

Farnham Board Minutes

Date & Time:	22 December 2021, 10:00-11:30
Venue:	Zoom
Chair:	Cllr Tim Oliver
In attendance:	Cllr Michaela Martin, Cllr Catherine Powell, Cllr Andy MacLeod, Cllr Paul Follows, Cllr Peter Clark, Cllr John Neale, Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP.
Observers:	Chris Greenwood, Alex Pye, Tom Horwood, Zac Ellwood, Iain Lynch, Peter Burch, Yasmin Ahmed, Jonathan Foster-Clark, Elaine Martin
Apologies:	

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1	<p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone and went through general housekeeping for the meeting and encouraged members to continue to push the message around vaccinations, face coverings and social distancing measures as the case of coronavirus continue to rise. He stressed the impact these cases will have on the NHS.</p>
2	<p>Minutes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from Last Board</p> <p>The Chair flagged that Paula Gough's name had been misspelled in the minutes. Baring this minor change, the minutes were approved.</p>
3	<p>Short and Medium-Term Interventions update</p> <p>Elaine Martin gave an update on project one stating that the signage has now been installed for the rerouting of the HGVS and the traffic regulation orders are now active. Progress is being made with National Highways on the installation of signage on the M3. The team is also working with the developer of the proposed Redfield Lane roundabout to have signage included within their development site.</p> <p>With regards to the reclassification of the A325, this is now been managed by the Department of Transport and the signs and road markings have been completed on site. The reclassification of East and West Street has been reported to Google Maps</p> <p>The Wayfinding Strategy report has been updated following feedback from our partners and the detailed designs now commenced based on the agreed placement strategy.</p> <p>The 20 mph zones and speed restrictions consultation started on the 25th concluding on the 3rd January next year.</p> <p>The medium term interventions pipeline of schemes has now been moderated based on the feedback provided in advance of and at the September board. A grouping and consolidation exercise is now being carried out as well as cost assessments and initial site surveys.</p> <p>Regarding project two; a workshop was held with members and we looked at Downing St, West St, Castle Street, South St, Victoria Road and Union Rd. The key themes emerging from the workshop across all the areas were provision of two way streets, better provision for</p>

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	<p>pedestrians including widening and improved crossings, retention versus reallocation of the car parks away from the town centre. The team has started to engage with architects and started to develop a design scope for the initial options.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Town Centre and LCWIP update</p> <p>Elaine Martin presented the update stating that the next phase of the LCWIP has started following an initial study on the Optimised Infrastructure Plan (OIP); a long list of schemes have been developed.</p> <p>The next step to be taken for the town centre will be a feasibility study, a public consultation on the town centre and corridor provisionally planned for Summer 2022 and an aspirational public vote element mentioned at previous board meetings.</p> <p>Cllr Catherine Powell flagged that signage had not yet been put up on the A30/A331 roundabout which is an area of concern because that links with the signage on the M3 for the primary route.</p> <p>ACTION: Alex Pye responded that he would follow this up with Kier and come back to Cllr Powell with an update.</p> <p>She also asked what the strategy would be for the workshops taking place in the summer and how councillors will be involved. Elaine stated that workshops will take place every fortnight engaging with officers first and then members second.</p> <p>Cllr John Neale commented that the engagement between the town council and SCC could be better; the town council has a lot of influence with local organisations and could help the programme more with better partnership working.</p> <p>He also mentioned that the papers for this meeting state that the A325 rerouting has changed while he has found that the signage still signposts the route through town.</p> <p>Cllr Neale raised several concerns about Castle street including that the Town Council feels that the 20mph scheme should move further up Castle Hill that would improve health and safety and slow the traffic down before it got to Castle Street. He also expressed concerned about any street furniture additions there due to nearby listed buildings and structures. He gave further feedback from the Town Council stating a preference for painted rounders as opposed to speed humps. He recommended a carriageway restriction to strengthen the 20mph zone.</p> <p>Finally, he flagged that the Town Council councillors would like to see the 20mph scheme go to the A31 junction, futher up on the upper Hale area and further east to Queens Road. He concluded with the ask to see more school vicinity areas on the 20mph schemes.</p> <p>ACTION: The Chair thanked Cllr Neale for his comments and stated that Elaine and Simon Duke would pick them up as part of the feedback to the consultation.</p> <p>Jeremy Hunt MP took the opportunity to thank the team and expressed his personal opinion to say that it would be fantastic for Farnham to be a 20mph town for the reduction in pollution and for a simple message to encourage behaviour change. He also flagged that having up to date traffic modelling to inform the consultation would be helpful to express the changing traffic patterns we expect to see and he also strongly advocated for a public consultation trying to get everyone in Farnham’s view about what is being proposed.</p> <p>Simon Duke responded around traffic modelling to say that the model is being built, led by Will Brians as SCC’s Chief Traffic Engineer, and testing scenarios will start from early next</p>

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	<p>year. So information to support those intelligence led decisions will be available for the public consultation for next year.</p> <p>Cllr Catherine Powell raised concerns around the LCWIP route proposed to Farnham Park, particularly the bottom end that comes down into Scholar's Way. A planning application has come in for an alternative route through the Hawthorns which has now made this a time bound issues. Waverly officers are aware of this and she wanted to flag to SCC officers. She also mentioned that the feasibility study on this route and any potential impacts for the Hawthorns development – which she pointed out is not included in the Farnham Neighbourhood Plans and that she would not support – is being prioritised.</p> <p>Cllr Peter Clark spoke on his approval for the plans around the workshops and engagement strategy.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Farnham A31 Corridor update</p> <p>Elaine Martin gave some background on this item as the Strategic Outline Business Case has now been submitted. Following on from discussion from September, discussions have been had with the Department of Transport and instead of it just being Hickleys Corner junction, it's actually being extended as a corridor approach from Shepherd and Flock roundabout including Water Lane through Hickleys Corner to the Cox Bridge roundabout.</p> <p>Issues that have been identified in this area are; traffic queuing, pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, air quality and active transport modes being less attractive than the private car. Improvements are then focussed around, easing congestion and delays, creation of transport network with prioritisation of the public transport, increasing cycling conditions and connections, facilitating development in Farnham and the A30 and A325 corridors to provide greater network resilience between the A3 and M3.</p> <p>The Strategic Outline Business Case that was approved at the September Board was submitted in November and served as a starting point with the Department for Transport for discussions and it's designed to secure a place in the SE scheme pipeline. The business case encompasses management, strategic, financial, commercial and economic dimensions and also has a local monitor model validation report, forecast traffic modelling and an option assessment.</p> <p>Next steps are to continue ongoing discussions with Department of Transport (DfT), developing the scope for the outline business case which links the early review of time constraints surveys and continuing transport modelling from Farnham and the wider area.</p> <p>Initial options have been identified and the team have done some engineering feasibility on five cases. These were cross checked with our partners and submitted to the DfT.</p> <p>ACTION: Cllr Catherine Powell asked if it would be possible to create a visual that shows the outputs for the proposals that are in discussion with DfT and how they feed into the work on the town centre, particularly with the LCWIP. Elaine confirmed that this is being worked on.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Western Link Road and Wrecclesham Relief Road policy alignment</p> <p>A policy review was undertaken in terms of the bypass alignment with national, regional and local policies and it was found that neither road project, on their own merits, would align with current structure which encourages people to take more sustainable forms of travel. It is, therefore, questionable if either scheme when considered as a stand alone project would be able to secure funding at this time but it is recognised that the two schemes address different connectivity issues within Farnham. The team suggests that these are considered as a separate projects.</p>

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The decision that is needed from Farnham Board members is to consider the following options:

- A) To cease work and develop an investigate on the Wrecclesham Bypass to review this against any emerging national regional and local policies
- B) Carry out an initial cost and environmental feasibility work Wrecclesham Bypass and report the conclusions and options to the board
- C) Following traffic modelling outcomes for the wider area to look at opportunities and create a smaller package of measures for Wrecclesham that address the negative safety and environmental impacts and traffic.

On the western bypass before the programme again commits more resource, the options are to:

- A) Cease work to develop and investigate the Western Bypass but again periodically to review against any emerging national, regional and local policies to see if the positions changed
- B) Carry out an initial cost and environmental feasibility work on the Western Bypass and report the conclusions and options to board
- C) Following traffic modelling outcomes for the wider area to look at the opportunity to develop smaller packages of measures for Farnham town centre and north Farnham that address the negative safety and environmental impacts of the traffic.

The Chair commented that we have to be realistic at the moment that neither of these longer term projects would fit with the government's current policy and welcomed thoughts and comments from board members on the options.

Jeremy Hunt MP expressed concern that if we carry on exploring the possibility of a Western Bypass it will make the whole project extremely controversial environmentally and opted for option A. For the Wrecclesham Bypass, he opted for option B because it would be good to see if there's any possible way to make a Wrecclesham Bypass consistent with national objectives.

Cllr John Neale advised that the Town Council would still like to go ahead with both schemes and would opt for option B for both. If that is not possible for the Western Bypass, he asked that it still be kept on the list for SCC and Hampshire for potential future schemes for major highway improvements.

Cllr Catherine Powell reminded the board that the current route through the town is the A287 which could not be reclassified. 8,000 new houses are being built in close proximity to this area that will have a huge impact on the A287. Improving the pedestrian experience would be the best thing to do but it will displace traffic and create more congestion especially around the train station. She also pointed out that the Wrecclesham Bypass is completely independent of the town centre in terms of impact and also questioned the "strong support" for this bypass as there was not strong support at a Local Liaison Forum for South Farnham where even one of the councillors spoke against it.

Regarding the environmental impacts of the Western Bypass, she also mentioned that the current state of play already has massive environmental impacts. She advocated that the team stop considering these two schemes as separate issues and concluded that if one is unable to go ahead, both should cease so that the limited funds could be spent responsibly. She commented that the wording of option C was questionable.

The Chair asked if option C would be her preferred option on both if the wording was changed and she elaborated that the words "opportunity" and "smaller measures" were the issue. It should not be about looking for an opportunity to develop smaller packages it should be about a solution being found to integrate a set of packages associated with the town centre proposals and it should funded together otherwise we could end up with a situation

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where the town centre is funded and the measures outside of the town are not. The impact of that would be unfair to people.

Cllr Michaela Martin commented that until there's an option on the table to alleviate traffic through both Wrecclesham and Farnham, both of these studies need to be kept on table (option B for both). She stated that work would need to be done to carry out initial cost and visibility work on the Wrecclesham Bypass as well as the Western relief road and agreed with Cllr Powell that if pedestrianisation is to take place, congestion will need to be alleviated.

Cllr Andy MacLeod commented that this was a highly emotive issue with the Western Bypass having been around for many years with the view that nothing can be done with the town centre without it. He mentioned that the distinction he sees between the two projects is that Wrecclesham Bypass is on the South East list for transport and the Western Bypass isn't. He also said he understood the motivation for the Wrecclesham Bypass as there were concerns about the safety of children on the bridge but noted that this isn't the only bridge in Surrey with this concern and suggested that a look for other measures could be had to mitigate these dangers.

He concluded that he could not make a definitive statement but recognised that without the Western Bypass, the town centre cannot be pedestrianised due to the impact of congestion. He advocated for it to not be taken off the table as a long term project and asked for Elaine and Simon's opinions as professionals. The Chair advised that the team would likely recommend the cessation of work to which Cllr MacLeod responded that their view should be taken into account.

Cllr Peter Clarke commented that the two schemes were vastly different in terms of the scale of upheaval. He mentioned a document that was sent out on the 5th December that was withdrawn; it painted a slightly different picture which favoured continuing work on the Wrecclesham Bypass and putting the Link Road on hold. He noted that pausing work on the Link Road would make it difficult to explain the Council's position and so thought further work on the link route would be worthwhile.

As a Waverly Councillor for Wrecclesham, he explained that the people in Wrecclesham live in fear due to the speed and volume of vehicles and also the constant strikes on the rail bridge. He noted that the Wrecclesham Bypass offers a firmer opportunity to secure funding and so he opted for option B for this scheme and would listen to the views of others for the decision on the Western Bypass.

Jeremy Hunt MP came back in and proposed a modified option B which allows the team to deprioritise funding those environmental sites but not take them off the table to find a compromise after hearing Cllrs Powell and MacLeod's input. This modified option would be for both the Wrecclesham Bypass and Western Bypass to continue feasibility and cost work on both projects but recognise that costs will have to be prioritised where they are most likely to get results in terms of national funding. Therefore, the project team can continue to prioritise their energy on the huge projects that we have still got in play to have a much clearer picture as to the impact on North Farnham and the town centre.

The Chair asked Simon Duke if options B & C could be conflated so that the environmental costing and feasibility work could be done at the same time as looking for other suitable measures. Simon confirmed that this could be done. Cllr Powell commented to say that this modified option would get her vote.

Zac Ellwood commented to opt for the modified option B and also mentioned that changing "smaller measures" to "localised measures" may invoke less emotion.

The Chair concluded that he would not be comfortable with taking either of the schemes off the table and noted that there seemed to be a consensus to combine options B & C.

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	<p>ACTION: Simon and Elaine will combine options B & C and will circulate it to the Board.</p>
7	<p>Overview of progress</p> <p>Elaine Martin gave a general overview of progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The OIP report was published and issued on the 4th October - Rerouting of the HGVs is complete but there are outstanding elements which need to be progressed by National Highways on the M3 - The A325 reclassification is complete however Elaine will take on Cllr Powell's comments - The wayfinding strategy is on target but there is a slight issue, the chairman will be speaking to suppliers – information provided by Iain Lynch was very helpful around using other routes with procurment - There may be a potential installation date for the 20mph zone which is the end of this year. More information will be provided once feedback has been received - Medium term interventions are on target - Town centre and LCWIP have been brought forward to 25th October from 28th January based on board feedback - Farnham A31 corridor is on target - Wrecclesham Bypass went for testing to align more closely with public expectation. <p>Key risks and issues are the cost plan, the public engagement outcomes, student engagement and the historic street layout.</p> <p>ACTION??? Cllr Catherine Powell asked that the North Farnham and South Farnham studies are also listed with nine projects as part of that workflow.</p> <p>Cllr John Neale asked how many of the earlier short and medium interventions are likely to go ahead. Elaine Martin responded that there is a list that has been graded but it will need to be consulted on at the officer and then member workshops in the New Year and so she is unable to comment on it now.</p>
8	<p>Questions and discussion</p> <p>Two question from Cllr George Hesse regarding proposals for the town centre scheme.</p> <p>Elaine responded that she would be able to give an update on the timeline for this to be implemented. Chris Greenwood commented that there was a timeline of 2025 for a town centre scheme incorporating Cllr Hesse's proposals.</p>
9	<p>Local Liaison Forum update</p> <p>Cllr John Neale gave an update from the last LLF stating that it wasn't as successful as previous meetings due to a lack of major announcements. This led to some criticism where they stated that the team could have given more feedback on some of the answers as engagement felt lacking.</p> <p>He mentioned that he and Cllr MacLeod haven't been involved in any preparation for the next meeting yet and that he would be keen to have a discussion with the team on that as soon as possible as the next meeting is due to take place in Jan/Feb.</p> <p>Cllr Andy MacLeod identified the need to address the idea in the town that there isn't enough consultation taking place. He also spoke about a lack of understanding around the timescales for the FIP.</p>



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	<p>Cllr Peter Clarke commented that it generally tends to be the same 40/50 people attending LLF meetings and it would be good to reach a wider audience.</p> <p>Cllr Paul Follows suggested refreshing the format of the meeting might help to reach a more diverse audience.</p> <p>Cllr Catherine Powell recommended a good workflow document to explain why things are being done in a particular order and why they take time, it will have a much better chance of getting people onside because they will understand the problem better.</p>
10	<p>AOB</p> <p>The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking the team and board members for their work this year and wished them a peaceful Christmas and Happy New Year.</p> <p>The Chair and Elaine Martin thanked Peter Burch his tireless work as this was his last board meeting today.</p> <p>The next meeting is 24 January 2022 and will be held at Farnham Town Council.</p>

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