

SELECT COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT – 16TH SEPTEMBER 2009

Report of the Director of the URBAN ENVIRONMENT

USE, ABUSE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SPEED CAMERAS

Purpose of Report

- 1 To advise the Select Committee on the Use, Abuse and Effectiveness of Speed Cameras.

Background

- 2 WM Police (WMP) Camera Enforcement Unit identifies potentially suitable sites for introduction of speed cameras against the following criteria;
 - i) Is there a personal injury accident problem at the location and has speed been a primary causation factor for the accident
 - ii) From enforcement activities whether there is a speed problem at the location based on the 85th percentile speed, i.e. that speed at which 85% of the traffic is travelling at or below is considered to be excessive when compared to the prevailing speed limit and the guidelines given by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).
- 3 The Camera Enforcement Unit provides Local Authorities with the necessary details to ensure that camera sites are compliant with the relevant guidelines
- 4 Identified sites are then submitted to the Local Authorities for observations on any local or site specific issues that may also need to be taken into consideration typically there are no other suitable alternative traffic calming scheme that could be introduced instead of speed cameras or the site is unsuitable for installation of a camera (eg. obstruction to camera housing)..
- 5 A relative priority is assigned to each of the assessment sites having regard to the limited level of resources available to the region.
- 6 Speed Cameras and their housings are quite robust but the nature of their operation means that they can attract acts of wilful and malicious damage from aggrieved motorists.

- 7 Such damage resulted in the need for maintenance works which ranges from relatively minor cleaning operations arising as a result of camera lenses being spayed with paint through to the total loss and replacement of equipment that has been subject to arson attacks.
- 8 As a percentage of capital value of the housings vandalism amounts to circa 0.5% and of the annual operational cost circa 1%.
- 9 Appendix A attached to the report is the four year evaluation report by the Department for Transport.
- 10 The report concludes;
- Vehicle speeds were down – 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 –there was a 22% per annum reduction in personal injury collisions at sites after cameras were introduced and there was also a 32% reduction in fatalities per annum.
 - There was a positive cost-benefit of around 2.7:1.
 - 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.
- 11 Overall, this report concludes that safety cameras have continued to reduce collisions, casualties and deaths.
- 12 Appendix B indicates the Dudley Profile from the WMs Road Accident review.
- 13 Figure DU1 demonstrates the actual, downward trend, and target for Killed and Seriously Injured from 1990 to 2010. It is not possible to disaggregate accidents to camera sites.
- 14 Prior to April 2007 speed Cameras were managed by the West Midlands Road Safety Camera Partnership with fines returned to HM Treasury and costs associated with managing the Speed Cameras recovered by way of a Business case submitted to the Department for Transport.
- 15 Under this arrangement there was a perceived linkage between fine income and associated costs.
- 16 In April 2007 the arrangement set out above was ceased and the Road Safety Grant (RSG) introduced that seeks to recognise the road safety needs in an area.
- 17 Whilst the RSG includes provision for the costs incurred by WM Police in respect of managing the Speed Cameras (in the annual sum of c£2.5m as now agreed by the WM Road Safety Partnership that is constituted to manage the delivery of the RSG) it recognises that Speed Cameras are only part of the tool kit available to Road Safety Practitioners in improving safety on the highway.

Finance

18 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Law

19 The council has a Statutory responsibility for the promotion of road safety measures to reduce the number of severity of road accident casualties under the provisions of the Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions) Act 1988.

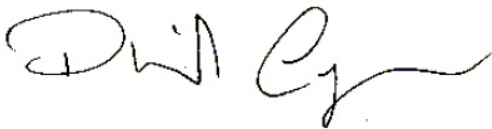
20 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate or is conducive of incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

21 The report is consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity policy and has no direct equality implications and the use of cameras to control speed seeks to secure the safety of all members of the community.

Recommendation

22 That the Committee note the contents of this report.



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for John Millar
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List of Background Papers

1. Department of Transport Four Year report on The National Safety Camera Programme
2. Various e-mails with the West Midlands Camera Enforcement Unit