

Welcome to our consultation

Solent Gateway 2

Solent Gateway is already an important part of the wider Port of Southampton – playing a key role in supporting jobs, trade and industry, both locally and across the UK.



Following sustained work over many years to make the most of our current space and infrastructure, the existing port is now nearing capacity. We are setting out our emerging proposals for a considered expansion – one that we believe brings real benefits to our local communities, the environment and the wider nation.

Our emerging proposals for Solent Gateway 2 would enable us to meet future demand and improve resilience through the delivery of a world-leading, sustainable automotive terminal, new marine facilities and improved road access to the existing Solent Gateway. They would also deliver environmental enhancements and a major new country park – improving the landscape and environment at the same time as we improve our port infrastructure.

In addition, the provision of a new direct access route to the new facility, with a new connection to Solent Gateway, would allow us to divert vehicles that currently need to drive through Marchwood to get to Solent Gateway. This would instead enable access to the existing facility via a direct connection from the A326.

Solent Gateway 2 is about more than infrastructure. It's about building a future that works for the region – one that balances economic strength, community needs and environmental care. We want to get this right, and that means continuing to work with you so we can deliver the best outcomes.

Under the Planning Act 2008, our emerging proposals are considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) so we will seek consent through the Development Consent Order (DCO) process. This means our application for development consent will be decided by the UK Government's Secretary of State for Transport.

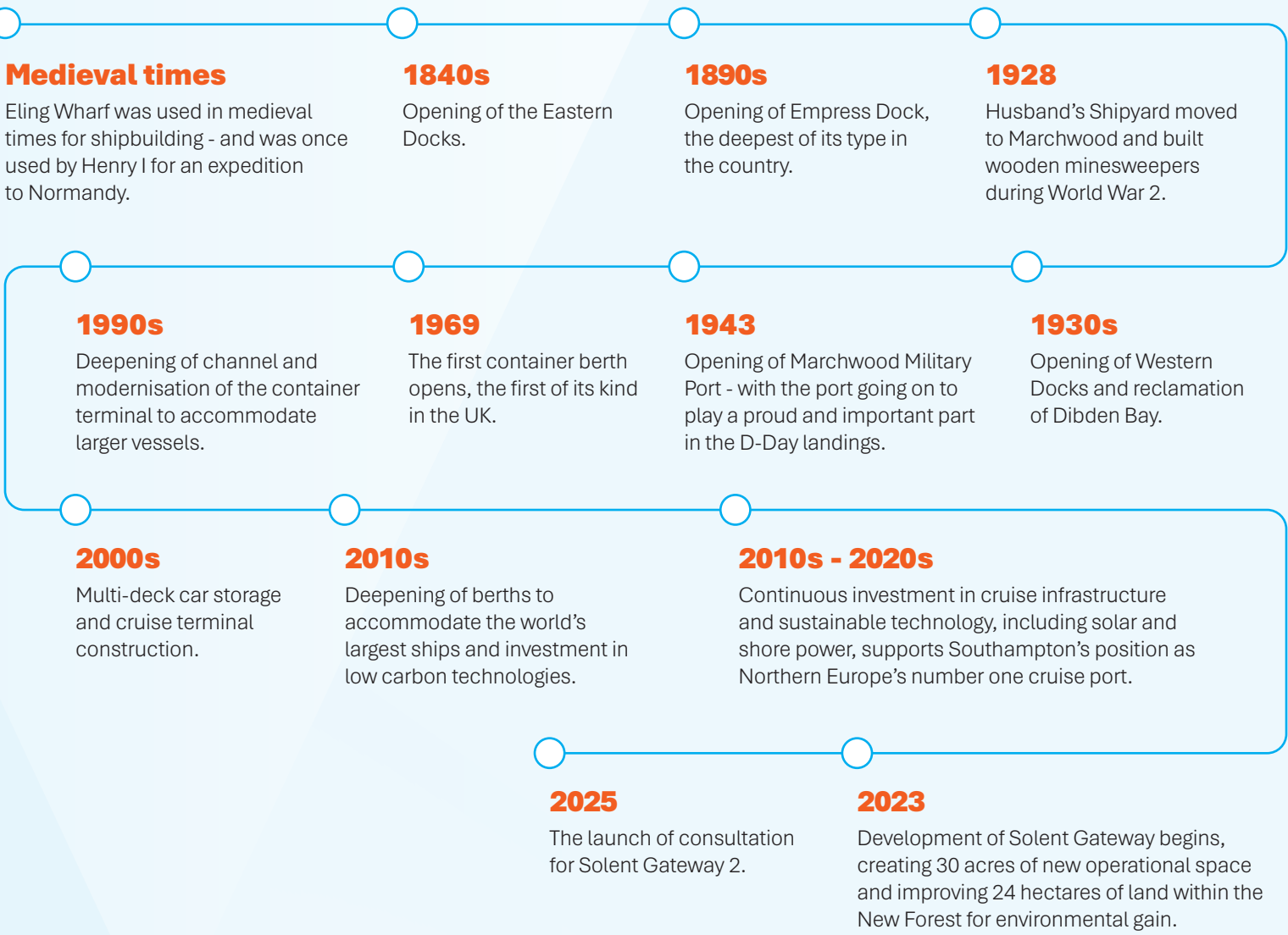
As part of this process, we are currently conducting an initial, non-statutory consultation. This is an opportunity for you to have your say on our emerging proposals for Solent Gateway 2 and will be followed by a more detailed, statutory consultation in 2026, where further feedback will be invited on our developing plans.



The story so far

Since the first evidence of a port settlement in Southampton nearly two thousand years ago, our journey across both trade and military operations has been one of growth and evolution.

From being the third largest port in England during the Middle Ages, to embracing low carbon technologies and welcoming the world’s largest ships today, the port has always been an ever-present part of our local area, as shown here:



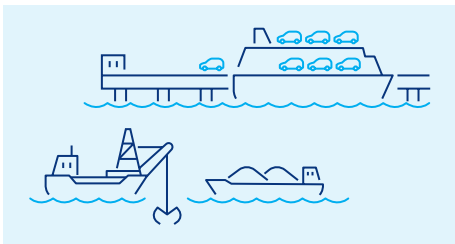
Our emerging proposals

We are proposing to extend Solent Gateway onto the northern part of the reclaimed land between Marchwood and Hythe. This new development – Solent Gateway 2 – would provide extra capacity where it is needed for a world-leading, sustainable automotive terminal.

This would, in turn, free up space in the main Port of Southampton to support other key sectors such as cruise and container shipping – helping us to ensure long-term resilience and global competitiveness.

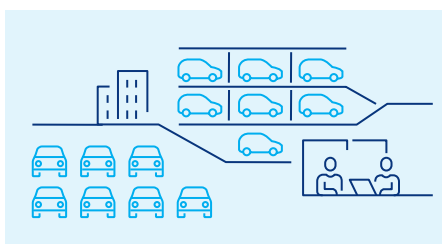
We believe this is a real opportunity to shape the port and deliver lasting value for the surrounding area – strengthening trade and defence through the creation of additional berths and port infrastructure, while enhancing the landscape and making it more accessible for everybody.

In brief, our emerging proposals include:



New marine facilities

This would comprise a new jetty located near the existing jetties at Solent Gateway.



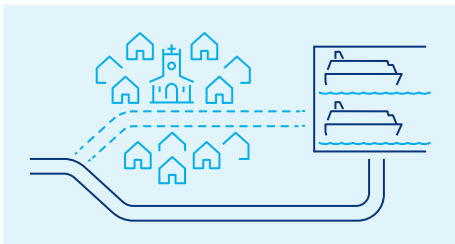
Automotive terminal space

This would include operational buildings, storage areas, multi-decked vehicle storage facilities and administration areas.



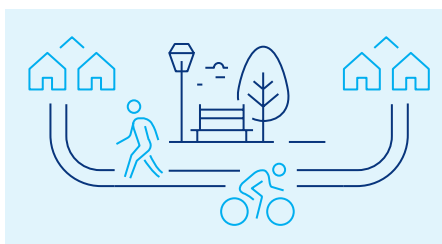
Environmental works

Recognising the valuable nature of the Waterside area and National Park, we are working to identify ways in which we can both preserve and enrich this area through habitat and landscape improvement. This would include natural barriers between the development and existing residential areas in the form of green spaces.



Improved road access

The provision of a new direct access route to the new facility, with a new connection to the existing Solent Gateway, would allow us to divert vehicles that currently need to drive through Marchwood in order to get to Solent Gateway and instead enable them to access the existing facility on a direct connection from the A326.



A new community green space

Through a major new country park and additional environmental enhancements which, combined, would be equivalent to the size of over 300 football pitches (this number is indicative and based on current estimates at this early stage of our proposals). It would also provide opportunities for new and improved cycle and walking routes, connecting Marchwood and Hythe.

What's different?

Our new, emerging plans are on a significantly smaller scale and are very different in character to the proposals brought forward previously.

We are focused on getting the balance right between supporting trade and the wider UK economy, enhancing the local environment and offering real, visible improvements for local communities.

The key differences between previous plans and what we are now proposing are:



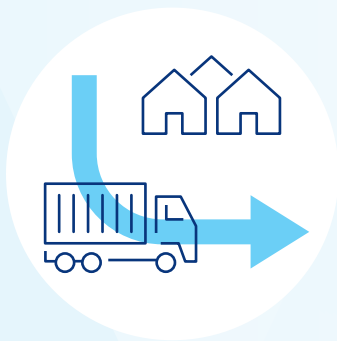
Over half of the land would now be set aside for environmental purposes and a major new country park, with the remainder developed for port use.



The proposed major new country park would also provide an opportunity for new and improved cycle and walking routes connecting Marchwood and Hythe.



The proposed development would not be used by container ships, and there would be no ability for the proposed development to be used by container ships.



Our plans would allow us to divert vehicles that currently need to drive through Marchwood to get to Solent Gateway and instead enable them to access the existing facility on a direct connection from the A326, by means of a new link road.



Visual impact of the new terminal would be minimised through design and planting, creating natural barriers between the development and residential areas.

Why is expansion needed and why here?

The Port of Southampton is a key gateway for the UK to the rest of the world, handling goods and cargo that are fundamental to our success as a trading nation. We are also the UK's number one cruise port, playing a key role in the tourism and leisure industry, both nationally and locally.

The demand from these key sectors is growing, but there isn't enough space in our existing port to meet this demand. Therefore, expansion is needed in order to meet this demand and keep supporting growth in our local and national economies.

There is a clear market need for this additional capacity to be provided as soon as possible. Following sustained work over many years to make the most of our current space and infrastructure, the existing port is now nearing capacity. The land planned for Solent Gateway 2 offers the opportunity for expanding our operations in line with demand, while enabling us to make better use of the existing Solent Gateway facility too.

We recognise the valuable nature of the Waterside area and New Forest National Park and are working to identify ways in which we can both preserve and enrich this area through our proposals. This includes looking at ways of working with the National Park, so the development supports its aims.

The rest of the port would continue to operate in largely the same way that it does now, and this proposed development would help meet demand and deliver efficiencies and growth in our existing cruise and cargo operations, rather than replacing them.



Southampton in the UK.

The proposed site

We are proposing to develop Solent Gateway 2 to the south of Solent Gateway (which used to be called Marchwood Military Port). This is on the opposite side of the River Test to the Port of Southampton.

This area is made up of land reclaimed between the 1930s and 1970s for the expansion of port activity and has long been held as a site for expansion of the port. It is now being brought forward through the emerging proposals for Solent Gateway 2, with less than half of this area proposed for the development of port infrastructure.

On the right is an indicative outline plan of the proposed site. This plan shows the location of the proposed development in relation to the existing Solent Gateway, rail infrastructure, public rights of way and the National Park boundary. This plan also details the proposed lines of connectivity throughout the development, including potential foot and cycle paths and the link road. These routes would connect the proposed development to, and allow access from, the A326.

This site has been chosen because:

- The existing port estate has limited potential for expansion or further intensification.
- There are no other sites in our local area which can accommodate this expansion.
- It allows us to make best use of the existing Solent Gateway facility.
- It presents the opportunity to provide areas set aside as enhanced and improved green space.
- It enables us to offer greater capacity and support to the armed forces.

Recognising Marchwood is the Ministry of Defence’s (MOD) primary sea mounting centre, we will be able to offer the MOD increased capacity and resilience through the additional port space and berths, thereby increasing our ability to support MOD operations.

If land is required for the Solent Gateway 2 proposals, either temporarily or permanently, we would endeavour to reach voluntary agreements with the relevant landowners. We will be contacting any landowners affected at an early stage as part of this consultation. If you have any queries regarding land ownership in relation to these proposals, please contact SolentGateway2Land@abports.co.uk



Proposed port infrastructure

Marine

Our proposals for new marine infrastructure comprise:

- **A new offshore jetty located close to, and closely resembling, the existing Solent Gateway Falklands Jetty, designed for vehicle imports and exports, not container ships.**
- **Dredging works to allow for marine access to the new jetty.**

This new infrastructure is proposed to operate in conjunction with the existing Solent Gateway facilities.

Onshore

Our proposals comprise a dedicated vehicle import / export terminal, set back from the waterfront and suitable for the loading and unloading of automotive cargo.

Proposals for this new terminal comprise:

- **Infrastructure connecting to the offshore jetty, suitable for loading and unloading the full range of automotive cargo.**
- **Terminal storage areas for the import and export of automotives and associated cargo.**
- **Onward connection for cargo transport, via road and rail, including a new direct access road to the A326.**
- **Supporting facilities and administrative buildings required to run an automotive terminal.**

These proposals would also consider on-site green energy generation such as rooftop solar and supporting infrastructure, as well as infrastructure to support our commitment to net zero including on-site electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Transport infrastructure

We are currently developing the proposal for a new link road connecting the proposed terminal to the A326.

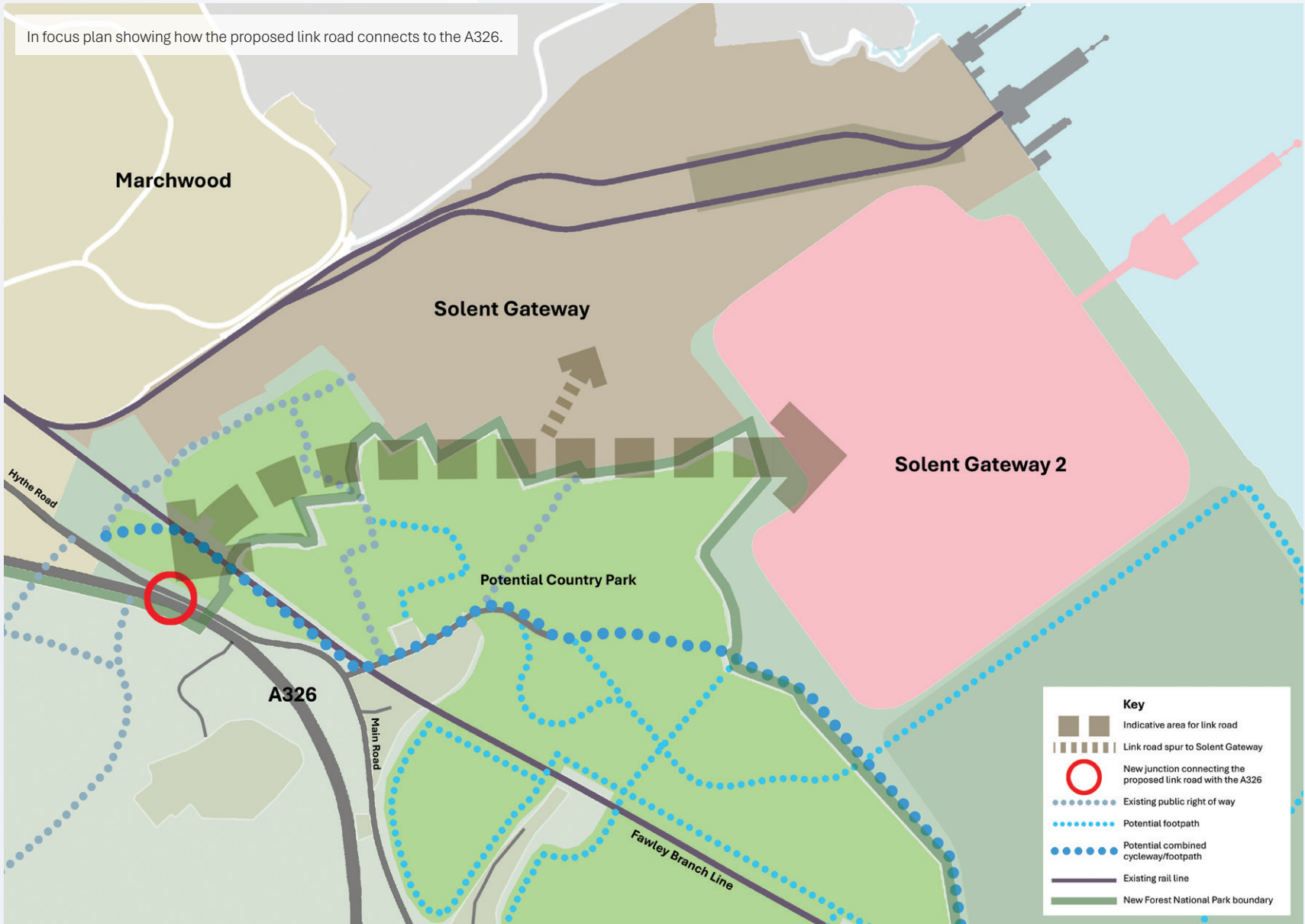
The alignment of this link road is being developed carefully, taking into account a number of factors including the local environmental conditions, the presence of overhead electrical lines, land ownership and the need to appropriately cross the railway (Fawley branch line).

The figure on the right shows the general route corridor we are investigating to identify the most appropriate alignment of the new link road.

Our aim is that, as far as practicable, the link road would be located outside of the New Forest National Park, and we are in discussion with the relevant third parties.

We currently envisage that there will be a new junction connecting the new link road with the A326. As our proposals develop, we will work closely with Hampshire County Council on the design of the junction connecting with the A326.

In line with our existing operations, it is anticipated that rail would be used for the transport of some of the automotive vehicles handled by Solent Gateway 2. Further detail on this element of our proposals will be available at our next round of consultation, once further assessments and design work have been undertaken.

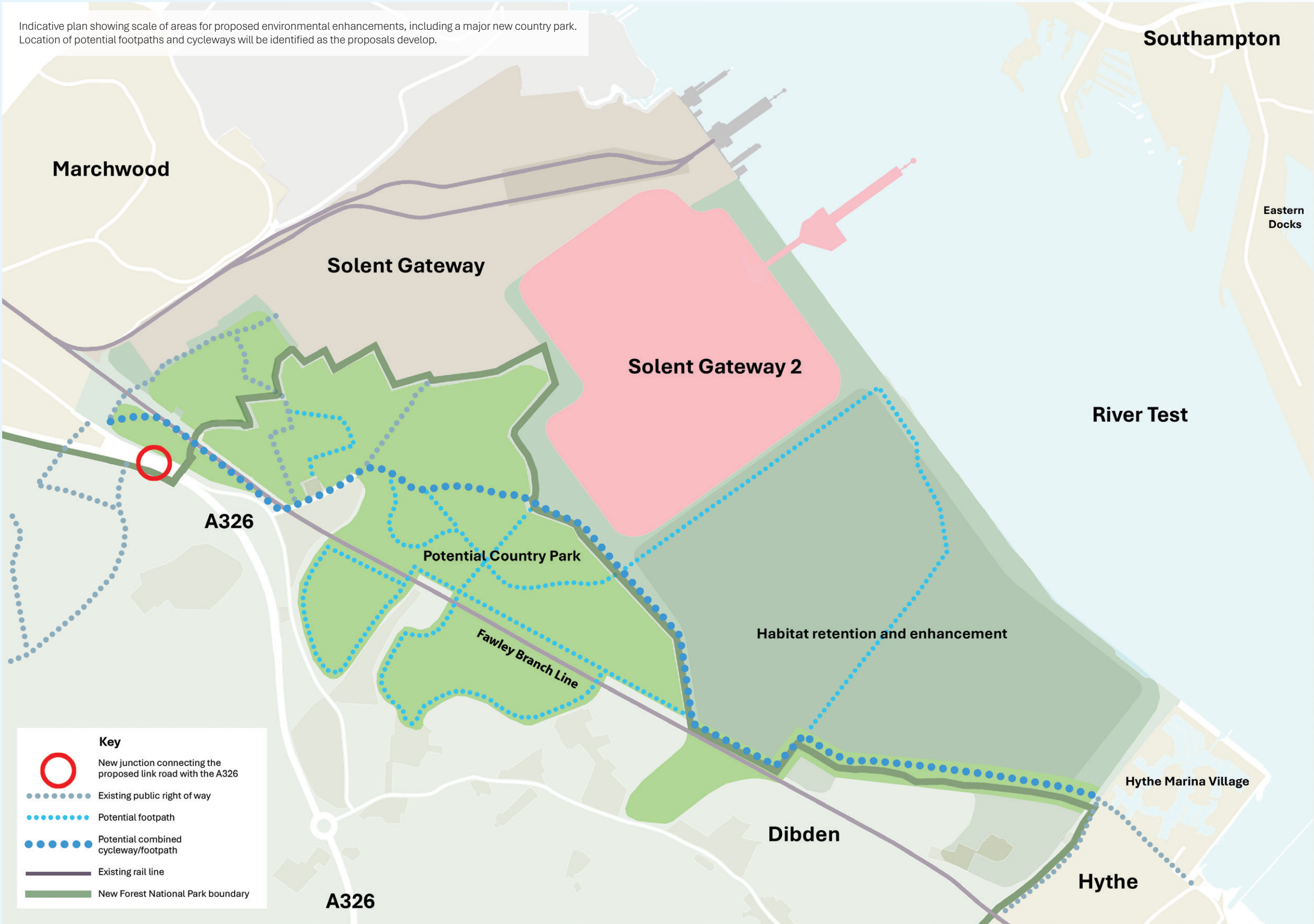


A major new country park

As part of our proposals, we would like to create a major new country park and additional environmental enhancements which, combined, would be equivalent to the size of over 300 football pitches (please note this number is indicative and based on current estimates), as shown on the plan below.

This plan also shows how this proposed major new country park would interact with both existing and proposed public rights of way, as well as the National Park boundary.

We recognise the valuable nature of the Waterside area and National Park, and we are working to identify ways in which we can both preserve and enrich this area through our proposals, including the opportunity for new and improved cycle and walking routes connecting Marchwood and Hythe.



Enhancing the environment

We are committed to ensuring that our Solent Gateway 2 proposals deliver meaningful environmental enhancements.

The design of the project will continue to develop and evolve, and the material we provide at this stage has taken account of many years of survey information.

Our proposals would firstly be seeking to avoid negative impacts and then to minimise the impacts that cannot be avoided, compensating where necessary.

Our proposals will deliver environmental benefits including habitat creation and enhancements. These would be developed in close collaboration with statutory bodies such as Natural England and the Environment Agency, as well as local authorities and environmental organisations – reflecting our commitment to sensitive and responsible development.

We would also look to create screening along the waterfront and around the site to help minimise visual impact.

Our proposals are being brought forward with sensitivity to the environmental designations of the area.

As shown on the plan opposite, these include the New Forest National Park, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Ramsar Sites.

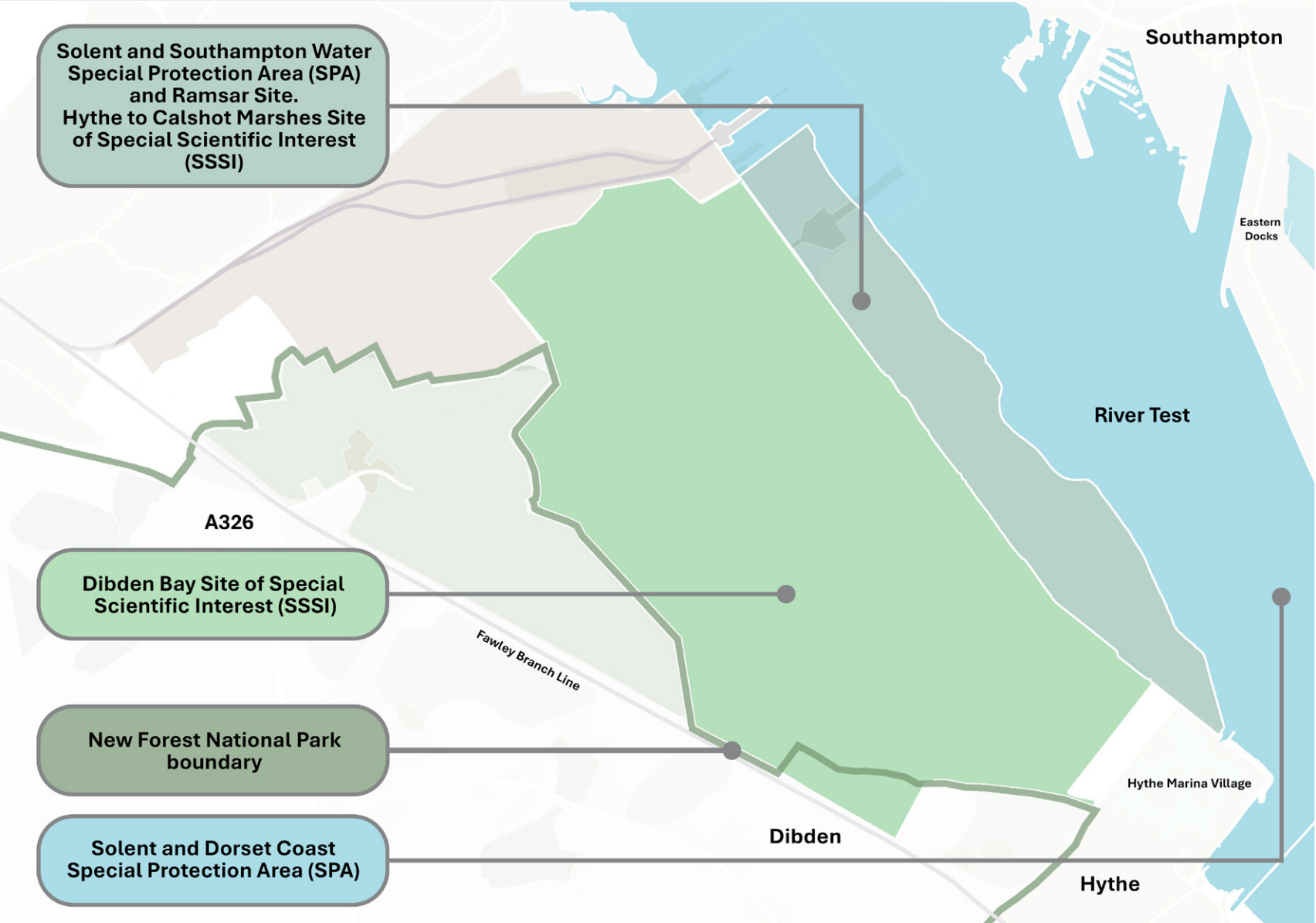
We want to make sure we take account of the various landscape and environmental sensitivities affecting the site – ensuring we create meaningful opportunities for public interaction with nature, while also safeguarding and enhancing its existing value. As an example, public access improvements may be focused within the National Park and more restricted within the SSSI.

What do these designations mean?

- National Park – areas or land designated and protected under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – areas designated and given legal protection for their valuable natural features such as geology, wildlife or flora and fauna.
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) – areas protected for the conservation of birds.
- Ramsar Site – areas of wetland designated and protected for conservation under the Ramsar Convention.

Designation	Why are the sites designated?
Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar Site	Important for wintering waterfowl and waders, including Dark-Bellied Brent Geese.
Solent and Dorset Coast SPA	Protects important marine foraging areas for seabirds such as Sandwich Terns and Common Terns.
Dibden Bay SSSI	Noted for its invertebrate assemblages and breeding bird populations.
Hythe to Calshot Marshes SSSI	Comprises saltmarsh and mudflats supporting wintering waders and wildfowl.
New Forest National Park	To conserve the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park area.

Further information on these designations can be found at <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>



Indicative plan of environmental considerations and protections.

Environmental impacts and mitigations

The potential environmental effects of the project, along with the mitigation and enhancement strategies being prepared, will be rigorously assessed, including through both the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) processes.

These assessments are being supported and informed by extensive surveys and studies and will be shaped through consultation with statutory stakeholders.

As an iterative process, the EIA will evolve alongside, and inform, the project design to ensure environmental considerations are fully integrated.

We expect our next round of consultation, in 2026, will include preliminary environmental information, with details of the assessments we've conducted as well as our proposals for mitigating any impacts.

What is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)?

- **EIA** – An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process that identifies and evaluates the potential environmental effects of a proposed development to help inform decision-making and ensure impacts are properly understood and addressed.
- **HRA** – A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) checks whether a proposed development could affect European sites. European sites comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Sites; all these designations are relevant to this project.

These assessments will be conducted across a range of areas and will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- **Noise and light levels from the proposed development and its associated infrastructure.**
- **Air quality impacts from the proposed development, and the associated traffic (vehicles and vessels) to and from the site.**
- **Flood risk.**
- **Visual impact of the proposed development.**
- **Impacts on public access and connectivity, including public rights of way.**
- **Ecology of the site, including marine and landside flora and fauna.**

That document will then, combined with further assessments throughout the pre-application stage, form the basis of an Environmental Statement (ES) which will be submitted as part of our application for development consent.



Part of the proposed site from the River Test.

Our approach to design

Our approach to design for this project is based on the following foundational principles:

1



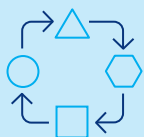
To enhance the environment and green spaces

2



To provide efficient, resilient and safe port operations

3



To produce durable and adaptable design

4



To make efficient use of land

5



To support the transition to net zero in line with ABP's wider commitment to reach net zero by 2040

6



To be a good neighbour and work collaboratively with stakeholders

7



To be sympathetic to local character and local history

8



To support innovation

Visual impact and engineering assessments are underway and will help us to ensure that the plans we are developing are designed in the best way possible. This is both in terms of ensuring the efficiency of the proposed development and to minimise and manage any impacts our proposals may have on the local area.

Improved connectivity and better access

Our proposals would improve connectivity across, and access to, this area of the Waterside through improved road access as well as new and improved cycle and walking routes.

We recognise that access to the existing Solent Gateway site, and connectivity to the area proposed for our major new country park, is limited and our proposals seek to address that, so it becomes a space for all to use and enjoy.

Automotive operations

Our proposed new terminal would operate in the same way as our existing automotive operations in Southampton:

- Vehicles for import or export would arrive at Solent Gateway 2 by road, rail or sea. This would involve vehicles being unloaded from ships and then imported by road for UK customers - or vehicles arriving at the terminal by road or rail, being loaded onto ships and exported by UK manufacturers for sale overseas.
- Both imported and exported vehicles would be stored on-site while we prepare for their onward journey.

Our emerging proposals do not constitute the wholesale relocation of our automotive operations to this side of the water, but rather an expansion to meet growing industry demand.

Improved road access

Hampshire County Council A326 improvements

Hampshire County Council is currently developing highways improvement schemes along the A326 in this area (the A326 Waterside) which consider potential improvements between Totton and Hythe. We are in early conversations with Hampshire County Council about its proposals and we are working to ensure that both projects can be brought forward together.

The provision of a new direct access route to the new facility, with a new connection to the existing Solent Gateway, would allow us to divert vehicles that currently need to drive through Marchwood to get to Solent Gateway. Instead this would enable access the existing facility on a direct connection from the A326.

Vehicles serving the terminal would comprise vehicle transporters and traffic associated with employees.

As we develop our proposals, we will be considering the impact on the local road network, to minimise impacts of additional traffic on local communities and to make sure that the roads are safe for all users. We recognise that the current facilities direct traffic through Marchwood, and we intend to develop our plans to reduce the current port traffic that passes through local communities.

Connectivity

As part of our emerging proposals, we also want to find ways in which we can improve connectivity for local communities. This could be through the establishment of new and improved footpaths and cycleways connecting Marchwood and Hythe, as we have set out in our proposals.

Jobs and skills

Our local workforce is central to what we do, and we currently support over 15,000 jobs across the region. Solent Gateway 2 would strengthen this substantial existing contribution and offer opportunities for more local jobs.

We want to keep contributing in this way across the country – but especially for those living and working in and around the New Forest and Southampton.

Solent Gateway 2 would also further strengthen the already world-leading Solent maritime cluster and new job opportunities would be created at all levels, including entry, professional and technical roles.

We expect that Solent Gateway 2 would create substantial employment both in the construction and operational phases of its development. When Solent Gateway 2 is fully operational we would anticipate a requirement for several hundred new jobs on an ongoing basis, subject to the eventual configuration of the site.

We're committed to Solent Gateway 2 having a jobs and skills plan that boosts opportunities for local employment. We are also keen to offer opportunities for upskilling in the local area, both through engagement with local schools, colleges and universities and through schemes such as apprenticeships.



ABP Southampton marathon.

Our work in the community

ABP Southampton already engages with local schools and, in autumn 2025, is launching a new Educational Outreach Programme designed to connect local schools, colleges, and universities with the dynamic world of the port sector.

We are also proud to be a partner of the Maritime and Transport Careers Programme, an initiative that helps young people explore pathways into the maritime and transport sectors across the Solent region.

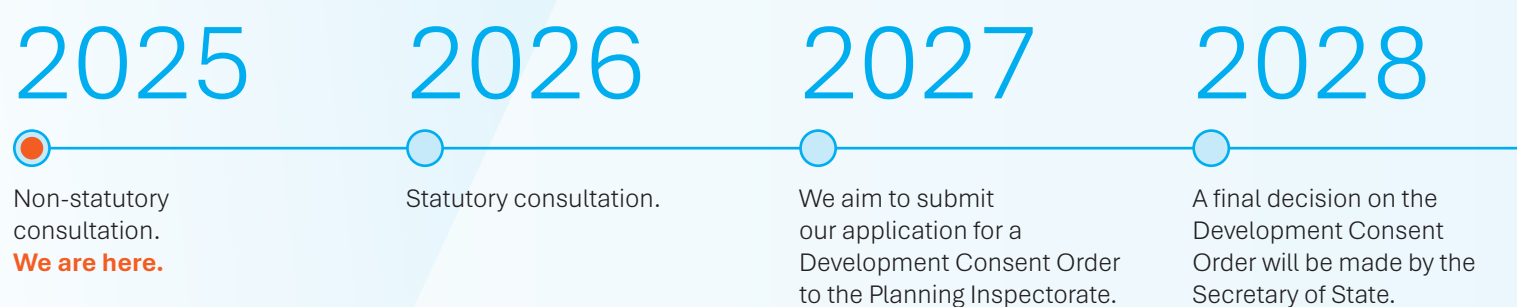
Additionally, the work we do in jobs and skills as part of our emerging proposals would be aligned as far as practicable with the newly launched New Forest Skills Action Plan 2025-2030.

Have your say



The below timeline shows the key dates between our current, non-statutory consultation and when we anticipate a decision being made on our application for development consent.

The dates shown here are indicative and subject to change.



We are committed to open, transparent engagement and we look forward to hearing your feedback on our proposals.

How to provide feedback

You can submit feedback to the project using the following methods:



Email us:
contact@solentgateway2.co.uk



Website:
solentgateway2.co.uk



Freepost:
Freepost SGTWO

We are keen to hear your feedback on our emerging proposals. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this consultation. If you have any questions or enquiries, please call us on 0800 138 9193.



Register your details to be kept updated on the proposals for Solent Gateway 2 by visiting our website or using the QR code.