

Supplementary Agenda

We welcome you to
Waverley Local Committee
Your Councillors, Your Community
and the Issues that Matter to You

Supplementary Agenda

Item 6 – Public question responses
Item 7- Member question response



Venue

Location: REMOTE

Date: Friday, 13 November
2020

Time: 10.30 am

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

6 WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(Pages 1 - 6)

To answer any questions from residents or businesses within the Waverley Borough area in accordance with Standing Order 69. Notice should be given in writing or by email to the Partnership Committee Officer by 12 noon four working days before the meeting.

7 WRITTEN MEMBER QUESTIONS

(Pages 7 - 10)

To receive any written questions from Members under Standing Order 47. The deadline for members' questions is 12 noon four working days before the meeting. Notice should be given by email to the Partnership Committee Officer.



SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE (WAVERLEY) 13 November 2020

AGENDA ITEM 6

WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Mr Maurice Castles will ask the following question:

- i) "What steps will Surrey County Council take to ensure that residents are given adequate notice of gulley cleaning operations in order to maximise the cleaners' accessibility to the gullies?"

As a former operator myself, I am deeply concerned that when road gullies in my area [Weybourne, Farnham] are 'cleaned' by Surrey, they are not actually cleaned as they should be which is, of course, incredibly wasteful. I understand that in many cases this is because access is prevented by parked cars. I believe that this could be remedied if residents are given the appropriate advance notice, in an effective manner, that a cleaning is due (and that it happens at the appointed time).

- ii) What steps will Surrey County Council take to ensure that accessible gullies are cleaned as they should be?

I know that a cleaning involves opening the gully grate and sucking out the accumulated debris. On inspecting several gullies in my area that have a cosmetic appearance of having been cleaned I have found no evidence that they've been opened as they should and rather than the debris inside hasn't been touched."

Frank Apicella, SCC Area Highway Manager (South West), will give the following answer:

"The County Council has taken steps to identifying the roads that have a historic high percentage of parked cars and putting them on a pre-signing programme. This programme ensures that signs are erected in advance on these identified roads, warning that a clean is scheduled to take place. It would not be practical, efficient or achievable to notify all residents prior to cleaning, hence why the more adversely affected roads are identified.

Once on this programme, irrespective of how successful the subsequent clean may have been, the roads will remain on the programme and not be removed, as we understand that the success is down to this pre signing and removing them would merely result in the clean once again becoming unsuccessful.

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The roads are chosen by taking a percentage of the recorded Vehicle Overs (VOs) at the last clean against an agreed intervention level. This year we had planned to greatly increase the amount of roads visited by lowering the intervention level and not requiring a second visit by the contractor as standard on individual VOs, to offset this additional work; however, this was effected by the COVID Lockdown, meaning that the programme had to be put on hold.

Covid19 has resulted in a significant increase in people working from home and parked cars in urban areas. This has meant that the VO challenge has been far greater this year than would otherwise be the case. The County Council do however in certain circumstances where vehicles consistently remain parked on the highway, arrange parking suspensions with Borough colleagues.

Any gullies not cleaned due to VOs (or any other reason) are recorded with photos on our monitoring system by the attending crews. There is no incentive for crews not to record assets that could not be cleaned, providing the reasons and data they record is accurate. If this road then hits the intervention requirements for the following year's pre-signing programme, it will be added.

A joint auditing is carried out of at least 1% of all the gullies cleaned in Surrey, each month, to ensure consistency of contractual approach. The online system does provide residents the opportunity to also report any gullies which are missed by our crews."

2. Anne Corbin and Daniel Neaves will ask the following question:

"What more can and will be done to enforce parking restrictions on Badshot Lea Road Farnham where there are double yellow lines?

For anyone entering Badshot Lea Road from Praymead Road there is a great risk of a serious accident as people are parking vans and cars on the double yellow lines, this totally removes visibility of oncoming traffic. There are a lot of repeat offenders, whom have been approached and we have requested that they move their vehicles and their response has been that they don't care. Whilst occasionally their vehicles are ticketed, it costs them less to pay, if indeed they do, the fine than move to where they get parking. The parking has been so bad, with so little visibility that I have sometimes not gone to appointments or bookings due to the stress this causes, this means that I am being held victim by these law breaking individuals. We request that bollards are put in place of the double yellow lines before any one is seriously injured or killed due to the illegal parking."



Jack Roberts, Engineer, SCC Parking Team, will give the following answer:

“Guildford Borough Council (who enforce parking in Waverley) are aware of the ongoing abuse of the double yellow lines on Badshot Lea Road across the entrance to the Praymead Industrial Estate, also leading to Mayfield Close. They have targeted some enforcement here in addition to their routine patrols of Farnham, but with a limited number of enforcement officers operating around Waverley at any one time, enforcement has to be shared across all locations where parking restrictions are present.

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With regards to bollards, as the vehicles are being parked entirely on the carriageway, bollards on the footway would not improve the parking situation at this particular location as drivers would simply park next to them.

The extent of the existing double yellow lines is more than adequate to maintain sight lines, and the quality of the lines is good, therefore it does come down to enforcement by Guildford Borough Council, and we are doing all we can with regards to this location.”

3. Mr Cliff Watts, Chair, Badshot Lea Community Association, will ask the following question:

“Regarding development in and around Farnham and traffic congestion at Shepherd and Flock:

- Are there plans to deal with this problem?
- If so, what is proposed?
- When are they likely to be implemented?

Development in and around Farnham is currently planned to provide over seven thousand new homes adding at least another ten thousand vehicles on to the local road network. In addition, any plan to pedestrianize Farnham town centre will inevitably increase traffic around the perimeter of the town, particularly through Hale and down to the A325.

One of the most congested pinch points is the junction of the A31/A325/B3208 feeding on to the Shepherd and Flock roundabout. This can only get worse as the new homes are occupied and the town centre proposals take effect. The continued expansion of employment and retail space around Farnborough airfield will also increase the traffic on the A325.

The current road layout and signage does not support the efficient flow of traffic through this area. Ideally an additional lane is required between the B3208 roundabout and the Shepherd and Flock.

Nothing short of a Western Bypass is likely to reduce traffic volumes in this area. We would very much appreciate an update on all of the above.”

Richard Cooper, SCC Principal Transport Development Officer, will give the following answer:

Future infrastructure improvements at the Shepherd and Flock roundabout will be identified by the county council as part of the Farnham Infrastructure Programme, as part of wider proposals to deliver infrastructure improvements to the A31 corridor through Farnham. The Farnham Infrastructure Programme is a joint venture between Surrey County Council, Waverley Borough Council and Farnham Town Council, who are working together to tackle issues such as congestion and air quality in Farnham and its surrounding areas. Local liaison forums are being held over the next few months, which will provide an opportunity to share ideas and give feedback on the proposed infrastructure

changes. Further details can be found on the Farnham Town Council website <https://www.farnham.gov.uk/town-council/lf>

At this stage there are no specific proposals in place or time-frame for delivering improvements at the Shepherd and Flock roundabout, however key stakeholders and the Farnham community will be regularly updated on progress with this work through the Farnham Board and Local Liaison Forum

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SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE (WAVERLEY) 13 November 2020

AGENDA ITEM 7

WRITTEN MEMBER QUESTIONS

One Written Member Questions has been received from Cllr Jerry Hyman:

“Does the Committee accept the validity of the facts expressed by businesses and residents (as emboldened below) and that we must in all reasonableness remove the Farnham Covid road measures immediately?”

I attended a Farnham Local Liaison Forum Zoom Meeting for Businesses on 2nd November as an Observer, at which all of the local entrepreneurs attending expressed deep concern regarding the severe impact on independent retailers being caused by the roadspace reallocation Covid-19 measures. Their message represented the views of the many retailers to whom they had spoken, including Farnham’s established ‘Shop Alert’ group, and echoed the views of the vast majority of residents and businesses in the many ‘traffic congestion’ posts that seem to have dominated the popular local Facebook and ‘Nextdoor’ social media forums over the past few months.

The congestion is preventing shoppers from visiting Farnham and is shifting traffic to the Upper Hale Road, to the Dora’s Green Lane and Crondall Lane cut-through, and to south Farnham residential rat-runs - which residents have always been promised we will not do! Emergency vehicles are regularly experiencing severe delays due to gridlock. Everyone wants better pedestrian conditions in the town centre, but most people have long recognised that alternative routes must be provided first.

The businesses requested that Surrey allow them the best chance of surviving and recovering from the pandemic’s impacts by ordering the immediate removal of the planters and cones.

Producing LLF leaflets with the headline of “Farnham is Open for Business”, while at the same time causing unacceptable congestion by removing road capacity, for no real benefit, is just self-contradictory, and it’s causing unnecessary suffering for our businesses and residents. If we really care then we must listen and act accordingly. Unfortunately the businesses’ representations were dismissed lightly by the LLF Chairman with a cursory response of “*That’s a view, there are lots of other views*”, and were further dismissed by Surrey’s project manager as being “*blinkered*”. Apart from claims that some unnamed people like the flowers, there was no good reason given as to why the restrictions should not be removed.

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I can attest to the veracity of those businesses' position, having myself sought the views of numerous residents and businesses, and so must urge members to appreciate that the common understanding is that **the current retention of the Covid road system is based upon two false premises, i.e. that 'we have no choice' and that 'the benefits outweigh any negative impacts'**. In fact, **it is our choice, and there are no real benefits**. Understandably, our intelligence and/or ulterior motives are in question.

I ask that you give careful consideration to the facts:

Firstly, **the system was put in place as a 3-month trial, to compensate for narrow pavements, in order to enable queuing outside shops and to allow pedestrians to pass each other**. We've since learned that the **scientists now accept that there is very little risk of contracting the virus outdoors, in passing**, and that common sense says that **any people who are afraid to walk past each other in the open air are certainly not going to risk entering shops**. And in practice we've seen that **few people use the extra 'pavement' space** and that **there have been precious few problems, if any, from queuing outside shops**.

Secondly, **the Covid system does not actually cover the places where narrow pavements are an issue, which are:**

- **in Downing Street, at the top, and at the bottom by the Chemists'; and**
- **in The Borough, outside the Queen's Head at the bus stops, and along from WH Smith's to the Royal Deer junction.**

In fact **we have cones and planters everywhere except the places where they might genuinely be considered necessary; and we can't put them in those places**, as they would prevent HGVs negotiating the junctions (as they do at the Castle Street/The Borough junction). Hence **the system is of no real benefit** and so is **not fit for purpose**. We could instead put simple pedestrian one-way-priority systems in those places, as other towns have, with pavement-widening retained where it doesn't restrict road capacity (e.g. outside Argos). We can then advertise boldly and widely that we've opened Farnham up for business.

Thirdly, **the narrowed roads make it difficult for HGVs to get through, causing regular blocking back**, and with the drastic reduction in shoppers caused by the gridlock it almost seems as though we're overrun by lorries, when in reality **Atkins have reported that there has been little if any increase in the number of HGVs passing through**. The HGV 'problem' has been **caused by the Covid system**, and the solution is blindingly obvious to most people: Remove the cause of the problem.

Fourthly and finally, if the Farnham Infrastructure Programme's 'promise' of £250 million of roads projects to enable pedestrianisation of the town centre is genuine, then logically **we must all accept that the enabling works MUST come first, as any other delivery programme can only be seen as disingenuous.**"

Frank Apicella, SCC Area Highway Manager (South West), will give the following answer:

This temporary scheme in Farnham town centre was implemented one day ahead of the official opening shops on Friday 12th June, in accordance with the new government suggested social distancing rules.

This was the first scheme of this nature to be introduced in the county, The Local MP and the Leaders of all three authorities have been involved in the evolution of project. Working closely with FTC, planters were also subsequently introduced, as the project on site advanced. Additionally, an advisory HGV & 20mph speed limit were introduced in the town centre. A ban on turning was also introduced together with NO entry from Castle Street into Park Row.

The County Council together with the Waverley BC and Farnham TC are very much aware of the varying views in connection with this social distancing scheme, through numerous meetings with councillors, and the business community, together with comments received.

Below is a joint statement provided by Surrey County Council leader Tim Oliver and Farnham Town Council leader John Neale confirming that the barriers would be replaced with planters, and the scheme managed by the town council going forward.

"Farnham Town Council and Surrey County Council (SCC) met on September 9 to review the Covid-19 pavement widening measures that have been in place in Farnham town centre since June.

These measures were put in place, at short notice, to respond to government guidelines for creating wider pavements in town centres, in order to assist in social distancing and queuing outside shops.

Whilst the Farnham scheme meets these objectives as best it can, we are conscious of the downsides of the current arrangement. Feedback from the community has told us that the scheme is unsightly and off-putting to our residents and visitors. Therefore, it's not giving the full benefits we want the scheme to deliver.

The traffic problems recently seen in the town centre have been compounded by the unavoidable roadworks that were brought forward to the, expected, quieter period caused by the pandemic.

With this experience behind us, and being mindful of the likely need to maintain effective social distancing measures into 2021, the councils have now agreed to change the scheme immediately.

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From 8pm on Friday, September 11, SCC as the highways authority, will be removing the existing barriers and we will be reconfiguring the scheme with an emphasis on using the planters to define the wider pavements.

The planters will be supplemented with some much less obtrusive temporary kerbstones and posts to ensure that vehicles are properly separated from pedestrians.

This arrangement will also make it easier for people to cross the roads without being confronted by barriers. Until the kerbstones can be installed, the separation will be defined by traffic cones.

Whilst the scheme is continued, it will in future be managed by the town council on behalf of SCC, which will ensure that any problems can be resolved quickly.

As with all COVID responses at government and local authority levels, we have to be prepared to respond and adapt according to any new factors that arise. We hope that Farnham people will understand what we are doing here and support the councils.

We are continuously listening to both our community and to our local businesses when we decide the way forward."

As the above clearly demonstrates, the project has changed and evolved to suit the needs and requirements of all users. Mobile Vehicle Actuated Signs were also introduced following discussions, to further enhance the message on the approaches to the Town Centre.

Following conversations with local councillors and the town council, we have commissioned WSP consultants to undertake an independent review of the scheme to review the affects the scheme has had on traffic volumes, congestion and pedestrian flows. We anticipate that this initial report will be available at the end of the month for consideration by Farnham Infrastructure Board. This technical note will draw evidence led conclusions as to the impacts of the scheme, looking at travel time reliability through the town during the schemes existence as well as data on footfall.

Finally, following the meeting mentioned above held on the 9th September, it was agreed to remove the metal barriers and replace them with a less intrusive delineator between the traffic and pedestrians. Whilst the barriers were initially removed the agreed temporary kerbs subsequently ordered with posts to act as segregation, with a more aesthetically pleasing profile. Surrey County Council propose to install these temporary kerbs next week, and carry out a full evaluation of the scheme with clear and transparent outcomes of the study.