

PART 1 - PUBLIC

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**Decision Maker:** Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Holder

**For Pre-decision Scrutiny by the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee on**

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> February 2011

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

**Title:** **BROMLEY TOWN CENTRE VARIABLE MESSAGE SYSTEM**

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**Chief Officer:** Marc Hume, Director Renewal & Recreation

**Ward:** Bromley Town Centre

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## 1. REASON FOR THE REPORT

- 1.1 A report detailing the specification for the Variable Message System (VMS) and seeking funding approval was considered by the Environment PDS on 29th November 2010 (Report ES10152: Attached as Appendix 1). The decision taken by the Environment Portfolio Holder on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2011 was:

**That the funds for the system be released in principle, but the matter be referred on to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal & Recreation for his consideration and assessment as to whether such technology provides value for money and will contribute positively to Bromley Town Centre's economy.**

- 1.2 The adopted Bromley Area Action Plan (AAP) and supporting Transport Strategy (TS) identifies a programme of transport improvements that were necessary to support both the future planned development growth in the town centre and the town's ongoing success as a thriving Metropolitan centre. The VMS system is required as part of this identified transport improvement programme and is needed to support the successful implementation of the Phase 1 of the Plan. The VMS System has been identified as the most effective measure to manage the resultant loss of car parking spaces that will occur in Phase 1 and it will efficiently redistribute parking demand to car parks with spare capacity. This requirement was also tested and supported at an Examination in Public before a Planning Inspector as part of the AAP adoption and represents value for money and should be supported.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation supports the Variable Message Sign scheme as part of the implementation of the Area Action Plan, as the Portfolio Holder is satisfied that the proposed scheme provides value for money and will contribute positively to Bromley Town Centre's economy.

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy. Bromley Town Centre Action Plan
  2. BBB Priority: Vibrant Thriving Town Centres.
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated cost £200k
  2. Ongoing costs: Recurring cost. Electricity costs
  3. Budget head/performance centre: TfL capital funding abd Transport & Highways Divisional Budget.
  4. Total current budget for this head: £200k
  5. Source of funding: TfL Formula funding 2010/11 & 2011/12
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### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 5
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 170
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: No statutory requirement or Government guidance.
  2. Call-in: Call-in is applicable
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Up to 4440 motorists who seek a parking space in Bromley on a dailiy basis.
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: No Comments

### 3 COMMENTARY

3.1 The adopted Bromley Town Centre AAP and supporting Transport Strategy were prepared to provide a planning framework to promote sustainable development in the town and improve the quality and range of facilities and services to residents and businesses. The AAP is clear that development proposals likely to come forward within Phase 1 of the plan (2010 -2015) can be accommodated without the requirement for major new transport infrastructure, such as significant junction improvements. However, the AAP and TS sets out a programme of operational and traffic management improvement measures that are necessary to support the implementation of Phase 1 of the AAP.

Phase 1 developments will include:

Site B Tweedy Road  
Site C Old Town Hall  
Site K Westmoreland Road

And could include subject to planning :

Site A Bromley North Station  
Site L DHSS Buildings Masons Hill

3.2 This programme of operational and traffic management improvement measures include:

1. A Parking Migration Strategy, which sets out how the Council and partners will manage the loss of car parking across the town centre. A draft of this has been produced and has been reported to the Town Centres Member Working Party for their consideration.
2. The introduction of a town-wide VMS system to provide information on car parking space availability for people driving into town. This would allow drivers who would otherwise have used either Westmoreland Road or any other redeveloped car park to find spaces in alternative car parks.
3. Subject to further investigation, the introduction of a Saturday Park & Ride scheme at Norman Park.
4. A Town-wide travel plan.

3.3 In Phase 1 of the AAP, Site K Westmoreland Road has the most significant transport impact because of the temporary closure of the car park during the construction period and the resultant loss of parking spaces. Analysis of parking data in the development of the TS confirmed that a positive parking management system would be needed with the closure of Westmoreland Road, to efficiently redistribute parking demand to car parks with spare capacity. The TS further identified that a permanent VMS system would clearly have other benefits, in addition to reductions in overall congestion, including improvements in air quality, more reliable journeys for customers and higher satisfaction ratings for the motorists, especially shoppers. The longer term legacy of the VMS system would be enjoyed by future shoppers and town users as development sites are built out, who would be beneficiaries of improved car parking information as they will not necessarily know the layout of the town or have any particular preference for one car park over another. In this way Bromley is responding positively to the challenge set by Croydon, Sutton and Kingston who all currently have VMS systems in operation.

3.4 Notwithstanding the detailed technical specification of the proposed VMS contained in the attached ES PDS report, it is Officers' opinion that the system has been designed to be

easily extended and flexible to allow future developments. Officers from the Town Centre Renewal team formed part of the project team that developed the specifications and are satisfied that it is fit for purpose. In relation to Value for Money considerations, Appendix 6 of the Transport Strategy sets out the Implementation Programme of Transport Improvements with Estimated Budget costs, which were prepared by Transport Consultants Peter Brett Associates in 2007. This programme estimated a budget cost of £450,000 for developing and implementing a VMS system. This budget estimate was produced before the recent innovations in IT based technology, which has improved and matured in recent years. This allied to the development of a robust specification and competitive tendering arrangements have further driven the budget estimate down to £200k, which is considered good value for money.

### **3. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There is a clear need for the introduction of the VMS system, as it has been identified in the AAP as a transport improvement that is needed to allow critical development to take place in the Phase1. This requirement has also been tested and supported at an Examination in Public before a Planning Inspector as part of the AAP adoption

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The capital cost for the system will be met from the TfL formula funding for years 2010/11 & 2011/12. The ongoing maintenance costs will be capitalised for the first 5 years.

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

LBB will need to enter a contract with the selected supplier to implement and maintain the system. The Legal Team has helped with the production of the tender documents.

### **6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The system will be under the day to day management of the Council’s parking Services team.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Environment PDS Report Bromley Town Centre Variable Message Sign System for Car Parking + Minute