

As the Town Centre works continue there was a Farnham Board meeting last week which can be viewed via the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJ5xGAKZH70>

Papers can be found (they are limited via the link below)

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=828&MId=9746&Ver=4>

Key points from the meeting

- Traffic lights are now being monitored by someone 7 days a week between 7am and 7pm and since the temporary light units have been changed, they are working well
- Works at the bottom of the north south section of Downing Street have started early and are progressing well.
- New traffic lights and pedestrian crossings and the junction of Downing Street, Longbridge, Union Road and Victoria Road will go live the evening of Sunday the 17th of August with the first full day of operation on the 18th of August. These will facilitate traffic travelling from the south and east into and out of the Waggon Yard carpark along the east / west section of Downing Street.
- Downing Street works - number of crews working is being significantly increased after significant pressure from local Councillors. As a result the period of closure to vehicles and temporary pedestrianisation will now start on the 18th of August and be completed by the 1st of November. The original closure period was nearly 5 months so this is a significant improvement
- The project team have committed to including maps, with diversion routes prior to the closure as part of the publicity around the works and I will chase them again next week.
- I raised concerns on behalf of residents that delivery vans should not use the Church Lanes whilst Downing Street is not available to through traffic because those buildings are 500 + years old and have no foundations. Officers advised that there would be a Ringway operative in place monitoring traffic into the Church Lanes and that there was an agreement in place with Waverley for there to be a temporary loading / unloading bay in both the Central and Wagon Yard Car Park and that deliveries to businesses would be facilitated.
- On the 1st of November when the works on Downing Street are complete the new permanent traffic lights at the top of Downing Street will be brought into service and will be linked to the new lights described above. This will enable both the two new way sections and the improved pedestrian crossing points as well as an improved pedestrian experience along Downing Street.
- From the 1st of November works will switch to South Street and Union Road until early January, both roads are being resurfaced, exact details of the work sequence are still being finalised. I emphasised the need to avoid closures during this period.
- Riverside walk is now complete except for some minor snagging picked up but the post execution safety audit, these works will be done in August
- Crest Nicholson are working to complete the installation of the new bridge - Cllr Hesse raised the misalignment issue with this Steps also installed by Crest Nicholson, this isn't something the Farnham Board can influence but it was acknowledged that Crest Nicholson needed to develop a solution
- Crest Nicholson were due to complete the Borellis walk between the new bridge and South Street but have now withdrawn so the FIP are now doing their detailed design and the work will be undertaken starting on the 1st of November and the section of footpath that has been closed will be reopened as soon as Crest Nicholson have completed the bridge works and will stay open until SCC starts work on Borellis Walk

- The mobile HGV enforcement camera continues to be in use for the Upper Hale Road / Folly Hill / Castle Street - 628 tickets issued since February.
- Fixed HGV camera update, there have been some further technical delays, but we are nearly there, the pole for the camera has been installed and the camera should follow "shortly" both Tim and I tried to get a date out of Officers for this and failed but they did say definitely before the 18th of August.
- I raised the continuing routing of abnormal loads down the Upper Hale Road and how unsafe this is, I have tried to get the police to review (they approve these movements) but with no success - one of the Officers at the meeting agreed that he will address this - so fingers crossed
- The same officer advised that the streetworks team had followed up with National Highways regarding additional signage during M3 closures that the A287 / A3016 are not appropriate for HGVs and this has now been done.
- Farnham LCWIP - SCC officer in charge advised that the Farnham LCWIP addendum draft was now available and would be circulated to local Councillors who have been previously involved for final checking that all agreed elements have been included (I can confirm that I have now received and will review). He also confirmed that the feasibility studies on the highest priority routes had now started (I had a short meeting with the team this afternoon)
- There was a presentation on footfall and air quality neither of which there is any evidence has been impacted by the works
- I emphasised that there are other phases of work that will also be very impactful to residents and businesses particularly works on the narrow section of The Borough and also on Victoria Road. Officers confirmed that they are aware of this and the preference for as much of The Borough works as possible to be done during the summer holidays.
- There was a presentation regarding other works on the network - Officers advised that the high level of utility works is a national problem and that they were doing all they could to get companies in to do works at the same time as the project where it made sense - e.g. Openreach are working on Downing Street currently and in other cases have asked that works that can be deferred are.
- I raised concerns about the closure of St George's Road at the same time as Downing Street and asked that this was reviewed which Officers have promised to do.
- A31 - having gained strategic business case approval some time ago, the low process of getting through the next stage continues with Government, the project has survived the new Government's review of major road projects and there has been a change in emphasis to include more connectivity and active travel, both of which Councillors had already pushed for. Officers advised that the Outline Business Case will likely be submitted in August 2026 but they should be able to provide a briefing to local Councillors in the Autumn.

Councillors thanked the team for changing out the temporary lights and for working hard to reduce the period that Downing Street will be closed for. The works are still ahead of schedule and whilst I know they are disruptive (as all roadworks are), as areas start to be completed and with the commitment to no road closures during the Christmas period starting from the 1st of November I hope that everyone will start to see that when all the railings are gone and the pavements are wider our town is going not only look better but represent a much better shopping and visiting experience as ultimately the end of all the journey's into the centre of town will be on foot to visit shops, restaurants etc.