

Place and Communities

Significant Decision

Destination Farnham Road Urban Realm scheme

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Purpose of Significant Decision:

- To seek approval to consult on the Destination Farnham Road Urban Realm scheme.

Background:

In June 2022 officers submitted a bid to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for the Destination Farnham Road project and in February 2023 Slough was awarded £9,292,149.00 through the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 (LUF2). The project is to implement strategic transport infrastructure works to support the development of high-quality places that will enhance the local economy. The aim of the Levelling Up Fund is to foster a sense of community, local pride, and belonging by empowering local leaders and communities, improving public services, and increasing productivity in areas that are lagging behind. The allocated capital grants will enable local authorities to undertake a range of projects focusing on investment themes that include transport investment, regeneration and town centre investment and cultural investment. As part of the bid the Council used existing grants as part of the match funding requirement and so the total value of the project is £10.3m.

Location

The proposed Destination Farnham Road scheme is located on the northern side of the A4 Bath Road and covers the stretch of A355 Farnham Road from its junction with Cumberland Avenue to its junction with the A4 Bath Road, though most of the works are centred around the shops between Cumberland Avenue and Sheffield Road.

The Farnham Road plays a crucial role in providing access to various destinations, including the M4 junction 6 to the south and the M40 junction 2 to the north. It serves not only the residents and local SME businesses but also the neighbouring light industrial estate (Segro). The area along Farnham Road is a mix of residential properties, commercial establishments, schools, community facilities, and open spaces that attracts traffic. The central location and high traffic volume along Farnham Road has led to persistent problems such as traffic congestion, increased parking demand, and road safety concerns along the route. The proposed Destination Farnham Road scheme will produce a coherent design that sets out to address the traffic congestion, parking demand, safety issues, air quality and to provide a public realm scheme to support the busy and active space that residents and businesses use on a daily basis.

The proposed scheme intends to provide improvements to support economic growth resulting in job creation but also deal with issues that tend to result from areas which are successful, such as anti-social behaviour, littering and crime. The project is aimed not just at supporting the business community but supporting residents in the vicinity who are affected by the volume of people and cars in the area.

Consultation.

To ensure community input and engagement of the proposals, a consultation exercise is being proposed from 11th December 2023 to 10th February 2024 to present the concept designs to the affected residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. The consultation will be undertaken via drop-in sessions, letters to consultees and online portal.

As set out in the consultation document the proposed improvements along Farnham Road will include:

- Creating a higher quality public realm for residents, businesses and visitors by; introducing better footways with distinctive paving material, street furniture, and cycling facilities that will create a functional urban environment that emphasises pedestrian public space across road junctions and connecting the north and south areas of Farnham Road.
- Introduce wayfinding totems that will improve journey quality and help assist visitors to easily locate shopping facilities, dining options, and the overall local environment.
- Improved lighting along the route and at the back of the shops
- Upgrades to access points for bus shelters.
- Improved landscaping and access to open spaces along Farnham Road that will also enhance the quality and accessibility of Salt Hill Park and surrounding neighbourhoods via the National Cycle Network (NCN) route.
- Introduction of journey time monitoring, traffic volume and cycle monitoring devices.
- Improvements to signalised and unsignalised junctions to provide for safer crossing facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users accessing the shopping parade between Sheffield Road and Essex Avenue.
- Review of existing parking restrictions to provide improved parking facilities and waiting restrictions to enhance parking management and road safety in the area.
- Introducing a segregated cycle lane along Farnham Road.

Supporting National and Local Policies

The proposed scheme aims to deliver the following outcomes as set out in the supporting policies listed below:

National Policies

- **DfT's Gear Change A Bold Vision for cycling and walking** that presents four themes to encourage cycling. These themes include Better Streets for cycling and pedestrians, cycling at the heart of decision making, empowering and encouraging Local Authorities and Enabling people to cycle and protecting them when they do. The

strategy set an objective to double cycling rates and to increase the number of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% to 55% by 2025.

- **Cycle Infrastructure Guide LTN 1/20** mainly focuses on cycle infrastructure design but briefly provides recommendations for the Planning and Designing for Commercial Cycling.
- **The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2017** outlines the government's ambition to make cycling and walking a natural choice for shorter journeys or as part of longer journeys by 2040. The strategy firstly sets out the Governments objectives, secondly sets out the financial resources available for walking and cycling and lastly describes the specific actions planned to support delivery of the ambition and objectives.

Local Policies:

The Corporate Improvement and Recovery Plan. Corporate Plan 2023-27 (A fresh start)

- A borough for children and young people to thrive; by providing a scheme that supports alternative modes of transport that will increase outdoor activity areas and reduce the negative impacts of transport in the borough.*
 - A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives; by introducing schemes that reduce the reliance on cars, planning for sustainable travel and improving air quality thereby encouraging more people to walk and cycle.*
 - A cleaner, healthier and more prosperous Slough;*
 - *by seeking grant funding that help progress schemes that benefit the community and help the local economy and;*
 - *providing enhancement works that help deliver safer crossing facilities and safer passage to places of work, shopping areas, school, home, worship and entertainment.*
- **Slough's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)**
The LCWIP activities will support our local strategic objectives by evaluating our existing infrastructure and providing designs and maintenance guidelines for cycling and walking infrastructure. When built, these will contribute to the physical and mental wellbeing, socially, safety and security for Slough residents and visitors and enhance the quality of life for its residents through improvements to accessibility and walkability.
 - **The Carbon Strategy**
The council has committed to challenging targets, with a net zero carbon target by 2040 for the borough, and a stretch target of 2030 for SBC's operations. Increased public transport provision will make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions through encouraging a shift away from private car use and reduce congestion benefits.
 - **The Low Emission Strategy**
Active travel and improved Public Transport will have an important part to play in improving air quality along Farnham Road. Improved cycling facilities and enhanced

modal interchanges will contribute significantly to low emissions along Farnham Road and improved multi modal connectivity.

- **The Local Transport Plan**

This is the over-arching plan for the provision of transport services and infrastructure at local level, across the borough. The current version (LTP3) is currently under review.

- **The Strategic Transport Infrastructure Plan (STIP)**

Car journeys should be replaced by realistic and achievable alternatives. Prioritising public transport will enable negotiations with bus operators. With greater patronage, realised through improved efficiencies, opportunities exist to make public transport use increasingly attractive. i.e. Cost and time savings for residents.

- **Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Enhanced Partnership (EP)**

BSIP and EP are both essential processes required in the national bus strategy – *Bus Back Better* to set out priorities relating to bus priority, fares and ticketing. Slough Borough Council wishes to make it easier for people to travel by bus to get people out of their cars and to provide an alternative for those without access to a car. Bus improvement measures such as better access to bus stops improved bus shelters and reliable timetables encourage people to switch to buses.

Legal Implications

- The Traffic Management Act 2004 (Section 16(1)) imposes a Network Management Duty to ensure that Slough Borough Council secures the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network and facilitates the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority.
- The Council as a Local Transport Authority (LTA) has statutory functions under the Local Transport Act 2008 and has statutory duty to comply with the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017. The Council is also under a statutory duty to comply with the National Bus Strategy.
- All proposals that require permanent and temporary traffic orders will be subject to procedures under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA 1984) (s.9) and the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 (reg.23). It should be noted that under the RTRA 1984 s.122 the Council has the duty to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and involves a balancing exercise in accordance with that Act.
- The introduction of signage and road markings will be undertaken using the Council's statutory powers as the Highway Authority and The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.
- Part 3.6 of the Constitution sets out the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and under Section 2 -Executive Directors' general delegated powers include: taking and implementing any decision required for operational effectiveness, taking any action necessary to ensure the effective development and implementation of the Council's

key strategies and services relating to directorates and attending and representing the Council on partnership boards. Under section 4, specific delegation is given to the Executive Director – Place for the function relating to Transport planning.

Financial Implications:

Slough has been awarded Levelling Up Fund of £9,292,149.00 by the Department for Transport towards the implementation of the Farnham Road Urban Realm scheme. Additional match funding from grant for £1,003,412.00 has been committed by the Council. The total scheme budget is **£10,295,561.00.**

Recommended Decision:

It is recommended that:




- The consultation for the Destination Farnham Road scheme is undertaken to seek feedback from the affected residents, businesses and statutory consultees.
- That Officers undertake a review of the consultation responses and review the designs.
- That a cabinet report is prepared and the preliminary designs and consultation feedback is taken to the April 2024 cabinet meeting for approval to construct the scheme.
- Once the detailed designs are approved, that a consultation is undertaken for the temporary and permanent traffic regulation orders.
- That a monitoring exercise is undertaken after 6 months and a year post scheme completion to monitor the impact of the scheme

Supporting Documents

1. Concept drawings of Farnham Road scheme:

2. Consultation leaflet.

Approved

Executive Director Pat Hayes		Date 6.12.23
Associate Director Place Operations Savio DeCruz		Date 30/11/23
Project Manager Rudo Beremauro		Date 24/11/2023