

Meeting Notes

- 2 hour meeting 6.30 – 8.30 pm
meeting is public and recorded
- Panel: the presenters will be on view
when slides are on view, images will be in small window
- Invitees will be listed in the **Participants** window
- Questions can be posted in the **Q&A** window
we will be monitoring this
- Questions can also be raised by requesting to speak
*click **Raise Hand** in the **Participants** window*
questions raised this way will get priority
- Please keep all questions and comments brief
- Please keep your microphone muted, except when speaking
so we don't hear background sound in your home
- We will respond to any questions, not covered during the meeting, by email afterwards

Local Liaison Forum 10 – Farnham Optimised Infrastructure Plan (OIP) Consultation

Farnham Infrastructure Programme

4 March 2021

Local Liaison Forum – Farnham OIP consultation (4 March 2021)

Introductions

Chair

Cllr John Neale

Councillors

Cllr Andy MacLeod, Cllr Wyatt Ramsdale

Programme Team

Chris Tunstall – Interim Programme Director, Surrey County Council

Paula Gough – Programme Manager, Arcadis Consulting (UK)

Alex Pye – Assistant Design Lead, Atkins

Local Liaison Forum – Farnham OIP consultation (4 March 2021)

Agenda

1. Welcome and opening remarks – John Neale (5 minutes)
2. Update from the Programme – Chris Tunstall / Alex Pye (15 minutes)
3. Seeking your views – John Neale (2 minutes)
4. Participant discussion – All (95 minutes)
5. Closing remarks – Andy MacLeod (3 minutes)

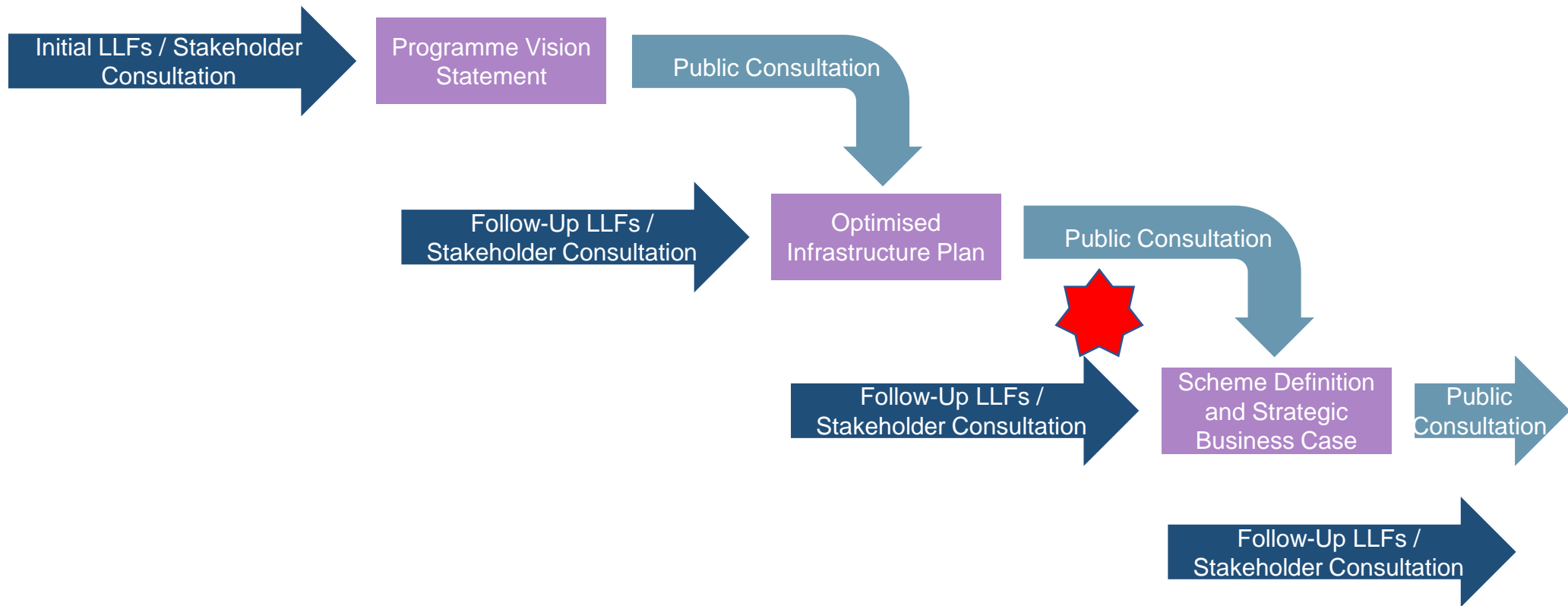
Local Liaison Forum – Farnham OIP consultation

(4 March 2021)

Objectives for today

- Familiarise you with recent work looking at transforming travel in Farnham – the Optimised Infrastructure Plan (OIP)
- Seek your views on:
 - The OIP
 - The prioritisation of the OIP proposed options

Consultation in the programme development process – a reminder



Farnham OIP consultation – welcome

Welcome

Welcome to the consultation on the draft Optimised Infrastructure Plan (OIP) for Farnham

Farnham is a beautiful town, from its position in the Surrey countryside to its historic centre and the strong sense of community from its people. There is much to celebrate and enjoy in the town.

Farnham is a great place to live but has major problems with traffic across the whole town. A town centre suffering from congestion and associated pollution, a congested dual carriageway which splits the community in two, narrow roads and pavements in many areas in the town which aren't fit for modern use, the list goes on.

We're pleased to have come together to develop the Farnham Infrastructure Programme to take a town-wide view on all the transport issues and work with people in the town to transform it for future generations.

These are our thoughts, assessments and suggested solutions to make a transformational change to the town. Some of what's contained is challenging. To tackle the causes of climate change means we all have to do things differently. Getting cars off the road is a simple yet very effective way to cut congestion and air pollution.



Tim Oliver
Leader of
Surrey County
Council



John Ward
Leader of Waverley
Borough Council



John Nicolle
Leader of
Farnham Town
Council



Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt
MP for South West
Surrey



We need your views

But we're not the real experts on Farnham, that's you. We need to know Farnham with you. Putting forward the plan will deliver the solutions you need. So, before we start any detailed planning work, we need your views on it. We urge you to share your views in our early consultation, and we promise to keep asking you for your views as plans progress.

The consultation

This consultation, launched on 18th February 2021, is online to minimise the risk of transmission during Covid-19 restrictions. Online question and answer sessions will enable you to speak directly with members of the OIP team.

In parallel with the consultation we will be running Local Liaison Forums (LLFs) which will provide opportunities for people in Farnham to ask questions and give feedback. Meetings are online while social distancing restrictions are in place due to the coronavirus pandemic.



Find out more about the forums
www.farnham.gov.uk/LLF

Only by working together can we transform travel around Farnham, while simultaneously tackling the causes of climate change, and improving our health and wellbeing.



Please proceed to the next board for more information

Introduction:

Farnham is a great place to live but has:

- A town centre suffering from congestion and associated pollution
- A congested dual carriageway splitting the community in two
- Narrow roads and pavements in many areas, unfit for modern use

All the Councils have come together to develop the infrastructure programme

The OIP presents our thoughts on how to make a transformational change

Farnham OIP consultation – vision

Farnham Infrastructure Programme

Our vision

In 2020 a vision document was written and people had the opportunity to provide feedback.

It identified the issues in the town and considered what the programme should achieve. It was summarised in a vision statement for the programme: "Deliver an attractive, well-integrated, future-focused and high-quality infrastructure solution for Farnham that enables a connected and vibrant town, where people choose to live, work, study and spend their leisure time in sustainable ways."

Optimised Infrastructure Plan

Surrey County Council (SCC), Waverley Borough Council (WBC) and Farnham Town Council (FTC), with the support of Jeremy Hunt MP, are working together to tackle transport and infrastructure issues, including congestion and air quality in Farnham and its surrounding areas.

This is the purpose of the Farnham Optimised Infrastructure Plan (OIP). The OIP has identified a wide range of options to tackle the transport issues and improve the town. The options have been assessed based on how they could support our objectives, value for money, affordability and deliverability. This will help to ensure that Farnham can become a better, more environmentally-friendly place for those who live, work, study in, or visit the town.

Desired outcomes

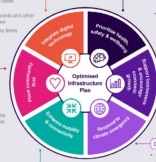
- Enable the creation of a 3D (3D) model to support asset management and asset integration.
- Enable faster, better and more efficient merging points and other emerging digital transport infrastructure technologies.
- Ensure alignment of mobility options to reduce journey times.
- Provide high quality parking and storage.
- Support the creation of improved digital footprints.

Desired outcomes

- Maximize dialogue and trust from the community to encourage the system to move forward.
- Enable outcomes that enhance the historic value of Farnham.
- Work with the programme partners to ensure that the system is designed to be integrated with the existing infrastructure and the town's character.

Desired outcomes

- Create a robust transport network that provides public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure.
- Support town improvements to Farnham Station and services to London, ensuring that Farnham has viable journey to all.
- Ensure supporting infrastructure for the system that is integrated.



Desired outcomes

- Improve road safety.
- Improve the quality of the existing public space.
- Reduce congestion and improve the air quality of public space in Farnham.

Desired outcomes

- Create a new connection between the new Farnham development and Farnham town.
- Contribute to ensure the historic and historic value of Farnham is protected and enhanced.
- Create a new connection between the historic and historic value of Farnham.

Desired outcomes

- Support the road to provide a better and a better overall experience.
- Create a new connection between the historic and historic value of Farnham.
- Support the creation of a new connection between the historic and historic value of Farnham.

Next steps

As the options in this plan are at a very early stage of development, they have been assessed and detailed analysis has not been undertaken – but will be the next stage in the programme.

For the next stage of the programme, to find out more about the Farnham OIP, and to read the vision statement and the full programme, visit www.farnham.gov.uk/farnhamprogramme

This consultation is the next step in a process that began with the submission of the Vision Statement, and which has continued through the Local Council Farnham with residents over the last few months.

Following the consultation, feedback will be reviewed to help shape the strategy and the development of the programme. Consultation feedback is a critical step in ensuring that people's views and experiences are considered in the next stage of the programme.

For more information, visit www.farnham.gov.uk/farnhamprogramme

6 Please proceed to the next board for more information

Programme vision:

- Consulted upon in autumn 2020
- Underpins the development of the OIP

“Deliver an attractive, well-integrated, future-focused and high-quality infrastructure solution for Farnham that enables a connected and vibrant town, where people choose to live, work, study and spend their leisure time in sustainable ways”

Farnham OIP consultation – travel around Farnham

Travel around Farnham

Current situation
Farnham benefits from a strong economy, with a highly skilled population and high levels of economic activity.

However, the town faces challenges. There are very high levels of car ownership and car use, with relatively few people walking, cycling or using public transport.

The high volumes of traffic in the town are causing high levels of congestion, poor air quality, severance between the town centre and local communities, concerns about road safety and a worse local environment.



Town centre
Public areas of town centre are characterised by motor vehicles and narrow pavements. There is significant potential to enhance the existing historic assets and urban environment by developing a high-quality and connected town centre.

Despite the use of one-way systems, the large volume of traffic coming into the town centre means that it dominates the area. This compromises the environment for walking, cycling and shopping, as well as reducing the quality of public areas and the sense of place in the town centre.

The high volumes of traffic have also resulted in the town centre being designated as an Air Quality Management Area.



Severance of north and south Farnham
The A31 Farnham Bypass is a busy route for traffic through the area. Together with the railway line, it is the main cause of severance between north and south Farnham. There are also long queues of traffic on the A31 at the Hickley's Corner junction.

The A31 also adversely affects the ability to safely, safely, and responsibly travel to and around the town centre on foot and by bicycle. Rather than enjoying the natural and built environment, people are affected by the high volumes of traffic.

Dependency on car travel
One of the causes of these challenges is the very high car dependency of people living in the town. Car ownership in Farnham is very high, even compared to the average for Surrey which has some of the highest car ownership in the country.

Both Farnham and Surrey have significantly more residents driving to work than the national average. Fewer people in Farnham use buses and trams than the Surrey and national average.

The town centre is served by several car parks, with 2,400 spaces, which is enough for 7% of Farnham residents (who have access to a car) to park in the town centre at any one time. This is very high, and much higher than comparable towns in Surrey.

But Farnham is a market town that supports a much wider group of people than just Farnham residents. See Board 6.

There is enough parking for 7% of Farnham residents who have access to a car to park in the town centre at any one time.



6) Please proceed to the next board for more information.

PIA ATKINS ARCADIS Waverley SURREY FARNHAM

Current situation:

- Strong economy, highly skilled population, high levels of economic activity
- Town centre characterized by heavy traffic, HGVs, narrow pavements, severance issues, poor air quality
- A31 and railway line cause severance between north and south – heavily congested at Hickley's corner
- High car dependency

Farnham OIP consultation – travel around Farnham

Travel around Farnham

Public transport
Limited numbers of people use buses to travel within Farnham, in part because many people choose to walk if they live close to the town centre. However, it is also clear that buses currently do not provide a sufficiently attractive alternative to driving.

Existing bus routes connect parts of the town. However, increased frequencies, bus priority on roads and junctions, and faster journeys could help to make services more attractive.



Walking and cycling

Walking is popular for some short journeys – typically within the town centre and between the town centre and both south-west and south-east Farnham. Cycling is less popular in all locations with very limited numbers. Topography is an influencing factor for both modes due to the hilly nature of parts of Farnham. There are also concerns about road safety.

Improved infrastructure and access to e-bikes and e-scooters could help make these active modes more attractive.



Lorries and goods traffic

Many stakeholders and residents have expressed concerns about the volumes of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) in the town centre. Traffic surveys indicate that Farnham has a similar percentage of HGVs to other Surrey towns.

However, Farnham has a higher proportion of light goods vehicles. This could be due to two main factors: the town centre containing a high number of smaller independent retailers and businesses, and high demand from residents for delivery of online purchases.

Although goods vehicles loading and unloading can cause congestion in the town centre, the most recent comprehensive surveys (from 2018) showed that traffic queues are cleared quickly by cars. Most deliveries on the road network also involve cars, with only a small number involving goods vehicles. There is a clear need to tackle these challenges, high levels of car dependency in the town.



Looking to the future

Waverley Borough, and Surrey overall, are forecast to experience significant growth over the next 30 years. While this is positive as it reflects the strength of the economy, and the attractiveness of the county to residents, employers, and visitors, this growth will have serious consequences.

Total annual vehicle kilometres travelled on the road network are forecast to increase by 40% from 2020 to 2050. Without action, these increases in traffic will cause a further deterioration of the quality of place in Farnham, increased congestion and worsening air quality. This will impact on people's quality of life and the competitiveness of the town centre.

Even with the Government's acceleration of the ban on sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles from 2035, the pace of change requires us to take to reach net zero carbon by 2050. Further measures are required to reduce emissions during the 2020s. These include reducing emissions from goods vehicles, reducing the length and frequency of car journeys, and increasing the number of journeys made by public and active transport.

Travel behaviour change will be crucial to achieving net zero carbon, including reducing the need to travel, reducing the number and distance of journeys undertaken by private vehicles, and a shift to low carbon alternatives like walking, cycling and public transport. We all need to take action to make this happen and the partners, working through the programme, want to support people in Farnham to move to more environmentally friendly ways to travel wherever they can.

Total annual vehicle kilometres travelled on the road network are forecast to increase by 40% from 2020 to 2050

40%



Please proceed to the next board for more information

FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL
WAVERTLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
ARCADIS
ATKINS

Current situation continued:

- Low uptake of public transport
- Walking popular for some short journeys – cycling less popular
- Impact of HGVs on local communities

Look to the future:

- Significant growth forecast over the next 30 years
- Significant increase in traffic
- Without action, carbon emissions will not reduce at the speed required by national legislation

Farnham OIP consultation – wider context

Wider context

Any proposed changes need to comply with a number of policies to ensure they receive approval or are eligible for government funding, which may be crucial for a scheme to be taken forward.

Many policies will have changed since previous studies were undertaken for the town, which means that previous options may no longer be appropriate.

Key documents that inform our proposals include:

International

- The 2015 Paris Agreement - designed to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius, preferably to 1.5, compared to pre-industrial levels.

National

- The Climate Change Act 2009 sets out emission targets for the UK and was amended in 2019 to include a commitment to net zero carbon by 2050.

- The 2017 UK Industrial Strategy is a long-term plan to deliver jobs, economic growth and prosperity, and boost productivity by backing investment in skills and infrastructure.

- Priorities in the Department for Transport's Decarbonising Transport report from 2020 include encouraging a shift to walking, cycling and public transport, decarbonising road vehicles, and developing the right local solutions.

Regional

- Transport for the South East's strategy looks at the impacts of how we travel on the economy and highlights the importance of net zero carbon and sustainable growth.

- The Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership's industrial strategy notes that infrastructure has not kept pace with growth, congestion is an issue and rail links need improvement.

Local

- There are three strategic priorities in Surrey's 2050 Place Vision: (a) improving links within Surrey and between vital hubs, (b) enhancing towns, including reducing car travel and maximising built and natural environments; and (c) maximising Surrey's economic assets.

- Surrey's Climate Change Strategy focuses on tackling climate change across every aspect of council services together with action by residents, businesses and partners. Surrey's 11 district and borough councils, and Farnham Town Council have also recognised the imminent threat and set their own emissions reduction targets.

- There are four priorities in the Surrey 2050 Economic Strategy: supporting the innovation economy; growing and sustaining quality places; maximising opportunities and capturing the potential of a greener economy.

- Surrey County Council is currently preparing a new Local Transport Plan. It is focused on reducing carbon emissions, ensuring communities are connected to encourage social mobility, supporting growth and helping communities thrive with clean air, excellent health, wellbeing and quality of life.

- Waverley's adopted Local Plan Part 1 sets out strategic policies across transport, housing, employment and infrastructure.
- The vision in the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan is 'for Farnham to continue to thrive, meeting the changing needs of the local community by ensuring new development... its well with, and does not erode, the character... of the town and is supported by improved infrastructure.'



Plan objectives

Having considered the situation in the town, previous studies and relevant policies, the objectives of the plan are:



Rapidly reduce carbon emissions, ensuring the Farnham and Waverley are on track for net zero by 2050



Well-connected communities across Farnham and the surrounding area



Support Farnham's economy and enable growth across the surrounding area



Improve the quality of place in Farnham, with clean air, healthy lifestyles and less dominance of traffic on communities



What do you think about the issues in Farnham?

Open feedback at: <https://www.farnham.gov.uk/consultation> (password-protected)

OIP objectives areas:

- Rapidly reduce carbon emissions
- Create well-connected communities
- Support Farnham's economy
- Improve quality of place

Farnham OIP consultation – town centre

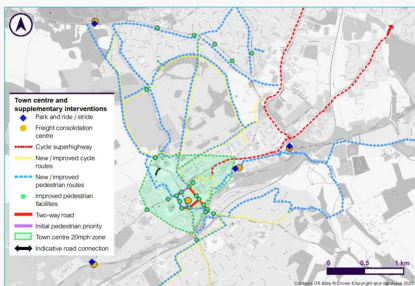
Possible town centre interventions

This is the historic heart of Farnham, an important destination between Guildford and Winchester that serves western Surrey and eastern Hampshire. It benefits from a dynamic economy, with high-quality shops, food and drink destinations, unique heritage and status as a World Craft Town. However, traffic dominates the town centre.

Work has already begun on new restrictions to HGVs travelling through the town, and consideration of lowering speed limits to 20mph and reclassifying roads is already underway. At its cabinet meeting in January 2021, Surrey County Council agreed £2.5 million in funding to deliver these 'quick wins' and for further feasibility studies.

Potential options could include:

- An integrated town centre strategy, ensuring high-quality public spaces
- Improvements to integrate walking routes from new development areas to the east, including Brightwell, into the rest of the town centre
- Major improvements to walking and cycling
- New public transport hubs
- A fundamental review of bus services to transform accessibility to the town centre using public transport
- Major changes to the town centre road layout, with major improvements to pedestrian experience
- Better management of town centre car parking, including a review of existing car parks alongside new park and ride / park and stride, and electronic signs to show where spaces are available
- Off-street locations for delivery by goods vehicles
- New freight consolidation centres to reduce the number of goods vehicles entering the town centre and medium term in the town centre, long-term facilities on the outskirts



RIA Atkins Arcadis Waverley Surrey Farnham

6 What do you think about the issues in Farnham?

Potential options could include:

- Integrated town centre strategy, ensuring high-quality public spaces
- Improvements to integrate walking routes from new development areas
- Major improvements to walking and cycling
- Major changes to town centre road layout, improvements to walking experience
- Better management of car parking, review of existing car parks, new 'park and ride / stride' sites
- New public transport hubs
- Fundamental review of bus services
- Off-street locations for deliveries
- New freight consolidation centres

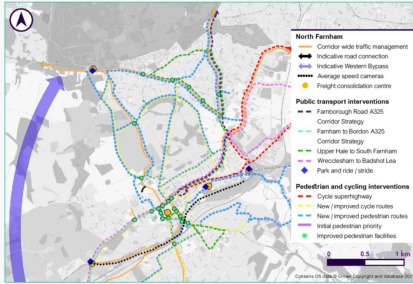
Farnham OIP consultation – North Farnham

Possible North Farnham interventions

This urban area has strong links with adjacent parts of Hampshire. There are traffic demands from both cars and goods vehicles. There are significant challenges caused by heavy traffic on roads including the A3016 through Upper Hale and A325 through Heath End.

Potential options could include:

- A programme of traffic management measures, which will be the subject of further study
 - Improved walking and cycling, including high quality segregated routes through Badshot Lea and Weybourne, and new / improved routes through Farnham Park
 - Measures to create wider pavements and enhanced bus infrastructure on the A325 Farnham to Badshot Lea corridor
 - Working closely with Hampshire County Council to ensure seamless new walking and cycling routes, bus routes and traffic management
 - An initial assessment on the potential benefits of a Western Bypass, focusing on the ability to reduce through traffic
- Quick wins will also be progressed to tackle the impacts of HGVs and speeding traffic through the area, including reduced speed limits, e.g. 20mph



6 What do you think about the issues in Farnham?
Please feedback to: transport@farnham.gov.uk or transport@hampshire.gov.uk

Potential options could include:

- Traffic management measures
- Improved walking and cycling, including segregated routes through Badshot Lea and Weybourne, and new / improved routes through Farnham Park
- Wider pavements and narrower roads
- Investigating and enhancing bus services and infrastructure, e.g. A325 Farnborough Road corridor
- Working closely with Hampshire County Council to ensure seamless travel
- Initial assessment on the potential benefits of a Western Bypass
- Quick wins to tackle the impacts of HGVs and speeding traffic are being progressed

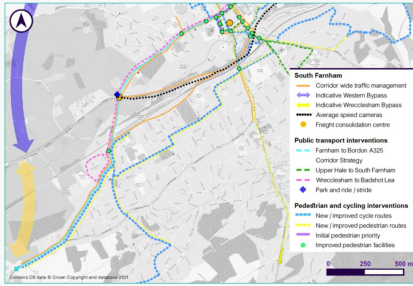
Farnham OIP consultation – South Farnham

Possible South Farnham interventions

This area faces significant challenges caused by local traffic and longer journeys from south west Surrey and eastern Hampshire. There are problems caused by the level crossing near the station, with long tailbacks. There are also problems caused by traffic passing through Wrecclesham, which experiences problems caused by a low rail bridge.

Potential options could include:

- Further studies for Wrecclesham, including investigation of the benefits of a bypass
- Schemes will be progressed for improved walking and cycling, including Wrecclesham
- Further studies of the station area and ways to tackle severance between South Farnham and the town centre caused by the railway, A31 and River Wey
- Planning options to reduce the amount of traffic using the level crossing by the station
- New bus routes and better bus infrastructure through Wrecclesham
- Quick wins will also be progressed to tackle the impacts of speeding traffic in the area.



Potential options could include:

- Further studies for Wrecclesham, including investigation of a bypass
- Schemes for improved walking and cycling
- Further studies of the station area and ways to tackle severance from the town centre
- Potential options to reduce traffic using the level crossing
- New bus routes and better bus infrastructure through Wrecclesham
- Quick wins will also be progressed to tackle the impacts of speeding traffic

Farnham OIP consultation – A31 corridor

Possible A31 corridor interventions

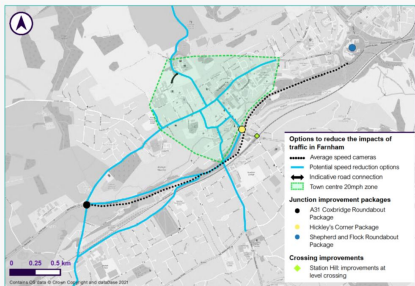
The A31 is the main east-west route through western Surrey and eastern Hampshire and plays a vital role in the regional economy. The main bottleneck on the route is the Hickley's Corner junction, with long queues on the approaches. The area is forecast to experience rapid growth in population, which will exacerbate delays at the junction.

Potential options could include:

We need to deliver detailed study work to assess the A31 corridor and develop a programme of improvements between the Cobridge and Shephard and Flock roundabouts. This will include addressing the challenges at Hickley's Corner and to be fully integrated with the proposals for the town centre and South Farnham.

We have reviewed the options that were previously developed for a new underpass at Hickley's Corner in the 1980s and 2000s. A new underpass would be very expensive to build and could create serious disruption in the town for a long period during construction. It is also unlikely to be consistent with our objectives to rapidly reduce carbon emissions. We will therefore investigate a wide range of options that could solve the problems facing this area of the town.

Short-term measures to improve road safety and smooth traffic flows by using average speed cameras, and reducing the speed limit on the A31, will also be considered.



FIA Atkins Arcadis Waverley Surrey Farnham

6 What do you think about the issues in Farnham?

A31 corridor options:

More study work to assess the A31 corridor and develop a programme of improvements:

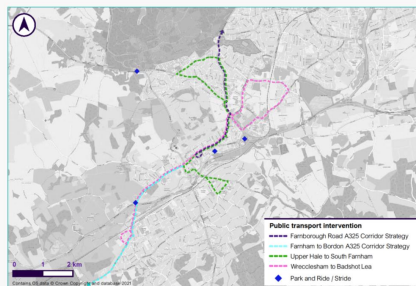
- Addressing the challenges at Hickley's Corner
- Full integration with town centre and South Farnham proposals
- Junction improvement packages for:
 - Coxbridge Roundabout
 - Hickley's Corner
 - Shephard and Flock Roundabout
- Improvements at the level crossing

We will investigate a wide range of options that could solve the problems facing this area

Farnham OIP consultation – Farnham-wide

Farnham-wide improvements

Providing environmental improvements across Farnham to help people travel and tackle the causes of climate change will be vital to the success of the programme, and to bring the change people in the town want to see.



Helping people leave the car at home

- Creation of a travel app, which brings public transport, walking and cycling options together in one place
- Introducing car clubs to the town, for people who don't need regular use of a car
- More work with schools to encourage more walking and cycling
- More emphasis on supporting pedestrians including improved footpaths, priority streets and new crossing points
- Increased cycle parking in the town centre and other key locations
- Dedicated cycle paths
- Hire or subsidised purchase of e-bikes and e-scooters

Reclaiming roads from cars

- Piloting and then rolling out low traffic neighbourhoods – where it's harder for drivers to 'take over' through residential areas

Using buses

- Improved services and bus stops
- Using electric and ultra-low emission buses
- Review fares – including free passes and hopper tickets
- Review bus routes

What happens next?

Please provide your views on our plans for Farnham via the questionnaire on the website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/farnhamprogramme

The views of people in Farnham are essential before we start detailed work on the proposals. Please share your views by Sunday 14 March 2021 by visiting www.surreycc.gov.uk/farnhamprogramme

We will also have an online Q&A session if you would like more information: see the website for more details. You can also get involved through the Local Council Forums – find out more at www.farnham.gov.uk/LF

We will take account of the feedback that you provide as we develop the next version of the Plan. We will also be carrying out further technical studies over the next six months to develop the proposals. We will then present a more detailed version of the Plan later in 2021, including a specific action plan for the key components.

What do you think about the issues in Farnham?

Please provide your views on the issues in Farnham via the questionnaire on the website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/farnhamprogramme

Supporting travel choice:

- Creation of a travel app and introducing car clubs
- Work with schools to increase walking and cycling
- Improved footpaths, priority streets, new crossing points
- Improved paths and cycle parking in the town centre and other key locations
- Hire or subsidised purchase of e-bikes and e-scooters
- Piloting and then rolling out low traffic neighbourhoods
- Improved bus stops and services using electric and ultra-low emission buses
- Review fares and routes

Farnham OIP – seeking your views

OIP - what are your views on:

- Objectives?
- Proposed options?
- Assessment of root causes?

Would the OIP proposals encourage you to change your travel behaviour?

Does the OIP support the vision for the town?

Discussion

Closing remarks

Andy MacLeod

What comes next?

The OIP consultation is open for comment until the end of Sunday 14th March 2021

The results of the consultation process will be communicated after the 2021 local elections

Local Liaison Forums consultations programme

Date	Time	Topic	Invitees
4 th March 2021	6.30 pm	OIP	Open to all
8 th March 2021	6.30 pm	OIP	Open to all
10 th March 2021	12.30 pm	OIP – Facebook Live	Open to all
10 th March 2021	6.30 pm	OIP – business perspective	Open to all businesses

Farnham Infrastructure Programme



Welcome

Welcome to the consultation on the draft Optimised Infrastructure Plan (OIP) for Farnham

Farnham is a beautiful town, from its position in the Surrey countryside to its historic centre and the strong sense of community from its people. There is much to celebrate and enjoy in the town.

Farnham is a great place to live but has major problems with traffic across the whole town. A town centre suffering from congestion and associated pollution, a congested dual carriageway which splits the community in two, narrow roads and pavements in many areas in the town which aren't fit for modern use, the list goes on.

We're pleased to have come together to develop the Farnham Infrastructure Programme to take a town-wide view on all the transport issues and work with people in the town to transform it for future generations.

These are our thoughts, assessments and suggested solutions to make a transformational change to the town. Some of what it contains is challenging. To tackle the causes of climate change means we all have to do things differently. Getting cars off the road is a simple yet very effective way to cut congestion and air pollution.



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Borough Council



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Leader of
Farnham Town
Council



Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt
MP for South West
Surrey



We need your views

But we're not the real experts on Farnham, that's you. We need to know if what we're putting forward in this plan will deliver the solutions you need. So, before we start any detailed planning work, we need your views on it. We urge you to have your say in our early consultation, and we promise to keep asking you for your views as plans progress.

The consultation

This consultation, launched on 15th February 2021, is online to minimise the risk of transmission during Covid-19 restrictions. Online question and answer sessions will enable you to speak directly with members of the OIP team.

In parallel with the consultation we will be running Local Liaison Forums (LLFs) which will provide opportunities for people in Farnham to ask questions and give feedback. Meetings are online while social distancing restrictions are in place due to the coronavirus pandemic.



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www.farnham.gov.uk/LLF

Only by working together can we transform travel around Farnham, while simultaneously tackling the causes of climate change, and improving our health and wellbeing.



Please proceed to the next board for more information

Farnham Infrastructure Programme



Our vision

In 2020 a vision document was written and people had the opportunity to provide feedback.

It identified the issues in the town and considered what the programme should achieve. It was summarised in a vision statement for the programme:

"Deliver an attractive, well-integrated, future-focused and high-quality infrastructure solution for Farnham that enables a connected and vibrant town, where people choose to live, work, study and spend their leisure time in sustainable ways."



Optimised Infrastructure Plan

Surrey County Council (SCC), Waverley Borough Council (WBC) and Farnham Town Council (FTC), with the support of Jeremy Hunt MP, are working together to tackle transport and infrastructure issues, including congestion and air quality in Farnham and its surrounding areas.

This is the purpose of the Farnham Optimised Infrastructure Plan (OIP). The OIP has identified a wide range of options to tackle the transport issues and improve the town. The options have been assessed based on how they could support our objectives, value for money, affordability and deliverability. This will help to ensure that Farnham can become a better, more environmentally-friendly place for those who live, work, study in, or visit the town.

Desired outcomes:

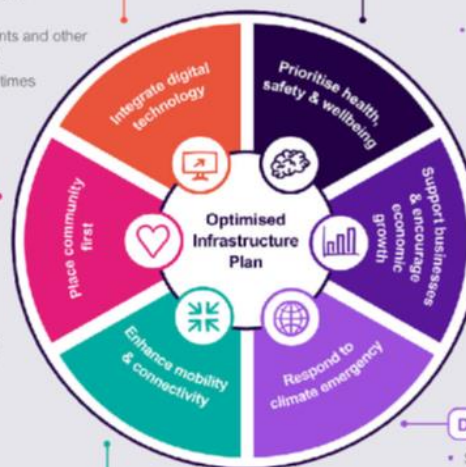
- Enable the creation of a 3D (BIM) model to support asset management and asset integration
- Enable Electric Vehicle on and off-street charging points and other emerging digital transport infrastructure technologies
- Ensure alignment of mobility options to reduce journey times
- Provide high quality cycle parking and storage
- Support the provision of improved digital bus service information

Desired outcomes:

- Maximise dialogue and input from the community to encourage the residents to have a real say in the future of their town
- Enable solutions that enhance the historic nature of Farnham
- Work with the programme partners to ensure that the appropriate consideration of infrastructure proposals can be integrated with the existing town and its future considerations

Desired outcomes:

- Create a local transport network that prioritises public transport, walking and cycling while minimising car use
- Support recent improvements to Farnham Station and services to London, ensuring that Farnham has reliable journeys for all
- Embed supporting infrastructure for EVs to ease their future integration



Desired outcomes:

- Improve road safety
- Improve security of the travelling public within Surrey
- Reduce congestion and improve the air quality of public spaces within Farnham
- Create solutions that make walking and cycling the most natural choice for all shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey, which is in line with the UK Government target

Desired outcomes:

- Create a seamless connection between the new Brightwell's development and Farnham's more historic town centre shopping hub so that both centres can be successful
- Contribute to ensure Brightwells and the historic centre have complementary retail provisions, helping Farnham become a destination that has something for everyone
- Create access to and highlight the historic and nature hubs in and around Farnham
- Build upon Farnham's status as a World Craft Town and creative centre

Desired outcomes:

- Support the road to zero-carbon ambition and carbon offset strategy
- Create a local transport network that prioritises public transport, walking and cycling while minimising car use
- Support the investment in ultra-low emission vehicles
- Promote sustainable travel planning (as set out in the Department for Transport's Sustainable Travel Towns document) and support the development of a plan for Farnham



Next steps

All the options in this plan are at a very early stage of development. Designs have not been produced and detailed analyses have not been undertaken – that will be the next stage in the programme.

For the latest news on the programme, to find out more about the Farnham Board, and to read the vision statement and the full infrastructure plan, visit: www.surreycc.gov.uk/farnhamprogramme

This consultation is the next step in a process that began with the publication of the Vision Statement, and which has continued through the Local Liaison Forums with residents over the last few months.

Following the consultation, feedback will be reviewed to help shape the strategy and packages of schemes to be further progressed. Consultation feedback is a critical step – ensuring that people's views are considered before resources are invested in the next steps to design and assess the selected options.



Travel around Farnham

Current situation

Farnham benefits from a strong economy, with a highly skilled population and high levels of economic activity.

However, the town faces challenges. There are very high levels of car ownership and car use, with relatively few people walking, cycling or using public transport.

The high volumes of traffic in the town are causing high levels of congestion, poor air quality, severance between the town centre and local communities, concerns about road safety and a worse local environment.



Town centre

Public areas of town centre are characterised by motor vehicles and narrow pavements. There is significant potential to enhance the existing historic assets and urban environment by developing a high-quality and connected town centre.

Despite the use of one-way systems, the large volume of traffic coming into the town centre means that it dominates the area. This compromises the environment for walking, cycling and shopping, as well as reducing the quality of public areas and the sense of place in the town centre.

The high volumes of traffic have also resulted in the town centre being designated an Air Quality Management Area.



Severance of north and south Farnham

The A31 Farnham Bypass is a busy route for traffic through the area. Together with the railway line, it is the main cause of severance between north and south Farnham. There are also long queues of traffic on the A31 at the Hickley's Corner junction.

The A31 also adversely affects the ability to easily, safely, and enjoyably travel to and around the town centre on foot and by bicycle. Rather than enjoying the natural and built environment, people are affected by the high volumes of traffic.



Dependency on car travel

One of the causes of these challenges is the very high car dependency of people living in the town. Car ownership in Farnham is very high, even compared to the average for Surrey which has some of the highest car ownership in the country.

Both Farnham and Surrey have significantly more residents driving to work than the national average. Fewer people in Farnham use buses and trains than the Surrey and national average.

The town centre is served by several car parks, with 2,470 spaces, which is enough for 7% of Farnham residents (who have access to a car) to park in the town centre at any one time. This is very high, and much higher than comparable towns in Surrey.

But Farnham is a market town that supports/attracts a much wider group of people than just Farnham residents. See Board 6.

There is enough parking for 7% of Farnham residents (who have access to a car) to park in the town centre at any one time.



Travel around Farnham

Public transport

Limited numbers of people use buses to travel within Farnham, in part because many people choose to walk if they live close to the town centre. However, it is also clear that buses currently do not provide a sufficiently attractive alternative to driving.

Existing bus routes connect parts of the town. However, increased frequencies, bus priority on roads and junctions, and faster journeys could help to make services more attractive.



Walking and cycling

Walking is popular for some short journeys – typically within the town centre and between the town centre and both south-west and south-east Farnham. Cycling is less popular in all locations with very limited numbers. Topography is an influencing factor for both modes due to the hilly nature of parts of Farnham. There are also concerns about road safety.

Improved infrastructure and access to e-bikes and e-scooters could help make these active modes more attractive.



Lorries and goods traffic

Many stakeholders and residents have expressed concerns about the volumes of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) in the town centre. Traffic surveys indicate that Farnham has a similar percentage of HGVs to other Surrey towns.

However, Farnham has a higher proportion of light goods vehicles. This could be due to two main factors: the town centre containing a high number of smaller independent retailers and businesses, and high demand from residents for delivery of online purchases.

Although goods vehicles loading and unloading can cause congestion in the town centre, the most recent comprehensive surveys (from 2019) showed that traffic queues are caused mainly by cars. Most collisions on the road network also involve cars, with only a small number involving goods vehicles. There is a clear root cause to these challenges: high levels of car dependency in the town.



Looking to the future

Waverley Borough, and Surrey overall, are forecast to experience significant growth over the next 30 years. While this is positive as it reflects the strength of the economy, and the attractiveness of the county to residents, employers, and visitors, this growth will have serious consequences.

Total annual vehicle kilometres travelled on the road network are forecast to increase by 40% from 2020 to 2050. Without action these increases in traffic will cause a further deterioration of the quality of place in Farnham, increased congestion and worsening of air quality. This will impact on people's quality of life and the competitiveness of the town centre.

Even with the Government's acceleration of the ban on sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles from 2030, the pace of change would be too slow to reach net zero carbon by 2050. Further measures are required to reduce emissions during the 2020s. These include reducing emissions from goods vehicles, reducing the length and frequency of car journeys, and increasing the number of journeys made by public and active transport.

Travel behaviour change will be crucial to achieving net zero carbon, including reducing the need to travel, reducing the number and distance of journeys undertaken by private vehicles, and a shift to low carbon alternatives like walking, cycling and public transport. We all need to take action to make this happen and the partners, working through the programme, want to support people in Farnham to move to more environmentally-friendly ways to travel whenever they can.

Total annual vehicle kilometres travelled on the road network are forecast to increase by 40% from 2020 to 2050

40%
↑



Wider context

Any proposed changes need to comply with a number of policies to ensure they receive approval or are eligible for government funding, which may be crucial for a scheme to be taken forward.

Many policies will have changed since previous studies were undertaken for the town, which means that previous options may no longer be appropriate.

Key documents that inform our proposals include:

International

- The 2015 Paris Agreement - designed to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius, preferably to 1.5, compared to pre-industrial levels.

National

- The Climate Change Act 2008 sets out emission targets for the UK and was amended in 2019 to include a commitment to net zero carbon by 2050
- The 2017 UK Industrial Strategy is a long-term plan to deliver jobs, economic growth and prosperity, and boost productivity by backing investment in skills and infrastructure
- Priorities in the Department for Transport's Decarbonising Transport report from 2020 include encouraging a shift to walking, cycling and public transport, decarbonising road vehicles, and developing the right local solutions.

Regional

- Transport for the South East's strategy looks at the impacts of how we travel on the economy and highlights the importance of net zero carbon and sustainable growth
- The Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership's industrial strategy notes that infrastructure has not kept pace with growth, congestion is an issue and rail links need improvement.

Local

- There are three strategic priorities in Surrey's 2050 Place Ambition: a) improving links within Surrey and between vital hubs; b) enhancing towns, including reducing car travel and maximising built and natural environments; and c) maximising Surrey's economic assets
- Surrey's Climate Change Strategy focuses on tackling climate change across every aspect of council services together with action by residents, businesses and partners. Surrey's 11 district and borough councils, and Farnham Town Council have also recognised the imminent threat and set their own emissions reductions targets
- There are four priorities in the Surrey 2030 Economic Strategy: supporting the innovation economy, growing and sustaining quality places, maximising opportunities and capturing the potential of a greener economy
- Surrey County Council is currently preparing a new Local Transport Plan. It is focused on reducing carbon emissions, ensuring communities are connected to encourage social mobility, supporting growth and helping communities thrive with clean air, excellent health, wellbeing and quality of life
- Waverley's adopted Local Plan Part 1 sets out strategic policies across transport, housing, employment and infrastructure
- The vision in the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan is 'for Farnham to continue to thrive, meeting the changing needs of the local community by ensuring new development... fits well with, and does not erode, the character... of the town and is supported by improved infrastructure.'



Plan objectives

Having considered the situation in the town, previous studies and relevant policies, the objectives of the plan are:



Rapidly reduce carbon emissions, ensuring that Farnham and Waverley are on track for net zero by 2050



Well-connected communities across Farnham and the surrounding area



Support Farnham's economy and enable growth across the surrounding area



Improve the quality of place in Farnham, with clean air, healthy lifestyles and less dominance of traffic on communities



What do you think about the issues in Farnham?

Please feedback at: <https://farnhaminfrastructure.commonplace.is/proposals/wider-context>

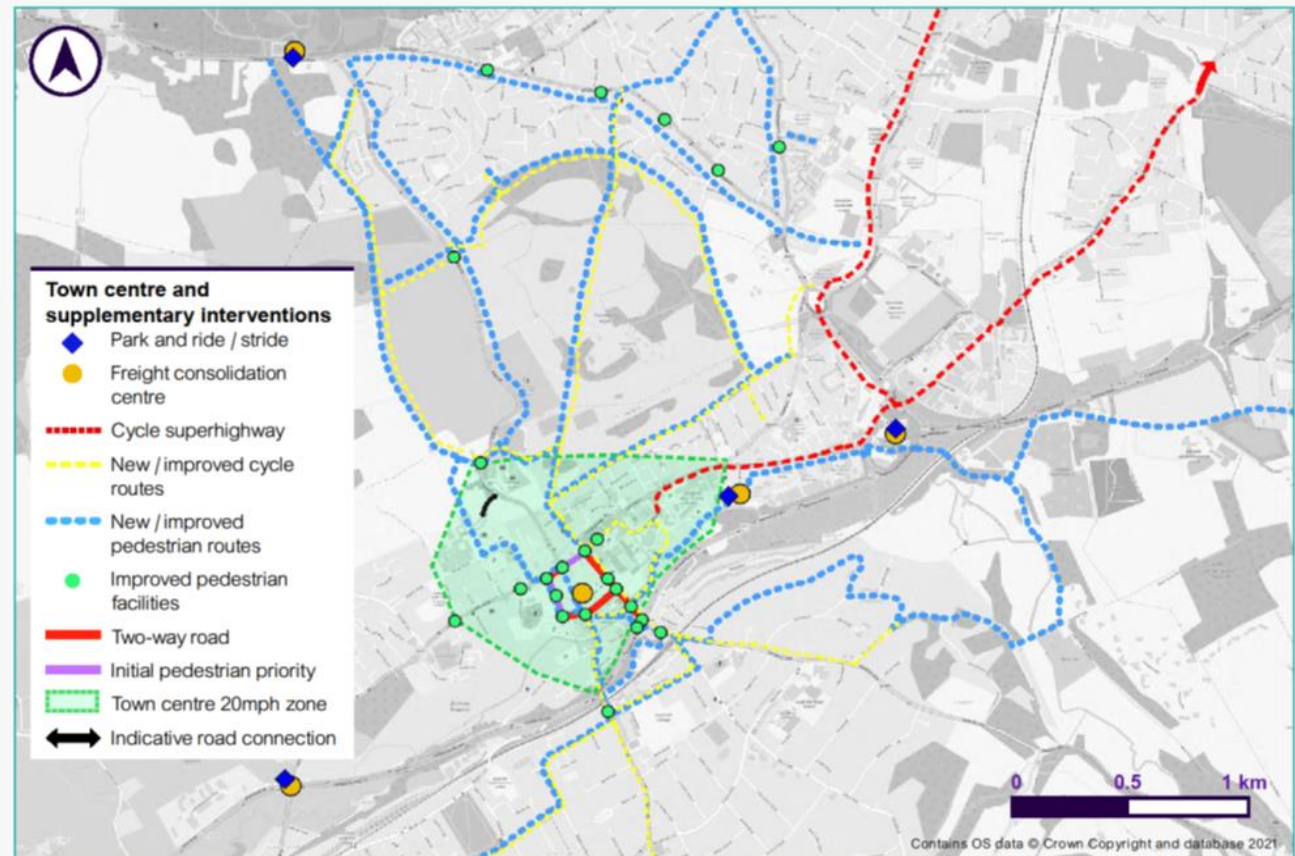
Possible town centre interventions

This is the historic heart of Farnham, an important destination between Guildford and Winchester that serves western Surrey and eastern Hampshire. It benefits from a dynamic economy, with high-quality shops, food and drink destinations, unique heritage and status as a World Craft Town. However, traffic dominates the town centre.

Work has already begun on new restrictions to HGVs travelling through the town, and consideration of lowering speed limits to 20mph and reclassifying roads is already underway. At its cabinet meeting in January 2021, Surrey County Council agreed £2.5 million in funding to deliver these 'quick wins' and for further feasibility studies.

Potential options could include:

- An integrated town centre strategy, ensuring high-quality public spaces
- Improvements to integrate walking routes from new development areas to the east, including Brightwells, into the rest of the town centre
- Major improvements to walking and cycling
- New public transport hubs
- A fundamental review of bus services to transform accessibility to the town centre using public transport
- Major changes to the town centre road layout, with major improvements to the pedestrian experience
- Better management of town centre car parking, including a review of existing car parks alongside new 'park and ride / stride' sites, and electronic signs to show where spaces are available
- Off-street locations for deliveries by goods vehicles
- New freight consolidation centres to reduce the number of goods vehicles entering the town centre; short-medium term in the town centre, longer-term facilities on the outskirts.



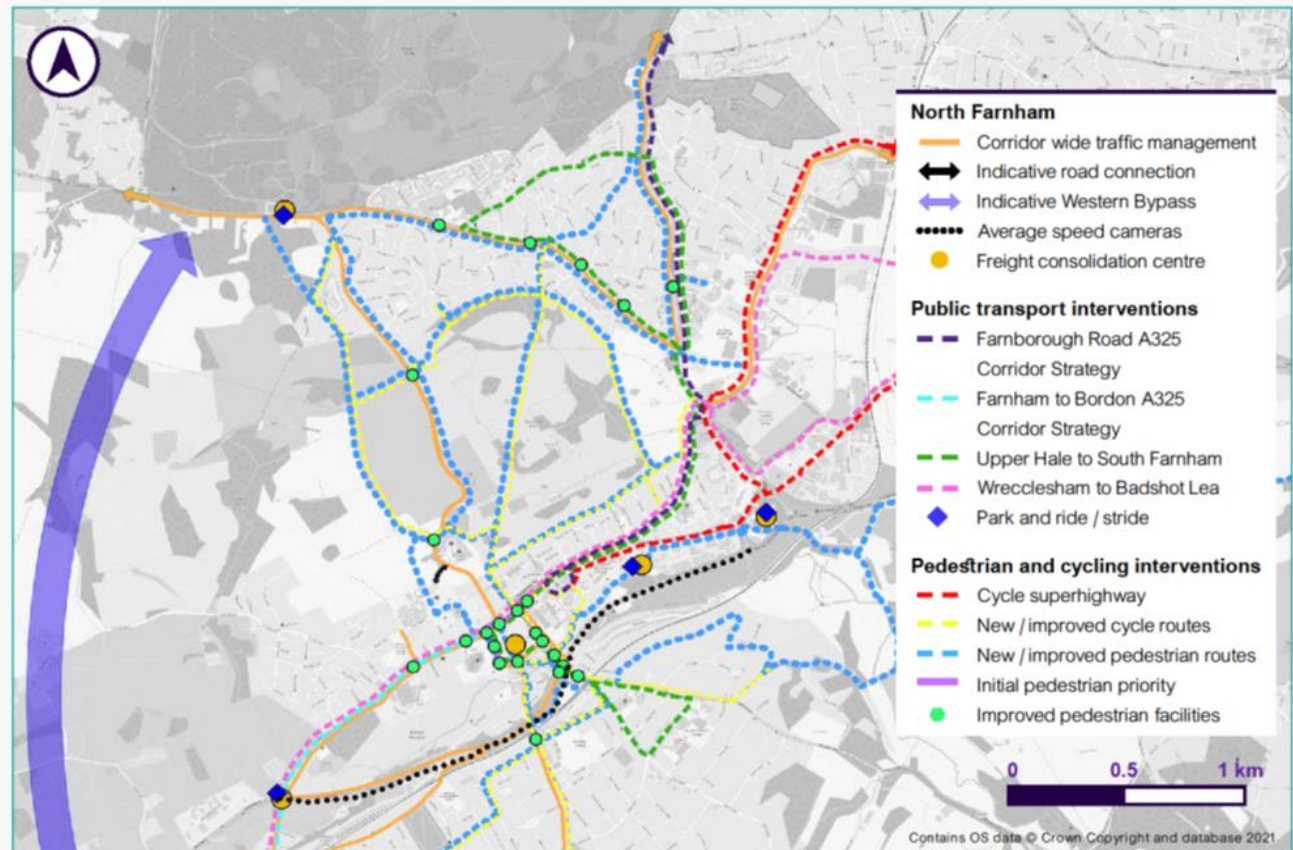
Possible North Farnham interventions

This urban area has strong links with adjacent parts of Hampshire. There are traffic demands from both cars and goods vehicles. There are significant challenges caused by heavy traffic on roads including the A3016 through Upper Hale and A325 through Heath End.

Potential options could include:

- A programme of traffic management measures, which will be the subject of further study
- Improved walking and cycling, including high quality segregated routes through Badshot Lea and Weybourne, and new / improved routes through Farnham Park
- Measures to create wider pavements and narrower roads
- Investigating new bus services and enhanced bus infrastructure on the A325 Farnham to Aldershot corridor
- Working closely with Hampshire County Council to ensure seamless new walking and cycling routes, bus routes and traffic management
- An initial assessment on the potential benefits of a Western Bypass, focusing on the ability to reduce through traffic.

Quick wins will also be progressed to tackle the impacts of HGVs and speeding traffic through the area, including reduced speed limits, e.g. 20mph.



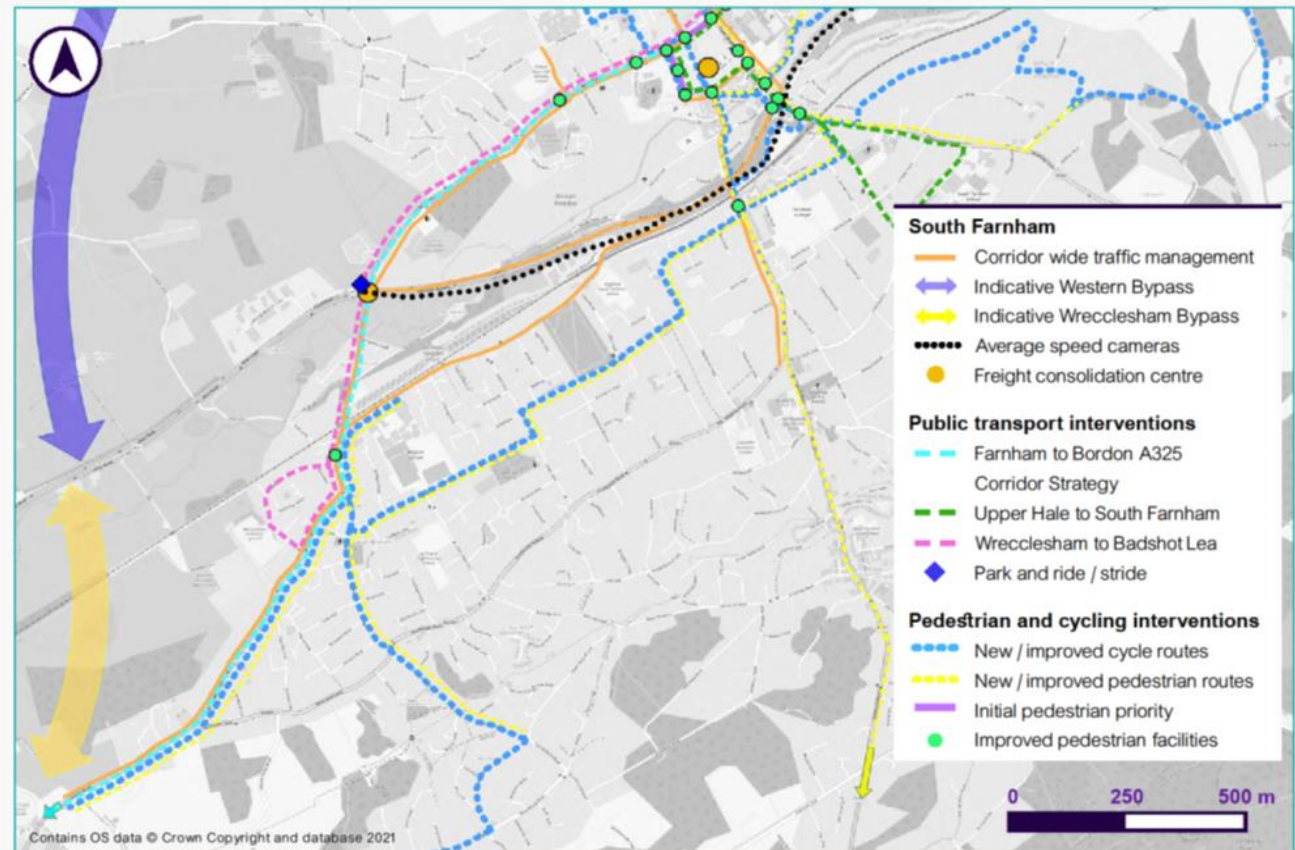
Possible South Farnham interventions

This area faces significant challenges caused by local traffic and longer journeys from south west Surrey and eastern Hampshire. There are problems caused by the level crossing near the station, with long tailbacks. There are also problems caused by traffic passing through Wrecclesham, which experiences problems caused by a low rail bridge.

Potential options could include:

- Further studies for Wrecclesham, including investigation of the benefits of a bypass
- Schemes will be progressed for improved walking and cycling, including in Wrecclesham
- Further studies of the station area and ways to tackle severance between south Farnham and the town centre caused by the railway, A31 and River Wey
- Potential options to reduce the amount of traffic using the level crossing by the station
- New bus routes and better bus infrastructure through Wrecclesham.

Quick wins will also be progressed to tackle the impacts of speeding traffic in the area.



Possible A31 corridor interventions

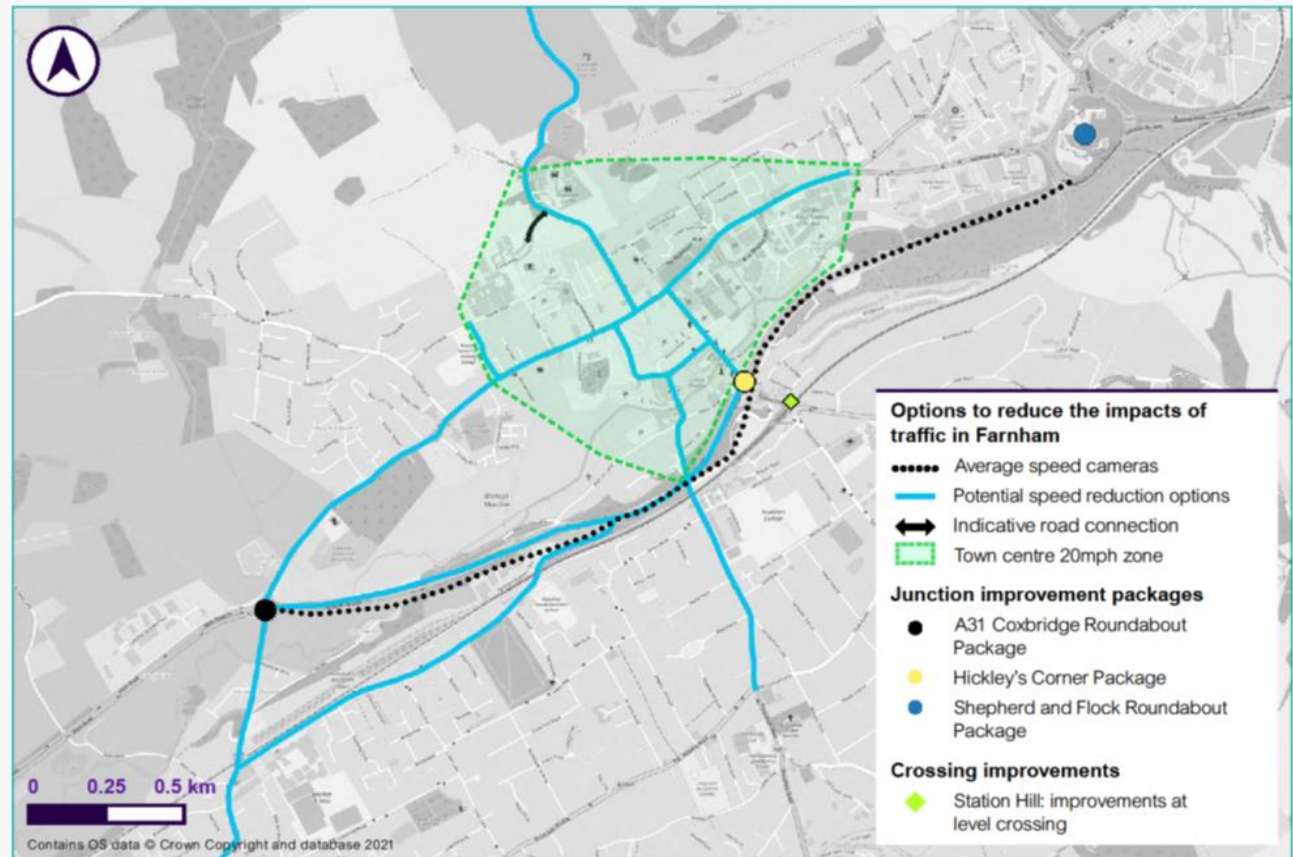
The A31 is the main east-west route through western Surrey and eastern Hampshire and plays a vital role in the regional economy. The main bottleneck on the route is the Hickley's Corner junction, with long queues on the approaches. The area is forecast to experience rapid growth in population, which will exacerbate delays at the junction.

Potential options could include:

We need to do more detailed study work to assess the A31 corridor and develop a programme of improvements between the Coxbridge, and Shepherd and Flock roundabouts. This will include addressing the challenges at Hickley's Corner and be fully integrated with the proposals for the town centre and South Farnham.

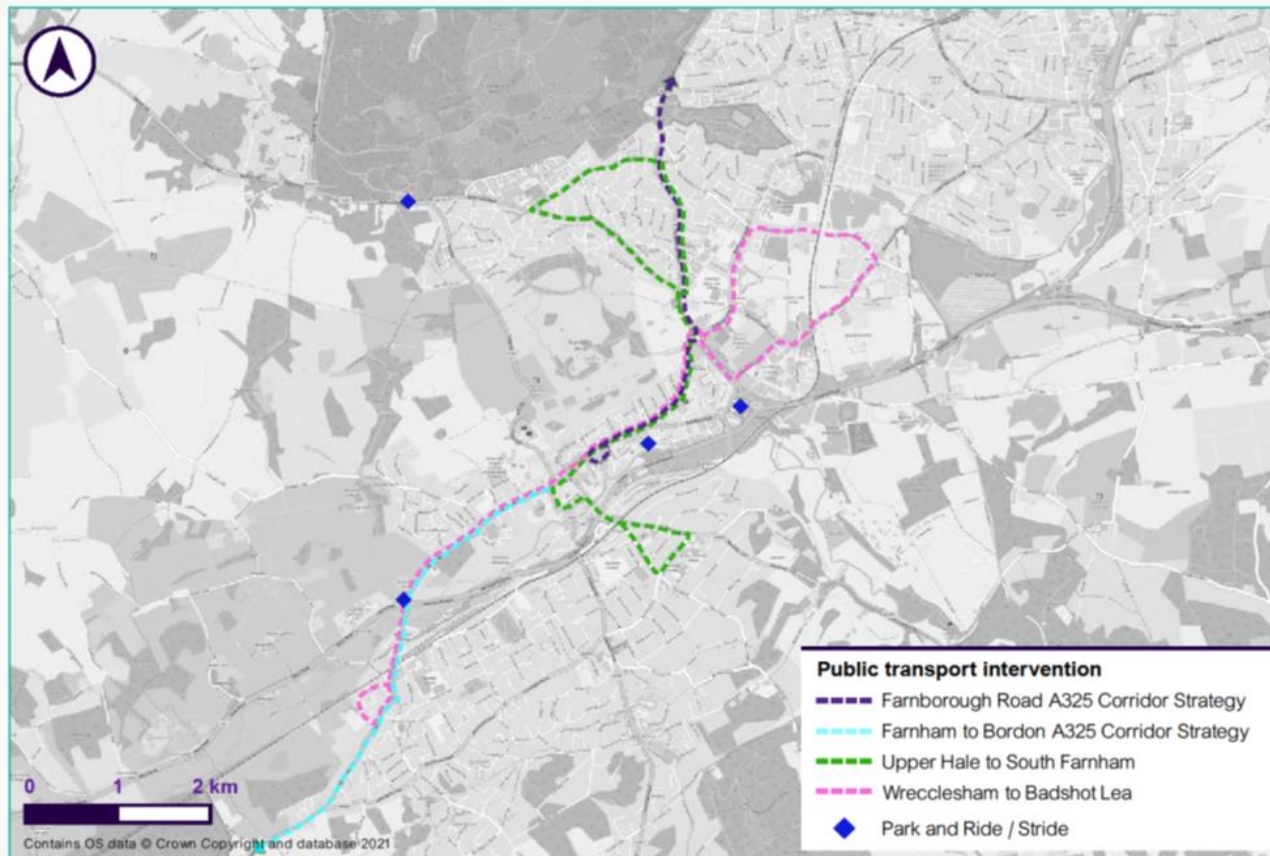
We have reviewed the options that were previously developed for a new underpass at Hickley's Corner in the 1990s and 2000s. A new underpass would be very expensive to build and could create serious disruption to the town for a long period during construction. It is also unlikely to be consistent with our objectives to rapidly reduce carbon emissions. We will therefore investigate a wide range of options that could solve the problems facing this area of the town.

Short-term measures to improve road safety and smooth traffic flows by using average speed cameras, and reducing the speed limit on the A31, will also be considered.



Farnham-wide improvements

Providing environmental improvements across Farnham to help people travel and tackle the causes of climate change will be vital to the success of the programme, and to bring the change people in the town want to see.



Helping people leave the car at home

- Creation of a travel app, which brings public transport, walking and cycling options together in one place
- Introducing car clubs to the town, for people who don't need regular use of a car
- More work with schools to encourage more walking and cycling
- More emphasis on supporting pedestrians including improved footpaths, priority streets and new crossing points
- Increased cycle parking in the town centre and other key locations
- Dedicated cycle paths
- Hire or subsidised purchase of e-bikes and e-scooters.

Reclaiming roads from cars

- Piloting and then rolling out low traffic neighbourhoods – where it is harder for drivers to 'rat run' through residential areas.

Using buses

- Improved services and bus stops
- Using electric and ultra-low emission buses
- Review fares – including free passes and hopper tickets
- Review bus routes.

What happens next?

Please provide your views on our plans for Farnham via the questionnaire on the website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/farnhamprogramme

The views of people in Farnham are essential before we start detailed work on the proposals. Please share your views by Sunday 14 March 2021 by visiting www.bit.ly/farnhaminfrastructure

We will also have an online Q&A session if you would like more information: see the website for more details. You can also get involved through the Local Liaison Forums – find out more at: www.farnham.gov.uk/LLF

We will take account of the feedback that you provide as we develop the next version of the Plan. We will also be carrying out further technical studies over the next six months to develop the proposals. We will then present a more detailed version of the Plan later in 2021, including a specific action plan for the key components.