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Policy on the Use of Safety Cameras in Surrey

Purpose of report: This report presents a new policy which sets out the criteria and process that will be followed for investment in new safety cameras. This includes average speed, spot speed, red-light and combination cameras. While road casualty hotspots will remain the top priority, the policy also sets out the criteria for the use of safety cameras at other locations where there might not have been such a high level of collisions, but where excess speeds are a concern for the community.

Introduction:

1. Higher vehicle speeds increase the risk of collisions. Also, the higher the speed the more severe the consequences are likely to be. Consequently, safety cameras (speed and red-light cameras) have been operating in Surrey since the 1990s. Historically their use has been prioritised at casualty hotspots, and they have proven to be very effective in helping to reduce the number of casualties by encouraging greater compliance with the speed limit and deterring red light jumping.
2. In more recent years, there has been greater use of average speed cameras as these can encourage greater compliance with the speed limit over a longer stretch of road compared with spot speed cameras. Anecdotally, road users appear to be more supportive of the use of average speed cameras, and several communities have lobbied for them on the roads where they live.
3. Consequently, Surrey County Council's leadership, Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable are keen to expand the use of average speed cameras and spot speed cameras in Surrey beyond only being deployed at the worst casualty hotspots. This is because as well as reducing the risk and severity of road collisions, improved compliance with the speed limit can also help to reduce air and noise pollution, and supports more active travel (walking, push scooting and cycling). This is better for the health and wellbeing of residents and contributes to the council's commitment to tackling climate change. Therefore, this report presents a new policy (Annex 1) which sets out the criteria and process that will be followed for investment in new safety cameras.

4. It should be noted that the Department for Transport have advised that they will be issuing guidance to local authorities in the coming months on how they can apply to Government to obtain powers to enforce moving traffic offences (such as yellow box junctions, motor-vehicle prohibitions, and banned turns). However, this will not include speeding or red-light violations - these will remain as criminal offences, enforceable only by the police.

Effectiveness of Speed Cameras

National Research

5. In the UK, a national safety camera programme was introduced between 2000 and 2004, and an evaluation report on the four-year programme was published in December 2005. At the time of writing the report was available via the following link: speedcamerareport.co.uk. In summary, it was concluded that:
- **Vehicle speeds were down** – surveys showed that vehicle speeds at speed camera sites had dropped by around 6% following the introduction of cameras. At new sites, there was a 31% reduction in vehicles breaking the speed limit. At fixed sites, there was a 70% reduction and at mobile sites there was a 18% reduction. Overall, the proportion of vehicles speeding excessively (i.e. 15mph more than the speed limit) fell by 91% at fixed camera sites, and 36% at mobile camera sites.
 - **Both casualties and deaths were down** – after allowing for the long-term trend there was a 22% reduction in personal injury collisions at sites after cameras were introduced. Overall, 42% fewer people were killed or seriously injured. At camera sites, there was also a reduction of over 100 fatalities per annum (32% fewer). There were 1,745 fewer people killed or seriously injured and 4,230 fewer personal injury collisions per annum in 2004. There was an association between reductions in speed and reductions in PICs.
 - **There was a positive cost-benefit** of around 2.7:1 (i.e. a saving of £2.7 for every £1 spent). In the fourth year, the benefits to society from the avoided injuries were in excess of £258million compared to enforcement costs of around £96million.
 - **The public supported the use of safety cameras** for targeted enforcement. This was evidenced by public attitude surveys, both locally and at a national level.
 - In 2016, the RAC Foundation published a national evaluation of average speed cameras. At the time of writing, the report was available via this link: [Average speed camera effectiveness 2016.pdf](#). In summary it was

concluded that: “The research shows quite clearly that the implementation of average speed cameras in the locations that have been assessed in this report has had the effect of reducing injury collisions, and especially those of a higher severity. Even taking into account other influencing factors, the reductions are large and statistically significant.”

Local monitoring data

6. Monitoring of the number of casualties at camera sites in Surrey confirms that they have contributed to substantial reductions in casualties at the locations where they have been introduced. This is summarised below and compares the number of casualties in the three years prior to implementation of each individual camera with the most recent three years (to the end of April 2021):
 - **Average speed cameras:** there are a total of ten schemes in the county, six of which are on county council roads and four of which are on Highways England roads. Of the six county council schemes, one is too recent to measure its effectiveness (having been installed in January 2021). Of the five county council schemes for which there has been a sufficient “after” monitoring period there was a reduction in casualties of 63%
 - **Spot speed cameras:** 16 sites, 36% reduction in casualties.
 - **Red light cameras:** 8 sites, 55% reduction in casualties.
 - **Combined speed and red-light cameras:** 5 sites, 38% reduction in casualties.

Existing National Guidance on the Use of Speed Cameras

7. Current national guidance is contained in the Department for Transport [Circular 1/2007 “Use Of Speed And Red-Light Cameras For Traffic Enforcement: Guidance On Deployment, Visibility And Signing”](#). This advocates prioritising resources at the sites that need the most attention based on a points-based system using data on collisions and speeds. It presents minimum criteria to be met before cameras would be recommended. It also advocates the need to ensure camera sites are visible, conspicuous and well signed. However, it does not include guidance specifically on the use of average speed cameras as they were not in wide-spread use at the time of its publication. This 15-year old guidance is now considered outdated by many in the industry.
8. More recent national guidance (for Scotland) was published in 2019: [The Scottish Safety Camera Programme: Handbook of Rules and Guidance](#). This also contains some important principles on prioritising enforcement resources based on data on collisions and speeds, with additional weighting for severity of

collision and involvement of vulnerable road users. The aim is to develop a long list and then prioritise new sites based on the data. It also advocates the need to ensure camera sites are visible, conspicuous and well signed. Although this guidance is not applicable in England, it is a helpful example of more recent guidance being used elsewhere in the UK.

Key Principles of the Proposed New Surrey Policy

9. The proposed draft policy for use in Surrey is contained within Annex 1. This has been produced with reference to the national guidance described above, and in consultation with police colleagues, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure. The key features of the draft policy are that:
- There will be two categories of speed enforcement camera sites: “core casualty reduction safety camera sites” and “community concern safety camera sites”.
 - Central funding from the Safer Roads Partnership will be prioritised towards “core safety camera sites” with the greatest potential for reducing casualties. These will be selected using a points-based system weighted for severity of collision, and presence of vulnerable road users within the history of collisions at the site. There will also need to be confirmation that speeds are part of the problem through the use of speed surveys.
 - Cameras will also be considered for “community concern” sites. These are defined as sites where there hasn’t been such a large history of collisions, but where speeding traffic is a major concern of the local community.
 - Funding for community concern sites will not ordinarily be provided from the central budget of the safer roads partnership as this will be reserved for the “core safety camera sites” using the points-based criteria. Instead alternative sources of funding will be required. This might be from budgets allocated to local county councillors for highway improvements, Community Infrastructure Levy funds, or as part of major schemes for example.
 - Speed cameras will be used only as a last resort after engineering highway improvements to manage speeds have been considered first. This is because it is a better use of public resources to manage speeds without an ongoing need to issue penalties and process offences enduringly. This principle will help to maintain public support for safety cameras as a road safety tool.
 - Enforcement cameras will not be introduced to enforce new lower speed limits that do not comply with the county council’s speed limit policy. If new

speed limits are introduced that are unreasonably low without supporting engineering measures, then if enforcement was introduced it could result in large numbers of prosecutions. This could place an unreasonable burden on police offence processing and court prosecution resources. It could also provoke a public backlash if there were large numbers of prosecutions that many perceive to be unfair. This principle will help to maintain public support for safety cameras as a road safety tool.

- Cameras will continue to be positioned to be visible, conspicuous and well-signed. The aim is to improve compliance and reduce risk of collisions rather than issue penalties.

Conclusions:

10. Higher vehicle speeds increase the risk of collisions. Also, the higher the speed the more severe the consequences are likely to be. Safety cameras have proven to be a very effective intervention to reducing casualties at the worst casualty hotspots where speeding or red-light violations have been part of the problem.
11. In more recent years there has been greater use of average speed cameras as these can encourage greater compliance with the speed limit over a longer stretch of road compared with spot speed cameras. Consequently, Surrey County Council's leadership, Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable are keen to expand the use of average speed cameras and spot speed cameras in Surrey beyond only being deployed at the worst casualty hotspots.
12. Therefore, this report presents a new policy (Annex 1) which sets out the criteria and process that will be followed for investment in new safety cameras. This policy has been developed with reference to national guidance and in consultation with police colleagues, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure.
13. The application of the policy will be overseen by the Surrey Safer Roads Partnership Board consisting of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Surrey County Council Cabinet Member responsible for road safety, and a senior representative of the police.

Recommendations:

14. It is recommended that the select committee review the proposed new safety camera policy presented in Annex 1. Feedback will be taken into account when presenting the policy to Cabinet for final approval on 28 September.

Next steps:

15. The policy will be presented to the Cabinet for final approval on 28 September.

Report contact

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Sources/background papers

Gains, A., et al (2005) The National Safety Camera Programme Four-year evaluation report, UCL and PA Consulting.

Owen, R., Ursachi, G., Allsop, R. (2016) The Effectiveness of Average Speed Cameras in Great Britain. RAC Foundation.

Department for Transport Circular 01/2007: Use Of Speed And Red-Light Cameras For Traffic Enforcement: Guidance On Deployment, Visibility And Signing.

Scottish Safety Camera Programme, Handbook of Rules and Guidance, March 2019.

Draft Policy and Criteria for the Use of Safety (Speed and Red-Light) Cameras in Surrey September 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. Higher vehicle speeds increase the risk of collisions. Also, the higher the speed the more severe the consequences are likely to be. Consequently, safety cameras (speed and red-light cameras) have been operating in Surrey since the 1990s. Since 2004 they have been implemented and managed through a partnership between Surrey Police and Surrey County Council. There are also some safety cameras on Highways England roads within Surrey. Historically their use has been prioritised at casualty hotspots and they have proven to be very effective in helping to reduce the number of casualties by encouraging greater compliance with the speed limit and deterring red light jumping.
- 1.1.2. In more recent years there has been greater use of average speed cameras as these can encourage greater compliance with the speed limit over a longer stretch of road compared with spot speed cameras. At the time of writing (September 2021) there were 10 average speed camera schemes across Surrey. Six of these are on county council roads and monitoring for five of them (one has only recently been implemented) shows that they have coincided with a reduction of 63 per cent in the number of road casualties at those sites (comparing the number of collisions in the three years prior to implementation, with the number of collisions in the most recent three years). Anecdotally, road users appear to be more supportive of the use of average speed cameras, and several communities have lobbied for their introduction on the roads where they live.
- 1.1.3. Consequently, Surrey County Council's leadership, Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable are keen to expand the use of average speed cameras and spot speed cameras in Surrey beyond only being deployed at the worst casualty hotspots. This is because as well as reducing the risk and severity of road collisions, improved compliance with the speed limit can also help to reduce air and noise pollution, and supports more active travel (walking, push scooting and cycling). This is better for the health and wellbeing of residents and contributes to the council's commitment to tackling climate change.
- 1.1.4. Implementation of new average speed cameras represent a significant investment. For example, the simplest system between two points on a two-way single carriageway road can cost around £100,000. Spot speed camera sites typically cost over £25,000. There are also significant resources required for ongoing processing of offences, court prosecutions and maintenance. Therefore, it is important to follow criteria that ensures that safety cameras are only introduced where they are worthwhile and represent a good use of public money and resource. At some sites other solutions might be more appropriate.
- 1.1.5. The fines resulting from enforcement by safety cameras are paid to the courts and are not received by Surrey County Council or Surrey Police. However part of the fee paid to attend driver offender rehabilitation courses such as speed awareness courses (instead of the usual fine and penalty points), is returned to the police and is used to cover the cost of providing enforcement at no cost to the taxpayer. Should there be any surplus then this is used for reinvestment in road safety.

- 1.1.6. Therefore, this policy presents the criteria and process that will be followed for investment in new safety cameras. This includes average speed, spot speed, red-light or combination cameras. While casualty hotspots will remain as the top priority, this policy also sets out the criteria for the use of safety cameras at other locations where there might not have been such a high level of collisions, but where excess speeds are a concern for the community. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the use of safety cameras remains targeted effectively at the sites that need them the most to reduce road death and injury, and to reduce the negative impacts of speeding traffic on local communities and to help tackle climate change.
- 1.1.7. This criteria for use in Surrey was developed with reference to the national guidance issued by the Department for Transport 01/2007: "Use Of Speed And Red-Light Cameras For Traffic Enforcement: Guidance On Deployment, Visibility And Signing" and the Scottish Safety Camera Programme: "Handbook of Rules and Guidance (March 2019)".

2. Key Principles

2.1. Introduction

- 2.1.1. Surrey's Safer Roads Partnership will implement two categories of speed enforcement camera sites: "core casualty reduction safety camera sites" and "community concern safety camera sites". A description of the criteria for each category of site is provided below.

2.2. Core Casualty Reduction Speed Enforcement Sites

- 2.2.1. Surrey's Safer Roads Partnership will prioritise their central funding at the top priority "core casualty reduction sites" where safety cameras are highly likely to make the biggest difference in reducing road casualties. New speed camera sites will be identified and prioritised using a points-based system per km over the three most recent years as follows:

- Collisions resulting in death or serious injury = 5 points
- Collisions resulting in slight injury = 1 point
- Additional weighting (x1.5) for those collisions involving vulnerable modes: pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, or equestrians.

- 2.2.2. An additional weighting has been applied to collisions resulting in injury to vulnerable road users because they are more likely to suffer a greater severity of injury from road collisions. Prioritising people who are walking or cycling also supports the council's aim to increase active travel, which is healthier for the participants and, as an alternative to fossil fuel powered transport, also helps to reduce climate change and improve air quality.

- 2.2.3. For speed camera sites to be worthwhile there will need to be confirmation that speeding is part of the problem. Therefore, speed surveys will be required to provide confirmation that the existing 85th percentile speeds must equal or exceed the speed limit by 5 mph in at least one of the directions of travel. In cases where police are confident that the pattern of collisions contributing to the scoring criteria is associated with speeding over the posted speed limit (perhaps by only a small proportion of vehicles late at night for example), then a camera can be considered irrespective of the measured 85th percentile speeds.

- 2.2.4. Enforcement could be provided over any distance of road, within reason. The positioning and layout of enforcement cameras will be dependent on assessment of the stretch by safer roads partnership officers. This will determine which type of speed camera would be appropriate for the stretch of road in question (either spot speed or average speed cameras for example). This will depend upon factors such as available power sources, available room at the roadside and distribution of collisions. In the case of average speed camera sites, the number of entry and exit points and the volume of traffic using them will be considered.
- 2.2.5. It may be that in some cases it would be sensible to provide enforcement over a longer length than the length contributing to the points based scoring described above if that is considered likely to make the system more cost effective (by enforcing over a longer stretch of road with the same number of cameras), or to overcome other physical restrictions. In other cases, a shorter length may be more effective to reduce the number of cameras required, and a spot speed camera may be preferred if the collision problem is focussed over a shorter length of road.
- 2.2.6. The ongoing maintenance of cameras and processing of offences and court prosecutions requires significant ongoing resources. Therefore, speed cameras will be used only as a last resort after engineering highway improvements to manage speeds have been considered first. For example, it is likely to be preferable to introduce traffic calming on more minor residential roads with a speed limit of 30mph or lower where there is street lighting, rather than resort to speed camera enforcement. However, it may not be feasible to implement traffic calming on 30 mph speed limit roads that are busier main routes where there are lots of larger vehicles that would cause noise and vibration when travelling over vertical traffic calming features close to residential properties, or on roads with a higher speed limit where traffic calming is not allowed.
- 2.2.7. It will also be possible for the Safer Roads Partnership to use their central funding to introduce “core casualty reduction sites” to replace established, regular police mobile enforcement sites (locations where police personnel have in the past provided regular enforcement from a camera van, or by using hand-held devices). This is because a fixed camera (average or spot speed camera) might provide a more cost-effective long-term solution as it will provide a permanent deterrent as opposed to an enforcement deterrent only being present from time to time. In the case of average speed cameras, it may be possible to cover a longer stretch of road too. The police personnel enforcement resources could then be directed to other sites.
- 2.2.8. In these cases, it will not be necessary to meet the collision points and speed criteria described above as it is expected that there will already have been a reduction in speeds and collisions because of the regular mobile speed enforcement. The intention of introducing a fixed camera in this scenario would be to maintain and improve upon the enforcement already provided by police personnel and to free up those resources for use elsewhere.
- 2.2.9. It should not be expected that enforcement will be implemented to support a new lower speed limit that does not comply with the county council’s speed limit policy, otherwise this could result in large numbers of prosecutions, and this could place an unreasonable burden on police enforcement and court prosecution resources. This could also provoke a public backlash if there were large numbers of prosecutions that many perceive to be unfair. Instead it is expected that new lower speed limits will continue to be introduced in

accordance with the county council's speed limit policy. This requires that lower speed limits using signs alone will only be introduced where the existing mean average speeds are close to the desired new lower speed limit. In accordance with the speed limit policy, if the existing speeds are very much higher than the new desired lower speed limit, then supporting engineering measures will be required.

- 2.2.10. A forward programme of prioritised new core casualty reduction safety camera sites will be presented to the Safer Roads Partnership Board for scrutiny and approval before implementation, with periodic updates being provided to the Board as required.

2.3. Community Concern Speed Camera Enforcement Sites

- 2.3.1. Surrey's Safer Roads Partnership will support the introduction of speed cameras at "community concern" sites. These are defined as sites where there is a lower level of collisions, but where speeding traffic is a major concern of the local community. Funding for these sites will not ordinarily be provided from the central budget of the safer roads partnership as this will be reserved for the worst collision hotspots using the points-based criteria.

- 2.3.2. The Safer Roads Partnership colleagues will undertake a feasibility assessment to check whether an enforcement camera would be viable, would meet the criteria described below and will provide an estimate of the likely costs. (Precise cost estimates will not be possible as this will depend upon the quotes received from suppliers subject to tender, and the amount of electrical preparation works that will be required). A source of funding will then need to be secured prior to any implementation. This might be from the budgets allocated to local county councillors for highway improvements, Community Infrastructure Levy funds, or as part of major schemes for example.

- 2.3.3. As with core casualty reduction sites, new community concern sites will be used only as a last resort after engineering highway improvements to manage speeds have been considered first. For example, it is likely to be preferable to introduce traffic calming on more minor residential roads with a speed limit of 30mph or lower where there is street lighting, rather than resort to speed camera enforcement. However, it may not be feasible to implement traffic calming on 30 mph speed limit roads that are busier main routes where there are lots of larger vehicles that would cause noise and vibration when travelling over vertical traffic calming features close to residential properties, or on roads with a higher speed limit where traffic calming is not allowed.

- 2.3.4. As with core casualty reduction sites, for new community concern sites to be worthwhile there will need to be confirmation that speeding is part of the problem (rather than just large volumes of vehicles for example). Therefore, speed surveys will be required to provide confirmation that the existing 85th percentile speeds must equal or exceed the speed limit by 5 mph in at least one of the directions of travel. At locations where the speeds have already been suppressed due to the provision of regular police mobile enforcement, the Safer Roads Partnership will confirm as to whether a camera to replace the regular enforcement would be worthwhile.

- 2.3.5. In the event that there are several requests for community concern sites across the county that meet the criteria, then the Safer Roads Partnership will decide upon the priority order for implementing them based on the following factors:

- Chronological order that the requests for the site and the source of funding was confirmed
- Level of collisions using the points-based criteria for core casualty reduction sites

2.3.6. A forward programme of prioritised community concern safety camera sites will be presented to the Safer Roads Partnership Board for scrutiny and approval before implementation, with periodic updates being provided to the Board as required.

2.4. Red Light, and Combined Speed and Red-Light Camera sites

2.4.1. Red light cameras will only be introduced at locations where there is confirmation that jumping the red traffic signal has been a factor in collisions or has been reported and observed as leading to near misses. Whenever a new red-light camera site is introduced, consideration will be given to enhancing the level of enforcement deterrent by selecting a camera system that enforces both speed and red-light violations if this is considered worthwhile by safer roads partnership officers.

2.5. Visibility and Signing

2.5.1. An important principle of the enforcement provided in Surrey is that cameras are positioned to be clearly visible, painted yellow to be conspicuous, and that signing warning of the presence of the cameras is provided in advance of any camera installation. Signing to remind drivers of the speed limit will continue to be co-located with camera warning signing in view to the driver at the same time as the camera at all new safety camera sites.

2.5.2. On the approach to nearly all spot speed camera sites in Surrey, electronic vehicle activated signing has also been provided that illuminate to remind drivers of the speed limit and to warn of the presence of the camera if they are approaching too fast. Consideration will be given to implementing vehicle activated signing at all new safety camera sites, but may not be necessary in all cases.

3. Role of Surrey Road Safety Partnership Board

3.1.1. The partnership board (consisting of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Surrey County Council Cabinet Member responsible for road safety, and senior representative of the police) will take the final decisions on the introduction of new safety camera sites. Officers will present the Board with a forward programme of new “core” safety camera sites and “community concern” safety camera sites for approval by the Board prior to implementation.

3.1.2. It is possible that on occasion, there may be exceptional cases where the requirements of this policy cannot be met, but there may still be a good case for proceeding with a new safety camera system. In such cases final decisions on whether to proceed or not with such exceptional cases will be taken by the Board, with officers from the road safety partnership providing advice. In future, any changes to this policy will be approved by the Board.

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