



# BBRAG NEWS

Bromley Borough Roads Action Group - No. 27 (April 2004)

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## Editorial

*There is a separate supplement with this edition covering the Orpington car park debacle. It is a typical example of how planning processes in Bromley result in a development that few people want, that nobody expected, and contrary to the needs of the borough to reduce traffic congestion.*

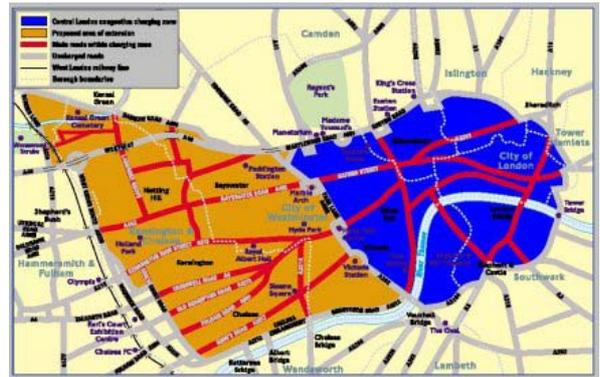
*The first article herein covers the proposed extension on the London congestion charging scheme, and some comments on how the existing one operates.*

*There is an article on the consumer of your taxes that you may have never of heard of - namely Seltrans, and more on the Greater London Assembly's consideration of speed humps. Plus there is a good example of why wide area traffic calming schemes are not as effective in saving accidents as is usually claimed (there will be another case covered in our next edition to finally put a nail in the coffin of that widely held belief)*

*Note that there will be more on the Old Hill, Chislehurst hump scheme in our next edition, but there were 69 responses strongly opposed to it, and only one in favour from our recent leaflet mailing.*

Roger Lawson, Editor

## Congestion Charging to be Extended?



Mr Livingstone is proposing to extend the London Congestion Charging zone to cover most of Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster, as shown on the above map. It would be bounded by Harrow Road on the north and the Embankment on the south (although it is not certain whether the latter road will be included within the zone or not). There will also be an "unchargeable" route from north to south through the new joint zone (basically the Park Lane to Vauxhall Bridge route).

Over 700 people attended a public meeting in Kensington Town Hall to protest against this proposal on the 16<sup>th</sup> February. It was organised by the West London Residents Association but Mr Livingstone refused his invitation. Even the Liberal/Democrats oppose this extension although they support the congestion charging scheme in general (but would like some minor changes made).

Tory mayoral candidate Steven Norris is opposed of course as he already plans to scrap the whole system. He's even said he will give an amnesty on any outstanding penalty payments - this could be a strong vote winner bearing in mind that 53,000 bailiffs warrants have been issued so far for non-payment of which only 9% have been collected according to the latest TfL

report. There are also over 7,000 appeals to PATAS outstanding, plus numerous other "representations" still in hand.

For more information on this proposal and to submit comments, go to the TfL website at: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/cc-ex/proposal.shtml> or phone 0800 106062 for a paper form, which is available in 10 different languages (BBRAG certainly recommends you vote against this plan as we do not see much merit in the existing scheme, let alone an extension - our full comments on the existing scheme and it's atrocious economics can be seen on our web site, or ask the editor for a copy).

### **Scheme Update**

TfL have also just issued a new report on the Congestion Charging scheme now that it has been operating for a year. It is of course positive as regards the impact on traffic congestion, with a reduction of 15% in traffic within the zone. However the AA reported that average traffic speeds within the zone had fallen over the last year, now that road works and other disruptions had returned, so it was now only 2 mph better than before the scheme was implemented.

The number of penalty charge notices are still increasing (now 165,000 per month!), which hardly indicates acceptance is rising as was suggested would happen, or that infringement would fall as people became more used to the system as was also suggested. *(Editor: and they still barely make a profit at £40 per time apparently).*

Moreover apparently a substantial proportion of the PCNs issued are dropped by TfL or go on appeal to PACTS where over 50% are won by complainants. Although TfL don't publish the data, it is possible that as many as half a million drivers each year have to waste time proving their innocence.

The TfL report includes surveys of the business impact of the scheme. Some 60% overall seemed to support it, although support differed widely between segments with the financial sector (ie. city businessmen to whom £5 means little) being the keenest, but with many doubts among retailers and service sector businesses.

Ken Livingstone has argued that the decline in retail sales is due to everything except the congestion charge (9/11, Iraq war, internet shopping, economic climate, high sterling, the weather, etc), but many retailers dispute this.

*(Editor's Comments: The more I have to use this scheme, the more I am against it. It wastes an enormous amount of one's time paying the charge, and appealing against false charges. And Capita simply do not operate it properly. Their staff do not know the law, and don't pay attention to what you say so you end up having to go through endless representations when they make a mistake which they will never admit is their error. It is no surprise therefore that most people win the appeals against them). For those opposed to the system, you may want to look at a new anti-congestion charge pressure group called CAUCC (Campaign Against Unfair Congestion Charging) - see <http://www.caucc.org>.*

### **No Pollution Data**

As with any report, what you also have to look at is what has been left out, in addition to what it actually includes. Now one of the questions that is important to answer is whether there has been any improvement in air pollution from the reduction in traffic. Many people justified the scheme on that argument, even though the TfL report to the Mayor said the impact would be small.

Do we get any data in the latest report? No, and it looks like we won't get any for another year even though your editor knows that data was supplied to TfL on this subject some months back. It's all very suspicious. Perhaps they just wanted to leave out the bad news?

### **Alternatives to Congestion Charging?**

One report that covers a number of alternatives to congestion charging is that produced on a GLA Seminar in 2002 (although it didn't seem to get much publicity at the time as your editor has only just found it). It can be seen on the web at: [http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport/congestion\\_charge\\_alternatives.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport/congestion_charge_alternatives.pdf). It's well worth reading. Ken Livingstone repeatedly claimed there were no alternatives when of course there are many.

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## Traffic Management To Be Improved?



A bill is currently going through Parliament which has not attracted much public attention. This is the “Traffic Management Bill” which aims to reduce traffic congestion. Among it’s provisions are:

- 1) Giving Local Authorities the duty to manage the road network to “secure the expeditious movement of traffic”.
- 2) Requiring Local Authorities to appoint a “Traffic Manager” (yes that means Bromley will get one, although it could be one of the existing council staff).
- 3) Regulating people who wish to dig up the roads, such as utilities like telephone, gas and electricity companies, who have already objected to the tough provisions in the bill.

The Act gives Local Authorities the power to take “any action which they consider will contribute to securing... the avoidance or reduction of road congestion or other disruption to the movement of road traffic...”. Whether they will use this power proactively remains to be seen. But it does lay down an obligation to identify causes of congestion and possible remedial actions, with specific policies in relation to different classes of roads.

### **The Mayor of London Can be Ignored**

Moreover if the Local Authority does little, then a national authority can appoint a “Traffic Director” to take over the role. Interestingly in London, such a Director has to tell the Mayor of London what he is doing, but he can ignore guidance from the Mayor and what the Traffic Director says always takes precedence.

Nationally “traffic officers” can be appointed to ensure traffic keeps moving, and these will have some powers of stopping and redirecting traffic which currently only the police can do. For example they could be used to clear accidents and manage associated congestion.

### **The ALG and PACTS have objected**

The Association of Local Government Officers have apparently objected to the bill on the grounds that it concentrates on improving conditions for motorists, but does not assist pedestrians or the local environment. They want it made more “inclusive”. (*Editor’s Comments: Yet another example of the bias against motorists shown by most local authority staff*). PACTS has objected because there is no obligation to have regard to road safety.

*(Editor’s Comments: This looks to be a good proposal and the Bill has many positive aspects to it, although it is somewhat complex.)*

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## How to Set Speed Limits

Our last but one edition discussed the proposal for a 40 mph speed limit on the A2022 Addington Road (picture below), which was previously set at 60 mph as an “unlimited” road.



You might think that choosing a speed limit is a purely subjective exercise where someone in authority takes their pick so to speak. But that in fact should not be the case, even if there is a new tendency to do it that way. Central government established a set of guidelines many years ago, based on the advice of road safety and traffic engineering experts. This advice was circulated in a document called “Circular Roads 1/93) which is still in effect. It can be found on the Department for Transport web site at <http://www.dft.gov.uk> .

It is very worth reading it if you have an interest in speed limits and road safety. For example, the

section on “General Principles” includes this statement:

**“Speed limits should be lowered only when a consequent reduction in vehicle speed can reasonably be expected. A survey of traffic speeds should indicate whether a lower limit, will, in the absence of regular enforcement, be likely to result in lower actual speed.”**

So for example, the reduction of the speed limit on Perry Street, Chislehurst (the A232) from 40 mph to 30 mph should clearly not have been implemented, and in practice the lowered limit has not been adhered to. The reduced limit did not solve the safety problems in the road and there have been two fatal accidents since the new limit was introduced. *(Editor’s Comments: Clearly the triumph of hope over experience. But the council does not learn as it plans to do the same in Magpie Hall Lane, where the plan is to reduce the limit from 30 mph to 20 mph).*

The report also suggests that mandatory speed limits should not be used to solve the problem of isolated hazards such as dangerous bends or road junctions, but rather that engineering measures be used in those cases.

### **How to Determine a Suitable Speed Limit**

How do you determine a suitable speed limit? Well the report supplies a well tried and proven procedure for doing this. It suggests first looking at the nature of the road - for example Addington Road would fall into the categories of “Lightly built up. Some frontage development.” or “Rural roads.”, for which an appropriate limit is 50 or 60.

### **The 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile is the Key Figure**

It also suggests that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of speed for traffic on the road (assuming it is measured when free flowing) should be within 7 mph or 20% of any proposed limit.

In the case of Addington Road, the existing traffic flows at well over 48 mph and therefore a 40 mph limit is clearly outside these guidelines. But did Bromley Council take note of this? No.

*(Editor’s Comments: The correct speed limit for Addington Road should be 50 mph. Setting speed limits which are not going to be adhered to is pointless. It encourages people to take no notice of speed limits when it is obvious to the competent and experienced driver that they are being set unrealistically, and it brings traffic law into disrepute).*

### **Is Rail Travel Safer?**



The writer of this article was watching a television documentary on the work of the rail transport police, and heard one of the police officers who had been called to a fatal incident

say “we have about 300 such incidents per year in this country”. This surprised him because usually the number of fatal accidents per year on UK railways that you see published is a number in the region of 20 to 40 (eg. 37 deaths in 1999 given by PACTS from government data - see <http://www.pacts.org.uk> but bear in mind that this organisation is one of many that selectively quotes data to prove the point they want to make).

Surely everyone knows that rail travel is much safer than road travel? The same PACTS web site also gives figures that suggest in terms of fatalities per passenger kilometre, car travel is 7 times more dangerous than rail and the figure for motorcycling is over 300 times more dangerous!

In fact the police officer was quite correct - there are about 300 fatal incidents of all kinds per year on UK railways. How many fatal incidents are there on the roads? About 3,300 at present. Looking at the distances travelled by all UK road users and all rail users (which the government provides from survey data - for the 2002 figures go to the following web site: [http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_transstats/documents/page/dft\\_transstats\\_025211.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/page/dft_transstats_025211.pdf)), one can draw up the following table:

	Fatalities per year	Billion passenger kilometres	Deaths per b/km
Rail	300	48	6.3
Road	3300	690	4.8

## Roads Are Safer Than Rail Transport

Yes, roads are safer than rail transport, according to the above table. Note that the roads figures include motor cycle, cycle, and pedestrian fatalities which are all more dangerous per passenger kilometre than car travel, plus the associated travel distances.

So how does one reconcile this data with the claims made above about the relative safety of rail travel? Well the rail transport figures typically include only “passenger fatalities”. In other words, the quoted numbers often exclude rail workers, and people who wander onto the track including the considerable number of suicides (of course in the latter case, on the roads they would be typically reported as road accident victims, but not in railway fatality figures). For example, the recent deaths of four track workers from a runaway trolley would not be included in the reported figures. In effect the rail transport figures are “massaged” to present the best possible number.

In addition comparing road and rail travel is not comparing like with like. Rail journeys are more likely to be long distance ones as few people take a train to go a mile or two, whereas the vast majority of road journeys are short ones. Really one should be comparing rail safety with motorway and “A” road safety statistics, in which case roads would come out even better because we know that per mile, motorways and main roads are much safer than local roads.

## Historic Transport Fatalities

Clearly which data you use gives you different answers, but it would certainly be wrong to suggest that if we banned road transport and moved everybody onto the railways, that accident figures would fall.

This is also supported by the following table of data which shows the comparative accident rates in deaths per million of population in England and Wales when rail and canal travel were more common (taken from “Road Accidents: Prevent or Punish” by J.J. Leeming):

	1891-1900	1931-1938	1963
Railway	63	22	10
Road	107	311	278
Drowning	178	70	37

Travel of any kind has always been somewhat dangerous and when the predominant mode of travel changes, so do the accident locations.

## Horses Used to be a Major Hazard

Or consider this quote from “The Skeptical Environmentalist” by Bjorn Lomborg (a book well worth reading incidentally): “*In the eighteenth century... there was the constant threat of accidental death from neglect or carelessness or association with animals like horses - which seem to have been at least as dangerous as automobiles*” (historian Lawrence Stone).

Lomborg also covers the comparative risks of accidental deaths and shows that deaths in road accidents are falling rapidly worldwide, and much more rapidly than other fatal accidents. His figures suggest that per kilometre travelled, a car is 45 times more risky than flying, but 7 times safer than cycling, 8 times safer than walking and 22 times safer than travelling by motorcycle.

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## Seltrans



The Christmas edition of our Newsletter attempted to explain where Bromley Council spent your money on transport. To remind you the total expenditure

in Bromley for 2004/5 is £7.6 million for specific programmes (ie. excluding council staff and accommodation costs), of which £1.3 million is spent in Seltrans (that’s about £10 per Bromley household).

You may be wondering who Seltrans are and what they do for us. This article attempts to explain just that.

Seltrans is a partnership between a number of South-East London boroughs (diagram above shows the area it covers). Like all big, ambitious organisations they have their own web site at <http://www.seltrans.org.uk> if you want the full details, but what follows is a brief overview. Seltrans obtain most of their funds from Transport for London which is part of the Greater London Authority (which is funded by taxpayers in Bromley, directly or indirectly). The majority of the programmes which Seltrans promotes and gets funds for are orientated to public transport projects.

Their formal objectives are somewhat long-winded so I won't repeat them here, but they aim to reduce traffic congestion (typically by promoting public transport), improve "accessibility" and reduce "exclusion" (again typically by improving public transport), develop safer transport choices (ditto) and promote "greater responsibility in personal travel behaviour" (and you can guess what that means).

### **Typical Seltrans Projects**

Typical projects for which they are bidding for funding in 2004/5 to 2006/7 are as follows:

- Identification of gaps in the public transport network and implementation of solutions (typically new bus and tram routes).
- Transport interchange proposals (typically for town centres).
- Rail station improvements and bus route improvements (such as bus stop improvements, and other things covered by the London Bus Priority Network).
- Promoting "greener" travel such as "travel awareness interventions", traffic free routes, walking and cycling, etc.

### **Examples of Bromley Specific Projects**

Many of these schemes (for example new bus routes) stretch over several boroughs, but in terms of those specific to Bromley, a typical example of a past project which is just being implemented is the improvement to the forecourt of Bromley South Station. This may well improve convenience and safety.

Typical future projects for 2004/5 are a "park and ride" service for Bromley Town Centre and improvements to "town centre access" for Bromley which means changes to Bromley North and Bromley South areas, to improve pedestrian access.

### **Seltrans Sustainable Transport Assessment**

Seltrans did do a useful study of transport in their area in 2003 which looked at travel habits and attitudes to travel. They surveyed 3000 people (note however that a third of the people surveyed were in council offices and another third at libraries so it's unlikely to be a very typical cross section of the public) and the key findings were as follows:

- People do not regard cycling as a "valid mode of transport", particularly in outer London boroughs such as Bromley.
- A significant number of people thought that buses were for the poor, and that there was a stigma attached to their use.
- Environmental concerns vary with age, with the 16 to 34 and 55-65 age groups showing the least concern (*Editor: is this a case of the young just don't care, and the old are uneducatable?*).
- The most fervent regular drivers are males aged 45 to 54 who live in boroughs such as Bromley (*Editor's Comment: Is this news? It's probably not surprising bearing in mind they are the wealthiest sector of the population and public transport in those areas is poorest*).

The report also indicated that Bromley has one of the highest proportions of people who travel to work by car of all London boroughs at 45%, with 28% using the train (presumably mainly "commuting" into central London) and a relatively high number working from home at 9%. Travel by bus is 7%, by foot is 6%, by motorcycle less than 2% and by cycle less than 1%.

A third of people gave their reason for using a car as convenience whereas the train is used because it is quicker (clearly it's quicker to take the train into London in the rush hour than drive). But the main reason given for using the bus was that there was no alternative.

*(Editor's Comment: So in other words, if they had access to a car and could afford it, they would drive, so clearly the improvement in bus services has a long way to go yet to change people's views).*

Respondents who drove were asked whether they would change their habits if parking was no longer free, and most would not change. *(Editor's Comment: This didn't discourage the authors of the report from advocating more parking restrictions to discourage car use which pretty well sums up their attitude to car usage).*

They also surveyed people's attitudes to government policies on transport, with some interesting results. There was a strong preference for more road building, for reserved lanes on motorways for HGVs and multi-occupant cars, for bus priority measures and for traffic calming measures *(Editor: the last is rather like voting for peace as a principle, so not necessarily surprising unless one is more specific about what is being proposed)*

There was also a demand for more trams, better railways, free off-peak travel for pensioners, etc, which is no doubt why politicians keep on promising these things even though they are probably not affordable. *(Editor: if you ask people what they want without attaching a cost, you get silly results)*

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## GLA Inquiry into Speed Humps



The second meeting of the Greater London Assembly Transport Committee's Inquiry into Speed Humps took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> February.

This time evidence was heard from Bromley, Enfield, Camden and Hull City councils, the latter being included because of their supposed success with traffic calming schemes (see separate article later on that subject).

The London Borough of Enfield disclosed that their policy had recently changed so that speed humps were likely to be "the least favoured option". In other words, they would always consider other traffic calming and road safety measures in preference to humps. Cushions

would also take preference over humps, if there was no other alternative. This is similar to Bromley's policy of a "preference for non vertical deflections".

### **Bromley's Comments**

Gareth Davies from Bromley Council expounded on his approach, and primarily made the point that any measures selected must depend on the circumstances. He also criticised the London Ambulance Service for not responding to consultation requests.

Mr Davies pointed out that Bromley was one of the best London boroughs in terms of road injury reductions and had recently increased its targets to a 50% cut from the standard 40% which is the London Mayor's target. He also said that they continued to look at newer traffic calming methods, such as "speed advisor" units which had been successful in reducing speeds quite considerably in Bromley. They were now looking at "self-explaining roads" as a possible road safety technique (see below).

Green Party member Jenny Jones complimented Bromley on its "motorist friendly" policies.

### **Camden's Comments**

Camden Council representative Sam Monck disparaged the objections that many people have to speed humps, saying there was no evidence to support them. For example, he claimed there was no evidence that humps caused additional pollution. *(Editor's Comment: He clearly was not aware of TRL report 482 and other similar scientific reports which clearly substantiates there is such an effect, but he is now).*

It was interesting to hear that Camden seem to have more money available for wide area traffic calming schemes as they have their own funds available for them, whereas Bromley and Enfield have to rely on TfL grants. *(Editor's Comment: Of course Camden has one of the highest rates of tax of all London boroughs so Camden residents get the worst of all worlds - high taxes and high humps. Which is probably why there was so much objection to the wide area scheme for Primrose Hill recently).*

In summary, Bromley came out very well from this review, with Camden appearing to be simply

dogmatic. The Committee is likely to go ahead with a survey of residents views on humps before preparing a report.

### **Self Explaining Roads**

What are “self-explaining roads”? These are roads where the visual appearance of the highway is adjusted so as to encourage better awareness of the road characteristics and more appropriate traffic speed. Research has shown that people rely on simplistic visual clues and mental categorisation of roads, so they sometimes perceive a road as safer than it really is. This is particularly the case with younger drivers, who have not yet built up a more complex repertoire of behaviour from past experience.

By adjusting road features, you can potentially slow traffic, particularly at danger points, without disturbing flows or using speed humps. These techniques have been used in rural environments but their use in urban situations would be experimental.

### **A Letter to the Chairman**

One interesting letter to the Chairman of the GLA Transport Committee on this subject from T.W.Whitney of Romford was as follows:

To: Lynne Featherstone  
Subject: GLA Scrutiny of Speed Humps

*I know the content of this letter will not carry the same weight as the reports you have received from others, but I have to try one last time to get someone to listen to my view regarding speed humps and the damage they cause.*

*The speed hump in the road outside my house doesn't stop drivers from speeding. In fact, lorries, vans and 4x4s whiz over the hump with impunity.*

*My life has been made a misery since Redbridge councillors decided to introduce a traffic calming scheme that turned a reasonably quiet road into a rat-run and 'speed hump' obstacle course. Official figures have shown a 40 per cent increase in traffic since the scheme was introduced; yet councillors have ignored the figures, saying they were flawed, and conveniently forgotten about their promised traffic flow review.*

*I am retired, and because of the speed hump, I now spend most of my day shut away in a back room of the house - the noise of vehicles hitting the hump at speed, or decelerating and accelerating away from the hump, has caused me to become very depressed. Also, it has cost me several hundred pounds to have roof tiles replaced that have been dislodged by traffic vibration. The ground-borne vibration of overloaded lorries and vans thumping over the speed hump makes the whole house shake, so I cannot agree with the Transport Research Laboratory statement: '...that increases in vibration from installation of speed humps is very small, so even superficial damage is unlikely to result.'*

*Academics lobby enthusiastically for more and more speed humps; yet in their haste to safeguard the pedestrian, they ignore the plight of the residents who are forced to live with the noise and pollution these obstacles generate day in and day out.*

Another letter that BBAG recently received was from an ambulance driver who has just spent three months off work after going over a new unmarked speed hump in Becontree in the dark. He says that having worked in the ambulance service for 32 years, they “are the bane of our lives”. He suggests borough architects and road planners should be made to take a ride in an ambulance over the humps so as to see what havoc they cause.

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### **Hull's Spurious Road Safety Claims**



Kingston-upon-Hull Guild Hall

Representatives from the city of Kingston-upon-Hull repeated their spurious claims about the success of their traffic calming schemes at the

recent GLA Transport Committee Inquiry into speed humps. Their claims for major reductions in road accident have received widespread publicity in the last few months, but the data is in fact seriously flawed.

Hull has installed road humps, 20 mph zones and other traffic calming devices in over 500 streets in the last few years. That's about 25% of their total road network, so they are probably one of the most heavily treated areas in the country. They claim the following reductions in accident data since 1994:

	Hull 1994-1998 Change	Great Britain 1994-1998 Change
All Casualties	-14%	-1%
Pedestrians	-44%	-20%

The above is an extract from their report to the GLA which can be seen in full on the GLA web site at:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/transport/2004/transpfeb05/transpfeb05item05b.pdf>

Unfortunately there are a number of mistakes in their report. The reality is that they have not obtained any better reduction than the UK as a whole, so clearly the investment has been mainly wasted. The mistakes are as follows:

### Great Britain Casualty Reduction is Wrong

The figure on which they based their -1% reduction for overall UK casualties is simply wrong, with the result that it should be -4%. That reduces the overall "improvement" to 10%.

### No Adjustment for Population Changes

They have not taken into account that the population of Hull is one of the few in the UK which has fallen substantially in the last few years. With fewer people on the streets, there are fewer accidents! In reality the population fell by 8% between 1994 and 1998 so taking that into account the reduction is only 2%.

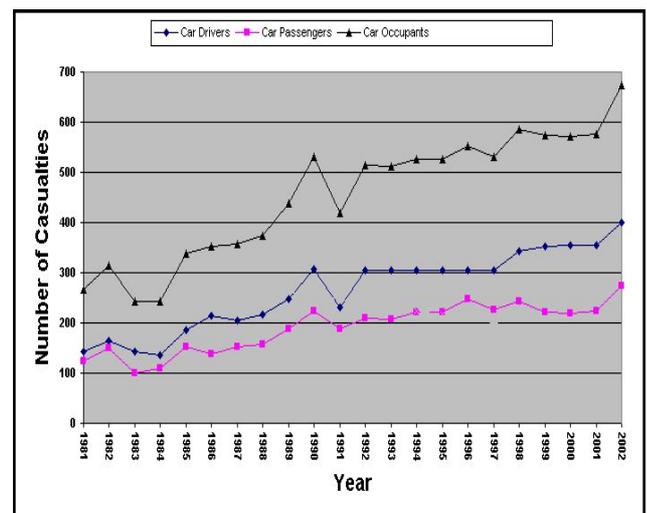
Also the overall UK population increased by 2% in the same period, so the net effect of these changes is to remove any remaining difference. In summary there is no overall casualty benefit

from the measures taken in Hull, when compared against the UK as a whole.

*(Editor's Comment: Of course it could be that people are leaving Hull because they are fed up with all the speed humps, but that may be too far fetched a conclusion).*

### Selective Data Only Shown

It may still look good that they have reduced pedestrian injuries by 44%, but unfortunately this is a very selective figure which is also distorted by the fact that the young and mobile are the first people to leave a declining city. What they fail to mention is that car occupant injuries actually went up by 28% in Hull from 1994-1998, while they fell in the same period in the UK as a whole. So much for the success of speed humps in Hull! The trends in car accidents in Hull are shown in the following graph (reproduced from the Hull City web site - the top line shows the overall car occupant trend):



In reality Hull demonstrates an extreme example of what was revealed in our last newsletter - namely that pedestrian and cycling accidents have been falling as people have moved into cars.

Incidentally according to a BBC television report, Hull is also one of the worst cities in the UK for health problems related to obesity. No doubt this is related to the above changes.

The major concern about the claims by Hull is that not only have they wasted an enormous amount of money which would have been more effectively spent on other road safety measures,

but that they may encourage others to do the same. Note that BBAG can supply the detailed evidence to support the above arguments if you need it.

*(Editor's Comment: One thing that is useful about the Hull data however, is that it demonstrably shows that wide area traffic calming schemes have no beneficial impact whatsoever).*

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## News Snapshots

Sundry news in the last few weeks that is worth a mention is as follows:

+ Council staff are pushing ahead with plans for a "Controlled Parking Zone" (ie. a Permit Parking scheme) around Penge East station despite the fact that previous consultations over a wider area showed most people were opposed to these kind of schemes. More consultation is being done and BBAG opposed the latest proposals as usual.

+ Mayor Ken Livingstone wants to up the London Congestion Charge "late collection surcharge" from £80 to £100. Presumably because they are having so much difficulty enforcing payment. *(Editor's Comment: Or it could just be that people are refusing to pay charges that are being demanded contrary to the legal regulations as happened to me recently. Congestion Charging staff simply do not know the law and ignore your representations).*

+ The Disability Council of the city of San Francisco have passed a resolution opposing the use of speed humps because of their impact on disabled people. See the following for details: [http://www.sfgov.org/site/sfmdc\\_page.asp?id=5809](http://www.sfgov.org/site/sfmdc_page.asp?id=5809)

+ While the Conservatives would scrap the Congestion Charge, the Green Party would apparently increase the charge if they gained power when the mayor is re-elected. They would also save the £3million spent on the "London" newspaper which is primarily used to promote Ken Livingstone's profile. *(Editor's Comment: At least the last part is a good idea as I don't normally even receive it - is that because some bureaucrat doesn't see Chislehurst residents as Kens natural.supporters?).*

+ Frank Maloney of the UK Independence Party seems to be running a "populist" campaign to be Mayor of London. He not only wants to replace Ken Livingstone, but also scrap the GLA altogether including the London Congestion Charge. See <http://www.maloney4mayor.co.uk> for more information.

+ As previously reported, Transport for London budgets are aiming for a massive shortfall. The London Transport Users Committee (LTUC) recently commented that it needs a £1 billion cash injection. Meanwhile Ken Livingstone is reported to have asked the Treasury if he can borrow £400 million to "invest" in London transport projects. *(Editors Comments: Yet more evidence of Ken's financial imprudence!)*

+ The Westmoreland Road car park in central Bromley is likely to be redeveloped. The Planning Brief indicates that parking capacity should be unchanged, but note that this site is owned by the council as was the Orpington car park site, so that may not be a safe assumption.

+ A German system to charge trucks for mileage traveled by using GPS tracking should have gone live last August but apparently is not likely to work before at least 2005. Software problems seem to be the main difficulty. This system is similar to what is planned for the UK, which does not bode well.

+ The city of Nottingham, which has been covered in previous Newsletters because of its rash spending on a new tram system, is now planning to charge businesses for workplace parking. It's expected to be at least £150 per year per space initially, and rising in later years. They apparently need to raise funds to subsidise public transport systems like the trams, but can't use a congestion charge in the city because "if you threw a cordon around it, people would go elsewhere to shop" according to a local official.

+ The Government is planning a new travel information service called "Transport Direct" that will cover all transport modes. It will advise people on the best way to travel to any location and also you to compare options on the basis of cost and convenience. At present this information is dispersed over different systems for rail, bus, road, etc, so it requires database consolidation and sophisticated software. It's

likely to be operational early next year. See the Department for Transport web site for more information - <http://www.dft.gov.uk> (Editor's Comment: Should be a good system if it works).

+ As an example of how noisy speed humps can be, some "cushions" on the A1198 at Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire were recently removed after it was found that noise levels exceeded 85 decibels over 1,100 times in 24 hours in one resident's bedroom. This was caused by heavy lorries primarily. (Editors Comment: Of course it's a pretty silly idea to put humps of any kind on an "A" road, but not unusual these days).

+ A correspondent to the Newsshopper has pointed out that when Bromley Council advertised for a new "school travel planning officer" whose job will be to encourage parents to consider alternative modes of transport to the school run, it was a requirement for applicants to own a motor vehicle. No hypocrisy there then!

+ The Elephant & Castle, a major road hub in south London with a run down shopping centre and poor quality housing estates nearby, is being redeveloped. The large roundabout will partly become a "town square" with "a realigned road network designed to give priority to pedestrians, public transport and cyclists". See the web site at <http://www.elephantandcastle.org.uk> for more information. (Editors Comments: It surely can't be worse than the existing mess).

+ Mayor Ken Livingstone's budget for London has been settled with a rise of 7.5% on last year. This is higher than Bromley's Council budget which will rise by 6.7%, or 6.9% with the London precept to covers the Mayor's spending included. Bob Neill, GLA Member for Bromley and Bexley said "This means that Livingstone has increased the GLA precept by 96 per cent since he came to power". (Editors Comments: And there is not much to show for it in Bromley. Lot's more buses, but mostly empty; lot's more police, but not in Bromley. The overall rise in council taxes is also still over twice the level of inflation for the last year which I also consider totally unreasonable, as do many pensioners).

+ The London Borough of Richmond has confirmed that it plans to phase out speed humps. Councillor Mark Kreling, cabinet member for transport, recently said: "When road humps reach the end of their natural life or when the road needs to be resurfaced, we will consult with a view to remove them and replace them with more modern types of road calming. This will be better for ambulances, etc, whilst maintaining safety. There will be no new humps unless there is overwhelming public demand.". Note that this is very much the policy now advocated by BBRAG so we applaud this decision.

+ Slough Borough Council recently circulated nearly 700 consultation leaflets about a proposed traffic calming scheme which included speed humps. They got 9 responses - as the majority were in favour they are going ahead. It later transpired however that as the council had not paid their Royal Mail account, it's possible responses had been lost, but that did not cause them to reconsider.

+ According to a report on BBC television a new scheme to try and cut out the school run by sharing lifts has been set up - see the web site at: <http://www.school-run.co.uk> . One of the schools that set up a pilot was Bromley's Highfield Infants School (they have a web site also at: <http://www.highfield-inf.bromley.sch.uk> which is well worth a look). However the BBC reported that only one parent volunteered.

+ Do you have problems with parking tickets? If so you may care to read a new book by John Squires entitled "The Motorists Guide to Parking Tickets" which has just been published. It's available for £9.99 from Troubador (web site: <http://www.troubador.co.uk>).

We regretfully report the death of independent Derby Councillor Ron Allen who held the balance of power after being elected on an anti-hump platform. The last of the humps he campaigned against was removed last December so at least he lived to see the results of his good work. He died from prostate cancer.



## **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**

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Our internet web address is: <http://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.

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