

# **Transportation and Parking Best Value Review**

## **Report of Panel's Findings**

**May 2003**

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## **Executive Summary**

The panel identified many strengths in the Transportation and Parking services, including:

- good transportation strategy with clear links to other strategies
- successful bidding documents and delivery record, rewarded by high funding level
- reducing accident rates
- strong professional staff base
- good relationship with parking contractors
- both services have responded well to greatly increased workload

It is difficult to judge whether the two services are efficient and effective, because of gaps in information and analysis. This is particularly the case with financial data, but generally the evidence on performance, especially comparison, is in short supply. During the course of the review, the services began to compare and challenge more, with a view to improving their operations and this is welcomed. The panel noted improvements in the following areas:

- consultation, particularly with traffic and parking schemes
- starting to develop local PI's
- improved internal liaison
- stronger focus on customer care
- measures for staff retention, communication and development.
- steps to improve parking contractor performance

The self assessment report set out an action plan for improvement. The panel noted that in many instances these actions were non-specific and they do need to be further developed into more specific actions and measurable outcomes. The panel has added some further recommendations, which are spread through the report and repeated in appendix one. Senior managers will need to ensure that the encouraging moves towards a process of continuous improvement, made during the course of the review, are not allowed to slide, when day-to-day business pressures take over from the challenge of the review.

The panel would particularly emphasise the need for the following:

- continue to develop ways of consulting and gaining customer feedback
- improved financial analysis
- strategy for off street car parks, including financial
- develop local PI's, including strategic, qualitative and outcome based
- introduce more formal contract monitoring criteria
- continue to improve customer service across all functions.

## **Section two**

### **Introduction**

#### **2.1 Review process**

A best value review team was established to review the Transportation and Parking enforcement services in May 2001. Following slow progress, the review was switched to the panel process in October 2002. The panel was made up of:

- Independent convenor                      Paul McConnell
- Council member                              Ralph Fox
- Finance officer                                Neil Wilcox
- Critical friend                                 Roger Khanna, Borough Engineer LB H&F
- Policy & performance officer      Bridget Duley

The services presented their initial self assessment (SA) report in January 2003 and the panel met on 27 and 28 January. Following comments and recommendations from the panel, a revised report was submitted in April 2003. The panel reconvened on 6<sup>th</sup> May. The SA report accompanies this report of the panel, together with supporting appendices, A to X. Other supporting material was also made available to the panel, too voluminous to include with the report.

During the panel days the following were interviewed or presented information:

- Richard Saunders                              Director of Environment
- Phil Rankmore                                 Director of Transportation Unit
- Richard Northen                                Parking Manager
- Keith Balmer                                    Director of StreetCare
- Qassim Kazaz                                    Head of Strategy
- David Eaglesham                                Head of Traffic Management
- Sandra Worrall                                 Policy & Best Value Manager
- Janet Kear                                        Service Development Officer
- Satnam Sahota                                  Principal Engineer (Parking)
- Tara Gabriel                                     Parking Appeals Officer
- Fouzi Oulad Zahra                              Vinci Park Manager
- Michael Lambert                                Senior Appeals Officer

This report is the product of the combined review team and panel process.

The scope agreed for the review is set out in Section three. It is cross-cutting in the sense that, although both services are within Environmental Services, they are not a single service unit, with Parking being part of StreetCare. The rest of StreetCare (street cleaning, refuse collection) was reviewed in 2000. Also Highways Maintenance, which is part of Transportation, was reviewed separately in 2001. In the SA report attached, an attempt has been made to incorporate the main findings

of the Highways review, although this was not the case in the earlier draft. The panel has not attempted to update the Highways Maintenance review. This report only refers to the Highways review incidentally or where it referred some matters on to the Transportation and Parking review.

## **2.2 Overview and scale of services**

Transportation and Parking are important and sometimes controversial issues of concern to the council and to local residents. The Transportation service represents the council in its statutory role as highways and traffic authority. Together the two services make important contributions to national, regional and borough objectives, in relation to environmental sustainability, accessibility, safety, regeneration and economic growth.

The Transportation Unit employs about 87 FTE posts (including Highways) plus 27 school-crossing patrols, with a total salary budget of around £3.4m in 2003/04 and a total turnover of around £12m. Three teams are the main subjects of this review – Strategy, Traffic Management and Civil Engineering – plus support staff (Major Projects was a separate team at the start of the review but is now within Strategy).

The Parking service comprises an in-house team which manages two major contracts and also the parking appeals function, which must be carried out by council staff. It has 13 staff members with a salaries budget of about £340k in 2003/04. It projects income of £8.7m with a surplus for use on traffic and parking schemes of £2.8m. The on and off street enforcement activity is contracted out to Vinci Park UK and notice processing to Vertex.

## **2.3 Major achievements**

The Transportation and Parking teams have been responsible for some major achievements in recent years, some of which are summarised below:

- Secured highest London borough funding of £6.9m for 2003/04.
- Significant reduction in personal injury accidents on roads
- Expansion and restructuring of staffing resources to meet expanding workload and staff concerns
- Successful delivery of greatly expanded programme of parking, safety and other traffic management schemes
- Construction of 'estate access corridor' on Wembley Industrial Estate.
- Accreditation of Highways Maintenance to ISO9001:2000.
- Letting Highways Maintenance contracts on new conditions, including incorporation of ISO 14001 Environmental Management System and ISO 9001 Quality Management system requirements.
- Parking enforcement has responded well to huge increase on workload, through rapid expansion in CPZ's.
- Appeals process has excellent success rate.

## **Section three**

### **Scope of review**

The best value review of Transportation and Parking will examine the efficiency, effectiveness and economic operation of:

- StreetCare: Parking and
- Transportation: Strategy; Civil Engineering; Traffic Management; and Major Projects.

It will also examine how these units/teams contribute to the objectives of the Interim Transport Plan and whether the current structure is the most effective for discharging these responsibilities; and how the strategy is implemented so as to improve service delivery to all transport users.

- How does the ITP contribute and reflect national, regional and corporate objectives with regard to transportation policy.
- Are the aims of the ITP with regard to parking, road safety, traffic calming and CPZs clear, consistent and effective.
- Are these same attributes demonstrated in the emerging Interim Local Implementation Plan and the Parking Strategy documents.
- Are the agreed objectives being translated into effectively implemented traffic management policies
- How well does the Council communicate its objectives to the public and does it genuinely consult the public and other stakeholders on transportation and parking issues.
- Do our local transportation objectives meet real local needs.
- Is the Council's statutory function as Highway Authority being delivered in the most appropriate and cost effective way.
- Does the unit provide an optimum contribution to the broader objectives of major projects within the Council's regeneration strategy .
- Is work programmed effectively to maximise use of current budgets and are there alternative models.
- How can the Council maximise the collection rate on the parking account
- Is the revenue generated by the parking account spent in line with strategic objectives.
- Is there scope to increase the contribution made by the private sector to road maintenance and improvement.

Recommendations of previous best value fundamental review and, in particular, the Highways Maintenance review should be incorporated and covered by this review.

The review will also look at the inter-linkages with other services not yet reviewed, in particular, Highways and Emergency Operations and Streetcare: abandoned vehicles.

## **Section four**

### **Findings**

#### **4.1 Strategy and policy**

The scope of the review asked for some specific questions to be answered:

- do transportation strategies and policies line up with national, regional and corporate objectives
- are the aims clear and consistent
- are the aims translated into effective traffic management policies.

The Transportation Unit has a clear understanding of how the hierarchy of national transportation policy to local traffic management schemes fits together. It has a dedicated Strategy team, which has produced a well-written Interim Local Implementation Plan (ILIP) which specifically recognises a shift in policy emphasis towards reducing the use of the car, in favour of encouraging the use of public transport and a drive to improve road safety. Together with the associated annual Borough Spending Plan (BSP) submission, the ILIP has been successful in attracting a high level of resources into the borough, from Transport for London (TfL) for transport investment. This is evidence that the borough's transportation plans are indeed consistent with regional objectives and that TfL has confidence that the borough has effective traffic management schemes to implement these objectives. The unit has also produced a Parking Strategy and is in the process of producing strategy documents for walking, cycling and public transport.

The Council's Corporate Strategy for 2002-2006 sets out five cross-cutting priorities for action, which transportation and parking strategies support, particularly:

- the promotion of the quality of life and green agenda.
- supporting children and young people, and
- achieving service excellence.

The panel has some reservations about what is otherwise an area of strength. Firstly, the methods used by the Transportation Unit to consult on the ILIP and Parking Strategies should be further developed for future strategy documents. There is no analysis of the results of consultation in the ILIP document or evidence that they shaped the strategies themselves. Also it is not clearly set out where conflicts arise between national or regional policies and local needs or how these are reconciled.

The Parking Strategy is mainly a strategy for enforcement. It does not make an assessment of the overall need for on or off street parking spaces, for example to support local businesses and shopping centres. It does not set out a specific programme for controlled parking, year on year, together with financial projections. The internal audit of CPZ's (X) also suggests that the parking strategy needs to be strengthened in terms of long term planning, financial projections, budgeting and financial control.

## Recommendation

*That there is more systematic consultation on transportation and parking strategy and policies and that the results are publicised and explicitly addressed.*

*That the positive side of parking service provision is developed in strategy documents, including an assessment of requirements borough-wide and at shopping, employment and other centres.*

*That a forward programme of controlled parking schemes is mapped out, with an associated financial analysis.*

## 4.2 Programme and service delivery

### Scheme delivery.

The traffic management team is one of the larger subdivisions of the Transportation unit. It has responded well to a greatly increased workload, in terms of the implementation of traffic management schemes, particularly CPZ's and road safety schemes. The number of CPZ's in Brent has increased from 6 to 23 over the last four years. It is a credit to them that they have managed to respond to this additional workload with only a modest increase in staffing resources. The amount of financial resources available to the borough has expanded enormously in the last two years and it is clearly a huge challenge to ensure that these are fully and effectively utilised.

One of the questions asked in the scope is:

- is work programmed effectively and are there alternative models?

There is an inherent problem with annual budgets being set relatively late for construction schemes, which require consultation, design and possibly tendering and are subject to the vagaries of the British climate. It is maintained that there are no alternative models as such. Council budgets for highway projects are confirmed in March, an improvement on previous practice. Within these constraints, the unit carries out design and consultation in the previous year, once there is some confidence that resources will be available, so that implementation can be started as early in the financial year as possible.

The Council's financial regulations also demand a lengthy tendering period for schemes over a certain size. This has the potential to delay implementation and the example of Neasden Town Centre was given. Also the Transportation unit is looking at ways of possibly repackaging contracts either through a term contractor or a partnering arrangement. An exercise is being carried out to compare costs from tendered schemes against rates produced by existing term contractors.

A similar issue exists for major civil engineering projects. The Council's revised tendering procedures have added to the difficulty in achieving timely contract letting, once funds are secured. This is being reviewed with Corporate Legal Services.

Finally, there has been a problem in the past with the uncertainty surrounding the income from surpluses on the parking account i.e. will it meet its projected income.



The report says that monitoring of this income source will be improved during 2003/04 by monthly reports. This is clearly essential.

While there are ongoing initiatives to tackle individual issues, the panel is concerned that there appears to have been no overview of these related issues in the review and a lack of urgency in concluding the appropriate actions, given the length of the review process to date. This must be an area of risk, given the greatly expanded resources at stake and the possible effects on other council priorities such as regeneration schemes.

#### Recommendation

*That an urgent review be undertaken of all aspects of financial and scheme planning, programming and management, with a view to producing a cohesive set of actions designed to reduce the risks to effective scheme delivery.*

### Public transport

It is a stated aim of transportation policy to encourage the use of public transport, but the borough has only an indirect role in promoting this. At the challenge day users were critical of the lack of influence the council had on public transport providers and services within borough. The improvement of public transport was the most frequently raised need for improvement in the 2001 MORI survey (49%).

The Transportation unit has now appointed a senior public transport promoter, re-established member level meetings with transport providers and is investigating setting up a public transport user forum. This is a good response to a need for improvement. The action towards the forum should be more positively stated but it is thought to be a genuine commitment. The service should record evidence of how service provision has been successfully influenced as a result of these steps.

#### Recommendation

*That the public transport user forum be set up.*

*That evidence of successful influence be recorded and fed back to residents.*

### Consultation

The scope asks:

- how well does the Council communicate its objectives to the public and does it genuinely consult the public and other stakeholders on transportation and parking issues?
- do our local transportation policies meet real local needs?

Reference to consultation at the strategy level has already been made, above. A considerable amount of consultation does take place at Area Forums on a wide range of transportation matters. This is considered to be very successful, although it is not clear how this influences policy or is fed back to residents. Consultation on some traffic management schemes is required by statute but there has been a

considerable improvement in the methods adopted and an expansion of the range of schemes covered.

This has culminated in a recent report to Highways Committee (15 April 2003) which sets out recent practice, recommends some changes and gains members endorsement of a standard protocol for consultation of traffic and parking schemes. This is an example of good practice.

The SA report suggests some LPI's associated with consultation and these may be refined over time. The unit should develop some qualitative indicators about the success of schemes. The SA report recommends that post scheme consultation is undertaken within six months. This could be the best test of success and some targets need to be devised for satisfaction levels amongst residents and local businesses. Also it is understood that no post scheme reviews have been undertaken to date and a programme should be set out to catch up with the back-log. This may have budgetary implications, as well as an impact on the programme for future schemes.

#### Recommendation

*That more qualitative as well as quantitative LPI's are developed to judge the success of schemes.*

*That a programme of post-scheme reviews is set up, taking account of budgetary and programme implications.*

### **4.3 Performance management**

#### **Efficiency and cost effectiveness**

The review has collected together internal financial data and some comparative Cipfa data. It is accepted that obtaining valid comparative financial data is very difficult, because of gaps in the data and because variations between authorities may be more down to inconsistencies in data collection and definition than true differences. That said, the units concerned have not attempted very much analysis of the data that is available nor drawn any conclusions or even raised questions for further investigation.

Cipfa estimates for Transportation, 2001-02, shows that Brent's maintenance expenditure on principal roads is lowest in the group (page 56 and R) - total £163k against group average of £442k. This supports the contention in the Highways Maintenance review that the borough should increase expenditure on road maintenance. Expenditure on safety maintenance has increased from a low base of £8k to £53k (2000/01 to 2001/02) but is insignificant compared with Newham's £338k with a similar length of roads. Brent spends significantly more on transport planning than the rest of the group. Does the unit know what it is getting from this apparently high level of expenditure?

Similarly for Parking, the Cipfa data shows that Brent has the lowest number of off street parking spaces and expenditure on the provision of off street parking exceeds income (page 58 and S). Appendix H further shows that although Brent's on street

parking income is highest in the group, its costs are also high. Again this requires further explanation. It is not known what can be concluded from the comparison with Camden LB (p 59) or the change in tickets with outstanding payments (p60).

These are all questions requiring further exploration, whereas the SA report appears to end with simply reporting the figures.

There is a table on page 58 which shows the impact of expenditure on safety schemes on Personal Injury Accidents (PIA's). This is an excellent example of how to measure cost effectiveness, as it relates site specific accidents before and after safety works, the cost of the works and the notional cost saving as a result of lives and injuries being saved. It shows more generally that the road safety schemes being pursued are contributing towards achieving the national and regional targets for accident reduction. There is a question as far as 2000/01 is concerned that the particular schemes pursued in that year may not have been cost effective and that the severity of accidents may have reduced but not the overall number, but this is not commented on in the report.

## Recommendation

*That the financial data so far produced is the beginning, not the end of the attempts at financial analysis and that explanations be sought for the differences in figures between authorities and over time.*

## National performance indicators

Neither Transportation or Parking have a good history of performance monitoring, although improvements have been made during the course of the review, with the services beginning to develop some local PI's. Apart from highways condition there are very few BV or AC PI's for Transportation and none for Parking (p 20).

The borough is now improving rapidly in the provision of disabled crossing facilities from a very low base and is performing well in relation to sign-posted footpaths. The accident PI breaks down into a complicated set of sub PI's, which seem to show that performance is generally improving in line with national targets and is good compared to other authorities. The monitoring of this in relation to individual schemes has been referred to already.

## Local performance indicators

Given the relative absence of Audit Commission PI's for Transportation and Parking, the development of local performance indicators is essential. Both units have now begun the process of defining these and this is welcome. This is however at a very preliminary stage. In some of the areas suggested for LPI's, the PI seems to be process rather than output or outcome related (e.g. respond to developers' applications within 15 days or to respond to 80% of applications from Planning within three weeks). Or it is unclear how a target will be formulated (e.g. 25% increase in children receiving cycle training within one year of commencement of the cycle training programme).

Some targets will have relevance as one-off indicators and some can be used to monitor performance over time. But some external comparison is necessary for validation of performance and to alert us to opportunities to improve and learn from best practice elsewhere. It is also unfortunate that attempts to engage with other authorities in benchmarking clubs have had little success so far. But it is important to develop some PI's which can be compared with other authorities.

## Recommendations

*That Transportation and Parking develop some strategic or headline targets, which encapsulate the essential purpose of their activities and measure the impact on the public. (Reducing accident rates is an example of this, although it is complicated by its subdivision into a series of separate indicators).*

*Develop a range of LPI's, which are qualitative as well as quantitative and cover outputs and outcomes as well as processes.*

*Make greater efforts to engage in (including initiating) benchmarking activities with other boroughs and private organisations.*

## Customer service

The annual Environment Services customer satisfaction surveys show a significant increase in the satisfaction rating of Transportation from 52% to 73% over three years, close to the Environment Service average of 75% in 2002. Parking is not separated out from StreetCare but a small survey of customers was undertaken. It is recognised that measuring the satisfaction of people who have been subject to some enforcement action is difficult. Even in the less contentious area of permit renewals, which are handled by an outside contractor, customers expressed relatively low levels of satisfaction with the politeness and helpfulness of staff and with being treated fairly. Action has already been undertaken to address this, including changes to the management of the parking shops, staff training and extended opening hours. The swift action taken is commendable and the effect of these changes should now be monitored, as proposed.

Telephone answering has been below the standard set by Environment Services, particularly for the parking contractors but also Transportation. A number of steps have been taken which should improve performance, from removal of redundant telephone points and additional staff to accommodating Transportation staff on a single floor. There is an impression that the Transportation teams act independently and that there is insufficient drive by senior managers to give this priority and to impose a common standard across all teams. The parking contractors in particular have been under-performing for a long time and the matter is only currently under investigation by the Assistant Director. These contractors represent the council and an internal team would not have been able to get away with such a low level of performance.

Correspondence monitoring needs to be strengthened as admitted in the SA report. Complaints seem to be on a rising trend for Transportation, probably mainly concerning the condition of roads and footways and stable or possibly declining

slightly for Parking – the graph is unclear (p26). There is no analysis of the nature of the complaints or if changes are due to declining or improving services.

## Recommendations

*Regular feedback is obtained from Parking customers as to the level of satisfaction with the service provided.*

*That there is a drive across all areas of Transportation and Parking to raise the level of telephone answering, especially with parking contractors, with agreed procedures for use of call handling technology.*

*That complaints are analysed, with a view to identifying areas for improved service delivery.*

## Contract monitoring

The SA report is virtually silent on contract monitoring. This is a particular concern with regard to the two parking contractors. There appears to be a lack of formality in the management of these contracts. It seems that there are no agreed performance targets built into these contracts and no system of incentives or penalties in place. The contracts are about to be extended for a period of two years and it is recommended that the inclusion of some performance targets is negotiated with the contractors. This will not only focus the current contractors on their priorities but also serve as valuable preparation for the new contracts to be let in two years time.

## Recommendation

*That more explicit performance monitoring of parking contractor performance be built into the current contracts and that this is further developed for the new contracts to be let in two years time.*

## Parking income collection

The scope asked:

- how can the council maximise the collection rate on the parking account?

Senior officers were concerned about the falling collection rate (down from 70% to 60%) and the failure to deliver the projected surplus in 2001/02. The problem of falling collection rates is said to be a common one across London and Brent's position is better than most. Total income has, however, risen year on year as the number of CPZ's has expanded rapidly. The issue is not adequately analysed in the report, although some information is presented (p33,34, 93,94 and T). Income collection in 2002/03 seems to be above target at the time of reporting. Is this because of improved procedures or simply more opportunities from more CPZ's? It is not clear from the table on page 33 if there were targets in earlier years. Various recommendations for action are proposed. These actions may be the right ones, but it is difficult to see if they will improve the situation without a fuller analysis of the problem. It is implied that the problem is partly due to poorly written tickets which

cannot be enforced. An unspecified number of tickets have to be cancelled because of deficiencies in signs and lines. The number of parking permits issued may also be falling off.

#### Recommendation

*It is recommended that a fuller analysis of income collection be presented to demonstrate how the actions proposed go to the causes of the problem.*

## 4.4 Organisation and human resources

### Organisational structure

The scope asks:

- Is the Council's statutory function as highway authority being delivered in the most appropriate and cost effective way?

The Transportation unit is an in-house engineering organisation which represents the Council as highway and traffic authority. Key staff are direct employees of the Council, supplemented by agency/contract staff and with some projects being contracted out. Construction work is entirely carried out by private contractors.

There are other models including that followed by Ealing LB, which has fully externalised its equivalent service. However, it still requires an engineering client organisation and has suffered recruitment problems. Brent's service compares favourably with Ealing's, which has suffered from tensions between client and contractor. Conversely, Harrow LB which is a well performing authority is organised similarly to Brent.

Brent has delivered its workload with a relatively small core of engineering staff. It has been able to respond flexibly to increases in budget and workload, by recruiting new staff and the senior managers believe this would have been more difficult to achieve in a contractual relationship. Some attempt was made during the review to gather comparative information on structure and costs, but with little success, owing to the reluctance of other authorities to share information. The review concludes that the current in-house unit works well and that there is no evidence of better services being provided by other arrangements.

Parking enforcement is already largely externalised, with two contractors dealing with the on-street enforcement and income collection. Notwithstanding remarks elsewhere about contract monitoring, there appears to be a good working relationship between the two contractors and the council. The contractors are co-operative and have responded well to increases in workload and the need to make changes to improve service. The division of the work into two contracts does not appear to be a problem, but it is understood this will be reviewed in time for the re-letting of contracts in two years time.

The review has also looked at whether services should be organised differently, internally. One obvious model would be to combine the Parking service with Transportation. This is rejected by the units concerned, because Parking's

enforcement and appeal role is better provided independent of the policy and design functions, preserving a degree of impartiality. Issues of poor communication between Transportation and Parking, which were raised, can and are being tackled by other means (see below). Parking is currently within StreetCare, which provides a range of street level environmental services. It is intended to develop further cross-working between parking and other StreetCare functions.

There is, in any case, a post of Assistant Director, which covers Transportation, StreetCare and Highways Emergency Operations, which will help provide cohesion. The new post holder will review the internal organisation in time. The unit heads and the Director of Environment Services felt strongly that a period of stability was now required, in line with corporate policy to consolidate and stabilise after years of continuous change across the council.

The panel concurs with this position.

### **Staffing resources**

In a staff consultation day held at the start of the review, Transportation staff were invited to set out the strengths and weaknesses of their unit. They concentrated entirely on internal issues and said that staffing issues were the biggest weakness of their unit, including recruitment and retention difficulties, lack of career progression opportunities, poor pay, workload, and unclear roles and responsibilities. In descending order of priority they went on to list poor internal communication, poor training opportunities and office accommodation as further weaknesses.

Since that time, considerable progress has been made to address these issues. The unit has moved office and is now all together on one floor. Restructuring has taken place and additional posts have been recruited to, including traffic management, support services, school safety and public transport posts. A career grade scheme is being trailed in traffic management with a view to extending the principle to other areas.

There is now a 'team briefing' system whereby information is cascaded from senior managers to staff at team meetings, with upward flow also encouraged. These meetings are minuted. A staff forum has also been established to provide a further vehicle for staff to management communication. There is a unit based training plan based on both the business needs of the unit and the individual's development needs. All managers are to receive a base level of management training. Staff are all appraised annually with a six month review, in line with the corporate scheme and this includes personal development. Environment Services has attained IIP accreditation and these practices have been audited as part of that assessment.

This is a major success of the Transportation unit in a short space of time. However, it is noted that the Traffic Management team's own staff consultation says (p48) that internal communication still needs to be improved. It also says that there could be improvement in the way the unit is co-ordinated and roles and responsibilities better defined. These residual issues are not expanded in the SA report and it is recommended that they be explored and actions taken to address them.

The same communication, appraisal and staff development systems operate for Parking as part of Environment Services. The contractor's management in the parking shops has been strengthened and Parking Attendants are now supervised better and are receiving more training. Some staffing and communication issues, similar to Transportation's, were raised by Parking's internal and contractors' staff. Some of these were to do with specific operational matters dealt with elsewhere, such as signs and lines, parking fees. But there were issues of staff/management communication and workload which should be reviewed.

#### Recommendation

*That the issues of internal communication and organisation within Transportation as raised by Traffic Management be specifically explored, with the same opportunity given to other teams in Transportation and Parking and actions taken to address them.*

### **4.5 Operational issues**

#### **Parking priorities, times and charges**

Various issues have been raised by residents at the challenge day and in the local press and by parking staff, about the perceived fairness of parking enforcement. Some members of the public believe that PA's are on an incentive scheme to raise income and that this leads them to go for soft targets to maximise their earnings with least trouble and effort. This applies also to the tow-away truck.

There is no incentive scheme of this type. There is also an agreed scheme of priorities for enforcement e.g. through routes and bus routes are priority areas. The activities of the enforcement contractor are monitored, although there are insufficient staff to check adequately on the street. There should be more specific measures of performance built into this monitoring. It is also recommended that more publicity is given to this prioritisation so that the public becomes more aware of how the scheme operates.

PA's in particular said that their job was made more difficult by the complexity of the parking restriction times and charges. Again some people see it as unfair that charges in one area are different from another. It is a stated intention to review and simplify the structure of parking times and charges. To some extent this cuts across the desire to allow local residents and businesses to choose times which suit them and a balance will need to be struck. A timetable for this review should be included with the action plan.

#### Recommendations

*That the priority scheme for enforcement activity be made into formal PI's which can be used monitor the enforcement contract.*

*That more publicity and consultation is developed on the parking enforcement scheme, including the contractors performance in relation to agreed targets, so that people can judge the fairness of the scheme against facts not rumour.*



*That the review of parking times and charges is actioned within an agreed timescale.*

## **Off street car parks**

The SA report proposes action to upgrade existing car parks (8.3.4). This report has already questioned the income from and costs of running these car parks, as well as the absence of a strategic assessment of off street parking requirements. The Transportation and Parking units appear to have a blind spot in relation to the provision of parking space as a positive service. Many of the car parks undoubtedly need upgrading but this should be done in the context of a strategy for off street parking provision, an assessment of the condition of and use made of each car park, an understanding of expenditure and income and of the financial impact of the work proposed.

### **Recommendation**

*That the Parking strategy be extended to include an assessment of the need for off street parking provision, overall and by each centre, including provision of public parking spaces by private contractors.*

*That more information is presented on the expenditure and income of off street parking, with a view to the service becoming at least self financing.*

*That the upgrading of car parks is considered in the light of the above and is based on an assessment of all car parks, in order to develop a comprehensive programme with all its financial implications.*

## **Signs and lines**

An issue raised by several staff at the start of the review process was the general lack of adequate liaison between transport and parking staff, especially at the design and review stages of parking schemes. Also parking staff and PA's reported problems in issuing valid PCN's when information on signs was incorrect, missing or inconsistent with lines. Finally Highways and Emergency services who manufacture signs complained that they were always left until last when commissioning work, so that they had difficulty in predicting income, programming work and delivering on time.

All these issues have been addressed during the course of the review, mainly through signs and lines meetings between the three parties. Parking staff review parking scheme designs and 'walk the job' with engineering staff to advise on practical operation issues. There are plans to set up a common database of signs and lines, to facilitate maintenance and replacement. All report that communications are substantially improved and service enhanced.

## **Contributions to income**

The scope asks:

- Is revenue from the parking account spent in line with strategic objectives?
- Is there scope to increase the contribution by the private sector to road maintenance and improvements?

The revenue account as a whole is prioritised through the corporate system of corporate strategy, SDP and SOP. The use of the account is audited as it must be used for traffic and parking schemes. This fact is related to residents during CPZ consultations, but more publicity could be given to schemes, which benefit from this funding. This is related to the point elsewhere that some people think that the system of parking charges is unfair.

It seems that, for legal reasons, private contribution cannot be sought for road maintenance, which is a duty of the local authority. Private developers are required to make financial contributions through section 106 planning agreements to schemes which will mitigate the negative impact of their development. These contributions are now sought more rigorously through the development control system and are based on clear policies set out in the UDP. Transportation have increased staffing resources to this and improved their liaison with the Planning service. Again the use of these resources could be publicised more.

#### Recommendation

*That the financial contributions from parking and S106 to transportation schemes and improvements be publicised more widely.*

### **Contribution to regeneration**

The scope asked:

- Does the unit provide an optimum contribution to the broader objectives of major projects within the council's regeneration strategy?

The Transportation unit has played a major role in the development of the scheme for the new stadium and the wider Wembley area, as well as the Park Royal employment area. The aim has been to promote and facilitate greater use of public transport, making the developments more environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive. At one time there was a small Major Projects team but with the uncertainty around the development of the stadium it was difficult to sustain this as a separate team. This function is now within the Strategy team, which enables a more flexible response to be made to requirements.

## Appendix one

### Recommendations

*That there is more systematic consultation on transportation and parking strategy and policies and that the results are publicised and explicitly addressed.*

*That the positive side of parking service provision is developed in strategy documents, including an assessment of requirements borough-wide and at shopping, employment and other centres.*

*That a forward programme of controlled parking schemes is mapped out, with an associated financial analysis.*

*That an urgent review be undertaken of all aspects of financial and scheme planning, programming and management, with a view to producing a cohesive set of actions designed to reduce the risks to effective scheme delivery.*

*That the public transport user forum be set up.*

*That evidence of successful influence be recorded and fed back to residents.*

*That more qualitative as well as quantitative LPI's are developed to judge the success of schemes.*

*That a programme of post-scheme reviews is set up, taking account of budgetary and programme implications.*

*That the financial data so far produced is the beginning, not the end of the attempts at financial analysis and that explanations be sought for the differences in figures between authorities and over time.*

*That Transportation and Parking develop some strategic or headline targets, which encapsulate the essential purpose of their activities and measure the impact on the public. (Reducing accident rates is an example of this, although it is complicated by its subdivision into a series of separate indicators).*

*Develop a range of LPI's, which are qualitative as well as quantitative and cover outputs and outcomes as well as processes.*

*Make greater efforts to engage in (including initiating) benchmarking activities with other boroughs and private organisations.*

*Regular feedback is obtained from Parking customers as to the level of satisfaction with the service provided.*

*That there is a drive across all areas of Transportation and Parking to raise the level of telephone answering, especially with parking contractors, with agreed procedures for use of call handling technology.*

*That complaints are analysed, with a view to identifying areas for improved service delivery.*

*That more explicit performance monitoring of parking contractor performance be built into the current contracts and that this is further developed for the new contracts to be let in two years time.*

*It is recommended that a fuller analysis of income collection be presented to demonstrate how the actions proposed go to the causes of the problem.*

*That the issues of internal communication and organisation within Transportation as raised by Traffic Management be specifically explored, with the same opportunity given to other teams in Transportation and Parking and actions taken to address them.*

*That the priority scheme for enforcement activity be made into formal PI's which can be used monitor the enforcement contract.*

*That more publicity and consultation is developed on the parking enforcement scheme, including the contractors performance in relation to agreed targets, so that people can judge the fairness of the scheme against facts not rumour.*

*That the review of parking times and charges is actioned within an agreed timescale.*

*That the Parking strategy be extended to include an assessment of the need for off street parking provision, overall and by each centre, including provision of public parking spaces by private contractors.*

*That more information is presented on the expenditure and income of off street parking, with a view to the service becoming at least self financing.*

*That the upgrading of car parks is considered in the light of the above and is based on an assessment of all car parks, in order to develop a comprehensive programme with all its financial implications.*

*That the financial contributions from parking and S106 to transportation schemes and improvements be publicised more widely.*

## ***Appendix two***

### **Glossary**

AC	Audit Commission
BSP	Borough Spending Plan
BV	Best Value
CPZ	Controlled Parking Zone
liP	Investing in People
ILIP	Interim Local Implementation Plan
LPI	Local Performance Indicator
PA	Parking Attendant
PATAS	Parking And Traffic Appeals Service
PI	Performance Indicator
SA	Self Assessment (report)
SDP	Service Development Plan
TfL	Transport for London
UDP	Unitary Development Plan