

**Report to:** Road Issues Scrutiny Panel

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> December 2006

**Report of:** Head of Highway Management

**Report No:** 9

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**Report Title:** **Traffic Calming in London Borough of Barnet**

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**Confidential /  
Non Confidential:**

**(Non-Confidential)** This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

**Purpose:**

To inform Scrutiny Panel of recent reports into action taken by London Borough of Barnet in relation to traffic calming measures

**Recommendations:**

Panel is requested to note the report

**Decision:**

**Background Doc(s):**

None

## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1) The Panel requested that enquiries be made into reports that, following concerns of the effectiveness and potential detrimental effect on road safety, the London Borough of Barnet had decided to remove all traffic calming features and that this had demonstrated a positive effect in terms of casualty reduction.
- 2) Enquires made of L. B. Barnet resulted in the receipt of information that Barnet has begun a significant road resurfacing programme and has undertaken a review of traffic management measures within that context.
- 3) The detailed responses obtained from L. B. Barnet are attached at Appendices A and B. These describe a policy whereby, before any traffic calming measures are reinstated following re-surfacing work, re-assessment of their effectiveness and consultation with residents and ward members is undertaken, with subsequent recommendations being made to the relevant Executive Member.

## **COMPARISON WITH BOLTON COUNCIL**

- 4) This Council's Traffic Calming Code of Practice states that prior to any re-surfacing work, a re-assessment of the need / appropriateness of traffic calming measures shall be undertaken. Consultations should also take place with Ward Members and residents.
- 5) The Code of Practice does not explicitly require the results of that re-assessment and consultation to be shared with Executive Member.
- 6) Current practice within the Highways and Engineering Division is to undertake re-assessments only where: i) maintenance / re-surfacing work is to be undertaken and ii) in cases where concerns have been identified regarding compliance of traffic calming measures with legislation and/or specification.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 7) The Panel is recommended to note this report.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **London Borough of Barnet (LBB) & Speed Humps**

LBB has a much publicised policy of removing speed humps on residential streets and improving the traffic flows on the main road network to prevent the use of local residential streets as rat runs.

According to testimony to a scrutiny panel of the London Assembly Transport Committee (report published in 2004), LBB was concerned that speed humps cause delays to traffic (including the emergency services); that traffic calming on one route could cause higher speeds and risk-taking by drivers elsewhere; and that vehicles driving over speed humps create additional noise and air pollution. LBB also suggested that speed humps can reduce the journey time reliability of buses and cause discomfort to bus passengers when buses travel over the humps. Apparently, LBB's own analysis of those sites with higher levels of accidents suggests that speed was not the main contributory factor and that individual characteristics of each site play a far greater part.

Requests to LBB for details of, and the rationale for, the removal of road humps confirmed that the policy of removing road humps was located within a council review of traffic management measures. LBB has begun a significant road resurfacing programme and the review of traffic management measures is best viewed within this context.

#### **Removal of Traffic Management Measures**

Along with a commitment to reducing congestion LBB recognises that, despite attempts to reduce the need for travel and encourage more sustainable means of travel, demand on the borough's road network will increase. LBB is resurfacing its roads and taking the opportunity to review its traffic management measures, including existing traffic calming measures. This review process has 3 stages:

##### *1. technical assessment*

Following removal of traffic management measures an assessment is undertaken by LBB officers to establish the initial aims of the measure and judge its success. Accident data from the period before the introduction of the measure is compared with data since its installation. Similarly, respective traffic speeds from before and after the installation of the measures are considered.

##### *2. consultation*

Next, the Council consults the emergency services, the elected ward members, residents, and if appropriate, public transport providers/user groups, etc. Before resurfacing commences residents are informed that their views will be sought following the work regarding reinstatement of the original measures.

##### *3. report and decision*

Finally, a synopsis of the findings is presented to the Executive Member and the relevant Area Environment Sub-committee chairman for decision.

## **Results of review**

A moderate number of schemes have completed the review process in LBB. The Council has concluded that there had been a fall in personal injury accidents in the period following the introduction of traffic calming measures, but that the reduction was similar to that for the whole borough over the same period. However, there were a few specific sites that had shown a 'significant reduction' in accidents. In such instances, some traffic calming measures were retained and/or introduced following resurfacing. At other sites the Council has also introduced other measures (e.g., vehicle actuated speed signs), but not apparently speed humps.

## **Success of the Removal of Traffic Management Measures**

A meaningful analysis of the new schemes in LBB is not yet possible. However, a reduction of 45 per cent in killed or seriously injured [KSI] casualties for 2005 (compared to the 1994-98 average) has been noted across the borough, alongside a 31 per cent reduction in slight casualties.

## **Financial Cost of Removal of Speed Humps**

It has not been possible to find out the financial cost of the removal of road humps. As stated above, as a rule during LBB's road resurfacing works all traffic calming measures are removed. This simplifies the resurfacing process. There are costs associated with new traffic management measures/adaptations but also savings achieved from not reinstating some traffic calming measures.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **London Borough of Barnet: Review of Traffic Management measures**

#### **CONTEXT**

Barnet is faced with the challenge of high levels of projected population growth within the next decade. It is committed to reducing congestion and, alongside measures to reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of more sustainable modes, it recognises that there will be increased demand placed on the borough's road network by the scale of growth expected, and is working to maximise the efficiency of that network. The borough has also embarked on a significant investment programme for road resurfacing.

As part of the carriageway resurfacing programme the opportunity has been taken to review whether improvements can be made to traffic flows by modifications to the existing traffic management arrangements including in some cases removal of existing traffic calming measures. Where existing measures exist these are removed as part of the resurfacing works and the surfacing completed without reinstatement of the measures. The reinstatement of original or alternative measures takes place subsequently following consultation.

#### **REVIEW PROCESS**

##### **Technical Assessment**

Where traffic management measures are removed a technical assessment aims to establish the initial objectives of the traffic management measures, and assess to what degree the measures have been effective in meeting these. The assessment looks at the wider implications of removing or retaining the traffic management and considers accident data from prior to the introduction of the original measures and prior to its removal along with traffic speeds before and after removal of the measures.

##### **Consultation**

The following groups are consulted as part of the process. Others such as Public Transport providers or cycle groups are consulted where applicable.

Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance)

Ward Members

Residents – before surfacing commences residents are advised that their views will be sought following the work regarding reinstatement of the original measures, when they will have had the experience of both arrangements.

##### **Report and decision**

The Head of Environment and Transport presents a synopsis of the officer findings, including consultation results and a recommendation, to the Lead Member for Environment and the relevant Area Environment Sub-committee Chairman for decision.

##### **Results of reviews**

Thirteen schemes have completed the review process. Two of these relate to a review of cycle lanes on the A1000 and one to removal of measures to facilitate introduction of a new bus route (rather than forming part of the resurfacing programme described above) and these are not included in this analysis. 27 other schemes are at various stages of the

process, with a further 10 planned.

For the ten completed reviews that are considered here the measures reviewed comprised:

- 1 mini-roundabout on a junction speed table
- 13 other speed tables
- 10 other mini-roundabouts
- 29 kerb build-outs
- 24 speed humps
- 26 speed cushions
- 1 cycle lane

There were 68 personal injury accidents (12 serious and 56 slight) at these sites in the three years prior to the introduction of the original measures and 56 personal injury accidents (13 serious and 43 slight) in the three years prior to the removal of the measures for resurfacing. This rate of reduction in personal injury accidents across the review sites is similar to that seen across the whole borough over the same period.

Only three of the sites showed any significant reduction in accidents through introduction of the original measures, despite accidents and casualties having fallen generally within the borough over the intervening period (it should be noted accident reduction was not necessarily an objective of the original schemes). In two cases where reductions were seen, in each case these occurred at a single junction. Works have therefore been put in place in mitigation at the individual junctions – in one instance the mini-roundabout at the junction was retained (although the speed table it was on was removed), at the other waiting restrictions were introduced at the junction to improve visibility. At the third location a controlled parking zone has been introduced which it is anticipated will have a beneficial effect on accident rates, but this site in particular needs to be kept under review.

At two other sites additional work has been carried out, in one case to improve visibility at a junction and in the other the introduction of vehicle actuated signs to remind drivers of the speed limit.

The earliest schemes to have been included in this process took place in the 2003/04 financial year. Insufficient time has elapsed since the removal of the measures to carry out a meaningful analysis based on the period since completion of the works, but the accident record of these sites is kept under review. Across the borough generally there has been a 45% reduction in KSI casualties at 2005 against the 1994-98 average and a 31% reduction in slight casualties.

## **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESULTS**

Responding residents were between 62% in favour and 83% opposed to reinstatement of the measures. Responses from ward members were mixed. In two cases the police supported reintroduction of the measures (additional measures were introduced in these cases, although not reinstatement of the original measures), but otherwise the emergency services were opposed to reinstatement.