



GOSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
JANUARY 2019



SOLENT
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FOREWORD

The Borough of Gosport faces an outstanding, once in a generation, opportunity. The release of substantial land for development at the entrance to one of the most famous natural harbours in the world, and with direct access to the waterfront in the spectacular heart of world sailing – the Solent, creates an unprecedented opportunity to build a destination of world renown. The availability of such a large constellation of developable sites is a rare event. When taken in combination with the Borough's extensive heritage assets, varied physical geography and benign climate, it creates the potential to build a region that provides an exceptional quality of life, is rich in culture, economically dynamic and thriving, and a magnet for businesses, residents and visitors. Now is the time for Gosport to capitalise on this opportunity and to make the world notice.

For over 400 years, Gosport has played a central role in the Nation's defence, supporting the ships, submarines and aircraft of the Royal Navy, and the men and women who operate them. In recent decades, as technology has evolved and the size of the Royal Navy has reduced, many of the support facilities have become redundant and closed or relocated. The announcement by the Ministry of Defence in November 2016 to relocate its activity away from Fort Blockhouse in 2020 and from HMS Sultan between 2024–26, was the next step on a journey that in recent years had already seen the Royal Naval Hospital Haslar, HMS Daedalus, and Royal Clarence Yard all vacated, with only HMS Daedalus seeing any substantial redevelopment, underpinned by its Enterprise Zone status. As these sites close they are leaving legacies of their former use in their shadows and the employment that they once provided is not being fully replaced, forcing the talented labour force to seek work elsewhere or to relocate, resulting in a decline in the Borough's employment opportunities relative to its immediate neighbours.

This situation is neither desirable nor sustainable, and the Gosport Infrastructure Investment Plan, commissioned through the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, and produced by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Ltd ('Lichfields'), identifies the infrastructure investment priorities to enable Gosport to capitalise on the opportunity afforded by the release of up to 100 Hectares of Government land.

This land release creates a 'once in a generation' opportunity to create a new vision – economic, geographic, and social – which, if implemented, will transform Gosport's economy and employment opportunities. It is a vision based on Gosport's maritime heritage, on the unique nature of its spectacular waterfront, and on the skills, dedication and resilience of its people.

The report identifies the infrastructure investment that is necessary in order that the sites announced for release, and those that have recently been released, can be developed for maximum economic benefit for Gosport Borough. It recognises that many previous public sector land disposals have come with substantial liabilities that make redevelopment challenging, and that this is likely to be the case for Fort Blockhouse, Royal Clarence Yard, and HMS Sultan. But the prize is worth the fight. The report makes the argument for public sector investment to reduce the risk in private sector development, and to provide the essential catalyst for change. The report also stresses the need for a planning framework that actively promotes and enables creative and inspiring private sector development. But the report goes further, it identifies the key elements of a bold and exciting new vision for Gosport, one that should provide the basis for all major investment and planning decisions, and one that will, quite rightly, make Gosport a driving force in the economy of the Solent, and the nation.

We are particularly grateful to the staff of Lichfields, Gosport and Hampshire local authorities, Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice and the many businesses and organisations of Gosport who have contributed to the report.


Richard Stokes CBE

Independent Chair
Gosport Infrastructure Investment Plan

Caroline Dinenage MP

Member of Parliament
Gosport, Stubbington,
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January 2019



The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) commissioned planning and economics consultancy Lichfields to prepare an Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) for the Borough of Gosport. This identifies future 'economic infrastructure' needs of the Borough; in other words, the infrastructure that is typically required to support the day-to-day functioning of an economy such as transport, telecommunications, energy, water, waste and flood defence and workforce skills.

The IIP is intended to support the work of the Gosport Task Force which has been set up to consider the potential growth opportunities that could be realised as a result of the disposal of various public sector sites in the Borough.

This document presents an Executive Summary of the key findings and recommendations from the IIP.



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The IIP has been undertaken at a critical juncture in Gosport's economic evolution. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has been gradually consolidating its presence within Gosport over a number of years, following the Borough's historic role as a support base for the Royal Navy. A number of prominent public sector sites in Gosport – currently or previously owned by the MoD or Ministry of Justice (MoJ) – are due for disposal over the next few years. Collectively these sites provide an unparalleled opportunity to accommodate a new phase of Gosport's growth, and local stakeholders are keen to maximise the potential of this portfolio of sites to encourage transformative economic development and growth.

Recent economic trends provide an important backdrop to the IIP, including a pattern of relatively poor performance of Gosport's economy. Whilst this represents a challenging baseline position, it also means that there is significant scope for change and improved economic performance looking ahead.

ECONOMIC GROWTH POTENTIAL

The latest economic projections for the Solent LEP area anticipate these trends will continue in future. This 'business as usual' approach could mean a real risk that the Borough's economy stagnates, and by doing so, worsens the existing 'performance gap' between Gosport and the wider Solent region. However, these economic forecasts underplay the scale and nature of future growth potential that exists in Gosport.

VISION FOR GOSPORT 2050

The IIP provides an opportunity to start to shape a renewed and refreshed economic vision for Gosport, drawing upon the Borough's existing strengths and unique attributes and being ambitious about the scale of transformative change that could be pursued. It introduces four themes around which an economic vision for Gosport can be developed, and these have been developed in partnership with key stakeholders through focused consultation.



Figure 1: View of all six Americas' Cup teams leaving Portsmouth harbour

These four themes are summarised in Figure 2 below and comprise:

1. A more self-sufficient economy and higher local job density (i.e. the ratio of jobs to working-age residents), providing a much larger employment base and broader range of job opportunities for local Gosport residents.
2. The development and evolution of Gosport to become a world-class global hub for marine and maritime activity, linked to its coastal location and assets.
3. Becoming a 'First Port of Call' for business by offering an attractive location to set up, relocate and grow a business.

4. All of the above should be underpinned by measures to enhance Gosport's profile and reputation as a successful and attractive place to live and work, supported by a strong and more positive brand.

The development of an overarching vision provides a useful starting point against which to consider ideas for how key opportunity sites in Gosport could be brought together, alongside associated economic infrastructure, to achieve this economic vision.



Figure 2: Economic vision for Gosport
Source: Lichfields

ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

A review of existing economic infrastructure provision to, from and within the Gosport Borough does not highlight any fundamental ‘showstopper’ constraints in terms of infrastructure provision or capacity constraining short-term development in overall terms. Many smaller-scale infrastructure requirements can be addressed incrementally as new development comes forward.

However, there are some broader infrastructure issues – notably ongoing risks associated with tidal flooding / coastal defences, pressures on the Borough’s transport networks and the relatively uncompetitive resident skills position – which could undermine Gosport’s ability to deliver transformative economic growth and change. In addition, these may impose additional costs that impact the financial viability of development proposals.

KEY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Within this context, the forthcoming release of a number of key development sites in Gosport currently in public ownership provides an important spatial opportunity to help achieve a step change in the Borough’s economic prosperity and to work towards the emerging economic vision for Gosport over the next 20 to 30 years.

These sites – namely Daedalus, Fort Blockhouse, Royal Clarence Yard, Haslar Immigration Removal Centre, Royal Hospital Haslar and HMS Sultan (shown on Figure 4 overleaf) – have been considered in detail through the IIP in terms of key opportunities and scope for each site to help achieve the overall economic vision and the main constraints to redevelopment as currently known.

Other development sites across the Borough will have an important role to play in shaping the future of Gosport in conjunction with those noted above, including a number of sites in private ownership such as the Haslar Gunboat Sheds and the former Royal Hospital Haslar site, and other waterfront sites identified in the Gosport Waterfront and Town Centre SPD including Gosport Bus Station and the remaining parts of the Priddy’s Hard site.



Figure 3: Aerial view of Daedalus



Figure 4: Key development opportunities
Source: Lichfields

These sites collectively provide over 100 hectares of land supply – about 7% of the Borough total – and in most cases could accommodate a level of growth that would fall over and above assumptions set out in the current Gosport Local Plan. They are also expected to come forward on a phased basis over a broad time frame (partly driven by the route of MoD / MoJ disposal), underlining the need for a joined-up and holistic approach to considering how best to maximise growth opportunities.

In many cases, more detailed technical work is required to more accurately determine site conditions and constraints, whilst initial masterplanning work is needed to test the potential feasibility of different uses and forms of development (particularly in relation to heritage issues which are relevant on all sites).

However, it is clear that there are some significant barriers to delivery and viability challenges present on all sites, and that initial investment is needed to help unlock and accelerate their potential and ultimately encourage private sector investment.

Significant underinvestment in the maintenance of buildings and structures have left many of the heritage and economic assets on key sites in poor condition and this represents a major barrier to regeneration. Therefore, targeted investment and action by the public sector is required.

Past experience shows that when land supply for new development has been made available in Gosport, the market has generally responded (albeit not always leading to the most beneficial development outcomes). This suggests that no inherent market failures exist within the local residential and commercial property market.

OVERARCHING INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

For this reason, the case for public sector intervention on particularly challenging sites in the Borough is strong, and through the IIP a series of overarching infrastructure investment priorities have been identified that have a critical role to play in encouraging a step change in Gosport's economy, each for different reasons.

These strategic infrastructure investment themes and concepts (summarised below) represent a scale and type of ambition that would be needed to unlock the development and growth potential of the Borough over the coming years, to 2050, and beyond.

Table 1: Overarching investment priorities for Gosport






ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE THEME	POTENTIAL AREA OF INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT	RELEVANCE TO KEY DEVELOPMENT SITE (S)	CONTRIBUTION TO OVERARCHING ECONOMIC VISION (H = HIGH, M = MEDIUM, L = LOW)	
WATER, WASTE AND FLOODING 	Tidal flooding defence works to Gosport waterfront	Royal Clarence Yard, Fort Blockhouse and Haslar Immigration Removal Centre in particular	Protecting a number of development sites that are key to achieving the vision for Gosport global marine hub, in doing so enhancing their viability for development	H
ENERGY 	Introduction of renewable energy generation facilities to help power residents and businesses in Gosport	Scope to benefit whole Borough and various sites	Supporting self-sufficiency agenda (albeit from energy rather than economic perspective), possible links to marine renewable energy cluster strengths elsewhere on the south coast / Solent	L–M
TRANSPORT 	Improving vehicle access to and from Gosport Peninsula, including better links to Portsmouth and the major road network	Scope to benefit whole Borough	Enhancing overall accessibility and connectivity to and from Gosport Peninsula, in turn supporting attractiveness of Gosport as a business location, and enhancing profile of Gosport global marine hub	M–H
	Expanded water based transport offer, serving multiple waterfront locations in Gosport (and potentially joining up with elsewhere along / across the Solent Inc. Portsmouth Harbour)	Particularly relevant for key waterfront sites at Fort Blockhouse and Royal Clarence Yard, but also scope to benefit whole Borough	Provision of a water-based transport link to facilitate access between a number of development sites that are key to achieving the vision for Gosport global marine hub	M–H
	Expanded Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to serve more of Gosport Peninsula, more often, potentially incorporated as part of new Solent-wide transit system	Scope to benefit whole Borough	Forms key part of an overall package of public transport improvements necessary for an accessible and productive Gosport global marine hub	M

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TELECOMS 	Roll-out of next-generation 5G mobile connectivity and provision across Gosport	Scope to benefit whole Borough	Providing fast and reliable digital connectivity to reinforce Gosport’s attractiveness as a business location – particularly within knowledge and service based sectors where growth is required to diversify Gosport’s existing business base. Critical in developing ‘Digital Peninsula’ concept	H
	Roll-out of ultra-fast broadband connectivity (100Mbps +) across Gosport	Scope to benefit whole Borough		
HUMAN CAPITAL AND SKILLS 	Provision of higher education facility / facilities within the Borough	Scope to incorporate within wider masterplan for key development sites (e.g. Fort Blockhouse, HMS Sultan, Daedalus)	Pro-actively developing resident skills in key growth areas for Gosport, enhancing the Borough’s competitiveness as a global marine hub and maritime cluster, and more generally as an attractive and viable place to start and grow a business. Key infrastructure components behind World Class Centre of Excellence for sailing and yacht technology and engineering	M–H
	Dedicated marine and maritime skills centre / training academy, potentially linked to existing institutions			H
	Dedicated hospitality skills centre / training academy			H

Source: Lichfields



Figure 5: Gosport marina

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The IIP provides an initial framework for taking forward a future economic vision for Gosport; it also highlights key areas where there is scope for targeted public sector action and investment. Some of these relate to infrastructure matters but also to more general measures to support site delivery. Partners will want to consider how the overarching themes can be refined and developed into a series of workable propositions and next steps that could form the basis for future funding bids in due course.



A number of potential approaches that could be taken, in broad terms, to bring forward the key public sector sites for development in Gosport are identified through the IIP to form a basis for further discussion, including various delivery and planning approaches.

Finally, a series of overall recommendations and suggested next steps are provided for supporting the future growth of Gosport and to realise the development potential of a number of key public sector sites that are due to be released for wider redevelopment over the coming months and years. These are summarised in Table 2 opposite.



Figure 6: Haslar marina

Table 2: Principle recommendations

TIME HORIZON	KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>NEAR TERM AND ONGOING</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission next-stage technical work to more accurately establish site conditions and constraints on key public sector sites (building on initial analysis presented in the IIP). Where possible this should cover multiple sites to encourage efficiency. • Maintain ongoing dialogue with developers of key sites in the Borough (public and private sector), including Royal Hospital Haslar and Daedalus, to stay aware of latest plans, progress and barriers to delivery. • Pursue early investment in full fibre / Giganet broadband as a catalyst for growth and improving public service delivery. • Facilitate regular discussions with key infrastructure providers to understand investment plans over the coming years and site-specific issues / constraints. As a minimum this should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Transport providers (Inc. Hampshire County Council, Gosport Ferry); ▶ Telecoms providers (Inc. BT, Openreach, CityFibre, Virgin Media); ▶ Existing post-16 education / training providers in the Borough; ▶ Utilities providers (Inc. Portsmouth Water, Southern Water, Environment Agency, Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership); and ▶ Energy providers (Inc. Southern Electric / SSE, Scotia Gas Networks). • Linked to the above, start working on developing a destination / place brand for Gosport which draws on the Borough's unique selling points and overarching economic vision.
<p>1 TO 3 YEARS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and establish optimum organisational structure / delivery model, including pros, cons, likely cost / resource implications and alignment with partner aspirations. • Develop masterplans for each MoD / MoJ site, and an overarching masterplan for key development sites considered as part of the IIP report. • Identify immediate and longer term funding opportunities / sources to help overcome 'abnormal' costs to site redevelopment e.g. associated with heritage assets. • Use upcoming Gosport Borough Local Plan Review to establish preferred planning policy approach / direction for key development sites. • Develop emerging components of a Vision for Gosport 2050 into a more detailed economic plan and/or strategy to guide ongoing work, engaging with local stakeholders to generate ideas and secure early stage 'buy-in'. • Work on expanding the initial table of overarching infrastructure investment priorities (set out in the IIP) into a series of more specific / tangible infrastructure investments and projects to inform future investment decisions and funding bids. Ideally this will form a 'live' schedule of potential projects that can be updated by partners on an ongoing basis and feed into delivery of the economic vision for Gosport.

Source: Lichfields

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