



Eight Parishes Forum



[date]

TO: Surrey County Council

TO: Guildford Borough Council

TO: West Surrey Council

CC: Zoe Franklin MP, Cllr Pat Oven, Cllr Bob Hughes, Cllr Catherine Young, Cllr Dennis Booth

SUBJECT: Cross-Parish Letter: Strategic Transport, Sustainability and Infrastructure Pressures

To whom it may concern,

We are writing on behalf of the member councils of the Eight Parishes Forum to raise several shared concerns about the way strategic transport, infrastructure and sustainability matters are being considered across our villages.

The Forum recognises that each parish council must respond to planning applications, consultations and highways matters through its own formal decision-making processes. This letter is not intended to replace the individual views of member councils. Rather, it reflects a wider concern that many of the issues now affecting our parishes do not sit neatly within one parish boundary.

In recent years, our communities have experienced increasing pressure from development, major road works, diversion routes, traffic displacement and infrastructure constraints. Decisions taken in relation to one site, one road closure, or one settlement can have a direct and sometimes significant impact on neighbouring villages.

Members are particularly concerned that the cumulative effect of these pressures is not always being properly captured. Individual applications or highway proposals may be assessed on their own merits, but the practical impact is often felt across a much wider rural network. This is especially the case where village roads are narrow, public transport is limited, pedestrian provision is poor, and alternative routes are unsuitable for additional traffic.

The Forum is also concerned about the way “sustainability” is being applied in practice. A settlement may appear sustainable on paper because of its relative proximity to services, but that does not always reflect the lived reality for residents. Access to shops, schools, healthcare, public transport and employment must be considered in practical terms, including frequency of services, safe walking routes, road capacity, congestion, and the ability of existing infrastructure to absorb further growth.

There is also a recurring concern that infrastructure delivery too often follows development rather than keeping pace with it. Where development is dependent on highway improvements, public transport provision, drainage, utilities, education, healthcare or other local infrastructure, there needs to be greater confidence that this will be delivered in a timely and enforceable way.

The Forum would therefore welcome clearer engagement from Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council on how cross-parish impacts are assessed, particularly in relation to:

- cumulative traffic impacts across village networks;
- diversion routes and temporary road closures;
- the practical application of sustainability assessments;
- infrastructure delivery and phasing;
- public transport limitations;
- pedestrian and cyclist safety;
- the effect of development and highway works on neighbouring settlements.

We would also welcome consideration of a more joined-up mechanism for engaging parish councils where proposals are likely to have impacts beyond a single parish area. Early discussion with affected parishes would allow local knowledge to be considered before decisions are too far advanced.

The member councils of the Eight Parishes Forum are keen to work constructively with both authorities. However, there is a clear shared concern that the current approach can feel fragmented, with rural communities left to deal with the combined consequences of separate planning and highways decisions.

We would be grateful for a written response setting out how these matters are currently assessed and what opportunities there may be for improved engagement with affected parish councils.

Yours sincerely,

Eight Parish Forum Members.