

## LRAG News Update – 26 September 2023

### Public Engagement Phase 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 to 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023

The London Road Action Group (LRAG) set itself a remit to ensure that the public were best informed about the Burpham to Guildford Active Travel Scheme. One of the underlying tenets that we set store by, and can be seen in the guidance given by the Department for Transport about engagement plans, was: ***“Proposals must be clear and unambiguous, as detailed as possible, including good maps and drawings...”***

This has been achieved to a certain extent, both online and at the first drop-in event, though presentations were **very short on dimension details**, and **animations failed to reflect peak-time activity**.

The second part of the paragraph continues: ***“... and frank about the disadvantages ...”***. This element is harder to detect in what has been offered for consideration.

Of the many concerns that emerged when details of the proposal were announced in December 2022, two issues seemed to be of great concern: a 5-month northbound road closure, and the potential effect on an already congested road. [Further issues are dealt with on our website](#), and readers are urged to study them carefully, before responding to the Survey. Adding your views, whatever they may be, is absolutely essential.

**Accessibility.** Keeping the road fully open, up to 8pm, partially addresses access issues for many. “Quiet” nighttime work may seem an OK solution, but bright lighting and an inevitable raising of the noise levels are unquantified, and may be distressful for some people living close by. The effect is impossible to quantify. If Environmental Health deem the effect unacceptable, once the scheme starts, what would be the resolution?

It is oft stated that short-term pain is worth the long-term gain, but this is projected to be an 18-month project, albeit distributed along the entire length. Six months will involve total closures, and access to both Burpham businesses and town centre entertainment venues, still operating after 8 pm, may only be accessible to pedestrians (or cyclists completing their journey dismounted). No contingency diversion plans have been published.

**Congestion.** The launch of this engagement by Surrey CC, without having been able to complete and/or publish details of its effects on traffic congestion, is hard to accept as being ***“frank about the disadvantages.”*** Computer modelling is not available; details of relative usage by vehicles and projected active travellers remain unsaid. Yet the survey expects responders to comment in detail, without having been given sufficient knowledge.

It was clearly stated in conversation with the Project Manager at the drop-in event on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, that the objective of the Scheme was to ensure an expeditious flow for **all** road users, with an implication that the relative volumes of users was not a consideration.

### “The Letter”

Six-and-a-half thousand letters have been sent, and so it remains a mystery why there have been so few reports of it having been received. Three points of note from it:

***“In addition, we are no longer proposing to narrow the width of the road to six metres, instead the road will remain the same width as it is currently”*** – **False**; there are many lengths where the installations of cycle tracks (with a kerb separating it from the vehicle carriageway) will be less than it is currently.

***“Surrey has the highest number of cycling fatalities in the UK”*** – **Misleading**; in fact, this was an error and should have stated **casualties**. It has been amended on the website, though is still **misleading** whichever category is being reported. The data actually refer to the local authority of Surrey, not the county.

**Hampshire**, as a county, is **worse** but this is hidden because there are 3 different local authorities.

Whichever data are chosen this is a highly selective statement, as it presupposes that London Road is wholly representative of all of Surrey roads. For the 10-years up to 2021 London Road had no fatalities and represented merely 0.45% of all Surrey cycling deaths and serious injuries.