



# BBRAG NEWS

Bromley Borough Roads Action Group - No. 28 (June 2004)

## In This Issue

- **Party Policies on Transport in London**
- **Waldo Rd Refuse Site to be Improved**
- **Brian Coleman Versus the Taliban**
- **Orpington Car Park Plan Rejected**
- **Environment Plan 2004/2005**
- **TV's Bee in Your Bonnet Joins the Anti-Hump Campaign**
- **Speed Humps and Ambulances**
- **GLA Hump Inquiry Concluded**
- **Councillors Legal Liabilities**
- **Speed Cameras - A Growing Industry**
- **Tram, Trolley or Guided Bus?**
- **Trams Lose Money According to NAO**
- **Congestion Charging - A Personal Nightmare**
- **Draft Local Implementation Plans**
- **Rewriting History**
- **News Snapshots**
- **B.B.R.A.G. Information and Contacts**

## Editorial

As our members no doubt know, although some politicians don't seem to believe it, BBRAG is a totally apolitical organisation. We support or oppose transport policies purely on whether they are rational and sensible, not on the basis of who advocates them. However as the elections for the London Mayor and Greater London Assembly are imminent, we have included a short article herein spelling out the respective parties views on transport matters.

Brevity has had to be the essence here, but hopefully it will educate our readers on their choice of candidates, even if there are the candidate's personal attributes and the candidate's views on other matters that also need to be taken into account. Just don't forget to use your vote!

Unfortunately we are not able to report on any progress yet on resolving the problem of the speed humps on Old Hill. A decision is still awaited from the council, following a meeting with local residents.

Roger Lawson, Editor

## Party Policies on Transport in London



The three main parties and candidates for Mayor of London (ie. those with a chance of winning) are listed overleaf in alphabetic order.

There are seven other candidates of which only a couple are worth mentioning. They both have some strong populist policies in regards to transport:

Frank Maloney is representing the UK Independence Party and is based in Bromley. His policies include abolishing the Congestion Charge, reducing the number of speed humps and speed cameras, introducing 24 hour London transport services, and trying to make traffic flow more smoothly. (Editor: clearly a popular manifesto for many!).

Darren Johnson is representing the Green Party. He would extend the Congestion Charge to all of Greater London, and even include "air traffic". All road building would be "ended immediately" including the Thames Gateway bridge. They are proposing a free travelcard scheme for "unwaged" and young people (Editor: the former might even include me as I haven't had a proper job for some time so he might be worth voting for!). They are also proposing a five year fares freeze for everyone else.

### **Conservative Party (Steve Norris)**

Steve Norris would scrap the Congestion Charge and tackle congestion by other means. The latter would include funding of school buses, restrictions on road works and a ban on delivery vehicles during the rush hour. *(Editor: restricting road works further would be a good idea - there were two miles of queuing traffic from road works on Tower Hill last week, one of the major arteries through the city).*

Norris would also extend underground opening times, negotiate a no-strike agreement with the unions and introduce air conditioning where possible. Bus services would be reviewed to reduce subsidies and he would "audit" bus lanes. Cycling and walking would also be encouraged.

### **Liberal/Democrat Party (Simon Hughes)**

Simon Hughes seems reasonably happy with the Congestion Charge scheme, albeit that he proposes some minor improvements, but he is opposed to the planned westward extension.

Buses would be improved with more technology to advise on arrival times and on-board announcement systems. More transport integration and improved safety for passengers is also promised, although some of the details seem a little sketchy on how these are to be achieved. Underground opening times would also be extended.

### **Labour Party (Ken Livingstone)**

Basically it's more of the same from Ken. His manifesto reiterates what he has already done such as added 1000 extra buses, replaced older buses by new ones, frozen bus fares with many free concessions, and spent more money on road safety schemes (a lot of which incidentally has gone on speed humps schemes).

He has of course introduced the Congestion Charging scheme although it is nowhere near as profitable as envisaged, and proposes to go ahead with the western extension.

He also wants to push ahead with two tram schemes (west London and Cross-River), with the Thames Gateway Bridge and with the Cross-

Rail scheme, although these probably all depend on Government funding to some extent.

He takes credit for the London Cycle Network and wants to bring the Tour de France to London in 2007 (and of course is a keen advocate of the Olympics in London). He has also spent money on improved policing on public transport and in regulating taxis and minicabs.

### **Finances Not Clear**

Neither Mr Livingstone, nor any of the other candidates seem to spell out what their policies have cost or will cost London taxpayers. It's easy to promise improved services, extended tube times, and other "hand-outs" if people don't know what are the cost implications. Ultimately much of the cost tends to fall on the taxpayer for most of these benefits. A full list of all mayoral candidates and links to their web sites can be seen at:

<http://www.londonelects.org.uk/candidates/mayor.html>

### **Waldo Rd Refuse Site to be Improved**



Proposals are in hand to redevelop the Council refuse disposal site in Waldo Road. This has been a cause of major traffic jams for many years on Homesdale Road when cars queuing to dispose of rubbish block the entrance. At peak times of year, the whole surrounding area can be affected.

The photographs above and overleaf show the scene the day after the Easter break, when the queue extended about half a mile back up to the middle of Page Heath Lane.



This has been a problem for a long time (it has been covered in past Newsletters), but previous initiatives all failed to cure it. The new proposals look like they stand a chance though because there will be 30 bays for cars as opposed to the less than 10 at present. However, visitors will be asked to sort their rubbish into different containers - for example, wood into one, garden waste into another, etc. This will enable the council to increase recycling, and reduce its use of land fill, which is increasingly expensive.

The only possible cause for complaint with the new arrangement is that in future heavy vehicles that remove the waste will have to exit via Baths Road. It's likely to take more than a year to bring these proposals into effect.

## Brian Coleman Versus the Taliban



Outspoken Barnet Councillor Brian Coleman has brought down the wrath of Ken Livingstone, Transport for London and every other anti-car fanatic upon himself. His policies of removing speed humps from the borough, and generally trying to get the traffic moving, have incensed his foes. And his high profile television appearances espousing his pro-motorist views have incensed his opponents.

In addition to removing all speed humps in Barnet, it is alleged that cycle lanes have been removed, kerb build-outs cut back, pedestrian crossing points removed and a rogue bus lane camera that generated £1 million in fines in a year is to be removed.

## TfL Withholding Grants and Legal Threats

TfL is threatening to withhold grants to the borough of Barnet (which all London boroughs rely on for road safety expenditure). The Mayor of London and the Green Party have suggested that people involved in accidents in the borough should sue the council, presumably on the basis that they may have contributed to the cause. *(Editor's Comment: In my opinion this is a legal nonsense - see a later article that covers this subject in more depth. In any case, there are likely to be no more accidents as a result and Coleman has recently claimed that accidents have fallen).*

**"TfL Stands for Taliban for London"...**  
Brian Coleman

Brian Coleman claimed TfL had no legal basis for withholding the grants and said "These road humps are responsible for 500 unnecessary deaths, pollution and noise. The Mayor has no idea what happens in the suburbs and neither has TfL." He also said: "TfL stands for Taliban for London. I wish Ken well on his parenting leave. He can carry on looking after his baby and I'll look after Barnet's traffic." Ken Livingstone said "Barnet's transport agenda is recklessly anti-public transport, anti-pedestrian and anti-cycling. Barnet has become a laboratory experiment for some very ill-thought out policies." *(Editor's Comment: A clear case of over exaggeration by both sides).*

Apparently Mr Livingstone and TfL fear that this outbreak of popular measures to improve traffic flows will spread to the rest of London as it has done already to Enfield and Richmond where some humps are also being removed.

Soon after the above row, Brian Coleman also hit the headlines by introducing £1000 fines for people who fail to follow recycling guidelines for their household rubbish in Barnet. Clearly he is a man who does not fear making a stand for what he believes in.

A few days after the above was written, Ken Livingstone accused Barnet council of putting children's lives at risk and referred to them as the "loony right". Brian Coleman responded by saying the Mayor's claims were "absolute bollocks" and said Barnet had only removed one cycle lane and accused Livingstone of "political grandstanding".

*(Editor's Comment: Well it's all good, knock-about stuff but not very constructive. Perhaps Mr Livingstone will next suggest that Brian Coleman be hung in public as he recently did for the Saudi royal family).*

---

## **Orpington Car Park Plan Rejected**



Following a rowdy public meeting attended by over 200 people to discuss the Tesco planning application for the Orpington car park site, it was rejected at a council meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> April. Tesco reiterated however that they would appeal, so it would be wrong to assume that this matter is anywhere near resolution.

The application was rejected by the Council's Development Control Committee on the basis of excessive size and bulk, but there were also many negative comments on the likely traffic congestion, insufficient public parking, impact on local residents and the impact on town centre shops.

At the public meeting it was disclosed that the new "superstore" would contain over 50,000 square feet of selling space, which is larger than the Tesco store at Ruxley Corner. It would also be bigger than the new Sainsbury store in Sidcup, another "town centre" store which is creating major traffic problems. Only 60% of the space would be for food, with the remainder other goods.

Maximum car movements in and out of the store would be 400 per hour, plus up to 75 per day from the "home delivery service". Tesco argued that shoppers would not visit the store when the roads were congested, but there was widespread scepticism that the surrounding roads could cope. Most people foresaw even more congestion on Station Road and at the

War Memorial roundabout than currently exists, and "rat-running" down side roads.

There was no provision for parking for the "affordable houses" in the development, and the residents of 30 flats at the rear of the shops on the High St would lose the free parking in Augustus Lane. The public parking was increased to 195 spaces on the final application, but this is still far short of the current usage.

The overall height of the structure was also lowered slightly and some flats overlooking Orchard Grove were removed, but residents were not impressed by these changes. They would still suffer overshadowing, 24-hour noise, and traffic problems.

Although the development did not appear to be in accord with the "Planning Brief", unfortunately it seems that this was never formally adopted (an oversight by the Council Planning Department surely).

---

## **Environment Plan 2004/2005**

Bromley Council have recently adopted an "Environment Plan" for the next coming financial year (transport comes under the Environment Portfolio). The main transport objective is "Encouragement to develop other forms of transport to reduce reliance on the car".  
*(Editor's Comment: The same old dogma as usual).*

It is interesting to note that the target for traffic change is now +1.81% (i.e. an increase) for the coming year, whereas back in 1999 there was a clear objective in Bromley Council's "Integrated Transport Strategy" to reduce traffic by 10% by 2008 (a figure obviously unlikely to be achieved now we are past the half way point). They were told then by your editor that this was totally unrealistic, so is this a case of reality seeping in?

## **Still No More Money for Roads**

Otherwise the intention is to "Support the introduction of major transport investment projects including the East London Line extension, Tramlink and new orbital links utilising partnerships such as SELTRANS.....". Likewise, no change in the emphasis on public

transport projects as opposed to spending any money at all on the road network.

### **Road Safety Targets Being Met**

One positive aspects of the plan is that it appears that Bromley is on target to achieve the intended savings in people killed and seriously injured on our roads. The projected "KSI" figure for 2003 is 170 which is again a substantial reduction. Concentration on measures to tackle the KSI number as opposed to slight injury accidents appears to be bringing results.

---

### **TV's Bee in Your Bonnet Joins the Anti-Hump Campaign**



BBC Television have been recently running a series of programmes entitled "Bee in Your Bonnet" where they parachute "celebrity" Amanda Platell into a local campaign to try and make a difference. A recent one covered

some anti-speed hump campaigners in Clifton, a suburb of Nottingham (a photograph of a hump on the Clifton Estate is shown above).

The Clifton Estate has 550 speed humps in 3 square miles which must make it one of the largest wide area traffic calming schemes in the UK. They cost £1.4 million to install, but local residents are now fighting to remove them. A group of local traders named Sotta has put together a petition of over 2000 signatures which has been submitted to the council.

There were only about 7 accidents per year saved, which is about a 6% reduction, and which must make it one of the least cost effective road safety schemes ever devised. In addition, it is alleged that some 35% of traffic is now diverting to avoid the humps, severely impacting local businesses (and of course, likely causing more accidents elsewhere than are being saved).

*(Editor's Comment: That level of accident reduction is trivial and is way below what should be achievable from that level of expenditure.)*

### **Another Wide Area Scheme with No Benefits**

Clearly this is yet another example of a wide area scheme which has proved to be a total waste of money like the schemes in Hull discussed in our last Newsletter.

Ms Platell did not seem to know much about speed humps and the arguments against them (which is surprising bearing in mind that a BBC researcher spoke to BBRAG). The council is currently reconsidering the scheme, but seems unlikely to change it's mind. Like the other programmes in the series, Ms Platell's intervention seemed to achieve very little, which is a shame.

---

### **Speed Humps and Ambulances**

One of the people who gave evidence to the recent GLA Speed Hump Inquiry was Paramedic Mark Belchamber who works for the London Ambulance Service (LAS). His evidence criticised the problems they cause ambulance staff.

In fact he did a study of such problems as a degree thesis which is well worth reading. It can be read on the internet at:  
<http://www.belchamber.org/speedhumps/>

The study main consisted of asking 36 paramedics from different parts of the country for their experiences, and their response to humps. For example, 66% would deviate to avoid humps even when on emergency calls, and half of them were willing to add 2.5 minutes to the response time as a result.

88% of paramedics felt that speed humps interfered with CPR or other medical procedures. All respondents considered that a number of patient conditions were affected detrimentally by speed humps, particularly spinal or back injuries, and fractures generally.

In summary, it was clear that ambulance staff take a very dim view of the impact of speed humps on their ability to do their job, and that there are negative implications for patients.

## **Ambulance Delay May Have Caused Death**

A recently reported case from Harpenden was that of the death of Victoria Ann Parkins who choked on some food. Paramedic Philip Bishop claimed at the inquest that he had been delayed by up to 3 minutes by a series of road humps.

---

## **GLA Hump Inquiry Concluded**

The Greater London Assembly Inquiry into speed humps has been concluded, with a final report being produced. The main recommendations were:

- Any removal of speed humps should only be done if equivalent measures can be introduced.
- TfL and the Boroughs should work more closely together on budgets and consultation procedures, and there should be better data collection on current schemes.
- The "Pan London Road Safety Forum" should be more proactive in promoting good practice.

However the report was generally very biased. For example it contained 19 quotations or references from anti-car groups and only one from a pro-car group. They even included the data on wide area traffic calming schemes in Hull, despite the fact that your editor had given them clear evidence that the claims from Hull were spurious and the data simply wrong.

Any evidence that did not support humps was disparaged, including that from the London Ambulance Service, or simply not reported.

*(Editor's Comment: In summary, a very disappointing conclusion to what could have been one of the few independent reports. Much of the report contained the usual dogma in favour of humps without looking at the contrary evidence. Apparently not all the Inquiry Committee members were happy with the contents of the report, and the Conservatives refused to sign it.*

*Incidentally the Committee originally intended to undertake a public opinion poll on this subject but that was later abandoned which is also unfortunate - perhaps they were afraid of the results they might have obtained.)*

## **Press Reporting and Political Manifestos**

Subsequent press comment on the GLA report suggested that the report emphasised the use of speed cameras as opposed to humps, particularly to enforce 20 mph areas, which is not strictly accurate. However the press also suggested Ken Livingstone was to put such a commitment in his mayoral manifesto. At which point Brian Coleman said "*The speed camera plans will mean residents getting clobbered all the time by fines. This is a version of the congestion charge for the suburbs and is merely a revenue raiser to fill the gaping hole at the heart of the Transport for London budget. Another week and yet another example of the anti-car agenda being pursued by the mayor and his Labour Party in City Hall*".

*(Editor's Comment: I couldn't have said it better myself. The committee and mayor's proposals also ignore the poor economics and impracticality of enforcing 20 mph zones by cameras, but economics has never been one of Mr Livingstone's strong points).*

---

## **Councillors Legal Liabilities**

The writer has heard councillors and council staff in Bromley claim that they cannot remove speed humps on legal grounds. For example because councillors could be personally liable, or the council itself, if there were any subsequent accidents (ie. the victims might sue).

As mentioned above, Ken Livingstone is suggesting people might have a case against Barnet council for removing humps.

What are the facts? Well Councillors are very unlikely to incur any such liability because in general they are indemnified against such actions under UK law. Unless that is their actions are "*ultra vires*" which removing speed humps is clearly not as it is specifically provided for in Section 62 of the Highways Act 1980.

For the full legal position on the liabilities and obligations of councillors and council staff, you can see an extensive report on this subject on the BBAG web site at: <http://www.bromleytransport.org.uk/News.htm> (or contact the editor for a printed copy).

---

## Speed Cameras - A Growing Industry



The London Safety Camera Partnership (LSCP) have started to produce a very professional newsletter called "Telescope". You can obtain copies from their new web site at <http://www.lscp.org.uk> (again very professionally designed and clearly not cheap). The first edition disclosed that they now have four "Community Public Relations Officers" who are no doubt promoting the merits of speed cameras.

That edition also contains a profile of John Walton, Head of Road Safety for Bromley, who is quoted as saying the following on the subject of speed cameras: "It is a great initiative, where the education initiates training and publicity and compliments police enforcement and engineering in a multi-disciplinary approach to tackling the eternal problem of speeding on London's roads.", and that's verbatim!

### Limehouse Link Revisited

Both the first two editions contain articles on the speed cameras in the Limehouse Link Tunnel which has been covered in a previous copy of this newsletter. Their second edition suggests that there have been 81 deaths on that road which is clearly nonsense - there were in fact 2.

The LCSP web site also provides the full details of the location of all 650 speed and red light cameras in London.

*(Editor's Comment: I think the "industry" of speed camera installation, financed by more and more fines on otherwise law abiding motorists, has got totally out of hand. The Sunday Times recently ran an article covering speed cameras and the fact that Essex was the most prolific with fines in 2002, with 213,861 penalties issued. And what impact has this had on road deaths in Essex in the last few years? None at all - they have actually risen in the last five years including a rise in 2003.)*

---

## Tram, Trolley or Guided Bus?

The above was the title of a seminar run in January by the Greater London Assembly to discuss "transit" options in London.

Everyone seems to agree that the Croydon Tramlink is a success in terms of user enthusiasm (*Editor: although nobody seems to be taking much notice of the atrocious economics*), but there are several more schemes in the pipeline for London. These include the West London Tram, Cross River Transit, Greenwich Waterfront and East London Transit.



The latter two are likely to be bus based and could be "guided buses" where buses run on a dedicated road and are guided automatically, as shown above. This has proved very successful in Leeds, and they are much cheaper than trams. Other options discussed for the future were trams, and trolley buses.

The Croydon Tramlink had the advantage of mainly being routed over disused railway lines, and therefore did not consume much road space. But the West London line is to run on already congested roads such as Ealing Broadway and Acton High Street. There was apparently much discussion of the local opposition which appears to have been mainly blamed on poor consultation procedures, and has held up progress on this scheme (*Editor's Comment: but may simply have been a case of the well informed public knowing what they did not want*).

### Political Views

The views of GLA members were split on typical political lines. Labour member John Biggs repeated the spurious allegation that trams were put out of business by bus companies who couldn't stand the competition - a total misreading of history. Otherwise he is clearly a great fan of trams and is perhaps willing to bulldoze over local opposition and even ignore the economics - to quote "Sometimes the greater good requires leadership and a bit of bravery. It will be a defeat for all of London if worthwhile transport schemes are defeated by an overly parochial political culture." Full speed ahead with trams for West London and Cross River routes is his view.

Conservative member Roger Evans, expressed much more concern about tram schemes and

the economics of all light transit schemes. He seemed to prefer bus based solutions.

Liberal/Democrat Lynne Featherstone, was opposed to the West London tram, but wanted an extension of the Croydon Tramlink, a route down Oxford Street, and the East London and Greenwich Waterfront schemes to be tram based (which would mean a dedicated lane on the new Thames Gateway Bridge). In general therefore she appeared to be a fan of trams.

The green party view represented by Jenny Jones was that trams for London “*could easily be funded by dropping all the plans to build and widen roads in the South East of England*”. (*Editor’s Comments: I am sure the residents of the shires will love that idea*). Her other comments were similarly either misinformed or ludicrous so will not be covered further here.

### **Financing and Economics**

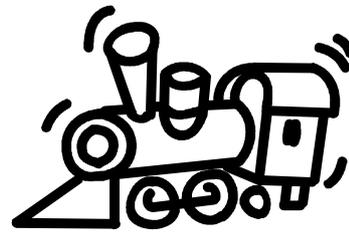
Financing of such schemes and their economics were discussed. It is clear that most tram schemes in the UK have cost more than budgeted and now run at a large loss. Overoptimistic passenger forecasts are rife, and underestimation of capital costs are pervasive. The budgets often ignore competitor responses from deregulated buses and even London’s regulated but artificially cheap bus fares have been accused of undermining the Tramlink.

### **A Well Reasoned Summary**

The resulting recommendations from this seminar were pretty wishy-washy, but David Quarmby who summarised at the end of the proceedings had a very well reasoned comment. He said “*We are inevitably led to the question - particularly relevant when you have a fixed budget - is there an 80/20 rule at work here? That is can you achieve, say, 80% of the benefit, or performance improvement for, say 20% of the cost? I have a suspicion that bus-based solutions, particularly in a bus-friendly road environment of the kind we have increasingly achieved in London over the past few years, may well be like this.*” In other words, investing in more reliable, better quality, bus services with adequate protection of bus routes will be a lot cheaper and approach the service levels achievable by other mass transit systems.

The full report of the seminar, which is well worth reading, can be seen on the internet at: <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport.jsp> although there was little discussion of trolley buses, your editor’s preference to trams.

### **Great Rail Disasters and Pork Barrel Politics**



Randall O’Toole, an American commentator and researcher on transport, planning and environmental

issues, has recently published a study of US “transit” systems under the title “Great Rail Disasters”. It shows how a high expenditure on rail transit systems is strongly correlated with high congestion - in other words it does not solve the problem it was intended to fix, even though the share of rail transit of the total travel in those regions is less than 5%.

Also, 60% of rail transit systems consume more energy per passenger mile than private cars, and light rail (e.g. trams) kill many more people per passenger mile than buses or freeway travel.

In addition he gives numerous examples of the poor capital budgeting and consistent operational cost overruns for such systems. He explains the political system whereby grandiose transit systems are given preference to road improvements, to the disadvantage of most of the residents in a region. To quote, “98 percent of Americans support the use of mass transit by others”. To see the full report, go to: <http://i2i.org/articles/I-2004.pdf>

### **Trams Lose Money According to NAO**



A Nottingham Tram

According to a report from the National Audit Office (NAO), light rail systems in the UK typically lose money and have too few passengers. The NAO is the government spending watchdog and it found that £2.3 billion had been spent on 7 new tram schemes since 1980. That includes such schemes as the Croydon Tramlink, Sheffield's Supertram, Manchester's Metrolink, the Docklands Light Railway (which is the only one that makes an operating profit) and the new system in Nottingham shown above.

The report says that light rail has a limited impact on road congestion, pollution and road accidents. To quote "Light rail cannot, by itself, reduce congestion significantly over the long term". Even when some motorists abandon the cars to take a tram, other motorists soon fill up the road space.

Neither is it clear that trams have any impact on urban regeneration or social exclusion, and they are rarely integrated with other forms of transport.

### **Trams Rarely Cover Their Operating Costs**

Even though the government gives capital grants to fund the development of tram systems, this was subject to a requirement for them to cover their operating costs. But only the Docklands Light Railway has done so. Patronage by riders has always fallen well short of anticipation, and this has been made worse by the schemes being cut back during construction due to cost overruns.

In France and Germany, they are more successful in attracting passengers but only because cities such as Grenoble and Freiburg subsidise fares by between 40% and 70%. Also one of the major cost elements in construction, which is the cost of diverting utilities where the trams run, is not paid in full by the developers in Europe.

The NAO gives some recommendations for improving the financial viability of these schemes, but it is not clear whether they will make them truly economic. The full report can be seen at: <http://www.nao.org.uk/pn/03-04/0304518.htm>

### **Nottingham Tram Meeting Uproar**

Incidentally there was a recent public meeting about extension of the Nottingham tram system to the south through Beeston and Chilwell (mainly down an already congested road). There was vociferous opposition at the meeting, and the police had to be called to restore order, but it seems unlikely that councillors will reconsider. Information from the opposition can be seen at: [http://www.notram.net/index\\_main.htm](http://www.notram.net/index_main.htm) or for the "pro" campaign, see: <http://www.bacit.org>.

### **Edinburgh Tram Opposition**

In Edinburgh, where one of the few new tram systems is being considered, local resident Bill Raynal has opposed the plans. He believes the revenue projections are optimistic, and that it will almost certainly always require an operating subsidy. (*Editor's Comment: He's probably right.*)

### **Buses Like Trams**

Meanwhile FirstGroup have announced a revolutionary new vehicle that will be a bus but appear more like a tram, so as to overcome resistance to bus use. It will use rubber wheels, but otherwise details were not disclosed. (*Editor's Comment: Sounds like a trolley bus to me.*)

---

## **Congestion Charging - A Personal Nightmare**



In August 2003, your editor received a Congestion Penalty Charge Notice. After writing 13 letters, making numerous telephone calls, and eventually submitting a complaint to the

Local Government Ombudsman, at Easter this year he finally received a letter saying that TfL were cancelling the notice.

The Congestion Charge operators (Capita) and Transport for London (TfL), simply were incapable of dealing with complaints in a logical and reasonable manner. They repeatedly ignored issues that were raised, made statements of fact that were patently incorrect, sent standard "form" letters that were irrelevant, and seemed to be incapable of understanding the legislation that governs this system.

In summary they have cost me more time and expense on this one incident, than I have saved from reduced congestion on all the times I have driven into London in the past year (which I do not do often). Unfortunately there are many other people in the same position who probably do not have my persistence and knowledge of the system. And that is confirmed by the statistics which I have covered in previous editions.

In summary the whole Congestion Charging system is an administrative and operational failure and should be scrapped forthwith. It should be replaced by other measures to control congestion which are more sane and reasonable.

P.S. After sending me a full refund of all charges paid, they then sent me a letter saying they were not going to. They couldn't even get that right!

---

### **Draft Local Implementation Plans**

Transport for London have published draft guidance on how the local London boroughs are supposed to prepare their "Local Implementation Plans". These are intended to be the details of how the London Transport Strategy is to be implemented by the boroughs. This may sound a pretty dry and unexciting subject but in reality may have a big impact as to whether there is any local say in many transport matters, or whether everything in future will be controlled from the Mayor's Office.

The whole 70 pages of the draft can be seen at: <http://www.transportforlondon.gov.uk/tfl/downloads/pdf/lips-guidance.pdf>

George Taylor and the L.B. of Bromley are sending strong objections to the contents as they see it as a TfL attempt to take even more power. Other boroughs seem to be of the same mind.

Certainly the level of reporting and monitoring of local activities demanded by TfL will impose a heavy burden on local authorities.

### **New Targets Also Introduced**

TfL has also introduced a number of new targets that will be both expensive and difficult to meet, including:

- 20 mph speed limits around all primary schools.
- School travel plans for all schools.
- Improvements in "modal shift" (less car use).
- Increase in pedestrian trips by 10% by 2015.
- Increase in cycling trips of 80% by 2011.

---

### **Rewriting History**

There was an interesting recent article on the subject of speed humps in the magazine "Local Transport Today". This is the journal read by many local authority traffic engineers. It quotes Bromley's Dave Chilver who explains that the justification for the new "no more humps" strategy was that they had been in receipt of "*adverse comments from the emergency services about attendance times and the effects on severely injured patients*". Oddly enough, his superior, Gareth Davies complained about the failure of the emergency services to respond to consultations at the recent Greater London Assembly hump inquiry. Surely it was other reasons that caused the change of policy, such as the democratically expressed views of the electorate, but it's good to know that the medical issues are now being recognised by road traffic engineers.

Mr Chilver also made an interesting comment on electronic "speed advisor" signs, which was that despite his enthusiasm for them, sometimes they showed traffic was going slower than residents actually thought. To quote: "*The very visible display of the vehicle speed also helps residents who normally think cars are travelling at 60 mph whereas the sign shows them that this is not really the case. The use of these signs can help to reduce residents concerns.....*".

Other tidbits of information in the article were that the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea were ceasing the installation of humps, and that Enfield is investigating their possible removal. The spurious claims from the City of Hull about their wide area traffic calming schemes were unfortunately again repeated (see a previous Newsletter for details).

---

### **News Snapshots**

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

+ TfL have proposed widening the approaches to the roundabout at the junction of Glebe Way and Addington Road (the A232/A2022) so as to permit two lanes of traffic on the Addington Road entrances. *(Editor's Comment: A good idea. It's a pity they don't do more of these kind of works).*

+ The Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ, ie. permit parking scheme) around Penge East Station has finally been abandoned after the latest consultation exercise again showed that most residents were opposed (by 55% to 41%). Support was patchy even for this more limited scheme. *(Editor's Comment: This is the last of several recent CPZ proposals which have been voted against by residents. Several thousands of pounds will have been wasted on consultation for such schemes, but council staff continue to put them forward at the drop of a hat - either encouraged by Transport for London or by one or two members of the public. Perhaps the Council could now take on board that residents are now generally opposed to such schemes now that they have experience of them in other areas).*

+ North Street in the north Bromley area has been closed to through traffic. A local taxi firm, ACX Express, who operate from nearby East Street have raised objections, and complained that they were not consulted. They also complained that this means that the traffic that previously used the one way system formed by East St, West St and North St will now have to turn on and off the congested Tweedy Road. The Bromley Little Theatre also complained about resulting access difficulties.

+ A campaign to discourage the use of SUVs (ie. large 4-wheel drive vehicles) in London has been launched - their web site is located at: <http://www.wastemonsters.org.uk>. They are providing the facility to print "dummy" parking tickets, so as to give the drivers a jolt no doubt. *(Editor's Comment: A good idea - such vehicles in towns are not sensible, not practical and not economic. I'm thinking of printing some to put on the Range Rover owner who repeatedly parks on the pavement in Church Row, Chislehurst because his vehicle is too wide for the road).*

+ A web site dedicated to opposition to the extension of the Congestion Charge zone is now present at: <http://www.stoptheextension.com>

+ Japanese police are apparently cracking down on "reckless cycling" on pavements. It is nominally legal in Japan to do so, but 2000 pedestrians were injured and 6 killed last year by collisions with cyclists. Unfortunately statistics on this problem are no longer collected in the UK, where it is becoming more prevalent even though clearly illegal.

+ The World Health Organisation (WHO) has said that road traffic accidents are likely to become the third biggest cause of death and disability by 2020. Poorer countries have a particularly bad safety record. Countries such as Russia, Brazil and South Korea have twice the rates of most western European countries. And you may prefer not to take a holiday in Mauritius where it is about 4 times worse. Although the rates in the USA are better than the above mentioned countries (but much worse than the UK), they still have the highest total of about 44,000 deaths per year as they are the most heavily motorised. As other diseases become more treatable, road accident deaths are rising in the mortality tables. *(Editor's Comment: Having spent a couple of days in Russia last year, I can see why they have such a bad record as the standard of driving there was truly appalling).*

+ According to the Road Users Alliance (see <http://www.rua.org.uk>) the government raised £44 billion in road user taxes last year, but spent only £5.8 billion on the road network.

+ Bromley High School in Blackbrook Lane, Bickley have threatened to ban cars from their premises unless the behaviour of parents improves. They claim there have been several "near misses" but it would surely be more dangerous to have children picked up and put down on the main road?

+ The London Borough of Bromley has won a "European Road Safety Award" for its achievements in "education measures". Only five cities in Europe gained an award.

+ Gloucester's "Safer City" project has been called "a disaster" by local councillors after the KSI accidents rose by 71% last year. The Safer City project consists of 159 speed cushions and 199 speed humps, plus other measures (ie. it's a typical wide area traffic calming scheme).

Meanwhile nearby Cheltenham's figures have fallen by a third with no such measures. As Councillor Gravells said "*And they haven't had to endure the misery we have here in the city. How much more spin will we have to put up with on this*".

+ TfL are proposing to extend the 30 mph zone on the A21 Hastings Road so as to cover the Biggin Hill turn off into Oakley Road. BBRAG objects to the continual reduction of speed limits on major roads instead of the use of proper road engineering measures in high accident zones. To object, send your letters to Chris Martin, Transport for London Street Management, TASS/AD/SF-TO, Windsor House, 42-50 Victoria St, London SW1H 0TL, quoting reference GLA/2004/186.

+ TfL are also proposing to introduce a "Toucan" pedestrian crossing on the A21 near the junction with Farnborough Hill. This will duplicate the existing nearby pedestrian footbridge "*for those who at present are unable or choose not use the footbridge*". If you have any comments send them to Dave Pownall, Transport for London Street Management, TASS/AD/SF-TO, Windsor House, 42-50 Victoria St, London SW1H 0TL, quoting reference GLA/2004/159.

+ There have been several letters to the local newspapers complaining about the redesign of the entrance to Bromley South Station. There is no longer anywhere for vehicles to drop off or pick up passengers, particularly those who are infirm or have heavy luggage. As mentioned in a previous newsletter, this was a Seltrans funded project that cost several hundred thousands of pounds. (*Editor's Comment: As usual with many new transport projects, there is a bias against car users, and as people will still do this there are now even more risks to passengers than there were before as they are likely to be walking across a busy road*).



## 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.), PO Box 62, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5YB. 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](mailto:roger.lawson@btclick.com)), Chairman: Peter Appleby. Contact either of the above for information on the aims and objectives of B.B.R.A.G. or for membership information (membership costs £9.50 per annum for individuals, or £7.50 if you opt to receive our Newsletter via email, 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: <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.