

Annex A – Correspondence with bus operators

Letter of objection from first bus operator:

Mr A Roberts
Head of Surrey Highways
Surrey County Council
County Hall
Penrhyn Road
KINGSTON UPON THAMES
Surrey
KT1 2DW

2 August 2007 - by fax and e-mail with hard copy in the post

Dear Mr Roberts

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL, PARK STREET, CAMBERLEY
(Prohibition of Traffic and One Way Traffic) ORDER**

I am writing to register our formal objection to the above mentioned Order which proposes to close Park Street, Camberley, to vehicles, including buses.

The grounds of my company's objections are as follows:-

- 1) That the proposed closure will seriously inconvenience residents who arrive in the centre by bus, particularly the elderly and disabled.
- 2) That the closure runs against the aims of the Surrey County Council Local Transport Plan, which seeks to maximise the use of public transport.
- 3) That the alternative bus routes and stops proposed will be less attractive and less safe for bus users.
- 4) That the resulting reduced bus use will adversely affect the retail vitality of the central area, given the volume of consumer spending that is bus-related.
- 5) That the proposals allow continued access for other classes of vehicle, which means that there will not be total pedestrianisation.

I trust that the proposals can be revised to allow continued access for buses in Park Street.

Yours sincerely

Letter of objection from second bus operator:

Mr A Roberts
Head of Surrey Highways
Surrey County Council
South West Area office
3rd Floor Grosvenor House
London Square, Cross Lanes
Guildford GU1 1FA

Your ref: BF/LEGAL/MISC/SH/AK

2 August 2007

Dear Mr Roberts

The Surrey County Council Park Street, Camberley (Prohibition Of Traffic and One Way Traffic) Order – as proposed in your letter of 5 July 2007

I am writing to object to the above proposed Order which would exclude registered local bus services (including our Route 194 Bracknell-Camberley) from its long-established route and stopping point in Park Street.

The grounds for my company's objection are as follows:-

1. That the proposed exclusion of buses is contrary to the policies expressed in the County Council's Local Transport Plan, with particular regard to accessibility and the bus strategy.
2. That bus passengers working and shopping in Camberley, will be seriously inconvenienced by any revised route that requires them to walk further to the commercial centre of the town. This would particularly discriminate against older people and others with mobility problems.
3. That the closest alternative stop to the retail centre of Camberley, which is in Pembroke Broadway, has very unattractive and potentially unsafe access for which no significant improvements have been proposed.
4. That there are numerous exemptions to the proposed Order which require access through Park Street to be maintained for all sizes of vehicle. This is not a proposal for total pedestrianisation and it is unreasonable that bus services should be excluded from a highway that will still be open to traffic and can be negotiated safely, maintaining convenient access for public transport users.

I look forward to receiving proposals for a modification to the proposed Order to permit the continued access for local bus services to Park Street.

In view of current difficulties with Royal Mail, this letter is being sent by fax and email also.

Yours sincerely

Formal response from Surrey County Council:

Our Ref: 7403/D3514/NH

21st December 2007

Dear

**RE: THE SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL PARK STREET CAMBERLEY
(PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC AND ONE-WAY TRAFFIC) ORDER**

Further to your objection of 2nd August 2007 to the proposed Permanent Traffic Regulation Order (PTRO) referred to above, I am writing to detail Surrey County Council's formal response to your objection. Thank you very much for your time taken to meet with representatives of Surrey County Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council and Crest Nicholson subsequent to your objection, to discuss the reasons behind your objection, and to negotiate a number of proposed improvements to the highway infrastructure in Camberley. I believe these improvements will compensate for loss of access to Park Street for First bus services.

I would like to confirm formally the proposed improvements that were agreed:

1. Northbound bus stop provision in Charles Street

The layout of Charles Street will be modified to provide one new bus stop on the west side of the road. A new Zebra Crossing will be provided to enable passengers to cross safely from the new bus stop to the Atrium forecourt area. One bus stop will also be provided on the east side of the road. These bus stops will facilitate two-way operation in Charles Street. The enclosed drawing shows the layout of these new facilities. The proposed improvements in Charles Street are subject to obtaining planning approval for a modification to the Atrium scheme. On the advice of Surrey Heath Borough Council's planning department, I am confident that this could be achieved, but it should be borne in mind that the final decision rests with the Planning Committee. There would be space on both sides of Charles Street to provide bus shelters. It may be possible to fund these as part of the Atrium project, depending on the requirement for bus shelters in Pembroke Broadway, which in turn depends on the modified bus service pattern based on two-way operation in Charles Street.

2. Princess Way Link

Please find enclosed a plan and briefing note detailing the proposed improvements for the Princess Way Link. These improvements include renewed surfacing, improved lighting, painting, and new street furniture. In addition the new Camberley Town Centre Manager will be tasked with organising a community art project, the result of which could be installed in the Princess Way Link. Surrey County Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council will look to improve pedestrian signage between Princess Way and the bus interchange on Pembroke Broadway. These proposals will improve the link as much as possible in the short term.

It is acknowledged that any substantial improvement in the link is constrained by the adjacent buildings. Therefore to achieve this substantial improvement in the medium to long term, Surrey Heath Borough Council has assured me that they will include in their Local Development Framework a policy to widen, straighten, and improve the link, in the context of any future redevelopment of Main Square multi-story car park or Ashwood House.

3. Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)

Surrey County Council is committed to providing RTPI for all bus services

serving Camberley. There are currently technical problems that prevent cross-boundary interface between RTPI systems operating in Surrey, Hampshire, and Bracknell Forest. Surrey County Council is accumulating a substantial fund to address these problems. The Atrium scheme is contributing £269,000 to this fund. The most recent RTPI contract let by Surrey County Council includes provision for resolution of these problems, subject to funding being available. Alongside RTPI, Surrey County Council will introduce bus priority measures at traffic signals along the A30 London Road, to aid punctual operation of local bus services. Sites intended for upgrade with bus priority measures are The Meadows, Tuscam Way, Frimley Road, Lower Charles Street, Park Street, Knoll Road, Caesar's Camp Road and the Jolly Farmer.

4. Continued use of Park Street until Charles Street opens

Until Charles Street opens in November 2008 Surrey County Council would provide written authority for First bus services to continue to use Park Street after the Permanent Traffic Regulation Order referred to above has been made. To comply with the order, each driver would have to have in his or her permission a letter of authorisation to drive his or her bus into Park Street. The proposed rising bollard is to be monitored continuously by The Mall security desk via CCTV and an entry phone system. We would provide the security desk with a list of bus route numbers that should be allowed access. On arrival at the bollard, each driver would use the entry phone to call the security desk, which could immediately lower the bollard.

Unauthorised traffic would be prevented from entering Park Street using the proposed rising bollard. To ensure pedestrian safety temporary accommodation – cones, barriers etc – would be provided in Park Street to segregate bus movements from pedestrian activity. Bus drivers within Park Street would have to respect the pedestrian environment, and keep to a very low speed to minimise the risk of an accident. If it were discovered that drivers were routinely driving either aggressively or too quickly along Park Street, Surrey County Council would withdraw authorisation to enter Park Street.

It is possible that this proposal could be challenged, as it may be perceived to be contrary to the spirit of the Permanent Traffic Regulation Order. I would, however, ensure that the local community were aware of the proposal and the reasons behind it, in an effort to minimise the risk of challenge. Generally speaking the community has been very positive when given good quality information in advance of an event.

5. Promotion of First services in Atrium publicity events

Crest Nicholson has assured me that First would be invited to be included in Atrium publicity events and marketing material. This would enable First to promote their services with new and existing employees in Camberley town centre, and new and existing visitors to Camberley town centre. This would also help to smooth the transition from Park Street to Charles Street, once Charles Street opens in November 2008.

6. Invitation to join the Camberley Town Centre Community Interest Company

During our recent meetings First was invited to join the Camberley Town Centre Community Interest Company, in return for an appropriate financial contribution towards the operation of the company. This company has been created to promote Camberley town centre, and all businesses that have an interest in Camberley town centre. The company will be guided by the members, who therefore have

considerable influence over its activities. The company employs a full-time Town Centre Manager, whose job it is to coordinate marketing campaigns, organise events, and so on.

7. Access to High Street

Unfortunately Surrey County Council cannot offer bus access to High Street at the present time. The necessary consultation and statutory processes mean that in the current climate, I cannot guarantee a favourable outcome, and therefore it would be dishonest of me to raise a false expectation. Moreover Surrey Heath Borough Council have medium to long-term redevelopment aspirations for High Street, which in and of themselves will require substantial consultation, together with their respective statutory processes. It would be much more appropriate to consider the question of bus access to High Street in the context of future redevelopment. At this stage all I can confirm is that the request for access to High Street has been noted. I am sorry that I cannot be more positive in regard to this matter.

In the light of the proposed improvements detailed above, I would encourage you to reconsider your objection of 2nd August. Mindful of the imminent Christmas holiday period, I would be extremely grateful to know your thoughts on the matter by 10th January 2008.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries or concerns.

Yours Sincerely,

Formal response from first bus operator – received by e-mail on 21st February 2008:

Dear Nick

Park Street, Camberley

Thank you for facilitating the series of meetings with Surrey Heath and Crest Nicholson to discuss our objection to the pedestrianisation of Park Street, Camberley. I am writing to confirm that sadly we are unable to withdraw our objection at this time.

We are very grateful that there has been considerable progress in enabling two-way bus operation in the new Charles Street and also in improving facilities on Pembroke Broadway and through the Princess Way link, which is currently such an unattractive walking route for bus users.

However, we feel that the significant disadvantage caused by the closure of Park Street to buses has still not been adequately addressed. We believe it is vital that the best possible public transport penetration of the town centre is maintained to maximise the attractiveness of bus services. This will of course help to achieve the County Councils targets on public transport use as well as addressing traffic congestion and environmental issues.

We have discussed at length the possibility of bus access along the High Street so that buses can serve both sides of the core retail area of the town. I was very surprised at the blank refusal to consider bus access to the High Street at our last meeting. In the short term it would only require the removal of a number of on-street parking spaces and in the longer term a 'buses only' street would be a much better urban environment than currently exists.

It is our view that the various opportunities created by bus access to the High Street would satisfactorily replace the current Park Street option and so we would be happy to withdraw our objection to the scheme if this bus access could be created.

We have always been strong supporters of the Atrium development as it will greatly improve the retail and leisure environment in Camberley. It seems a great shame that we may have to proceed to a Public Inquiry when resolution of this one High Street issue would solve the problem from our perspective.

I hope that the County and District Councils will be able to review their position on the High Street so that we can all move forward as speedily as possible.

Yours Sincerely