

LRAG News Update – 6 June 2023

Petition Resolution

The resolution of the petition raised against the proposed 5-month northbound closure of London Road took place on 6th June. The essence of Surrey CC's response is contained in the written submission from the relevant Cabinet Member:

We can assure the community that we will no longer be proposing to close London Road for the originally planned 5-month period, and in delivering any scheme, would seek to minimise any inconvenience to residents and businesses.

This original petition only addressed the stretch of London Road from New Inn Lane up to Boxgrove Roundabout. The new consultation now covers the entire route, through the roundabout to York Road. The phrase "minimise any inconvenience" does not absolutely exclude the possibility of closures, and Cllr Furniss made no firm statement, at the petition hearing, that excluded this possibility. Work is not expected to commence before school holidays in 2024.

The plan for traffic management is expected to be a significant point of discussion for the Sustainable Travel Reference Group (STRG), in producing the necessary content of the planned public engagement events.

Stakeholders on STRG

Confirmation has been obtained that engagement with the emergency services and Royal Mail will be kept separate to the stakeholder group, to quote a Surrey CC message: "as we believe the stakeholder group plays a different role to the engagement with statutory consultees".

LRAG believes this is a flawed decision as the STRG should expect to be allowed to "cover all bases" in helping to create questions and answers to all anticipated issues, and the exclusion of the views of the emergency services and Royal Mail during the development of the new engagement process creates an impression that there is something to hide, even if there isn't.

A message was sent to the Chair of STRG urging that this position is reversed, but the reply merely restated that the results of the statutory consultation with the emergency services and Royal Mail would simply be reported to the STRG, and not afforded first hand.

It was also asserted that the issue of problems of rapid access for police, fire and ambulance need not be raised again, because, to quote: "... we no longer propose to narrow the carriageways ..."