

Item 25

SAFETY CAMERA PARTNERSHIP

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE IN SURREY HEATH

22nd July 2004

KEY ISSUE:

This report sets out the background and the case for a Safety Camera Partnership.

SUMMARY:

The success of the use of safety cameras is the basis of the progression of the Safety Camera Partnership between Surrey County Council and Surrey Police. The Department for Transport (DfT) lay down the rules and guidelines for the use of the cameras, and therefore it is highly likely that any sites submitted for inclusion which do not meet the criteria will be rejected.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Surrey Heath Local Committee notes the report.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. On 30 September 2002 the Executive approved the Best Value Improvement Plan for Road Safety. Recommendation 5.3.2 stated "jointly identify if a business case exists for cost recovery of speed and casualty methods, and reach agreement within 12 months". On 24 June 2003 the Executive also approved the Joint Road Safety Strategy that included an action to "develop a business case for cost recovery for safety cameras".
2. Safety cameras have been deployed within Surrey since 1995. There are currently 28 fixed site speed camera locations in Surrey. Over a three year period these sites have achieved a **31% reduction in collisions**. There are also a further 12 Red Light Violation (RLV) sites. These sites have **reduced accidents involving RLV by 38% per annum**. Currently all costs are borne by the individual organisations involved with this activity. SCC bears the costs of installing and maintaining the camera housing and all associated engineering works, whilst Surrey Police bear the enforcement costs. The revenue generated by the fines goes directly to the Treasury.
3. The UK safety camera programme was launched in April 2000. Eight regional partnerships in the UK piloted the system, over a two year period.

Now in its fourth year of operation, the programme has expanded to include forty-two partnerships (as of July 2003). Surrey is one of the four areas within England and Wales that at present have not yet joined the national programme.

4. The aim of the programme is casualty reduction which supports the DfT's road safety strategy "Tomorrows Roads – Safer for Everyone", and particularly one of the 10 priority themes "safer speeds". The strategy sets 3 targets for casualty reduction on UK roads by 2010. They are:-
 - a 40% reduction in killed or seriously injured
 - a 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured
 - a 10% reduction in the rate of slight casualties
5. Surrey County Council within its Local Transport Plan has also adopted these targets, and within its current Public Partnership Agreement has agreed to achieve the first two targets by 2007 of the previously set target of 2010.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

5. The results of the national pilot after 2 years showed the following results:-
 - a 14% reduction in personal injury accidents
 - a 56% reduction in the number of pedestrians killed or seriously injured at sites with cameras
 - average speed at all camera sites fell by 10% or 3.7mph
 - the number of vehicles speeding at camera sites dropped by 67%
 - 80% of people surveyed in the pilot areas agreed that cameras are meant to encourage drivers to keep to the speed limit, not to punish them
6. Following the success of the pilot study, the DfT decided to roll out the programme nationwide, and have produced a handbook of rules and guidelines within which Safety Camera Partnerships (SCPs) must operate. These include:-
 - site selection and enforcement
 - visibility and conspicuity
 - cost recovery arrangements and partnerships
 - allowable fixed penalties
 - allowable expenditure
 - financial controls
 - project monitoring
7. The programme is aimed at casualty reduction and therefore the deployment of safety cameras is targeted towards locations with high casualty rates, particularly where there is a high incidence of serious injury

or death. In order to ensure safety cameras remain focused on the objective, fine revenue can only be used to cover the agreed costs of the SCP identified within the operational case. Any surplus is retained by central government. The creation of a SCP allows partner organisations to recover the full costs of their activities.

8. Surrey County Council and Surrey Police have been working closely to examine if an operational case exists to form a partnership. It is now agreed that a case does exist for Surrey to form a partnership. However this should not be seen as the universal remedy for casualty reduction, but rather another technique to reduce casualties on our roads. This option generally should only be used as a last resort, when all other methods have been explored.
9. The economic costs impact on other public services (health, ambulance and fire service). These other services may also be invited to join the partnership.
10. Initial investigations have shown that a further seven sites meet the DfT criteria for speed enforcement, and eight for RLV. The new speed enforcement sites would be a mixture of fixed (traditional static grey boxes) and mobile (Police Officer enforcement) cameras. It is also proposed that seven existing sites are removed and possibly replaced with Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS). In total, it is proposed that there would be 28 safety camera sites and 20 RLV sites.
11. In the district of Surrey Heath, there is currently one camera housing, located at the junction of the A322 Bracknell Road with New Road. It is dedicated to the detection of red light violation. Enforcement at this location has been problematical, particularly in relation to health and safety aspects of maintenance. The formation of the partnership has enabled these problems to be overcome and allows the camera to operate efficiently.
12. It is proposed to add a further camera at the same location to deal with red light violation problems involving eastbound vehicles. This is a provisional proposal and may be subject to change following detailed discussions and agreement with the DfT.

GOVERNANCE

13. The day-to-day management of safety cameras will be administered by a small team consisting of a project manager, senior communications officer and data officer, funded through the partnership as set out in the DfT guidelines. The project manager will report to a Project Board made up of senior officers from all the partners.
14. The deployment of Safety Cameras, both for speed and red light violation is solely dependent on rules and guidelines laid down by the DfT, and all partners will have to agree priorities within those rules and guidelines. Accordingly, whilst Local Committees may continue to submit sites to the

partnership, those that do not meet the criteria are likely to be rejected. To ensure continued democratic accountability, a Member from the Police Authority together with the Executive Member for Transportation and the Head of Transportation will oversee the partnership, receiving regular reports from the Project Board, and will deal with unresolved concerns raised by Local Committees. Annual reports on the Partnership will be taken to the Transportation Select Committee.

CONSULTATION

15. The Transport Select Committee considered the proposal on 1 April 2004, and the Executive Member has been consulted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

16. The costs of setting up and running the SCP are fully recoverable, however the financial risk is held with the various partners and any deficiency would have to be borne by them. At present none of the partnerships set up elsewhere in the UK have failed to cover their costs. At this stage, the operational case has not yet been fully developed, but in discussion with the appointed DfT consultants, they have indicated that they expect our operational case to fully recover the costs incurred by the partnership.

17. The financial size of the partnership relates to the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued and subsequently paid. For example, a partnership receiving payment for 40,000 FPNs, would potentially generate income in excess of £2.4m. However at this stage, it is not possible to predict the exact size of the partnership until further work is completed.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

18. There are no direct sustainable development implications.

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

19. The implementation of the partnership with its anticipated reduction in red light violations and unacceptable vehicle speeds, will assist in reducing this type of crime and the fear of this type of crime.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

20. There are no equalities implications.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Report to The Executive, 13 April 2004, Item 11.
Number of Annexes:	none