

SAFER ROADS PARTNERSHIP AND SPEED LIMIT REVIEW UPDATE

**Report By: Director of Regeneration and Director of
Environment and Culture**

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To provide members with an overview of the work of the West Mercia Safer Roads Partnership and its role in helping deliver Herefordshire Council's road safety strategy.
2. To update Members on proposals for a workshop on the review of the road safety strategy.
3. To provide an update to members on the progress of the review of Speed Limits and respond to specific questions raised following the report on this subject to this Committee on 23 March 2009.

Recommendation

- THAT: (a) The contents of this report are noted.**
- (b) Committee notes the opportunity to attend a workshop on road safety early in 2010.**

Financial Implications

4. None as a result of this report.

Background

West Mercia Safer Roads Partnership

Introduction and Overview

5. The West Mercia Safer Roads Partnership (SRP) came into existence on 1st April 2007. Prior to this, speed cameras were promoted through the National Safety Camera Programme and delivered through Safety Camera Partnerships. Crucially, these original partnerships were able to recover the costs of operating speed cameras from the fines resulting from enforcement. With the advent of the Safer Roads Partnerships, government removed the link between revenue generation and speed enforcement and also devolved responsibility for speed enforcement to local partners.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Steve Burgess, Transportation Manager on 01432 260968

6. Acknowledging the need to provide a funding stream for the Safer Roads Partnerships Government provided a direct Specific Road Safety Grant to highway authorities alongside Local Transport Plan funding. This Specific Grant, along with a wide range of other grants, is now provided direct to the Council as part of the Area Based Grant. For the Safer Roads Partnership to secure a funding contribution from Herefordshire Council it must work in cooperation with the Safer Herefordshire Partnership which has access to the Area Based Grant funding pot.
7. The SRP comprises 13 local partners. Included are:
 - 4 highway authorities (Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire and Telford and Wrekin);
 - the Highways Agency;
 - HM Court Service – West Mercia;
 - Fire and Rescue Service (Hereford and Worcester, Shropshire);
 - Four local NHS Primary Care Trusts; and
 - West Mercia Constabulary.
8. Funding for the SRP is provided by the 4 local authorities, including Herefordshire Council. Total annual funding is around £2M and the contribution from Herefordshire is calculated at 13.08% of the total contribution, which is based on the level of direct grant Herefordshire Council received as a proportion of the total grant received by the four highway authorities. It is also worth noting that the West Mercia Constabulary provides direct support to the SRP as it employs all of its personnel and provides a range of corporate support functions including human resources, accounting and property management. The SRP is exploring other sources of funding and has recently secured a contribution from the income received through Speed Awareness Training.
9. Although the operation of safety camera sites across West Mercia remains an important part of the SRP's work, its longer-term aim is to work more closely with partner agencies to coordinate, support and develop a broader road safety strategy. This will include building stronger links with local council road safety teams and other agencies to tackle the major safety priorities across the region and to work together on a variety of road safety projects and campaigns.

Safer Roads Partnership Role in Delivering Road Safety Improvements in Herefordshire

10. The SRP has an important role in helping deliver the Council's road safety strategy. The road safety strategy (which is set out in the Local Transport Plan) is based on three key elements, known as the three 'E's – engineering, education and enforcement. The SRP is particularly involved in the enforcement element of the strategy and also has an important coordinating role in bringing together education programmes over the West Mercia area, linking with adjoining regions. An overview of these elements of our strategy is provided below:
 - In terms of **engineering**, analysis of accident sites may indicate that improvements such as lining, signing and improving visibility would reduce speeds by providing drivers with clearer visual instructions and alerting them to particular hazards. Other engineering measures bring about physical enforcement of speed limits through traffic calming measures and gateway treatments. We have robust before/after data to illustrate the success of this approach and will

continue to treat and maintain accident cluster sites to improve the safety of the highway network.

- **Education** has an important role to play. Inappropriate speeding is not always due to the design or state of the highway. Poor driving behaviour is a recurrent issue in most accidents. Poor driving can result from a number of factors including, inexperience, incompetence, drug/drink impairment and in some cases dangerous or reckless behaviour. Education programmes have been established to address all of these different behavioural factors. A key to these programmes is targeting education at certain groups to maximise impact. Programmes are aimed at pre-drivers (school children) to reinforce messages before they become drivers, young drivers who are inexperienced, older drivers for whom driving competence may be an issue and motorcyclists. Other programmes tackle specific issues such as drug/drink driving, preparing for difficult driving conditions and improving safety for vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and school children).
 - **Enforcement.** Whilst targeted education programmes offer the main long term solution to improving driver behaviour and increasing safety it is important that enforcement of traffic law is clear, consistent and acts as a deterrent to poor driving behaviour. Safety cameras help establish this deterrent and can be targeted at locations and routes where analysis has shown a clear link between collisions and speeding. This targeting of enforcement needs to be underpinned by general traffic enforcement by the police and appropriate penalties imposed by the courts.
11. The SRP is currently reviewing its approach to targeting enforcement and coordinating education, training and publicity and has entered into discussions with the partners to identify opportunities and priorities for action. To take this work forward the SRP has established the Operations Forum which includes representatives from all of the key partners.
 12. Rod Reynolds, the Chief Operating Officer of the West Mercia Safer Roads Partnership will be present at the Committee meeting to provide an update on the work of the SRP in Herefordshire and progress on implementing recommendations of the Audit Commission review of the SRP.

Review of Road Safety Strategy and Member Involvement

13. Improving road safety and reducing the number of serious casualties on our roads is a clear priority for the Council. Whilst performance has been good, and we are on track to meet the 2010 target for a 40% reduction in killed and seriously injured casualties, there is a need to review our strategy and take into account the emerging national strategy to take us to 2020.
14. In its consultation 'A Safer Way', government has indicated a range of ambitious targets including a 33% reduction in road deaths and serious injuries by 2020 compared to the baseline of the 2004-8 average. It has identified a range of challenges including protecting children and young people, safety on rural roads, protecting motorcyclists and tackling poor road user behaviour and illegal and inappropriate speed. Our review will take the national strategy into account and will feed into the next Herefordshire Local Transport Plan.

15. Given the widespread interest in road safety issues we will be organising a workshop for all Council Members to help take part in the review. The workshop will examine road safety issues at the local level and consider the solutions which are already working and best practice approaches from elsewhere. A date is currently being finalised with Member Support team and invitations will be issued to Members before the end of the year.

Update on the Review of Speed Limits and Response to Points Raised following Report to 23 March 2009 Meeting.

16. A programme for undertaking the speed limit review is being developed by Amey. Further details of this will be provided at the meeting.

Background Papers

- None identified