



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Bi

Notes

Reconvened Meeting of Strategy & Finance

Time and date of meeting

9.30 13th December 2022

Members

Cllr David Beaman, Cllr George Hesse, Cllr John Neale
Alan Earwaker (ex officio), Cllr Pat Evans via Zoom

Officers:

Iain Lynch (Town Clerk), Lisa Tremeer (Communities and Administration Manager)

1 Apologies

Cllrs Carole Cockburn, Mark Merryweather, Paula Dunsmore, Kika Mirylees.

2 Disclosure of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Farnham Infrastructure Programme – Papers for Farnham Board 16th December

3 The Farnham Infrastructure Program (FIP) Update.

- i) Cllr Beaman presented his summarised notes and thoughts on the papers for the FIP Board which was used as a basis for meeting discussion. He advised that the papers were not as advanced as the councillors on the Board had been briefed by the Programme Team.
- ii) The Town Clerk commented how frustrating it was that the documents had been circulated so late with insufficient time for officers to review the documents before the meeting on Friday as was normal practice (and previous practice with the FIP). This was not a good example of joint working. It was also noted that there was nothing about partnership and the new report branding did not include the partner councils in the Joint Board, only Surrey County Council. There had been no notification of branding change and the members should consider how they wanted to deal with that. Cllr Hesse suggested an email be sent to the Tim Oliver or Katie Stewart to point out the lack of reference to partner councils and lack of involvement of the respective council's officers as would be expected.
- iii) The Panel went through each point from Cllr Beaman's summarised notes and were in agreement with all the points mentioned with some amendments. There was agreement for a few changes to be made to the wording on the final document to be given to council, (see attachment B1) which included the following changes:

- Point number 3: To include **‘With a provision for a suspension for west bound vehicles during large events.’**
- Point number 5: To include **‘FTC supports (as consultation responses also recorded) the provision of bus laybys’**
- Point number 9: To split the paragraph and add **‘Could transfer air quality issues from The Borough to Downing Street with the right turn from Castle Street.’** It was also noted that the air quality problem would move from one road to another and if the pavements in The Borough were widened without a right turn, there could be continued problems in the Borough and it was important to consider the implications.
- Here was discussion on the potential to retain the current pelican crossing outside Boots, and avoid the need for new traffic lights at the top of Downing Street allowing traffic to turn left into West Street without congesting Downing Street. There was a strong view to reduce the requirement for and minimise street furniture wherever possible.
- Point number 11: To include **‘for Central Government and other funding.’**
- Point number 12: To change the paragraph to read **‘Where pavements have been widened for pedestrians or cyclists, use of higher quality materials should be prioritised.’** In addition, to include **‘FTC again wishes to remind SCC that a significant surplus has been built up through on-street parking charges that was agreed to be ring fenced as part of the agreement in introduction of on-street parking charges.’**
- Point number 14: To change the wording to read **‘FTC would support remaining parking spaces on Castle Street being given priority for residents with consideration also given to...’**
- Point number 15: To change the wording to read **‘With the proposal to move to the detailed design stage of certain elements of the FIP, FTC would urge SCC to engage more with FTC (and WBC) staff on all elements of the FIP with their invaluable local knowledge to avoid problems which have been experienced to date.’**

iv) **The following recommendations were made for council to consider:**

- Point number 6: **‘The light controlled pedestrian crossing on South Street at the junction with Victoria Road should be retained in its existing position (not moved up to Sainsbury’s) to allow the continuation of useful gaps in traffic for vehicles emerging from Victoria Road when traffic is stopped on South Street to allow pedestrians to cross and save costs.’**
- Point number 7: **‘FTC supports (as the consultation comments stated) the provision of bus laybys wherever possible at town centre bus stops to avoid traffic flow being held up by passengers alighting from and boarding stationary vehicles.’**
- Point number 9: There was a motion to council to minimise street furniture and consider the air quality issue.
- Point number 11: Town Clerk to put caveats in this comment and would ask to reflect comments already made by councillors and staff on the LCWIP.
- Point 14: **FTC would support remaining parking spaces on Castle Street being given priority for residents with consideration also being given to compensatory car parking spaces also being made available in WBC controlled Upper Hart and Central Car**

Parks. It was also noted the anticipated inclusion of taxis in East Street as part of the Brightwells scheme was not showing in the FIP document.

Recommendation to Council:

It is recommended that the comments in Annex I be agreed as the Council's response to the response to the FIP Town Centre Consultation report.

v) Upper Hart Link Road Paper

Members considered the new Link Road paper that was again heavily emphasising negative points in a contradictory way (eg referencing Farnham Castle as a listed monument but the same argument was not being applied to the more pertinent impact on the listed monument in the LCWIP paper on routes preferred by SCC). There was a strong view that the Link Road should be retained. Cllr Hesse drafted the following for consideration by Council:

“On the final page of the Farnham Infrastructure Programme’s High Level Feasibility Report on the proposed Upper Hart Link Road, point 29 contains the Conclusion and Recommendation. Paragraph 3 states :-
“It is recommended that further work on the route be paused and that it is removed from any emerging designs and work focused on maximising sustainable travel options for Farnham’s residents.”

Accordingly, a motion with an alternative conclusion is proposed for Council to propose to the Board:- “That the Farnham Infrastructure Programme maintains the provision of the link road, to provide access for the residents and visitors from North Farnham to the Hart and The University of Creative Arts as an essential part of successful town centre improvements and minimise traffic moving around the town centre. The potential opportunity to extend this link road to West Street at a future point should be retained.”

4 Town Clerk Update

Members noted a request from the Isabella Schroder Trust to reappoint Jack Crawford and appoint Joan Anniballi as a new trustee following the resignation of Jill Beaumont who was moving out of the area.

Recommendation to Council:

It is recommended that Jack Crawfords and Joan Anniballi be appointed as Trustees of the Isabella Schroder Trust

Notes taken by Lisa Tremeer.

Annex I

Below is the proposed response to the FIP Consultation report on the Town Centre (in no particular order) recommended by the reconvened meeting of the Strategy and Finance Working Group held on Tuesday 13th December 2022.

After discussion at the meeting it is proposed:

1. FTC support SCC proceeding to design stage the proposals for Castle Street, Downing Street and The Borough reflecting the support received during public consultation exercise.
2. FTC welcomes the proposal for two-way traffic on the section of Downing Street between Lower Church Lane and Longbridge.
3. FTC welcomes the designation of Park Row as an active travel route for cyclists and pedestrians with a provision for suspension of no traffic for west bound vehicles, during large events.
4. FTC supports the need for further work to be undertaken on Bear Lane (which would be strongly influenced if two-way traffic was implemented on Woolmead Road).
5. With regards to South Street and Union Road, FTC now believes that the status quo of traffic movements should be retained rather than allowing two-way traffic on these roads. The implementation of two-way traffic on Union Road would be hindered by the bus stop which is used by 7/8 buses per hour of which 3 buses per hour use this stop as a terminus point with layover times which would prevent the free flow of traffic if traffic flow was two-way since there is no room to accommodate a bus stop layby at this location. If Union Road was to remain one way (east to west) then Victoria Road would have to remain one way (west to east) for traffic travelling in the opposite direction.

The retention of one-way traffic on Union Road and Victoria Road would also avoid the need for a traffic light-controlled crossing at the junction of South Street and Union Road and potentially with Longbridge and Downing Street if the section of Downing Street between Lower Church Lane and Longbridge was to become two-way.

The conversion of South Street to two-way operation would result in an added phase to the traffic light sequence at the Royal Deer junction which could result in longer traffic tailbacks particularly on The Borough if this is reduced to one traffic lane with pavement widening with knock on traffic tailbacks likely on Castle Street.

Retention of one-way traffic on South Street could allow consideration to be given to construction of a cycleway on South Street between Union Road and The Royal Deer junction.

6. The light controlled pedestrian crossing on South Street at its junction with Victoria Road should be retained in its existing position to allow the continuation of useful gaps in traffic for traffic emerging from Victoria Road when traffic is stopped on South Street to allow pedestrians to cross. There would be no need for the cost of moving the traffic lights to Sainsburys if single lane traffic was retained.
7. FTC supports (as the consultation did) the provision of bus laybys wherever possible at town centre bus stops to avoid traffic flow being held up by passengers alighting from and boarding stationary vehicles in a live lane.

8. FTC supports the provision of improved bus stop infrastructure (shelters, seating, and provision of real time information) for the benefit of waiting passengers.
9. FTC is still very concerned over the proposal to allow right turns from Castle Street into The Borough which could create potential lengthy tailbacks of traffic along Castle Street. This would also potentially move the air quality problem in the Borough to Downing Street.

Although it is accepted that construction of the short length of new road between Castle Hill and the Upper Hart car park could not be implemented quickly due to the time needed to acquire land not already in SCC's possession, the route should be protected should it be required to be constructed at some time in the future.

10. FTC welcomes the undertaking to investigate the potential for two-way traffic flow on Woolmead Road to facilitate bus, pedestrian, and cyclist only access on all or part of East Street between The Royal Deer junction and Dogflud Way.
11. FTC supports the provision of additional cycling infrastructure / parking where possible. FTC supports with certain reservations the Farnham LCWIP report as a basis for identifying certain corridors to be subject to further design work as a basis for bids to be made for Central Government and other funding. FTC's reservations relate to routes that continue to be included in the LCWIP report for further investigation which have already been identified by councillors and officers from SCC, WBC and FTC as not being feasible. In addition other routes favoured by WBC and FTC that would suit local use (without harming the archaeology of the scheduled monument) have been excluded.
12. It remains a concern for FTC that there is still no commitment to using the highest quality materials when extending pavements and improving other areas of the public realm. Where pavements have been widened for pedestrians or cyclists, use of higher quality materials should be prioritised. FTC again wishes to remind SCC that a significant surplus has been built up through on street parking charges that was agreed to be ring fenced (as part of the agreement in introduction of on-street parking charges) for use in Farnham which should now be used for providing high quality materials particularly in the town centre which is a designated Conservation Area.
13. FTC would support SCC giving a firm commitment to extending the HGV weight restriction and 20 mph speed limit to other roads in the town at the earliest possible opportunity.
14. With the reduction in car parking spaces in Castle Street, South of Long Garden Walk, associated with proposed pavement widening, FTC would support remaining parking spaces on Castle Street being given priority for residents with consideration also being given to compensatory car parking spaces also being made available in WBC controlled Upper Hart and Central Car Parks.
15. With the proposal to move to the detailed design stage of certain elements of the FIP FTC would urge SCC to engage more with FTC (and WBC) staff on all elements of the FIP with their invaluable local knowledge to avoid problems which have been experienced to date.
16. There is need to include taxis in East Street by Brightwells as the anticipated provision is not currently shown in the latest drawings.
17. FTC would like street furniture to be kept to a minimum in the implementation of the scheme.