

LRAG News Update – 11 July 2023

Sustainable Travel Reference Group (STRG)

The next meeting of the STRG is scheduled for 19th July. Discussions about the best means of presenting traffic management plans to the public, during the construction of the cycle lanes along London Road, are expected. Stakeholders should be provided with details of these plans one week in advance.

LRAG will not be surprised if details are vague, as, similar to the withholding of dimensioned drawings, much of the scheme “remains under development and, therefore, subject to change”. It is not hard to detect the irony of this suggested position, when 8 months ago fully-formed traffic management plans had been made, and comparison of drawings published then, with those now available, show virtually no change.

Surrey CC have at last managed to engage with a local business stakeholder from Kingpost Parade, but continue to keep the statutory consultees (emergency services and essential delivery businesses), and other categories of stakeholders, separate from meetings with the STRG.

Information Sharing by Surrey CC

Two examples of a differing approach to sharing advance information by SCC have been noted:

1. An invite has been received from Surrey CC for a session with their transport modelling team. There have been many outstanding questions on traffic modelling, since a meeting between LRAG and SCC in February. There is a clear difference of opinion about the effects of the installation of cycle lanes, between local residents, who observe borderline gridlock on numerous occasions, and SCC’s theoretical assessment that reducing carriageway widths and inserting many additional pedestrian crossings will have a neutral outcome. Resolution of the conflicting views is unlikely to result, but a better understanding may ensue.
2. A Freedom of Information request for more precise design details of the modifications to London Road has been refused on the following grounds:

It is considered that the greater public interest ... lies in not providing the information at this time. In coming to that conclusion, the public interest in providing the information has been carefully weighed against any prejudice to the public interest that might arise from withholding the information; in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

In other words, SCC do not want the public to have access to information, yet, that might allow them to critique the scheme. It leads one to wonder who understands “public interest” better – members of the public or SCC?

Local Pollution Monitoring

LRAG now has a capability of sampling the local atmosphere for pollutants. Measurements are *ad hoc* but may provide a “before and after” comparison. A straw poll amongst a very limited sample of people in Burpham Riverside Nature Reserve suggested that public perception of levels of pollution that are assessed as “GOOD” has been adversely skewed by scaring propaganda.