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## Traffic Counts Not Rising

One often sees alarming forecasts of “gridlock” if the number of vehicles owned by the public continues to increase. So supporters of the London congestion charge claim that without it the city would have ground to a standstill.

Recent figures made available in the London Borough of Bromley rather disprove this presumption. Bromley is of course one of the wealthiest London boroughs with the second highest number of cars per person – in fact car ownership seems to be increasing in recent years.

But these are the figures for traffic counts on 38 sites in the borough over the last 6 years compared with the base year of 2001:

All traffic	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
7 am - 7pm	100	101.9	102	99.6	96.9	95.1
Peak Hours	100	101.7	101.3	98.1	93.4	93.8

Perhaps needless to point out that there is no congestion charge system operating in Bromley, and yet these figures are comparable to the reduction in traffic volumes claimed in central London as a result of the London congestion charge.

What is going on here? Has improved public transport or “modal shift” encouragement programmes promoted by the council had some effect? Or are the traffic counts lower because it’s more slow moving? The answers are not clear, but these figures probably give a lie to the suggestion that gridlock is inevitable.

Roger Lawson, May 2008

[www.bromleytransport.org.uk](http://www.bromleytransport.org.uk), [www.freedomfordrivers.org](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org)