

Transport Group Report for 2016-17

With much activity by Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council relating to transport issues, this has been an eventful year.

Replacement for the Bus station

Following an inconclusive but well-researched study by MVA in 2011, GBC had commissioned Arup to do further work. In June 2016, we were asked by Arup for our ideas on the matter, and elements of our contribution were included in their report which finally appeared at the end of the year. Their report did not seem to offer any more information than that provided by MVA, and GBC commissioned Systra to conduct a consultation, including a Bus Station stakeholder engagement workshop in April to which the Society was invited. The option presented at that workshop was not one of the more promising offers by Arup and it did not impress either those present or the bus operators. We are currently working on a proposal for an INTERIM fully-equipped Bus Station on the Bedford Road surface car park site which we will put to the bus operators for their comments. Options requiring less land-take should be possible in the longer term if Onslow Street can be dedicated to buses and essential users only.

GBC Parking Strategy

A new Draft Parking Strategy was presented to the Guildford Local Committee in June. This was a well-researched, comprehensive document reflecting the principle of Driving TO, not THROUGH Guildford. We considered our response which was then sent to the lead officer and GBC's Lead Councillor for Infrastructure in August. The draft has now been published, and adopted with later comments from the Infrastructure Executive Advisory Board (EAB).

University's Blackwell Park development

The University's outline plan for developing land on the Blackwell Farm site initially included a new junction on the A31 on the Hog's Back, providing a park & ride site and a road through the "village" to the faculties, the Research Park and the County Hospital. We encouraged the Society to make representations against these ideas, insisting that such a junction would be wrong for many reasons and that a more logical connection could be provided nearer to the A31/A3 interchange with the link circumventing the village. The Local Plan now provides a link to Blackwell Park from the A31 Farnham road near the A3 interchange.

Sustainable Movement Corridor (SMC).

Following its inclusion in the Draft Local Plan, a number of updates on progress of the design have been published. We have commented on these, and in particular, on the most recent one in February which was considered by the Infrastructure EAB. The Society Chairman included these in his letter to a member of the Board.

New Walnut Bridge

We consider this to be premature until it is known what form any adjacent development will take. There is potential for extending it to create a high level walkway through, or adjacent to a building on the site and over Onslow Street.

Traffic light successes

Waitrose. We have made representations during the year to the Guildford Local Committee, drawing SCC's attention to the dangerous confusion, created by the traffic lights, for pedestrians crossing York Road and drivers leaving the Waitrose car park. We are happy to report that these have been modified.
Cathedral roundabout We enquired of SCC and Highways England regarding the conditions under which the part-time signals were required to operate. This appeared to trigger an internal review which resulted in the retained contractor carrying out a check and correcting a fault in the installation. The

lights operate to give traffic priority to leave the A3 in the event of a tailback on the exit slip.

M25 Junction 10 (M25/A3) consultation

Highways England recently launched a consultation on options for increasing the capacity of this junction. We were unable to arrive at a consensus due to differences in individual weighting of the environmental issues involved. Members were therefore encouraged to respond individually.

New East-West link

We have followed with interest, and support in principle, the idea being promoted by Guildford Vision Group, to create a crossing between Woodbridge Road and Guildford Park Road, with a new link to Farnham Road running next to the west side of the railway. This should have the effect of diverting general traffic away from Bridge St and Onslow St to make the whole town centre more attractive.

Group Position Paper

This was completed and posted in March. Additional issues mentioned are:

Railway Stations:- We look forward to Network Rail's assessment of its long term operational needs for extra platforms at Guildford, and the appeal against refusal of Solum's plan. Stations at Guildford East and Guildford West are very important, especially as they can and should be related to the SMC.

A3:- A report by Highways England (HE) is awaited. We note that GBC has stipulated that the three major developments in the Local Plan will be conditional upon a significant increase in A3 capacity by HE. We welcome the late inclusion of provision for a four-way junction at Burnt Common in the Guildford Local Plan. Other routes for pedestrians and cyclists:- Although attention is focused by SCC on a package of improved facilities and the SMC, we are keen that key routes to the Cathedral and the University, for example, are well-developed.

Maurice Barham/Chris Blow 13.4.17