

LRAG News Update – 17 October 2023

Public Engagement Phase Progress

The traffic modelling report has now been published, 4 weeks into the engagement phase, along with drawings containing dimensions at many points along the entire route. However, its tardiness has necessitated a 4-week extension and 2 more drop-in events. The new end date for the engagement is Friday 15 December 2023. The dates for the new drop-in events are:

Saturday 18 November	George Abbot School from 10am to 2pm
Wednesday 6 December	George Abbot School from 6pm to 8pm

Surrey CC state that the delay was “unavoidable”. It seems extraordinary that all necessary information (including the late publication of the additional FAQs) was not compiled before going public, and the engagement started 4 weeks later. Some might surmise that it was because public opinion could be swayed better, initially, by not revealing all the details. All previous survey responders will have only been able to react to what they knew at the time. They may not bother to return to the matter at a later date, and so the survey could be considered biased as some returns may be on the basis of inadequate information.

Further letters will be sent to residents informing them of these changes. The failures to ensure that earlier letters were properly distributed gives little confidence that this repeat effort will be any more successful. The limited area covered by this distribution has left many other users of London Road completely unaware of the proposals and the survey, and feedback indicates that many, who have not been informed, believed the plans had been totally shelved.

Traffic Modelling

What is in the traffic modelling report that might be of interest? It is a complex analysis, but 2 points stand out to the layman:

1. There will be NO RIGHT TURN  from London Road into York Road.

All of the community, especially those living south of Boxgrove roundabout, wishing to head south by car to, say, the A281 or the A3 (south) or the A3100 to Godalming, or the A31 to Farnham, will have to find an alternative route to turning right into York Road, because that option will be removed. This will create potential rat-runs via Nightingale Road and Dene Road and the GLive roundabout.

This plan would seem to be absolutely ideal for a trial, as repeatedly suggested in the guidance document. A “trial” implemented for a scheme in Reigate in July 2020 proved so disastrous that it had to be removed after just 3 days. The decision-makers are the same as were involved then, and ought to understand the importance of making a real-world assessment, and not just rely on computer modelling.

“Albert Einstein: The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.”

2. The report states: “The **scheme** as modelled **reduces vehicle capacity** along the corridor Additional crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists **increase delay** to vehicles. As a result, fewer vehicles travel along the A3100 corridor.”

This last sentence is clear that the policy invoked by the scheme is not simply to improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians, but to dissuade drivers from using London Road. It is assumed that the effect of increased congestion will do so. In other words, those who are not in the “fewer vehicles” category will have to go somewhere. The crux of the modelling report attempts to show who takes the hits, and that “it will be alright on the night”.

There are 2 scenarios about possible levels of uptake of active travelling, low and high, but precise meanings of these phrases are not declared. Not included in the report, are earlier figures published by SCC indicated that current daily cycle usage is 230, and that would increase by 50%, or up to 78%. Surrey CC traffic survey measurements from May 2021 show more than 19000 daily vehicle movements.