

Update to Environment and Community Safety PDS 23rd January 2024

Alternative Technologies:

I have asked officers to investigate the financial feasibility of two alternative technologies for generating electricity in our car parks – solar panels and wind power. It will depend on the cost period for return on investment.

New Tesla Chargers in Civic Centre Carpark.

The new facilities, which were facilitated on behalf of the Council, by APCOA, were funded by Tesla, with use not restricted to Tesla vehicles and available for charging all electric vehicle types.

Each Tesla charge point can produce up to 250kW of power with a 15-minute charge typically producing enough battery charge for 170 miles. A standard charge takes around 40 minutes, subject to vehicle type and battery size.

In addition to the Tesla chargers, a further five AC charging units are available in the same area of the car park for motorists to charge their vehicles over a longer period or overnight.

With the car park open 24/7 along with the number of charging units and the swift charging feature, there should always be a charger available when needed.

Motorists who are happy to charge their vehicles over a longer period can use the one of the five additional AC charging units and there are also two further charging units near the main entrance to the car park.”



Connected Kerb

Cllr Grant and I visited the newly installed Connected Kerb charging points at Knights Hill, Norwood yesterday. The Company is one of three suppliers identified through the procurement framework. Further details are in the report to tonight's meeting at 10c.



Potholes

The torrential rain has once again caused potholes to appear across the network. Our contractors, Riney, are busy repairing the holes. The Government has awarded Bromley an additional £455,000 to spend on potholes in each of 2023-4 and 2024-25, and a pledge of a minimum of £14,240,000 to be spent in the borough up to 2033-34. I very much welcome this money which is coming directly to the Council rather than TfL. We await further details about any conditions which need to be fulfilled. Members will recall that last winter I authorised a second contractor, O'Rourke's, to help with the backlog caused by the doubling of the number of reports, this was expensive and therefore officers are meeting our contractor this coming week to discuss further incentives to increase the number of teams in Bromley with recourse to a second emergency contractor.

In my last update I referred to trialling innovative technology for pothole repairs. I will be attending a demonstration by JCB on February 6th and a report will be prepared for a subsequent committee.



Criminal Damage to Traffic Lights

As members will be aware, a large number of traffic lights, in total, we believe thirty-three traffic signals at 13 junctions and pelican crossings in the borough required repairs following criminal attacks attempting to destroy ULEZ enforcement cameras. A number of colleagues asked the Council to provide warning signs. However, as the traffic lights are controlled and owned by Transport for London, this is their responsibility. I checked traffic signals in the Bickley and Chislehurst area and every affected location did have warning signs, although not in all directions. Our paramount concern was and is road safety and through the good offices of Peter Fortune, our London Assembly member, a meeting between TfL and Bromley was held to emphasise the need for urgent action to replace the signals giving priority to repairs at traffic signals on routes to schools.

We need TfL to remain focussed on this serious problem and we welcome the news that repair work has started. I condemn, without reservation, these criminal acts and hope the perpetrators are caught. Bromley has amongst the safest roads in London. This vandalism compromises road safety.

Blackwall Tunnel Closures

Transport for London (TfL) has advised us that the Blackwall Tunnel will be closed to southbound traffic for five weekends in January and February to help support works to the northbound carriageway on the northbound Blackwall Tunnel approach.

The works, which are required to implement the road configuration for the new Silvertown Tunnel which will open in 2025, will see new drainage as well as new over-height vehicle gantries installed, which are necessary to protect the tunnel. The Silvertown Tunnel will provide a public transport-focused river crossing with zero-emission bus links across the Thames. Once open in 2025, the crossing, which is within the Ultra-Low Emission Zone and will be subject to a user charge, will also reduce congestion and improve the reliability and resilience of the Blackwall Tunnel, which will improve overall air quality in the local area.

The closures will take place across the weekends of 13-15 January, 20-22 January, 27-29 January (a contingency weekend if either of the previous two weekends are not possible), 10-12 February and 24-26 February, starting at 00:01 on the Saturday morning and being reopened by 05:00 on the Monday morning at the latest.

Greater London Assembly Transport Committee Report on Transport in Outer London

In a previous update (ECS PDS 7th September), I reported on my evidence session to the GLA Transport Committee on September 5th 2023. The report has been published and I am pleased to say that my evidence on Local Implementation Plan funding has been highlighted in the Committee's letter to the Mayor. A copy of their letter is attached as Appendix A.

Hill Car Park

The Hill Car Park reopened on December 17th. Because of complaints of anti-social behaviour on the upper floor have authorised the closure of the third floor, this will not impact on motorists as there is sufficient space in the lower floors for all potential users.

Bromley North to Grove Park Rail Link

Following the discussion at the Transport Forum about the connection at Grove Park in the morning and evening rush hours I asked local ward members for their views.

The overwhelming consensus is that as far as possible, the morning and evening connections at Grove Park for London trains should favour the traffic flow to and from London rather than any commuters travelling against the London bound flow. I therefore wrote to Southeastern as follows:

“At present in the morning rush hour the train provides a service every twenty minutes and has a dwell time at each terminus of 5 minutes on what is a five-minute journey each way. We accept that without a second train, which would not be an economic or a reasonable request, the service is appropriate. We also consider that the non-peak frequency of 30 minutes is reasonable.

We would, however request that consideration be given to increasing the frequency in the evening peak from 30 to 20 minutes as in line with the morning peak. This would provide more connections with the outbound London trains and reduce the often long waiting times at Grove Park for the Bromley North train”.

Southeastern have replied as follows:

“The current timetable has a two train per hour (2TPH) or half-hourly service operate between Grove Park and Bromley North in the evening peak. This is mainly because if we move away from this pattern, the connections out of other services worsen and currently the Bromley North shuttle connects out of the Charing Cross via Lewisham service thereby accommodating most passengers.

I have spoken to our train planners, and they say, as the shuttle services are self-contained it is relatively straight-forward to amend the timetable as, aside from the impact on passenger connection times, there is no knock-on impact on other operators or lines. From June 2024 our intention is to operate the same level of service as the current timetable, however there is an option to improve the evening peak frequency to 3TPH or every 20 minutes, as you have suggested, but it would mean some connections are broken, while others become better, for example for services departing Cannon St.

I would be interested to hear what the preferences of local councillors would be on the following two options:

1. The June 2024 timetable as originally planned (PDF Copy attached)
2. The June 2024 timetable, but with an option to enhance to 3TPH in the PM peak. (The changes are highlighted in red on the word timetable).

I would highlight that if we decide we should enhance the Bromley North service from its current level, we would need to secure approval from the Department for Transport, but we believe that because the costs of doing this are very low and if there is stakeholder support then it would further enhance the likelihood of this being enacted”.

The service mainly used by residents of Bromley Town, Plaistow and Bickley and Sundridge Wards and I have, today, written to them for their views.

Cllr Nicholas Bennett JP

Executive Member for Transport, Highways and Road Safety