

BBRAG NEWS

BROMLEY BOROUGH ROADS ACTION GROUP – No. 4 (Mar 2000)

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This edition has more positive news to report than we have ever had before. It gives you the likely conclusion on the Blackbrook Lane traffic calming scheme, and other developments.

Less gratifying is the post implementation review of the Watts Lane/Manor Park Road scheme.

Don't forget to keep letting us know of your opinions on any transport or traffic problems in Bromley. As you can see from the reports in this issue, we can have some impact on public affairs.

Roger Lawson, Editor

Blackbrook Lane, Bickley Traffic Calming Scheme

After further consultation, this was again discussed at a council committee meeting on the 18th January. The questionnaire circulated to local residents resulted in a positive opinion by a fairly wide margin in favour of all the proposals (ie. 5 speed tables and a gateway treatment). Opinions of BBRAG (including our objection to the speed table outside the school as being superfluous) were presented in the report to the council, as were some objections by the local ward councillors. However, and as expected, the proposals were approved and will now proceed to construction. The speed tables will be 75 cm high with a leading gradient of 1:20 which is the DETR recommendation to minimise their impact on public service vehicles (ambulances, buses, etc).

Our conclusion is that the result is a lot better than the original proposals, if not what some of the supporters of BBRAG would have liked. At least our activities have had a major impact on the outcome.

Blackbrook Lane/Bromley Road Junction

Another BBRAG success story is that that the new pedestrian refuge at the north end of Blackbrook Lane is being reconsidered. The new refuge as constructed reduced traffic to one lane when it was previously two, resulting in significant extra congestion at peak periods.

Your editor asked a question concerning this matter at the council meeting mentioned above (as anyone can do now incidentally). I pointed out that there had been no consultation of any road users on this matter (including BBRAG) even though the survey of Bromley residents by the council themselves had recently shown concerns about lack of public consultation, traffic congestion and environmental problems. There is now a proposal to move the refuge further south, and slightly offset it in the road which would certainly appear to solve the problem. Local residents are being consulted, but if you also have any comments please direct them to Louise McDevitt at Bromley Council (or contact BBRAG for more information).

Watts Lane/Manor Park Road Scheme

Now that the Watts Lane/Manor Park Road, Chislehurst scheme has been in place for some time, a survey on the opinions of local residents was conducted and presented to the above mentioned council committee. In essence, there was a large majority in favour of the scheme as a whole, but when individual parts of it were considered, the picture was less clear cut. For example the majority in favour of the humps in Watts Lane was only 87 to 72. As usual, the views of the road users and residents outside the immediate area were not obtained or taken into account.

As we argued would happen before the scheme was implemented, there was also significant diversion of traffic according to a study by the council. Sample figures were a reduction of 26% in the morning and 21% in the afternoon at peak times. However traffic speed has been substantially reduced and no accidents have been reported since the scheme was introduced (however as any changes to road design tend to reduce accidents in the short

term it is somewhat premature to say that the impact longer term will be significant).

BBRAG's considered view is that the scheme was still excessive and a waste of money. Most of the benefits could have been achieved with less expenditure and less inconvenience to road users.

A "Proactive" Approach to Accident Reduction

As everyone who is familiar with this subject will know, most of the traffic calming schemes that have been implemented by the council in the last few years have been at the request of some local residents. In fact, there are so many roads in the borough now on the list for requested traffic calming measures that it is highly unlikely that many of them will be considered in our lifetimes.

Now there is supposed to be a rational process to decide which schemes should take top priority but in reality it seems to be more a case of who asked first, or who has the best political support, or who puts their case best. A classic example of this is that at the last council meeting, a petition was presented by the residents of The Avenue, West Wickham for some traffic calming measures. Apparently there have been a number of accidents lately due to apparently reckless driving, although none resulting in injury and the general accident record of the road is not very different to other similar roads. Although some measures to improve safety seem merited, it is not at all clear why in this case the councillors approved some expenditure, effectively allowing these petitioners to jump the queue for traffic calming measures.

Interestingly though, at the very same council meeting, Roger Perry proposed that a report be prepared "setting out a proactive programme of works which will address the identified accident problems in the Borough". In other words, presumably instead of reacting to local pressure groups, there will be a proper attempt to select those measures (or locations for accident reduction measures) where expenditure will be most effective.

The above is very much what we argued for when the Watts Lane/Manor Park Road scheme was proposed. It is clear that this road was by no means the most dangerous in the borough and there were many more where expenditure would have reaped a bigger saving in accident injury numbers. Pandering to the requests of a few local residents has very little impact on the overall traffic accident statistics (particularly as many traffic calming schemes simply divert the reckless or speeding motorists onto other roads).

So maybe we will see some positive results out of this initiative, and thanks to Bromley Council staff for listening to our arguments on this point.

Biggin Hill Airport Expansion

No doubt many of you have read about the proposed expansion of Biggin Hill Airport so as to accommodate more flights and hence passenger traffic. This would obviously have a major impact on road traffic in the area, particularly bearing in mind the poor access by public transport (no rail access for example).

Access by road from London or the M25 is also not easy at present, and any major increase in road traffic would cause major additional congestion unless the roads were improved substantially.

With so many people already objecting to the proposals on other grounds (such as noise and air pollution), it is probably unnecessary for us to campaign on this issue just yet but if anyone has any views on this matter then please let us know.

Contact Information

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