

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 January 2022

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENVIRONMENT,
TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE: COUNCILLOR PHIL LARRATT**

Report Title **A422 Farthinghoe Bypass Interim Measures**

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Approvers

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Director for Place, Economy and Environment	Stuart Timmiss	Approved 18.1.22

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Initial design drawing for Interim measures S3531/1200/220 (Sept 2021)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update Place Overview and Scrutiny on the progress made with developing interim proposals for A422 Farthinghoe.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Following the report to cabinet in September 2021 the proposal to install traffic signals on the A422 in the centre of Farthinghoe has been developed in consultation with representatives from the Parish Council. The design work is on-going with an expectation of further discussions with the Parish Council in February 2022.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 To continue to develop the proposal for traffic control measures through Farthinghoe Village.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- A solution is needed to alleviate the pinch point issues which restrict traffic movement on the A422 through Farthinghoe.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The village of Farthinghoe (population 413, 2011 census) is located on the A422 between Banbury and Brackley.
- 5.2 In the 1980s, in anticipation of the forthcoming opening of the M40, the former County Council developed a policy of upgrading the A422 to provide a high-quality route for traffic from the M40 towards Milton Keynes. Middleton Cheney was bypassed in 1991 and a southern bypass for Brackley was opened in 1992. Improvements, jointly with Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils, improved the A421 to continue the upgrade towards Milton Keynes.
- 5.3 Plans were developed to provide a bypass for Farthinghoe, but difficulties in determining an appropriate route which enjoyed public support, at a time when Government funding for new road construction was being significantly reduced, led to the scheme being discontinued.
- 5.4 This has left Farthinghoe as the only village on the A422/A421 between the M40 and Milton Keynes without a bypass. In the subsequent period the local community has continued to campaign for a bypass. Although current traffic flows of some 11,000 vehicles per day (7.5% HGV) are lower than those experienced by some other villages in West Northamptonshire, there is a pinch-point in the village which prevents two large vehicles passing, and this frequently leads to vehicles mounting the footways, which has resulted in recorded accidents between vehicles and collisions with residential boundaries.
- 5.5 Local concerns have been heightened by the potential for significant growth at Banbury in the period 2014 to 2031, as proposed in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan. This includes proposals for 7,106 new houses and a strategic employment located allocation located east of Banbury adjacent to the M40 and the west Northamptonshire border. Inevitably, this level of development will increase current traffic flows on the A422 through Farthinghoe.

- 5.6 In November 2016, following consultation on northern and southern route options, the County Council Cabinet agreed that the A422 Farthinghoe Bypass should be added to the County Council's priority list of major road schemes and that a northern route should form the basis of further work to develop the scheme.
- 5.7 In 2020 four northern routes were developed and a consultation exercise was carried out closing in early January 2021. The results of the consultation were reported to WNC Cabinet in September 2021 together with a proposed timescale assuming that funding could be found to continue the scheme.
- 5.8 During 2021 further work was carried out to ascertain the robustness of the forecast cost for delivering the bypass and to understand the likelihood of receiving government funding to deliver the project. This exercise concluded that a budget of the order of £30m would be required to deliver the scheme and that the benefit to cost ration (BCR) of the scheme would be between 0.6 and 0.7 which would be categorised as poor value for money by the Department for Transport guidance and so this falls far short of the normal absolute minimum BCR required to unlock government funding using the current guidelines. The reason for this low scoring is the weight that development and job outcomes provide in prioritising infrastructure investment, as this scheme does not provide any new jobs or homes it is extremely unlikely to receive any government funding as it stands. Nevertheless the scheme remains as a political priority for West Northamptonshire Council.

6. Interim Measures - Update

- 6.1 The report to WNC cabinet in September 2021 proposed an interim solution to alleviate the safety issues and concerns at the pinch point where it is difficult, if not impossible for large vehicles to cross. During the autumn the interim measures proposal was developed including the installation of traffic signals to reduce the flow of traffic on the A422 to one way at a time through the narrowest section of the village, it will also allow for the widening of the footway in this location. The proposal also included the need to prevent vehicles from exiting Baker Street onto A422 by way of a one-way traffic order.
- 6.2 On 16 November 2021 a meeting was held with Dame Andrea Leadsom MP and representatives of the Parish Council to discuss the future of the Farthinghoe Bypass and the progress on work for the interim solution. The issue surrounding the BCR and funding implications were explained and some discussion of the detail of the interim solution also took place.
- 6.3 On 23 November 2021, this was followed up with a more detailed in person meeting to review the drawings of the interim solution and to discuss the issues that the representative of the Parish Council had raised with the proposals. The issues centred around the risk of vehicles using Queen Street to rat run around the traffic signals which would lead to congestion in the village and the potential for inappropriate volumes of traffic to use the village roads. The representatives of the Parish Council also were concerned about the impact the scheme may have in the area around the play park opposite the junction of New Road and Queen Street.

6.4 The outcome of the meeting was that:

- Consideration should be given to also making Chapel Lane one way, running away from the A422 to prevent traffic trying to join the queue at the signals at this point
- A site meeting should be held to inform further design work to prevent the likely rat-running by preventing through traffic along Queen Street, probably by closing the road at its western end but also considering the desire to provide some parking for people attending the play park

6.5 The site meeting took place on 10th December 2021 agreeing a potential way forward in line with the previous discussions and making a commitment to complete sufficient design work by the end of January 2022 to enable further discussions to take place with the representatives from the Parish Council.

7. Next steps

7.1 It is anticipated that during February the design will be further discussed with the representatives of the Parish Council and the local members and subject to those discussions then discussed with the wider parish council before carrying out a wider consultation with the villagers of Farthinghoe and other stakeholders.

7.2 Subject to the successful conclusion to the consultation exercise in spring/summer 2022, and gaining internal funding approval, the scheme will be programmed for implementation in autumn/winter 2022

8. Implications (including financial implications)

8.1 Resources and Financial

8.1.1 At this stage it is anticipated that the scheme will cost c£500k to implement, but once the current design work is completed and agreed with the Parish Council representatives a full estimate including contingencies will be developed. It is anticipated that this funding will be available from existing budgets.

8.2 Legal

8.2.1 Assuming the scheme that comes forward results in the need to prevent through traffic being able to pass along the full length of Queen Street it will be necessary to put in place a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to achieve this, TROs will also be required in order to make Baker Street and Chapel Lane one-way streets. In order to put in place TROs there is a legal process that must be followed including consultation.

8.3 Risk

8.3.1 At this stage in the design phase costs have been estimated based on desktop studies and visits to site to check road widths etc. An allowance of 20% contingency has been allowed for unknown issues. Once the proposed scheme is acceptable to the Parish Council a further costing iteration will be carried out.

8.3.2 It is possible that the scheme that is developed will not be supported by either the Parish Council or the residents of Farthinghoe, this is being mitigated by working with representatives for the Parish Council during this early design phase.

8.3.3 It is possible that there will be significant objections to the proposed TROs during the legally required consultation, this is being mitigated by working with representatives for the Parish Council during this early design phase.

8.4 **Consultation**

8.4.1 It is anticipated that during February the design will be further discussed with the representatives of the Parish Council and the local members and subject to those discussions then discussed with the wider parish council before carrying out a wider consultation with the villagers of Farthinghoe and other stakeholders.

8.5 **Climate Impact**

8.5.1 The introduction of traffic signals on the A422 will result in queuing traffic, particularly during peak hours, this will have a negative impact in terms of noise and emissions within the village, however the benefits to the village are believed to outweigh this issue, this view will be further informed during the consultation process. The proposal to make Baker Street One Way is designed to optimise the traffic signal phasing to maximise green time on the A422 minimising delays, queuing and associated pollution risk. It is also likely that drivers will seek alternative routes to avoid the congestion.

8.6 **Community Impact**

8.6.1 The proposed scheme will provide a solution to a long-standing issue in Farthinghoe until government policy makes the prospect of a bypass realistic. The scheme will reduce the risk to pedestrians caused by two heavy goods vehicles meeting in the narrow section of the village and also by treating Queen Street will eliminate any current rat-running that takes place and if possible, provide some mitigation to the current parking issues on New Road in the area of the play park.

9. **Background Papers**

9.1 Report to Cabinet 14th September 2021
[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 14/09/2021 18:00 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)