



Farnham Board - meeting notes

16 June 2023



Minutes

Date and Time:	16 June 2023, 10:00-11:30
Venue:	Hybrid Meeting - Farnham Town Council Offices
Chair:	Cllr Tim Oliver
In attendance:	Cllr Michaela Martin, Cllr Catherine Powell, Cllr Andy MacLeod, Cllr Peter Clark, Cllr David Beaman, Cllr John Ward, Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Observers:	<p>SCC – Antoinette Antoine, David Stempffer, Elaine Martin, Katie Ludvigsen Anna Miller, Mohammed Ali, Ben Funning, Duncan Knox, Gemma Joyner, Neil McClure, William Bryans</p> <p>WBC - Dawn Hudd</p> <p>FTC - Iain Lynch</p> <p>Atkins - Chris Greenwood, Alex Pye, Nii Doodoo, Richard Franklin</p> <p>Richard Nelson</p>
Apologies:	Tom Horwood (WBC), Cllr Matt Furniss

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1	<p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were noted from Tom Horwood and Cllr Matt Furniss.</p>
2	<p>Actions and minutes from the last meeting</p> <p>Minutes of the previous meeting 24 March 2023 have previously been circulated and were agreed.</p> <p>Actions from previous meetings were discussed.</p>
3	<p>Short and Medium-Term Interventions update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding Strategy Elaine Martin updated on the wayfinding work which has been undertaken and shared images of some of the signage which has been installed. • 20mph Limits/ Zones and Speed restrictions Maps were shared displaying the proposed 20mph zones at Weydon Lane, Upper Hale Road and Farnham Town centre. • Borelli Park and Stride Elaine Martin updated that the feasibility for Borelli Park and Stride has yet to commence as discussions were still ongoing with the adjacent new bridge crossing being delivered by Crest for the Brightwells development. However some upfront ecology surveys are planned. Cllr Peter Clark asked if a revised planning application would be coming through to Waverley for the bridge, and Elaine Martin responded that one was expected once designs were finalised. • Water Lane Roundabout Elaine Martin updated that following the success of the CIL bid for funding, design work has commenced with SCC Highways teams.

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	<p>Surveys have been undertaken and in early July officers will be engaging local disability and business groups.</p> <p>Cllr Catherine Powell highlighted a public petition which had been raised concerning reduced sight lines at the junction.</p>
4	<p>Town Centre update</p> <p>Elaine Martin reminded attendees of the objectives for the work in town as agreed within the Farnham Optimised Infrastructure Plan in October 2021 and how this links to the Surrey Local Transport Plan (LTP4) which was adopted in July 2022, that prioritises walking and cycling over less sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>Chris Greenwood (Atkins) updated on the work which had been undertaken following the previous Board meeting on the feasibility design work and countywide and local traffic modelling which has been undertaken for Options V and Y for the town centre.</p> <p>Plans for the Downing Street/ Victoria Road/Union Road junctions were shared which include the addition of traffic lights, but with limited change at South St/ Union Road junction based on consultation feedback. Plans for proposed changes to Park Row and Bear Lane were also shown. Cllr Powell queried whether this route was the northbound cycling route, with an alternative southbound route elsewhere in the town. Chris Greenwood confirmed that alternative options for cycling routes had been looked at, but that they were not displayed on the maps shown. David Stempfer clarified the options for northbound and southbound cycling routes through the town.</p> <p>Options V and Y were discussed in more detail with plans shared with attendees. Option Y includes making East St bus and limited deliveries only to enable some of the other proposed changes.</p> <p>The proposed plans for the remainder of the town were also discussed and include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider pavements • Improved and raised crossing points at several junctions • Loading bays • Improved quality of place through seating and new planting • Shorter driving routes to cross the town from north to south (for example to get from Castle Street to West Street). <p>Cllr Andy MacLeod commented on the construction timescales for East Street (delivered by Crest) and that work would be unable to commence until 2024 due to building works in the town and that mitigations should be put in place to minimise disruptions to residents and businesses. Cllr Michaela Martin supported this statement and requested that mitigations were built into the town centre plans initially, rather than added in afterwards. The Chair acknowledged the disruption these works could cause and offered attendees the opportunity to sit down with the team working on the plans to discuss possible mitigations.</p> <p>Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP applauded the progress made and asked for clarification about timings for engagement with the public. Elaine Martin responded that this would be covered later in the agenda, but highlighted work would start shortly with local business and organisations. The Chair clarified that this work would be starting in the autumn.</p> <p>Cllr Powell highlighted the need to consider the phasing of the work and for it to be planned in advance to minimise disruption to residents and is keen to get plans finalised so that partners can be aware of the planned works within the town.</p>

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Cllr Clark raised concerns around funding and political uncertainty for this project and highlighted the risk to delivery if works were delayed. The Chair confirmed that the SCC funding was confirmed for this project with a paper due to Cabinet in June to draw down some of the funding for the scheme.

The Chair also shared his view that a collaborative approach to this work was required by all and highlighted the opportunity Board members to share their local knowledge with the team. Cllr David Beaman requested that the Town Council would like to be more positively engaged in the plans for upcoming work.

Gemma Joyner from the Transport Studies Team provided an update on county wide traffic modelling work which has been undertaken and shared slides highlighting the potential impact of the options being considered.

- Option V - The town centre sees a general reduction in vehicle trips, including The Borough which sees approximately a 40% reduction. Any increases shown in the town centre relate to where new routes are available. For example the westbound carriageway between Castle Street and West Street, which would permit two-way travel in this Option. The A31 absorbs some of the displaced vehicles with up to 15% increases in the Eastbound direction in the middle of the day and pm peak times, but this doesn't appear in the am peak due to longer distance trips using alternative routes.
- Option Y – This has similar result to Option V, except for Woolmead which would be two-way, and a reduction in vehicles travelling along East Street due to this section of road being restricted to buses and access only. In the am peak and the middle of the day there are more vehicles using the bypass in both directions, but the differences are localised.
- It is estimated that bus passenger numbers will reduce by a very small amount, due to increased journey times, although they reduce less in Option Y, due to East St being bus only.
- The modelling does show that more people will walk or cycle with both options.

Chris Greenwood shared details of a sample of routes through the town and how the journey time for each of these routes would be impacted by the proposed changes.

Cllr Powell highlighted that the modelling assumes that HGV ban is 100% effective, which it currently is not. Concerns were also highlighted that the modelling assumes changes in resident behaviours, which it was felt will not occur, as the recent closure to West St did not change resident behaviour. Chris Greenwood responded that the models are a guide to support decision making. Gemma Joyner agreed that modelling is a complex process and is needed to understand potential impact of any proposed changes. Chris Greenwood also highlighted that a benefit of modelling is to be able to draw comparisons between options to help aid decisions.

The Chair highlighted that it needs to be acknowledged that the proposed changes will have an impact on vehicle travel in town by reducing road capacity and making other methods of travel more appealing. The Chair also noted that if the modelling was predicting a 30 minute increase it would be a concern, but it is a balance and broadly speaking it wasn't predicting significant increases, while there is also a need to recognise the wider benefits. Jeremy Hunt supported these points, highlighting that modelling does not show how habits change over time in reaction to any increases in journey time and also stated that without making bigger changes then pollution in the town centre would not be reduced.

Cllr MacLeod stated that it would take time for active travel changes to be implemented within the town and feels that an on-demand minibus service would significantly improve public

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	<p>transport in the town. The Chair confirmed the on-demand minibus would be implemented in September in 4 areas, including Waverley, and then it planned to be rolled out to the rest of the County in April 2024.</p> <p>Elaine Martin summarised that the modelling had identified that Option V is the best performing option. Initial engagement work will start in early July with local disability groups, and on parking provisions for Castle Street.</p> <p>Cllr Beaman commented that resident's habits could be changed by changing car parking charges. The Chair asked if it was worth engaging with the Police and Trading Standards to aid enforcement of the HGV bans.</p>
5	<p>Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) update</p> <p>Elaine Martin provided a brief overview of progress since the last meeting and then introduced Neil McClure to provide further details on the LCWIP plans.</p> <p>The Farnham LCWIP includes a 'high to low' ranking of cycle routes and core walking zones, whereas alternative approaches have been made in the Waverley Borough and other LCWIP area plans which already include an agreed 'phase 1' prioritisation of routes to take forward to the next stage of design/development. Stage 2 feasibility design/development for Farnham routes will commence after the priority routes are agreed with stakeholders. A series of Active Travel workshops are being held by local councillors to engage further with key stakeholders to help inform the prioritisation of routes within Farnham. These workshops will be completed during the summer. A final workshop will then be hosted by Surrey CC to review the outputs from these earlier workshops and finalise the agreed set of initial routes to take forward to the next stage of design.</p> <p>Cllr Powell highlighted the 4 local engagement workshops that are taking place across the summer period to discuss the plans for the town, and how these align with LCWIP discussions. The Chair suggested that Cllr Powell and Neil McClure discuss outside the meeting plans for local engagement.</p> <p>A budget funding allocation of £100k has been agreed from the Surrey Infrastructure Programme to take forward the initial LCWIP feasibility stage work for Farnham. Public consultation will be undertaken within the feasibility stage to invite public feedback on the proposed schemes and options.</p> <p>Capital funding for the scheme construction phase is not yet secured. Possible funding opportunities were shared, with the majority of the funding expected to come from future rounds of the DfT/Active Travel Fund. However it is also noted that DfT budgets in this area have recently been reduced, with limited funds expected to be made available nationwide for competitive bidding. Prioritisation of active travel routes from across our countywide programme of LCWIPs will be required in order to put forward the schemes that will provide value for money and best meet the strategic objectives and delivery requirements of any future funding bid opportunity.</p> <p>ACTION: Cllr Powell and Neil McClure to discuss meeting dates</p>
6	<p>Farnham A31 Corridor update</p> <p>Elaine Martin shared that plans for the A31 corridor were presented to DfT and Active Travel in November 2021 for scrutiny and review, and in November 2022 it was submitted to the DfT investment panel. It is currently sitting with the Treasury to await further funding information and approval for the works.</p>

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7	<p>Wrecclesham and Western Bypasses update</p> <p>Elaine Martin updated that the environmental report is being updated by Atkins and that the team are currently reviewing the next activities.</p>
8	<p>Adjacent Projects update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrecclesham Bridge <p>Elaine Martin introduced Duncan Knox to update on the work undertaken to prevent bridge strikes at Wrecclesham, including adding additional signage and ensuring foliage has been kept cut back to improve visibility.</p> <p>Network Rail have been pressed to improve the conspicuousness of the bridge and further information has been requested around the details of the work they will be undertaking on the bridge.</p> <p>Atkins were commissioned to explore a range of options for attempting to resolve the issue of repeated bridge strikes. The options discussed were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lowering the road – which would eliminate the risk completely, but it would be a significant engineering undertaking and would cost around £8.2million. 2. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Perpendicular Bash Beam installation – the siting of the beam on the south side would require a new footway being built, which would then prohibit left hand turns due to the angle of the turn. The cost of this option would be around £2.1million b) Perpendicular Bash Beam installation and one-way Weydon Lane – this builds on the previous option but would allow vehicles to turn left in Weydon Lane as this would allow more space on the carriage way for the turn. 3. Traffic signals for the junction with Weydon lane, providing a new bash beam on the southbound approach and retaining the existing northbound bash beam – this option would prevent any toppling vehicles, after a bridge strike, from falling on other vehicles, but would not protect any pedestrians using the crossing on Weydon Lane. 4. Install priority give way traffic islands, so that only one vehicle can travel under the bridge at a time. 5. Option 2a, with the addition of give way islands to reduce speeds. <p>Following a discussion of the options, Duncan Knox summarised the options that had been considered and shared the key recommendations from the work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the amendments to the unplanned diversion route • Continue to maintain the foliage to a high standard • Correct the triangular warning signs to make them prohibition signs • Continue to lobby network rail to make the bridge more conspicuous • Consider a 20mph speed limit, without traffic calming • Communicate to residents and stakeholders on the way forward. <p>Duncan Knox commented on the suggestion of Cllr Michaela Martin and others of creating a pedestrian tunnel alongside the road bridge, however it was noted that whilst this would make walking and cycling safer, it would not address the issue of potential bridge strikes.</p> <p>Cllr Clark shared that discussion had been held with Tom Horwood, CEO of Waverley Borough Council, on how to reduce the number of HGVs travelling from the A3 onto the A325 north. An option suggested had been to install a low bridge warning sign on the A3, just before the A325 junction. The junction falls in Hampshire and discussion had been held</p>

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	<p>between relevant colleagues in Hampshire and Surrey and the idea received positive feedback, but had not yet progressed further.</p> <p>Cllr Martin thanked the Chair for facilitating the recent meeting between Network Rail and Surrey Highways.</p> <p>Cllr Beaman suggested raising the height of the bridge, so that the low height of the bridge became more obvious. Iain Lynch highlighted that the community had suggested a height barrier near Echo Barn Lane and asked if this had been considered by Atkins. Duncan Knox responded that the team had not considered raising the bridge, as it was felt that this could cause more issues. 'Height gauges' as suggested by Iain Lynch had been considered, as these are used in other places, however it was felt that this wouldn't be appropriate given the other vehicles who might need to use these roads for access elsewhere.</p> <p>The Chair summarised and asked Duncan Knox to take away the comments made during the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A31 Speed Management Scheme Elaine Martin updated that Surrey is aligning installation work with planned drainage improvements to reduce the traffic management costs for the scheme.
4	<p>Town Centre Update</p> <p>Elaine Martin returned to the previous agenda item and asked for clarification that there was consensus from the Board to continue with work developing Option V for the Town Centre. The Chair confirmed that the other option was not possible currently as required purchase of land which was currently not available.</p> <p>DECISION: Work to continue developing Option V for the Town Centre.</p>
9	<p>Programme and Risk update</p> <p>Elaine Martin provided a brief overview of progress on programme key milestones. Key risks for the work include rising inflation costs, funding availability, 'scope creep' and managing stakeholder expectations for the works.</p> <p>The Chair summarised that the work in the town is now gathering real momentum, and that it has public support, and he thanks everyone for their work on achieving this.</p>
10	<p>Questions and discussion</p> <p>The Chair commented that questions were only received late this morning, but reassured the questioners that an answer would be emailed to them and added to the website.</p>
11	<p>AOB</p> <p>No AOB items were raised.</p> <p>The next meeting is 15 September 2023.</p>

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