

LRAG News Update – 18 July 2023

Sustainable Travel Reference Group (STRG)

As I start to draft this week's newsletter, it is hard not to reflect on what I said last week about inadequate information sharing by Surrey CC.

The agenda for Wednesday's meeting did not arrive until 5pm on Tuesday. That is not sufficient time for meeting participants to suggest further items for inclusion, and get agreement. LLAG will attempt to get the following items included:

- There is no item to confirm that minutes of the last meeting were a true and accurate record, which without amendment will include an omission - that any virtual reality (VR) demonstration must show relevant peak time traffic – as required by LLAG.
- There is no mention of planned discussions of, or means of presenting to the public, plans for traffic management during construction. This was probably the main point of contention that caused the public's anger, displayed at the George Abbot meeting.
- This apparent reluctance to air this very important issue was also reflected by Matt Furniss's avoidance, at the hearing of the London Road closure petition, of making any acknowledgment, or answer, to a question that: "if it was not to be 5 months, then what was the plan?"
- To date there has been no publication of "any documents provided to or generated by the group will be available before and after the meeting for wider stakeholders/individuals to access" i.e., design plans shared with the group (as per the [STRG Working Arrangements](#))

This is no way to run a committee of stakeholders, who are being portrayed on SCC's website as "co-producing" public involvement, plans and survey questions, date and venue for design and delivery workshops. These statements are misleading, if not complete "terminological inexactitudes" (*Winston Churchill 1906*), as is the report of receiving feedback from statutory consultees.

This is the actuality of Surrey CC's grand plan for stakeholders' involvement, undoubtedly coached by The Consultation Institute. The STRG's role, when invitations were issued (see [LRAG's website](#) for details), suggested they would be able to "contribute views from the community in relation to the Scheme and its activities, and where relevant, the views of wider stakeholders".

All that has happened so far is that Surrey CC have indicated their own plans for a "glossy brochure" promotion; avoided suggesting a means (other than via FAQs) of rigorously addressing most of the concerns so evident at the public meeting on 5th January; and appear to be using the stakeholder group's presence as evidence of engagement.

Although there is an absence of detailed insider knowledge, letters to the [Guildford Dragon NEWS](#) are beginning to appear, questioning the methods and outcomes of this apparent sham process. In contrast, expect further claims of support for the cycle scheme, as the comments to the Guildford borough "Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan" (LCWIP) [Discover Surrey LCWIP – Have Your Say – Commonplace](#) are analysed.

This initiative is in the early stages of development, asking for ideas on the local issues or barriers which make it difficult to walk or cycle to nearby destinations. It would appear that the results of this survey could easily be misused or misinterpreted, even though it shows an apparent bias, in that the research makes no attempt to understand the other side of the coin - the problems that may be created.