

**Farnham Infrastructure Programme  
Local Liaison Forum: Town Centre  
Wednesday 9 December 2020, 6.30 pm**

Present:

Cllr Andy MacLeod, Waverley Borough Council  
Cllr John Neale, Farnham Town Council  
Cllr Wyatt Ramsdale, Surrey County Council  
Cllr Tim Oliver, Surrey County Council  
Cllr Paul Fellows, Waverley Borough Council  
Cllr Stephen Spence, Surrey County Council

Chris Tunstall, Programme Director, Surrey County Council  
Paula Gough, Programme Manager, Arcadis  
Jonathan Foster-Clark,  
Peter Burch, Arcadis  
Andy Cleaver, Atkins Global  
Alex Pye, Atkins Global  
Iain Lynch, Town Clerk, Farnham Town Council  
Clare Kennett, Governance and Community Engagement Manager, Farnham Town Council

77 members of the public were present. (Andrew Laughton, Paul Hoskins, Alan Gavaghan, Alan Stroud, Alison Kirkpatrick, Andrew Milner, Anthony Cohn, Barbara Rogers, Brian Perryman, Candida Boxer, Carole Cockburn, Catherine Powell, Chris Shephard, Chris Whitehouse, Christopher Butler, Cliff Watts, Clifford Jones, Clive Teague, Cllr Alan Earwaker, Cllr Jerry Hyman, David B, David Dearsley, David Howell, David Uffindell, David Urbani, Elaine Fell, Emma Bandey, Emma Dearsley, George Hesse, Graham Sutton, Helen Locker, Iain Godwin, Iain Steel, Jim Duffy, John Bell, John Farley, John Hughes, John Townsend, John Watson, Jon Watson, Julia Weatherall, Julie-Ann Flude, Kathie Dearsley, Kay Foster, Libby Ralph, Mark Mulberry, Max Lyons, Nigel Ling, Norma Corkish, Pamela Pownall, Pat Evans, Peter Cruise, Peter Goodman-Smith, Peter Mitchell, Philippa Secretan, Richard Berkij, Richard Stubberfield, Robert Hockey, Robert Stansbury, Robert Stevens, Simon Atkinson, Simon Foale, Simon Valley, Steve Smith, Thomas Lankester, Winfried Keller, Zofia Lovell).

## **1. Welcome and opening remarks**

Cllr MacLeod welcomed attendees to the fifth Local Liaison Forum (LLF) to discuss town centre aspects of the programme and introduced members of the panel. It was noted that launch LLF and the LLF relating to community issues were attended by 220 people, and the LLF aimed at resident associations and businesses were attended by 52 people. A commitment had been made to hold another LLF for businesses as the last one coincided with the beginning of the national lockdown and may have prevented people from attending. Cllr MacLeod said that over 800 responses had been received for the consultation on the Programme's Vision Statement.

Cllr MacLeod outlined proceedings for the meeting and how people could ask a question or make a comment which would be considered as part of the consultation.

## **2. Views from the Programme**

Chris Tunstall said that he recognised that Farnham had been studied many times over the last 25 years and there was a need for something to be done to improve infrastructure. These studies, although useful, were now out of date and needed to be brought into current thinking. The key was to know from people attending the LLF's their views on what needed to happen to improve travel and traffic in Farnham. Chris said that examples of what Farnham could look like in the future would be shown at the

meeting to assist discussions but that there were no preconceived ideas and no decisions had been made on potential schemes. Chris showed a flow chart that demonstrated how the consultation would feedback into the development of the programme.

Chris said that the programme team were developing an Optimised Infrastructure Plan (OIP), a transport plan which would identify how people could move around Farnham in the future with a list of possible schemes and proposals, to be presented to the Farnham Board on 22 January 2021. Chris explained that no decisions had yet been made and everything was open for discussion. A consultation on the proposals would take place in early 2021 before the May elections.

Chris said that there was a high car dependence in Farnham, where it was used more than the national and South East averages, which meant that there was less walking, cycling and use of public transport. People living in Farnham who crossed the town from north to south and vice versa contributed to the issue, as well as the 2400 car parking spaces within the town centre. Chris said that in recent months the number of HGVs had stayed the same but there had been an increase in delivery vans while cars had reduced. An HGV study had been completed and it was proposed to restrict traffic coming from the M3 into town and beyond and in the opposite direction. They would also be working with local shops to find better ways to do deliveries and would be looking at the classification of roads to prevent sat navs from sending people through the town centre, including A325 and A287. Chris explained that unless changes were made, Farnham would continue to be dominated by cars and HGVs and would have the same traffic and travel issues. Moving to electric cars would not solve the pollution problem as they still emitted particulates.

Chris said that objectives for the OIP included reducing carbon emissions, improving quality of place, supporting the local economy and creating well-connected communities. The emerging components of the OIP were new walking and cycling routes, planning places for people, improving bus services, creating a park and stride/ride, changing traffic circulation and changes to access to car parks.

Chris showed a map of the town centre to show the area that was under consideration and a number of potential schemes to facilitate discussions which were based on ideas that have emerged from the consultation process. Chris said that discussions were taking place with Crest Nicholson at the Brightwells development to minimise highways works so that they could be undertaken by the Farnham Infrastructure Programme.

### **3. Introduction to discussion**

Cllr MacLeod reminded people how to ask questions and give comments.

### **4. Participant discussion – All**

A list of questions and statements are attached at Appendix 1. Questions asked through webinar Q&A feature are attached at Appendix 2. Some require additional input and these will be added to the frequently asked questions being prepared for the website.

### **5. Closing remarks**

Cllr Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council and Chairman of the Farnham Board, said it was a challenging project and everyone agreed that it needed to be bold to improve the congestion and pollution in Farnham. The challenge was to find a single solution that was suitable for everyone and address all the competing interests. The work that had gone into creating the vision statement had been widely shared and responded to and they were beginning to see a reasonable consensus about what people wanted from the programme. The County Council was in dialogue with all the bus operators in the county to look at the right size vehicle on the roads. There would be a trial pilot of a hopper bus service and the County Council was keen to invest in low emission electric buses. To get the drivers off the road there needed to be sensible alternative means of transport. Cllr Oliver asked for people's tolerance as they worked through the difficult decisions and said that the county, borough and town councils were all united in finding long-term solutions which may take time to develop and implement.

2. Farnham Infrastructure Programme, Local Liaison Forum: Town Centre. 9 December 2020

Cllr MacLeod thanked everyone who attended the meeting for their useful contributions, and thanked Chris Tunstall and Paula Gough for supporting conversations and Iain Lynch at the Town Council for organising and hosting the meeting.

Cllr Neale said that it was a bold project and the future challenges were not underestimated. He reassured everyone that there were many things that they wanted to achieve, including improving the town centre as a place to go and visit and draw people into, especially Farnham's community. This involved creating a community centre and not just a shopping centre, and removing the cars where possible and providing alternative means of travel. There was a need to make sure that there was access to the town centre by whatever means people wanted to come, including the car, buses, cycling and walking. The other issue was to tackle the problem of moving the traffic around the town which would be available for discussion at future LLF's, as follows:

- 6 January 2021 at 3pm: A31 and Hickley's Corner
- 6 January 2021 at 6.30pm: Upper Hale
- 7 January at 6.30pm: Wrecclesham
- 14 January at 3pm: Young people.

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

### 4. Participant discussion

Name/organisation	Question/comment	Answer
<p><b>David Wylde</b></p>	<p>How soon would HGVs be banned for the centre of Farnham and given the state of retail nationally what contingency plans were being made for Brightwells when the lack of uptake of its retail options became apparent? Would cycle lanes leading to the station become part of the Brightwells picture?</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said they were working to reduce the number of HGVs that travelled through Farnham which could be implemented from May 2021. The restriction would be applied to the A287 however, there still needed to be agreement from Highways England for implications to the M3. HGVs also delivered to businesses and options included allowing HGVs to park in the car parks instead of blocking central roads or a freight consolidation centre which would be distributed by electric vans and cargo bikes. This still needed to be discussed with businesses. Chris said that a cycle lane would be provided into Brightwells but would not be available on all access points as they were too narrow.</p> <p>Cllr MacLeod said that Crest Nicholson had the obligation to rent the units as well as the housing. There was concern about the current retail environment but Crest remained confident. It may be necessary to think of alternative options if they cannot rent the shops. There was a commitment from all parties to make the development was a success.</p>
<p><b>Paul Hoskins</b></p>	<p>Everyone wants to make Farnham better as the current situation is dire and this meeting and public engagement is to be commended. It was important to consider the reality and the programme focused on reducing/eradicating cars which would reduce pollution. No one would notice any difference if HGVs were banned and 20 mph zones would not have an impact as traffic does not move fast in Farnham anyway. Two recent housing development schemes were quoted with reference to the number of parking spaces available. The footway widening in the town,</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said that the programme was not suggesting that people should sell their cars but that people could travel in a slightly different way. This was about people who live in Farnham and they would be clear about what the implications of changes would be so that people could make choices. Chris said that national evidence shows that people do find other ways of doing things when changes were made.</p> <p>Cllr Neale said that it was about balance and encourage people to lessen their use of the car and to think of other options instead.</p>

	<p>imposed without consultation, had contributed to pollution and congestion and had been removed in other towns. Traffic cannot disappear and it would go somewhere else including the outlying areas. The issue was to get the current traffic moving by getting rid of the lane blocks, changing the traffic lights outside Sainsbury's and the allowing the free movement of traffic exiting the central car parks. Would like the town centre to be pedestrianised but needed to be realistic about the consequences. Councillors should lead by example by selling their cars and walking and cycling instead.</p>	<p>Cllr Fellows said it would be necessary to make changes to get people to think about the alternatives. Good public transport links were required. Cllr Fellows said he did not own a car and walked, cycled and used public transport.</p> <p>Cllr MacLeod said the road system was inefficient and every journey required people to travel through the narrow town centre.</p>
<b>Diana Jeffery</b>	<p>Understand that the County Council owns the Coxbridge Farm and the land there. Could this be used to build a park and ride and could this happen soon? If we waited for electric cars and everything else, it would be another 10 years before anything was done. We could not keep having consultations and someone had to take the decision. Farnham residents needed to get together and move this forward. People in West Street were fed up of traffic. Why build houses at Coxbridge Farm when so many developments were being built.</p>	<p>Cllr MacLeod said that County Council owned some of the land at Coxbridge Farm and that it was an interesting point that would be considered. Waverley Borough is given a housing target by the government that had to be delivered each year.</p>
<b>Christopher Butler</b>	<p>Colossal amount of new housing development around Farnham and HGVs are travelling down Castle Street and through the town centre to service the developments. Is it time to look at a western bypass because until we have this, traffic problems will never be resolved in Farnham.</p>	<p>Cllr Spence said that Folly Hill development was opposed by the local planning authority and approved by the Planning Inspectorate. It is hoped that HGVs would be banned in these locations, except for legitimate purposes, to resolve the issue. The process to get views from residents meant that a consensus on the way forward would be made to make changes.</p> <p>Chris Tunstall said the western bypass had not been forgotten but that funding from government would be required. There was strict criteria that would need to be met.</p>
<b>Emma Bandey</b>	<p>Lives in the centre of town with a young family and it was important to consider the number of children</p>	<p>Cllr MacLeod said he had sympathy with the issue of cycling in central Farnham with the narrow roads.</p>

	<p>who go to school through the centre of town. The recent bids did not provide cycling provision to children going to St Andrews and Potters Gate schools. Many of the roads were not safe and needed to feel safer. Segregated bike lanes gave families, and others, the confidence to cycle. Recognised the need to widen footpaths in the town centre but was aware that many people did not use the extended area. People with mobility issues and buggies did not use them because it was hard to get down the edge of the pavement. Welcomed that all three councils were looking at the issues and trying to make improvements.</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said that the bid was put into secure the funding and there was unfortunately a limit to what they could do. This was just one scheme and they would be developing a local walking and cycling infrastructure plan and cycle routes to schools would be included. New guidance now involved the creation of segregated cycle lanes.</p> <p>Paula Gough said that they would be working with all schools to make sure they have bikeability and were able to make the most of walking and cycling.</p>
<b>Chris Whitehouse</b>	<p>The volume of traffic going through a single lane in the town centre might not solve the problems and make the issue of pollution worse. Changing the road networks so that traffic could flow was important. was there any data on the level of pollution before and after the social distancing measures were implemented? In favour of park and ride. In agreement with the cycling issues and the need for better provision. New housing development welcomed to make house buying more affordable and not true that they were building too many in the South East.</p>	<p>Cllr MacLeod said that the Borough Council had a responsibility to monitor the air quality but it was unable to control the issues that created the pollution.</p> <p>Cllr Fellows said that the cost of rent in Waverley was high and a lot of the issues were to do with the types of houses that were being built and the lack of appropriate infrastructure to support the new developments. This problem had been building up over time, including a lack of schools and roads, and that infrastructure was being put in retrospectively across the country.</p> <p>Chris Tunstall said that traffic volumes were currently down so while it may seem that congestion still exists, the pollution was likely to be better.</p> <p>Alex Pye said that traffic was still being monitored and air quality would be looked at as part of the annual review process. A number of variables influenced air pollution.</p>
<b>Max Lyons</b>	<p>Strongly support some pedestrianisation in the town centre. Having the A287 and A325 going through the Borough and Downing Street would never create a pleasant place to shop. There was a need to improve</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said that pedestrian access on the outer parts of the town would be considered as part of the cycling and walking plan and would cater for the needs of all people, including those with disabilities who currently struggle on Farnham's roads.</p>

	<p>footpaths into the town centre as they were in an appalling condition in many places. There was also poor visibility when crossing roads.</p>	<p>Paula Gough said there was a balance to be made and a number of options would be available in the OIP for people to comment on and influence.</p> <p>Chris Tunstall said that they would be reviewing how walking, cycling and transport operates in the town and there would be a need to make changes. There was also a current need to resurface roads although it would be a shame to dig up roads that had only recently been resurfaced, and therefore they were looking at deferring some of the resurfacing projects. Chris asked for people's patience.</p>
<p><b>Fiona Massari</b></p>	<p>Happy that the three councils are working together and that many of the measures sounded excellent. They key seemed to be the order of events. Footpaths and cycleways could happen without restrictions, 20 mph zones would help, an HGV ban and electric delivery vans a park and stride/ride would be great. It would make a difference if the traffic from the northern area did not need to go all the way around the town. However, the land required for a link road in north Farnham was in private ownership. Farnham should be a zero-emission town with electric buses so that we could get towards pedestrianisation. Reduce traffic through some of these measures would enable the current central car parks into a community/event space linking with the World Craft Town status.</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said there was a need to put something in place first and give people the facilities and opportunities. It would be possible to provide hopper buses soon and the County Council was looking into electric buses. There was a desire to make Farnham an exemplar town. There would be the opportunity to use the central space for other purposes. Some of the central car parking spaces would still be needed for people with disabilities but that the rest of the space could be used for community purposes.</p> <p>Cllr Spence said that conversations were taking place with the University and the Watts Gallery on the Brightwells development to possibly make a craft area.</p> <p>Cllr Oliver said that there was a need to make the Brightwells development a success that would add value to the town, and that included looking at all options for its future.</p>
<p><b>Pamela Pownall</b></p>	<p>The narrow roads in Farnham were an issue and people walking on the narrow pavements felt in danger. The widening of the pavements was a good solution but it prevents cars, bikes and pedestrians all in one space. Is there a thought of making cycle lanes that are completely off road? The town was for</p>	<p>Chris Tunstall said that off road cycle paths were being considered.</p>

	people to enjoy shopping and for recreation, not for cars and bikes.	
<b>Christopher Butler</b>	Many of the buses, including the double deckers are empty and hopper buses would be the best option – less pollution and take less room on the roads.	Chris Tunstall said that buses outside London are deregulated and it is the providers decision to run the types of vehicles. It is a commercial issue and councils have no power over them, although they can try to negotiate services etc. Some companies may have double deckers and additional smaller buses may not be viable. Covid-19 has seriously affected public transport.
<b>Chris Whitehouse</b>	On street parking reduces the road width, creating one lane instead of two which slows things down. Has there been any thought into preventing on street parking?	Chris Tunstall said that on street parking does affect bus services and the highways authority does take action to try and prevent it. However, it is about balance as people need to park their cars at the same time as allowing free flow. It also acts as traffic calming.
<b>Andrew Milner</b>	The recent resurfacing has been a major improvement for cyclists. If South Street cannot be resurfaced in the near future, can the troughs and potholes be repaired?	Chris Tunstall said that these issues would be looked at and it would not be left unsafe. The programme would also looking at advance stop lines for cyclists at traffic lights to allow them to move before traffic goes through.
<b>Zofia Lovell</b>	Please could the programme team speak to schools in South Farnham about cycling provision. Many would like to see cycling from the town to the station which would help commuters. Interested in how this idea would be approached on Station Hill – would it be on-road cycling or shared space. The former school bus service had poor uptake and became unviable and there were lessons to be learnt.	Paula Gough said they plan to contact all schools in Farnham to understand current take up of walking and cycling, the key blockers and the views of children and parents to develop solutions. A survey/questionnaire would be developed to capture walking and cycling from the school perspective. The success of the programme depended on the integration of all types of transport.  Chris Tunstall said there was not enough time to consult on the scheme put to the government for funding but that they would consult on it retrospectively and there were likely to be changes.
<b>Paul Hoskins</b>	Everyone wants us to change and the situation is dire. However there is frustration about the amount of contradictions from councillors. The situation is not just because of Covid. Alternatives are needed first and there was a need to get cars moving.	Cllr MacLeod said that over 800 responses were received in the recent consultation which was a good response rate for the size of the town. They were interested in hearing the views of people and no decision had not yet been made.  Cllr Spence said that congestion existed before the Covid measures were put in place. For many years people have not been able to walk and cycle in the town centre because of the dangers of passing traffic.

		<p>Cllr Ramsdale said the Covid measures had made the town centre safer and it had helped people to access the shops. There was a need to get the through traffic out to make the town centre the lovely historic town centre that it used to be. Many providers cannot afford two sets of buses and so that is why double deckers are often used even in quieter periods.</p>
<b>Fiona Massari</b>	<p>More information about the private land near the northern car park to prevented as it could make a big difference.</p>	<p>Cllr MacLeod said that the issue of private land was a sensitive subject and had to be considered appropriately. However, a northern link road would certainly have a big impact on the town centre and would be considered.</p> <p>Chris Tunstall said that it would be considered as part of the OIP. If a benefit was identified, there were mechanisms available to compensate people as most roads cut across private land. They would look to negotiate an agreement with the owner, and as a very last resort compulsory purchase would be available. The creation of alternatives does impact on people and so these issues need to be dealt with carefully.</p>
<b>Chris Shephard</b>	<p>The programme is an excellent idea and hope that it makes progress. As a shopper, the town is more inviting than ever before because of the Covid measures. Drivers are courteous and this is what we need to achieve as part of the programme.</p>	<p>Cllr MacLeod said that his general experience of Farnham is that people are very courteous, including in the series of LLFs</p>
<b>Nigel Ling</b>	<p>Urge the councils to be bold and not to be backward in transport policy ideas. Many places in Europe much more ahead with walking and cycling provision. A lot of people may be reluctant to move away from using cars but change was needed.</p>	
<b>Thomas Lankester</b>	<p>Felt that people do not cycle because they were put off because of danger, congestion and pollution. Recently, seen the governments cycling model which looked at what happens if those constraints are removed and appropriate facilities and infrastructure are put in place. Can see in Farnham many people are</p>	

	<p>put off although there is a want to do it, particularly with school aged children. Need to put in alternatives so that people can make the choice. A secondary network was required to allow the retail and vitality to continue.</p>	
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