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23 November 2021

## **GOSPORT BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2038**

First welcomes Gosport Borough's Local Plan with its strong focus on encouraging greater usage of sustainable modes of transport. We believe it will also be important to maintain a focus on the long-term environmental benefits that continued and increased investment in public transport will be able to deliver.

The bus plays a central role in keeping the towns and communities across the Gosport running, not only as a means for people to get to work but also as a means to keep communities connected, enabling people to get to hospitals, go shopping and carry out basic day to day necessities.

As the Covid-19 situation has highlighted, with buses having remained both in service and demand throughout the pandemic, the importance of buses and public transport remains central to the solution for clean air and green initiatives. A typical double-decker bus can take 75 cars off the road, reducing both congestion and emissions.

Supporting growth and investment in public transport and public transport infrastructure remains essential to the future development the areas selected for housing/commercial development, as well as provision of section 106 funding and pump priming being made available to bus/public transport operators to enable sustainable long term network development to ensure service provision can meet the needs of these communities. We would also recommend that Gosport Borough Council focuses planning approvals with the bus at the heart of transport provision. This will enable bus services to remain sustainable and allow them to grow. Brockhurst Gate Retail Park is an example where, from the planning and design stages, the car has been dominant and thus bus services remaining viable for this location are in doubt.

Enabling and increasing bus priority measures and expanding dedicated bus lanes will greatly improve public transport journey reliability, but crucial to this will be ensuring that dedicated road space for buses is maintained and remains dedicated to buses rather than being diluted by other vehicle types that will slow traffic flows and cause delays to overall journey times. Reducing bus journey times and their variability not only allows for more efficient operation, it helps deliver a service which is more attractive to users and potential users, as has been demonstrated by the Eclipse service running along a dedicated bus way where 20% of passenger who regularly use this service used to use their own cars.

Future investment in urban regeneration across the Gosport peninsula will require a continued focus on both housing and commercial developments having good access to bus routes to reduce commuting and increase sustainable travel. It will also be important for Gosport Borough Council to co-ordinate with Hampshire County Council as a transport authority to establish an aligned transport plan. Improving bus access to communities that would benefit most from bus access will also help stimulate an increase in bus usage.

First has already committed to buy no further diesel buses after 2022 and to be 100% zero carbon by 2035, and through the DfT ZEBRA (Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas) scheme First is also committed to deploying electric buses on the 9 and 9a routes that already provide service coverage through the Rowner and HMS Sultan area, and we are hopeful that this will support Gosport Borough Council's objectives to encouraging greater usage of sustainable modes of transport.

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As a private business, First has invested £14.8m in new buses on the Gosport Peninsular in the last 9 years. This has been delivered at no expense to the tax payer

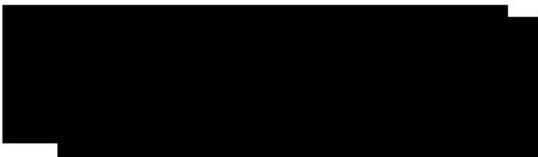
Better public realm open space could be provided by removal of unnecessary car parking and limited provision of parking for new housing developments. This will this also further reinforce a modal shift to public transport. The provision of a more accessible and convenient public transport network that improves social inclusion will also help reduce car dependence.

First would strongly welcome an emphasis on stronger parking management and enforcement of illegal and obstructive parking, and introduction of workplace parking levies, as well as a structured approach to pricing for parking in town centres across the Gosport peninsula that will serve as an effective incentive to support a modal shift towards public transport.

Redevelopment of Gosport bus station should also be forward looking to ensure that the new Gosport bus station can accommodate modern electric bus sizes with provision for infrastructure that will support electric vehicles and charging facilities, as well as the extra trips and passenger demand that will be generated as a result of increased departures and service levels as demand for bus travel, as a sustainable transport mode, grows.

First is in full support of Gosport Borough's Local Plan, and we welcome the opportunity to continue to play an active role in contributing to the development of a greener, more efficient and more attractive public transport system and infrastructure for the Gosport peninsula.

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan Lewis  
Commercial Manager  
First Hampshire, Dorset and Berkshire