

Farnham Infrastructure Programme

Farnham Board Meeting

AGENDA ITEM 09

DATE: 17 JUNE 2022

REPORT OF: TIM OLIVER – BOARD CHAIR

LEAD OFFICER: ELAINE MARTIN – PROGRAMME MANAGER

SUBJECT: TOWN CENTRE – REVIEW OF THE USE OF FLUSH PAVEMENTS

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

There have been requests from key stakeholders to review the possibility of using flush surfaces as part of design options for Farnham Town Centre, with the aspiration that this would lend itself to any potential pedestrianisation in the future.

A flush pavement means a level surface with minimal difference in height between the footway and the carriageway.

DETAILS:

Design advice for shared space schemes using flush surfaces

1. In September 2018 Ministers Nusrat Ghani MP and Kit Malthouse MP wrote to the Chief Executives of English local authorities to clarify the approach to 'shared space' schemes in the light of the Inclusive Transport Strategy and National Planning Policy Framework being published earlier that year.

[Ministerial letter regarding shared space: 28 September 2018](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682112/ministerial-letter-regarding-shared-space-28-september-2018.pdf)
(publishing.service.gov.uk)

2. In response to concerns raised about shared space, particularly navigability by visually impaired people, the Inclusive Transport Strategy asked local authorities to pause the introduction of new shared space schemes that feature a level surface, clarified as a design feature where the level difference between the footway and carriageway is removed.
3. The 'pause' was clarified as applying to schemes with relatively large demand for pedestrian and vehicular movement such as High Streets and town centres. The pause

was not intended to apply to streets within new residential areas, or existing residential streets with very low levels of traffic.

4. Additionally, features which complement the flush surface often included in a shared space scheme are often integral parts of other traffic management schemes. These include minimal use of traffic signs and other traffic management related street furniture, removing traffic signals, removing or modifying formal and informal crossings, raised side road entry treatments, continuous footways, table junction and shared use routes for pedestrian and cyclists. The use of these is not included in the request to pause level surface shared space schemes.
5. The guidance below on the use of tactile paving was issued in January 2022 by the Department for Transport (DfT). The use of tactile paving surfaces informs pedestrians who are visually impaired and others about their environment, including potential hazards and features in the road, as well as directional guidance. This guidance includes responses to some recommendations of research carried out as a commitment in the DfT's Inclusive Transport Strategy of 2018, and following engagement with disabled people, representative groups, and with practitioners. It outlines the importance of the use of tactile paving especially where the carriageway and footway are flush.

[Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/organisations/guidance-on-the-use-of-tactile-paving-surfaces)

6. The guidance references situations where a footway is dropped to the level of the carriageway or where the carriageway is raised to the level of the footway but generally only in the case of controlled and uncontrolled crossings including flat topped road humps or tables. It also implies for areas away from crossings as it is vital to ensure the visually impaired do not move into vehicle areas by creating a level difference of at least 25mm. It does also reference the use of tactile paving in certain situations for communicating hazards to visually impaired users.

Conclusion

7. Flush surfaces are only favoured where traffic flows are reduced to being very low and where spaces are dominated by high pedestrian activity, which is not currently the case in Farnham. While flush surfaces may be an option for other traffic management schemes, due to the current guidance on its suitability in locations with high levels of pedestrian and vehicular movement, and safety concerns raised as part of research and engagement carried out by DfT, it would not be suitable for implementation within Farnham at this time.
8. However, there is still the potential to have flush surfaces over relatively short distances for example, at crossing points. Whilst flush surfacing is desired by some key stakeholders, flush surfaces do not preclude pedestrianisation of Farnham Town Centre in the future. An example of this is Guildford High Street.
9. We are considering a suitable pallet for the materials to be used for the town centre project and we will engage with stakeholders to ensure that this meets with expectations and aspirations for the Town Centre. The detail around levels will be worked through during the detailed design stage and will also need to include engagement with visually and mobility impaired people to achieve the best balance of provision. However, we are intending to use lower than standard height kerbs to give the impression of a more pedestrian friendly and dominated space, except at bus stops where full height kerbs will be needed to assist boarding and alighting.

CONSULTATION:

10. There are no other implications in respect of this report. Public views on the options for the Town Centre will be sought as part of the summer 2022 consultation.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

9. 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

11. The cost and value for money in respect of the works will be identified within the Surrey County Council Report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY

12. As proposals are developed that require necessary Surrey County Council approval, individual S151 approvals will be sought.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER

13. 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

14. A Programme-level Equality Impact Assessment was carried out in August 2021. This was approved by the Programme Team at the September Programme Board and indicated that there are currently no substantive concerns associated with the Programme's proposals based upon the level of information available.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

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

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

16. Programme activity will continue in line with the decisions made by the Board.

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