



# BBRAG NEWS

Bromley Borough Roads Action Group - No. 45 (Mar 2007)

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## *Editorial*

*The biggest transport issue in the news in the last few weeks has definitely been the petition against road pricing and this is covered briefly in our first article. What an interesting example of on-line democracy in action, where the policies of Ministers and Civil Servants have been brought into total disrepute by a few individuals.*

*And if you read the Eddington report (few have but I did) you will realise that the return on investment in the road network would be better than any congestion charge system. One only has to look at the London congestion charge tax to see how loony the economics are.*

*Roger Lawson, Editor*

## **Petitions Against Road Pricing and Speed Humps**



Pictured left is Peter Roberts, a member of the Association of British Drivers (ABD) who set up a petition against road pricing on the Prime Ministers web site. To his surprise, it collected over 1.8 million signatures which

demonstrates the strength of feeling of the public against these proposals.

If you aren't already aware of the arguments against road pricing, then you might want to visit Peter's web site at: [www.traveltax.org.uk](http://www.traveltax.org.uk) or go to the ABD web site at [www.abd.org.uk](http://www.abd.org.uk).

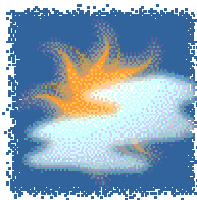
Not to be outdone, your editor has registered a petition against the use of speed humps on the 10 Downing Street. As you probably know, I have campaigned against the use of speed humps for some years and I hope you will sign the petition by going to the following web address <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Nohumps/> and submitting your name.

Let's get as many as we can. So don't forget to forward this information to all your friends and acquaintances and encourage them to sign it also. This information has already been circulated via email to BBRAG members but if anyone reading this has not already signed it then please do so now. If you want to get rid of the pain and suffering they inflict, you have to sign the petition!

There are more stories on speed humps and the problems they cause later in this edition, but there is of course voluminous further information on the BBRAG web site.

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## London's Low Emission Zone (LEZ)



Public consultation on the proposed Low Emission Zone in London took place early in 2006. The final proposals and draft "Scheme Order" have recently been published – see

[www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/low-emission-zone/consultation.asp](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/low-emission-zone/consultation.asp)

You can submit your comments, but it is doubtful whether Transport for London (TfL) will take any more notice of them than they did of those to the initial consultation. The scheme is very little changed from the original proposals – in essence HGVs, LGVs and buses that are not compliant with the latest vehicle emission standards will have to pay a toll of £200 to drive within London (or of course they can adapt their vehicles to be compliant or scrap them and buy new ones). To enforce the system there will be cameras covering the whole of the greater London area which will be issue fines of £1,000 for infringement.

The only changes to the proposals have been as follows:

- The Euro IV emission standard for HGVs and buses has been postponed to 2012.
- A NO<sub>x</sub> standard has been omitted (probably because of the difficulty in getting vehicles to comply, particularly London buses).
- Inclusion of heavier, diesel engined LGVs and minibuses from 2010.
- TfL to look at the possibility of including cars in the LEZ at a later date.

Yes that last is a new idea which was not in the original plans. But what else can you expect when the proposed system was clearly only going to be necessary for a very limited number of years. Improvements in vehicle technology are going to be so effective over the next few years, that in 5 years time the whole scheme may be unnecessary. But of course there is no time limit on the "Scheme Order" – it is an indefinite one – so you can well imagine what other things the Mayor may want to use this extensive network of public surveillance for.

The estimated cost of the scheme until 2015/16 is still £120 million. The report says " the proposed LEZ is not designed to be a **net** revenue generating scheme" – in other words revenue may only cover the costs of implementation. But it also says "some **gross** revenues" may result from penalty charges. And what can the surplus be spent on? Well almost anything that is transport related according to the Scheme Order.

*(Editor's comments: well as I said in my comments on the original proposals, I am in favour of a scheme to improve air quality in London. I noticed it yet again in the period just before Christmas when fog blanketed the capital, the air was static and more vehicles were on the road. But there was a much cheaper and simpler solution as has been adopted in other countries – you simply ban all older or non-compliant vehicles from the city after a certain date. The cost to goods vehicles operators would not have been much different, so why did not the Mayor and TfL propose that? Probably because the new system gives them even more powers to interfere with individual owners of such vehicles, more ability to monitor the lives of individuals in general, and easier justification for future similar schemes - particularly for cars of course).*

### **Removal Firm in Blockade Threat**

The above was the headline in the Newsshopper newspaper reporting that a local removal firm (Dee and Dee Removals of Erith) had just realised the likely impact and cost of the LEZ. When the previous public consultation was undertaken, haulage firms did not all object, but it is quite likely that larger firms were more likely to have responded than others. But the removal industry is full of small operators, and the vehicles are used for much longer than other types of haulage vehicles. Likewise smaller coach and bus operators are likely to be more affected. The bigger operators are probably happy to have the smaller operators put out of business by the large costs of upgrading their vehicle fleets, and as everyone will be affected, the end consumers will bear the cost.

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## Cross River Tram

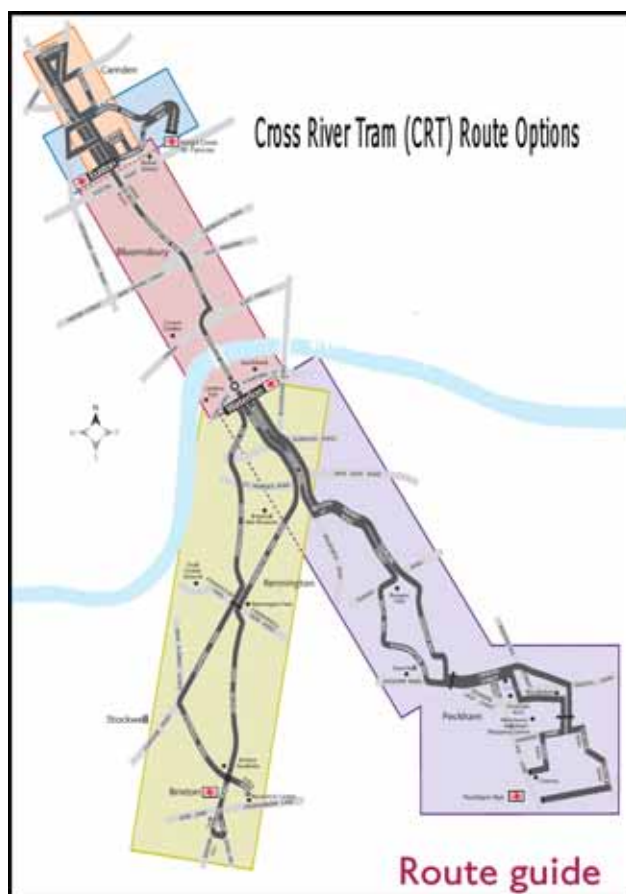
Transport for London have recently published details of the proposed Cross River Tram (CRT) which is a new tram scheme that runs from Peckham and Brixton in the south of London, to Euston, Kings Cross and Camden. Unlike most other new tram schemes, almost all of the route runs on existing roads.

The consultation document can be seen at [www.tfl.gov.uk/trams/initiatives/crt/consultation.asp](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/trams/initiatives/crt/consultation.asp) You can also read more about it on the following page of the sponsoring organisation: [www.crossriverpartnership.org/page.asp?id=1236](http://www.crossriverpartnership.org/page.asp?id=1236)

According to Transport for London (TfL), the anticipated cost of the scheme is about £650 million. Which they say equates to about 33p per passenger over 30 years if the expected passenger loadings are met (although they rarely are for tram services). Or to put it another way, that's £100 roughly that every Londoner will have to pay to cover the capital costs. Just for the record, the current estimate of passenger journeys each year on CRT is 66 million after it opens in 2016.

And you might ask where is the money coming from to fund this project? Well it is not very clear. TfL are paying for the initial design work but they probably don't have the ability to fund the whole project so it looks like they are hoping for some central Government funds, or European Union grants. In addition the Cross River Partnership suggests there "will be attractiveness of the project to the private sector". They also suggest it will "provide London with a state-of-the-art transport system that's an eye-catching asset".

As with the Croydon Tramlink extension, there seems to be no intention to do any separate public consultation on the scheme as a whole. The only public consultation being done is on the route options. Much of the route runs along roads that are already congested such as Kingsway and Southampton Row where it crosses High Holborn. Your editor has of course submitted objections to much of the route and to the failure to undertake proper consultation on the project. The general route of the tram and the route options are shown in the following diagram.



### *The Dangers of Street Trams*

Why is the running of trams down existing streets a bad idea? Well would you want a train (which is effectively what they are) running down your street? Apart from the issue of traffic congestion the main concerns are simply safety – particularly to pedestrians and cyclists.

There don't seem to be any accurate records of injuries to pedestrians caused by trams in the UK (until recently there have not been enough trams to make them measurable anyway). But the problem with trams is that they have very poor stopping distances in comparison with other modern road vehicles. They also tend to be much heavier with the result that accidents tend to be more severe.

A good web site to look at if you want to see some details of accidents involving trams and pedestrians is to look at this site which covers the aptly named Wham-Bam-Tram in Houston, Texas:

[www.actionamerica.org/houston/index.shtml](http://www.actionamerica.org/houston/index.shtml)

This tram system has caused more than 90 injuries, or more than 3 injuries per month.

Tram tracks are also a particular danger to cyclists who tend to get stuck in the ruts, or skid over them when the tracks are wet.

### ***The Reliability of Trams***

And of course the other problem is that other vehicles tend to regularly break down over the tracks which brings the whole tram network to a halt – this happens quite regularly in Croydon where the line runs on the street for only a small part of its total distance. The “unofficial” Croydon Tramlink web site (maintained by a fan of the system) shows a number of pictures of “misplaced” vehicles as it calls them (ie. accidents involving cars and the tram network) at: [www.croydon-tramlink.co.uk/pictures/misplacedvehicles/index.shtml](http://www.croydon-tramlink.co.uk/pictures/misplacedvehicles/index.shtml).

Incidentally, and unfortunately as the site is a mine of useful information, the developer of this web site, Stephen Parascandolo, recently died in a car crash in Hitchin.

How well did the trams cope with the January gales this year? To quote from the Croydon Tramlink Unofficial Site: *“On the afternoon of Thursday 18th January, trams were caught up in the general chaos following 80mph winds throughout the UK. During the afternoon, there was no service Wimbledon - Phipps Bridge (due to a tree down on both tracks between Merton Park and Dundonald Road stops), no service East Croydon - Sandilands (due to a tree in Addiscombe Road leaning on the overhead wire), no service Sandilands - Addiscombe (due to a tree on the OHLE), and no service Sandilands - Addington Village (due to a tree on the OHLE near to Oaks Road).”* Did other road traffic come to a halt? Not in my experience as I drove extensively around south London on the worst day. There were a few fallen trees but the traffic simply drove around them.

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### **Tramlink and Bus Competition**

A good example of the inflexibility of trams, and their problems with competing with buses was a recent report on London Tonight. It seems that the number of trams on the New Addington branch has been reduced from 9 to 8 because one has been transferred to cover the East and

West Croydon stations where there is overcrowding. But Transport for London have therefore ordered more buses to run to New Addington to make up the deficit.

Roger Harding of Tramlink claimed they could not cost justify buying more trams because they face more competition from buses and lower passenger loading than originally forecast. Mayor Livingstone apparently thinks it is madness.

*(Editors Comments: Of course this was exactly one of the reasons why buses replaced trams many years ago. They are simply easier to move around to meet changing requirements, and it's simple to buy another bus whereas trams are purpose built).*

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### **New Draconian Powers in TfL Bill**

Transport for London (TfL) have sponsored a new Bill that is going through Parliament. It provides extra powers to operate road tolling schemes. It is a complex and seemingly innocuous Bill which has received almost no publicity or comment in the national press. But it introduces a whole new raft of infringements that might make drivers liable to imprisonment.

For example, it will mean that any driver who permits his number plate to become obscured could be imprisoned. So failing to keep your plates clean in winter weather might result in you being taken to court and imprisoned - six months is the maximum penalty.

Is this reasonable? I don't think so. The normal penalties for offences such as not having a readable number plate are a fixed penalty notice and a fine of up to £1,000. Why does the Mayor of London need additional powers?

In addition it provides severe penalties for obstructing anyone who wishes to inspect in-car equipment related to road usage charging – clearly in anticipation of GPS or “tag & beacon” charging systems. It looks like someone has already anticipated the use of GPS jammers (which are quite widely available apparently) and other equipment to obstruct such charging.

The Bill in question is the Transport for London (Supplemental Toll Provisions) Bill and it can be seen on the internet at:

[www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/about/report-library/private-bill.asp](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/about/report-library/private-bill.asp)

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## Mayoral Candidate Steps Forward



One declared candidate for the London Mayoral election in 2008 is Chris Prior (picture left). He has formed a political party called the "Stop Congestion

Charging Party" so clearly he is going to be primarily a "single issue" candidate. However he does have declared policies on quite a number of issues which you can see on his web site at [www.stopcc.com](http://www.stopcc.com).

These include removing a lot of speed humps and speed cameras, introducing school buses, installing air conditioning on public transport and other popular measures. He also wants to bring back Routemaster buses (probably a popular policy but perhaps not very practical), and is in favour of trams "provided the infrastructure can be put in place with the minimum of disruption".

Mr Prior does have some political experience but needs to raise some funds for a campaign so please donate if you can. Your editor has made a contribution because, if nothing else, this candidate should ensure that scrapping the London Congestion Charge is a significant election issue.

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## Orpington Bus Lane Cameras



We have previously reported on the large amount of revenue being collected from infringers of the Cray Avenue, Orpington bus lane. Many people turned left through the bus lane unthinkingly and collected a penalty notice.

Indeed the amount of revenue the council was collecting from this scam was enough to make a substantial contribution to the budget. As pointed out in previous editions, it is very doubtful that such penalty notices adhered with the law. But two things have changed.

Firstly PCN revenue from this source has fallen by £263,000 – a fall of 90% - resulting in a major shortfall in council budgets. Clearly people have been learning to avoid the trap, and only unsuspecting "out of towners" now get caught.

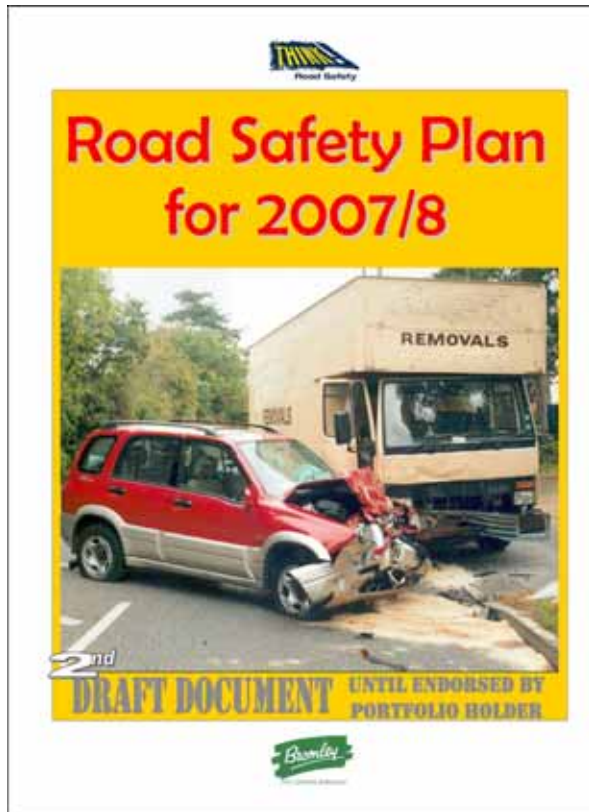
Secondly, Councillor Colin Smith has approved two changes to the road layout and markings near Station Approach:

- The existing dotted line that indicates where you can turn will be extended another 30 metres to 60 metres in total. This should minimise the number of accidental infringements just before Station Approach.
- The road will be widened and the box junction and other markings changed to try and improve traffic flow at this junction.

He is also going to consider the issue of whether the bus lane should have more restricted times than the current "all day" limits.

*(Editor's Comments: This should go a long way to solve the problem in future. However it is unlikely to pacify those people who have already paid fines resulting from excessive "enforcement". And it still leaves the basic issue that the council appeared to be ignoring the wording of the "Traffic Management Order" that established this bus lane, and the wording of the Highway Code when enforcing the lane – as was upheld by at least one PATAS adjudicator when one victim appealed. Council staff are persisting in saying their actions were reasonable when they were not and that moral issue remains unresolved. A change in "enforcement policy" should also have been made to rectify this as there are other locations and will be other circumstances where people will still be penalised unreasonably. Also refunds should be given to past victims of these unreasonable actions by the council).*

## Bromley Road Safety Plan



Bromley Council have recently published their road safety plan for the coming year (see cover above – it suggests this is a draft but in fact it has already been approved by Environment portfolio holder Colin Smith). Anyone who is interested in road safety should read this document as it explains why Bromley is better than most other London boroughs in road safety measures.

To quote from the report: *“Bromley has a generally low number of casualties overall, compared with the rest of London, and numbers are also low in most individual road user categories. Bromley is in the best ten boroughs for all but car user casualties, where Bromley is 12<sup>th</sup> [out of 33 London boroughs]”.*

For “all severities” Bromley ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in casualties per head of population, even though Bromley has more cars per head of population than any other London borough.

Bromley is therefore well on the way to meeting the road casualty reduction targets set by the Government and the Mayor of London – the targets include a 50% reduction in KSIs by 2010.

In fact Bromley has already met the 2010 target for slight casualties.

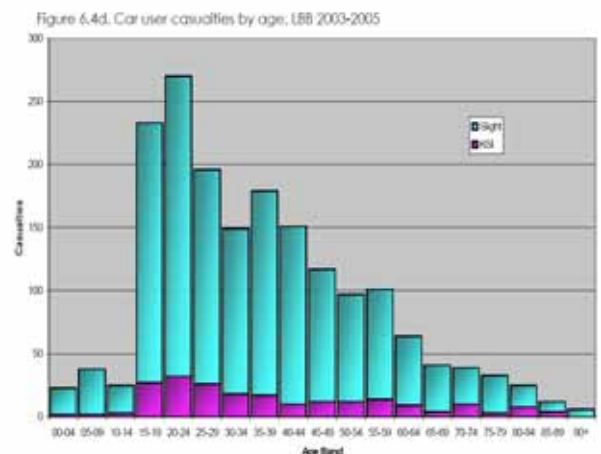
And they manage to do this without speed humps and speed cameras everywhere, so this surely should set an example for other London boroughs!

How has Bromley achieved such good results? Well read the report to find out in detail, but one very clear aspect is the emphasis on identifying the statistically dangerous roads and tackling those, with a proper cost justification for all the proposals. In other words, the most dangerous locations, and those where treatment can provide the most benefits are tackled first.

BBRAG possibly contributed to this result as one of our early campaign themes was that money should stop being wasted on ineffective schemes, or those roads where residents simply complained loudest.

These policies have been so successful in fact that it is getting harder to identify the most dangerous locations, as the number of accidents is now so few that they are more randomly distributed across the borough.

But some problems certainly remain. For example road deaths in Bromley have not fallen at all over the years – there were 9 in 2005. But many of these are quite exceptional incidents, and in fact if car occupants involved in these accidents had been wearing seat belts, most would probably not have died. There is also a particular problem with young drivers and motorcyclists. The following chart taken from the report shows the age profile of car occupant casualties over the last 3 years.



Clearly education has a big part to play here and Bromley spends considerable sums on that. For example the education of cyclists and motorcyclists in schools and young driver education in general has been a high priority in Bromley.

Bromley's Road Safety Plan is definitely worth reading and it should be available on the council's web site – see [www.bromley.gov.uk](http://www.bromley.gov.uk) – but the last time I looked it could not be found so ask your editor for a copy. It should be recommended reading in every other London borough. And note that Bromley does not have more financial or other resources than other London boroughs – they just spend the money they do have more effectively.

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### Congestion Charge Extension



The day before the London Congestion Tax zone was extended to the west, a demonstration took place on the streets of Hammersmith. It was organised by Hammersmith

Conservative Association but got widespread support – a number of ABD members also attended.

Below is a picture of Councillor Merrick Cockell, Leader of the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, speaking to the crowd and to his right is Gordon Taylor, Chairman of the West London Residents Association. The latter has been very active in opposing the London Congestion Charge system. He has done a lot of detailed analysis of the effect of the scheme and its economics and simply thinks there are better alternatives.



Below is a picture of the cavalcade of cars before it took off on a tour of the area. Let us hope that Mr Livingstone takes note of the public opposition to the extension, but he certainly didn't when the public consultation took place.



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### Old Hill Humps Smoothed Out



Readers of this newsletter will be aware that for a number of years BBRAG has campaigned against the speed humps on Old Hill, Chislehurst. Finally the really annoying "cushions" on the lower part of the hill have been replaced by speed tables – picture above. The former single cushions caused pain and suffering on a daily basis to road users, and excessive noise and vibration to the annoyance of local residents. They were also the direct cause of a serious accident to cyclist Anja Szkodowski.

The new full width speed tables are relatively gentle and most residents and road users seem to be much happier with them.

But at least one local resident has complained that the traffic speed is now too high.  
*(Editors Comments: It is always a compromise, and usually a bad one, between slowing traffic and making humps not too uncomfortable for road users. But as this stretch of road did not experience any accident problems before the humps were installed, there is little reason to take further measures and hopefully we can consider this matter closed – at least until the council decides to remove all humps from all roads in the borough which would be the wisest thing to do).*

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### Another Speed Hump Problem



Over on the other side of town (at least in terms of the London Borough of Bromley) in Beckenham there is a speed table at the junction of Worsley Bridge Road and Copers Cope Road.

Although the table is fairly innocuous, it lies on a road where vehicles clearly go at some speed – with the result that they often hit the table at speed. Numerous minor accidents are the result plus a lot of noise and vibration inflicted on the adjacent residents. One resident who lives on the corner of the junction is also complaining that the vibration is creating large cracks in her house. See picture below.



*(Editors Comments: Another difficult problem where the solution to previous accidents at this junction creates as many problems as it was intended to solve).*

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### Council Not Happy with LIP

All London boroughs have had to prepare a Local Implementation Plan (LIP) which shows how they will implement the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy. The following is a statement made by Councillor Colin Smith when approving the LIP for Bromley:

"It is not without significance that I have chosen today to consider this document. Today is the arbitrary deadline imposed by Mr Kevin Austin, the Mayor for London's Head of Transport under his "definitive timetable" for us to do so. To have agreed it earlier would have implied a tacit approval of either its contents, or direction.

Failure to adhere to this timetable would run the risk of a series of measures being taken against the Borough, culminating with the prospect of a Traffic Director being imposed upon us under Section 21 of the TMA 2004.

Such an action would take all decision making ability away from democratically elected local Members and would open up the prospect of undesirable traffic schemes being imposed against the will of local residents and at additional cost to Bromley Council tax payers to meet costs incurred by third parties administering the same.

This is not an option I am prepared to consider.

I therefore approve recommendation 2.1, under protest and at the point of a gun. I wish to put on record that although I have been forced into rubber stamping this document against my better judgment, I continue to regard it as 'The Mayor for London's LIP' rather than the London Borough of Bromley's as parts of the document either fly in the face, or completely fail to address, many of our local priorities, concerns and needs.

It is of note and offers some encouragement moving forward, that this time consuming, over bureaucratic, top heavy, 'one size fits all', resource wasting process is now beginning to



attract cross party criticism at London Councils and within the GLA. Not before time too.

Underlining the waste of time and resources this ill conceived and superfluous programme has already caused the London Boroughs, comes the news that the Mayor for London has already announced his intention that he will shortly be undertaking a review of his Transport Strategy for London. In essence, this 600 page document, produced at vast expense to the Tax Payer was already out of date before it was printed. You really couldn't make it up !

It is to be hoped, and I believe with increasing confidence that colleagues in other Boroughs will, use the Mayor for London's forthcoming review as an opportunity to collectively insist that his continued determination to centralise powers is halted, and begun to be unwound.

Local decisions should be taken by locally elected Councillors whose intimate knowledge of local priorities and needs, allied to their accountability to local taxpayers, leave them in an indisputably better position to allocate funding to achieve best outcomes. 'One size fits all' never has worked and never will.

The sooner The Mayor for London and his coterie at the GLA grasp this fact, the better it will be for all concerned.

I approve recommendation 2.2."

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the Final LIP be approved and submitted to Transport for London, in line with the contents of the report; and
- (2) the Council lobby for the forthcoming second Mayor's Transport Strategy to be a more genuinely strategic document, for a parallel simplification of the LIP process to reduce the burden on boroughs, and for a LIP funding system that allows boroughs more freedom to devise local solutions to local problems, as set out in paragraphs 3.21 to 3.23 of the report."

*(Editor's Comments: Clearly yet more evidence that the bureaucracy that is TfL creates an enormous amount of work for local council staff, at the same time as ignoring the democratic local consultation process and the needs of individual local authorities).*

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## CO2 Based Permit Parking Charges



The London Borough of Richmond, followed by a number of other London councils, are implementing a change to permit parking charges so that they are based on the CO2

emissions of the vehicle. This has caused an enormous public outcry in Richmond residents. The following is a speech your editor made at a Richmond council meeting in support of their objections (LibDem councillors proceeded to vote it through, although they have opposed similar schemes in other boroughs):

### ***Speech at Richmond Council Meeting on 29/1/2007***

*Firstly let me declare that I have no financial interest in this matter. I don't live in a permit parking zone, and in fact I don't even live in Richmond. But I do represent the London region of the Association of British Drivers which supports ordinary motorists.*

*You may be wondering why the ABD has bothered to interfere in this local matter. Well the answer is simple. Because when we saw the initial press release from the council on these proposals, we instantly knew someone was suffering from "environmental hysteria".*

*It said: "By implementing a scheme to reduce CO2 emissions locally, Richmond upon Thames can make a positive impact on climate change nationally and globally". A totally misleading statement and a gross exaggeration.*

*It also became clear that nobody had bothered to calculate the likely impact in terms of actual CO2 reduction before council staff, and Councillor Lourie, started to promote the wonders of this scheme. But as pointed out by Mr Kebble last week, and confirmed by the councils own environmental expert, Mr Coates, the actual reduction might be a fall of 0.2% in Richmond. In other words an imperceptible change.*

*There are only four questions councillors should ask about this proposal:*

1. *Will it significantly reduce CO2 levels? The answer is no.*
2. *Will it be legal? Questionable..*
3. *Is it fair to enforce a CO2 tax on permit parking holders, when other residents will not be so taxed – in my view, no.*
4. *Has it been democratically introduced?*

*The answer to the last question is definitely no. From the first misleading statement, through the whole consultation process, it has been grossly mishandled.*

*The survey form, which was only sent to a small proportion of residents and not those mainly affected, is a classic of how to obtain the right answer by asking leading questions. Even the title links climate change to car parking. But of course residents were not informed of the true benefit of this proposal, which is negligible.*

*The council has also deliberately downplayed the one thousand four hundred objection letters and emails they received on this matter, and also ignored the evidence of their own eyes and ears in respect of the public who turned out for last weeks meeting.*

*If you proceed to vote for this proposal, without further and proper consultation, then you are no doubt destroying the spirit of democracy in this borough.*

*To quote from a Liberal Democrat councilor in Haringey on the same subject – “what is being proposed is just gesture politics”. Just empty and futile gestures.*

*Thank you, Roger Lawson*

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## Letters

It seems that the report of one member of council staff working on “green travel plans” in our last newsletter was an understatement. The following letter was subsequently received from Councillor Nicholas Bennett.

*Dear Mr Lawson*

*Thank you for the latest newsletter and for the mentions of the two Cllr Bennetts.*

*The Travel to Work 'co-ordinator' started with one post in 2003. I (as a member of the public) first asked a question to Cllr Taylor at the full council some three years ago about the glossy leaflets they were producing. At the time, from memory, it was a two year appointment at a total cost of £60k. Now the original appointee has two chums to keep her company. The latest situation is as follows:*

*- Workplace Travel Plan Coordinator (PO3 £31509-£34137) Post created 2003*

*- Workplace Travel Plan Advisor (SO1 £24825-£26358) Post created 2004*

*- Business Manager (ML6 £32845-£49266) Post created 2004.*

*There is also a Seltrans Administrator (Sc4-6 £17787-23937. Add on office costs, plus other “on costs” etc of 50%.*

*What was interesting was not only had they not thought of any objective evaluative criteria to judge whether they were doing anything of use, now they have done, it isn't measured against the number of people who have been persuaded to use public transport or share a car with a colleague but against the number of 'plans'. I challenged the idea that people couldn't work these things out for themselves but would only decide to do so if exhorted by a glossy campaign organised by state bureaucrats. Interestingly although the posts have existed since 2003 it appears that Bromley Council staff are only now themselves being encouraged to draw up these meaningless plans for themselves! Of course, nowhere in the procedure can they monitor whether the staff of a firm which signs up to such a plan actually change their habits and don't backslide into their old habits.*

*You couldn't make this up!*

*Cllr Nicholas Bennett JP  
West Wickham Ward*

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## News Snapshots

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

+ A two-tier system for parking penalties will be introduced in London. A £120 fine will apply in central London for “serious” contraventions such as parking on double yellow lines or outside schools, or £100 in outer London. Lesser infringements such as overstaying in a parking meter will cost £100 or £80. Bus lane infringements will go up to £120 from July.

*(Editor's Comments: Differentiating the penalties seems a lot fairer, but the charges are much too high, particularly the new bus lane infringement charge, for what could be quite trivial or accidental infringements. The power to set the levels of such fines should be taken out of the hands of Local Government as they have a vested interest in maximising their revenue.)*

+ According to a report in the Financial Times, Transport for London are predicting that congestion in the central zone will rise by 5% after the Congestion Charge zone is extended to the west. This is simply because more people will have residents discount permits and are likely to drive in the old zone. More east-west traffic is also expected to pay the charge as it will be more trouble than it is worth to drive around the new extended zone. *(Editor's Comments: This is yet another example of the incompetent design of the system and demonstrates yet again that the charge was introduced, and is now being extended, purely as a way to raise money. It's more about political dogma from Mr Livingstone than any rational argument. Congestion within the tax zone has been rising and if this latest forecast is met it is likely to be back pretty much back to where it was before the congestion tax was first introduced).*

+ It seems that public consultation responses to the Croydon Tramlink Extension generally supported Option 2 (the off-street option) for the route. Bromley council and BBAG also supported that option.

+ Your editor appeared on BBC Newsnight TV representing the ABD on the 7<sup>th</sup> February on a feature on the harassment of motorists in general. This was prompted by the letter bombs to motoring related organisations.

We drove around the streets of Bromley for 30 minutes covering speed cameras, bus lanes, speed humps, box junctions while talking “on-camera”. Fortunately my driving turned out to look quite safe. It was followed by a session with Jeremy Paxman on which Transport 2000 and someone else claiming to represent motorists was present – the latter will remain nameless as he made a real hash of putting our case.

In addition I did interviews on SkyNews and BBC News 24 on the road usage charging petition set up by ABD member Peter Roberts, plus several other media interviews with international networks.

+ A good source of material on American transport issues is the American Dream Coalition web site, run by Randall O’Toole – see [www.americandreamcoalition.org](http://www.americandreamcoalition.org). It includes a large number of conference papers and talks – go to the tab labelled “Guide to the American Dream”, then look under each topic and select “References and Experts”. It’s an amazing source of pro-car material and anti light rail (a.k.a. trams) and excessive public transport funding. There’s even some material from your editor in there.

+ It is reported that average speed cameras have been installed in the Blackwall Tunnel (30 mph limit on the north bound side, 40 mph on the south bound). There was no consultation on this of course.

+ Residents of Ealing have voted overwhelmingly to reject a traffic calming scheme involving the use of speed humps.

## 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. Chairman and Newsletter Editor: Roger Lawson (Tel: 020-8467-2686, fax: 020-8295-0378, Email: [roger.lawson@btclick.com](mailto: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 £11.00 per annum for individuals, or £8.50 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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