



BBRAG NEWS

Bromley Borough Roads Action Group - No. 30 (October 2004)

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Editorial

One article in this edition is by Jeremy Clyne, a Lambeth councillor, who was not at all happy with the report produced by the Greater London Assembly on speed humps. It seems they misinterpreted and misrepresented evidence he gave about noise and vibrations caused by a hump outside his home. There are also some other articles on how humps affect ambulances and bus drivers.

Data is also given that shows that London Boroughs who have stopped using road humps, or dug them up, have better accident data than those such as Camden who still think they are a good idea.

Crossrail is the subject of another damning report on the Mayors financial recklessness and his proposals to push ahead with extension of the Congestion Charging zone, contrary to public opinion, is also covered.

Roger Lawson, Editor

Speed Humps, Vibration and Noise by Jeremy Clyne



I am one of thousands of Londoners who have the misfortune to live next to a road hump (my home is in Streatham, near the picture above of the hump).

As I said in written evidence to last year's Greater London Assembly (GLA) inquiry into road humps, I have been driven to the extreme of hiring monitoring equipment which has recorded vibration four times above the level of acceptability. This shaking is usually accompanied by a loud intrusive crash.

GLA Report Missed the Point

My findings were recorded in the inquiry report "London's got the hump" but the report's authors completely missed the point I was making and referred to my submission in a section about "possible damage" to buildings caused by vibration, whereas I was complaining chiefly about the nuisance caused by vibration. Noise from humps was mentioned in the report but there was no reference to vibration nuisance, and so the issue continues to be ignored by traffic planners and engineers.

Vibration from traffic has long been known, at least since 1990, to cause "serious environmental disturbance" but the authorities choose to disregard these effects from road humps.

For the past seven years I and other occupants of the building where I live have been subjected to regular intermittent disturbance from the vibration and noise caused in particular by heavy goods vehicles as they bounce off an unusually long (100ft) speed table.

My inquiries and limited research lead me to believe that traffic engineers have disregarded the obvious effects on residents and that guidance being given to councils by the Department for Transport is grossly misleading when it comes to the nuisance that these traffic calming devices cause.

Vibration Exceeds Acceptable Limits

The results from my initial testing are startling, with vibration events regularly breaching the 1millimetre per second level of peak particle velocity at which complaint can be anticipated. I have even recorded events up to 4mm per second, four times above what is termed the "level of acceptability".

The Transport Research Laboratory stated in its 1990 report Traffic Induced Vibrations In Buildings: "it appears that vibrations due to ground-borne traffic vibration may become unacceptable above a level of 1mm/s"

A later paper by Greg Watts, the TRL's expert on the subject, "Vehicle generated ground-borne vibration alongside speed control cushions and road humps" (Control dynamics and man-made processes, 1998) reaffirms this, referring to "the guide PPV threshold values of 0.3mm, 1, 3 and 19mm/s for perception, complaint, fatigue damage and damage defined in BS 7385 respectively."

Vibration a Common Source of Nuisance

The 1990 TRL report, which predates the widespread use of road humps, did not deal with the effects of humps but with traffic vibration generally, in particular from uneven road surfaces.

Nevertheless it was stated clearly that "traffic induced vibration is a common source of nuisance affecting residents.....traffic vibration represents a serious environmental disturbance affecting large numbers of people" ,

The report also states that "ground-borne vibration is potentially a more severe problem (than airborne vibration) under the worst combination of conditions. This is because ground-borne vibration has been found to produce the greatest motion in floors and walls and to affect the whole building."

Later it is stated "a ground-borne vibration problem is most acute when the building is within a few metres of a significant road surface irregularity such as a poorly backfilled trench or sunken cover".

The effects of traffic passing over a rough surface would, or should, have been apparent to any traffic engineer. Introducing road humps and speed tables with their much greater variation in surface height would have the obvious effect of creating much more significant vibration disturbance to adjacent properties. It has clearly been thought that these considerations were of little import compared with the perceived benefits of reducing speed.

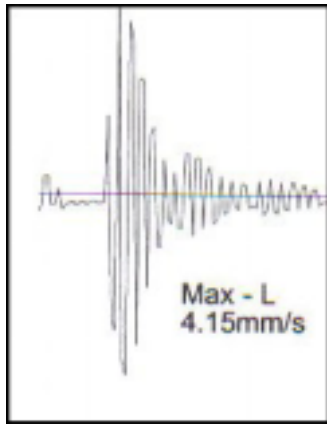
Research Has Been Ignored

The lessons to be drawn from this research, namely that constructing road humps close to dwellings would cause unacceptable disturbance, have been ignored and road humps have been built everywhere rather than other forms of traffic calming being employed.

Later research specifically on vibration from road humps details the "minimum distances between road humps and dwellings to avoid vibration exposure". Minor damage, it is stated, would only occur if the road hump were nearer than a metre. Separately detailed are the distances recommended to avoid "perception" and "complaint".

It is stated that on London clay a flat top hump (i.e. speed table) should not cause complaint (i.e. vibration above 1mm/s) to residents at a distance above 5 metres.

And yet my home is suffering vibration four times above the level of acceptability, as can be seen in the evidence below, and is 6.5 metres away from just such a flat top hump.



From my experience and investigations it seems clear that the advice on recommended distances between road humps and residential buildings needs to be reassessed, as it appears that the guidance seriously

understates the likelihood of vibration nuisance.

Vibration exposure from road humps is the subject of continued inquiry and research, probably because guidance given by official bodies bears little relevance to the reality experienced by those having to live with the problem. The issue is regularly the subject of academic papers.

With regard to damage, TRL's position is that only minor damage can result, and even that under fairly extreme circumstances. It is stated however in their 1990 report:

"a small additional stress imposed by traffic vibration might possibly add to a much greater static stress resulting in damage. Such a 'trigger' mechanism could perhaps cause premature failure in a building component already weakened by other causes. A more widespread concern is the possibility of fatigue damage occurring as a result of long periods of exposure to low levels of vibration. Buildings close to heavily trafficked roads may be exposed to many thousands of stress cycles each day so that the vibration dose over many years could be considerable."

Cracks Appearing in Home

Cracks have appeared in my home but the difficulty is proving they are the result of vibration from the adjacent road hump, particularly when faced with the blanket denials from TRL of such effects.

The fact that the property is shaken by heavy traffic can be shown and cannot be denied. And if TRL has got it so badly wrong in assessing vibration nuisance from road humps this puts a big question mark over its assertions about damage from road humps.

With regard to the particular problems I have experienced these have of course been reported on numerous occasions to my local authority, but to no avail.

Speed Humps and Ambulances



TeLeSCoPe is the glossy newsletter produced by the London Safety Camera Partnership (*Editor: I think they spell it that way so you slow down when reading it*). Their latest edition contained an interesting interview with Chris Hartley-Sharpe (picture left) who is the Ambulance

Operations Manager for the London Ambulance Service (LAS) based at Waterloo.

He seemed to favour speed cameras as "*Road humps cause us problems because they obstruct the passage of ambulances, increasing the time it takes for medical help to reach seriously ill or injured patients, exacerbating the discomfort of patients with spinal injuries, sometimes making it impossible for paramedics to give life-saving treatment to patients when on the move, and damaging our vehicles*". This is a clear and succinct summary of the views of many ambulance staff. When asked to describe himself in three words, he said "*Road hump-sceptic*".

(Editor: One peculiarity is the prominence of this article in such a publication. It's rather as if the editor is saying "aren't speed cameras a good idea when the alternative might be humps?". Personally I think we can do without either).

Other LCSP News

It seems that one thing the London Safety Camera Partnership has been doing recently is to display reconstructions of road crash sites. These have been done in Kingston, Newham and Westminster (Bromley also staged one in the Glades recently, presumably under the same programme). In the reconstructions, simulated casualties were cut free from crashed cars and treated by LAS staff. How that is expected to improve road safety or driver behaviour is not made clear.

Another section of TeLeSCoPe covers "Frequently Asked Questions". Here's one of the responses:

Question: If I travel on a road every day and it is clear of other traffic, why can't I drive appropriately?

Answer: The speed limit posted is the maximum speed for the vehicle and the road. It is not safe to exceed this limit based on the driver's judgement of road conditions or driving experience.

(Editor: So now you know, although I am quite unable to follow that logic. Looks like they are saying the state always knows best and your personal experience and knowledge count for nothing. Perhaps this is an early sign of us becoming truly "Europeanised").

Conservatives Plan to Scrap Safety Camera Partnerships

The Conservatives recently announced new policies that would mean responsibility for speed cameras would move back to the Police. They claim the Safety Camera Partnerships are expensive bureaucracy and that cameras should be reviewed to ensure they are safety orientated and not solely being used to raise revenue. They also proposed some review of speed limits with higher limits on some motorways but lower outside schools.

(Editor: Safety camera partnerships are certainly unaccountable to anyone and are outside democratic control, so some change is certainly a good idea).

More Humps for Blackheath

The London Borough of Lewisham has proposed a 20 mph zone and a mixture of speed tables, cushions and humps for a wide area around Blackheath Village. This includes the main routes through the village (the B212) despite the fact that 20 mph zones are only recommended by government guidelines in exceptional circumstances for such "distributor" roads.

And how did Lewisham, as a borough still building humps, compare to Bromley for accident reduction in 2003? Bromley reduced casualties by 21% whereas Lewisham managed exactly zero reduction. Clearly they have yet to learn that expenditure on more humps is simply wasted expenditure!

For more information on the latest scheme, or to send your objections, contact: Pam Bacchus, Transport and Engineering, Lewisham Council 1st Floor, Fleet Building, Wearside Service Centre, Wearside Road, Lewisham, SE13 7EZ

Fewer Humps, Fewer Accidents

The recently reported London accident data for 2003 actually demonstrate very clearly that those boroughs that stopped further expenditure on speed humps a couple of years ago managed to reduce accidents more than other boroughs. Both Bromley and Barnet improved their accident records over the year 2002 much more than other London boroughs, presumably because instead of wasting money on speed humps they actually spent it on other road safety measures. Consider the table below, where those boroughs are compared with Camden, who are great fans of humps, and Lewisham a neighbouring borough to Bromley and where they are still installing humps.

Percentage change in accidents from 2002 to 2003
(KSI= Killed or Seriously Injured)

Borough	KSI	All casualties
Barnet	-17%	-10%
Bromley	-22%	-21%
Camden	-17%	-10%
Lewisham	-11%	0%
All Boroughs	-9%	-7%

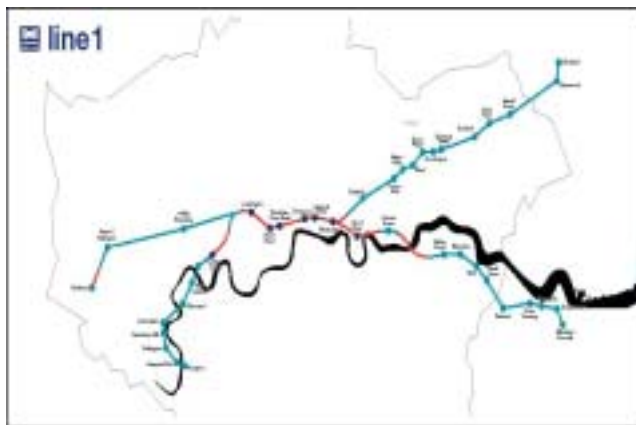
Of course the figures also refute those people who foresaw a deluge of accidents in Barnet after the humps were removed. In reality Barnet was still better than the average London borough in reducing road accidents.

In the borough of Camden a number of over-height humps in West Hampstead are having to be reduced in height by the council. The legal limit on hump height is 100 mm but some were 160 mm. Local builder Patrick Cawley says the humps in Westbere Road are as high as 240 mm. *(Editor: The normal height of humps is now 75 mm, as even 100 mm humps cause grounding, so what 240 mm humps must be like doesn't bear thinking about).*

This prompted GLA Member Brian Coleman to say "If Camden spent all the tens of thousands of pounds they waste on traffic calming and other unnecessary anti-motorist measures on resurfacing the roads it would be far more efficient. The most upsetting thing is the way Camden's road safety team treat as of no importance the frail, the elderly and the handicapped.". As usual, his comments are very appropriate.

Incidentally if you think the reason why Bromley has a better performance than Camden is because it spends more money on road safety, you would be wrong. The number of staff in Camden and their budget for traffic engineering and other road safety measures is several times that of Bromley so the exact opposite is the case.

Crossrail: What It Will Cost Us



The Crossrail project has recently been given the go ahead in principle by the Government

although it is not yet clear as to where the funding will come from. As you can see from the map above, the first stage provides a line under London running from Ebbsfleet in Kent, to Heathrow in the west. Other branches would run up to Shenfield in Essex and to Kingston in Surrey.

Many of our readers may not see much benefit from this, but all Londoners will have to pay for it if Ken Livingstone gets his way (he is one of the prime supporters of the project). It would likely be the largest ever infrastructure project in the UK at a cost of over £10 billion (give or take a few billion as discussed later). To give you some idea of the scale of this project, some £154 million was spent just on the feasibility study!

The result of the feasibility study was a plan that has recently been the subject of a review (the "Crossrail Review" available from the Department of Transport - see their web site at <http://www.dft.gov.uk>). This says "the CLRL's proposals (from Cross London Rail Link Ltd) would have a whole-life cost in excess of £11,200 million NPV." where NPV is Net Present Value.

You may be thinking that this indicates the cost of the project and that revenue from fares will help pay for it. But no, this is the cost after discounting back the future fare revenues and other benefits to the "current value". In fact it's actually very difficult to determine the true cost - the brochure from CLRL entitled "Crossrail - The Next Step" (see <http://www.crossrail.co.uk>) doesn't even mention the cost, and the review document mainly refers to a figure of "approximately £10,000 million excluding financing costs" *(Editor: And only a financial ignoramus would exclude such costs)*. However it does elsewhere mention a figure of £15 billion "required over the period of construction".

The review document actually suggests the real "Net Present Value" may be somewhat less at £8 billion after taking account of contributions from the business community of over £2 billion and other adjustments but that is still an enormous cost. In other words, instead of showing a positive return on the investment, it will show a gigantic loss. To give you some idea of the scale, assuming Londoners are primarily going to pay for it one way or another (through

higher public transport fares, as is one suggestion, or through taxes), that means that it will cost London households as much as £3,000 each after taking into account the benefits they gain - so the real cash cost is even higher.

Of course it also ignores the risk that such large projects typically overrun on costs, and that fare revenue is often less than forecast, so the chance of the budget being adhered to is also fairly remote.

One reason why it loses money apparently is because only about a third of trips on the new line would represent new public transport trips - the rest are simply diversions from other rail or bus journeys so there is little financial advantage. But the costs above take into account the time saved by passengers on more convenient trips.

(Editor: Only Ken Livingstone could have sold this financially disastrous project to the government. Anyone who is familiar with basic economics and capital project evaluation would immediately see that it is fundamentally financially unsound. Any project with a negative Net Present Value like this one would never even be looked at in a commercial environment. One can understand exactly why previous governments over the last 30 years have consistently shelved such a project).

So as to give you the arguments put by the proponents of the project, here are the claimed main benefits:

- Time savings experienced by users of Crossrail.
- Crowding relief for people on other services.
- Increased public transport revenue and reduction in highway use by shift to public transport.

Wider benefits included urban regeneration, support for government transport policies, and the creation of 47,500 new jobs in central London (but of course they haven't taken into account the higher cost of housing resulting from those same people looking for accommodation in the London area, and other negative effects).

(Editor: In summary, another bit of empire building by Ken Livingstone and more ignoring of the true financial cost of his policies.)

Mayor Pushes Ahead with Congestion Charging Extension



Despite the fact that public consultation showed a large majority of all interested parties were opposed to the plans for extension of the London Congestion Charging Zone, Ken Livingstone is pushing ahead with the plans (outline map of likely area is above).

In one of the largest consultation exercises ever undertaken in London, the following were the preferences of those who submitted comments:

Responses	Stakeholders and other Organisations	Members of the Public	Businesses
Support	27	23,226	3,465
Oppose	98	52,512	13,380
Neutral	32	7,542	1,732
Totals	157	83,280	18,577

In other words, almost 70% of members of the public who had an opinion were opposed to it.

The mayor said that the proposal "was controversial" and went on to say in his announcement statement that "consultations of this type ...inevitably tend to elicit responses primarily from those opposed to whatever is being consulted upon..." and even went on to suggest that the negative responses resulted from an organised campaign against the proposal. To demonstrate that he is denying the obvious truth, the consultation process also included a public "attitudinal survey" from which the responses were as follows (the result is still strongly opposed to an extension of the charging zone of course).

Response	Percentage %
Strongly in favour	15
In Favour	21
Neither	18
Against	15
Strongly Against	30
Don't Know	2

This scheme also demonstrates yet again the lack of financial probity in the Mayor. The net revenue from the scheme is estimated to be about £10 million per annum, when it will cost up to £120 million to implement, which is a pretty poor return on investment. There is also the difficulty that the budgets for Transport for London are already considerably overextended so it is not at all clear where the cash investment would come from. For that reason, it seems it is unlikely to be implemented before 2006, if not later.

The above of course ignores the even higher costs to residents in paying the charge, or avoiding it, most of which ends up in the pockets of residents of Coventry and Glasgow who operate the scheme. It also ignores the worsening of traffic likely within the existing zone when 120,000 extra residents of Kensington and Chelsea can use it at their discounted rate.

There may be a couple of sops to appease residents however which are the possibility of granting discounts to some residents outside the zone, and shortening the hours to finish at 6.0 pm instead of 6.30 pm.

(Editor: Like all great dictators, Mr Livingstone takes absolutely no heed of public opinion and the "Wisdom of Crowds" - incidentally that is the title of a recently published book by James Surowiecki which is worth a read if you have an interest in why democracy works better than a dictatorship. If you feel like I do that this is yet another example of Ken Livingstone's unreasonable behaviour I suggest you contact your Greater London Assembly Member - Bob Neill in the case of Bromley residents.

As a final example of the rash expenditure of public money by Ken Livingstone, he has also authorised funding of £400,000 to a conference for the European Social Forum. This is an organisation of left wing pressure groups who wish to "develop alternatives to the free market madness which

dominates mainstream politics" to quote from their manifesto).

Transport White Paper and the Latest UK Travel Statistics

The Government have just published a White Paper entitled "The Future of Transport" (available on the internet at the following: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/strategy/futureoftransport>).

The forward is by Tony Blair and contains the following statements: "Bus use is increasing year on year for the first time in decades. More people are using the trains than at any time in the 1960s." along with some other claims about the merits of the current governments transport policies.

Unfortunately the above statements are simply untrue. Contemporaneously the Office of National Statistics published the latest annual National Travel Survey (it can be found on <http://www.dft.gov.uk>). Page 6 of that document gives a breakdown of trips per person per year. To summarise the figures are (trips per person per year in 2003):

Mode	1998/2000	2002	2003
Walking	271	243	245
Bicycle	16	15	14
Car/van	640	649	627
Motorcycle	3	3	3
Bus	60	58	61
Underground	7	7	6
Train	12	11	11
Taxi	12	11	11
Other	10	11	10

Clearly whoever wrote the prime minister's foreword didn't look at the facts. Although total bus use increased in 2003, it fell the previous year, and the rise in 2003 was almost all down to the massive subsidies in London which account for two-thirds of the rise. Rail travel was actually the same as in 1985/1986 and has changed little in the last twenty years.

What is clear though is that cycling continues to decline (it was 25 trips in 1985/1986) and walking has only just stabilised (down from 350 trips in 1985/1986).

Both the White Paper and the National Travel Survey are worth reading to see the unreality of current government transport policies.

Declining Young Drivers

The Financial Times recently ran an interesting report on the declining ownership of cars and driving licences by younger drivers. It seems that in the early 1990s, almost 50% of people aged 17 to 20 possessed a driving licence, but this has fallen to 25% in the latest figures.

The reasons seem to be the increased costs of motoring and more involvement in higher education. Costs of motoring have risen for everyone, but particularly for the young where the cost of insuring a 17-year old for a Nissan Micra can be as much as £3,000 per year.

This reduction in younger drivers is having a very positive effect on car accidents as they are much more likely to have an accident than older drivers. In fact this effect probably accounts for a significant proportion of the reduction in road accident injury figures for car users. However the same young people are also tending to ride scooters or motorcycles which is leading to a sharp increase in deaths and serious injuries in that category (see the fatal accident in Elmstead Lane reported later in this Newsletter for an example).

The two countervailing effects likely result in a zero change in overall road deaths that has been seen in the last few years. But the changes distort the accident data and enable people to claim positive results from some road safety measures when in fact they are imaginary.

Bromley High Street Proposals

There have been plans afoot for some time to improve Bromley town centre. For example, it has been recognized that Bromley High Street south of the pedestrianised area is of poor quality and no longer attracts shoppers so the retailers in that area are having difficulties.

Bromley High Street used to be a major thoroughfare for traffic, but now the road is primarily only used by private vehicles to access minor roads around the town centre. Only buses can travel directly through the centre, with other traffic now using Kentish Way.

Some detail proposals have now been put forward for Bromley High Street (south) and Elmfield Road and adjacent streets. It seems the total cost of all the town centre plans under consideration might be a million pounds, but the short term proposals are probably about £200,000 which would mainly be funded by the Greater London Authority.

BBRAG has supported more emphasis on pedestrian friendly changes to Bromley High Street and Elmfield Road. However, we feel the proposals as they stand are expensive and not revolutionary enough.

They also involve the use of "speed tables", which are directly contrary to adopted council policy and should not be placed on bus routes.

More details of our objections to this scheme can be seen on the BBRAG web site at: <http://www.bromleytransport.org.uk/Bbrag035.pdf> or contact Adrian Bell, Head of Transport Strategy at the council, for more information on the proposals.

New Tesco Proposals for Car Park Site



As foretold in our last edition, Tesco have submitted a separate new planning application for the Station Road, Orpington Car Park site. This is in addition to appealing against rejection of

their previous application which will be the subject of a public inquiry.

The new proposals include a new basement level, thus reducing the height of the building somewhat and the frontages are set back also. This may overcome some of the objections to the "bulk" of the previous building, but it leaves all the other problems unchanged as the retail floor space and provision of public parking are not significantly changed.

In summary, the problems are:

- Inadequate public parking, with a shortfall of as many as 250 spaces for users of adjacent office blocks, retail businesses and High St shoppers.
- Much worse traffic congestion which is already a major problem in the area.
- Negative impacts on local residents through 24 hour operation, noise and pollution.
- Probability of damage to other High Street retailers and degradation of Orpington as a mixed shopping centre.

If you have not already sent in objections to the new plans (which should be done even if you sent ones on the old proposals), send them as soon as possible to: The Chief Planner, London Borough of Bromley, Stockwell Close, Bromley, BR1 3UH quoting planning application reference DC/04/03193/FULL1. It is important that as many people object as possible. Also if you live in Bromley it is also worth writing or speaking to your local councillors. Contact OCPAG or Bromley council for more details of the planning application, or to find out who your local councillors are if you don't know.

Full details of the history of these planning applications, the objections of OCPAG and BBARG and how to support OCPAG are given on the following page of the BBARG web site: <http://www.bromleytransport.org.uk/OCPAG.htm>

The Faulty Traffic Assessment

Note that OCPAG believes the Traffic Assessment submitted by Tesco with the latest application is defective and simply does not match current reality. A number of photographs that demonstrate exactly that are present on the above mentioned page of our web site, or look at the example below that shows traffic stationery on Station Road during the morning rush hour (it's actually queuing all the way up to the station).



A Stationery Queue Past the Proposed Site

OCPAG argues therefore that no consideration should be given to the new application until a fresh independent traffic survey and assessment is produced which OCPAG intend to obtain.

(Editor: How anyone can think it is a good idea to add to this congestion with up to another 400 vehicle movements in and out of the store per hour is quite beyond me).

Car Park Operating Costs

An interesting light on the commonly repeated allegation that the car park "has reached the end of it's useful life" was revealed in recent council budget documents. The budgets for this financial year for parking income and expenditure in Bromley were set on the assumption that the car park would be disposed of in the year. However that is now unlikely to happen so new forecasts have been produced. They show new expected costs of £69,000 to operate the Station Road car park but it says this "is more than offset by the extra income for the car park". From other information, it is clear that this is in fact a substantial surplus.

Bromley Local Implementation Plan

Bromley has to prepare a "Local Implementation Plan" showing how it is to implement the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy over the next year. This is a major task due to the detail required, the level of consultation that must be done, and the pickiness of Transport for London. In fact Bromley will have to take on two temporary staff just to handle it.

New targets devised by TFL which have to be met include:

- Bus "Excess Waiting Time" to be reduced to 1.3 minutes per passenger journey, which probably means more bus lanes.
- Traffic volume growth to reduce to 4% (from 7.5% and zero growth in town centres (*Editor: Like all such past targets, it is unlikely to be met*).
- More "modal shift".
- A 10% increase in journeys by foot by 2015 (not a difficult target surely).
- An 80% increase in cycling by 2011 (surely unrealistic, even if the current level is so low).

(Editor: The bureaucracy generated by Ken Livingstone is a burden to everyone and the new "micro-management" approach from city hall deprives local boroughs of any initiative and ability to plan according to local circumstances, as well as eroding democratic control of local affairs).

Old Hill Update

After discussions between local residents and Councillor George Taylor, and the submission of a formal complaint to the council concerning certain aspects of the Old Hill traffic calming scheme, it has been agreed that a further review will take place in six months time.

A complaint has also been submitted to the Local Government Ombudsman about the impact on local residents (particularly the noise generated), and the fact that the single cushions on the lower part of the hill are wider than government recommendations.

More information on the issues here and what residents would like to see is in the News section of the BBAG web site (or ask the editor for a printed copy if you have a particular interest).

(Editor: It seems astonishing that the council is so obdurate on fixing the problems with this scheme that are so obvious to local residents and would cost relatively little money. As usual, council staff seem to think that complainants will go away if they ignore

them long enough, but they may find that this is not the case in this circumstance).

News Snapshots

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

+ The London Borough of Merton is reviewing the use of speed humps after calling a temporary halt to further installations. To quote councillor Mickey Spacey who is in charge of street management: "*It is little use saving a life in one direction only to lose another life elsewhere. Measures we take should therefore accord with the needs of our emergency services.*"

+ A strike by bus drivers is threatened in Reading. A route down the A33 to the Green Park industrial estate means that drivers go over as many as 1,104 humps in an eight hour shift. The council has promised to change the humps to cushions, but work has been delayed for unexplained reasons.

+ The Conservatives have adopted some new national transport policies. Called a "five point plan to end motoring misery", they cover:

- Ensuring that local councils cannot install road humps without consultation and full approval of the emergency services (e.g the London Ambulance Service, fire and police).

- Restricting traffic wardens to jobs they are trained for rather than acting as police officers.

- Allowing vehicles with 2 or more passengers to use bus lanes.

- Implementing more control of wheel clampers.

- Increasing the use of vehicle activated displays.

(Editor's Comments: These seem sensible policies on the whole).

+ Brian Coleman, speed hump remover and general opponent of Ken Livingstone's transport policies, has been appointed chairman of the Greater London Assembly. Whether this body will do much to rein in Livingstone's more lunatic policies remains to be seen.

+ Traffic wardens in Bromley are threatening "industrial action" over plans by management to ask them to use local cafes for their tea breaks rather than return to the depot. The latter can waste as much as 40 minutes of time. However the traffic wardens fear that they risk assault if they mix with the public (although a union spokesman was unable to recall examples of his members being attacked when asked).

+ Sutton police officer Kay Loxston has been given an award for rescuing unconscious colleague Stephen Poole from their smoke filled vehicle when it spun off the road and hit a tree after hitting a speed hump (which was allegedly "unmarked").

+ Road casualties were down by 11% in London in the first three months of 2004. The total number was 8,086 including 51 fatalities and 1,039 serious injuries. Road conditions were generally better than normal in the period which could account for some of the reduction.

+ Two lime trees in Crystal Palace Parade have been cut down, much to the annoyance of local residents. The primary reason is to clear the view of a bus lane enforcement camera. *(Editor's Comments: When your editor suggested that a tree that is in a dangerous position on a corner of a bend in Bromley Road, Shortlands be felled, this suggestion was considered totally unreasonable by council staff, despite the fact that it was a major contribution to a fatal road accident.*

Clearly there is a difference between the merit of collecting money from frustrated motorists, than from cutting road accidents, in the minds of some bureaucrats. Bus lane infringement fines are now a major source of revenue for the council as can be seen in a later item).

+ There was a fatal accident recently in Elmstead Lane despite the installation of road safety measures recently. Twenty-three year old James Newman fell from a scooter in the evening, but it seems no other vehicle was involved. Note that it seems unlikely that the alternative road safety measures that were also considered for the road would have made any difference to this accident. Rumour says that alcohol may have been a factor.

+ Bromley Council are now putting up the Agendas, Minutes and all supporting documents for all council meetings on their web site. They can be found by going through "Council & Democracy" and "Meeting Documents" from the tab on the home page. *(Editor's Comments: This is a big improvement but I just wish the council web site was a bit more reliable and easy to use).*

+ The latest budget projections for Bromley Council's Environmental Services department show an underspend of £789,000. Some reasons for the surplus are more income from bus lane infringement fines (£113,000 year to date), and a surplus of £225,000 on the Orpington Station Road car park and other car parks (the former was originally expected to be sold during the year). *(Editor's Comments: And yet the council still pleads poverty when asked to spend a few thousand to rectify the Old Hill scheme).*

+ The Bromley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Inquiry which BBAG spent some considerable effort on submitting comments to in 2003 is apparently not going to be finished for some time. The final UDP is unlikely to be completed until February 2005.

+ Bromley Council is to appoint a new Traffic Manager to undertake the role of network management as required by the Traffic Management Act 2004, which was recently passed into law. See our previous Newsletter for more information on that Act, but in summary its aim is to reduce traffic congestion by improved management of roads. The government has also published draft "Network Management Duty Guidance" for consultation which can be obtained from the Department for Transport web site (<http://www.dft.gov.uk>).

+ The proposed permit parking scheme for the Shortlands area of Bromley has been shelved indefinitely. Not only could the residents not agree on the proposals, but there is no money to spend on it. *(Editor's Comments: Yet another example of where many residents oppose such schemes. The sooner they are abandoned the better.)*

+ The Evening Standard recently ran an article on speed humps in London. From a survey of 15 London boroughs, it seems more than half were abandoning humps as the primary solution to curb speeding drivers. Chicanes and 20 mph zones are now more fashionable it seems. Westminster says it won't install new humps and Tower Hamlets claims to be removing them. Camden however continues to think they are a good idea.

+ Bus fares in London will rise by up to 43% in January, and tube fares will also go up by more than inflation. The looming deficit in his transport budget is the prime reason as Ken Livingstone refuses to abandon his commitment to a "world class transport system". The rises will raise an additional £80 million on the buses and £45million from tube users but are in breach of his past promises to freeze fares in real terms.



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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B.B.R.A.G. Treasurer and Newsletter Editor: Roger Lawson (Tel: 020-8467-2686, fax: 020-8295-0378, Email: roger.lawson@btclick.com), Chairman: 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.

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