

Streatham Area Committee

25 April 2007

Public Notice Questions

St Leonards, Streatham Hill, Streatham South, Streatham Wells Wards/Streatham Area

Report authorised by: Eric Bohl, Executive Director of Corporate Services

Executive summary

This report provides details of five public notice questions submitted to the Area Committee together with the officer responses.

Summary of financial implication

N/A

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Consultation

Name of consultee	Directorate or Organisation	Date sent to consultee	Date response received from consultee	Comments appear in report para:
Internal				
N/A				
External				
N/A				
Entered in Consultation and Events Diary?				
No				

Report history

Date report drafted:	Report deadline:	Date report sent:	Report no.:
12.04.07	16.04.07	17.04.07	440/06-07
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Background documents/Appendices

Appendix 1.

1. Context

This report sets out details of five questions submitted to the Area Committee and the responses provided by officers.

2. Proposals and reasons

2.1 Questions submitted by Mr. Tim Barnsley – Streatham Leisure Centre, Ref: AC/S/01/FEBRUARY/06-07

- 1) Whilst recognising that there are areas covered by rules around commercial confidentiality, can the meeting have an update on the state of negotiations between Lambeth Council and Tesco (and other relevant third parties) over the proposed Streatham hub development?
- 2) Whilst recognising that there are areas covered by rules around commercial confidentiality, can the meeting have an update on the provision of service at Streatham Leisure Centre once the current Leisure Connection contract ends at the end of the financial year? This should confirm whether or not a new contract has been put in place.
- 3) Can the meeting have an assurance that Streatham Leisure Centre will continue to operate (and provide the full range of services) up until the contract for the hub development has been signed and it is essential for the existing centre to be closed to allow demolition and work on the new development to begin?
- 4) A number of meetings (of customer forums and user consultation groups) have been cancelled this year, and there has been little or no publicity in the local press or "Lambeth Life"; can the meeting be told how Lambeth Council proposes to communicate with centre users and residents about what is happening with the existing centre and progress on the new development?

Officer response provided by Richard Godfrey, Corporate Information Manager, Environment, Culture & Community Safety

- 1) Streatham Area Committee received a report on the latest position on 7 March 2007 and this is attached for your information. The Council will exchange documents with Tesco as soon as possible, given a short delay, in order to include within the drafting the requirement to extend the Development Period of the project by 9 months.
- 2) There is a preferred contractor identified. The detailed contractual arrangements are being completed, which will lead to a new contractor being appointed imminently. an appropriate announcement will be made upon exchange and arrangements made for the contractors to meet the customers at each of the leisure centres. The operational arrangement will continue under the control of the new leisure operator.
- 3) Yes - there is no reason why normal operation should not continue.

- 4) The partnership with Tesco has been through a period of uncertainty. As soon as the documents (section 106 and Development Agreement) are exchanged a more settled period of activity will fall into place - until the Procurement Process begins in 9 months time. The issues of 'commercial sensitivity' will then become paramount again, prior to the signing of the Building Contract. The Council will be as open as possible, taking into account the constraints of commercial confidentiality, and will communicate with our customers on each stage of the development. Once the new Leisure contract has been signed, the new operator and the Council are determined to ensure that better, more regular forums and communication for customer engagement should be established.

I hope this answer's the questions you have raised but should you wish to ask a supplementary question this can be done at the meeting on 25 April.

2.2 Questions submitted by Mr. Peter Lloyd, 35 Stanthorpe Road, Streatham, London SW16 2DZ – Yellow box monitoring at Eardley Road/Greyhound Lane Junction, Ref: AC/S/01/APRIL/06-07

I have read the local "Post" newspaper dated 15th March, about the traffic gridlock which has occurred at this junction since the new traffic lights were installed at the junction of Estreham Road and Greyhound Lane. I have used Estreham Road regularly since I moved into Streatham 36 years ago and I can confirm that what used to be a straightforward right turn into Greyhound lane now involves, at busy times, a queue of traffic controlled by the newly installed lights which only let two or three cars through at a time. The extra delay to my journey at these times is in excess of five minutes!

There is another problem caused by these traffic lights and this affects traffic heading eastwards along Greyhound Lane over the Streatham Common railway bridge. Because there is very little forward view possible for drivers passing the Eardley Road junction. a change of lights to red over the bridge and therefore out of sight, causes a sudden halt to traffic and traps drivers in the yellow box who have no reason to expect an obstruction where traffic had appeared to be moving smoothly. I have been caught in this way.

My enquiry relates to the CCTV vehicle which has been monitoring this yellow box and issuing PCN notices to trapped drivers, I note from the article that the vehicle parks on double yellow lines and I have seen this for myself. Could you please let me know on what authority the vehicle is able to do this because it seems to me that to commit an offence so that other drivers can be prosecuted for another offence is not justifiable. With regard to the issue of PCN's relative to this yellow box, it is obvious that the number of "offences" has increased since the introduction of the Estreham Road junction traffic lights. It is obvious that these lights are not working as intended because, according to the Post article, a TFL spokesman says that they will be controlled from Victoria when a BT line has been installed.

The fines collected from this exercise obviously benefit the Lambeth Council budget and I should be glad if you would provide the Area Meeting with information regarding the number of PCN's issued for alleged offences in the Eardley Road yellow box in the three months prior to the installation of the Estreham Road traffic lights and for the three months following their installation.

reasoning behind the changes that have taken place in the vicinity recently, (ii) why the new arrangements have taken time to operate as they were originally proposed and (iii) discusses a number of issues that have arisen.

The background note illustrates the problems associated with introducing a system of traffic signals at that particular location which satisfactorily addresses the needs and expectations of all road users (pedestrians, cyclists, bus users and motorists). I hope the note adequately conveys the message that the aim of the council, together with TfL, is to provide a “best balance” solution for the various users and that very those users often have conflicting expectations.

The note refers to the linking of the 3 sets of signals to provide the most efficient form of control. I am pleased to say that link is in place. I have visited site on a number of times during the last fortnight and my observation is that the system is working well with no significant delays in any direction. I recognise that, following the Easter break, traffic and pedestrian volumes have not necessarily returned to normal levels but the situation will be monitored and if further adjustments are necessary we will be working with TfL to make them.

The note also covers the general issue of enforcement of the yellow box at the Eardley road junction. It is not accepted that motorists were “unwittingly trapped” into receiving penalty charge notices (pcn’s). I do accept that there was a period when the signals were not working as intended and this caused delays. However motorist stopping in the yellow box often contributed further to those delays and were committing an offence.

With regard to the particular issues you raised about the “smart car” CCTV enforcement:

The council is able to enforce “moving traffic offences” which include yellow box junctions as a result of (decriminalisation) powers that were granted to local councils in 2005. This council has been using those powers since November 2005.

The arrangements for enforcement do allow the vehicles to park on single or double yellow lines whilst carrying out enforcement. This is provided for under the terms of the council’s parking dispensation scheme (which provides exception for vehicles undertaking statutory duties). Additionally, the various Traffic Orders for parking controls provide exemptions for vehicles undertaking statutory duties. In the case of Streatham Vale the traffic Order is the SPA waiting and loading Order (1997/19).

That said, the staff undertaking enforcement have instructions to park in areas other than yellow lines and in a way that does not cause safety problems or obstruct the traffic flow. When the council decided to enforce moving traffic offences, “Smart” cars were chosen because they are small and very manoeuvrable. You will appreciate that most yellow boxes are at busy junctions which have parking controls and therefore it is difficult for the operators to find a location “off” yellow lines and yet in a position to record offences. I understand that at Streatham Vale the staff generally try to park in nearby short term parking bays but recently road works activity has made that difficult.

The figures for PCN issuance at the Eardley Road junction are as follows:

22nd October 2006 – 21st January 2007 – 325 potential PCN's issued

22nd January 2007 – 12th April 2007 – 3900 potential PCN's issued

When considering these figures you should note

- (i) That the October – January period includes the Christmas and early January period when fewer PCN's are issued across the Borough generally (this is because traffic activity is lower, fewer offences are committed and correspondingly our enforcement activity is reduced).
- (ii) That at one time the yellow box was only visited in the evenings but subsequently (prior to the issues with the junction) enforcement was extended to the morning peak period.

I note your comment about the budgetary implications arising from this enforcement activity. I can assure you that our moving traffic enforcement regime is not income driven. The priorities are to enforce at locations where motorists are causing congestion or road safety problems. PCN issuance at Streatham Vale has been high at Eardley Road recently because a high level of offences occurred. As at all locations, when the indications are that a reasonable level of compliance has been achieved Eardley Road will be de-prioritised for attention and a location with more severe problems will be given a higher priority.

2.3 Questions submitted Jonathan Leake – Dangerous junction in Mitcham Lane Ref: AC/S/02/APRIL/06-07

I understand that there will be a Streatham Area Committee meeting on April 25. I wonder if you could ensure that the agenda includes an opportunity to discuss the new signalling arrangements at the junction of Mitcham Lane, Estreham Road and Ellison Road, SW16?

Would it be possible to invite the relevant officers from Lambeth Council and Transport for London? I would like to hear their explanations as to why the signalling at this junction has been designed to discriminate against pedestrians and favour motor traffic and how they reconcile this with the transport policies set out by the Mayor of London, which said that pedestrians should be given priority.

The reason I'd like to raise this is that I use this junction a lot and it is clear that the signalling is putting people at risk of an accident. This is because the lights have been set up:

- a) to allow pedestrians to cross only one road at a time (they go green for just 4 seconds)
- b) with long gaps between showing the 'green man'

This means that, in practice, people are getting frustrated with all the waiting and so cross the road when the traffic is against them and the pedestrian lights are red. This is an obvious recipe for an accident. Besides the lights the other changes made to the junction allow cars to travel through it much faster.

I would like to invite the ward councillors to visit the junction with me one morning in rush hour before the meeting to see what is happening in practice. I hope this would illustrate the kind of dangers the modifications to this junction have generated. There are a lot of children - including my own - who use this junction. Young people are one of the groups at greatest risk of road accidents - and these lights seem designed to demonstrate their impatience. I suspect all this could be resolved quite easily, by resetting the timings of the lights to favour pedestrians and, ideally, by restoring the traffic refuge that was in the entrance to Estreham Road.

Officer response provided by Tim Jackson, Assistant Director Street Management

In addition to yours, another public notice question has been raised in relation to traffic conditions around the intersection of Streatham Vale and Greyhound Lane. Although that question raises a number of different issues, an officer will be in attendance at the Area Committee meeting to provide further background information relating to the issues raised and respond to any follow up queries you may have.

In your email of 31st March 2007 you refer to the signalling arrangements at the junction of Mitcham Lane with Estreham Road and Ellison Road. This is incorrect. The junction which concerns you is at the intersection of Greyhound Lane with Estreham Road and Ellison Road. That junction became signal operated in January this year.

Your email invites the ward members to visit the junction to gain an understanding of the conditions there and your concerns. It is not appropriate for me to respond to that suggestion other than to say that officers have met on site with Cllr Bennett and Cllr Haselden (Deputy Cabinet member for Highways & Traffic) to experience the local conditions and all 3 ward councillors have been provided with written briefings in relation to local concerns.

It is important that any consideration of issues associated with the Greyhound Lane/Elison Road/Estreham Road signal junction is undertaken in the context of traffic conditions and recent changes to traffic management arrangements along the Greyhound Lane/Streatham Vale corridor and particularly at the road junctions to either side of the road over railway bridge there.

Therefore I have taken this opportunity to attach a copy of a recent report that provides the background to the traffic management changes and addresses the issues that have arisen recently (Appendix 1.) You will see that the report outlines the reasons for signalling the Greyhound Lane/Elison Road junction and addresses the specific issues you have raised.

The report states:

"The pedestrian phasing has been designed in accordance with London-wide standards and checked by site inspection. The method of signal operation provides the "Green Man" as an invitation to start to cross. Pedestrians are advised to begin crossing when the green man is displayed. In this case it is displayed for five seconds. This is followed by a "blackout" phase of five

seconds, which allows the pedestrian to complete crossing. Lastly there is the “red man” which indicates it is unsafe to cross.

In total there is a maximum of 10-12 seconds of “safe crossing” time for each of the legs of the junction. Although this is not all “green man” time it is adequate for the road width. This type of facility was adopted in 1996 as standard signal junction operation. It is different from some old systems which may take some while for pedestrians to get used to.

The new arrangement does not allow pedestrians to cross a number of arms (under the green man) in one go. It was not designed to – since greater crossing time for pedestrians would be at the expense of increased delays for vehicular traffic.

The arrangement does however provide safe, controlled, facilities on three arms which segregates pedestrians from vehicular traffic. Accordingly it provides a much safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists than was provided in the old arrangement. The situation will continue to be monitored but it is not proposed to implement any major changes to the pedestrian facilities at this time.”

I recognise your concerns about pedestrian safety at the junction and can assure you that the situation will continue to be monitored and will, as mentioned in the attached report, be subject to a further safety audit.

I note your suggestion that the situation could be resolved easily by re-setting the lights in favour of pedestrians. Unfortunately this is not the case. As I hope the attached report explains, it is necessary to provide the best balance between the needs of the various road users at this location – which includes giving appropriate priority to road safety. At the present time it is considered that the timings are adequate for pedestrians in the light of the local conditions. Any significant increase to the timings would not only be at the expense of other road users (including cyclists on the priority network and those using buses) but may result in motorists diverting to other parallel routes to avoid delays – thereby increasing accident potential on other parts of the road network.

2.4 Questions submitted by Mr. Tim Barnsley – Streatham Leisure Centre, Ref: AC/S/03/APRIL/06-07

- (1) Given that the expected life of Streatham Leisure Centre has now been extended by at least nine months (to allow for further work on developing the proposals for the new leisure centre), and given that the centre was already in need of considerable repair and maintainance, have additional funds been made available to keep the centre operational for the foreseeable future?
If Yes, have any priorities been identified for spending in this period?
If No, how will the cost of essential repairs and maintainance be met?
- (2) Can you give details of the communications plan to keep users and residents informed about what is happening to both the existing centre and the proposed new centre?

(3) Can we have details of what the new centre is due to deliver, that is, those things which the Council regard as non-negotiable.

Other issues

(4) When are the toilets near the play area at the High Road end of Streatham Common supposed to be open?

(5) When will the first meeting to replace the Streatham Area Committee take place and what will be its remit?

If a date has not been set, will Lambeth Council consider extending the life of the Streatham Area Committee in order to ensure that residents have public access to Councillors and Council officers?

Officer response provided by Richard Godfrey, Corporate Information Manager, Environment, Culture & Community Safety

1. The Council has entered into an agreement with GLL, the new leisure provider, to operate the Streatham leisure centre until the start of construction of the new facility. The Council will continue to invest in the day to day maintenance of the existing facility to keep it operational. This will ensure that current standard of service provision is maintained. However, there will be no new investment for improvements to the facility due to the fact that it is due to be replaced in the near future.

2. When Tesco PLC have agreed with the Legal Documents a new Project Development phase will begin in order to complete all the drawings and undertake a Value Engineering Study of the whole project. This will require a continued dialogue with:

- The Stakeholders Group over the further advice they can offer on the detailed design – in order to ensure the facility is technically suited to the proposed use.
- The Council's Leisure Operators – in order to ensure the facility can be managed effectively and efficiently.
- The potential users.

By the very nature of this phase of the development the communications programmes will be focussed upon decision points and will be occasional rather than targeted at points in the calendar. We will be able to identify the decision points when the detailed project plan is developed from the outline that has been submitted by Tesco.

Once the Build Contract is signed the communication programme will be on a completely different footing – as the number of certainties around the project will increase dramatically and the milestone will be much more obvious and visual. We anticipate a monthly newsletter and web page update that will give as much information on the build progress and the programming of the new centre as possible.

In respect of service provision a meeting for Streatham Leisure Centre users to meet the new leisure management contractor and to give their views has just been arranged. This meeting will take place on Tuesday 8 May 2007 at

Streatham Leisure Centre from 6.30pm until 8pm. Publicity is now being prepared for this meeting and will be distributed as soon as possible.

3. The leisure content of the Streatham Hub hasn't changed since the submission of the original planning permission:

Ice Rink (International Dimension)
25 meter pool (International Dimension)
Dance Studio
3 Badminton Court Sports Hall
Fitness Suite
Community Rooms

The Council negotiated some improvements to these facilities during the development of the scheme, with Tesco, and will endeavour to retain these improvements during the Value Engineering Review. Otherwise Tesco's intention is to build the scheme submitted and agreed by the Planning Applications Committee (PAC).

4. The public conveniences are scheduled to open each morning at 8am and close one hour before dusk. The Council is occasionally forced to close the conveniences while repairs are carried out following incidents of vandalism.

5. Cabinet (19.04.07) decided to replace Area Committees with new forms of local engagement, and these will be in operation for the next municipal year (i.e. from late May 2007). The Council is to develop a more flexible approach, which prioritises neighbourhood working and the Council facilitation of an annual Communities First Area Conference within the six areas of Brixton, Streatham, Clapham, North Lambeth, Norwood and Stockwell.

There will also be the separate but complementary Area Call for Action (ACfA) meetings. These meetings will be called as and when they are requisitioned by Councillors for the Area or a set number of members of the public living, working or studying in the area. They will consider a single issue of public interest and concern impacting upon the quality of life within the area.

Where further action is agreed, this will be referred to scrutiny, Cabinet; an officer or partner organisation as appropriate for resolution.

Public access to Councillors and officers can also of course be made through the contact and ward surgery details on the Council website.

As the answers to these three questions had not been received at the time the agenda had to be despatched they will be tabled at the meeting.

2.5 Questions submitted by Ms Patricia Sauer, 62 Lewin Road, London SW16 6JT – provision of Arts and Cultural facilities as part of development, Ref: AC/S/05/MARCH/06-07

"GIVEN

The recognised lack of Arts and Cultural provision / facilities in Streatham.

That Policy 30 on "Arts and Culture" in the London Borough of Lambeth, Replacement Unitary Development Plan (incorporating Proposed Modifications) October 2006, states:

"(C) Arts and Cultural Uses and Public Art – On the South Bank, and in Vauxhall, Streatham, Norwood and Brixton, the Council will seek to secure enhanced or increased provision of such uses either within large developments or nearby."

[We note, with interest, that the reasoned justification for the policy states (paragraph 4. 13. 8.) that:

"Outside the South Bank Centre there is the Oval House Theatre and Community Arts Centre, the National Theatre and the National Film Theatre (which is proposing new premises). There are also significant cultural facilities in each of the Borough's town centres, Brixton being a centre of music venues such as the Ritzy, the Academy and the Fridge, as well as a major centre of the Black and alternative arts and music communities. Clapham has the Picture House and Stockwell, Vauxhall and the Oval are increasingly housing artist's workplaces and galleries. By contrast, Streatham has a lack of cultural facilities. " (our underlining and emphasis)

AND

That Policy 66 on "Regeneration of Streatham Town Centre" in same document

"Priority will be given to addressing the shortage of community facilities (in particular for a medium –sized multi-function non-denominational space) and arts and cultural uses in Streatham" .

QUESTION

What steps have been taken, by Council officers, to ensure that any proposals for large developments in Streatham, including the possible redevelopment of the "Caesar's / Mecca bowling alley" site in Streatham Hill, include provision of Arts and Cultural facilities as part of the development mix – in line with stated Council policy?"

Officer response provided by Richard Godfrey, Corporate Information Manager, Environment, Culture & Community Safety

Caesars – Mega bowl Site

"Discussions are currently taking place with Ludgate Land Ltd who have instructed the architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands to enter discussions with the Council with the intent of comprehensively redeveloping the Megabowl/Ceasars site. Although the discussions are at an early stage the applicant has been advising that he intends to submit an application based around the following elements:

New purpose-designed retail units to be provided on the Streatham Hill frontage, suitable for some of the higher-quality 'high street multiples' at around 20,000 sq. ft with off-street servicing arrangements

- Market housing in the form of flats, above the shop units
- Affordable housing in the form of flats, above the shop units
- Some basement car-parking and ancillary space, the potential for a 'car-club' arrangement, and provision of a 'Green Travel Plan'.
- Amenity space will be provided in an internal landscaped courtyard

Officers are aware that there is a need to protect leisure uses as well as meeting local needs with regard to Arts and Culture in and around the Streatham area. The applicant has not submitted an application at the present time and negotiations are therefore still ongoing. However, officers clearly understand the need to meet the Councils policies and the objectives contained in the UDP for the Streatham area.

This question was received after the deadline for questions to this meeting, but as it will be the last meeting of the Area Committee, it has been included here and a response will be tabled at the meeting.

3. Comments from Executive Director of Finance

3.1 N/A

4. Comments from Director of Legal and Democratic Services

4.1 N/A

5. Results of consultation

5.1 N/A

6. Organisational implications

6.1 Risk management:
N/A

6.2 Equalities impact assessment:
N/A

6.3 Community safety implications:
N/A

6.4 Environmental implications:
N/A

6.5 Staffing and accommodation implications:

N/A

6.6 Any other implications:
N/A

7. Timetable for implementation:

N/A

APPENDIX 1.

New traffic lights at Greyhound Lane by Ellison Road and associated issues

Context

As with many routes that cross railways or other barriers, the Greyhound Lane/Streatham Vale route is heavily used and traffic congestion, particularly at peak times, is commonplace. The close proximity of the three junctions (Aberfoyle Road, Eardley Road and Ellison/Estreham), the narrowness of the main road and visibility issues associated with the bridge significantly restrict opportunities to relieve congestion. The need to provide safe crossing facilities for pedestrians moving to and from the station and local shops, and to accommodate cyclists using the strategic cycle route along Ellison Road and Estreham Road, further complicates matters.

The overall objective

The overall objective is to provide a “best balance” solution that (i) reduces congestion along the main route, (ii) provides safe crossing facilities both sides of the bridge, (iii) accommodates cyclists along the priority route, (iv) provides appropriate priority for vehicles crossing the main route and, above all, (v) maintains or improves road safety for all users.

Bearing in mind the physical constraints mentioned previously and the nature of the traffic/pedestrian flows, achieving this “best balance” solution is difficult to achieve.

Relationship with TfL

The scheme is being introduced in partnership with TfL, who are also providing funding through the Bus Priority Programme (although the scheme should provide benefits to users other than buses). TfL design, install and maintain all signals within London and have been responsible for the detailed design (timings etc) and installation in this case. Lambeth is responsible for jointly clienting the project and for implementing all work on site.

The recent works

The most recent work (which went live on 22nd January) comprises the “signalisation” of the Greyhound Lane/ Ellison Road/Estreham Road junction.

The main purpose of this is to (i) provide safe “green man” crossing facilities for pedestrians, (ii) reduce conflict (and hence delays and accidents) caused by vehicles turning out of the side roads and (iii) accommodate cyclists using the Ellison Road/Estreham Road priority route. The signalisation was to achieve these objectives but with regard to the overall objective described above.

The signal phasing has to accommodate vehicle movements out of the side roads in a way that does not encourage “rat-running” parallel to the A23 and delay progress along the main Greyhound Lane/Streatham Vale route.

The signalisation was modelled by TfL before its introduction and the (Network Impact Assessment) Report states “the modelling of the proposed situation indicates that the signalisation will not negatively impact on the current situation, and will in fact increase capacity of the two junctions. Internal queuing has been reduced in all time periods, reducing the likelihood of exit blocking”. Lower cycle times have been utilised that will reduce the delay to both vehicles and pedestrians, whilst not over-saturating any arm.”

In other words, the modelling demonstrated that a “best balance” solution could be achieved. Technical approval from both TfL and ourselves was based on that assessment.

During the scheme development, consideration was given to providing a pedestrian crossing route on the southwest (bridge) side of the junction as well as on the other arms. This would have allowed pedestrians to cross directly from the south west side of Ellison Road to the station entrance and vice versa. Unfortunately this was ruled out because of the poor visibility afforded to vehicles coming over the bridge was considered to present a safety risk. As a result pedestrians now have green man controls on three arms of the junction only.

Current situation/complaints:

(i) Traffic Congestion

Since the signalisation of the Greyhound Lane/Elison Road junction there have been numerous complaints, verified by site observations, of increased queuing (with attendant delays) on the main Streatham Vale/Greyhound Lane route.

The problem appears to be greatest in the morning peak period, but complaints have indicated that delays occur at other times.

An early review of the junction by Lambeth officers also identified this issue and determined that the Greyhound Lane/Elison Road signal junction was not linked to the Streatham Vale/Eardley road/Aberfoyle Road arrangement as had been designed and modelled.

This (Urban Traffic Control (UTC)) linkage would optimise movement along the main route and hence minimise delays moving from one set of signals to the next.

This issue was drawn to TfL’s attention and they have installing the link. The necessary BT infrastructure is in place and Lambeth officers are waiting to be advised as to when the linkage will be fully operational.

In the interim Lambeth officers had requested that, until such time as the linkage was in place and operational, TfL adjust the signal timings to reduce

delays. This could be done by providing less “green time” to traffic on the side roads and greater “green time” to the main route.

Now that the junctions are linked and working under UTC, the scheme will be reviewed and timings will be adjusted to get the “best balance” out of the system for all road users. Although over a month has passed since the Greyhound Lane/Ellison Road junction was signalled, there is always a “bedding in” period for new installations. In this case this period will be extended by the late introduction of UTC. It would therefore be unrealistic to expect an immediate removal of all delays when UTC is installed.

(ii) Problems for pedestrians

A smaller number of complaints have been received relating to the impact of the signalisation of the Greyhound Lane/Ellison Road junction on pedestrians. The concerns are that the arrangement fails to assist pedestrians in that (i) each leg of the junction must be crossed independently and (ii) the “green” man time is too short.

It may be helpful to explain how these facilities are designed to work.

The pedestrian phasing has been designed in accordance with London-wide standards and checked by site inspection. The method of signal operation provides the “Green Man” as an invitation to start to cross. Pedestrians are advised to begin crossing when the green man is displayed. In this case it is displayed for five seconds. This is followed by a “blackout” phase of five seconds, which allows the pedestrian to complete crossing. Lastly there is the “red man” which indicates it is unsafe to cross.

In total there is a maximum of 10-12 seconds of “safe crossing” time for each of the legs of the junction. Although this is not all “green man” time it is adequate for the road width. This type of facility was adopted in 1996 as standard signal junction operation. It is different from some old systems which may take some while for pedestrians to get used to.

The new arrangement does not allow pedestrians to cross a number of arms (under the green man) in one go. It was not designed to – since greater crossing time for pedestrians would be at the expense of increased delays for vehicular traffic.

The arrangement does however provide safe, controlled, facilities on three arms which segregates pedestrians from vehicular traffic. Accordingly it provides a much safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists than was provided in the old arrangement. The situation will continue to be monitored but it is not proposed to implement any major changes to the pedestrian facilities at this time.

(iii) CCTV Camera/Smart car enforcement

Complaints have been received relating to CCTV enforcement of the yellow box junctions at Streatham Vale by Aberfoyle Road and Eardley Road.

Essentially the complaint is that the Council is acting unfairly by introducing a layout that has caused delays and then enforcing against motorists that unwittingly enter the yellow box. It is accepted that the signals were causing additional delays, particularly at certain times.

The Council has been explicit about the use of CCTV and “smart” cars for moving traffic enforcement such as the enforcement of yellow boxes. Moving traffic enforcement was launched with a great deal of publicity. The Council complies with all necessary regulations with regard to CCTV enforcement. The yellow boxes in Streatham Vale are the minimum necessary and are properly marked.

The majority of motorists using the route use it on a regular basis and should be aware of driving conditions at the junction and of the presence of the yellow boxes. Those motorists entering the yellow box when they should not do so are inevitably worsening the congestion for others.

The Council has not increased its level of enforcement since the signalisation and does not propose to do so. Nevertheless there are no proposals to cease or reduce enforcement activity at this time.

Any motorist who receives a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) for entering a yellow box and believes it was inappropriately issued may contest the PCN by writing to the address on the notice. All challenges are properly considered.

Way forward

Approximately three months after TfL have arrived at a “best balance” operation under UTC, a Stage 3 safety audit will be undertaken. This will comprise a review of the whole scheme (including signage, parking, pedestrian and cyclists’ facilities). Any issues highlighted in the audit would be considered for action going forward.

A number of requests had been made for the “switching off” of the new arrangement at Greyhound Lane by Ellison Road until such time as the TUC linkage was installed and delays reduced. This is not considered an appropriate way forward. It would be wholly unsafe to leave the junction with no controlled facilities for pedestrians after having provided them. It was also not a practicable or appropriate use of public funds to re-install the pre-existing zebra crossing to accommodate concerns over traffic delays.

Conclusion

The Council regrets any inconvenience caused to motorists arising from the scheme. It is working with TfL to reduce delays, as soon as possible.

The Greyhound Lane/Streatham Vale junction is complex and it is difficult to achieve a “best balance” solution which is safe and meets the needs of all road users. Nevertheless the Council is committed to working with TfL to achieve that best balance.

In this case, there will inevitably be a “bedding in” period whilst the best balance solution is found. We apologise for this and seek the co-operation of all road users in the area whilst we work towards that best balance.