

REPORT TO CABINET

Title: **SPEED CAMERAS**

Date: 22 October 2009

Member Reporting: Councillor Rayner, Lead Member for Highways and Streetcare

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 June 2009, Cabinet considered a report on speed cameras and resolved that the Royal Borough actively participate in the review of the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership and undertake a review of each fixed camera site within the Borough. The June report set out:-

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%.

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.

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.

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.

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.*

- 1.2 The 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership' (TVSRP) manage, maintain and operate both the fixed camera and mobile camera sites within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead as a significant part their service.
- 1.3 The review of the TVSRP is being led by Wokingham District Council and the Royal Borough has been an active participant in preparing a paper, which was considered by the TVSRP Committee on 29th September.
- 1.4 A detailed review of each fixed camera site (26no.) has been undertaken which considers the casualty reduction impact at each location and considers other factors that have changed since the introduction of the camera. **The recommended outcome of this exercise is that all fixed camera sites are retained.**
- 1.5 In addition to the fixed speed camera sites, recent discussions with the 'Safer Roads Partnership' have achieved agreement to introduce new mobile cameras sites at a number of new locations across the Borough where concerns about excess vehicle speeds have been raised by the local community. This is welcomed as a positive response to residents concerns and an effective method in improving road safety,
- 1.6 In parallel with the review of the 'Safer Roads Partnership' and the speed camera sites, the opportunity has been taken to consult on some existing speed limits within the Royal Borough. The outcome of this consultation has created a schedule, which is prioritised to respond to concerns around schools, which is recommended as a work programme for the next three years.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That:

i) The 'Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead' remain a member of the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership' (subject to achieving the financial targets set out in paragraph 3.13) and continue to be actively involved in its management to ensure that the services it provides are transparent; are tailored to local needs and that value for money is delivered

ii) Cabinet receive a further report in September 2010 to consider the conclusion of the feasibility exercise considering whether the role of the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership' could be transferred to a partial, or total in-house function

iii) The review of fixed camera sites (Appendix 2 refers) agreed and that all fixed camera sites are retained

iv) The Royal Borough supports initiatives to deploy mobile speed cameras in support of local concerns about excess vehicle speeds,

v) The outcome of the speed limit review be endorsed and forms the basis of a works programme for the next three years (until March 2013) – subject to budget availability

vi) The priority for responding to the speed limit consultation be focussed around schools and that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director of Environment (in conjunction with the Lead Member for Highways and Streetcare supported by local ward members) to prioritise and implement the remaining schedule of requests

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 whilst responding to local concerns to prevent accidents through effective measures (including the deployment of mobile speed enforcement and use of 'Speed Indicator Devices')

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

Speed management is a very emotive subject that polarises opinion. Whilst there is a small but vocal lobby for removing speed cameras (which are regarded by some as an opportunity for 'milking the motorist'), there are also those who feel that speed cameras deliver positive benefits 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 across the Borough raising concerns about issues associated with excess vehicle speeds. For information, five petitions relating to speed management issues have been received in the last 18 months.

Speed cameras were introduced in the mid 1990's as an alternative to physical traffic calming measures at sites where speeding problems were being experienced and at sites where Police speed enforcement would otherwise be required.

Cameras within the Thames Valley Police area are managed by the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership'. The Royal Borough is a member of the 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. 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. A review of current activities undertaken by the 'Safer Roads Partnership' is included in Appendix 1 and summarised below:

- management, maintenance and operation of the fixed safety cameras
- management, maintenance and operation of the mobile camera sites
- processing and administration of fines

- a dedicated team of road safety constables carrying out roadside checks targeted at various offences (including seatbelts and mobile phones)
- road safety campaigns, including 'Safe Drive – Stay Alive' targeted at young people and 'SafeRider' targeted at motorcyclists
- a definitive source of accident data and analysis across the region

3.2 From April 2007 the funding arrangements for safety camera partnerships were 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.

3.3 This move was intended to give local authorities, 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...*'

3.4 Each safety camera partnership then seeks an annual contribution from each Local Authority, and other paying partners, to support its road safety activities.

3.5 The Royal Boroughs' road safety grant 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.

3.6 The remainder of the grant from central Government, 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. For 2009/2010, the retained grant was £95,000. In March 2009 Prioritisation Sub Committee approved schedules of Local Safety Schemes and Traffic Management Schemes which are partly funded by this £95,000. Projects range from, accident reduction facilities, speed limit changes, pedestrian crossings to redesigned junction layouts etc.

3.7 'Safer Roads Partnership' Review

3.8 With effect from April 2009, Wokingham District Council made a decision to withdraw from the 'Safer Roads Partnership'. This decision, coupled with the Royal Borough 'capping' its contribution at a lower level than requested, generated a value for money review, which was also supported by other partners.

3.9 Following agreement by all partners to a fundamental review to ensure:

- more transparency
- that services are more tailored to local needs
- that value for money is delivered

'Wokingham District Council' agreed to remain within the 'Safer Roads Partnership' pending the conclusions of this process.

3.10 The initial report was presented the 'Safer Roads Partnership – Strategy Committee' on 29th September 2009 and concluded that:

- all partners are seeking financial reductions ranging from circa. 10% and 20%
- partners value different elements of the services provided making it very difficult to draw conclusions and focus effort accordingly
- opportunities to increase revenue are being explored
- further work is planned to undertake a 'Benchmarking' exercise
- further work is planned to develop a 5-year financial plan including the best balance of enforcement levels versus income / costs

3.11 It should be noted that changes with the governance arrangements at the 'Safer Roads Partnership' mean that the Royal Borough is now more effectively represented in the management of the Partnership.

3.12 As background, operating cost reductions of around 20% have been achieved over the past two years, without significant detrimental impact on the operations of the 'Safer Roads Partnership'. Further short-term cost reductions could only be achieved through a reduction in services i.e. by reducing enforcement levels.

3.13 Longer term cost reductions are nevertheless being evaluated with the intention being to develop a 5-year financial plan. This will include ensuring that the best balance between enforcement levels versus income / costs is achieved and looking at the potential to significantly reduce costs associated with the Fixed Penalty Support Unit, which processes and issues speeding notices, and presently represent the largest element of costs within the overall budget.

3.14 Additionally it is recommended that the Royal Borough conduct a feasibility exercise to establish whether it would be effective and efficient to transfer the role of the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership' to a partial, or total in-house function. The outcome of this exercise will be reported to Cabinet in September 2010

3.15 As part of the Royal Boroughs budget process funding for the 'Safer Roads Partnership' has been 'capped' at £ 170,000 (2010/11) and £ 145,000 (2011/12).

3.16 With consideration for the above it is recommended that the Royal Borough remains an active Members of the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership' until 31st March 2012 subject to achieving the financial targets set out in paragraph 3.15.

Fixed Speed Camera Review

3.17 There are presently 26 operational fixed camera sites within the Royal Borough, the majority of which were installed in the mid or late 1990's. The existing film-based cameras are becoming obsolete and the cameras may require replacing with new digital cameras over the next three to five years.

- 3.18 Opinions vary significantly as to the effectiveness of speed cameras at reducing casualties; their effectiveness at reducing traffic speeds and the overall cost-effectiveness of cameras compared to other traffic and road safety measures.
- 3.19 An analysis of road crash data for the Royal Borough indicates statistically, a significantly higher level of casualty reduction at camera sites compared with casualty trends across the Royal Borough as a whole. The majority of fixed camera sites have been operational for over 10 years and have delivered a 44% reduction in recorded injury collisions since installation.

This would indicate that cameras have been effective at reducing casualties. However, these results have not been consistent at all camera sites.

- 3.20 A detailed review of each fixed camera site has been undertaken which considers:
- the casualty reduction impact of each camera site (comparing the three year period before the introduction of the camera with the latest three year period)
 - other relevant factors which have changed since the introduction of the camera

(Note: the review primarily considers the cameras in terms of the effectiveness at reducing casualties – it has not considered the impact of cameras upon speed reduction, in particular the deterrent impact on vehicle speeds or the consequent impact upon casualties if a camera were to be removed)

The outcome of this review is included as Appendix 2 and it is recommended that all fixed camera sites be retained due to their overall positive effect in improving road safety and responding to community concerns.

- 3.21 It should also be noted that reducing the number of fixed camera sites would not significantly reduce the overall operating costs incurred by the Borough.

Mobile Speed Camera Enforcement

- 3.22 In addition to the 26 fixed camera sites there are presently 11 sites identified within the Royal Borough for mobile camera enforcement.
- 3.23 A previous criticism of the 'Safer Roads Partnership' was that they were inflexible at meeting concerns about speed related issues that had been raised by local residents. Whilst there are national criteria relating to the installation of fixed camera sites, mobile camera deployment is a matter for the Partnership, and is dependent upon the level of resources available.
- 3.24 Recent requests to the 'Safer Roads Partnership' have been successful and achieved agreement to introduce new mobile cameras sites at a number of new locations across the Borough. This has been very popular with residents in responding to community concerns and, coupled with the effective deployments of 'Speed Indicator Devices' is effective.
- 3.25 Subject to the Royal Borough continuing as a member of the 'Safer Roads Partnership' this activity will continue to receive greater prominence.

Alternatives to Speed Cameras

- 3.26 Whilst safety cameras are an important part of the toolkit available to Local Authorities in reducing road accident casualties and to respond to local concerns, the funding currently provided to the 'Safer Roads Partnership' could be retained and used to fund alternative initiatives, including:
- increased funding to introduce physical measures such as traffic calming and junction improvements
 - expansion of the 'Speed Indicator Device' programme
 - funding for 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 residents
 - additional road safety education, training and publicity
- 3.27 The existing funding covers operation of speed cameras at 26 fixed camera sites, 11 mobile camera sites, ad-hoc speed enforcement at other community concern sites, and other roadside checks involving offences that cannot be managed through automatic mechanisms.
- 3.28 Whilst retaining the existing funding would allow a number of traffic or road safety schemes to be introduced at a number of locations, only very limited funding could be allocated to each site that currently receives enforcement. Based on this, it is considered that alternative measures would be unlikely to achieve a similar level of casualty reduction as existing fixed and mobile camera enforcement, together with other Police roadside checks. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that this assessment would be very difficult to quantify.

Speed Limit Review

- 3.29 In parallel with the review of the 'Safer Roads Partnership' and the speed camera sites, the opportunity has been taken to consult on existing speed limits within the Royal Borough.
- 3.30 This exercise responds to the spirit of the Department for Transport guidance and has been undertaken in a manner, which is very focussed on local needs and concerns and is felt to be very effective in 'putting residents first'.
- 3.31 The Lead Member for Highways and Streetcare invited comments from all schools, town and parish councils, the Police, Neighbourhood Action Groups and RBWM councillors on speed limits and speed cameras. The results of this consultation are set out in Appendix 3.
- 3.32 The main themes which have emerged from the consultation are:
- introduction of 20mph zones outside schools
 - Requests to review specific speed limits in individual roads / areas
 - A general reduction in speed limits on rural village roads

- supportive of more sustainable traffic safety features such as ‘Speed Indicator Devices’
- acknowledgement that physical traffic calming features can be controversial
- some support for retaining speed cameras and some support for removing all fixed speed cameras

3.33 The outcome of this consultation has created a schedule, which is recommended as the basis of a work programme for the next three years (subject to budget availability - currently £50,000 per annum is included in the draft capital programme).

3.34 Furthermore, it is recommended that the priority for responding to the speed limit consultation be focussed around schools and that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director of Environment (in conjunction with the Lead Member for Highways and Streetcare supported by local ward members) to prioritise and implement the remaining schedule of requests.

3.35 Recently two other Highway Authorities have brought in area wide 20mph speed limits “zones”. Until recently 20mph limits had to be self-enforcing as the Police would not take enforcement action. However Thames Valley Police have very recently revised their policy on this and this may give scope for further amendments in the Royal Borough. Officers will be investigating this new opportunity.

4. OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Options

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
‘Safer Roads Partnership’ Review			
1.	The Royal Borough may withdraw from the partnership and retain 100% funding for local road safety initiatives	This option is not recommended as the funding is unlikely to achieve a similar level of casualty reduction	Funding available to the Royal Borough to use on local initiatives would increase by £170,000 (2010/11) and £145,000 (2011/12)
2.	Continue as a member of the partnership whilst actively contributing to the on-going reviews 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 RECOMMENDED	The Royal Boroughs contribution has been ‘capped’ and services will be delivered within this budget allocation
3.	Conduct a feasibility exercise to establish whether it would be effective and efficient to	This option is recommended to consider alternative local based services as an alternative	There are no financial implications associated with this option as resources costs can be

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
	transfer the role of the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership' to a partial, or total in-house function. The outcome of this exercise will be reported to Cabinet in September 2010	to the current role of the 'Safer Roads Partnership' RECOMMENDED	covered from existing budgets
4.	Remain as a full member of the partnership and retain existing operating and financial arrangements	This approach is not recommended as it does not fulfil the objective of meeting local needs and ensuring that financial efficiency is achieved	Budget targets will not be achieved
FIXED SPEED CAMERA REVIEW			
5.	Retain all fixed camera sites	This option will retain existing cameras which have a good record in reducing accident casualties whilst retaining other existing cameras for their positive effect on vehicle speeds RECOMMENDED	There are no financial implications of this option as costs are covered through the contribution to the 'Safer Roads Partnership' which has been 'capped' to achieve financial targets
6.	Retain some fixed camera sites and decommission some fixed camera sites	This option provides a balance of retaining existing camera sites where there is a beneficial effect on road safety and decommissioning sites where the effect is lessened	As the Royal Borough has 'capped' its contribution to the 'Safer Roads Partnership' it is unlikely that further significant savings will be achieved by decommissioning some fixed camera sites
7.	Remove all fixed camera sites	This option will increase funding available to the Royal Borough for local initiatives. However, it is unlikely to be as effective in reducing casualties	This option will result in a consequent reduction in the contribution to the 'Safer Roads Partnership'
8.	Retain the existing camera housings but do not deploy enforcement cameras	This option will retain a deterrent effect but may undermine the credibility of camera enforcement	This option is likely to reduce fine revenue but is unlikely to realise savings with respect to camera operations

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
9.	Introduce additional fixed cameras at specific locations	This option may respond to local requests. However, more appropriate solutions to improve road safety should be considered	The estimated costs of each new camera housing is circa £25,000. If additional cameras were to be procured a further £25,000 - £ 40,000 per camera would be incurred
SPEED LIMIT REVIEW			
7.	Adopt the schedule, attached as Appendix 3 as the basis of a work programme for the next three years (subject to budget availability)	This is the recommended option which responds fully to the recent consultation exercise	Capital funding will be required to deliver this option. Capital funding of circa. £50,000 per annum is required
8.	Note the results of the consultation exercise and take no further action	This is not recommended as it does not respond to the consultation exercise and will not improve road safety	There are no financial implications associated with this option
9.	Partially adopt the schedule, attached as Appendix 3 and add / delete schemes	This is not recommended as there is no basis to add / delete schemes at this stage prior to investigations	The financial implication of this option is unquantifiable at this stage

4.2 Risk assessment

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

- Removal of fixed site speed cameras could result in an increase in road accident casualties
- Withdrawing from the 'Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership' would remove all fixed and mobile speed cameras across the Borough. Other speed enforcement activities undertaken by the Police are likely to be significantly reduced. This is very likely to 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 some motorist support

- Road safety targets may be achieved through locally focussed initiatives
- Financial efficiencies may be generated

5. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

- 5.1 Ward Members, Town / Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAG) and schools have been consulted as part of the review of speed cameras and speed limit review.

6. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

- 6.1 The Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel received a presentation on this report at the meeting on 8th September and agreed that the process being adopted was adequate and that they would comment on the report when circulated electronically in early October 2009.

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
- Department for Transport – Road Safety Strategy