

### TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

#### Traffic congestion is a problem. What are you doing about this?

Keeping traffic moving and reducing **traffic congestion** is a major challenge faced by most highway authorities in built-up areas. The Royal Borough is densely populated, and whilst car ownership is not high, the road network carries a huge amount of traffic. Traffic on our roads is made up of residents, visitors, local businesses and those simply passing through the borough. Adding more capacity to our roads to meet demand is not a realistic option, so we must make the best of our road network which was established in an age of horse-drawn carriages.

The Council is the Highway Authority for virtually all roads and pavements in the Royal Borough. There are three roads in the borough that are the responsibility of **Transport for London** (TfL), namely; the A4 (West Cromwell Road), the A3220 (Earl's Court one-way system) and A3212 (Chelsea Embankment).

Our policies to reduce traffic congestion are two-pronged:

- Firstly we encourage the use of **alternative transport modes**. We were one of the first authorities to introduce dedicated car club bays. There are now around 200 such bays in the borough and they present a viable alternative to car ownership. We work closely with schools in the borough to assist them in preparing Travel Plans to improve road safety and reduce congestion during the school run. Even our parking policies play a part in reducing parking stress through our visitor parking charges and the hours of parking control.

Many car trips are for short journeys that could have been made on foot or by cycle, and we have a range of measures to encourage a shift to these modes. For walking, we have well maintained pavements that are well lit at night. This year we introduced the Legible London wayfinding system in Exhibition Road and Portobello Road.

- The other approach to reducing traffic congestion is through regulating **roadworks**. In 2010, the Council, was one of the first boroughs to adopt new powers under the Traffic Management Act. The **permit scheme** allows the Council to impose conditions on roadworks such as traffic management, diversions and working hours, and to also coordinate the work taking account of other roadworks in the area.

There have been several instances of collaborative working amongst utility companies as a result and there has been greater accountability of roadworks in the borough. However it is not practical to defer roadworks unduly. Some of the work is dealt with as an emergency or it may need to fit into a wider programme.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What else is being done to manage disruption from roadworks?

Roadwork carried out by public utilities is done under a statutory power and whilst officers meet utility companies regularly and scrutinise their work programmes, there is no incentive for utility companies to finish their work as expediently as possible. Earlier this year, the Department for Transport agreed for TfL to operate a pilot **lane rental** scheme on the TfL Road Network. This potentially places a daily charge for working on their roads at peak times, thereby incentivising utility companies to minimise the time taken and avoid working at peak times. We expect the lane rental scheme to be adopted by other authorities in a few years.

### Who runs the traffic signals and why are they timed as they are?

All traffic lights in London are maintained and controlled by TfL. If we receive a complaint about a fault on a set of traffic lights, we refer it to TfL's fault control desk at [faultcontrolfaults@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:faultcontrolfaults@tfl.gov.uk). Traffic signals are sophisticated pieces of equipment. They continually monitor traffic flows using metal detectors buried in the road, and the signal timings can adjust automatically to respond to excessive traffic queues. The timings for traffic light sequences are calculated for each site based on the amount of traffic needing to get through. The key is to be able to discharge traffic through the lights at a faster rate than the queue that forms when the lights turn red.

This is also primarily the reason why it is not always possible to provide a 'green man' crossing facility at a signalised junction even though there may be a demand for it.

### I'm concerned about road safety in the area.

One of our most important functions is to monitor road accidents in the borough, and if there is a pattern developing, to find appropriate measures to reduce the risk. We receive information on personal injury collisions that are reported to the Police, from Transport for London. The vast majority of accidents in the borough occur on the TfL Road Network. We look for treatable patterns of collisions, such as accidents at night-time which may be rectified by improving the street lighting. In general collisions are decreasing in the borough, however last year there was a rise in collisions resulting in injury to pedestrians, and this area will be a focus of our work programme in the coming year.

In Holland Road this year, we plan to introduce some measures that should improve safety at junctions along Holland Park Avenue.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **I'd like there to be more traffic calming in place, such as through a 20 mph speed limit and more sleeping policemen. What can be done?**

In general, traffic speeds during the day on most roads in the borough are well below the 30 mph speed limit. The Council has resisted requests to create 20mph limits on the basis that, to be effective, these will require physical traffic calming, which is expensive and unsightly.

Enforcement of existing speed limits is a low priority for the Police, so it is unlikely that simply installing some 20mph speed limit signs will achieve the kinds of speed reduction that residents may wish to see.

Equally, in roads where there are already traffic calming measures, such as Abbotsbury Road, it is unlikely that lowering the legal speed limit would have a significant impact on speeds.

Our approach is to address speeding problems only where there is evidence that traffic speed is resulting in personal injury accidents. In this way, we can expect a measurable reduction in accidents as a result of implementing the measures.

### **What are you doing about inconsiderate cycling? What are you doing to improve cycle paths and facilities through Holland?**

We recognise the increasing popularity of **cycling**. We have extensive cycling parking facilities throughout the borough and will try to provide cycle stands wherever there is a demand.

In recent years we introduced cycle parking stands in the carriageway where the pavements were too narrow and these have been well received. We introduced two-way cycling in one-way roads in six roads in the borough a few years ago. It proved to be a success in providing a useful route for cyclists without compromising road safety.

Conversely, we receive complaints about inconsiderate cycling, such as cycling on the pavement and red-light jumping. These are primarily matters for the local police as the Council is not empowered to enforce these contraventions, but we work closely with the Police to enable them to target hotspots.

We also encourage safe cycling through our training programme for adults and children, and ensure bicycles are road worthy by providing free maintenance checks for cyclists.

### **Could there be more Barclay's cycle hire points?**

The cycle hire scheme has proved to be very popular. There are five docking station sites within Holland ward, and a further one to come in Addison Road. Across the borough as a whole there are over sixty docking stations, and the Council is working with TfL on a third phase of the bike hire scheme, which will extend as far north as the Westway as well as west into Hammersmith and Fulham. This phase is due to be delivered in 2013.

### What's happening with the Kensington Olympia station footbridge?

Many residents in the Olympia area will now be aware of TfL's proposal to install ticket gates at Kensington Olympia station. This would mean that the public would no longer be able to use the station footbridge as a shortcut between Kensington and Hammersmith. TfL has offered to issue special permits to local residents, but this would not help residents' visitors or the general public. Both this Council and LBHF have written to TfL to oppose this proposal, and to set out their view that the footbridge represents a public right of way.

## PARKING

### Why are there so many and frequent parking bay suspensions?

**Parking suspensions** can be hugely inconvenient to residents but they are usually requested by residents to allow work to be done to their property or for a large delivery to be made. We aim to accommodate all valid parking suspension requests. Quite often it is difficult to decline a suspension on the premise that there are already other suspensions in the road as it may mean that a delivery cannot take place or scaffolding cannot be erected.

Parking bays are also suspended by utility companies carrying out road works. Last year, for example a considerable number of bays were lost due to Thames Water renewing their mains. The suspension may be necessary because it is the location where the contractor needs to excavate, or a parked car may obstruct traffic (for example if the utility company is excavating on the opposite side of the road). Recently we have started charging utility companies for some parking suspensions and this may encourage them to reduce the number of suspensions requested.

Quite often, the suspension is not required for the whole day and could be reinstated as a parking bay before the end of the day. However, the Council relies on receiving notification from the applicant to lift the suspension which unfortunately does not always happen. Until the suspension is lifted, our parking attendants have to continue to enforce the suspension. We have been trialling 'Back in Service' stickers with our larger customers. These can be affixed to the suspension sign when the suspension is no longer required thereby allowing the parking space to be used.

Last year we introduced a graduated charge for parking suspensions whereby the daily rate increases for long-term suspensions. This has led to a reduction in the number of long term suspensions.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Parking is difficult in the Holland area. Why is this and what are you doing about it?**

**Parking stress** is particularly high in many parts of the Royal Borough and there are more resident parking permits in circulation than there are parking spaces in the borough. Our parking policies are designed to address this; we do not have 'shared' parking bays. Our resident bays are only available for residents during the controlled hours. New large-scale residential developments are 'permit-free' so that these residents would not be eligible for a residents parking permit, and we charge a supplement for second and subsequent permits in the same household.

Unlike many other boroughs, we do not issue visitor permits for use by residents' visitors, or business permits, and we have a stringent eligibility criterion for resident permit applications to reduce the risk of fraudulent applications.

## **PLANNING**

### **Basement developments are causing lots of problems and noise and nuisance. What is the Council doing on this issue?**

The Council is carrying out a review of how it will consider basement development across the Borough. This work involves multiple teams, and includes a review of planning policy; the use of the Environmental Protection regime; and more effective communication. Essentially, we are looking at how the different Council services dealing with basements can be coordinated and how noise and nuisance complaints can be enforced.

To this end the Council will be publishing a new draft Core Strategy policy on basements towards the end of this year, for examination by the Planning Inspectorate in 2013. The public were asked for their views in May, the 'issues consultation', and will be consulted again in December 2012. Whilst it is extremely unlikely that a future policy will disallow all new basement extensions outright, the aim is to better incorporate evidence of impact into the consideration of applications and the enforcement options at existing sites.

### **Could there be more trees planted and greenery on our streets?**

The Council plants about 200 trees every year. The vast majority of these are replacements for trees which have died or had to be removed for safety reasons. We now have nearly 7,000 street trees. Holland is already one of the greener wards in the borough. Four trees were planted in 2011/12 which is about average. Holland Road is a Red Route which, along with its trees, is managed by TfL rather than the Council.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **I'm concerned about my local shops and businesses, particularly on High Street Kensington**

The Council works to support retailers in Kensington High Street through a Retail Forum. However, it cannot intervene to foster individual shops because this is controlled by commercial decisions taken by individual landlords. There is normally no planning control over different types of shop. One shop unit can change over to a completely different product without planning permission. Post offices, by law, are shops so there is no control over the change to a different shop use. The closure of post offices was part of a rationalisation exercise undertaken by the Post Office. The Council lobbied against it but does not have the legal power to resist closure.

Planning permission is however required to change from a shop to a different use like a bank, or a restaurant or an estate agent. The Council's Core Strategy has a policy that aims to protect shops in Kensington High Street unless the change is to another town centre use and most of the surrounding premises are shops. This allows for other town centre uses such as cafes and restaurants but prevents them taking over.

### **I think there needs to be more transparency and consultation with local people on planning issues and applications**

The Council is currently consulting on how it involves local people. The consultation paper *Involving People in Planning* sets out how people can be involved.

When it comes to notifying people about planning applications, the Council exceeds its statutory requirements. We find that under the current combination of arrangements, including neighbour notification, site notice and weekly list, it is extremely rare for people not to find out about proposed local developments. Neighbours are notified where they are affected by material changes to a planning application. We cannot notify more widely by hard copy post because of costs. Moreover, residents can 'self-serve'. Anyone can sign up via the My RBKC button on the council's website to be sent an automatic notification of planning applications in their chosen area. We want to publicise this service more widely.

The Planning Committee consists of democratically elected members and its decisions are made in open committee. Any interested resident may attend the committee and hear the discussion. Every planning application, including all the documents, can be viewed by the public. Officers' reports are also available for public view 5 days before committee.

### **What's happening with the Commonwealth Institute?**

The proposals for the development of the Commonwealth Institute site have now been granted planning permission. Residents had significant opportunities to make their views known on the scheme during its development. Planning conditions, a traffic management plan and a site/events management plan will all help to control potential noise from the completed development.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Could you please control the number and density of new homes, particularly on the Warwick Road site?**

All of the Warwick Road sites have been granted planning permission. Of the four sites, only one (Charles House) was outside the density range identified in the density matrix in the London Plan. In addition, both the Homebase site and 100 West Cromwell Road provide fewer homes than the land use allocation identified in Core Strategy Policy CA6.

However, density when considered in isolation provides no indication as to whether a development is good or bad. The historic townscape of the Royal Borough is built to very high density but is generally considered to be of high quality. The appropriate density of development must be judged in relation to surrounding buildings and open spaces, the additional traffic that would be generated and the community facilities that can be provided.

In the case of the Warwick Road sites, the schemes included a significant amount of open space within the development including a public park. They also included a new primary school and significant financial contributions towards health and community facilities. Therefore, although the schemes are high density, they are of good design and provide significant open space and contribution toward social infrastructure.

### **Control the installation of mobile/wireless antennas**

Proposals for antennas are dealt with under specific government regulations. Most proposals for freestanding antennas, such as 'streetworks' masts, will require consent of one sort or another from the Council. The relevant factors are siting and design. Installations are required to comply with the standards of the Health Protection Agency. The Council has policies to resist street clutter and will also resist schemes that harm the character of conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings.

### **Please protect cars from damage caused by lime trees and inoculate in spring and summer**

The Council's arboricultural team advise that it is not a practical proposition to inject trees to prevent sap drop because it is very expensive and only partially effective.

### WASTE MANAGEMENT, RUBBISH, RECYCLING

#### What items can I recycle in orange bags?

Any paper and card (including magazines and junk mail but not shredded paper as it can clog up machinery at the recycling plant), glass bottles and jars (rinsed, no lids as these are sometimes a different type of plastic, can clog up machinery, and can also act as missiles when containers are crushed and they pop off), food and drink cans and tins (rinsed), plastic bottles (rinsed, no lids), pots, tubs and trays, and juice and milk cartons (essentially wax coated cardboard).

#### Why can't I recycle using black bags?

Recyclable material placed in a black bag will never be recycled. The collection crews cannot see through the bag to check whether or not it is uncontaminated and have therefore been instructed to treat all black bagged waste as non-recyclable.

#### Why are there only five locations where I can obtain additional orange recycling bags, and why do I need to produce a voucher or proof of residence?

Additional orange bags can be obtained free of charge from the following outlets:

**Town Hall** reception desk, Hornton Street, W8

**Market Office**, 72 Tavistock Road, W11

**Reception Office**, Stable Yard, Holland Park, W8

**North Kensington Sports Centre**, Walmer Road, W11

**Chelsea Old Town Hall** reception desk, King's Road, SW3

There have been only five outlets since the libraries moved to a system of self service, meaning that the distribution of bags could not be monitored. Proof of residence is required as the Council needs to control the amount spent on these bags and:

- 1) a number of residents have been obtaining the bags for use with mixed recycling banks which is unnecessary and a waste of resources;
- 2) the use of the bags was sometimes abused, for example builders have been seen using the bags as free refuse sacks.

#### Why won't the dustmen take my garden waste?

The current policy is to compost garden waste via the Council's special garden waste collection service. However, there is an alternative view that it is just as environmentally friendly to incinerate garden waste as it produces electricity. This view has not yet been fully explored and so current policy prevails at the present time.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why are there only two locations I can purchase biodegradable garden waste bags?**

It is vital that anyone purchasing these bags register for the collection service as it is an 'opt-in' service and the waste collectors will only ever visit registered properties. In order to manage this effectively, bags can only be made available at these locations. We prefer to take orders and payment over the telephone and then deliver the bags ourselves.

### **Why can't we have more litter bins?**

There are different schools of thought about litter bins: some people like them and some do not. One view is that they attract rubbish dumping (and there is evidence of this from a trial in Earls Court); another is that containers should be provided for litter emanating from passers-by. The Royal Borough is currently reviewing its Litter Bin placement policy so that we maintain a similar number as we have currently, but that they are sited in the most effective locations. Many older bins are now worn out and a new style of free-standing bin is under consideration. In addition to the cost of the bins, there is an ongoing cost to service them so that they are not unsightly and overflowing. Officers receive ad hoc requests for bins in a variety of locations and we need to maintain some consistency, as far as possible, in how we handle those requests.

### **Why are dumped sacks left on the streets with stickers on them, rather than taken away?**

In spite of the fact that the Royal Borough provides more collections than most of the rest of the country, some people still dump rubbish on the street when it is not the day of collection, or instead of using waste storage areas. Those residents and businesses who comply understandably complain about this rubbish dumping. We have found that highlighting dumped rubbish and leaving it for the next collection so that everyone can see it is being investigated has, in some cases, deterred rubbish dumpers, and perhaps even potential dumpers.

### **What are you doing to reduce dog fouling?**

We launched a Dog Fouling Campaign in July in various hotspot dog walking and dog fouling area across the borough. This involved depositing yellow cardboard poop scoop pyramids to promote the campaign, speaking to dog owners, handing out dog pooh bags, and giving warnings as appropriate. If this campaign is deemed successful, we intend rolling it out to other areas.

### **Why can't we have more dog pooh bins?**

Dog pooh bins are more expensive to maintain than ordinary litter bins as the waste has to be treated in a different way when it is concentrated as a single waste type. Many authorities encourage dog owners to take their dog pooh home to put in their own bin. Dog pooh can also be placed in ordinary litter bins.

### STREET PAVING AND MAINTENANCE

#### How are the pavements maintained?

The pavements and roads in the Royal Borough are some of the best maintained in London as illustrated in London wide surveys. Our approach is two-pronged:

- Firstly we establish a **programme** of renewing roads and pavements in the borough which is agreed at the start of each year by the Cabinet Member for Transport. The list of sites is prioritised based on an appraisal of their condition. Our main roads are independently assessed using a mechanical method while other roads and pavements are systematically inspected throughout the year. It is worth noting that we aim to repair the highway before major defects (such as potholes) appear as this approach is less disruptive and more cost effective.
- Secondly we carry out **reactive maintenance** throughout the year to address localised defects. Again this work is prioritised based on the severity of the defect.