

Report



meeting	ENVIRONMENT STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE	
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Report of the Chair of the Environment Standing Select Committee

Traffic Calming Study Group – Final Report

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1** To inform Members of the recent work and recommendations of the Study Group examining the effectiveness of traffic calming measures in Nottinghamshire.

2. Introduction

- 2.1** The Environment Standing Select Committee of 26th August 2004 initiated the work of this Study Group.

- 2.2** The Members of the Study Group are: Councillors Andrew Freeman (Chair), Stan Heptinstall, Richard Jackson and Parry Tsimbiridis.

- 2.3** The Study Group met on 11th October and 15th November 2004 and 12th January, 1st March and 21st March 2005 when it received information from:

- Suzanne Heydon, Accident Investigation Manager, Environment Department
- Linda Morrison Allsop, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)
- Mike Ashworth, Assistant Director Network Management and Customer Services
- Sergeant Paul Preston and Mick Mosley of Nottinghamshire Police (representing the Safety Camera Partnership)

In addition, the Study Group also received information from Henk Tromp of the Dutch civil engineers Goudappel Coffeng in order to obtain a perspective

on the effectiveness of traffic calming measures from outside the United Kingdom and a written response from the Chief Constable of Durham.

3. Summary of Information Received from Witnesses

3.1 Suzanne Heydon is the Accident Investigation Manager for Nottinghamshire County Council. Ms Heydon provided substantial background information and briefing to the Study Group on traffic calming measures and the operation of the safety camera partnership. Her wide-ranging presentation included the following key points.

- The Accident Unit based within Nottinghamshire County Council's Environment Department utilises police data to identify locations with the highest number of injury accidents.
- If the Accident Unit identifies a pattern to the accidents at a particular location the site is examined to see if preventative measures would be justified.
- The cost of a fatal accident is £1.4 million according to Department of Transport figures. In Nottinghamshire the criterion for undertaking all accident schemes is an expected 200% return during the first year (by contrast the Highways Agency looks at costs and benefits over a ten year period).
- The Government has set targets for the reduction of fatal and serious accidents by 2010 as compared with 1994-98 averages of: 40% overall casualties, 50% children's casualties and 10% for slight casualties. The County Council is making good progress in meeting these targets and under the Public Service Agreement has a Stretch Target of 599 casualties by 2006 compared with 646.

3.2 Suzanne Heydon also explained that the purpose of traffic calming measures (such as cushions, plateaux, road humps and village gateways) was purely to cause drivers to reduce speed and hence reduce accident levels. Layouts with curving roads are encouraged on new estates. All developments currently receive a safety audit to maximise the safety of the road while minimising the need for future traffic calming.

3.3 In situations where schemes are requested by residents the accident database is checked and if no accidents are recorded the request is referred to the Traffic Management Team who have a budget of £15,000 per annum per district. If accidents have been recorded a survey of residents is conducted which requires a 35% response rate; 65% of whom must be in favour.

3.4 For traffic calming measures, the following principles and criteria apply:

Accident Reduction Traffic Calming

- i) Traffic calming will not be installed on Category 1 roads according to the County Council Structure Plan hierarchy.

- ii) Traffic calming will be permitted on Category 2, 3, or 4 roads according to the County Council Structure Plan hierarchy. However, any vertical deflections or road narrowing on Category 2 or 3 roads will need the specific approval of the Cabinet Member for Environment.
- iii) A 200% rate of return on first year investment must be obtained.

Environmental Traffic Calming

- i) Will only be considered on Category 4 roads according to the County Council Structure Plan hierarchy.
- ii) More than 250 vehicles travel through the affected length during a morning or afternoon peak hour.

and,

The 85th percentile speed of daily traffic flow must exceed the stated speed limit by 20% or more.

- iii) Where at least 50% of the affected road frontage comprises residential premises.

3.5 Gateways and Traffic Regulation Orders: Ms Heydon explained that in isolation traffic regulation orders to reduce speed limits were not an effective tool for accident reduction. The process to put them in place is lengthy, the police do not have the resources to enforce them, and they were shown to produce a maximum of only 5 mph reduction in speed.

3.6 Safety Camera Partnership: Ms Heydon explained that the County Council was a member of the Safety Camera Partnership along with the Police, the Highways Authority, the City Council and the Magistrates' Court. All safety cameras within the County operate under the partnership and the revenue from fixed penalty notices is used to pay for new cameras and for other police operational costs. Cameras are only installed where all other engineering solutions have been exhausted. Attached as Appendix A is a statistical analysis of changes in the number of accidents at camera sites. N.B. in this analysis KSI stands for Killed and Seriously Injured and PIC stands for Personal Injury Collision.

3.7 In addition, Ms Heydon told the Study Group that whilst there are cameras in Nottinghamshire which were installed before the County Council joined the partnership, such as the Mansfield sites, the Nottinghamshire Partnership does not have any actual 'legacy sites' because all sites (including pre-partnership ones) have been assessed and approved by the Department for Transport. Other than in situations where significant engineering works have been carried out e.g. the installation of speed cushions and plateaux, the partnership does not believe that the case for the removal or abandonment of

enforcement activity has been made. There is a likelihood that if safety cameras were removed motorists would revert to previous behaviour and the old problems would manifest themselves.

3.8 Linda Morrison Allsopp is the Project Manager (Road Safety) at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. During her meeting with the Study Group the following points emerged:

- RoSPA campaigns for improvements in road safety including a change in the perception that it is 'normal' for 3500 people to die on roads in the United Kingdom every year.
- The installation of safety cameras is not an excuse for police forces to get rid of traffic officers. Indeed, it should free up traffic officer's time to pick up on other traffic offences such as dangerous and careless driving.
- RoSPA supports speed limit repeater signs and lane markings and believes that the revenue from fines could be used to pay for such measures.
- Children in deprived areas are more at risk of road traffic accidents due to their proximity to major routes and lack of gardens.
- The more dangerous a road appears the more safely people drive; therefore, ironically, road improvements can actually result in an increased level of accidents.
- RoSPA has concerns that a single two and half hour speed awareness course is not sufficient to change the behaviour of a habitual speeder. The pilot projects running at the moment should be analysed to find the best course. Speed awareness courses could be a subject to lobby safety camera partnerships on at a local level.
- Newly qualified riders of large motorcycles are particularly at risk of accidents, especially those aged over twenty five who might pass their test after just a week's Direct Access training.

3.9 **Mike Ashworth is an Assistant Director within Derbyshire County Council's Environment Department** with responsibility for issues in relation to the operation of the safety camera partnership and traffic calming. Mr Ashworth told the Study Group that Derbyshire does not operate strict criteria in relation to traffic calming measures, except on bus routes.

3.9.1 Every year Derbyshire engages in a programme of safety schemes and ensures possible dangers in new housing schemes are designed out at the approval stage.

3.9.2 Derbyshire has partnership arrangements with Parish Councils and assists them with design and consultation for traffic calming schemes with the parish council footing the bill.

3.9.3 Mr Ashworth reported that Derbyshire had 110 sites with safety cameras and four mobile cameras. There has been a reduction in the numbers of killed and seriously injured at camera sites of 24%. Where Derbyshire County Council

operates 'legacy' sites a business case is supplied to the Department for Transport every year.

- 3.9.4** Mick Mosley is Manager of the Operational Support (Traffic Management) section and Sergeant Paul Preston is the Project Officer for the Nottinghamshire Safety Camera Partnership. Mr Mosley told the Study Group that the use of fixed speed cameras is as a last resort, after a site survey carried out by a road safety engineer, confirming that no other cost effective engineering solution can be implemented to improve road safety. The Safety Camera Partnership stays within the rules and does not seek to place cameras where they might generate the most revenue.
- 3.9.5** Mr Mosley and Sergeant Preston emphasised that speeding vehicles are a 'quality of life' issue for many residents and the police receive many complaints. Additionally, safety camera evidence has assisted on a number of occasions to convict offenders engaged in serious crime.
- 3.9.6** **Henk Tromp is a civil engineer with the Dutch firm Goudappel Coffeng.** He told the Study Group that at present the Dutch focus is 'regional' roads (single lane highways with an 80 kph speed limit) and main city roads around traffic lights. Trees alongside regional roads are being removed, in a programme that will take a couple of years. In addition, on long stretches of road overtaking will be prohibited.
- 3.9.7** In the cities many traffic lights are being replaced by safer roundabouts or give way junctions. At the moment there is a lot of discussion about the priority for bicycles at roundabouts. Giving priority to cyclists has proved to be seven times more dangerous than ordering them to give way.
- 3.9.8** In Holland there is a great deal of public opposition to speed cameras. A Dutch scientific safety organisation has recently recommended an increase to maximum speeds on roads where there are few or no accidents.
- 3.9.9** There is little use of repeater signs in Holland. Generally, areas are marked with a single sign in order to allow the police to write speeding tickets although lanes are sometimes marked with speed limits.

4. Summary of Findings and Emerging Facts

- 4.1** The Study Group is aware of the accusation that is often made and widely held that safety cameras are placed where they can generate maximum revenue. The Study Group has gathered evidence on this point and believes the accusation is unfounded. The Study Group learnt that as part of the National Safety Camera Scheme, the Nottinghamshire Partnership has to demonstrate to the Department for Transport's consultants that 'speed' cameras will **only** be used where there is a history of fatal or serious road casualties or speeding. Therefore, all proposed speed camera locations are required to meet the Government's accident criteria for fixed or mobile camera sites. In addition to accidents each potential location must also satisfy various

speed and other site criteria and should only be used if there is no other appropriate engineering solution. For example, fixed cameras can be considered at locations where there have been at least four fatal or serious collisions per kilometre in the last three calendar years and where the 85th percentile speed is at or above ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) guidance, (10% above the speed limit plus 2 mph – i.e. 35 mph in a 30 mph limit).

- 4.2** Due to the hypothecation or 'netting off' arrangements under which the Safety Camera Partnership operates it is not possible for the monies from speeding fines to be used for anything other than paying for new safety cameras and meeting police operational costs. However, the representative from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents indicated that speed limit repeater signs as an additional warning to drivers would be an appropriate use of funds raised from fines and the Study Group agrees with this assertion.
- 4.3** In the response from the Chief Constable of Durham to Blackpool Borough Council's Speed Camera Study Group (copied to this Select Committee's Study Group for information and attached as Appendix B), the Chief Constable indicates a link between those with multiple motoring convictions and more serious lawlessness:

"Analysis of our serious and fatal collisions shows that many involve one or more persons who are under the influence of drink or more commonly drugs, many are disqualified from driving and have multiple driving convictions. Individuals who are hardly likely to be deterred by speed cameras anyway. A recent survey of prisoners held in Durham Category 'A' Prison showed that 94% have multiple motoring convictions even though they are in prison for serious non-motoring offences."

While it is not perhaps altogether surprising that those convicted of major infractions of the law have also committed minor offences, the Chief Constable highlights an important point; speeding may be an indicator of more serious criminality. The Study Group does not doubt that effective road policing patrols rather than safety cameras are the best tool for dealing with criminal road users and deterring crime.

- 4.4 Killed and Seriously Injured – Nottinghamshire and Durham:** In his letter the Chief Constable of Durham stated in relation to casualty reduction that:

"Durham should reach its 2010 target by 2005/6, while I note that in the Nottinghamshire Constabulary area they appear on current performance as if the target will be achieved by 2009/10. However, the number of killed and seriously injured persons per thousand population is 0.88, while Durham's is almost 50% lower at 0.46 per thousand population."

In fact, Nottingham Police Area and Durham Police can be compared favourably over the last three years by means of reference to 'Road Accidents Guide Britain,' the national statistics record. The Guide indicates that comparing the figures of 2001 with 2003 Nottinghamshire have had a

reduction in Killed and Seriously Injured of 5% and a reduction of all casualties of 7%. In the same time period Durham have had an increase in their KSI rate and an increase in their all casualty rate of 3%. Even though Nottinghamshire are currently on target to achieve the National Targets (3 in number), given the nature of casualties it is possible that poor casualty figures in the last year will mean that the target will not be achieved. Comment on the Chief Constable of Durham's letter from the Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire can be found at Appendix C.

4.5 Nottinghamshire's contribution to national targets is detailed below:

<u>Target</u>	<u>Casualty Reduction</u>	
	<u>1994-98</u>	<u>2010</u>
40% reduction in overall KSI	826 →	496
50% reduction in child KSI	129 →	65
10% reduction in slight casualties* per million veh. Kilometres	3387 →	3387

**This has been interpreted as a nil increase in slight casualty figures because the number of vehicles and the kilometres travelled are increasing year on year.*

4.6 During the course of gathering evidence in this review the Study Group was directed by the Chief Constable of Durham to a Scrutiny report by Blackpool Council entitled 'Speed Cameras.' In Appendix A to Blackpool Council's report Blackpool's Scrutiny Group asked their local Safety Camera Partnership if the guidelines for the installation of cameras have been strictly adhered to. They received this reply:

"The guidelines relating to the 85th percentile speed and percentage of drivers exceeding the speed limit were not rigidly adhered to when sites were selected for year 1, 2, and 3. The emphasis was placed on selecting sites (generally main roads) with high numbers of crashes and casualties where it would be undesirable to introduce other methods of traffic calming such as road humps. This was the case for the whole of Lancashire and not just Blackpool. It was considered by the Partnership that to choose sites on the basis of a high percentage of speeding drivers would have resulted in accusations of siting cameras where they were most likely to maximise income."

4.7 This Study Group is pleased to be able to report that the Nottinghamshire Safety Camera Partnership schemes are all soundly statistically based and fully comply to national guidelines. In addition, the Mansfield 'legacy' sites whose existence pre-dates the current criteria are fully supported by a business case that has been cleared by the Department of Transport.

- 4.8 Traffic Calming follows policy and national guidelines and is predominantly used to address accident problems with a view to achieving the casualty reduction targets for 2010. Traffic calming in Nottinghamshire achieves a reduction in accidents of between 50-60%.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 5.1. The Authority supports the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents campaign for small, strategically placed lamp-post mounted repeater signs or lane markings to remind motorists of the speed limit. The Study Group is aware that this is a long term objective requiring a sea change in Government policy.
- 5.2 The Authority should indicate to the Department of Transport that the regulations in relation to 'netting off' should be amended to allow funds from speeding fines to be used for road safety enhancements, such as repeater signs.
- 5.3 The Authority seeks to examine means by which an additional £15,000 should be made available for Members to spend on highways safety initiatives within their wards; over and above the existing £5000 already allocated to Members for electoral division initiatives.
- 5.4 The Authority seeks to influence the Chief Constable and the Police Authority to substantially increase road traffic patrols in order to both improve road safety and apprehend offenders.
- 5.5 The Authority should seek to increase the target number of responses in neighbourhood consultations on the installation of traffic calming, where practicable. The Authority should aim to get a higher return than 35% and examine on a case by case basis on whether or not 65% in favour is the appropriate trigger for the implementation of a scheme dependent on the number of returns.
- 5.6 The Authority should seek to use the most innovative and up to date measures available to it for the improvement of road safety and, in particular, keep abreast of novel measures being developed abroad.
- 5.7 The Authority should request that the Safety Camera Partnership puts in place Speed Awareness Courses for repeat speeding offenders. These courses should be of sufficient duration and impact that they are likely to deter 'hardened' speeders.

Councillor Andrew Freeman (Chair)
Councillor Stan Heptinstall
Councillor Parry Tsimbiridis
Councillor Richard Jackson

Background Papers available for inspection:

None.