

Meeting Notes

Before the meeting I was able to do a site visit with Elaine Martin (Programme Manager) and her boss (David Stempfer). This was useful as they agreed to do a further safety audit to re-evaluate:

- White lines on The Borough
- Additional look right and left coming out of the Central carpark on to The Borough
- Green man phasing at the top of Downing Street
- Moving pedestrian crossings at the new junction closer in and removing the temporary island
- Additional pull ins on Downing Street
- Taking the pedestrian crossing on Downing Street out of service as it is conflicting with the new lights

Item 2 - Actions from last meeting

- Crest are aware of the need for them to reinstate the trees along the A31 removed for the construction bridge
- Meeting held on Castle Street
 - Review potential to swap loading bay and 2-hour/resident parking on west side
 - Review location and size of “E” shaped rain garden at south-east end of Castle Street.
 - Cllr Hesse offered to review stored ironstone quantity.
- SCC Comms review - they are still focused on behaviour change campaign
- HGV Enforcement
 - Officer reported on warning notices and penalties
 - I provided an update from the Cabinet Member that a fixed camera has been purchased for the Odiham Road and will be installed by the end of June

Item 3 - Updates

- Riverside walk open, still lighting and benches to be installed but the route is open - formal opening in May requested by FTC - I requested we did more comms before the Easter Holidays to encourage those that can to park and stride
- Crest are still working on the bridge and Borellis Walk
- LCWIP
 - Updates/additions to the Farnham LCWIP report put forward by WBC and SCC have been agreed for inclusion within the report addendum. Final item regarding alignment of a section of a route in Farnham Park is in discussion with Cllrs before proceeding. [Note the Leader of Waverley Borough Council has now cancelled four meetings with me to resolve this - I have written to him again this weekend asking for a meeting next week]
 - Funding allocated to progress feasibility designs (LCWIP stage 2). Work being prepared to commence

Item 4 - Town Centre

- Confirmed that there will be no work outside Elphicks in November or December
- Resurfacing of South Street has been moved forward into 2025

- Once the permanent lights are installed they will talk to each other and be sequenced, can't do this with the temporary lights. Request made by for the team to review to see if they can do this before Christmas embargo - promised to review but currently the earliest is Spring 2026
- Are addressing delivery issues working with businesses - in the site visit I also requested this consider additional pull ins
- Businesses had requested Portable Variable Messaging Signs on the key roundabouts outside town, these have now been installed.
- FIP team apologised for the early opening of the new 2 way section catching people by surprise
- FIP team have committed to having a week between the completion of the works at the bottom of Downing Street and starting the new 2 way section to ensure that there is significant comms around this before go live
- FIP team advised that Comms for this project is far beyond anything they have ever done before for a highways scheme.
- FIP team also advised that they now have agreement to include maps and they will be looking to roll out a behaviour change campaign after Easter
- I advised that there were still significant gaps, so a group of Local Councillors are committed to working with the Farnham BID (Business Improvement District) to produce a weekly publication of events and update on the FIP. I also asked that the FIP team support this - didn't get an absolute commitment but hopefully they will. I also said that the 3 SCC Councillors are going to set up regular face to face drop ins in the evening with businesses so that we can capture issues and concerns and send them to the team to address.
- I verbally shared the information that I had received from WBC Officers regarding footfall which based on the data source they can access shows no impact and also on air quality which again shows no impact - it was agreed that a more detailed review would be undertaken for the next meeting, including looking at the data the BID team has which is more detailed.
- There was a discussion about car parking
 - At the moment the number of tickets brought and the durations of stay are not showing an impact and data that is currently available shows a slight increase
 - Agreed that for the next meeting more detailed information would be made available
 - Cllr Fairclough explained that the increase in charges is to cover new machines and the repair of potholes - the new machines will allow direct card payments saving residents money as they don't need to pay the RINGO fee and that they will be more reliable as the existing machines often cannot get a signal so are not in use.
- Cllr Andy MacLeod - SCC Farnham Central - raised a recent site visit regarding Park Row
 - There is a 1970s block paved section adjacent to the Almshouses wall that we relaid about 5 years ago, however, it has already sunk and really cannot be designed for the HGVs that are still using the route
 - Where it has sunk water pools and the splashes up against the listed walk.
 - SCC Officers have advised that in order to permanently resolve this issue the block paved section needs to be replaced with tarmac
 - Cllr MacLeod asked that the FIP team review whether they could do this as part of the work they are doing on the Town Centre works at that junction - the team will review and advise

- The previous consultation to close the route to all by pedestrians and cyclists was not successful so the FIP plans to make it permanently one way from Bear Lane to Castle Street to reduce rat running and damage to the listed buildings

Item 5 - Wider Network Management

- There are a significant number of other pressures on the road network including the Hawthorns development on Hale Road and the Coxbridge Farm Development on West Street both of which want to close lanes this year
- Crest also have lane closures coming up associated with the construction bridge removal and installation of the new bridge and kerbing work.
- Southern Gas Network have also announced that they need to do major works on Folly Hill, Castle street, Firgrove Hill, Beavers Road, Hale Road and Red Lion Lane
- There is also the normal verge maintenance on the A31 and A325 which they are looking to schedule around the FIP works.
- The SCC Traffic Manager gave a very clear explanation of the challenges they are facing and how they are trying to meet both their statutory duties to allow these works to be done but also trying to get them done working around the FIP to minimise disruption and to look where works can be done simultaneously where possible

Item 6 - Farnham A31 Corridor

- Having passed the first phase gate of the Strategic business Case officers are now working on an outline business case which is required to release funding. Update from the team
 - Reviewing scheme cost-effectiveness and benefits. This includes looking at the benefit cost ratio of alternative options. The results will give direction on design, help to understand benefits of delivering the whole scheme versus smaller sections and to identify key steps required to proceed to Outline Business Case.
 - Submission of Outline Business Case is expected to be August 2026.
 - FIP is in regular communication with DfT.
- I asked that officers confirm that North / South Connectivity and active travel are still being considered and they confirmed that they are.

Item 7 - Programme and Risk update

- Officers ran through the projects already completed
- Town Centre is on-going
- There were not dates for A31, Western / Wrecclesham Bypass or the North and South Farnham studies - Officer confirmed they are still all in the future.

Item 8 - Public Questions

Question from Peter Goodman - Farnham Cycling Campaign (18/03/25): why carriageway widths are 3.2m which does not allow cyclists to pass queued cars, when the OIP wanted walking and cycling to become the preferred choice of transport.

Answer: While dedicated cycle lanes would be preferred, it is rarely possible to do so in historic town centres like Farnham which have a tight street pattern and high pedestrian footfall. Footway widths on Downing Street

are currently sub-standard, and footway widening was identified as the priority during consultation and design development with the Farnham Board. The widened footway also accommodates loading bays which are a critical element to avoid congestion behind delivery vehicles stopped at the kerb. This is aligned with SCC's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) which puts pedestrians at the top of the hierarchy followed by cycling.

Where separation cannot be provided, good practice guidance (Department for Transport LTN 1/20 and Active Travel England) recommends avoiding lane widths between 3.2m and 3.9m as it encourages 'filtering' without safe space to do so. The better and more importantly safer option for cyclists is to create narrower and consistent lanes (3.2m or lower).

This means cyclists would cycle with traffic when travelling through Farnham town centre where the maximum speed limit is 20mph. There will be traffic calming measures such as raised tables to further slow traffic and provide crossing points for pedestrians.

Advance stop lines will be provided for cyclists who are at the front when the traffic light turns red to increase their visibility. We are also providing more cycle stands in the town centre to support cyclists.

The design is now fixed, and we are not able to make any further changes.

Item 9 - AOB

I raised that there are two different categories of issue we need to continue to discuss

- Issues associated with the on-going works
- Issues associated with pipeline projects such as the A31, Wrecclesham / Western By Pass and the North & South Farnham Studies

Local Councillors are keen to ensure that we are having the right discussions at the right teams with the right people involved and therefore as Tim Oliver was unable to attend this meeting, I requested that an action be raised on Tim and I to organise a meeting with the existing members of the board to review this.

All agreed that today's meeting had been useful and that sharing the additional information on wider network challenges, footfall, car parks and air quality was important.