

Farnham Board Minutes

Date & Time:	19 Mar 2021, 10:00-11:30
Venue:	Video Conferencing - Zoom
Chair:	Cllr Tim Oliver
In attendance:	Cllr Wyatt Ramsdale, Cllr Stephen Spence, Cllr Andy MacLeod, Cllr John Ward, Cllr Paul Follows, Cllr John Neale, Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Cllr Matt Furniss, Tom Horwood, Zac Ellwood, Chris Tunstall, Paula Gough, Iain Lynch, Ben Funning, Jonathan Foster-Clark, Lee Parker, Simon Duke, Flora Holmes (Sec)
Observers	Fiona Cameron, Peter Burch, Richard Nelson, Sachio Baig, Veronika Moore, Steve Howard, Yasmin Ahmed
Apologies	

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1	<p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted this will be Flora Holmes' last meeting and Yasmin Ahmed will be taking over as sec going forward. The Chair also noted Chris Tunstall is still with us and will be until the summer but will be focusing on the quick wins, with Simon Duke having now taken over as programme director.</p>
2	<p>Minutes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from Last Board</p> <p>No amendments were suggested, minutes approved.</p>
3	<p>Questions and Queries</p> <p>There were no questions or queries for this Board.</p>
4	<p>Optimised Infrastructure Plan Update</p> <p>Simon Duke introduced the item, noting it was an early opportunity to engage with people around Farnham on the Optimised Infrastructure Plan (OIP). He said they'd gone out slightly earlier than they would usually but they wanted feedback to shape the details. He said although they hadn't achieved the volume of responses Ben was hoping for, the quality of responses were fantastic and will help to take it forwards. Ben Funing will do some studies to see how they can engage further with young people.</p> <p>Ben Funning went through the findings of the consultation. He said they had 746 respondents to the questionnaire, 28% spending most of their time in central Farnham. Of the respondents, 51% travel by car, and 36% by foot. 26% of respondents were in full time employment, and 28% retired. In terms of Instagram engagement, they had received 5,859</p>

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clicks on polls. In terms of age of respondents, the most interactions were had with those aged 45-74. Most respondents were male.

Ben Funning noted that due to lockdown, the methods of engagement were constrained, so a lot of work was done via Facebook and Instagram. He noted that younger people are a known 'hard to reach' group that don't engage with traditional questionnaires, hence the attempts to engage with them via other ways such as Instagram polls.

Cllr Paul Follows noted that the demographics that use Facebook has got older over time, so it's not a medium that will target young people. He said those that use Instagram are slightly less old, but there are other mediums to be used. Simon Duke noted they're looking into this. Paula Gough said they're doing school engagement as well, and will use that route to engage with the parent group as well. She said they're also intending to hold a session with the university to reach that age group.

Simon Duke noted that the responses received were largely positive, with the exception of the north Farnham proposals and the impacts of pedestrianisation. Overall, there was about 42% positive, 24% neutral, 33% negative. He said more work needs to be done around the north Farnham proposals. Responses to the south Farnham proposals were largely positive (53.7%), with 24.8% neutral, and 21.6% negative. There were similar figures for the A31 corridor – 51% positive, 26% negative, and 23% neutral.

Ben Funning outlined the responses to the Instagram polls. He said the questions were slightly different given the constraints of Instagram polls. 73.82% said they valued walking over driving, 26.18% said they prefer driving. 76.43% said they wanted more dedicated cycle lanes, 23.57% said they didn't. Ben noted the poll will be used as a temperature check rather than a detailed consultation response.

John Neale gave feedback on the town council meeting. He said the Council meeting was on Wednesday night (17/03), and the council came to a conclusion on what they wanted for the town centre. He said they produced a town council response to the consultation that they hope to release early next week. The outcome of the meeting was that the town council would like to have a clear objective to create a pedestrianised town centre, as soon as is practical, based on a carefully phased plan. They would also like to see castle street reimaged as the main public space in the town centre. TO asked for clarity on 'pedestrianised town centre' and John Neale said that they honed in on west street from where the old post office was towards the borough, the borough itself, the bottom end of castle street, all of downing street, east street up to the delivery road (threadneedle street), and an option for consideration as to whether we would include part of south street, although this might come later.

John Neale noted they discussed having some sort of consolidated delivery van going around the town centre, so that shops that are having relatively lightweight deliveries can get them offloaded from a bigger van onto something else. He said they suggested a limited number of buses, some sort of shuttle delivery service, maybe cycles and some sort of other delivery facilities. Bus services would be focused on providing connectivity between the town centre and communities.

Jeremy Hunt saluted the leadership in getting that support from the town council, noting this is not an easy thing. He asked Chris Tunstall about the traffic impact of pedestrianisation proposals, and asked what the timescale is for getting traffic modelling done to be able to show people the data in response to their concerns. Chris confirmed that this would be done over the next few months so that the Board would have it for their next meeting in June. Jeremy Hunt also noted that Cllrs Stephen Spence and Wyatt Ramsdale were standing down at the forthcoming election and saluted them for their work – Wyatt with his support for the Wrecclesham work that has been vital, and Stephen for his bipartisan work on the programme.

John Neale continued, noting that the council is very keen to retain the car parks because they will be able to accommodate in and out traffic for those that want to come into the

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neighbourhood by car. Secondly, the council wants to ensure that active travel routes are improved for cycling and walking. He said the Park and Ride is not being warmed to, unless it's a location somewhere out of the town centre for visitors or commuters, but it's not seen as an alternative to allowing people continued access to the town centre by car. He said freight consolidation is support in principle, assuming it's needed.

On neighbourhood issues, John Neale said that they see improved bus services as the only way to encourage much more use of public transport. He said in conjunction with this that they support the idea of a public transport hub or hubs. He raised concern about the neighbourhood highway improvements in Wrecchlesham and the Heath End areas, and concern about the growth of traffic caused by housing developments around the area.

The Chair asked if there was anything to highlight that the OIP hasn't addressed. John Neale said they talked about traffic calming and enforcement to try and transform the areas. He said on the major road network, there are two points to be made: first that they feel there hasn't been much response from the programme team to various ideas from local people. Second, he raised concern about the level crossing problems. Finally, John Neale noted that the Town council is very keen to see progress on the Wrecchlesham relief road or possible western bypass.

The Chair said that feedback will be taken on board, along with other responses, then the OIP will be refined and brought back to the next meeting.

Cllr Andy Macleod raised a question over how to convince people of outlying areas what the effect on them would be on the pedestrianisation of the town centre, and how would they get into town. He said an answer would be through mitigation, and making it clear to people that the work is happening in stages.

Cllr Wyatt Ramsdale asked about the potential link between the Hart car park and Castle street, and if people have been convinced that they would need to travel around town rather than across to get around the town.

Jeremy Hunt asked about the publication of the final plan and if it will include proper traffic studies that will back up the proposals.

Chris Tunstall said the principle they're looking at is not moving a problem to just another area. They're looking at mitigation first, providing other solutions for people. To Jeremy's point, he said PJA consultants are working with Atkins who are modelling specialists. Models are awkward to conduct due to Covid-19 but he said they do have a validated model that they're using. He emphasised though that modelling is an art, not a science.

John Neale commented on Cllr Ramsdale's point he said if they do manage to get people to do more on buses and active travel, then that should be removing a fair amount of the vehicle traffic. The Chair added that the County Council is very committed to investing in public transport, and are shortly to pilot a scheme in Mole Valley for an on demand bus service. There will be a workshop for the board in May to go through the next iteration of the OIP to take on board that feedback and feed in to the forward work plan.

5 Quick Wins Project Update

Chris Tunstall introduced the item, noting it was felt to be beneficial to put more effort into the quick wins. He said at the moment the major elements are: HGVs, speed, and road reclassification. Chris noted the great news that £2m has been allocated to the Quick Wins Project over the next year. This is alongside other revenue and capital money for managing the programme and feasibility studies as well.

Chris said they are taking on board a number of issues raised at the LLFs, for example the level crossing issue. On this, there have been conversations with network rail. Whilst the cost

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of changing the level crossing is phenomenal, they are talking to network rail about reducing the time that the crossing is down before and after the train passes.

He said they're also looking at cycle storage and narrow footpaths. He said the team are looking to put a programme of works together, tying it into a pro forma that is complementary with the wider programme so that changes don't have to be made once permanent projects are installed. He said this can be brought back to the next meeting.

Cllr Stephen Spence asked about HGVs, saying there is a need to raise with residents that enforcement is taking place. He said that people are asking about other roads not on the list, and inquired about the mechanism for managing these requests. Cllr Wyatt Ramsdale asked about further detail on what's happening on the quick wins, suggesting a meeting with Chris Tunstall and those that are facing questions from residents. **Chris agreed to a meeting as Wyatt suggested once they had compiled a list.**

Jonathan Foster-Clark spoke about HGV restrictions. He said an informal consultation has been undertaken with Surrey Police, Highways England, and Hampshire County Council. Atkins have produced the statement of reasons required for the statutory consultation that is now live and will take place over the next four weeks until 16 April. The adjacent highways authority HCC, Highways England and the police are aware and will be contributing. **Jonathan asked that community leaders make residents aware this is taking place.**

Following the completion of consultation, the team will be drawing on the responses and from that prepare for implementation. Provided there are no negative responses from the consultation, implementation of the signage will take place in May and June, with the intention that it's legally enforceable from June onwards. Jonathan Foster-Clark said that they are hoping that work done previously will help to smooth this path. Additionally, they have had some issues in terms of the perspectives of the police with regards to the enforceability of these proposals, and the team will be working with the police to discuss that and develop a workable approach moving forward.

Jonathan Foster-Clark added that clear signage, well in advance of Farnham will make it clear to Farnham that there is this weight restriction. He said they will be working with the traffic management team to take this work forward.

On speed restrictions, Jonathan Foster-Clark noted that proposals had been brought to the previous meeting. He said there was a meeting the day before with County Council officers and with Surrey Police to work through the proposals and identify the next steps. The next tasks that are needed to take this forward have been scoped, and the programme is being refined in response. He said important issues were raised in terms of delivering measures for certain parts of the town. He noted an update will be brought to the next board meeting. An issue was raised that previous TROs hadn't been enacted, so the legal state of play is being established.

Cllr Ramsdale asked to what extent the use of volunteers had been explored for enforcement. Jonathan Foster-Clark said there will have to be different levels of response. Chris Tunstall said they will be working with the Town Council on this, the County Council has already put additional support into trading standards to do that as well. Additionally, they've asked DfT when they are looking to roll out civil traffic violations, which would allow cameras to identify whether vehicles had come straight through.

On road reclassification, Chris Tunstall noted it was agreed at the last meeting that this would be looked at. Chris noted the issue of perception that sat navs send people onto A-roads, in that they actually work on a number of things including speed and distance, and often offered a choice of routes. As such it was not straight forward to assume that sat navs automatically default onto A-roads. He noted that when they review the classified road network, which will be discussed at the next meeting, continuity in the A-roads must be

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	<p>assured. He noted this was also considered in 2015 and was decided against. However he noted the Board was now looking at a much larger programme of work.</p> <p>Chris Tunstall also noted concerns that were raised about quarries on Beacon Hill and HGVs running through the Upper Hale road. He emphasised that with regard to the currently advertised Order HGV access only means that, it does not mean access to another road elsewhere. So Upper Hale road is included in the ban, and any vehicles coming from Beacon Hill will not be able to use that road. He added that speed is also a quick win on Upper Hale road as well, and the area highways office are looking at what maintenance is required. He noted that footways are a bit harder, but quick wins can be achieved where there are areas of overgrown footway.</p> <p>The Chair noted lots of concerns and issues are being raised in North Farnham and it's essential they are being noted. Chris confirmed they were.</p>
6	<p>Standing Items</p> <p>Chris Tunstall gave an update on the Brightwells development, noting that a scheme had been agreed that minimised the amount of work in the town centre. He said that full access will be retained and that the balance of what would have been spent there as a S278 would be taken back as a lump sum to be spent as soon as it can be when it is clear re the implications of the OIP proposals.</p> <p>Cllr Macleod noted Brightwells came up at a meeting last night, and concern has been raised over the perceived success of the project. Access to Brightwells is not a quick win but it has to be done quickly.</p> <p>On active travel, Chris noted that SCC bid more than their allocation on the government's active travel tranche 2 of funding, and that DfT have only confirmed the original allocation. He said at the moment all schemes were out to consultation which will be concluded in April. A report detailing this will be coming to SCC Cabinet at the end of the month. The agreed schemes will need to be completed by the end of the next financial year end of March 2022.</p>
7	<p>Progress Update</p> <p>Paula Gough noted a paper has been submitted to the board with an outline draft programme of the next phases the team are expecting to achieve. She said they are going to be working with Jonathan and colleagues to develop a more robust cost profile for the Programme. She said at the next meeting it will become clearer how wider major programme interventions will sit alongside the town centre plans. This won't be finalised until all the comments raised on the OIP process are absorbed. Paula however confirmed that the walking and cycling network work will be brought forward.</p> <p>Paula noted a renewed, enhanced and updated business case will be brought forward for the programme. In Wrecchlesham, she said they are looking at a strategic case for Wrecchlesham to take a package of measures forward to the area, including the consideration of the western bypass.</p> <p>Finally, Paula said the team are producing a clear critical path for the programme around how the various key milestones will be met in the next 5-10 years. She said the programme was attached to the annex of the paper submitted with the programmes.</p>
8	<p>Local Liaison Forum Update</p>

