

Q&A from Leeds village meeting

29 June 2023

Residents of Leeds and surrounding villages were invited to attend a presentation by South East Water's project team explaining updates to the proposal to lay a new pipeline through the village.

The meeting followed a public drop-in session in May where members of the community requested changes to the traffic management.

In attendance were 89 members of the community, as well as representatives from South East Water and Kent Highways.

[A presentation](#) was given by the South East Water project team which included updates on the traffic management. A question-and-answer session then followed where community members were able to question South East Water and Kent Highways about the project and traffic management plans.

Q1. Why not put in temporary one-way orders? There is no evidence to suggest they cause fatalities. An FOI confirmed no fatalities as result of temporary one-way orders.

A1. We (KCC Highways) do not put in temporary one-way orders. This explains why there are no fatalities attributed to temporary one-way orders. I (Andrew) wrote the FOI response, and have been doing projects like this for 30 years and temporary one-way orders are incredibly dangerous, which is why we do not use them.

Q2. Any issues in Leeds always cause big problems. Today it took 30 minutes for a five minute journey. Are you aware of the impact on Otham St from your plans and road closures around Caring Lane?

A2. Kent Highways is fully aware of the issues of road closures etc. But, there has to be a cut-off point to the diversion plans in place. Also, consideration must be taken to the law around roadworks. These road closures make it safer for all road users, which includes the staff working on the roads.

Q3. What exactly is being proposed at Duck Pond Lane / Broomfield Rd?

A3. There will be a hard closure in place at Duck Pond Lane to limit traffic, as well as a hard closure at the Leeds Castle end of Broomfield Rd.

Q4. Will there be specific signage which explains what access is available and to where?

A4. Yes, as per the presentation, there will be bespoke signage to explain fully all road closures.

Statement 5: People will ignore the signs, so blocking only one end will cause congestion and chaos. Blocking one end of a road is not a solution.

Statement 6: Lorries and HGVs are not the only issue. White van men etc. will also ignore signage and cause issues.

Statement 7: How do I get my son to Cornwallis School with these road closures in place? Why can you not use speed cameras? This plan will not work and you are box ticking. Put in speed cameras and a one-way system.

Q8. Has anyone been to Otham Street? Is it chaos. Road closures will only push more traffic through Otham Street.

A8. A number of panel members confirmed they had been to Otham Street and understand the issues there. Please see answer to question two for details.

Q9. What provisions have been made for the Number 13 bus?

A9. We have been working with KCC public transport and the bus companies to maintain services throughout the works. This is ongoing, but already we have discussed shuttle buses etc. More information will be issued when available.

Q10. This new plan is a great idea. But, is there a review period in place to see how the plan is working and review if it isn't?

A10. South East Water and KCC Highways will be constantly monitoring the project, with staff continually reviewing and resolving issues as they arise.

Q11. Can residents be involved in the monitoring and feedback process? Perhaps another meeting two weeks after the project start?

A11. Yes, we can absolutely do this. We have nothing to hide and continue to be happy to engage with residents and businesses. We are doing this work because we have a legal duty to supply water.

Q12. Is KCC Highways aware of the blocked drains and accidents at Lower St? Will they be making road surface repairs whilst these works are taking place?

A12. Yes. KCC Highways will be making repairs whilst the road is available to be worked on. This is a collaborative effort.

Q13. Can we have another public meeting after the schools go back in September?

A13. Yes

Q14. We agree this is a better plan than the previous one. What form do the chicanes take? When will they be manned?

A14. The chicanes will be water-filled plastic chicanes, positioned with space for emergency vehicles. They will be manned from 7am to 7pm for the first two weeks with the potential to extend beyond two weeks if required.

Q15. Why shut the road for such long distances for only three metres of work per day (calculation made by member of public asking questions)?

A15. We have to close the road because it is so congested with utilities under it. The width of the road and safety regulations dictate this. The road is too narrow to make one-way and work with the legally required safety zones in place. We must abide by the law. There are also lots of unknowns in the area, including former sinkholes.

Q16. How many people will there be working on this?

A16. There will be two gangs of three workers (six in total) every working day (Monday – Saturday).

Q17. Farmers Close resident asked: Will schools be made aware of the potential disruptions and delays? This project will make my journey to my child's nursery in Sutton Valance impossible, with a one-year-old child in the car sat in traffic. Why are the gangs not working overnight?

A17. We appreciate any roadworks cause disruption, but this work is essential. The type of work being undertaken cannot be done in shifts, and cannot be done safely at night.

Q18. Why have KCC Highways approved an August closure for meter replacement in this area?

A18. The project team is looking into this and working with the team at South East Water responsible for this work to try and bring this forward or postpone.

Q19. What is wrong with a car permit system to only allow residents through both ends?

A19. The gatemen have no statutory powers to enforce a permit system, so we cannot do this and it would not work because the public would not comply.

Q20. How many water shut-offs will there be? Will the water go off every time you need to connect properties to the new main?

A20. Yes, we do need to shut the water off to do this work. There will always be 48 hours' notice given. Each shut-off is a maximum of three hours.

Q21. Will I have access to my property on Upper Street whilst the road is closed?

A21. Yes, this is a rolling closure, designed to give residents access at all times. Whilst the road is closed one side of your property, you will exit the other way. As the road closure reaches the other side of your property, you will exit in the opposite direction.

Q22. Can we see the risk assessment for this project?

A22. All aspects of the works have been risk assessed to ensure all risks are identified and mitigated in line with current regulations.

Q23. Has there been an estimate made of the traffic increase to Willington Street from this work?

A23. KCC Highways has given significant thought to all aspects of this road closure and the disruption it will cause and have sought to minimise this through careful planning with South East Water.

Q24. Why can't this new main be laid on agricultural land?

A24. This has been looked at, but the agricultural land is to the rear of the residential properties this main is required to service. This would mean all homeowners would be responsible for the cost and organisation of connecting their meters (which are at the front of their properties) to the new main at the rear.

Statement 25: This main is being laid to reinforce the existing network and reduce the leakages experienced in the area as a result of the old main. The population in Leeds is growing and, once the retirement village is complete, demand for water will increase significantly. This new main will protect supplies and reduce disruption to the community from loss of supply.