

## REPORT TO CABINET

Title: **SPEED CAMERAS**

Date: 25 June 2009

Member Reporting: Councillor Rayner

Contact Officer(s): Ben Smith, Highway Services Manager

Wards Affected: This report will have direct, or indirect impact on all Wards within the Royal Borough

### 1. SUMMARY

1.1 In 2000 a national road safety strategy was launched which stated:

*‘...By 2010 we want to achieve, compared to the average for 1994-98:*

- *a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents*
- *a 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured: and*
- *a 10% reduction in slight casualties*

The Royal Borough has subsequently adopted a more ambitious, ‘Stretch Target’, to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured by 60% and children killed or seriously injured by 85%.

1.2 During this period the Royal Borough has made excellent progress in meeting these targets through a mix of road safety initiatives which include the activities of the ‘Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership. The partnership was traditionally established to manage, operate and administer speed cameras.

1.3 In April 2007 the financing arrangements for the ‘Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership’ were altered giving local authorities greater flexibility to pursue whichever locally agreed mix of road safety measures will make the greatest contribution to reducing road accidents and, therefore, reducing casualties in their area.

1.4 The purpose of this report is to consider whether the Royal Boroughs engagement in the ‘Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership’, and particularly the emphasis on safety cameras, is still appropriate and delivering the greatest impact in reducing road accidents.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION: That;

**i) The ‘Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead’ actively contributes to the thorough review of the ‘Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership’ to**

ensure that there is transparency in the services provided; that they are tailored to local needs and that value for money is achieved.

ii) A detailed review of each existing camera site be undertaken to determine whether to:

- Retain the camera (and update to current technology)
- Replace a fixed camera with mobile camera enforcement
- Replace the camera with alternative road safety features
- Remove the camera

iii) The outcome of the review of the Thames Valley Safer Roads partnership and the conclusions from the review of the existing camera sites be reported to Cabinet in October 2009 to agree a 'Way Forward'

What will be different for residents as a result of this decision?
Appropriate local road safety measures will be implemented which contribute to achieving a reduction in road accident casualties and respond to local concerns.

### 3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Royal Borough is a member of the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership', which includes all Local Authorities in the Thames Valley; Thames Valley Police; the Fire & Rescue Service; Highways Agency; the Crown Prosecution Service and Her Majesty's Court Services.

3.2 The primary function of the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership' is to assist Local Authorities and other bodies in reducing accident casualties in line with National targets.

3.3 To achieve this aim the following activities are undertaken:

- Management, maintenance and operation of fixed safety cameras
- management, maintenance and operation of mobile safety camera enforcement
- processing and administration of fines
- management, administration and operation of 'Speed Awareness Training' (which is offered to motorists as an education alternative to points on the driving licence in certain circumstances)
- providing a definitive source of accident data and analysis across the region
- assisting in developing and operating road safety campaigns, including; 'Safe Drive – Stay Alive' (targeted at young drivers); seatbelt campaigns; 'Drink Drive' campaigns

- employment and functions of dedicated road safety constables who conduct activities such as roadside checks with respect to seatbelts, mobile phone use etc.
- 3.4 Originally, the partnership was established to focus on speed cameras but latterly the focus has been broadened to focus on wider road safety initiatives across the region. This shift is encapsulated in the subtle name change from 'speed cameras' to 'safety cameras'. However, it should be noted that a significant proportion of funding is still required to manage, operate and administer the safety cameras.
- 3.5 The total operating costs of the partnership for 2009/10 are £4.5m across the Thames Valley region. When the partnerships were originally established at national level the revenue received from speed camera activities was received by the treasury and paid directly to each partnership via a 'Hypothecation Scheme'.
- 3.6 From April 2007 the funding arrangements changed, whereby the revenue is still received by the treasury but is used to fund the road safety allocation which each local authority receives as part of the 'Local Transport Plan' area based grant.
- 3.7 This move was intended to give local authorities, the police and other agencies greater flexibility to pursue whichever locally agreed mix of road safety measures will make the greatest contribution to reducing road accident casualties in their area. Whilst the grant is non-ring fenced, the Department for Transport advise that '*...there remains a high expectation that the allocation will be invested in road safety...*'
- 3.8 Each partnership then seeks an annual contribution from each Local Authority, and other paying partners, to support its road safety activities.
- 3.9 The Royal Boroughs' road safety allocation for 2009/10 was circa. £295,000 and the contribution requested from the partnership was circa. £230,000. In order to secure financial efficiencies the Royal Borough 'capped' its contribution at £200,000.
- 3.10 The remainder of the grant, which is retained by the Royal Borough, is used to partially fund the programme of road safety schemes approved as part of the capital programme.
- 3.11 In 2000 a national road safety strategy was launched which stated:  
'*...By 2010 we want to achieve, compared to the average for 1994-98:*
- *a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents*
  - *a 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured: and*
  - *a 10% reduction in slight casualties*
- The Royal Borough has subsequently adopted a more ambitious, 'Stretch Target', to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured by 60% and children killed or seriously injured by 85%.

- 3.12 For the Royal Borough this is translated into:
- a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured from 106 to 42
  - a reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured from 10 to 2
  - a reduction in slight casualties from 608 to 547
- 3.13 The Royal Boroughs performance against these targets is set out in Appendix A.
- 3.14 It is very difficult to establish the contribution of safety cameras to this decline and a plethora of statistics are available both nationally and locally, from which conclusions can be drawn. However, safety cameras are an important part of the toolkit available to Local Authorities in reducing road accident casualties and to respond to local concerns regarding speeding and road safety.
- 3.15 Other road safety initiatives that are successfully deployed within the Royal Borough to achieve these targets include:
- Annual investment in the development and delivery of local safety schemes which are prioritised on the basis of existing accident records and targeted at sites where the introduction of physical measures could improve road safety. These measures may include: introducing speed reducing features such as interactive signage; speed cushions or other 'traffic calming' features.
  - Annual investment in the development and delivery of traffic management schemes which are prioritised on the basis of local concerns (eg. petitions / Neighbourhood Action Groups); where there is widespread disregard for speed limits or where the threat to vulnerable road users (eg. school children, pedestrians and cyclists) is high. These measures may include: new pedestrian crossings; cycle routes or 20 mph zones outside schools
  - Extensive use of speed indicator devices
  - An extensive programme of road safety education, training and publicity which includes; cycle training; roadside motorist schemes and education in schools
- 3.16 There are 33 fixed or mobile camera sites within the Royal Borough, which are set out in Appendix B.
- 3.17 The existing film-based cameras are becoming obsolete and the cameras need to be replaced with new digital cameras over the next three to five years.
- 3.18 A full review of all camera sites has, therefore, been agreed by the partnership to consider the locations and benefits of each site over the next 2 years. This will include a thorough review of accident trends at each location

This review will be undertaken in conjunction with Thames Valley Police and will fully engage with Local Members to establish, for each of the existing fixed camera site, whether to:

1. Retain the camera(and update to current technology)
2. Replace a fixed camera with mobile camera enforcement
3. Replace the camera with alternative road safety features
4. Remove the camera

Integral to this review will be the identification of the costs associated with the recommended 'Way Forward' and consideration to how this will be funded.

- 3.19 It should be noted that speed management is a very emotive subject that polarises opinion and there is a small but vocal lobby for removing speed cameras (which are regarded by some as an opportunity for 'milking the motorist'), and those who feel that speed cameras deliver a positive effect in improving road safety. There has also been a noticeable change in the wider public perception of speed in the last 12 –18 months with more residents becoming more supportive of reduced speeds to improve safety.
- 3.20 There are high profile examples of Local Authorities opting out of their respective safety camera partnerships (notably Swindon) and retaining the total area based grant for local safety initiatives prioritised and established by the Local Authority. This approach may be equally effective in achieving road accident casualty targets. However there is little evidence available at present.
- 3.21 A neighbouring Authority seriously considered withdrawing from the partnership with effect from April 2009 and working with the police to maintain an element of speed enforcement as part of the core police function, whilst retaining their funding for other local initiatives. However they have now agreed to remain partners subject to more "transparency", tailored services and value for money.
- 3.22 The outcome of this approach is that a thorough review of the role of the partnership and its current operating practices be undertaken with a report on the conclusions and recommendations to be considered by the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership – Strategy Committee' in September 2009.
- 3.23 The issue for consideration, is therefore, has the Royal Borough adopted an appropriate mix of road safety initiatives to reduce road accident casualties and does the support for the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership' offer good value for local residents.

## 4. OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 Options

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
1.	The Royal Borough may withdraw from the partnership and retain 100% funding for local road safety initiatives	This option is not recommended in advance of the full review of the partnership	Funding available to the Royal Borough to use on local initiatives would increase by circa. £200,000 per annum.* (See note (i))

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
2.	Continue as a member of the partnership whilst actively contributing to the current review of roles and operating practices to influence its future performance to align with local needs	This option is recommended to ensure that local needs are met and financial efficiency is achieved	The financial implications of this approach cannot be quantified until the review is complete and any changes adopted
3.	Continue as a member of the partnership and undertake the thorough review of each camera site and adopt an approach that is in line with local needs	It is recommended that this option be progressed in parallel with option 2 and a co-ordinated timescale be adopted	The financial implications of this approach cannot be quantified until the review is complete and any changes adopted
4.	Remain as a full member of the partnership and retain existing operating arrangements	This approach does not fulfil the objective of meeting local needs and ensuring that financial efficiency is achieved	None

### **Notes:**

- (i) \* The additional funding could be utilised for the following measures:
- to fund additional 'Police Community Support Officers. Current duties do not include speed enforcement but it may be possible to utilise these staff in a different manner and achieve greater flexibility for Royal Borough residents
  - to increase the funding available for physical measures / schemes thereby delivering additional schemes through the capital programme
  - deliver an enhanced programme of advisory measures, such as 'Speed Indicator Devices

(ii) In evaluating the options it is important to note that the partnership operates under a 'Memorandum of Understanding' signed by all partners. Withdrawal from the partnership will have a consequent effect on all other partners and an appropriate notice period should be given. Additionally, if the Royal Borough were to withdraw its support it is unlikely that rejoining would be an option in the short to medium term.

**It is recommended that Options 2 and 3 be adopted and that the review of each camera site be accelerated to be undertaken in parallel with (and to the same timescale) as the overall review of the partnership.**

## 4.2 Risk assessment

The following significant **risks** and opportunities have been identified:

- Withdrawing support for the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership' and, effectively, removing speed cameras may have a detrimental effect in achieving road safety targets
- Removal of safety camera sites may generate local opposition
- Withdrawal from the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership may reduce the options available to improve road safety at specific sites
- Costs may be increased as the collective 'buying power' of the partnership is reduced

### **Opportunities**

- An increase in funding that can be utilised to meet local needs is very responsive to 'putting residents first'
- The removal of safety camera sites may generate local support
- Road safety targets may be achieved through locally focussed initiatives
- Financial efficiencies may be generated

## 5. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

- 5.1 Extensive consultation will be undertaken with Ward Members, Town / Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAG) when reviewing the existing safety camera locations.

## 6. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

- 6.1 The Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel will consider this report on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009 and comments will be verbally reported to Cabinet.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS

The following implications have been addressed where indicated below.

Financial	Legal	Human Rights Act	Planning	Sustainable Development	Diversity & Equality
✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A

### Background Papers:

- Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership website: [www.saferroads.org](http://www.saferroads.org)
- Department for Transport – Road Safety Strategy