



BBRAG NEWS

Bromley Borough Roads Action Group - No. 16 (June 2002)

In This Issue

- **Conservatives Win Council Elections**
- **Hated Speed Bumps follow Taliban into History**
- **The Wrong Direction?**
- **Ten Year Transport Plan in Difficulties**
- **Why is Bromley Road Safety Better?**
- **Speed Cameras in Bromley**
- **Mottingham Estate Traffic Scheme**
- **Pollution Caused by Traffic Calming**
- **Potholes Created by Road Humps**
- **Heathrow Congestion Charge**
- **Road User Charging**
- **More Satellite Tracking**
- **How to Get a Local Map**
- **Council News**
- **Driving Road Traffic Accidents Down**
- **Britains First Fatal Road Accident**
- **Letters**
- **B.B.R.A.G. Information and Contacts**

Editorial

This edition contains a couple of contributed articles from John Redwood, M.P., and Gareth Davies of Bromley Council (any other contributions or suggestions for articles would be welcomed). We also have the latest news on Bromley and London transport issues, and some articles on the contentious issue of speed humps.

For those readers who tend to get lost, or who don't always know which roads we are referring to, we also have an article on internet and other street maps. And finally some letters from our readers.

Roger Lawson, Editor

Conservatives Win Council Elections

The Conservative Party retained control of Bromley Council at the elections in early May. Previously the council was fairly evenly divided between Conservatives and a LibDem/Labour coalition and the former only gained control following a by-election. However in the recent elections Conservatives gained 41 seats, with the Liberal Democrats falling to 13 and Labour retaining 6 seats, a major swing in allegiance.

Clearly council tax rises were a major issue for the electorate, but the Conservatives also campaigned with a policy of "no more speed bumps". Interestingly, there was a similar strong swing to the Conservatives in the London Borough of Richmond which they also captured from the Liberal Democrats and where there was a similar anti speed bump policy.

If any readers would like an up-to-date list of local councillors, we can supply, or go to the Bromley Council web site: www.bromley.gov.uk.



Note that Councillor George Taylor (picture left) has been appointed to the Executive with responsibility for the "Environment" portfolio, which includes transport matters.

At an Executive meeting on the 20th May (effectively a "cabinet" meeting of councillor portfolio holders under the new council structure) the following policies were agreed:

1. Traffic management should concentrate on cost effective measures without detriment to the free flow of traffic.

2. There will be a preference for no vertical speed reduction installations (bumps to you and me), subject to considering each case on its merits.

3. A report is to be prepared regarding the feasibility of contracting out all aspects of traffic management in Bromley.

4. The council re-iterated its commitment to the public service agreement (PSA) for accident reduction in the borough.

There were a number of residents of Murray Avenue, Bromley at this meeting. They are in the peculiar situation that Murray Avenue was being resurfaced at the time the new administration took office. The speed bumps had been temporarily removed for the purpose of resurfacing but have not been put back. No final decision has yet been made on this but it is possible that some alternative traffic calming proposal will be made.

(Editors Comment: Well let us hope that the Conservatives continue to stick to their election promises. Maybe they should adopt these policies nationally or even consider removing some of the worst speed bump examples in Bromley).

Hated Speed Bumps Follow Taliban into History

No this is not Bromley we are talking about, but it seems that speed bumps have a strong association with policies on individual freedom. In Kandahar, Afghanistan, speed humps originally installed by the Taliban have been dug up, much to the joy of local road users. To quote a local news source: "Long stretches of the Herat Bazaar and Kabul Shah thoroughfares were suddenly flat and inviting to motorists, where once the Taliban had built up bumps in the pavement to control the traffic of motorised rickshaws, lumbering trucks, bicycles and overpowered sport utility vehicles".

(Editors Comment: Whether there are any parallels with Bromley will be left to your own decision).

The Wrong Direction?

by John Redwood, M.P.



The recent government Budget was portrayed as a gargantuan struggle between the good guys, who want to put taxes up to pay for a better health service, and the bad guys, who want to leave taxes alone. By implication, these heartless rogues

would starve the National Health Service of its birthright. The reality is otherwise.

The Budget should be an occasion to ask why the increase in taxation since this government came to power has made so little impact on the quality of important public services. Where has all the money gone? Could some of it not be better spent?

We could begin by examining the extraordinary increase in public spending on transport. There are no visible improvements, and many signs that things are getting worse.

The most striking feature of the government's 10 year transport plan is how it combines both high cost to the taxpayer with poverty of ambition. The aim is to invest £180bn over 10 years. This includes £27bn of subsidy for the railways and substantial sums on road maintenance and Highways Agency administration, likely to exceed £12bn. But London Underground is promised only £16bn over a 15-year period, with much of that needed for renewal rather than expansion.

Meanwhile, in the same 10-year period Britons are forecast to spend £180bn or so on new cars.

"The main transport difficulty in Britain is that there is not enough of it. Much of the policy debate agonises over how to switch at the margins from car and lorry to train and bus. But the country is short of railway lines as well as of road space. It needs big investment in new capacity,

The main transport difficulty in Britain is that there is not enough of it. Much of the policy debate agonises over how to switch at the margins from car and lorry to train and bus. But the country is short of railway lines as well as of road space. It needs big investment in new capacity,

but this is not included on any scale in the present plan. Instead we have a 21st-century economy and a transport system capable of handling the traffic volumes of the 1970s.

The government forecasts that about £60bn of its £180bn transport plan will come from the private sector. The risk is that even this modest amount will be delayed and reduced. Railtrack is in administration. Many of the train operating companies are unsure of their future, waiting to see if their franchises will be renewed, and wanting to know how the government intends to merge franchises.

Most people would like a more integrated transport policy, but we need to begin by understanding the current popularity of the motor vehicle, which accounts for 87 per cent of our travel needs. Integration means finding ways to tempt the motorist out of the car on to the bus or train. The past five years have shown that motorists cannot be taxed and regulated off the road.

The first task must be to make it easier to commute by bus or train from suburbs to city centres. That requires cheap and secure commuter car parks at stations. The second task is to boost capacity on the tube, railways and buses so there is a good chance of getting a seat, with a regular service. The third task is to make it easier to drive to the station. We need to review station access in each town and city.

The fourth task is to take urgent decisions to enable the railway industry to attract massive private investment to do the job. That means getting Railtrack out of administration as quickly as possible. It means proposing a scheme for the Tube that would release far more private capital than the convoluted PPP so far devised.

It means offering long franchises to existing train companies quickly, or getting on with supplanting them. There is no advantage in insisting on only one company at each station: imagine the chaos if Heathrow airport decided it wanted only one airline to fly in.

It means creating a Londoner's Tube, owned by London voters and Tube users, which could raise substantial sums from the City to build a

new line, put air conditioning on the trains, and build park-and-ride car parks at outlying stations.

We also need to increase the capacity of our road network. Where new road space is being supplied it could be tolled, allowing the money to be raised in the private sector. The Dartford crossing showed how successful this approach can be.

The emphasis should be a little less on management of an inadequate network, and much more on attracting large sums into our transport systems. No one argues over where the money to build a new telephone, mobile cable and internet networks is going to come from. If BT was still a nationalised monopoly, there would be queues to get a mobile and the internet would be rationed. So let us learn the lesson for transport, and quickly. We need to spend much more than £180bn on transport over the next 10 years, but to spend much less than £120bn of taxpayer's money on doing so.

Setting Railtrack and London Underground free in the private sector would be a good start. The telecommunications industry shows how spending can be increased while the cost to the taxpayer is cut. Do it for transport and Britain can spend more on the NHS without putting taxes up.

(Editors Comment: The author of this article is the Rt. Hon John Redwood who is the Conservative Member of Parliament for Wokingham, and former Minister. He takes a keen interest in local transport issues in his constituency and is a critic of the Liberal Council's vendetta against the motorist. This article was originally published in the Financial Times and is reprinted with permission of the author.

The Dartford crossing is certainly a good example of private funding, but it is unfortunate that the government has now reneged on the promise to cease tolls once it had been paid for, despite overwhelming objections by the public to the idea that charges should remain.

Incidentally dissatisfaction with current transport policies is not a Conservative monopoly. The Commons Transport Select Committee which is dominated by Labour members has also expressed recent strong concerns in a 74 page report.)

Ten Year Transport Plan in Difficulties

As an interesting comment on the previous article, it has just been reported by the Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) that the 10 year UK Integrated Transport Plan established in 2000 is not on target. Although some aspects such as air quality were improving, rail and bus passengers have been falling (except in London), rail and bus services were not improving and public transport fares were rising.

The Commission wants tougher measures to curb car use and more action by local authorities. To quote "There are worrying signs that the Government and local authorities are soft-peddling on demand management, essential to ensure delivery of the 10 Year Plan objectives. Unless we take action to change behaviour at the margins, traffic congestion, particularly in our cities, is only going to get worse.....Allowing congestion to grow is the only true anti-motorist policy". Refer to www.cfit.gov.uk for the full report.

(Editors Comment: Of course if you attempt to introduce policies that are unpopular or which are not practical, then objectives are not likely to be met. Unfortunately the expectation that you can switch large numbers of people to public transport such as buses or trains when they are of such poor quality, and are not improving, or are even getting worse - after Hatfield the reliability of train services was seriously degraded - is not a realistic policy.)

Why is Bromley Road Safety Better?

Previous editions of this Newsletter have pointed out that the road traffic accident statistics have been improving in Bromley, whereas most other London boroughs have not been getting better. Some of this has been assumed to be due to more effective strategies in Bromley, for example more expenditure on educational measures.

However there is apparently one other possible reason that is worth mentioning. That is that Bromley typically has wealthier residents who own more modern cars. Modern cars are much safer, particularly in protecting their occupants when accidents occur, so that minor accidents

may even drop out of the statistics because the latter only include those where personal injuries are reported to the police. As current car models spread through the population more rapidly in Bromley, hence the accidents statistics improve more rapidly.

Incidentally, Bromley council staff are working on a new road safety action plan which is likely to be published in September.

Speed Cameras in Bromley



A report entitled "ILIP/BSP" produced by Bromley Council last year as an interim transport plan for the borough contains some interesting statistics on the effectiveness of traffic management schemes. One of the items in there is some data on the effectiveness of speed cameras.

There were 8 speed cameras sites installed in 1997 in the borough - you no doubt know where they are, as most residents do of course - but only one camera purchased. The sites were chosen "on the basis of locations that had both speeding and accident problems". The accident figures per year for the 3 years before and after are as follows:

Before	After	Reduction
69.7	63.3	9.2%

The total cost of the installations was £130,000, plus of course the cost of processing the films which is not identifiable. The accident saving is relatively small and is probably not statistically significant. In addition the effectiveness of the cameras may well have declined after the initial few months as people learned where they were. Even if you assume that there is a benefit, the cost effectiveness of the expenditure is very poor in comparison with other measures taken in Bromley.

For example, a similar level of expenditure on red light cameras at 8 junctions produced a reduction of 30% in accidents.

Even simple measures such as improved road surfacing, pedestrian refuges, signage and other

traffic calming measures are all more effective than speed cameras.

However, this lack of cost effectiveness did not prevent council staff advocating that more cameras be installed in future, which simply shows that policies are driven more by conventional gestures than by rational thought.

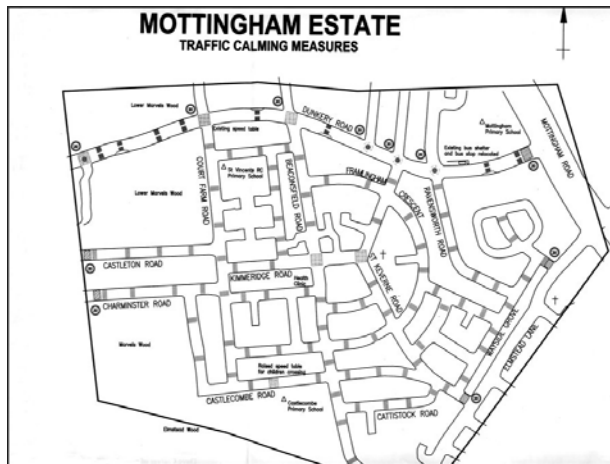
Incidentally if you wish to get more information on the public's attitude to speed cameras, there is a very long and comprehensive report on this matter which can be downloaded from the following internet site:

www.roads.detr.gov.uk/roadsafety/research11

This report also shows that just the presence of warning signs (without actual cameras) does cause a significant reduction in speed, although the effect tends to wear off with time, as does the impact of speed cameras.

Mottingham Estate Traffic Scheme

The Mottingham Estate, which is an area to the south of Dunkery Road in Mottingham (see map below), is the location of a proposed traffic calming scheme.



This must be one of the largest yet proposed in Bromley with about 85 speed humps (*Editor: this must be some sort of record*), several speed tables, speed cushions on Dunkery Road and a 20 mph speed limit over the whole area. The total cost of the scheme will be £172,500 if it is implemented as proposed, for which funding

from the DTLR (part of central government) has already been promised.

B.B.R.A.G. has submitted objections to this scheme based on the proposed cost and the excessive use of speed humps. Also we are opposed to such measures on Dunkery Road which is used as a through route by traffic. Although B.B.R.A.G. accepts that some measures are necessary in this road, we do not like the scheme as proposed.

Apparently this area is rated a priority for traffic calming as there have been 8.6 accidents per annum in this area in the last few years. However we feel that cheaper measures would be more cost effective.

This scheme has gone out to consultation with local residents (any comments should be sent to the Traffic Engineering Unit, Environmental Services Dept, London Borough of Bromley, Stockwell Close, Bromley, BR1 3BR). However, the new Conservative policy of "no more speed bumps" may clearly affect these proposals and it seems unlikely to go ahead as proposed.

Pollution Caused by Traffic Calming



As a contribution to the local debate on the merits of speed bumps, it is worth covering a report produced by the TRL (Transport Research Lab.) last year. In the

past, different studies in different countries seemed to produce very diverse results, but the latest methodology seems more likely to have produced accurate figures.

TRL Report No. 482 studies the effect of a number of different traffic calming measures, including road humps, cushions, pinch points and mini-roundabouts. They also studied the impact on traffic flows and delays experienced by fire engines.

To quote from the report "The results of the study clearly indicate that traffic calming

measures increase the emissions of some pollutants from passenger cars. For petrol non-catalyst, petrol catalyst and diesel cars, mean emissions of CO per vehicle-km increased by 34%, 59% and 39% respectively. For all three vehicle categories the increase in mean HC emissions was close to 50%. Emissions of NOX from petrol vehicles increased only slightly, but such emissions from diesel vehicles increased by around 30%. Emissions of CO2 from each of the three vehicle categories increased by between 20% and 26%. Emissions of particulate matter from the diesel vehicles increased by 30%.”

The more “severe” the traffic calming measure, for example road humps, the larger was the increase in emissions! So without being specific, the report suggests that speed humps would generate even worse figures than those above.

However they do say that these increases would rarely be sufficient to cause problems and would be unlikely to cause breaches of the Air Quality Strategy Standards. *(Editors Comment: But if every minor road in the borough had some sort of traffic calming measure, as was likely to happen if previous policies were continued, the extra pollution would be very substantial).*

On a simulated trip by a fire engine around a traffic calming scheme they did report some delays (of a little over a second per “device”), but as most of the scheme consisted of cushions, this may not be accurate for other schemes. However they do mention a study undertaken in Portland, Oregon where delays up to 10 seconds per “device” were reported.



Speed Cushions in Manor Park Rd, Chislehurst

Traffic diversion was very variable in this study, depending on the site, but one peculiar thing they noticed was that the mix of vehicle types after installation of the humps changed. It appears that smaller cars diverted more with the result that larger cars were more common as a percentage of users after installation (incidentally this does not account for the pollution changes as it was measured in a different way which was not affected).

This is probably accounted for by the fact that larger cars are smoother over humps, and can straddle cushions fully so they are not affected by the latter at all in many cases. One peculiar result of installing speed cushions everywhere might be that people would choose to drive bigger cars. *(Editors Comment: This might explain the recent popularity of Sport Utility Vehicles, SUVs, which are otherwise an environmental and social disaster).*

It might also explain why some improvement in accident rates in the streets concerned is seen after installation because it is well known that larger vehicles are much safer for occupants when a road accident occurs - of course the overall effect is nil because the smaller cars just have their accidents somewhere else. Along with the general tendency to cause traffic diversion, this might help to explain why speed humps seem to have a positive impact on accidents in the street in which they are installed, but the overall accident figures do not fall. For example in other London boroughs where speed humps are even more prevalent than Bromley, overall accident rates have hardly improved at all in the last few years.

The suggestion that installing speed cushions so as to encourage people to buy larger cars might make sense, on the basis that if everyone had a larger vehicle then overall road accident injuries would be cut, is an interesting idea. But such vehicles are less efficient so there would be much higher environmental costs.

(Editors Comment: Clearly both on account of emissions directly increased and the encouragement to use larger vehicles, speed humps and cushions are environmentally a bad idea).

Potholes Created by Road Humps

Just three years after installation of speed bumps in Watts Lane, Chislehurst, extensive repairs have had to be made to the road surface. The following photograph shows two of a number of potholes that appeared, mainly just before or just after a speed bump.



Watts Lane Potholes

Similar problems have been apparent in Crofton Lane and it is clear that speed bumps would certainly lead to generally more costly road maintenance expenses.

The problem appears not to be caused by traffic grounding, but by sharp braking immediately before, and acceleration after, the hump. It is thought that this behaviour stems either from people not noticing the hump until the last moment, or possibly those people with softer suspensions deliberately braking hard so as to compress the springs before hitting the bump - this avoids the uncomfortable "see-saw" effect.

Heathrow Congestion Charge



Following proposed implementation of the central London congestion charging scheme (see last newsletter), Mayor Ken Livingstone is now

suggesting that a similar scheme be introduced around the London Heathrow airport. This would deter people from using cars (and possibly also taxis and minicabs unlike the central London scheme) to travel to and from the airport. Charges would probably be used to fund the proposed CrossRail link - a train line across London.

Meanwhile the central London congestion charging scheme is likely to be delayed because Westminster Council have commenced a legal challenge. They have applied for a judicial review on the basis that the Mayor did not carry out a full impact assessment. Ken Livingstone reckons he has an extremely strong case, but apparently he told London Assembly members "my political career is littered with times when people have told me I was certain to win a particular court case and I have not".

Incidentally Westminster City Council have a web site with a very good page containing transport "links" of various kinds - for example details of public transport facilities. Refer to: www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/gateway/transport.cfm

Road User Charging



Previous editions of this newsletter have covered ideas for widespread road user charging. The government has now announced that such a scheme will be introduced for trucks in 2006. It will involve a satellite based tracking system as previously discussed and will apply to all roads, not just motorways. The duty paid will be calculated on distance and offset by other cuts, for example on fuel tax.

One big advantage is that it will apply to all truck operators, even foreign based ones who currently avoid UK fuel duty by filling up at cheaper rates on the continent.

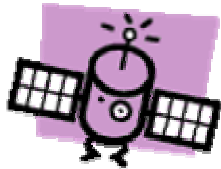
If this scheme proves to be practical and is otherwise a success then it may well be extended to cars and other vehicles later.

Note that a recently published report by the RAC Foundation also advocated some congestion charging as an alternative to worsening traffic jams, but they suggested drivers would only support this if it was combined with road improvements.

Meanwhile Lord Birt, Tony Blair's transport advisor has proposed building a network of

tolled “super-motorways” to reduce congestion, along with more rail links, more spending on buses and taxes on company car parking. At least that is apparently what he has said from “leaked” sources.

More Satellite Tracking



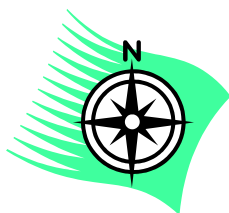
Many trucks already have satellite tracking devices installed to provide security and management information. Such systems are likely to become much

more popular for cars and an example is the Smartnav product that is about to be launched by Trafficmaster (look under “Products” at www.trafficmaster.co.uk).

This not only provides a route navigation system (typically previously dependent on expensive in-car equipment using a CD map and costing more than £1,000), but also monitors the route taken. The route information is held on a central server and is monitored for new traffic jams so the car user can be warned before they get to a jam, and appropriately diverted to an alternate route. It also provides such capabilities as being able to route you to the nearest petrol station or restaurant when desired. The system is likely to be significantly cheaper than existing navigation systems and has many technical advantages.

Your editor had a demonstration of the system recently and was most impressed.

How to Get a Local Map



Ever had difficulty figuring out which roads we are referring to in previous articles? Or simply need a map of the local area?

There are now several sites on the internet that allow you to enter a UK street name or post code and they then supply a map of the location. You can usually zoom in and

out to a certain extent also to get a wider or narrower area view. The sites I know of are:

www.streetmap.co.uk - Possibly the best for simple street maps.

www.multimap.com - Also provides aerial photographs, tube maps and other services.

www.mapquest.co.uk - Allows you to “customise” the map.

Ordnance Survey (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) have also recently introduced an interesting facility where you supply a post code and they will then send you a large printed map of the local area for a charge of £15. This could be useful if you want a local delivery area map for commercial purposes, but unfortunately they don’t let you resize it and the scale is a bit large for pedestrian use.

For those who prefer the traditional hard copy format, “A-Z” produce a large format colour book entitled the “Master Atlas of Greater London” which I would recommend.

Council News

So as to improve public consultation on local matters, ward councillors will in future take part in quarterly meetings. These will be held in three areas - central, east and west parts of Bromley based on parliamentary constituencies. Anyone can attend and raise their concerns on any matter, or make their views on current issues felt. For more details, refer to the Bromley Council web site (www.bromley.gov.uk) or contact Paul Hughes on 020-8313-4587 (paul.hughes@bromley.gov.uk).

The council have instituted a new system for disposing of garden waste. They will provide advice on composting of waste, and reduced price compost bins, or there is a new paid collection service now in operation. Contact Bromley Council Environment Section (020-8313-4989) for more information.

However it seems that traffic queues in Waldo Road were again a major headache

when the brighter spring weather arrived. Clearly many residents choose to take their garden waste to the council tip.

(Editors Comment: Composting is both cheaper and avoids you wasting time stuck in queues at the council tip, so I would certainly recommend it. Compost bins you can buy are usually too small however, but I would suggest building one from fencing materials which can be made a fair size and the materials are very cheap).

Driving Road Traffic Accidents Down

by Gareth Davies, London Borough of Bromley

Bromley Council, London's largest borough, has a successful history of reducing road accidents. Since its formation in 1965, road casualties have reduced by 65%, but long before 1965, the impact of road accidents was witnessed as in 1896, Britain's first fatal road accident happened in Crystal Palace, within the borough of Bromley. One of only three London Boroughs to meet the Governments year 2000 reduction target, the challenge is to reduce road casualties further. It is easy to be proud of an accident reduction record, but this is no consolation to a bereaved parent.



Fatal Accident Scene in Bromley

As part of a commitment to ensure that Bromley roads continue to be among the safest in Britain, the Council has entered into a public service agreement (PSA) with the Government to stretch casualty reduction further than the national reduction targets. As one of 13 PSA targets agreed with Government, the Council

have agreed to have a target to reduce all serious and fatal road accidents by 50%, compared to the national target of 40%. The new interim target for 2003 of 191 casualties, a reduction from the baseline of 241 KSI with the target for slight casualties set at 1181.

The Council has secured initial extra funding from the Government of £500,000 to pump prime the PSA, and if all 13 targets are met the Council will receive an extra £6Million bonus in 2004.

The new target is a challenge and if Bromley is to achieve its aim of accident reduction, priority must be given to tackling areas of concern. Accurate and up-to-date information is needed to identify problem sites or vulnerable user groups in the drive to focus resources and investment.

An analysis of the main factors contributing to accidents over the past three years identifies key priority areas for action. However, these priorities change with further analysis concentrating only on casualties involving killed and seriously injured rather than all casualties involving slight injuries.

The revised priorities show that driving too fast for the conditions is the greatest single cause of accidents.

Speed management is a key component of the Council's drive to cut the number and severity of road traffic accidents. The aim should be to create a culture in which any violation of speed-limits or inappropriate speed is regarded as socially unacceptable.

In light of this it would seem that continued efforts must be made to encourage drivers to travel at speeds appropriate to the road and traffic conditions, and keep an appropriate distance from the vehicle in front in order to reduce the number and severity of accidents. This can be achieved through education, engineering and enforcement.

The Borough will continue to work in conjunction with the Police and the Mayor for London to introduce a speed limit enforcement action plan to help achieve a unified approach. This will include reviewing speed limits,

developing well designed traffic calming schemes that are self enforcing, carrying out speed traps, using the “speed trailer” (see below), using posters on lamp columns on specific roads, and considering the purchase of additional speed detection devices.

There are currently 8 red light camera and 9 speed camera sites in the Borough. Accident data at traffic signal locations together with speed and accident data on 100 of the busiest roads and in the Borough were examined. The camera equipment was installed in those areas with the worst records; the red light cameras being installed in January 1994 and the speed cameras being installed between February 1997 and the end of 1999.



New Speed Monitor in Bromley

The Council recently purchased a mobile device, which uses a radar gun to display the speed of passing traffic on a large digital display. The device is used to draw the attention of passing drivers to the speed limit, which is also displayed in a roundel alongside the driver’s current speed. The device also records the speed and volume of the traffic, which passes it during operation.

The device is used to both slow and educate drivers in locations where speed related accidents have caused injuries. It will also be used where concerns about the speed of traffic have been raised. The recorded data can help officers decide if further use of the device is warranted, or the use of other speed reduction measures is needed.

The Police have supported this initiative by carrying out additional speed enforcement checks further along the road. Motorists who

ignore the advisory signs soon find themselves in trouble with the Police for speeding.

Further analysis of the accident data by age profile for road users broken down by mode of transport shows that the greatest problem for all road user groups with regard to KSI casualties is the teenage years, with a growing problem of many elderly pedestrians being KSI.

In order to achieve this new challenge, the road safety unit has undergone a review to focus on their activities on these new stretched targets. As a result, the team has developed a comprehensive programme of road safety education and training programmes targeted at vulnerable road users.

The Council's Road Safety Unit provides information on road safety to all school age groups and to parents of pre-school age children. The focus for child pedestrian education in Bromley is as follows:

- Road safety projects for 13 to 15 year-olds integrated into Maths or Personal & Social education (P.S.E).
- Road safety projects and talks for 11 to 12 year-olds integrated into P.S.E.
- Road safety projects for 9 to 10 year-olds integrated into a number of curriculum subjects.
- Practical training for 5 to 7 year-olds involving support from parents and teachers. Also, active promotion to teachers of this age group to use road safety resources in their teaching programmes.
- Parents of young children are given information via various groups for parents, such as antenatal classes.

“Road Safety itself is not in the national curriculum”, says John Walton Head of Road Safety, “and in order to get our important message into the classroom my road safety team have developed information packs that can be used by teachers that fully support the national curriculum. The packs provide road safety information that can be used in Mathematics, English and Geography, Science and other key subjects. Road safety can be utilised in nearly all the subjects taught in schools today. The Road Safety Officers actively support the work of the

schools in their visits and this new initiative will bring added benefits to children, teachers and parents alike.”

The Council's Road Safety Unit also provides cycle training & proficiency testing to children aged 10 plus. These comprehensive two and a half-day courses are primarily for those who wish to ride to school or for children riding on the road for other reasons. The courses are free of charge and include a cycle check for roadworthiness, a cycle safety booklet (Bikewise) and a Highway Code for young road users.

Children are required to take and pass a written test on the contents of the safety booklet and Highway Code, as well as showing basic cycle control, on an initial half-day assessment. Once they have passed this assessment, they will be invited on to a future two-day course on the public highway, so that the children can learn how to deal with traffic. Following this, the child can undertake a test for the Bromley Cycling Proficiency Certificate.

Cycle training also provides a means to teach children “road sense” at an age when they are vulnerable both as cyclists and as pedestrians.

Most schools in the London Borough of Bromley link training, proficiency, protective clothing and safer routes to school to agreements for children to cycle to school. The Council's Road Safety Unit will continue to promote this in schools.

Bromley Council has also contributed to educational & attitudinal campaigns to improve awareness of cyclists such as the Festival of Cycling and Car Free Day and supports local cycling clubs at these events. The Council also offers adult cycle training courses throughout the year. It is anticipated that the Council will continue to take part in or support campaigns to increase awareness of cycling.

The growing problem of deaths and serious injuries to motorcyclists for both the older middle-aged biker returning to motorcycling and the young person starting out on scooters has meant that these groups are actively being targeted.

The Council's Road Safety Unit provides motorcyclist training courses including advanced motorcyclist training linked with the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists, and takes part in publicity campaigns and road safety exhibitions and fetes. In addition, the Road Safety Unit has initiated education in schools for those who wish to ride mopeds or scooters. They work closely with local shops and suppliers to encourage them to promote safe practice to their customers.

Most accidents involve car drivers and Bromley Council's Road Safety Unit offer a number of courses designed to improve drivers' skills. One of the most important to reduce casualties involving young people is the pre-driving courses in secondary schools and colleges.

“Traffic Education is the name given to the new-driver training offered to 16 and 17 year olds in the Borough”, says Angus Culverwell Senior Road Safety Officer. “It is a course designed to improve attitudes towards various aspects of driving, and to teach hazard awareness skills which are often lacking in new drivers. The Driving Theory course is an “out-of-hours” and shorter version of the same course”.

A total of about 1200 young drivers are trained each year in this Borough by the Road Safety Unit, out of a potential of about 3500 young people in the target age group (i.e. approximately 33%). The courses are run in all the schools in the Borough, usually over a six-week period.

Research has been undertaken into all the injury accidents that occurred in the 18 months between April 1999 and September 2000 in the Borough. During this time a total of 313 drivers aged 17 to 21 were involved in injury accidents. Results of the research reveal that of these only 12 (4%) had successfully completed a Traffic Education course since September 1995.

“A probable explanation for this is that new drivers successfully completing a Traffic Education Course are less likely to have an accident”, Angus Culverwell, explains, “If this was not the case, one might reasonably expect 33% of recorded accidents to have involved a driver who had completed a Traffic Education course.”

“The only accidents that were investigated for the research were accidents that happened within the Borough of Bromley. Therefore, another possible explanation for the fact that only 4% of trained drivers featured in the injury accidents could be that the drivers trained had their crashes outside of the Borough. It is certain that some trained drivers will have had accidents outside of the Borough, but it is very unlikely that this could account for the observed low number of crashes amongst trained drivers.” The road safety unit also works closely with the Police to reach the young people who would not normally attend the Traffic Education courses.

Young people who are involved with joy riding and other crimes are referred by the Police to undertake rehabilitation courses and part of the programme is driver training. At the other end of the age spectrum a growing problem is accidents involving elderly pedestrians

Broad-brush road safety education for this age group is not carried out at present. However, by using feedback from other service providers such as the Health Authority, community nurses and Social Services, the Council aims to target just those who are in need of and are susceptible to road safety education.

In order to improve facilities for all pedestrians in the borough, the Council is developing a Pedestrian Review Tool Kit in consultation with TRL. This will be a set methodology that can be applied to any pedestrian environment. The system will allow the objective comparison of level of service for pedestrians along different routes to inform decision-making and the targeting of investment at a town and Borough level. The aim of the system is to help in creating safe, useable and accessible provision for footway users across the Borough.

Finally as John Walton states, “Measures are in place to improve the reporting and analysis of data in order to identify emerging problem areas and trends. The Council will have to be more proactive if it wishes to achieve the challenge of the PSA target. It will be hard work but the effort is worth it. The real prize is cutting the number of people killed and injured on the roads of Bromley: and the incentive of additional Government funding at the end of the agreement is just a bonus”.

(Editors Comment: The author of this article is Gareth Davies who is the Assistant Director (Transportation Planning) at the London Borough of Bromley. He would like to acknowledge the long-term work and efforts of members of the road safety team and support from Chief Officers and Elected Members in achieving reductions in road traffic casualties.

Note that the new council administration has recently re-iterated its commitment to the new PSA target for accident reduction. The effort put into driver education is clearly substantial and beneficial, but his comments on driving too fast being the greatest single cause of accidents do not tally with other published reports on this subject, unless Bromley differs from other parts of the UK. However the interpretation of accidents can be very subjective. For example, if someone runs into the back of a car that was turning right in front, was it because he was going too fast to stop in time, or simply that inattention caused the accident?)

Britains First Fatal Road Accident

The first road death in Britain occurred at Crystal Palace in 1896, which is now part of the administrative boundary of the London Borough of Bromley

The Crystal Palace was originally erected in 1851 to house the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. In 1852 it was taken down to be re-erected in Sydenham by its designer Joseph Paxton.

On the afternoon of Monday 17th August 1896 a Mrs Bridget Driscoll came to a fete at the Crystal Palace with her daughter and a friend. She had caught the train from Croydon and had just walked from the railway station, past the fountain and up to the steps of the Lower Terrace. The Lower Terrace was long, straight, flat and wide: a pleasant place to stroll and promenade. As the party strolled along the Terrace Mrs Driscoll carried her umbrella, as was the fashion of the day, even though it was not raining.

The Anglo-French Motor Car Company had organised pleasure trips on three of their horseless carriages at Crystal Palace. These carriages were a new invention and at the time there were only seventy-five of them in the

country. The speeds of the cars were limited to only 4mph

The driver, Mr Arthur Edsell, was 20 years old and had been driving for three weeks. Before that he had only had experience of washing cars, and the only place he had driven was on the Lower Terrace. According to witnesses, Mr Edsell was seen zigzagging across the Terrace. He expected Mrs Driscoll to move out of his way. Mrs Driscoll had probably never seen a horseless carriage before and didn't know what to do. She put up her umbrella in defence to scare "the horses" away. Unfortunately the car hit Mrs Driscoll and she died almost instantaneously. An inquest was held on 27th August 1896: the verdict Accidental Death.

Letters

From J.M Douglas:

"I am glad you are taking an interest in the Aquila case. I think the planners are being deluged with objections. I phoned today to check the last date for objecting and was told that some time next year might be a good guess.

One disagreeable feature is that the Government owns the land and the applicant to develop the site is a wholly Government-owned public limited company. So the Government, which will eventually decide the application has a vested interest in the decisions that are taken."

Editor : Indeed this is a concern as the matter is very likely to be referred to the Secretary of State. I believe there was an appeal to the European Court on a similar case on the basis that the government deciding it's own case was a breach of natural justice but I don't know how it was decided, or whether it has been - if any readers know then please advise.

From Councillor Julian Grainger:

"Thank your for the copy of BBRAG News. On page 11 of the last issue, I noted how effective LibDem propaganda is. Under Council Funding it says: "...if you are more concerned with the cuts in council expenditure on such services as education.....". In fact £6.9 million more cash will be spent on education in 2002/2003.

Most individual budgets go up, some remain unchanged, and a few go down.

Another example of a "cut" that is not a cut is the claim that "£11 million has been slashed from council services". The truth is that, instead of total council spending going up by over £20m, as the Borough Treasurer predicted before the by-elections, spending will increase by just under £10m - hence a £11m difference."

Editor : Apologies for this error, which probably arose from regurgitating half-baked local press articles. With salary increases to be allowed for, even an increase in budgets may result in some services cuts, even if justifiable. Thankfully my mistake does not seem to have affected the election results.

From Michael Leah, DTLR:

Re: Dartford Crossing Tolls and Removal of Tolls: "I am writing simply to explain the statement about toll booths not being the limited factor at the Crossing. The current operators of the Dartford Crossing have informed us that the limiting factor on traffic flow at the Crossing is the reduced capacity of the tunnels which are sub-standard in both width and height. The toll booths are able to cope with more vehicles per hour than the tunnels."

Editor : Even if true, which I doubt, this would not justify retaining tolls on the bridge side, and it would be very easy to test this theory by temporarily removing the tolls. Seems more likely to me that the toll operators simply want to retain their jobs.



BBRAG Background Information

The Bromley Borough Roads Action Group (B.B.R.A.G.) stands for a more democratic and more rational approach to the traffic management problems of the London Borough of Bromley. Our initial formation some years ago was based on opposition to the kind of traffic calming scheme that was being introduced in the borough that simply caused more traffic congestion, and general inconvenience to road users, without any significant benefit in terms of road accident reductions. In fact, the money wasted on such schemes could have been much better spent on actual improvements to road safety in other areas. We now take a more general interest in all transport and associated environmental issues in the borough of Bromley and the greater London area. This includes traffic management schemes, public transport, road safety, parking policies, air pollution, other transport environmental issues such as noise, and associated local and central government policies. Our prime objective is to promote improvements in the transport infrastructure while stopping wasted expenditure on unpopular, ineffective or inappropriate policies.

Contact Information

This Newsletter is published by the Bromley Borough Roads Action Group (B.B.R.A.G.), 8 Prince Consort Drive, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5SB. All material contained herein is Copyright of B.B.R.A.G. and may only be reproduced with permission. Any opinions expressed herein are solely those of the author of the article or that of the Editor which do not necessarily represent the official policies of B.B.R.A.G.

B.B.R.A.G. Treasurer and Newsletter Editor: Roger Lawson (Tel: 020-8467-2686, fax: 020-8295-0378, Email: roger.lawson@btclick.com), Chairman: John Nicholls (Tel: 020-8467-8284). Contact either of the above for information on the aims and objectives of B.B.R.A.G. or for membership information (membership costs £7.50 per annum for individuals or £50 for corporate membership). B.B.R.A.G. would be happy to advise or assist anyone who is concerned about any traffic, transport or road safety issues in the borough.

Our internet web address is: www.bromleytransport.org.uk. This contains much useful information including articles extracted from our newsletters. It also contains a "News" page which is updated regularly with items of topical interest.

Where this Newsletter is supplied in electronic form (e.g. as a PDF file via email), then you are permitted to pass it on to up to 5 additional readers without charge. In the case of corporate members, the Newsletter may be copied or forwarded to all staff members.

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