

Legislative Council Inquiry into road tolling regimes, MP site inspection 24 May 2022

Talking points

1. Bexley Town Centre has experienced regular periods of overly heavy traffic since the opening of Port Botany in 1979 with vehicles of all types travelling between the port and destinations to the west and south west. This has been consistently reported in the media since the mid 1980s

2. Bexley Town Centre straddles 2 significant state road intersections. Forest Road with Stoney Creek Road to the south and Forest Rd with Bexley / Harrow Roads to the north. These intersections are approximately 250 metres apart. In between them there are multiple bus stops and a pedestrian crossing. The alignment and width of Forest and Stoney Creek roads is essentially unchanged since they were built in the early 1900s. Traffic is stop start in nature and the Town centre can be a bottle neck even under full clearway conditions.

3. There are 2 nearby motorways that have had an influence on Bexley Town Centre traffic conditions in the last 20 years.

The first is the M5 east which runs between the Bexley North area and Marsh Street Arncliffe. It opened in 2001, with no toll, and relieved traffic congestion, noise and pollution in Bexley markedly.

The second is the M8, originally called the new M5. It currently runs between Bexley North / Kingsgrove and St Peters. When it opened in June 2020 a toll was imposed on both the M8 and M5. From its opening motorists avoided the toll by detouring through surrounding streets. Bexley Town centre traffic conditions are now worse than before the M5 east opened in 2001. This is contrary to one of the key promises of motorways to take traffic away from surrounding streets.

4. On 17 February 2020 revised no stopping and clearway restrictions along Forest and Stoney Creek Roads came into effect. It was thought that this was to set the route up as a free alternative to future tolled M8 and M5 motorways. Up to that time Bexley Town Centre had a unidirectional morning and afternoon clearway with 50% of possible shop front parking available during clearway times. With the February 2020 changes all shop front parking was removed during clearway times and 60% was removed between morning and afternoon clearway times.

5. Impact on businesses of loss of shop front parking - Case studies

A flooring and blind store at 385 - 387 Forest Road lost 5 car spaces outside their premises from 6am to 7pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 6pm weekends. Previously they only lost these spaces Monday to Friday during morning clearways. Given the bulky, heavy nature of their stock there is no convenient alternative parking for deliveries and pickups from this business.

Other examples include a pharmacy, podiatrist and medical centre in the section between 453 and 465 Forest Road which has lost 5 car spaces to no stopping zones. Customers of such businesses are often mobility impaired and need shop front parking. Another is an art school at 425 Forest Road which conducts after school art lessons. This business no longer has a safe and convenient place for parents to drop off and pick up their children at the front door.

There are many other businesses including cafes and food outlets, a post office, a bread shop, supermarket, pharmacies, newsagency and bank that rely on shop front parking for impulse shoppers, deliveries and pickups.

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