

Decision Maker: Environment PDS Committee

Date: 16 June 2011

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

Title: **SELECTION, DESIGN AND CONSULTATION POLICY FOR TRAFFIC SCHEMES**

Contact Officer: Deirdre Farrell, Traffic Engineering Manager
Tel: 020 8313 4543 E-mail: deirdre.farrell@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Nigel Davies, Director of Environmental Services

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report is to set out the methods that are used in selecting traffic schemes to design, consult on and if approved, implement in the Borough.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Environment PDS comments on the selection, design and consultation methods, set out in this report.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: N/A.
 2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No cost
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A.
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Transport for London LIP Formula Funding / Transport and Highways budget
 4. Total current budget for this head: £3.2M / £52K
 5. Source of funding: Transport for London and existing revenue budget 2011/12
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 15
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-statutory - Government guidance.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is not applicable.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected):
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? N/A.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

Introduction

- 3.1 In 2010 the Environment PDS asked for a report to be brought forward giving more information about the process undertaken to select, prioritise, design, consult and decide upon traffic related improvements to the highway network.
- 3.2 Traffic schemes are wide ranging, including the areas listed below.
- 3.3 Road Safety and Antisocial Driving: This covers many aspects of Road Safety including accident investigation and prevention, local safety schemes and accident reduction measures. It includes design and installation of features to slow inappropriate traffic speeds, improve safety for all road users and quality of life for residents blighted by antisocial driving.
- 3.4 Parking: This relates to all forms of parking on the public highway. It covers issues such as requests for parking controls in areas where parking has become a problem and modifications to existing parking regulations are needed. Parking controls include such things as waiting and loading restrictions (yellow lines), controlled parking zones (which may include residents' parking permits), footway parking, disabled parking bays and any other parking controls that may be installed on the public highway.
- 3.5 Traffic Flow and Congestion: The flow of traffic is key to public and personal transport on our borough roads. On many major routes traffic flow is regulated by traffic signals. These are controlled centrally by Transport for London, but with input from Bromley. Officers also monitor any congestion issues in the borough and look to improve traffic management in order to keep the traffic moving.
- 3.6 Pedestrians: Pedestrian facilities are also installed at locations where a need has been identified and facilities have been agreed through consultation and reporting. This includes footway improvements and better crossing facilities such as pelican crossings, zebra crossings, pedestrian traffic islands and tactile paving facilities.
- 3.7 Accessibility: Accessibility is key to reaping the benefit of the various transport options in the borough. Much of the work which is carried out by officers in this area involves linking various transport modes. It promotes the usage of combined modes of transport with recent examples including the making up of roads and footways to make public transport more accessible to all.
- 3.8 Vulnerable Road Users: There are some road users that are more vulnerable than others and they sometimes need facilities which are specifically aimed at their needs. This includes road users such as children, people with disabilities, cyclists and motorcyclists. The provisions which may be conceived initially will be designed to facilitate all road users although they may be of particular benefit to vulnerable road users.

Resources and Prioritisation

- 3.9 Much of the design work for schemes is now carried out in-house as this is more cost-effective than using consultants. There is a revenue budget of £52K to implement minor traffic schemes, such as introducing some double yellow lines or a warning sign. For larger schemes, funding is obtained through the LIP process from TfL; the 2010/11 budget was £3.26M. Some of these larger schemes do however require additional input from specialist consultants. The LIP funded schemes are all developed to target Bromley priorities. The previous TfL funding system was highly dependent on meeting specific criteria for each particular funding stream. There is a far greater flexibility in the new system to identify schemes which are a priority for Bromley.

- 3.10 Previous funding was very prescriptive and there were set criteria for each funding stream. This meant that there needed to be empirical evidence on which to base each bid. This included such things as calculations for accident rates, proposed accident savings and subsequent rates of return for investment.
- 3.11 In terms of congestion, this required evidence related to savings on journey times, including bus journeys. Previously there was not a funding stream that related to parking and so this did not have an indicator. Parking issues were mainly dealt with in relation to how they impacted on other aspects of traffic, for example as an aspect of a local safety scheme or to alleviate congestion at a particular location.
- 3.12 The new system allows for a more pragmatic approach in order to use a combination of the numerical methods of identifying problems in relation to accidents and congestion as well as priorities identified locally by Members and residents. This can include schemes which would not previously have fitted the constraints of the funding streams but are priorities locally.
- 3.13 Each year officers go through issues identified from their assessments and via requests received from Members and residents, to see which might be developed to become potential schemes. Those measures that officers believe to be buildable, cost-effective and in line with Bromley's priorities are listed. Once a list of possible schemes has been put together and possible funding has been identified, this is brought to the attention of Members through a report to the Environment PDS Committee.
- 3.14 Where possible schemes are ranked in order of cost-benefit. This is relatively straightforward for safety schemes, where national guidance exists on how to assess the effect of each measure proposed and how to put a value on each collision projected to be prevented. A value can also be placed on congestion, so that cost-benefit can be calculated in respect to congestion-relief schemes. However, it is not always possible to put a numerical value on the benefit to the borough's residents of each scheme proposed, so the input of ward Members is particularly helpful in respect of such proposals.

Selection of Schemes

- 3.15 The selection of schemes is based on the following factors plus any that present themselves for consideration at individual sites.
- 3.16 Local Safety / Accident Reduction Schemes
- a. Accidents must be identified and assessed in terms of numbers and severity of accidents.
 - b. Potential cost savings to the wider community if these accidents were prevented.
 - c. Whether the accidents are treatable in terms of engineering measures (eg. If the accident was a result of drink driving, poor driving ability, using a mobile phone etc. then this would not be treatable in the engineering sense)
 - d. There must be suitable measures available to prevent, or mitigate against, such accidents.
 - e. In situations where speed is a factor and reduction in speeds will reduce the likelihood of accidents and also reduce the severity in the event of an accident.
 - f. Particular note is taken of the environment in terms of schools or residential areas which are used by children and other vulnerable road users.
 - g. The analysis of all these factors is quite complex and is also conducted in relation to what changes have been made to the traffic environment in the recent past. In order to assess

the effect of other changes to traffic it is also important to look at trends. There may have been a notable number of accidents in the previous three years but if the trend is reducing then we need to look closely at the effect that new measures may have on it. The selection of potential schemes therefore is considered in depth before being added to the list presented to Members in the PDS report.

3.17 Traffic Flow and Congestion

- a. Congestion areas were identified by a Member working party on congestion and analysis by officers.
- b. Lists of the sites are prepared and an assessment of each site made in terms of congestion and delays.
- c. Issues causing flow problems are assessed and traffic surveys carried out if required.
- d. Following that the data is analysed in light of other measures that have been carried out in the area recently or any other issues that may impact on the congestion such as road closures or utility works.
- e. Areas are selected based on where the best cost benefit can be achieved at that time in terms of linking with other works and bearing in mind any future schemes in the area.
- f. A list is prepared and brought forward to Members in order to gather views in relation to progressing the schemes in the coming financial year.

As in the case of the selection of local safety schemes there is considerable investigation that goes into all sites before a list is presented to Committee and the Portfolio Holder, and a decision is made on whether to take these schemes forward. This takes place usually over a period of months prior to submission of the list of schemes.

3.18 Parking Schemes

- a. Parking Schemes are identified in a number of ways but usually they come initially in the form of a request from end users, either directly to officers or through their local ward Members.
- b. The range of requests is from a small local issue such as parking on a junction to the larger requests for a Controlled Parking Zone in an area with Residents' parking permits.
- c. It is important to separate requests into the different categories and deal with them appropriately. For example safety and access problems at specific locations are generally dealt with in batches and when approved by the Portfolio Holder or by Director's delegated decision they are combined in one Traffic Management Order.
- d. Disabled Bays in residential streets have their own procedure and criteria which involves the potential recipient being assessed by the Council's Doctor. In addition these must fulfil specific criteria designed to ensure that the bay will be used effectively.
- e. Requests for parking schemes by residents as a result of parking problems they are experiencing in their areas are more complex and need a detailed and bespoke assessment of the area. These issues are dealt with in more detail in paragraphs 3.19 to 3.30.
- f. The smaller more day-to-day parking issues such as safety issues, access issues and disabled bays are generally consulted on by officers and then reported for decision.

- g. The larger schemes that are at the request of users are more involved and as detailed below are the subject of in-depth consultation with residents, businesses, Members and other local interest groups.

Parking Schemes

- 3.19 Parking schemes are one area of traffic management where it is hard to objectively measure, prioritise and, to an extent, design schemes, and where input from Members and local road users is vital. As parking issues can have a major impact on the residents and visitors to an area, parking schemes that are for more than safety or minor congestion relief require considerable consultation. In the more densely populated urban areas of the borough, where demand for spaces at peak periods is likely to exceed supply, decisions are needed on the allocation of the available space amongst the various categories of potential users. Priority is often given to the demands of local residents and short-stay shoppers first, with long-stay parking for commuters and local workers being facilitated afterwards if there is a sufficient supply of parking spaces.
- 3.20 Suitable measures to control parking might be a simple yellow line scheme, perhaps with a two-hour restriction in the middle of the day to prevent long-term parking, and leaving parking space available for local residents at other times of the day when they might otherwise find nowhere to park. For this type of scheme consideration will need to be given to where the displaced parked vehicles might end up: we wish to avoid simply moving a problem to another road or another area. Simply 'cleansing' an area of long-term parking is not in itself ever a goal.
- 3.21 White 'H-bars' are sometimes used in place of yellow lines, to indicate to drivers that they should not park in front of a drop kerb. However, in order to prevent the widespread use of these advisory markings, which could lead to their being ignored, they are normally only used to indicate entrances to multiple premises, such as an apartment block.
- 3.22 Charging for on-street parking can be a suitable way of managing how long visitors to an area park for and achieving vehicle turnover. This is particularly important to consider in and around town centres.

Parking Permits

- 3.23 Parking permits schemes can be a useful way of maximising parking in an area, so that residents will always have spaces available to park in, without long term parking by commuters or shoppers impinging on this availability. Residents with a permit are generally permitted to park in bays at any time. If there is the capacity these may be shared with other users who may pay and display to park for a certain period of time.
- 3.24 Parking permits zones can form part of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ), or the restrictions in an area can be signed individually. A CPZ requires fewer signs and so less street clutter. Either way, within a permit area there can be a mixture of bays (e.g. pay and display, shared use or resident-only) or just the resident-only bays. Resident-only bays normally operate for specified hours, and the restriction can be for selected days. Most existing zones operate Monday to Friday or include Saturdays. Some zones allow for local businesses to apply for permits as well as residents.

Permit Fees

- 3.25 Local authorities normally charge residents and businesses for permits. Bromley sets the price of its permits based on the level of enforcement that will be needed to ensure the scheme is effective. A proportion of the permit fee covers the cost to Bromley of administering the permits. Residents' permits have ranged in price from £35 to £75, the price normally reflecting the hours of operation of the permit bays. However, for historic reasons, there are a number of anomalies

in the pricing structure. These prices are amongst the lowest in London: Bexley charge a flat rate of £75 or £90, Croydon charge £48 plus a £25 administration fee in the first year, Greenwich charge from £15 to £50, Lambeth charge from £117 to £260 (although very low emission vehicles are free of charge), and Lewisham charge £60.

- 3.26 Visitors vouchers can be purchased in all areas except for Bromley Town Centre, whether a resident has a car of their own or not. Where a local business needs to be able to park vehicles near its premises in order to carry out its business, arrangements can be made to issue business permits. These would normally allow for shared use of bays with residents, in order to avoid sterilising an area when the business vehicles are not present.
- 3.27 Other types of permits can be offered where appropriate, including arrangements for carers, medical permits and permits for Council staff required to make visits in the community as part of their work duties.
- 3.28 As indicated above, Bromley does not have a rolling programme of implementing residents parking schemes, but instead responds to residents' and Members' concerns, or officers' assessments, by investigating possible parking solutions. Sometimes yellow line schemes can be the most appropriate measure to help residents – for example introducing a one-hour yellow line to stop commuters using a road as a car park. Sometimes a permit-scheme for residents can be a better solution, although it obviously involves a cost to residents and doesn't necessarily guarantee a space will be available.

Suitable Areas for Permits

- 3.29 In the design of a permit scheme smaller areas have often proved unsuitable with fewer options for residents to find an available space to park in. For example, creating parking bays in a road of 30 residencies may deliver only 15 bays, so if more than 15 residents purchase a permit, there will be times when their permit will not help a resident to park. In a larger area, there will normally be a bay available, even if it is in a neighbouring road. Permit schemes work best where there are natural boundaries, such as a main road or a railway line. The main problem with schemes of this nature can be that they displace a problem to a road or roads nearby, upsetting other residents. This can result in designing a scheme in an adjacent area where previously there was no problem. Therefore a whole-area approach is best.

Consultation

Member Consultation

- 3.30 There are a number of levels of consultation carried out when a potential scheme is identified. The first level of consultation is contained in discussions with local Members and the Portfolio Holder in order to ascertain whether there is a desire for the scheme locally. This is also a point where it is possible to get some informal feedback from Members as to what they see as being the problem which needs to be targeted.
- 3.31 When this informal discussion has taken place, officers then proceed to draft an initial proposal that can be taken forward to consultation.
- 3.32 The next element of consultation again involves the local Members and Portfolio Holder. The initial proposals and draft designs are presented to them and they are asked for comments prior to the consultation being sent out to the wider public. This allows Ward Members to see whether any initial discussions they may have had with their constituents are accurately represented. The Members are asked to comment within two weeks of receiving the documents. If there are no objections from Members, the consultation documents are sent out to residents and other stakeholders. Any comments that are received from Members at this stage allow for a revised consultation document to be prepared and subsequently sent out to residents.

Public Consultation

- 3.33 The next stage of the process is the public consultation. Letters and plans are delivered to residents and businesses in the area and they are asked to give their views and any comments that they consider pertinent. (Examples of these will be made available at committee.) In addition to residents this will also include other stakeholders such as residents associations and groups with an expressed interest in traffic matters.
- 3.34 Not all schemes will have a full consultation and some smaller parking issues relating to road safety will simply lead to an information letter being sent to residents. This still allows them to send back any relevant comments but it does not necessarily ask their view in terms of whether they want a parking restriction. This mainly relates to situations such as protection of a junction with yellow lines. Public consultation will generally allow three weeks for residents to comment and these responses are summarised and reported to the PDS/Portfolio Holder or Director as appropriate.
- 3.35 For large proposals, such as an area-based parking review, it is essential to obtain feedback from as many residents as possible, as in effect the residents contribute substantially to the design of such a scheme. Such reviews will require at least two stages to the consultation: the first to ascertain the extent of the perceived problem and subsequent ones to help clarify with residents what changes they want.
- 3.36 Feedback from residents is not considered as a referendum, but as important information that will help Members take a view on whether a scheme should proceed. As noted previously, in the case of an essential minor scheme, residents are informed of what has been decided and why.

Statutory Consultation

- 3.37 Statutory consultation is obligatory and is part of the formal process of making a Traffic Management Order. This is required for anything which needs legislation in place for enforcement to take place. In terms of Bromley this will apply to anything with parking restrictions, weigh limits, width limits, banned traffic movements or prescribed routes. This process is dealt with as part of the Traffic Order making process and it includes consultees such as the emergency services, transport operators, freight groups and special interest groups.

Consultation Response Rates

- 3.38 The response rates from consultations can vary greatly from scheme to scheme, as can be seen in the examples below:
- Penge Parking Review = 21% response rate
 - Chislehurst Station Area Parking Improvements:
 - Elms Estate = 74% response rate
 - Blackbrook Lane and Barfield Road = 44% response rate
 - Copers Cope CPZ = 17% response rate
 - Copers Cope CPZ Review = 9% response rate
 - Bromley Road, Shortlands, yellow lines = 28% response rate
 - Kelsey Lane and Kelsey Square, yellow lines = 68% response rate
 - Main Road / Sunningvale, Biggin Hill, local safety & traffic management scheme = 32% response rate
 - Croydon Road, Beckenham, local safety scheme = 16% response rate
 - Widmore Road local safety scheme = 16% response rate
 - Avalon Road Area/Ramsden Estate safety scheme = 10% response rate

- 3.39 The consultation documents do advise people to reply in order to have their views taken on board; however it is not possible to make a person respond. It is often the case that those with a specific view (either in favour or against a proposal) are more likely to respond. Every effort is made to ensure that those potentially affected by any proposal receive the consultation documents: hand deliveries are utilised, using casual staff who know the Borough well and can give feedback regarding any delivery issues.
- 3.40 As a result a decision needs to be made on the basis of those that have replied. On many occasions residents have complained about a particular decision once it was made, but they had not responded themselves. For larger schemes involving resident parking schemes, public exhibitions are held and public meetings. However, even with significant community engagement with some local groups there may not be a high response rate overall.
- 3.41 Officers are keen to use a variety of approaches to engage with residents, as the better the response rate the clearer the picture in terms of local views. This helps to design the best scheme possible. In future, for resident-led local schemes, such as a Controlled Parking Zone, Members will be advised of the response rate, so that this can be taken into account.

Reporting

- 3.42 All consultation responses are reported to the Portfolio Holder or the Director of Environmental Services. There is a threshold value for schemes, set at £5,000, below which a decision may be made by the Director, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Ward Members. All other schemes must be reported to the Portfolio Holder for a decision, after scrutiny by the PDS.

Post Reporting / Implementation

- 3.43 Once a decision has been made by the Director or Portfolio Holder, the traffic engineer leading the scheme will write to the residents informing them of the outcome of the consultation and reporting process. In some instances there will be agreed changes to the original proposals as a result of responses received and this will be fed back to residents.
- 3.44 There are many aspects of work involved in different schemes and sometimes a Traffic Management Order will need to be made before work can commence on site. As a result the initial letter to residents will detail the decision made, and then contractors will drop letters to residents just before work starts on site. These contractor letters go to the areas where work will affect residents when it is underway.

Monitoring and Review

- 3.45 It is the responsibility of officers to monitor schemes once they have been installed. In some cases this will involve visiting the site to see that the scheme is having the desired effect and not causing any knock-on problems in surrounding areas.
- 3.46 Other larger schemes will need a formal review before they are finally signed off. This is the case in situations such as controlled parking zones and large area based safety schemes. In these types of review a consultation will generally be held along with parking and other traffic or collision surveys as appropriate. Results of a review will be reported to the Director or Members and a decision made by the Director or Portfolio Holder for any changes to the scheme. In those situations where a large scale review is to be held this will be indicated in the original report or agreed with Members and residents at a later stage.

Conclusions

- 3.47 The current process of identifying and prioritising traffic schemes is robust and input from Members is sought for any improvements that might be made.

- 3.48 In respect of consultation, the views of residents and businesses are always sought where they will be affected. However, the feedback received is not considered to be a referendum, but as evidence for or against a scheme being taken forward. Members are asked to endorse this process and to suggest any improvements.
- 3.49 Members should be advised of any particularly low response rates in large area schemes or where it is felt that additional resident's views are required.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Policy, Financial, Legal, Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	TfL Funded Work Programme for 2011/2012 (Environmental PDS Report – 28 September 2010) Environmental Services Departmental Plan