



Response to:

**A326 Waterside
Improvements planning
application consultation
HCC/2026/0213**

Introduction

Transport Action Network (TAN) wishes to **OBJECT** to the planning application for the A326 Waterside Improvement (HCC/2026/0213).

Impact on Dibden Bay

It is clear, from the Planning Statement and from the scheme design, that the real purpose of this road project is to facilitate access for Associated British Ports (ABP) to develop Dibden Bay (euphemistically known as ‘Solent Gateway 2’) as a multi-storey car park for imported cars. Dibden Bay is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Ramsar site wetland, and a Special Protection Area (SPA). These are the highest environmental designations, and any development here should be refused, and will be fiercely opposed. It is unclear why Hampshire County Council would want to facilitate a private entity to develop this highly protected area.

Lack of cumulative assessment

Despite it being clear (from the Planning Statement, and the scheme design) that the purpose and objective of the A326 scheme is to facilitate development of Dibden Bay by a private entity, the combined and cumulative impacts of these developments have not been assessed and considered, as required by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (EIA Directive 2014/52/EU). Instead the scheme has been assessed in isolation, and the environmental impacts have therefore been underestimated and improperly assessed. The Planning Statement also describes other developments in the Waterside area, to justify the scheme, yet has not assessed these developments either in a coherent cumulative assessment.

Public funds used for private interests

We object that significant public funds (both Hampshire County Council capital funds, but also Department for Transport capital funds) are being used for a road project designed to advance the interests of a private entity (Associated British Ports). The double roundabout is clearly only included in the scheme design to allow the development of Dibden Bay on behalf of ABP. It is not acceptable for public funds to be used to further private interests.

Other significant environmental impacts

The proposed scheme would also destroy and impact on ancient woodland and veteran trees. These habitats are irreplaceable, and no mitigation can compensate for their loss. The scheme also takes part of the New Forest National Park, and is counter the duty in Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) to further the purposes of National Parks. It would instead urbanise

Alternatives not adequately examined

There has been inadequate assessment of alternatives. The Planning Statement states that because there is already an inadequate bus service in the Waterside area, a public transport alternative “does not offer a credible alternative to car use”. We dispute this, and suggest Hampshire County Council seriously consider and examine massively improved bus services for this area, for residents but also tourists to the New Forest National Park.

Modelling potentially unreliable

We believe some of the absurd traffic forecasts on surrounding roads suggest the traffic model used, the Solent Sub-Regional Transport Model (SRTM), is not robust. The results, such as a 98% decrease in daily traffic at Deerleap Lane (2,216 to 45), and a 98% decrease at Arters Lawn (2,218 to 45), are simply not credible. The modelling also suggests that journey time savings are in seconds, not minutes. The huge cost of the project, financial and environmental, is not justified by these miniscule time savings.

Conclusion

We recommend that the planning application be REFUSED

31 July 2026

Rebecca Lush

Transport Action Network

Transport Action Network provides free support to people and groups pressing for more sustainable transport in their area and opposing cuts to bus and rail services, damaging road schemes and large unsustainable developments

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