

Farnham Infrastructure Programme

Farnham Board Meeting

AGENDA ITEM 05

DATE: 24 SEPTEMBER 2021

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REPORT OF: TIM OLIVER – BOARD CHAIR

LEAD OFFICER: SIMON DUKE – PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: FARNHAM A31 CORRIDOR UPDATE

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

To note the current progress with the Farnham A31 Corridor project.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Notes the progress update on the Farnham A31 Corridor project.
2. Approves in principle the submission of the Farnham A31 Corridor Strategic Outline Business Case to the Department for Transport in November 2021, subject to the consultation and review measures outline below.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To provide Board Members with an update on the Farnham A31 Corridor project and support the development of the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) due to be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in November 2021.

DETAILS:

PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Overall, the Farnham A31 Corridor project remains on schedule, with activity progressing in period in line with expectation leading up to submission of the SOBC to the DfT in November 2021.

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

2. In July 2021, the geographical scope of the project was extended from the Hickley's Corner / Firgrove Hill area to a wider area encompassing the Coxbridge roundabout to the west and the Shepherd and Flock roundabout to the east, following consultation with the DfT.

OBJECTIVE SETTING AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE DfT

3. The project objectives were developed in July 2021 and refined following engagement with the DfT. The project objectives are as follows:
 - Ease congestion and delays on the A31 and at key junctions.
 - Improve road safety
 - Improve the transport network with prioritisation of public transport
 - Improve walking and cycling at the Hickley's Corner junction and connections to/and from Farnham Town Centre
 - Resolve community severance by improving connectivity across Farnham
 - Reduce the impacts of the level crossing
 - Facilitate development in Farnham
 - Improve sub-regional movement along the A31 corridor
 - Address air quality issues in Farnham

SCHEME INTERDEPENDENCIES

4. The Farnham A31 Corridor project has direct interdependencies with Project 2 (Town Centre and associated active travel programme), as well as the Station area and related development. Project 1 (Short- and Medium-term interventions) includes proposals put forward by stakeholders for the area covered by the Farnham A31 Corridor project, including: cycle lanes along the A31, greening of the A31 corridor, and requests to reduce the downtime of the level crossing barriers at Farnham Station.

BUSINESS CASE DOCUMENTATION

5. The SOBC to be submitted in quarter 4 of 2021 will comprise of the following documents:
 - Option Assessment Report (OAR)
 - Appraisal Specification Report (ASR)
 - Strategic Outline business Case (SOBC)
 - Local Model Validation Report (LMVR) for the PARAMICS model
 - Modelling and Appraisal Report
 - Appraisal Toolkit

DRAFT LONG LIST AND OPTIONEERING APPROACH

6. The starting point for optioneering was a draft 'longlist' of eighteen interventions put forward by the Programme Team, partners and stakeholders since 2004. The 'longlist' of interventions has been sifted against five key criteria:
 - Eligibility for funding stream

- Compatibility with other Town Centre measures
- Deliverability
- Major Road Network/Large Local Majors objectives
- Scheme objectives

SHORTLISTED INTERVENTIONS

7. As a result of the sifting exercise and discussions with the DfT, the following junctions have been shortlisted for design development and supplementing with complementary measures:
 - A31 Coxbridge roundabout – to include improvements to vehicular circulation and crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists
 - A31 Hickley's Corner and Firgrove Hill area – to include improved connection for walking and cycling between the Station area and Farnham Town Centre and measures to provide additional capacity on the A31, along with improvements to the Station approach.
 - A31 Shepherd and Flock roundabout – to include improvements to vehicular circulation and crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists
8. Any junction designs will be evaluated against their respective performance in delivering against the project objectives, deliverability / land take and cost, alongside consultation with the Programme Team and partners. The SOBC to be submitted in November 2021 will contain interventions for the corridor sifted into upto three packages.

APPROACH TO DESIGN

9. Outline designs are being developed through August and September 2021, focussing in particular on horizontal / vertical alignments, and potential land take based on Ordnance Survey base mapping, highway boundary information, and some limited levels information. The scope for a topographical survey to provide more information on levels is currently being developed, as is a 'red line' boundary to form the basis of a land ownership search.

APPROACH TO FORECASTING AND MODELLING

10. A forecast year of 2033 has been adopted based on consultation with Surrey County Council Officers and the DfT. Forecasting taking account of committed or near-certain employment and housing schemes has been undertaken based on the TEMPRO software which accounts for changes in GDP, employment, and other factors like car ownership, as well as an 'Uncertainty Log' of local schemes and developments agreed with Waverley Borough Council.
11. Testing of the agreed shortlisted interventions will commence in September 2021, using a reviewed and refined version of the Farnham PARAMICS micro-simulation model. The modifications and adjustments made to the PARAMICS model to improve the accuracy of its predictions in and around the A31 corridor will be documented in the LMVR.
12. The performance of the shortlisted interventions will be compared against the performance of a 'do minimum' scenario, which represents the case without the Farnham A31 Corridor project, during September and October 2021 using the PARAMICS model. The 'do minimum' scenario will include an option for Farnham

Town Centre in which both Castle Street and Downing Street are pedestrianised as this option is predicted to displace the greatest volume of traffic from the town centre to the A31 corridor.

NEXT STEPS

13. The next steps include:

- Consultation with the Programme Team, partners and major stakeholders on the shortlisted options
- Completion and refinement of the outline design of the shortlisted interventions
- Commencement and completion of the PARAMICs modelling of the interventions, including a comparison of their performance against that of the 'do minimum' for a forecast year of 2033.
- Circulation for comments to Programme Team, partners and major stakeholders
- Refinement of the OAR based on feedback
- Further development of the SOBC based on feedback
- Sharing of details of the shortlisted options with stakeholders before submission of the SOBC
- Completion of the full documentation and submission of the SOBC in November 2021

CONSULTATION:

14. There has been no public consultation to-date, and none is planned before submission of the SOBC to the DfT in November 2021, although details on the concept options developed so far will be shared with the Programme Team, partners and major stakeholders in late September and October 2021.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

15. The Board has no Statutory powers and as such any decisions requiring approval by the responsible Authorities, in this case Surrey County Council, will have individual risk assessments.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

16. The cost of the works will be identified through estimation work once three shortlisted options have been identified. The estimated costs of the options will be presented in the financial case of the SOBC.

SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY

17. There are no other implications in respect of this Report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER

18. The Board has no executive powers. Any decisions made would require Surrey County Council to follow its own legal advice and its approval procedures.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY

19. As part of Surrey County Council's reporting requirements, an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken for the Farnham Infrastructure Programme,

and subsequently approved by the Programme Team at the September Programme Board.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

20. There are no other implications in respect of this Report.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

21. The SOBC and option designs will be worked up in more detail and progress reports brought back to the Board. The design concepts will be shared with the Programme Team, partners and major stakeholders in September and October 2021 before the SOBC is submitted to the DfT.

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Annexes: None.

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