



# THE FARNHAM SOCIETY

## **Farnham Infrastructure Programme Comment on Public Consultation**

### **1. Introduction**

Farnham has a unique and special space in the County of Surrey, with a very large percentage of Listed Buildings. The square layout contains in-town parking with straight forward access. It is served by a considerable network of pedestrian paths and spaces and is quite simply a masterpiece of English County towns. This Society's aim is to shape the future and protect our heritage and in this submission we believe we are addressing both.

In May 2018, at the Farnham Society's Annual General Meeting, our MP Jeremy Hunt and architect, Jim Duffy, presented a proposal to improve the town's image and provide a degree of pedestrianisation. The plans did not include altering the existing traffic gyratory in South Street. The Hunt/Duffy presentation was well received generally, especially the architect's sketches which included wider pavements and generally showed how an attractive town centre could look if these ideas were adopted.

### **2. The Offer**

The proposals, put before the public in the current consultation, are for two alternate schemes for the town centre (A and B) and several options for improvement works on the junctions of the A31 Farnham Bypass. The most immediate decisions are needed in relation to the town centre and funds to undertake these works are, apparently, available. The A31 works on the other hand are further in the future and are unfunded at present and these are not therefore reviewed here.

### **3. Town Centre Schemes**

The most important point to say firstly, is that neither of the schemes presented provides pedestrianisation of the town. More consultation options would have been welcome as it feels as though with these binary choices, we are being offered, it is channeling or leading the people of Farnham to choose between two schemes.

Dr Pamela Campanelli, a consultant on survey methods who has advised local government, warns that offering binary options can lead to 'sculpting and leading' the public. <https://www.thesurveycoach.com> .

Each of the schemes or options presents some degree of improved experience for pedestrians, with wider pavements and narrower road lanes and /or single lane roads. We would like to see another option which we have named a hybrid of A & B which will be outlined under the heading of Comments..

Scheme A is a limited step forward but never less is a good first step. The proposal makes no changes to traffic flow directions and restricts itself to works on Downing Street and the lower part of Castle Street to widen pavements and reduce road space, but it is limited in scope. However, we know that it works with few traffic problems usually only occurring through accidents or uncaring delivery drivers. Appended are detailed comments based on local knowledge which relate to Scheme A.

Scheme B on the other hand incorporates and extends Scheme A to change the flow of traffic through the town. This significantly changes the gyratory system that was put in place many years ago to ease the traffic problem in Farnham. Detailed comment based on local knowledge which relate to Scheme B is also appended.

#### 4. Comment

**Scheme A** is a limited step forward but by keeping with single flow traffic via the existing one-way system and restricting speed to 20 mph this may benefit the visitor experience. Scheme A does have the advantage of relying on evidence that the existing gyratory system only occasionally leads to traffic jams.

However, we do feel there is scope for adapting Scheme A and B, then postulating a **Hybrid Option** with the following additions:

- Two-way Traffic on The Borough between Downing Street and Castle Street, with some widened pavements on North side of the borough creating a Bus lay-by. Retain pedestrian crossing with lights in existing position.
- Two Way Traffic on Woolmead as an alternative route to East Street which would allow for pedestrianisation of East Street. The direction of traffic, on Woolmead, is currently one way. The existing two lanes rarely are ever both used. This should/ could be two way (it is wide enough) and would allow the Brightwells & Woolmead section of East Street to be partially pedestrianised sharing space with buses and taxis.
- Bear Lane restricted to only turning right at the top, with a 'no left turn sign', to prevent it turning into a short cut.
- Pedestrianisation of East Street. The one Road in the whole of Farnham that easily lends itself to be a pedestrian zone (only buses and taxis) has been left out of the scope of Option A. Woolmead with two directional traffic would allow for this. This must be included in the scope.
- Downing Street, at the bottom, needs to be two way between the Waggon Yard car park and the junction with Longbridge. The road is wide enough, as well as provide a loading bay pull-in in front of the Lost Boy if the pavement widening kept solely to South side of the street and re-site the bicycle park also to south side.

**Scheme B** does provide a possible improvement in traffic flow, around the town and likely reduction of traffic volumes on Downing Street and the eastern part of The Borough.

However, we would point out the following drawbacks: -

- No improvement in connectivity with Brightwells. In fact, the two way traffic in South Street creates a greater barrier
- Bear Lane restricted to only turning right at the top, with a 'no left turn sign'. This is suggested as two-way traffic on South St increases the risk of traffic using Bear Lane and Park Row as a rat run.
- No reference to the previously proposed East Street layout which included partial pedestrianisation (shared space) enabled by proposed two-way traffic movement on Woolmead Road.
- No reference to any shared spaces so it must be assumed there will continue to be a sharp demarcation between pedestrians and traffic.
- Insufficient delivery vehicle and some removal of existing, location and number of, bus bays on the revised streets which will lead to blockage of live lanes. The lack of a bus bay near The Queens Head on The Borough would be particularly problematic.
- The opportunity for two-way traffic on the lower part of Downing Street connecting with Waggon Yard car park should be included to reduce traffic in Downing Street further.
- No mention of a possible link between upper Castle Street and The Hart which would enable visitors and North Farnham residents access to car parks and alternative route to town centre.
- No Design focus on our world class Craft Town or detailing of the materials in the conservation area to be used in the road surfacing, pavements, and street furniture.
- Increase in emissions due to stop start flow created by additional 3 sets of traffic lights also because of drop off and pick up by buses in live lanes.
- Fixed street furniture in Castle street preventing market gazebos when holding the Christmas and food festivals.

## 5 Further Comment

The suggestion to connect upper Castle Street to The Hart should be actively considered as this would provide a direct link to parking for traffic from the North and more importantly would create a pedestrianised or shared space area in the lower part of Castle Street. This would give the town the public space it needs at the heart of the historic conservation area. It is accepted that there may be practical problems to overcome but this would meet the original aim to provide a pedestrianised area in the centre of Farnham. At this important stage of planning this opportunity must be seriously considered and not put to one side because of concerns relating to cost or the operational difficulties in achieving an aim which would bring enormous benefits to Farnham. However, we would not wish to see

Scheme A or B further delayed because of this but there should be a commitment to reconsider this addition as soon as possible.

The lack of mention to improving the connectivity between Brightwells and the town centre is in our view is significant. The one street in Farnham that could easily be pedestrianised, with bus and taxi only access, is East Street. Changing to two-way traffic flow on Woolmead Road would make this possible.

To support our historic conservation areas, which attract many visitors to Farnham, the temptation to economise must be resisted and only high-quality materials used.

The lack of a plan to develop a properly functioning Green public transport system will greatly undermine the achievement of the objectives of the FIP. A bus hub located either at the Central Car Park or at Farnham Station would be a first step towards this. However, it is the inadequate frequency of buses which, in our view, is the main deterrent to greater utilisation and switching from car use. The FIP have made statements about greater use of public transport but offers no way of achieving this.

## 6 Summary

### **Scheme A**

We would support Scheme A with the additions outlined above creating a **Hybrid Option** which does not involve a two way traffic flow in South Street. It is believed the existing traffic system has some merits and should not be ignored. However, as previously stated, Scheme A as it stands does improve the pedestrian experience and should not be discounted.

### **Scheme B**

Pending an acceptable response to our questions it is difficult to give unqualified acceptance to Scheme B. Presumably the research undertaken by the consultants has satisfied the planners that the proposed changes to the gyratory system will improve the traffic flow through Farnham.

Saturday, 1 October 2022

Having been represented on the formation committee to propagate pedestrianisation, the Society was delighted when Jeremy Hunt MP launched the recommendations at our Annual General Meeting in May 2018. The meeting was impressed with the architectural quality of the proposals which stressed the importance of detail design in this all important plan for Farnham and we look forward to an early commencement of this worthy and long awaited transformation of Farnham.

Considerable thought has gone into providing this submission which is backed by a depth of informed and balanced local knowledge and it is hoped that it will receive a detailed review. We would be prepared to attend appropriate meetings for further discussion or to provide further information.

The Farnham Society.

*Alan Gavaghan*

Chairman of the Farnham Society

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Attached:

Appendix with further commentary below of Scheme A, B and the **Hybrid Option**.

## These comments relate to Option A FIP drawing below

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### Castle Street

1. Pavement widening not necessary in front of 12,13,14,15 Castle Street could be residents parking and would make up for the 4 or 5 spaces lost outside the Giggling Squid and Nelson Arms. All pavement widening only south of Long Garden Walk.
2. Parking Bay. No public parking south of Long Garden Walk
3. Bicycle stand in front of 69 unnecessary as private housing and no shops or restaurants. In this location, so will be little used where cyclists cannot oversee their vehicles.
4. Bus Stop. Not in live lane. Dedicated lay-by. Pavement widening in front of 71, 70, 70a & 69 unnecessary and to remain as existing
5. Re-site Disabled bays north to where parking bays are shown (yellow hatched). The remainder widened. No restaurants at this point.
6. Move Loading Bay south away from Castle Inn frontage where the disabled bays are shown, to facilitate hospitality use of widened pavements and allow for suitable ambiance.
7. Suitable High Grade Materials for paving and furniture to enhance one of the most important Georgian streets in England and to live up to the name of World Craft Town. Fixed furniture, planters and bicycle racks will be obstructions when Castle Street is used for the Town Food Festival and Christmas market. Unless another street is chosen for this? Liaising with the Town council on final positions of these items are essential.

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### Bear Lane/ Woolmead

8. Two Way Traffic on Woolmead as alternative route to East Street which would allow for pedestrianisation of East Street. The direction of traffic is currently one way. The existing two lanes rarely are ever both used. This should/could be two way (it is wide enough) and would allow the Brightwells & Woolmead section of East Street to be partially pedestrianised sharing space with buses and taxis.
1. No left turn into Park Row to prevent this becoming a shortcut route

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### East Street

10. Pedestrianisation of East Street. The one Road in the whole of Farnham that easily lends itself to be a pedestrian zone (only buses and taxis) has been left out of the scope of Options B. Woolmead with two directional traffic would allow for this. This is a SCC road and must be included in the scope South Street

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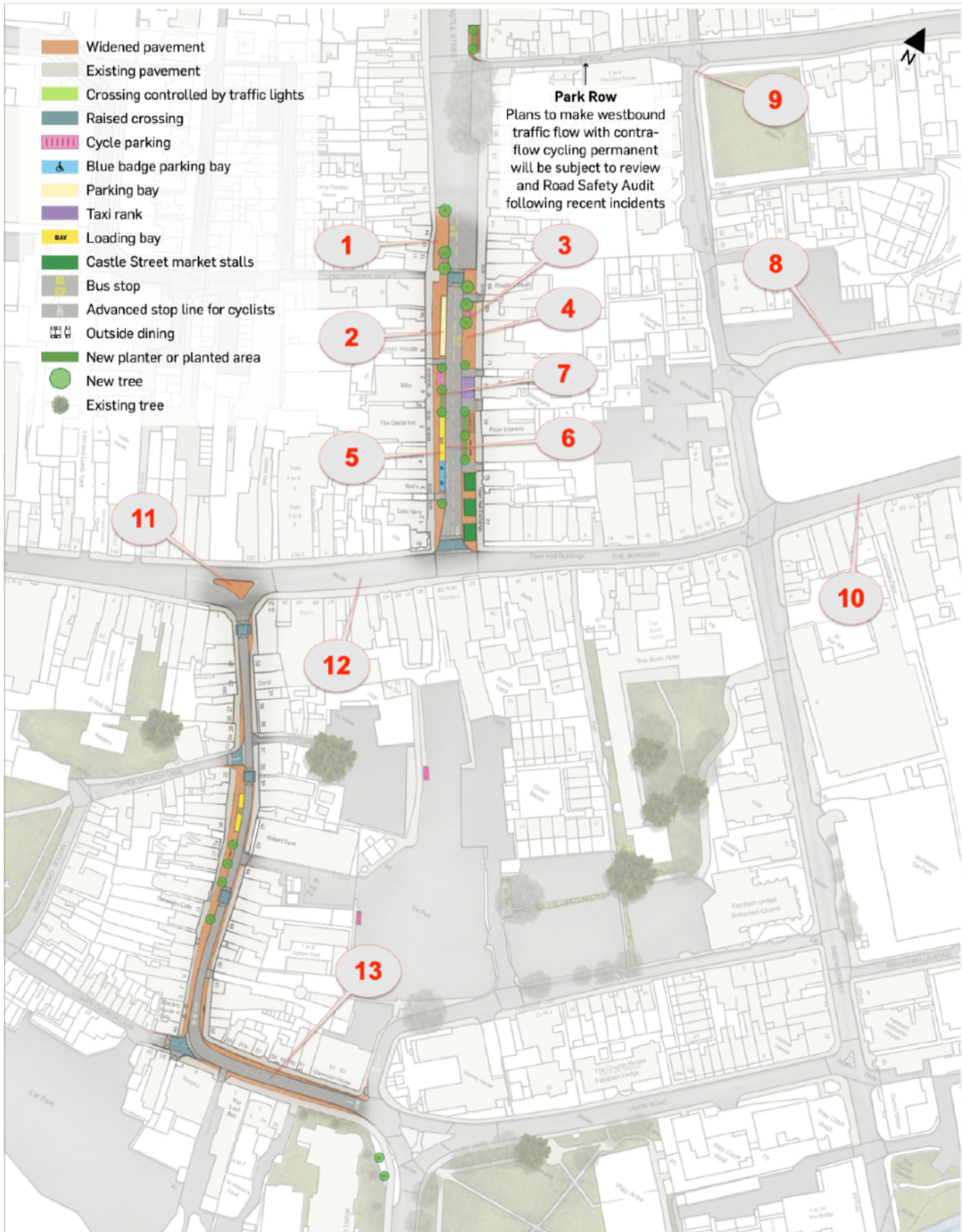
### West Street/ The Borough - Addition to Option A

11. Roundabout at top of Downing Street. Raised crossing and bus lay-by.
12. Two way Traffic between Downing Street and Castle Street, with some widened pavements on North side of the borough creating a Bus lay-by. Retain pedestrian crossing with lights in existing position.

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### Downing St. between Waggon Yard & Longbridge - Addition to Option A

13. Traffic Direction This needs to be two way between the Waggon Yard car park and the junction with Longbridge and the road is wide enough, as well as provide a loading bay pull-in in front of the Lost Boy. Pavement widening kept solely to South side of the street and re-site the bicycle park also to south side. This will enable a loading bay immediately in front of The Lost Boy.



**OPTION A AS PROPOSED BY FARNHAM INFRASTRUCTURE BOARD  
WITH FURTHER COMMENTS BY THE FARNHAM SOCIETY.**

**NUMBERING REFERS TO COMMENTS PAPER AND BE READ TOGETHER 11/9/22**

## These comments relate to Option B FIP drawing below

### Castle Street

1. Pavement widening not necessary in front of 12,13,14,15 Castle Street could be residents parking and would make up for the 4 or 5 spaces lost outside the Giggling Squid and Nelson Arms. All pavement widening only south of Long Garden Walk.
2. Parking Bay. No need for public parking south of Long Garden Walk
3. Bicycle stand in front of 69 unnecessary as private housing and no shops or restaurants. In this location, so will be little used where cyclists cannot oversee their vehicles.
4. Bus Stop. Not in live lane. Dedicated lay-by. Pavement widening in front of 71, 70, 70a & 69 unnecessary and to remain as existing
5. Re-site Disabled bays north to where parking bays are shown (yellow hatched). The remainder widened.
6. Move Loading Bay south away from Castle Inn frontage where the disabled bays are shown, to facilitate hospitality use of widened pavements and allow for suitable ambiance.
7. Suitable High Grade Materials for paving and furniture to enhance one of the most important Georgian streets in England and to live up to the name of World Craft Town. Fixed furniture, planters and bicycle racks will be obstructions when Castle Street is used for the Town Food Festival and Christmas market. Unless another street is chosen for this? Liaising with the Town council on final positions of these items are essential.

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### West Street/ The Borough

8. Bus Stop outside 5,6,7 (the Queens Head) is shown in the live Eastbound lane which will cause congestion in one of the busiest parts of the town. A pull-in bus stop needs to be provided.
  - a. Retain pedestrian crossing instead of lights at the top of Downing Street
9. Bus Stop retain in existing position and minimise pavement widening at this point to prevent bus stopping in live lane. Dedicated pull ins.
  - a. Roundabout instead of traffic lights
10. Taxi Rank. The existing rank is rarely used for taxis so happy for this to be removed.

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### Bear Lane/ Woolmead

11. Pavement widening and trees. All Bear Lane pavement widening is unnecessary and will have major consequences and costs. There is no hospitality outlet from Romans Estate Agents on the Royal Deer end of Bear Lane to Park Row. Widening the pavement outside Romans prevents Woolmead Road from becoming two way (currently shown as One Way). This will result in East Street, which is the one road in the Town Centre that could be shared space pedestrianised (buses and taxis). Major lost opportunity for real pedestrianisation.
  - a. No left turn into Park Row to prevent this becoming a shortcut route
12. Woolmead Road. The direction of traffic is currently one way. The existing two lanes rarely are ever both used. This should/could be two way (it is wide enough) and would allow the Brightwells & Woolmead section of East Street to be fully pedestrianised.



13. East Street. Pedestrianisation of East Street. The one road in the whole of Farnham that easily lends itself to be a pedestrian zone (only buses and taxis) has been left out of the scope of Options B. Woolmead with two directional traffic would allow for this. This is a SCC road and must be included in the scope. South Street.
14. South Street. Not in live lane. Retain existing bus pull on southbound carriage way. Pull in more important than a wide pavement at this point.
15. Possible access issue for delivery vehicles to the Bush Hotel if they do not go ahead with extant planning permission to alter delivery access to Victoria Road.

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### **Downing Street - between Waggon Yard and Longbridge**

16. Traffic direction needs to be two way between the Waggon Yard car park and the junction with Longbridge and the road is wide enough to provide a loading bay pull-in in front of the Lost Boy. Pavement widening kept solely to South side of the street and re-site the bicycle park also to south side. This will enable a loading bay immediately in front of The Lost Boy. see drawing attached

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### **Union road**

17. Pull in for the bus stop.

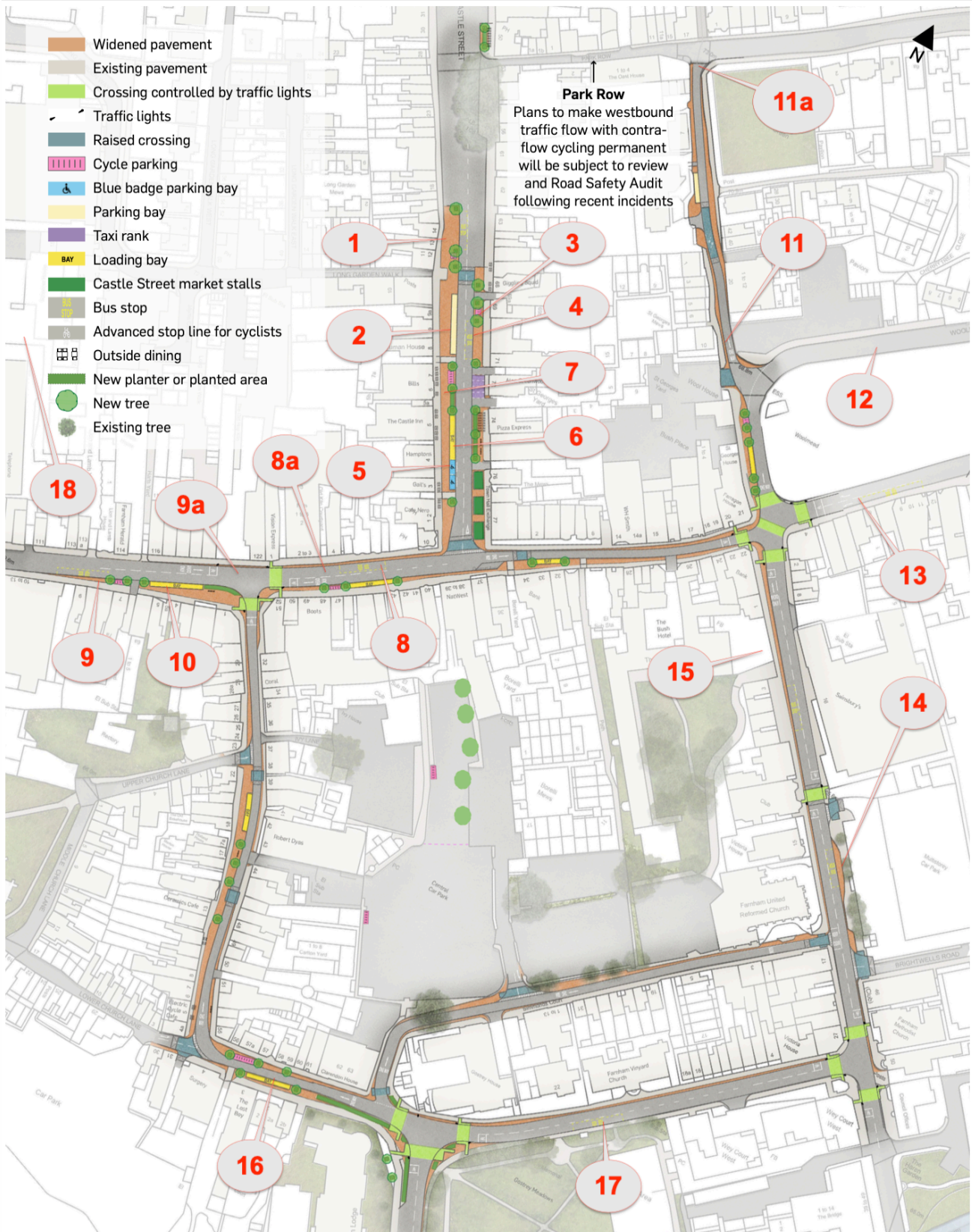
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### **Upper Hart Link missing**

18. When Chris Tunstall held his initial meetings, he said 'nothing is off the table, everything is up for consideration'. So why has this important feature been left off our options? Why are we not consulting on this publicly?

By adding a link from Castle Street to the Upper Hart Car Park and then at the same time or later adding a further link to The Hart, would allow all the Northern residents to access a car park and then walk into town and if extended down to West Street, give them full access to the town.

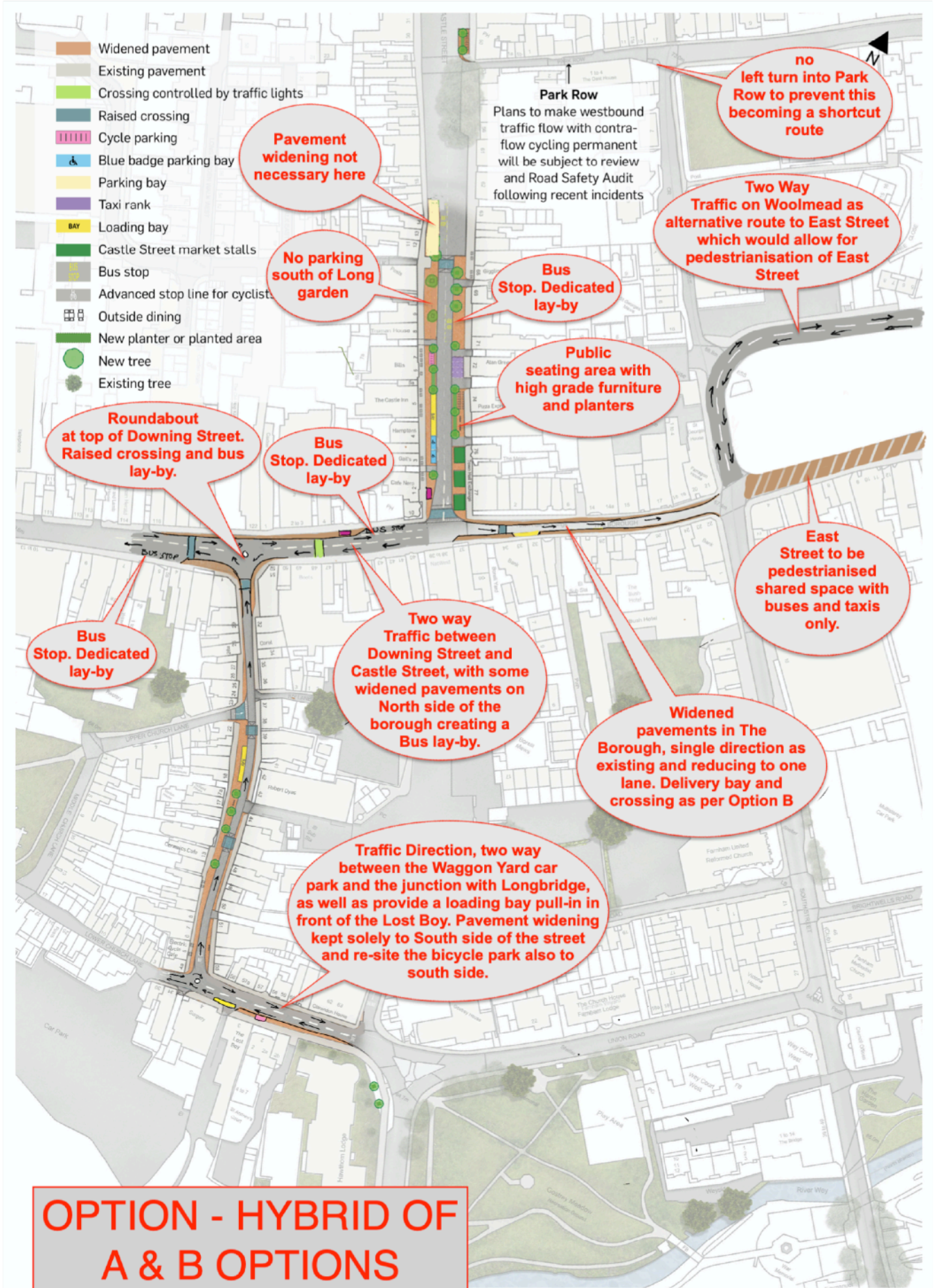
Castle Street doesn't need to be permanently a pedestrian zone but could be timed use eg. Guildford High Street. Even if Castle Street was in full vehicle use, it would relieve the traffic flows and provide for freer flow.



**OPTION B AS PROPOSED BY FARNHAM INFRASTRUCTURE BOARD WITH FURTHER COMMENTS BY THE FARNHAM SOCIETY.**

**NUMBERING REFERS TO COMMENTS PAPER AND BE READ TOGETHER 11/9/22**





**OPTION - HYBRID OF A & B OPTIONS**