

**Farnham Infrastructure Programme
Local Liaison Forum:
Residents' Associations and The Farnham Society
Wednesday 21 October 2020, 6.30 pm**

Present:

Cllr John Neale, Farnham Town Council
Cllr Stephen Spence, Surrey County Council
Cllr Andy MacLeod, Surrey County Council
Cllr Wyatt Ramsdale, Surrey County Council

Chris Tunstall, Surrey County Council
Peter Burch, Arcadis
Paula Gough, Arcadis
Jonathan Foster-Clark, Atkins

Elizabeth
Old Park Lane Residents Association
Julie Flude, Badshot Lea Community Association
Cliff Watts, Badshot Lea Community Association
Timothy Holland- Bosworth,
Christopher Butler, Castle Street Residents' Association
Michelle Quinlan, Castle Street Residents' Association
Libby Ralph, Farnham Biodiversity Partnership
Cllr Penny Marriott, North West Farnham Residents' Association
Cllr Peter Marriott, North West Farnham Residents' Association
Sharon Downs, Park View Residents' Association
Graham Precious, Rowledge Residents' Association
John Steeds, Rowledge Residents' Association
Catherine Powell, Hale
Zofia Lovell, South Farnham Residents Association (SOFRA)
Pamela Pownall, SOFRA
Alan Gavaghan, The Farnham Society
David Howell, The Farnham Society
John Slater, The Farnham Society
John Birch, Wrecclesham Village Voice
Paula Dunsmore, Wrecclesham Village Voice

In attendance

Cllr David Beaman, Farnham Town Council
Cllr Carole Cockburn, Farnham Town Council
Cllr George Hesse, Farnham Town Council
Cllr Mark Merryweather, Farnham Town Council
Cllr John Ward, Farnham Town Council
Cllr Jerry Hyman, Waverley Borough Council
Iain Lynch, Farnham Town Council
Clare Kennett, Farnham Town Council

I. Welcome and briefing on meeting format

Cllr Neale opened the meeting, welcomed attendees and gave an overview of the agenda. Cllr Neale introduced Chris Tunstall, from Surrey County Council, and colleagues working on the programme from Arcadis, highways consultants, and from Atkins, civil engineering consultants.

2. Opening remarks by hosting councillor

Cllr Neale explained the purpose of the meeting was to seek views on the programme and the vision statement, currently out for consultation. He reported that the programme started this year with Surrey County Council, Waverley Borough Council and Farnham Town Council all working together. So far, the breadth of the programme had been agreed and the key objectives had been identified. There was an initial expectation of a £250m outline investment in the programme.

Cllr Neale said it was not just an infrastructure programme and that it would also create other benefits for the community, such as well-being, pollution, creating a better economic future and revitalising the town centre. The programme is at an initial consultation phase and that they would continue to consult as the programme progressed and projects were identified.

Chris Tunstall outlined the background to the Programme saying that over the years many highways studies had been undertaken in and around Farnham, but no infrastructure improvements had been made. However, there was a commitment this time from the three leaders of the councils with the creation of the Farnham Board which had a shared vision for Farnham's future. This was combined with support from Jeremy Hunt MP.

Chris Tunstall said that there were three major projects under consideration:

- Quick wins to address a number of highways issues in Farnham, including the volume of traffic, width of footways in the town centre, pedestrianisation and HGVs.
- Hickley's Corner
- A Wrecclesham bypass.

Chris Tunstall explained that the programme had considered previous studies and that these were being taken into consideration, although they needed to be brought up-to-date with current thinking. The programme was looking at all aspects, including pedestrianisation, car parking (for example, there are 2000 spaces within 100 yards of the town centre), park and ride, walking and cycling and people's lifestyles. One of the aims was to be zero carbon and an exemplar town that residents would be proud of, whilst at the same time keeping the economy thriving. There was a need to balance all the aims.

Chris Tunstall advised it would be a slow process and that there would be further consultation on specific schemes to ensure that the right solution was found. He reiterated that the purpose of the meeting was to seek views and to get people's input and feedback. A survey on the vision statement was underway with a deadline of 8 November and he encouraged people to participate.

Paula Gough said that it was not just an infrastructure programme but it was about place making, being able to prosper, considering people's well-being, keeping up with technology, communities first and carbon reduction. In addition, enhancing the natural environment, creating opportunities for walking and cycling, providing buses, and enhancing the way people live in Farnham.

3. Initial public observations

A list of the questions and answers are attached at Appendix I.

4. Statement from the programme management team

Chris Tunstall said that the purpose of the consultation on the vision statement was to find out if the correct themes and objectives had been identified.

Chris Tunstall advised that air quality was a major issue in Farnham and that a bid had been submitted for electric buses. He explained that in terms of electric vehicles, current thinking identified that batteries could progress as far as those in Tesla vehicles and that new technology would overtake this, possibly hydrogen.

Chris Tunstall said for Brightwells it was proposed that some of the highways work would be carried out and that it was hoped that some of it would be incorporated into the programme.

Local Liaison Forums had been set up to consult with community groups. Other studies, documents and policies had been looked at to create the vision statement. So far there had been over 300 responses to the consultation.

Paula Gough said the themes in the vision statement had been developed from previous consultation events and that there was a need to meet government requirements to win bids for funding. She was interested in hearing from smaller businesses and schools to find out how they will adapt in the future and post-Covid. For instance, would there be more home working, smaller localised teams, or changing retail patterns.

Cllr Wyatt Ramsdale asked why there was an emphasis on small businesses when there were many large businesses in Farnham. Paula Gough explained that larger businesses of over 25 employees would be consulted directly and that there was also a need to reach out to smaller businesses.

5. Public observations on the Vision Statement

A list of the questions and answers are attached at Appendix 2.

6. Closing remarks

Cllr Neale thanked everyone for attending and for their helpful contributions. He reminded people to take part in the consultation on the vision statement, closing date of 8 November. The results of the survey would be taken to the Farnham Board for consideration and comments would be incorporated to the programme. Cllr Neale said a further seven Local Liaison Forums had been planned and the results of the consultation would be brought together for the Board to consider in mid-January.

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Appendix I
Initial public observations: Questions and answers

Name/organisation	Question/comment	Answer
<p>Sophia Lovell, SOFRA</p>	<p>Raised the issue of the Scott Wilson Report at the last meeting. It seems that the proposals put forward for HGVs, Hale, Wrecclesham and the Town Centre were all addressed in the Scott Wilson report of 2008 with a western bypass being the best solution. The Wrecclesham relief road would also be important given the forecast growth in Hampshire.</p> <p>Air quality and the environment is particularly bad in the centre of Farnham– is this something the government takes into account?</p> <p>All good suggestions but concerned about where the traffic would go? Upper Hale? Zofia could not support a scheme that push the problem to another area.</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall reassured members of the meeting that the work carried out for the Scott Wilson report had not gone to waste and it was being used. The western bypass would feature in all three major projects and was not ‘off the table’. However, the report needed to be brought up-to-date in order to meet the government’s rigorous requirements for funding. The outline £250m commitment from SCC for the programme is unlikely to cover the cost of a western bypass and additional funding would be required, therefore proposals would need to hit the government cost-benefit requirements or they would not get anywhere.</p> <p>Chris Tunstall confirmed that it was, as well as allowing businesses to prosper and finding sustainable transport. Paula Gough added that the Department for Transport (DfT) assessment was geared towards net zero carbon, reducing traffic, improving air quality and increasing active travel.</p> <p>Chris Tunstall replied that the programme would have to find a solution for all and Upper Hale was one of the major issues. There was a need to balance solutions to suit all aspects of the programme.</p> <p>Cllr MacLeod said that the Scott Wilson report was an excellent report but the problems still existed. It provided good ideas for the town centre but was not something that could be done overnight. HGVs could make the problem worse. The solution could be to continue on M3 until the Blackwater Valley route so they would not go on to Upper Hale Road.</p>
<p>Cllr Peter Marriott, North West Farnham Residents’ Association</p>	<p>Has there been detailed traffic modelling or data provided showing where vehicles came from and were going to?</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall explained that it had although it was not possible to do a full analysis due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which had changed vehicle movements. Car traffic had dropped, and HGVs and smaller vans had stayed the same, although there was an increase in delivery vehicles. More extensive traffic modelling would be required after the pandemic but use was being made of modelling commissioned for development proposals and use of the new CCTV cameras which monitor traffic flow.</p>

	<p>Seen a lot of changes in the last 45 years and had been looking at how traffic flows. It goes around the one system in the town centre – along East Street and down South Street with a good portion going up Firgrove Hill. Improved links could be: central car park exit should be right and left; a North/South route from Castle Street to the Hart; a link from south Street to Castle street. Hickley’s Corner would be a big benefit.</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall replied that the initial aim is to reduce traffic volume through the town centre by providing alternative and viable routes. The question is whether the town is for traffic or for people. Is so much parking needed in the town centre? Would a park and ride work as in Cambridge? Some suggestions for Castle Street do not work for all people and Need to also consider mobility issues.</p> <p>Paula Gough thanked Mr Marriot for his suggestions and said that more work would be done to identify these issues and they would be brought back for further consultation as part of the Optimised Infrastructure Plan.</p>
<p>Cliff Watts, Badshot Lea Community Association</p>	<p>The more we can do for traffic around the town will help the town centre. The Shephard and Flock and the Badshot Lea roundabout was a horrendous mess. The impact of new and future housing developments were having an impact and people were more likely to go through the town centre than negotiate this route. There is scope to sort this out now, and suggestions had already brought to the attention of SCC Highways. Weather also has an impact on people’s ability to cycle and a Badshot Lea bus service was need.</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall replied that the Leaders of the different councils were on Board which meant that things would happen. The programme was looking at quick wins, especially if Highways had the identified the Badshot Lea roundabout as a potential piece of work.</p> <p>Paula Gough reiterated that further work was required to identify all aspects of the programme before any pieces of work were carried out in isolation. erent councils were on Board which meant that things would happen. The There was a risk that any changes to the roundabout at this stage could change the flow traffic, and it would need to fit into a wider sustainable long-term solution for Farnham.</p>
<p>Graham Precious, Rowledge Residents’ Association</p>	<p>Is there scope for a bold decision, such as a no through town? For example, moving car parks away, putting a park and ride/stride in place and making the town centre a pedestrian area?</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said that was some scope for this but they needed to balance out a range of needs. Chris quoted Florence in Italy as an example of where traffic is not permitted in the centre. All options were on the table.</p>
<p>Pamela Pownall, SOFRA</p>	<p>Improvement to Hickley’s Corner and Wrecclesham Bridge would be a game changer. When considering some of the solutions, it was important to remember that 20% of the population in Farnham is over 65 and changes would need to consider demographics. Also, the car parks at Riverside were underused and access could be improved. There is also the top deck of the railway station and car parks on the outskirts with a ‘bob the bus’ system in place.</p>	<p>Paula Gough said that the Department for Transport had an emerging UK-wide policy on centres with shuttle buses from periphery locations which provided destinations with key facilities, such as a post office.</p> <p>Chris Tunstall said that a local cycle and walking infrastructure plan would cover this with identified cycle ways, not shared footways. Segregated routes making the most of alleyways while at the same time balancing space for walkers was the government policy.</p>

	She supported walking and cycling with cycle tracks off the road and main roads.	
Cllr Wyatt Ramsdale, Surrey County Council	Pleased to hear contributions and making the town centre car free. However, town centre people would be affected and it would need to suit their needs. Wyatt noted Farnham Cycle Campaign had e-bikes that could be tried out.	
Zofia Lovell, SOFRA	It was important to remember there are a lot of families in and around the town who are attracted to Farnham because of its environment and facilities. People's lifestyles need to be taken into consideration and walking and cycling may be less attractive to these people if they have children to take to school, jobs to travel to etc. South Farnham School was offered a cycle shed for children's bikes but the school turned it down because parents did not want their children to cycle to school due to safety concerns.	Chris Tunstall said that if routes were provided off road than safety issues would be addressed. The programme would consider people's busy lifestyles and there would be a need to balance that. Cllr Neale said that the programme would accommodate different needs and it might give children a chance to cycle.
Cllr Paula Dunsmore, Wrecclesham Village Voice	Drew attention to comment on the Zoom chat: Cycle routes which run parallel to the train tracks and river. Routes are great spaces with improvements for walking.	

Appendix 2

Public observations on the Vision Statement: Questions and answers

Name/organisation	Question/comment	Answer
<p>Cllr Peter Marriott, North West Farnham Residents' Association</p>	<p>Removal of central car parks would be a game changer. Winchester and Cambridge are similar but not sure it would work for Farnham. Waverley Borough Council also depends on the income received from car parks.</p> <p>As an owner of an electric car, it would be unlikely that people would charge on the street because of the risk of not being able to find or access a charging point. More likely to charge at home, although on street charging points would be useful for residents in flats.</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said this all had to be looked into.</p> <p>Chris Tunstall said an expected increase in electric vehicle ownership would mean that 9-10 thousand charging points would be required around the county. Chris said that electric vehicles were great but they still released particulates in the air through braking and tyres and the aim was to try and minimise routes in/through the town centre.</p>
<p>Cllr Mark Merryweather</p>	<p>Drew attention to comment on chat: More not less car parking</p>	
<p>Cllr Wyatt Ramsdale</p>	<p>Road user charging could be linked to free car parking with only through traffic paying.</p> <p>Comment on chat: Perhaps future rental income from what might be built on central car parks could fund the park and ride.</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said it could and charges could be put in place per vehicle based on air pollution. For instance, a charge could encourage people to use a park and ride system rather than entering a charge zone. However, there are essential services to consider (nurses and social workers) and there would still be people who were prepared to pay the charge. A balance would need to be found, along with alternative solutions before charging was put in place.</p>
<p>Cliff Watts, Badshot Lea Community Association</p>	<p>There are two new bus shelters in Badshot Lea but a poor bus service. There was huge potential. A better electric bus service could change people's mind about accessing the town centre. Badshot Lea is 200 yards from the border with Hampshire County Council. Services that crossed the boundary had been affected due to a lack of agreement</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall explained that bus subsidies were a concern and that county councils may be asset rich, but they are revenue poor. This would need to be looked into further.</p>

	between local authorities about who would pay for the service.	
Christopher Butler, Castle Street Residents' Association	What happens if traffic is stopped in the town centre. How would residents in Castle Street access their properties?	Chris Tunstall said that people would not become divorced from their homes. Link roads, parking near properties and possible alternatives would be considered.
Cllr Andy MacLeod,	Asked people's opinion on Brightwells and its connection to the town centre. What did people think about it? It would need support if it was to succeed.	<p>A general discussion took place.</p> <p>Cliff Watts said that it was too late to think about it and that that should have been considered by Waverley Borough Council during the planning process. Opportunities for connectivity had been lost. It was suggested that pedestrianising South Street would open everything up and make the connection.</p> <p>Cllr MacLeod agreed but replied that "we are where we are" and that everyone had to make the best of it.</p> <p>Graham Precious said that a pedestrian town centre would link the development with the main high street.</p> <p>Julie Flude asked where the entrance to Brightwells was - East Street and South Street?</p> <p>Cliff Watts asked it if was too late to use the bridge as a bypass into the development? Cllr MacLeod confirmed that the bridge would become a cycle/pedestrian path into the development and that there were no roads inside it.</p> <p>Julie Flude asked where people would park if visiting the cinema. Cllr MacLeod said that they would use the car park block which also has spaces for residents.</p>
John Slater, The Farnham Society	The Farnham Society has already provided written submissions on the programme and supports what is being done and applauds the general direction. Cllr MacLeod's point about connectivity is relevant and there is a	Chris Tunstall explained that they were in discussion with Waverley Borough Council and the developer to minimise short-term improvements to the highway so that the scheme could be considered as part of the wider programme. Little point in making changes if it is only dug up a short time later.

	<p>need to consider this to help it succeed. Upgraded access from Sainsbury's to Marks and Spencer could be made. There could also be improvements to Victoria Road, the central car park and the Robert Dyas yard to give connectivity.</p>	
Catherine Powell, Hale	<p>Nervous about Brightwells and feel that it is not the right solution. It was important to address the HGVs in town but she lives in Upper Hale where HGVs are also an issue, including the speed at which they travel which is a danger to pedestrians.</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said that the programme would not forget the issues on Upper Hale Road.</p>
Pamela Pownall SOFRA	<p>Suggested a link road from Badshot Lea/Shepherd and Flock to A31</p>	<p>Cliff Watts said that the whole design of the A31 was not to link with Badshot Lea and the residents want to keep it that way to minimise the volume of traffic through the village.</p>
Michelle Quinlan, Castle Street Residents' Association	<p>Did not consider that the County Council had a good track record of attractiveness on its works and would they consider the importance of the conservation area? Also, in agreement about pedestrian safety on Upper Hale Road. Disabled access poor in the town centre. Would technology be upgraded and installed, such as virgin media and digital lines, before roads were resurfaced.</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said that Highways would consider the conservation area. Recent work had been carried out to resurface areas as the work to the roads was in much need. Electric charging points would also been in keeping with the conservation area.</p>
Cliff Watts, Badshot Lea Community Association	<p>Castle street is used as a race track. Would a 20 mph zone be put in place with digital enforcement to have an impact?</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said that the programme would look at lower speed limits in areas of Farnham. Digital enforcement would mean yellow camera boxes which may not be welcomed in the conservation area. There was also the issue of whether the police would enforce 20 mph zones.</p> <p>A general discussion took place with attendees discussing the merits of 20 mph zones and the issue of people not sticking to the limit. Comment on chat: Yes, 20mph for whole town including outwards.</p>
Zofia Lovell, SOFRA	<p>Listened to the debate tonight and concerned about the whole approach. Solutions are commendable but would not</p>	

	<p>solve the whole problem. Did not have faith in signage and still need help to connect Farnham. Only real solution that remains is a western bypass.</p>	
<p>John Steeds, Rowledge</p>	<p>Noted the 20MPH in Rowledge seemed to be largely ignored. He also spoke with knowledge (former Atkins director) and noted there had been no mention of the level crossing gates which caused blockages on the A31 as they were down so often, nor the urgency of replacing the Firgrove Bridge.</p>	<p>John Neale responded by saying all the comments being brought up would be looked at.</p>
<p>Alan Gavaghan, The Farnham Society</p>	<p>The Farnham Society had already submitted reports to the consultation. Concerns about the cost of the whole programme and delays being made while funding opportunities were being sought.</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said that this would not be the case as work to improve the centre – the most affordable part of the programme - would impact on the other schemes.</p> <p>Cllr Neale said that the County Council has invested time and money to the programme and that there was strong leadership from the Board. The initial aim was to have a clear picture of the work required and then the programme would be in a better position to bid for funding. Cllr Neale said that the programme would achieve a solution.</p> <p>Cllr Wyatt Ramsdale said in response to Alan Gavaghan’s observations, there was a priority for the town centre. Different areas would need separate funding solutions but this would not delay the programme as a whole.</p>