
Meeting: Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2010

Subject: Road Traffic Accidents

Report of: Director of Sustainable Communities

Summary: The purpose of this report is to advise Members on progress relating to national 2010 casualty reduction targets.

Contact Officer: Basil Jackson, Assistant Director for Highways & Transport

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Executive

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Council priorities affected by this paper are:

- creating safer communities.

Financial:

None as a result of this report

Legal:

None as a result of this report

Risk Management:

This programme is managed through our framework contractor, Amey. The company has large staff resources both within this contract, as well as resources that can be called upon from outside of this contract to manage our programme to budget and delivery tolerates set by the Council.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as a result of this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

Central Bedfordshire Council has a duty to promote race, gender and disability equality and to tackle discrimination experienced by other vulnerable groups. When developing the highways programme consideration must be given to developing well designed and

well managed streets that meet the needs of different road users, including the needs of disabled and visually impaired people in particular.

Community Safety:

Creating a safe and accessible public realm has a part to play in getting people out and about, especially the more vulnerable members of the community who might experience isolation. The provision of safe roads can help promote independence in travel choices and help ensure that people are able to access vital local services such as retail and employment opportunities.

Sustainability:

Maintaining a safe highway is a key part of accommodating Central Bedfordshire's growth agenda. The Council recognises that encouraging sustainable transport modes, such as cycling, can make certain road users more vulnerable to accidents unless adequate safety measures are put in place.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members note the contents of the report.

Background

1. The Department for Transport (DfT) published 'Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone' in 2000. The document provided a broad strategy for casualty reduction, along with casualty reduction targets to be achieved by 2010. Set against a base line average for casualties for the period 1994 to 1998 local highway authorities were expected by 2010 to achieve:
 - a 40% reduction in the number of people Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) in road accidents;
 - a 50% reduction in the number of Children Killed or Seriously Injured (Child KSI) in road accidents; and
 - a 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate, expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100 million vehicle kilometres.
2. For the period 2000 to 2010 Bedfordshire will be considered in its totality for achievement of the national casualty reduction targets. Although full casualty statistics have yet to be collated and verified for 2009 (expected April/May 2010) progress to the end of 2009 has been in line with the projected downward trend to achieve the 2010 targets. In summary, Killed and Serious casualties have been reduced from 399 to 247 with a target of 239; Child KSIs have been reduced from 53 to 19 compared with a target of 27; and slight casualties have been reduced from 2561 to 1630 compared with a target of 2305.

3. Whilst this progress is encouraging for Bedfordshire, when accident records are disaggregated into the three Bedfordshire Unitary Authorities, Central Bedfordshire is not performing well in reducing road traffic casualties. There was a marked increase in killed and seriously injured casualties (8%) in Central Bedfordshire in 2009 when compared against 2008 figures. Casualty reductions in Bedfordshire have followed a downward trend due to the casualty reductions seen in the large urban areas of Bedford and Luton.
4. The Department for Transport is currently consulting on new casualty reductions targets for the next ten year period to 2020. The decision on the actual targets is likely to be made after the general election. However, these are likely to be:
 - a 33% reduction in those killed,
 - a 33% reduction in those seriously injured,
 - 50% reduction in Child Killed and Seriously Injured casualties &
 - 50% reduction in Pedestrian and Cyclist Killed and Seriously Injured (*set against the average casualty rate achieved from 2004 – 2008 inclusive*)
5. Central Bedfordshire as a unitary authority would be responsible for achieving these targets as a Bedfordshire wide figure will no longer be used by Central Government. In casualty reduction terms, Central Bedfordshire would most likely be required to deliver a reduction of:
 - 6 Fatal Casualties,
 - 33 Serious Casualties,
 - 12 Child KSI Casualties, and
 - 12 KSI Casualties,

over the ten year period 2010 to 2020.

Whilst these targets appear, at first glance, to be more than reasonable and achievable, the disposition of accident occurrence on the network makes it difficult to “engineer” problems out. Over the last 10 years in particular, nearly all of the traditional “hazardous sites / accident black spots” have been treated with some form of engineer accident reduction measure, leaving a scattered occurrence of accidents on the Central Bedfordshire road network.

The Way Forward

6. Casualty reduction techniques fall into broadly three categories:
 - Engineering – Highways improvements and maintenance;
 - Enforcement – Police speed enforcement; and
 - Education – Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity (ETP).

Both Engineering and Education have been the remit of the local highway authority with enforcement being delivered by the Police. With recent changes in Government policy, partner organisations (such as fire and rescue) are being tasked with providing a contribution to casualty reduction targets.

7. In order to achieve these targets, Central Bedfordshire will need to fully embrace partnership working with the Police, Fire & Rescue, Ambulance & Paramedics, NHS and others to bring about the required levels of casualty reduction. Due to the disposition of accidents on the network, Enforcement and Road Safety Education will be of greater importance than Engineering measures moving forward.
8. The Bedfordshire and Luton Casualty Reduction Partnership (BLCRP) forms part of the Central Bedfordshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), Community Safety Partnership. Central Bedfordshire Council is represented by Cllr David McVicar, Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities and Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities. The BLCRP includes membership from the 3 Bedfordshire local authorities, Bedfordshire Police and Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue. All of these organisations will play an increasingly important role in reducing road traffic accidents in Central Bedfordshire.
9. The Police carry out over 2000 hours of mobile speed enforcement in Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and Luton as part of the partnership. They also manage all fixed camera sites across Bedfordshire. Camera sites have seen a significant reduction in KSIs without noticeable accident migration to adjacent areas of the road network. However, all sites that are treatable by fixed cameras have already been dealt with and therefore no further static speed camera sites are likely to be justifiable in Central Bedfordshire. The current mobile speed Enforcement programme will continue into the financial year 2010/11. Appendix B provides details on additional measures the BLCRP will pursue over the coming months and years in order to meet its casualty reduction targets.

Finance

10. The Partnership is funded by an Area Based Road Safety Grant which has both Capital and Revenue allocations paid directly to the three partner local authorities. Central Bedfordshire receives the largest grant of £793k revenue along with £176k capital. Through efficiencies and overhead savings in Partnership working, additional funds are likely to be available in 2010/11. The current savings are yet to be finalised but could see (for example) additional mobile speed enforcement in Central Bedfordshire along with Educational programmes and low cost accident remedial measures.

Conclusion

- 11 In conclusion, although Bedfordshire as a County is likely to achieve national 2010 casualty reduction targets, Central Bedfordshire's performance remains a concern with an overall 8% increase in the occurrence of Killed and Seriously injured on our road network.

Moving forward, strong partnership working will be vital if Central Bedfordshire is to achieve new Government targets for 2020. The Partnership's efficiencies will continue to be sought with any saving achieved being ploughed directly back into casualty reduction.

Appendix A – Accident Stats

Appendix B – Action Plan