

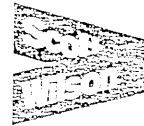
FARNHAM – REVIEW OF MOVEMENT STUDIES AND MAJOR SCHEMES FINAL REPORT

Section 1: Background



1 BACKGROUND

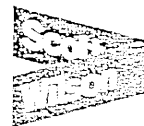
- 1.1 Farnham is a historic market town in the west of Surrey, close to the border with Hampshire. Although the main A31 (Guildford to Winchester) road bypasses the town, there is significant traffic on the other A roads that pass through the town centre. The town has a one-way system around the central district, part of this comprises narrow roads and pavements in close proximity leading to conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.
- 1.2 Farnham has one of the longest established conservation societies and building preservation trusts in the country. Much of the mainly Georgian town centre and other parts of the parish have been designated an Outstanding Conservation Area. There is much local interest in transport issues represented in the transport interest groups that have evolved.
- 1.3 Although Farnham has been the focus of a number of major transport studies in recent years, there have been few new significant schemes implemented in the town. This may in part be due to the long running proposals for major transport schemes associated with the town and the A31 Bypass. Congestion on the bypass section of the A31 is considered to result in 'through' traffic in the town centre. Relieving this problem is anticipated to result in lower congestion and improved accessibility to and within the town centre.
- 1.4 A number of significant schemes have been considered in Farnham. These include: a Western Bypass comprising a new highway section from the A325 Farnborough Road just north of the county boundary to the Coxbridge Roundabout; and a Wrecclesham Relief Road, involving a new section of highway from Coxbridge Roundabout to Holt Pound Lane. Although the Western Bypass has been abandoned due to significant environmental constraints, the Wrecclesham Relief Road is still considered a feasible future scheme.
- 1.5 Many schemes proposed for Farnham relate to improving town centre accessibility and the environment in the town. The protracted decisions concerning the funding and feasibility of the more major schemes may have added uncertainty in the need for and severity of the measures required to improve the town centre.
- 1.6 The disappointing decision by the Region, The South Downs, to give top priority to the A31 Highways Corridor, and major scheme rather than to fund for a traffic study and a new transport strategy for Farnham town centre. A table detailing the Regional Transport Authority Schemes and Interventions by Parish 2011 to 2016, extracted from the South East Hampshire Transport Study, is provided in Appendix A.
- 1.7 The study is intended to inform the development of a new transport strategy for Farnham. Amongst government funding, at least every ten years, a provided funding mechanism to consider the problems and schemes identified in Farnham, in line with a plan for the delivery of a funded way forward in the implementation of a scheme compatible with national funding and other policies.
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9 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.2 The Strategies present three options for a future Farnham. All seek to maintain and improve the quality of Farnham. Strategy 2a and 2b include the proposed changes to East Street and Woolmead Road assuming the East Street development is undertaken. There is no timeframe for the implementation of the strategies, although it is considered that measures would be implemented progressively from local plan funding. The strategies can be conditioned to provide three levels of intervention, particularly within the Farnham town centre transport system.
- 9.3 Strategy 1 proposed measures to improve pedestrian amenity and safety, these measures are concerned with: improving the visual streetscape in the central shopping streets; improving pedestrian safety and accessibility by improving pedestrian crossing facilities at key town centre junctions; encouraging cycling by introducing new or extending existing routes to the town centre and providing more stands within the town centre; reviewing on-street parking, improving parking enforcement, an improved parking strategy with real time signing of available parking; and additional disabled parking to improve accessibility to the town centre. Outside the central area traffic calming measures would be introduced in Hale and Wheelersham.
- 9.4 Strategy 2a would introduce measures that would be more controversial, those concerned with the reallocation of street space to pedestrians and service vehicles. Although including most of the street enhancements proposed in Strategy 1, those for The Borough and Downing Street would further introduce carriageway narrowing to single lane to enable street widening and the provision of service areas to facilitate on-street deliveries. Key junctions would be signalised to improve junction capacity. Strategy 2a would also introduce the partial pedestrianisation of East Street and the two-way operation of Woolmead Road. However, there are concerns that Strategy 2a may result in air quality deterioration issues in the town centre.
- 9.5 Strategy 2b introduces complimentary measures to reduce traffic levels in The Borough and Downing Street, by changing the town centre one-way system. Measures include introducing two-way traffic on South Street and Union Street and further signalling of the new junctions to include the Union Street junction with Long Bridge and South Street.
- 9.6 Strategy 2c provides the most attractive town centre to all users and visitors through the introduction of partial pedestrianisation on the eastern section of The Borough. Although pedestrianisation schemes have been considered for other town centre streets this section of The Borough is the most attractive and would provide the most significant benefits in a part of the town which can be accessed without difficulties, particularly in the case of alternative routes for the A3016 and the A27. Further work should provide significant benefits in a part of the town.
- 9.7 Strategy 2d would provide most of the measures in Strategy 1, and combine these measures with additional street enhancement from the road narrowing and further planting schemes. Strategy 2d provides a more holistic approach to ordering the street and is therefore preferred as a more significant benefit to the town centre, and one which is more likely to be implemented as a long term strategy. It is also preferred to the Town and Town Centre Strategy.
- 9.8 The strategies are all based on a number of assumptions, particularly in relation to the timing of the development of the East Street development. It is considered that the strategies are all based on the assumption that the development will be completed by 2015. It is considered that the strategies are all based on the assumption that the development will be completed by 2015. It is considered that the strategies are all based on the assumption that the development will be completed by 2015. It is considered that the strategies are all based on the assumption that the development will be completed by 2015.

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Section 8 - Recommendations

- 8.9 Given these findings, it is considered that the implementation of a Farnham Town Centre Strategy, would need strong political support and leadership to ensure that not only that the more popular lower impact schemes identified in Strategy 1, but also that the more effective measures in Strategy 2, are progressively adopted.
- 8.10 Finally, all the measures proposed in these strategies are subject to appropriate engineering feasibility.

