



BBRAG NEWS

Bromley Borough Roads Action Group - No. 35 (August 2005)

In This Issue

- **Parking Charges Now over £1 Billion**
- **Parking Enforcement in London**
- **Disabled Petition Scottish Parliament**
- **New Disability Discrimination Act**
- **Old Hill Speed Humps**
- **Private Roads and Speed Humps**
- **Congestion Charging -
The Editors View**
- **Congestion Charging - Isn't it Great
by Richard Gitt**
- **Beckenham Hospital CPZ**
- **Vehicle Crossovers**
- **Policing Priorities in London**
- **Who Is The Safest of All?**
- **Magpie Hall Lane Chicanes**
- **News Snapshots**
- **B.B.R.A.G. Information and Contacts**

Editorial

The main topics in this edition are parking regulations, the new Disability Discrimination Act, and Congestion Charging following an announcement by the Government on nationwide plans for the latter.

Plus there is a summary of the latest London road accident statistics, and some comments thereon.

Roger Lawson, Editor

Parking Charges Now over £1 Billion



According to a response to a question in Parliament, local councils in England raised over £1 billion in parking charges in the 2003/4 year.

London boroughs are the biggest exploiters of this goldmine, collecting almost half that figure. Westminster council alone, which is by far the most avaricious, obtained £135 million.

(Editors Comments: Clearly these amounts are not just being raised to ensure smooth flowing traffic and police obstructive parking. The charges are being raised to deter car use as a social engineering measure and to fund other programmes in many boroughs. Plus enforcement of parking regulations has become over-zealous since it was permitted to be "privatised" in 1994.

Unfortunately it is not possible to say what proportion of this income comes from fines as opposed to normal parking charges, but it is certainly clear that parking charges are now so high in central London, that the use of parking meter bays has declined substantially. You now have little difficulty finding an empty parking bay in most parts of the West End, but don't stay past the 2 hour limit at your peril).

Bromley Roads in Which to Be Wary

It seems the most profitable road for the council in Bromley was Penge High Street which generated £951,000 in parking and bus lane enforcement fines last year. Other locations to be wary of are the Sainsbury's Car Park in Locksbottom with £248,000 in revenue, Crystal Palace Parade at £322,000 followed by Orpington High Street, Beckenham High Street, and Chislehurst High Street (at £182,000, £163,000 and £146,000 respectively).

(Editors Comments: I recently just missed getting a ticket at the Locksbottom car park - the warden had actually started writing it out - after overstaying when my wife's hospital appointment took longer than expected. Obviously a common problem!).

Parking Enforcement in London



The Greater London Assembly have just published the results of their inquiry into parking in London, under the title "Parking Enforcement in London". This was probably the final act by Chairperson of the Transport Committee, Lynne Featherstone, before becoming an MP for the Liberal Democrats.

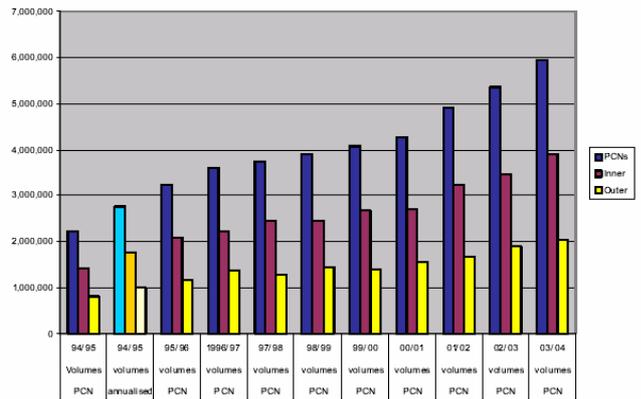
As their Executive Summary points out, many Londoners have a suspicion that in many boroughs, parking enforcement is being used to raise revenue for other purposes. The committee clearly received many complaints of incorrectly issued tickets, indeed of apparent fraudulent behaviour in some cases. In addition they received considerable evidence that motorists are being heavily fined, or being clamped or towed away, for very minor breaches of the regulations. Such as overstaying on a "pay and display" bay by a few minutes, or with wheels not fully within the parking bays (eg. just on the line in some cases).

Delivery services seem to have a particular problem. They often get parking tickets for short stops to deliver goods, when clearly they should not - it means they have to go through the appeal process needlessly.

The complexity of the regulations also confuse many people, leading to innocent mistakes. When they contest the fines, their explanations get rejected.

The Growth in Penalty Charges

The number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued has increased from 2 million in 1994/95 to nearly 6 million in 2003/04, as shown by the chart that follows.



The explanation for the rise is apparently the increase in "Controlled Parking Zones" (CPZs) during this period, which the Association of London Government explains away as being based on increasing demand from the public.

(Editors Comments: I suggest this is more based on the preference for councils to raise money and the motivation to introduce anti-motorist policies than public popularity).

Contract Targets - A Major Problem

Most London authorities sub-contract parking enforcement. Many people believe that these contracts have incentives built in that result in parking attendants issuing spurious tickets or being over zealous. The award of prizes to staff if they issue the most tickets is sometimes reported. But even if the contractors do not operate such a scheme, they do have "enforcement targets" typically built into their contracts. This is normally based on the number of tickets issued, rather than the amount of illegal parking that is taking place (probably because the former is easier to measure than the latter).

So if a contractor is not meeting their targets for "PCNs Issued" they may be in breach of their contract, and subsequently lose it. The end result is of course pressure on staff to issue more tickets. So if the general public are becoming more law abiding, then enforcement just gets more and more severe.

Unfortunately the GLA report does not point out this major defect in the system, and thinks that nothing is amiss with the newer "performance based" contracts.

How Bromley Compares

Bromley generates income of £2.9 million from parking (2002/2003 year), and has a surplus of £1.0 million over expenditure. This makes it one of the lower boroughs for income - for example, Camden generates £29.3 million which is ten times higher, and boroughs such as Croydon, Hackney, Hammersmith, and Wandsworth are all over £15 million per annum. *(Editor: the disparities here are astonishing and just shows how much the policies and the severity of enforcement vary between boroughs).*

For "removal" (ie. tow-aways) Bromley did 23 in the whole of last year (only persistent non-payers and a few others are towed). By comparison Camden performed 9,456 and Westminster did 20,508. Camden also clamped 29,554 vehicles and Westminster clamped 45,384 (no figure for Bromley).

Clearly Camden and Westminster tow-away or clamp quite routine parking offences, like over-staying in a bay. Is this fair and reasonable? Your editor thinks not.

Of course it would be nice to know what the real figures are for illegal parking, ie. how much infringement is actually taking place in each borough as clearly the number of PCNs issued is not necessarily a good indicator. But nobody seems to bother collecting that data.

Disabled Petition Scottish Parliament



In May this year, Judith McCrorie a disabled person who lives in Fife (picture above), submitted a petition to the Scottish Parliament on the subject of speed humps and other traffic calming measures.

You can see it in full on the BBRAG web site at: http://www.bromleytransport.org.uk/McCrorie_Scottish_Petition_Edited.pdf, but the following is an edited summary:

Petition PE840 :- That the Scottish Parliament urge the Scottish Executive to review its policy in relation to traffic calming measures, such as road humps and road cushions, in order that the impact on disabled users and the elderly is adequately addressed.

Although the aim behind the implementation of road humps, cushions, humped zebra crossings and pads is laudable, these structures present unforeseen consequences for those with medical conditions, the elderly and the disabled. The enforced jolting, independent of speed, not only causes pain, discomfort and potential deterioration of condition but has wider repercussions for the health of the general public and those involved with the emergency services.

I have five principle submissions:-

1. That speed humps and cushions force the aforementioned groups to be selective in their journeys, eliminating the possibility of certain routes and destinations. This discrimination was established in a submission by The Disability Rights Commission to the cabinet office on 19/3/2005:

"There have been recent initiatives to reduce traffic speed through the installation of traffic calming humps. Positive though this is, the uninformed design of the humps can cause pain for disabled drivers and passengers as jolting occurs when driving over them." Over 18 % of Scots are believed to suffer from chronic pain according to The Pain in Europe Study, 2004.

2. That humps and speed cushions are being overused as gateways in the desire to turn residential streets into 20 mph zones. Furthermore, that the use of humps and cushions creates a barrier for disabled motorists,

pedestrians, wheelchair and electric scooter users. Frequently pavements are too narrow for passage and bus shelters and street furniture can further reduce pavement width forcing the disabled person onto the road, where a lack of dropped kerbs and parked cars on kerbs cause new problems. Gateways do not have to be humps. (DETR).

3. In conversing with Janet Kennedy, author of the DETR's Report TRL614 Impact of road humps on vehicles and their occupants, I was informed that "common sense should be employed in the selection of humps and cushions over other forms of traffic calming", especially on accident free streets. That the recommendation that "vehicles should be prevented from parking near to speed cushions to allow buses and ambulances to straddle the cushions (since discomfort is greater when such vehicles are forced to mount the cushion) should certainly not be ignored". But contractors for one Scottish region state that "as humps/cushions are being installed on residential streets, people cannot be prevented from parking by or on humps".

Also in the same report it was stated "As pain is subjective" the researchers were "unable to include the disabled in their research and the reports findings are only applicable to healthy persons". The humps and cushions tested were made of flawless concrete to a tolerance of +3 mm since "quite small deviations can adversely affect the comfort of vehicle occupants." Clearly the practical aspects of implementing hump schemes that are acceptable to disabled people are being ignored.

4. A lack of standardisation of design means that some materials being used in Scotland in the construction of humps, cushions, dropped kerbs, ramps and crossings, such as granite sets and concrete bricks, increase the severity of pain experienced. Granite sets and aggregate are problematic for people with walking difficulties, wheelchair and scooter users, e.g. George Street, Edinburgh/Dysart. Lips on humps, cushions and pedestrian crossings cause discomfort/difficulty and tactile slabs, although beneficial to the blind, are problematic for wheelchair and scooter users. Wheelchair and scooter users cannot cope with lips as high as 2 inches or inclines greater than 8.5%.

5. The London Ambulance Service has requested that proper research into traffic calming schemes be initiated as, out of 7,500-8000 accidental deaths a year, at least 5,500 are due to heart attacks/cardiac arrest. Road deaths, in comparison, account for 280-300 persons. It is claimed that a one minute reduction in response times could possibly cost 500 lives a year and that response times, chances of survival, treatment and discomfort levels en route to hospital are all affected. The Fire Service also experiences delays. How will the explosive growth of traffic calming measures affect future emergency statistics in Scotland?

In conclusion, there is a distinct lack of research regarding the impact of traffic calming methods on the emergency services and the health and well being of the elderly, frail and disabled. Road humps and cushions do discriminate against this section of Scottish society and greater consultation with disabled persons should be a prerequisite in all future transportation issues. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a duty of care on public authorities (Part 5A, 49A (1)) to eliminate unlawful discrimination and the harassment of disabled persons, to promote positive attitudes and to encourage participation in public life and these duties should be honoured.

New Disability Discrimination Act



Note the reference in the petition above to the new Disability Discrimination Act which may have a major impact on the use of speed humps as disabled people have persistently complained that the use of humps discriminates against them. For example, your editor knows several people whose use of the public highways has become severely limited because of speed humps - they simply find them too painful to travel over.

The previous Act of the same name was fairly toothless, in that it excluded transport and many Local Authority responsibilities from consideration. But public highways will be covered and Local Authorities will have a duty not to implement highway schemes that have a disproportionately negative impact on the disabled. The new Act becomes law in stages

during 2006, and the relevant “code of practice” has yet to be developed, but there are at least expectations that the needs of the disabled will at last be taken into account.

For more details go to the web site of the Disability Rights Commission at:
<http://www.disability.gov.uk>

Old Hill Speed Humps

As expected, the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) rejected the complaints submitted by local residents concerning the Old Hill, Chislehurst speed humps. To remind you the complaints were:

1. The original public consultation leaflet was misleading and probably caused residents to support the scheme when they would not have done so had the truth about the accident record been correctly stated.
2. The single humps are not in accordance with government guidance as regards the maximum recommended width as published by the Department for Transport (DfT), and also are in a configuration which is clearly dangerous and not recommended in such guidance. Note that such guidance is laid down as “good practice” to ensure a safe, practical and publicly acceptable implementation of such schemes.
3. The council did not undertake an adequate investigation of the noise, vibration and other inconvenience suffered by local residents as a result of the design of the scheme, despite many complaints.

The LGO effectively said:

On item 1: The residents may not have voted differently if the consultation leaflet had been worded differently, so that is no administrative fault.

On item 2: The DfT guidance is not law and council staff therefore had discretion to adopt some other approach if they saw fit, so again there is no maladministration.

On item 3: The council has promised a further review, so there are no grounds for the LGO to intervene.

(Editor: one can see exactly why so many people are frustrated and annoyed by the response they get from the Local Government Ombudsman. On item 2 for example, if the council was in breach of the law then other remedies are possible, but the LGO was specifically set up to deal with administrative mistakes that adversely affect people and to which normal legal channels do not provide a remedy. Clearly the LGO has totally lost track of its purpose and objectives.)

The Council Review

Councillor George Taylor promised residents a further review of this scheme “in six months time” in September 2004. This apparently has been delayed by a shortage of staff in the traffic engineering department, and it now seems that this will not now take place until September. BBRAG will of course be pushing to ensure that this is done as soon as possible.

(Editors Note: We are doubtful that the council will concede that any mistakes have been made in the design of this scheme as they rarely do so. But we will not give up on pursuing a more sensible design to replace the “single humps” in the middle of the road.)

Private Roads and Speed Humps

It is sometimes thought that owners of private roads can build speed humps with impunity, but that is not necessarily the case. A recent legal ruling highlights the risks.

A car dealer in Croydon was recently awarded £430,000 in damages against insurance company Scottish Widows (part of Lloyds-TSB). Chandler Stewart repaired exotic sports cars on the Bebbington Cross industrial estate and their business was severely affected when speed humps were constructed on the access roads. Scottish Widows owned the estate.

Congestion Charging - The Editors View



As you have probably seen in the national news, the Government is considering a nationwide scheme for congestion charging, and is going to introduce some

pilot schemes. The scheme is likely to be based on the use of GPS satellite technology to track all vehicles, or by the use of roadside “activation” points. In both cases, all vehicles will have to be fitted with devices that tell the government where and when you are driving at all times.

In theory, this sounds an ideal solution to traffic congestion - you simply charge those “other” people who block up the roads unnecessarily until they go somewhere else, or penalise them so heavily that they stop driving altogether.

In fact the above is even stated government policy in the UK, and from a “socialist” government at that, even though clearly the people most affected by this policy will be the poorer part of society.

Of course, they can choose to use public transport instead, heavily subsidised as it is, or choose to drive at a different time of day, but the less wealthy members of society also typically have fewer options - no flexible working hours for them for example.

However, my main objection is not the lack of the egalitarian spirit in these proposals, but the simple impracticality of the scheme. A good tax system has three key characteristics:

1. It is very cheap to collect as a proportion of the revenue raised (ideally less than 5%).
2. It is not easily avoided by payers, and enforcement is also easy and certain.
3. It is progressive in preference to regressive, ie. the rich pay more, and the poor pay less.

Taxation of petrol and diesel fuel, meets all these criteria, and actually encourages environmental efficiency. It costs the government almost

nothing to collect, is exceedingly difficult to avoid paying, and the rich people who drive large, inefficient cars or drive further, pay more.

Compare that with the London Congestion Charge - an absolute nightmare to enforce, with widespread avoidance, and with disastrous economics (the vast majority of revenue goes in collection costs).

How Do You Verify Your Bill?

There is another aspect that nobody else seems to have pointed out. How is anyone going to verify that the bill the government will send you, based on their satellite records, is correct? Will it be itemised? If not, who will believe the data. If it is itemised, what if you deny being on a particular road at a particular time? And just think of the reams of data that might need to be checked if you query the bill.

In reality, this might be one of the few bills you will ever get where you have no way of verifying the charge calculation.

Your Bill Might Rise Faster with Less Congestion

Another oddity of this system, where you pay per mile rather than per time used on the road, is that your bill might rise more rapidly the faster you go. So in fact, if the charge is set at a certain level for a certain road and time of day, it matters not to you whether the road is congested or not, so there is not even an incentive to divert if you meet a traffic jam.

But presumably there will not be charging by time that road space is occupied, otherwise it might encourage a lot of speeding drivers, as the faster you drive, the less the charge would be.

How Will the Incentive Work?

Financial incentives only work, if the charge is transparent to the user, and the bill promptly delivered. At least with a petrol surcharge, if you drive a long way, it hits your pocket very soon - namely when you have to refill the tank.

But with the proposed congestion charge, you won't get the bill until some time later presumably.

And how are the roads (and times) where charges are highest to be signposted? Unless you know in advance the cost on a road, how can you devise a route that is cheapest?

One can of course see an enormous demand for devices that will plan your journey on a “least cost” basis to take you down all the back-roads where charges are cheap. But they would need to dynamically reprogramme the route if the charge was changed due to traffic conditions. This is definitely not going to be simple technology, and again the poor might miss out on the optimum approach and end up paying more.

In conclusion, your editor is exceedingly sceptical that these proposals make any sense at all. It’s simply a “good idea” that has not been thought through properly, and a looming financial albatross. In fact, just like the London scheme, but on a much bigger scale. I say, let some other country try it first, and let us learn from their experience!

An article on the impact of the London congestion charge by an independent contributor follows.

Congestion Charging - Isn't it Great By Richard Gitt

On the first day of the new £8 per day London Congestion Charge (that’s US\$15 to overseas readers), I happened to drive into central London. And what a pleasure it was!

No roads clogged up by poor people in their unwashed Fords, Vauxhalls and “people carriers”. Just a few individuals just like me driving top of the range Mercedes, BMWs and Jaguars.

Mayor Ken Livingstone certainly has his priorities right. Permitting the rich to purchase their own private road space is even something that has not yet come fully back into favour in that bastion of free market capitalism, the USA. If there is a market for it, I say sell it.

Perhaps the government should look at other similar ways to sell, or “ration”, scarce and publicly owned resources. For example, the National Health Service is chronically short of funds and overcrowded with patients. Why not

sell bed space to the highest bidders in some hospitals, so that you can fund more doctors elsewhere? (*Ed: isn't that happening already?*)

Likewise one often runs into the poor at airports, in restaurants, public houses, supermarkets, churches and strolling in our green parks. We need priority treatment for the rich with reserved space at all these venues. Just think of the environmental damage that these hordes of people inflict even by just walking around in Central London, and the litter they drop. Surely it’s time for Ken to tackle these problems also?

Of course there were a few smoky taxis and slow-moving, obstructive buses left in central London when I visited. But I have pity on the disabled who need personal transport door-to-door (I even use taxis myself sometimes), and who would wish to do away with that archaic symbol of London, the double-decker red bus - just think of the number of tourists they attract. Of course the poor have to run the risk of catching colds, or even TB in London, from their fellow passengers, and they run the risk of being blown up by terrorists as shown in the recent tragic events, but at least the fares are cheap and us rich people are helping to subsidise them of course.

Reclaiming the streets for the rich is long overdue. Don’t people realise how short of time a wealthy businessman is? A few minutes stuck behind some queue of lowly Nissans and Toyotas can mean the difference between missing out on millions of pounds of profits on a geared stock market speculation when the markets are moving fast. There’s no “free lunch”, as the saying goes, when it comes to planning a sensible transport system.

Let’s have “tolled” motorway lanes, where you can pay more and use a reserved lane, which are already available in some US cities. Or if you have heard of “on-ramp metering”, why not have on-ramp tolling where only those willing to pay even get onto the motorway at busy times?

As for the national congestion charging proposals, what is good for German truck drivers is surely good enough for us Brits. After all it’s not just the Germans who can follow rigid regulations without question or demur.

There's one thing for sure, red Ken will be getting my vote the next time he comes up for election, and the sooner we extend this wonderful system nationwide, the better. Incidentally how did he acquire the epithet of "red". Is it because he has red hair, or is he a Liverpool supporter?

Beckenham Hospital CPZ



Beckenham Hospital site is the third major hospital site to be redeveloped in the London Borough of Bromley in recent years. The others were Farnborough Hospital and Orpington Hospital, where major difficulties arose because of inadequate on-site car parking provision. This led to numerous complaints in the local press, and aggravation for local residents due to on-street parking by patients and staff.

Patients who are already feeling unwell, or may have mobility problems, do not take kindly to being told they must use public transport to get to hospital, or use expensive taxis. But, as pointed out in the report on the Beckenham Hospital site to Councillor George Taylor by council staff, *"The number of parking spaces allowed at the Hospital is determined by Government guidance and there is a cap on the number of spaces that can be provided."* In other words, do not blame your local councillors, or planning officials, it's central government policy that is causing the problem.

But of course even before nearby residents have complained about the parking problem, council staff have a solution in mind. Namely a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) or permit parking scheme.

For the Beckenham site a consultation exercise has already been performed in nearby roads, but from 237 responses, some 57% were opposed to a CPZ, as opposed to 102 in favour. However that didn't stop council staff recommending that such a scheme be introduced in a couple of the roads where residents were in favour - Shaftesbury Road and Faversham Road.

But according to council information, in fact the number of vehicles owned by residents of those roads at present, would likely occupy all the proposed permit spaces. In other words, if there is a parking problem in those roads, it's almost certainly caused mainly by the residents own cars, not by visitors from elsewhere! So much for the justification for a CPZ.

(Editors Comment: As usual BBRAG opposed this CPZ scheme, as do most residents who get consulted on similar schemes nowadays. But such proposals are still being brought forward. BBRAG is opposed to the basic principle behind these schemes, and does not believe they have a net benefit. Of course, it would be quite possible for the council to encourage the provision of public parking on sites adjacent to the hospital, and anywhere else where parking proved to be insufficient to meet demand, so that would be one way of overcoming the stupidity of central government, but somehow I don't think that is going to happen).

Vehicle Crossovers



Your editor has received a number of complaints and questions from members of the public concerning "vehicle crossovers". Typically this is where a house owner wants to provide access to a car they own onto their own property or forecourt. To do that, where there was no previous "driveway" requires permission from the council to construct a "crossover", ie. lower the kerb and provide a vehicle crossing over the pavement.

Where there are road safety issues, or "amenity issues", the council can refuse permission. This can be very frustrating to residents when adjacent properties may already have crossovers.

The council has now formulated a policy on when permission will be granted and when it will not - a copy can be obtained from the council. Note that crossovers actually require planning permission where the road is "classified", but others still require council permission because the verge is typically council property.

Policing Priorities in London



The Metropolitan Police recently ran an on-line consultation about the priorities for policing in London. Anyone could take part, and give comments on the issues that they believed were most important, and there was also a “ranking”

exercise to determine what most people considered the highest priorities.

There were about 25 categories ranging from “Traffic and Road Safety Offences”, through “Burglary” and “Domestic Violence” to “Terrorism”.

This is the latest in a series of surveys and, for example, “Terrorism” moved from 11th priority (ie. ranked in that position as of concern to respondents) in 2004, to 26th in 2005, but this was before the recent terrorist attacks of course. The interesting point though is that “Traffic and Road Safety Offences” moved from 27th in 2004, to 3rd in 2005. The first and second positions were occupied by “Anti-social behaviour and low level crime” and “Visibility and numbers of police”.

What concerns did people have about Traffic and Road Safety? Many expressed the view that traffic laws were now ignored by many drivers, with widespread “*anti-social driving behaviour*”. The lack of visible police patrols seemed to make this worse.

A number of people also complained how cyclists also routinely ignored the law by riding on pavements and disregarding red lights, including one comment on “*psychotic swearing cyclists charging between pedestrians...*”.

Non-compliance with the ban on driving whilst using a mobile phone was mentioned by many people, and the over-zealous enforcement of speeding offences was mentioned by several. For example, one respondent said “*Use speed limits as a guide - if no harm is done, leave speeders*

alone.” Another said “*There is no point in having laws if they are un-enforceable or the police do not have the manpower to act*”. Another said “*There seems to be an almost total lack of traffic police on the roads of London.*” In general the public seemed to want better enforcement of the laws, although speeding was a divisive issue with many considering it of little importance. It is also clear that general standards of driving seemed to be in decline.

Who Is the Safest of All?



Transport for London (TfL) have recently published their detail analysis of accident statistics for the year 2004. It also shows the trends in accidents in the different London boroughs from the 1994-1998 average which is taken as the “baseline”. There is a target to achieve a reduction of 40% in killed and seriously injured (KSIs) by 2010.

As reported in our last Newsletter, 2004 was a good year, as KSIs fell in London by 19% overall during the year. This meant that the reduction since the “baseline” is now 38%, so meeting the overall target by 2010 should be relatively easy.

Note that the KSI figure is used as a good measure of performance because fatal accidents are so few that any change can be due to random factors, ie. any change may not be “statistically significant”. But it’s worth pointing out that the fatal accident reduction is only 13% from the “baseline”.

One very interesting aspect to look at is the differing performance of London Boroughs in reducing the KSI figures. After all it would be nice to know which boroughs were doing the best job, or were spending our money most cost effectively. Although the TfL report does not provide this in a convenient table, here are the numbers:

Borough	2004 KSI	Change from Baseline
Barking & Dagenham	90	-40%
Barnet	172	-36%
Bexley	82	-44%
Brent	155	-36%

Bromley	158	-34%
Camden	148	-41%
City of London	44	-32%
City of Westminster	281	-31%
Croydon	156	-37%
Ealing	147	-49%
Enfield	173	-27%
Greenwich	113	-44%
Hackney	149	-29%
Hammersmith & Fulham	113	-24%
Haringey	131	-18%
Harrow	83	-32%
Havering	130	-39%
Hillingdon	157	-38%
Hounslow	134	-41%
Islington	101	-46%
Kensington & Chelsea	105	-39%
Kingston	64	-48%
Lambeth	167	-47%
Lewisham	147	-29%
Merton	79	-39%
Newham	114	-40%
Redbridge	118	-37%
Richmond	80	-41%
Southwark	126	-47%
Sutton	64	-45%
Tower Hamlets	133	-29%
Waltham Forest	105	-38%
Wandsworth	150	-41%

It seems odd to your editor that no analysis or research on these figures has been undertaken. For example why did Haringey only achieve 18% while Kingston achieved 48%? What are Haringey doing wrong, or is this just random variation (no statistical analysis is given in the report).

Why are Bromley and Brent very near the “average” reduction, while Lewisham appears to be significantly worse (although of course the latter have installed a lot more speed humps). Is it because of the policies they have adopted or the ineffective choice of programmes on which they spend money?

One could possibly explain why Camden have done so well because they spend a lot more on road safety programmes than say Bromley, but does that account for why Kingston and Lambeth have done even better?

It would seem a relatively simple job to examine the policies and expenditure of the boroughs and see who has the best and most cost effective policies, but no attempt seems to have been made to do this. Why not? Is it because dogma rules as your editor suspects? Or are TfL keeping any such analysis to themselves?

Magpie Hall Lane Chicanes



Recently a traffic calming scheme was introduced into the Magpie Hall Lane area (near Bromley Common). This includes a wide-area 20 mph zone, kerb build-outs and other measures. At the southern end of Magpie Hall Lane itself, where a new school is being built, this has resulted in a “chicane” like arrangement being built as shown in the photograph above.

Is this safe? Your editor does not think so after having used the road a few times. Vehicles don't slow down, they just drive down the centre of the road - even onto the opposite carriageway as show in the photographs above and below. Clearly drivers take what they consider to be fastest and safest route which is a direct line between the kerb build-outs.



Of course it is odd that this new “horizontal deflection” scheme was introduced when such an approach was previously discredited in Bromley by a scheme in Crofton Lane, Orpington - there were so many accidents it had to be removed. Vehicles either spun off to the sides of the road in wet weather, or crashed into each other when coming in opposite directions. It seems that some staff on Bromley Council must have a short memory.

It is also odd that neither BBKAG nor the local residents were consulted on the details of this scheme, only on the general plan to introduce a 20 mph zone and some road safety measures. Your editor is pretty clear that not many people would have voted for this arrangement if they had been consulted.

A similar scheme is now being proposed for Selby Road in Penge. Any comments should be sent to Ray Pearce at the council quoting reference ADE(tp)/RP/T100/450.

News Snapshots

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

+ Bromley councillors rejected an application for 251 homes on the Ravensbourne College site at a recent planning committee meeting. Local residents, supported by the Chislehurst Society, have objected to the proposed redevelopment on the grounds of inadequate local facilities, over-development of the site, and inadequate transport infrastructure. Unfortunately this matter may ultimately get decided by someone who knows little about Chislehurst (such as Ken Livingstone’s, or John Prescott’s offices). As local councillor Katy Boughey was quoted as saying in the Newsshopper “*This decision could well be taken by people who have never even been to Chislehurst and only know it through its location on a map*”. In the meantime the council is going to try and negotiate with the developer for a lower density housing development.

+ The London Safety Camera Partnership (LSCP) is having to refund several hundred thousands of pounds after incorrectly siting a 20 mph speed limit sign on Upper Thames Street. This stretch of road, monitored by “SPECS” type

speed cameras, has become one of the biggest generators of speed fines in the capital since the cameras were installed a few months ago to monitor a stretch of road affected by building works. *(Editors Comment: Although the road had been narrowed slightly, and a kink in it introduced due to adjacent building works,, the need for a 20 mph limit was not at all obvious. A few warning signs would surely have sufficed. It is understood 5,600 motorists are affected by this mistake, and presumably about the same number have been fined going the other way, but will not be let off).*

+ The outrageous cost of the Crossrail project has been covered in previous editions of this newsletter. After spending £300 million on “feasibility studies” alone, it now seems that another £150 million is required for further design work. The project has yet to get a definite commitment from the government, or funding, to proceed. Our generous Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, has offered to lend the developers the required money.

+ The proposed nationwide road charging scheme for trucks has been scrapped. This was to have been introduced in the UK by 2008. This was likely to be a GPS based system, as introduced in Germany recently, and similar to the system being talked about for all vehicles in due course. Has the cost of the system or technical problems experienced with the German scheme caused a rethink? It is not clear.

+ It was reported at the Bromley Police Community Consultative Group meeting in June that of the 10 people killed on Bromley’s roads last year, three of the five drivers were not wearing seat belts, four were over the drink drive alcohol limit and two were not taxed or insured. *(Editor: this shows how difficult it is to reduce road accidents by legislation alone).*

+ At the same meeting, it was reported that police were now giving tickets for cycling on pavements, an activity which has been illegal since 1836. *(Editor: it is a pity that the police in the City of London and other central London boroughs do not seem to be following the same policy. On almost any trip into these regions you see examples of this, plus other breaches of the law by cyclists such as riding the wrong way down one way streets, and riding through red traffic lights).*

+ Three hundred residents of Muswell Hill have petitioned the local council to remove speed humps in five roads around Alexandra Palace. They have complained about the noise and vibration. One complainant said her ceiling had collapsed and also said *“The ceiling had survived 100 years and the world wars but it has come down in one month after the humps were introduced. It has cost me over £2,000 to have the ceiling repaired. The constant noise has affected my health and my life”*. Does the council intend to remove the humps? Apparently not. (Editor: *that’s local democracy for you*).

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