

Dear News,

An extra lane on the A32 between Brockhurst and Fareham won't provide a long-term solution to Gosport traffic problems. It will make it harder to argue against the hundreds of extra homes that developers want to build in the borough. These will bring more cars and it won't be long before the three lanes are as congested as the existing two.

The answer is more public transport. Yet the Light Rapid Transit is like a desert mirage - constantly out of reach. A comparatively straight-forward solution would be to have more buses. A more comprehensive service would encourage more people to leave their cars at home, and the fares from the extra passengers should offset the costs of extra drivers and vehicles. However, it would remain a gamble and a commercial operator like First Portsmouth would have to be encouraged to take that step by subsidies from the county council, which isn't governed by such narrow commercial interests.

The problem is that even if the county council saw the sense in this, it has to beg and squeeze money from central government. This undermines local democracy.

Problems such as the continual A32 traffic jam will only be solved when central government allows local people to have the power to solve local problems, but New Labour is a control freak and the Tories may complain about nanny states, but do nothing to give local councils real power when they have the opportunity.

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