
Bromley Transport Plans Published

All London boroughs have to publish a Transport Plan known as a “Local Implementation Plan” – yes it’s really only to tell us how Bromley is to implement the Mayor London’s Transport Strategy as he calls all the shots these days. Yet another example of how the Mayor’s office and TfL have undermined local democracy. This means that the borough has no real control any more over many of the key issues that affect transport in Bromley, although they do have some flexibility on minor matters.

But for those interested in local transport matters it is of some interest as it will lay down policies for some years, and has been open to public consultation. The LIP can be obtained from the council on CD-ROM or paper (for some reason it’s not on their web site but BBRAG can supply electronically although it is several hundred pages), and BBRAG’s response can be seen on our web site (in the News section of www.bromleytransport.org.uk of course).

Here are a few points of interest from the report:

“Car Dependency” Still in Use

The introduction refers to “car dependency” which is an emotive phrase and misleading. We have objected repeatedly to the description of people’s rational choices of transport modes as “dependency”.

Tackling Congestion

Of course there is nothing really of significance in the document about improving the road network of Bromley to actual increase traffic flows and reduce congestion (that is simply not a part of the Mayor’s Transport Strategy). But there is reference to tackling some congestion bottlenecks under TfLs “Pinch Points” initiative. Such junctions as Mason Hill/Homesdale Road on the A21, Rectory Road/High St Beckenham, Farnborough Common/Crofton Road, Sevenoaks Road/Midhurst Way and Orpington Bypass/Spur Road are being considered.

Note that there is much discussion of encouragement for “modal shift” and for school and workplace travel plans to assist this, but little concrete evidence that such policies are likely to have any major impact and no targets have been set.

Pedestrian Phases at Traffic Lights

Several signal controlled junctions are in line for the addition of pedestrian phases to improve safety. However one of these is the Chislehurst war memorial junction where additional delays to traffic would cause severe problems as it is already heavily congested, and it is unclear that this is necessary on road safety grounds.

Road Safety Policies

The report highlights that Bromley compares well with other London boroughs in terms of road safety. Per 100,000 head of population, Bromley ranks 4th of 33 for overall casualties.

However fatality numbers are not improving as much as hoped. One possible reason for this is that the majority of car users killed in road accidents in Bromley are not in fact wearing seat belts, so improvements in other areas may be offset by this factor.

One interesting paragraph reads: *“Until drivers are convinced of the need to slow down at appropriate times or in appropriate places, it will be very hard to force them to do so. The use of safety cameras, humps, etc, must be fully explained to sceptical Bromley road users. Speed humps and cameras will only be used in this borough where the Council’s preferred methods of accident reduction are not appropriate or prove ineffective.”* (Editor’s Comments: *Well I have had these devices “explained” to me and I am not convinced of their efficacy, so this is just patronising rhetoric, but at least the policy won’t apparently be changed*).

Road Safety Education Does Work

Accidents to younger drivers, motorcyclists and pedestrians are one of the major problems in Bromley. However research in Bromley shows that drivers who successfully complete a Traffic Education Course are much less likely to be involved in an accident. So thankfully education is one of the key policies for the future.

Parking and Parking Provision

Penalty charge notices for parking and other infringements increased to 78,378 in 2004 and are probably rising even faster more recently with more bus lane and parking cameras being introduced. There were widespread comments from the previous public consultation about the high and rising cost of parking in Bromley, which is opposed by most residents.

Also the failure to provide sufficient off street parking, particularly at rail stations was mentioned by many people.

Despite the lack of enthusiasm by residents for Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) these are still on the agenda it seems. Even residents within such zones object to the high charges imposed.

In fact Bromley made a surplus of £2.3 million on parking charges in 2004/5, of which 78% was used to subsidise the Freedom Pass scheme (Editor: *Yes readers, whenever you park in Bromley you are paying for my free travel subsidy which I don’t need*).

Bus Driving Standard Discourages Usage

Many respondents to the previous consultation complained about the standard of buses and passenger safety. A particular problem seems to be that now bus routes have been cleared (with bus lanes, red routes and other measures), many drivers now take off rapidly from stops, and brake hard before the next one. This causes problems for unsteady older passengers who do not have time to sit down before the bus lurches away. As a result, many bus passengers suffer minor injuries.

Roger Lawson, BBRA, 02/07/2006