

# BBRAG NEWS

## BROMLEY BOROUGH ROADS ACTION GROUP – No. 7 (November 2000)

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This edition contains as usual the latest news on traffic calming schemes around the borough (when will we ever see a "traffic expedition" scheme one wonders). The capital expenditure commitment for traffic management schemes in Bromley during 1999/2000 is £515,000, none of which is clearly going to be applied to improving the transport network.

There is no expenditure planned on any measures to reduce traffic congestion, or substantially improve public transport. Even money spent on introducing cycle lanes, which at least benefits one group of road users, was wasted as it was mostly spent on the Green Lane scheme as described later in this newsletter. Surely this is a clear example where lack of strategic policy direction means that the environment of Bromley is gradually impaired rather than improved over time. If you want to change that see the article on the Council Leadership System herein.

One member has queried why he did not receive an acknowledgement of his membership payment. We do not normally send out such receipts as it is a relatively small amount and it would add to our costs and administrative

burden. However if anyone would like a receipt we would be happy to issue one. Incidentally thank you to all those members who made an additional voluntary donation with their membership fee (a significant proportion of members did so in the last year).

If you have any queries on membership status then please contact myself as I also act as treasurer and membership secretary.

Roger Lawson, Editor

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### **Old Hill, Chislehurst**

As with Chislehurst Road, an excuse has been found, and the funds probably obtained from a third party, to introduce a traffic calming scheme in Old Hill. In this case a proposed new housing development in Brenchley Close (about half way down Old Hill) would cause an accident risk because there are poor sight lines on the exit from Brenchley Close. However by introducing a traffic calming scheme which would be a whole series of speed bumps or cushions down the hill, and getting the developer to pay for them, council staff think that planning permission could then be obtained.

BBRAG feels that introducing a new hazard and then getting someone else to pay for a partial solution in the form of a traffic calming scheme does not make much sense, and we will therefore be objecting to this proposal. Unfortunately speed bumps or cushions, particularly the latter, do not slow all traffic and therefore would not be a total solution to the danger that will be created.

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Also this road is undoubtedly used by public service vehicles and therefore only cushions would be appropriate but with extensive parking in the road which forces vehicles off the "straddle" position it is not a sensible road for such treatment.

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### Priority Accident Remedial Sites

One of the recently introduced policies by Bromley Council has been to concentrate on measures to tackle known accident black spots in the borough. BBRAG fully supports such expenditure as opposed to the generally more expensive "traffic calming schemes" which often have little effect other than to inconvenience a large number of people. The top ten sites for further treatment (after ones already treated or in hand) are as follows:

1. The junction of Bromley Lane/Kemnal Road. It is proposed to close Kemnal Road between Ashfield Lane and Bromley Lane.
  2. The junction of Ashfield Lane/Heathfield Lane. Minor junction improvements are proposed.
  3. Mini-roundabout on Loop Lane, Ashfield Lane on Chislehurst Common. Proposed to put a speed table under the roundabout.
  4. The junction of Crofton Road/Starts Hill Road. Carriageway widening on Crofton Road is proposed.
  5. Southborough Road. Traffic calming scheme proposed (see previous discussions in this newsletter re Blackbrook Lane scheme).
  6. Junction of Hayes Lane/Hayes Road. Mini roundabout proposed.
  7. Junction of Centre Common Road/Prince Imperial Way. Minor junction improvement proposed.
  8. Junction of Copers Cope Rd/Worsley Bridge Road. Speed table proposed.
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9. High St, St. Mary Cray. Traffic calming scheme proposed.
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10. Chelsfield Lane. Traffic calming scheme proposed.

BBRAG has already made objections to the proposal for item 1 based on the inconvenience to residents in the Kemnal Road area and the fact that more hazards will be introduced. We are also likely to make alternative suggestions to 3. If any members have any views on the other proposals then please let us know.

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### Green Lane Cycle Path

The new cycle path in Green Lane, Chislehurst was mentioned in a previous newsletter. Since then a number of local residents have presented a petition to the council asking for the path to be removed as they believe it creates a hazard to themselves, partly because they have to cross the road more often as pedestrians because of the new parking problems. Local councillor Mrs Wykes supported the residents views. However the Environmental Services committee rejected the petition on the basis that it should be left until the normal post implementation review date.

Let us hope there are no accidents in the meantime. BBRAG has previously suggested the scheme is unsafe as it stands and supports the local residents view that the scheme should be removed, unless it can be otherwise improved to overcome their and other objections. Another example of a poorly designed traffic management scheme in Bromley!

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### Watts Lane Zebra Crossing

As part of the "Safer Routes to School" programme, it is proposed to place a Zebra crossing on top of the speed table in Watts Lane to assist pupils from Coopers and other

schools. Some members may recall that BBKAG actually proposed such a crossing as part of our alternative proposals for a traffic calming scheme.

The following is the published response in their report to councillors to that proposal made by council staff at the time:

*"Such a proposal can be very effective at reducing accidents where there is a clear pattern of accidents involving pedestrians trying to cross at a certain location. The accident record for this area does not show this to be the case.*

*The Borough average for accidents at pelican crossings is nearly 2 per year. It would, therefore, be difficult to justify the cost of a signal controlled crossing (around £17,000) at this one location on accident reduction grounds. The visual intrusion in the Conservation Area and local residents would also have to be considered. Traffic signal heads, guardrailing, warning signs and the road markings associated with such measures are particularly visually intrusive by design. These reasons would similarly apply to a Zebra crossing, although being cheaper than a signal controlled crossing."*

The idea of a zebra or pelican crossing was also opposed by local councillors and we understand the Chislehurst Society also objected on "visual amenity" grounds. One argument used against our proposal was the difficulty of persuading children to use the crossing. So why the sudden change of policy, or have people forgotten the previous objections? Perhaps it was simply a case of people being unwilling to listen to reason when we made our proposals? It will no doubt be interesting to hear the justification for this change of view.

The cost of a plain Zebra crossing will be £9,000 in case you are wondering where your taxes go.

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### **Roger Perry: Obituary**

Readers may have noticed in the local press that Roger Perry, who was Assistant Director of Engineering for Bromley Council, recently died as a result of falling off Beachy Head. Mr Perry dealt with many of the matters discussed in this newsletter and your committee had several meetings with him over the last few years. He was always courteous and helpful where possible, even if he did not necessarily agree with our point of view on some issues. An open verdict was recorded at the inquest as there was no clear evidence of intent.

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### **Council Leadership System**

The Government is allowing new forms of local government leadership in future. At present, local councillors are elected who then serve on various committees to decide minor policies and operational matters with full council meetings a few times a year to decide on major policies. This tends to result in little democratic input into this process from the electorate, slow decision making processes, unclear leadership and other problems. Note that at present the Mayor has no executive responsibilities and mainly has ceremonial duties.

Two alternatives that may be used in future are: 1) A directly elected Mayor with a supporting Manager, or 2) a directly elected Mayor with a supporting Cabinet (similar to the new GLA structure).

In both of the new alternatives the elected Mayor would be elected on their policy platform and have a hand in implementation.

Note that the above is a condensed simplification of the existing and possible new arrangements and more information can be obtained from Bromley Council (to put your point of view as part of the public consultation process write to the Head of Committee Services, London Borough of Bromley, FREEPOST SEAI0386, Bromley, BR1 3BR).

BBRAGs view is that the present system should be changed. Under the existing arrangements councillors tend to be elected on party lines and there is hardly any consideration by the electorate of local policy issues. There is little transparency thereafter as to how decisions are made and by who. If a group of local residents want to get a policy decision changed, at present there is no clear person to address.

Even your local councillors (and there are typically more than one for each ward which muddles the issue to start with) may have little direct say on an issue, particularly if they are not represented on the relevant committee.

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### **Latest Hump Count**

Bromley Council are persisting with the policy of introducing speed humps or "cushions" (a euphemism for a split hump) as their main measure to reduce accident statistics despite the number of objections and lack of evidence that they solve the real problems. At the recent council sub-committee meeting the following proposals were considered and are likely to proceed to implementation:

- 6 cushions in High St, St Mary Cray and 8 cushions in Chelsfield Lane.
- 6 cushions/humps in Old Hill

- 3 humps in Stanhope Grove and 4 humps in Lloyds Way plus a speed table.

Any members who wish to pursue objections to any of these schemes should contact BBRAG.

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### **Contact Information**

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