

## LRAG News Update – 12 December 2023

This week's newsletter appears a little earlier than usual because this is the last opportunity to remind readers that the [Surrey County Council survey](#) closes on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December. Once completed, an analysis and report will be compiled by The Consultation Institute, for submission together with other reports, pending a Council decision on whether to proceed with the Burpham to Guildford Active Travel Scheme. Recent advice from an SCC source is that this will most probably take place in February 2024.

Numbers of responses to the survey still languish in the tens of hundreds, despite the tens of thousands of London Road users. This remains disappointing given the weight that will probably be assigned to the survey in the final conclusion.

### Analysing Surveys

There has been a lot of publicity lately about the contribution that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be bringing to people's lives in the future. LLAG's survey analyst has identified AI programmes that can analyse and summarise lengthy documents, to save readers time wading through masses of text. As a trial, the commentaries in some of the SCC Survey questions were subjected to a test by one of these AI programmes.

The results were surprisingly cogent. For example:

*Q4 asks: To what extent do you agree that the design of Section No. 1 contributes to the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and vulnerable road users?*

The current rough ratio of supporting answers, compared to those not agreeing, is about 4 to 3 in agreement.

When the AI programme reviews the comments to the succeeding question:

*Q5. Do you want to provide any further comments on this section of the updated proposals?*

it is much more equivocal and comes back with its own more detailed questions, viz:

*Summary: **There are mixed opinions** expressed about the proposed cycle lane and pedestrian improvements along London Road in Guildford. Some support improving safety and active travel options while others voice concerns about reduced road space increasing congestion. **Questions also arise** around fully separating cyclists and pedestrians given shared paths, enforcing safety on shared sections, and addressing gaps in the proposed cycle routing.*

*Questions:*

- 1. Does the proposal fully separate pedestrians and cyclists for the entire route, or are there shared sections?*
- 2. What enforcement or design measures are proposed for shared pedestrian/cyclist sections to reduce conflicts?*
- 3. How will the proposal address discontinuities or gaps in the proposed cycling infrastructure?*

It does seem slightly ironic that a computer has noticed that, perhaps, there has been less than the necessary candour in the survey questions, and that respondents may have amplified that they are a little less certain about what they were actually buying in to.

### "A Show of Hands"

As a parting shot, at the end of the engagement period, LLAG makes an offer to contributors.

Here is the opportunity to respond to the commitment that the Leader of Surrey County Council made at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> January public meeting, when he said a further review might be necessary if the public showed continued opposition. This simple and straightforward enquiry is not limited to the end of SCC's engagement period, would probably be dismissed by them as non-verifiable if names and contact details are not included, but it is the "elephant in the room" that SCC have carefully avoided addressing.

Give a "show of hands" on the [LRAG website](#) if you are convinced that all is now OK for the Burpham to Guildford Active Travel Scheme to go ahead **with public support**.