

RESULTS of SURVEY

Albemarle Road Cycle Scheme and Westgate Bridge

Conducted by Conservative Councillors for Copers Cope Ward, Beckenham – Feb-Mar 2021
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1. COMMENTARY

Background

- 1.1 Having been consulted by Bromley Council officers on questions they planned to put to our residents on this subject, the Ward Councillors had their recommended 5 questions rejected. The Council Department survey went ahead based on only 2 questions.
- 1.2 Many of our residents in the roads most affected by this scheme are very angry about its introduction without prior public consultation or warning. We regarded the Department questionnaire as inadequate because:
 - We know that some residents like the Albemarle Road and Westgate scheme as it is, now that traffic has settled down. The Department survey did not allow this option.
 - Other residents like some aspects of the scheme but were not given the chance to say what could be improved, particularly no chance to say how traffic could best flow over Westgate hump-back bridge. The Department survey did not allow the option of one way traffic over the Bridge.
 - The Department's questions seemed to be railroading our residents into voting for changes to the traffic scheme that they may not want.
 - The Department survey did not allow residents with no internet access to respond.
- 1.3 We Ward Councillors therefore decided to conduct our own survey to give residents the opportunity to more fully express their views. Our questions (see below) had been amended and approved by Bromley's Environment Portfolio Holder.

2. ALTERNATIVE SURVEY – METHOD AND RESPONSE

- 2.1 We printed 3,500 copies of our Alternative Survey together with a letter explaining our reasons for carrying out this exercise. We arranged for its door to door distribution in the same area of our Ward that the Department survey had been delivered. Our delivery took place between 21 – 25 February and the closing date for responses to be received was 12 noon on 8th March 2021.
- 2.2 The 5 questions we posed all had (a) or (b) or n/a answer options. Other comments and suggestions were also invited, and these were frequently made – sometimes at great length. In the analysis spreadsheet we sought to summarise useful comments.
- 2.3 Residents could respond by email, on our website, or, unlike the Department survey, by dropping a paper response in at any one of 3 secure addresses. This last option allowed those without internet access to respond, and we received most replies in this way. We provided these letterboxes in the centre of each of the 3 major roads affected: Albemarle Road, The Avenue and Foxgrove.
- 2.4 We were surprised at the high response and strength of feelings. In previous surveys a 1-2% response was considered good. We received 16%. Responses received by the deadline were:

113 on our website
241 on paper
221 by email

575 total = 16.4% response to the 3,500 questionnaires circulated.

2.5 We were aware that other residents' associations and organisations had also carried out surveys but not restricted them to the area directly affected. In order to keep our results directly relevant and comparable with the Department survey, 62 submissions were disallowed. These were from the website responses. Responses on paper and by email were all included, even when the sender wished to remain anonymous.

2.6 A total of 513 responses were analysed, each with the source identified as follows:

w = 51 website responses allowed

p = 241 paper responses submitted

e = 221 emailed responses

513 total analysed

d = 62 website responses disallowed as out of area but with views and comments recorded

575 total received

3. COUNCILLORS' SURVEY QUESTIONS – OUTCOME AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 ALBEMARLE ROAD

- 1) Do you wish to
- (a) continue the experimental traffic scheme with or without the adjustments offered below; or
 - (b) end the experimental scheme and remove most elements of it?

(a) = 49% (b) = 46% n/a = 5%

- 2) If you wish the scheme to continue, do you wish to
- (a) continue the scheme with traffic flows as they are at present; or
 - (b) re-introduce two way traffic between junctions at Westgate Road and St Georges Road whilst retaining the segregated cycle lane?

(a) = 33% (b) = 28% n/a = 39%

WESTGATE HUMP-BACK BRIDGE

- 3) Do you wish to
- (a) continue to have one way traffic (see options below), or
 - (b) re-introduce two way traffic on Westgate Bridge (see options below)?

(a) = 50% (b) = 42% n/a = 8%

- 4) If you wish the one way traffic to continue, do you wish to
- (a) have one way traffic South (as present) running from The Avenue into Albemarle Road; or
 - (b) have one way traffic North running from Albemarle Road into The Avenue?

(a) = 41% (b) = 9% n/a = 50%

- 5) If you wish to re-introduce two way traffic and the experimental scheme in Albemarle Road continues, do you wish to

- (a) control traffic across the bridge with traffic lights (adjustable for tidal flows but will cause tailbacks); or
- (b) revert to uncontrolled two way traffic?

(a) = 26% (b) = 24% n/a = 50%

Surveys conducted by the Department and other organisations, such as residents' associations, all concluded that the experimental scheme should stay in place, with none recommending it be removed.

As traffic levels are nowhere near the pre-lockdown levels, The Environment Committee at the Council recommended on 11th March 2021 leaving the scheme in place for the present time and re-introducing two way traffic on an experimental basis in Albemarle Road between junctions at Westgate Road and St Georges Road.

Ward Members conclude that opinions are very evenly split. However there is a majority wishing to continue to have one way traffic over the Bridge and a large majority wishing to have one way traffic South (as present). The conclusion of the Committee was that The Council should save further tax payers' money and leave arrangements on Westgate Bridge as they are, perhaps with enhanced signage.

The Committee also recommended that the scheme be reviewed again within 18 months so that post-lockdown traffic can be measured and residents views re-evaluated.

Traffic engineers were asked to do more work on changing traffic priorities at the junctions of Albemarle Rd – St Georges Rd and at Westgate Rd – Albemarle Rd. Parking in the southern end of Westgate Road is to be revised with a view to reducing traffic congestion.