

LRAG News Update – 6 March 2023

Last week we reported the outcomes from our meeting with SCC on 22nd February. Three items from that report were:

6. SCC shared a stakeholder ‘mapping plan’ that grouped interested parties by their level of “influence and interest”. It was clear that they regard LLAG as a ‘sideshow’ and want to engage separately with businesses, schools, emergency services, transport providers, residents’ associations, care homes, disability organisations, postal services, etc. We told them that LLAG actually represents many of those mentioned, but again this did not seem to fit with their view of the world.

We were told that consultation with stakeholders would be broken into 2 parts: a) Design principles, and b) Delivery, and stakeholder reference groups would be set up on these two topics.

7. SCC suggested that the consultation engagement should encompass the ‘corridor’ of the entire active travel scheme, not just Phase 1. We noted their idea, because the design has to be homogenous from end to end, but recognise that until their plans are substantially complete for all of the scheme, it would be difficult to undertake a meaningful consultation.
8. We asked for a timeline for the next steps. SCC agreed that they would provide this week commencing February 27th.

On Friday 3rd March we did, indeed, receive the requested timeline as follows:

| TASK | START | END |
|---|---------|---------|
| Public/stakeholder Involvement planning | | |
| Stakeholder mapping | 13/2/23 | 10/3/23 |
| Stakeholder analysis | 27/2/23 | 10/3/23 |
| Corridor Reference Group - Terms of reference | 10/3/23 | 31/3/23 |
| Convene Corridor Reference Group | 10/3/23 | 31/3/23 |
| Corridor Public/stakeholder Involvement delivery | | |
| Create corridor public facing proposal document/survey | 31/3/23 | 30/4/23 |
| Deploy proposal document/survey with associated materials | 1/5/23 | 30/6/23 |
| Deliver x3 public events | 1/5/23 | 30/6/23 |
| Analyse survey responses | 1/7/23 | 30/8/23 |
| Workshop 2- Design | 1/5/23 | 1/7/23 |
| Workshop 3 Delivery | 1/5/23 | 1/7/23 |

The timescales above are estimates and we will update the community on progress.

An important element to take away from this timeline is that there will be no physical construction before end August 2023, and pretty certainly not this year. Any further explanation of the meaning of the terms used in the table above will have to wait to see how events unfold, because we don’t fully understand them either!

We have been told that the Corridor Reference Group will comprise 10-12 stakeholders, of which LLAG should occupy just one place. We have asked to be kept informed about who else will be invited, but in the meantime **if any of our correspondents receives an invite to join the Corridor Reference Group, we would be grateful to learn of the approach by SCC.**

LRAG has made it clear to SCC that this new/revised engagement must concentrate on obtaining opinions on the exact details of the design and its implementation. Simply seeking to revisit and survey the principles of providing improved cycling facilities is no longer a fundamental issue, although many may argue that it is unjustifiable. What adverse effects that the ATS design might cause, and how its installation is to be achieved seem to be the crux of the matter.

Before seeking general consultation LLAG wants SCC to be able to demonstrate balance to its stakeholders in every aspect:

- a justification of numbers who will benefit, compared to those numbers who feel they will not;
- a balance of costs which is appropriate for the whole community, not just cyclists (pedestrians are mainly unaffected), both during construction and subsequently;
- a demonstration that environmental effects, again both during construction and subsequently, are progressive towards a net zero target, together with an explanation how any adverse effects are to be offset;
- a provision of appropriate evidence that commonly-held fears of worsened traffic congestion are not valid.

We shall have to wait and see if these points are included in the Terms of Reference, but there is a distinct echo here of the commitments sought from SCC, but are yet to be fulfilled, from the 5th January meeting.