

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee for Transport and Environment**  
Date: **24 November 2010**  
By: **Chairman of the Project Board**  
Title of report: **Scrutiny Review of Road Safety in East Sussex – final report**  
Purpose of report: **To present the outcomes of the scrutiny investigation and make recommendations.**

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**RECOMMENDATION: that the Committee considers the report and agrees its recommendations to Cabinet and Full Council.**

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### **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 There are no specific financial implications at this stage. The financial implications of the report's recommendations are incorporated into the attached report.

### **2. Summary**

2.1 The attached appendix contains the findings and recommendations of the Transport and Environment Scrutiny Review Board. An evidence pack of supporting documentation is available on request from the contact officer.

2.3 The Committee is recommended to agree its recommendations for submission to Cabinet (14 December 2010) and Full Council (8 February 2011).

### **3. Recommendation**

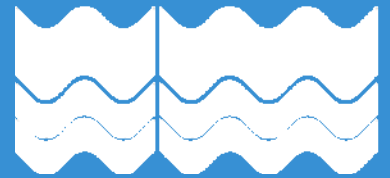
3.1 The Committee considers the report and agrees its recommendations to the Cabinet and Full Council.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD STOGDON  
Chairman of the Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Paul Dean                      Tel No. 01273 481751  
Local Members:                      All

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None



# Scrutiny review of road safety in East Sussex

## Report of the Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

Councillors Richard Stogdon (Chairman), Jon Freeman,  
Terry Fawthrop, Barry Taylor and Dr Laurie Bush.

November 2010

**Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee – 24 November 2010**

Cabinet – 14 December 2010

Full Council – 8 February 2011

## Scrutiny review of road safety in East Sussex

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2	Information should be provided to Members and residents to explain: (a) why funding will be reduced for conventional road safety engineering schemes (such as pedestrian crossings), and (b) the benefits of a 'whole route approach'. The information should include pointers and assistance to help residents consider alternative self-help solutions.	10
3	Police enforcement operations, such as Operation Triangle, should ensure that all possible benefits are realised, including for example: (a) following up and taking action for all violations; and (b) using the data collected to help build more accurate profiles of those most likely to be involved in road crashes.	11
4	Publicity and support for Operation Crackdown should be given a boost in East Sussex. Dealing with the resulting increased volume of reports will require managing public expectations about the response they can expect and how the data is to be used. If necessary, the police should highlight the most serious violations it wants the public to report.	12
5	Diversion courses for drivers committing relatively minor offences should be continued and expanded in Sussex to include mobile phone usage violations (providing that consistency of approach across the whole of Sussex can be achieved). Additionally, the results of DfT research into the value of such courses in reducing KSIs should be carefully monitored and the scheme improved accordingly.	12
6	A safety camera operation should be continued in East Sussex. A pan Sussex camera agreement should continue if it is cost effective, but the contribution from East Sussex should be in proportion to the number of cameras being operated in the county.	16
7	Road safety data collection and analysis work, as currently carried out by the SSRP, should continue to be undertaken and developed at a pan Sussex level in order to inform priorities both locally and across the area.	17
8	The East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group should own and develop the future road safety strategy for East Sussex and adopt a strategic commissioning approach towards the management and provision of all road safety initiatives. A County Council road safety officer champion will need to provide active leadership to the Group for this to be effective.	19
9	The relationship between East Sussex County Council and the SSRP needs to change fundamentally to one where the SSRP is 'commissioned' to undertake specific activities, such as the safety camera operation or road casualty data collection and analysis, that are best carried out at a pan Sussex level.	19
10	The Lead Member for Transport and Environment should continue to work with our partners to identify activities best undertaken at pan Sussex level and to agree a funding arrangement that reflects the proportion of those activities occurring in East Sussex.	19

## Introduction by the Chairman

Over the past three years, road accident statistics reported to the East Sussex County Council Transport & Environment Scrutiny Committee have been the cause of rising levels of concern. That concern is shared by residents of East Sussex and officers and members of the County Council alike, not least by the County's Road Safety Specialist, whose unhappy task it has been to report consistently poor statistics relating to the numbers of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) on East Sussex roads.

Needless to say, our concern is shared by Sussex Police, the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and the Ambulance Service. Moreover, having regard to the numbers of accidents occurring in the Wealden District of East Sussex, Wealden District Council has recently completed a commendable Scrutiny Review of Road Safety in that District, published earlier this year.

Looking at the wider perspective of East Sussex generally and without wishing to cover ground previously covered by the Wealden Review, it was decided to set up a combined Scrutiny Review Board from the County's Community Services Scrutiny Committee as well as the Transport & Environment Scrutiny Committee, to see what, if anything, could be made of the statistics and to attempt to establish why it is that KSIs in East Sussex consistently outnumber the national averages, or at least, why they appear to do so.

The Scrutiny Review Board initially looked at a volume of statistical data, over and above that cited in the Wealden Review, little of which was helpful in providing steerage to the Board in formulating substantive recommendations. However, what did emerge from the statistics were the groups of road users, towards whom road safety initiatives in East Sussex need to be directed, namely young male drivers between the ages of 17 and 24, drivers of powered two wheelers, drink drivers, older drivers, drivers failing to use seat belts and using mobile 'phones and other groups listed in paragraph 10 of the report. Nothing new there then, you may say. And yet, what the Review Board found, despite having identified the relevant target groups, the various agencies having responsibility for road safety in East Sussex have failed to articulate, let alone pursue, a clear, common strategy for dealing with them.

In arriving at this view, the Board took note of the evidence provided to it by Sussex Police, the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and East Sussex County Council officers, besides the other agencies listed in the report. Broadly, the Review Board endorses the traditional wisdom to effect that improvements can be achieved, by enforcement, education and (possibly now to a lesser extent) engineering. Nothing new there either, you may also say. However, what is necessary is the very careful balance and coordinated direction to be struck between these crucial elements by the parties and agencies involved, if our (now very limited and reducing) resources are not to be wasted, as they appear to have been in the recent past.

There needs, too, to be a more evidence based approach to the adoption and application of road safety initiatives. If it is the case that enforcement, on its own, achieves only short term performance improvements and engineering solutions in relation to particular hotspots have largely been achieved, there does need to be a continuing focus on road safety education. The alarming statistics relating to the number of uninsured drivers using East Sussex roads (of which the 14 issued with tickets under Operation Triangle reported in paragraph 28 of the report is only the tip of the iceberg), the numbers of drivers continuing the blatant use of mobile 'phones and the increasing numbers of young drivers failing to practice the elementary discipline of wearing seat belts, all point to the vital role to be played in delivering continuing road safety education.

There are some specific issues which the Board did not address. An example would be the number of accidents caused by the movement of deer across roads on Ashdown Forest of which the annual average in recent years has been of the order of 300. Judging by the number of carcasses seen daily on roads in and around Ashdown Forest, 300 may well be an

underestimate due to lack of reporting. The choice for the Conservators is either to embark on a substantial programme of fencing or to engage in a carefully planned cull of the deer population. This point highlights the responsibility of other bodies within East Sussex, other than the County Council and Police etc. for dealing with local issues, which have not been addressed in our report.

You will see that the Board spent some time reviewing the way in which the various agencies responsible for road safety in East Sussex carry out their respective operations. In some respects there is considerable overlap between the agencies, bearing in mind that, whereas East Sussex County Council and the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service deal with the geographical area comprised by East Sussex, the area for which the Police and the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership are responsible comprises both East and West Sussex as well as Brighton & Hove.

All the more reason therefore, having regard to the background poor record of KSIs in East Sussex, why the Board is keen to see what can be achieved by the relatively newly formed East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group in providing focus and direction to road safety initiatives in the County. Whatever the outcome of the work of that Group, the Board does want to see a much more focussed and coordinated approach to road safety measures in East Sussex and closer working with our partners in delivering that vital outcome.

***Councillor Richard Stogdon***  
***Chairman of the Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee***

12 November 2010

## Background

1. Over the past few years the T&E Scrutiny Committee has become increasingly concerned about consistently poor killed and seriously injured (KSI) statistics for East Sussex. These concerns are shared by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee. A joint Scrutiny Board was formed in November 2009 with members drawn from both Scrutiny Committees. The Board set out to:

- a) Understand the perspectives of key partners (particularly Sussex Police)
- b) Identify barriers to progress
- c) Understand the background statistics relating to KSIs and review the evidence supporting successful road safety strategies
- d) Consider how best East Sussex County Council might influence others and ensure a joined-up approach to road safety strategies in East Sussex
- e) Understand the roles in the provision of road safety in East Sussex and parts played by Sussex Police and the Safer Sussex Roads Partnership (SSRP), both of which have responsibility not only for East Sussex but also for West Sussex and Brighton & Hove; where relevant to evaluate the extent of conflict or overlapping activity of those agencies
- f) Evaluate the role of the East Sussex Casualty reduction Steering Group and promote effective partnership working
- g) Articulate the elements of an overarching road safety strategy into which members the County Council can 'buy in' and promote within the various communities in East Sussex.

2. The Scrutiny Board was careful to supplement and not duplicate other scrutiny work that has already been undertaken in the area, such as that carried out by a working party of Wealden District Council's Community Scrutiny Committee in January 2010.

## Findings and observations

### ***Statistics, lies and damned lies***

3. A bewildering array of national and local statistics abounds on the issue of road safety making it exceptionally difficult for experts and lay persons alike to identify the most effective and efficient courses of action to reduce road casualties. Even reputable national agencies often present a confusing picture of what the data is telling us, blurred further by campaigning groups selectively manipulating data to support their own particular objectives.

4. Road safety data itself pulls in different directions making it difficult to see any link between the data and the initiatives needed on the ground. For example:

*Of the districts and boroughs in East Sussex, Wealden experienced the highest overall number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) on its roads in 2008/09. However, the statistics also show that Wealden achieved the lowest number of KSIs per kilometre of road<sup>1</sup>. Does this mean that Wealden has the most, or least, dangerous roads in East Sussex and what action should be taken by way of response?*

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<sup>1</sup> Weald District Council Scrutiny Review of Road Safety 2010

5. Some road safety statistics point to counter-intuitive conclusions. The 2006 East Sussex Scrutiny Review of Urban Speed Limits found that the greater unpredictability and uncertainty built into 'shared space' road schemes enhanced safety in the street environment.

6. Sussex Police say that road safety in Sussex is as good as many other parts of the UK and therefore Sussex should take a more confident line when defending its road safety record and activities. This is despite the fact that East Sussex has failed to hit the most recent as well as previous Department for Transport (DfT) KSI reduction targets.

7. The somewhat crude national KSI targets, expressed as percentage reductions in KSIs over a fixed period, take no account of local circumstances. They can so easily give a misleading picture about whether road safety is improving or deteriorating in an area, especially in the short term or where there is a relatively low number of KSIs. The current national target ends in March 2011. The question then is whether the County Council wishes to promote any local road safety targets, and what form they would take, so that they actively support a local road safety strategy.

8. The Scrutiny Board found that, whilst all police forces use the same national guidance to define slight and serious road crash injuries, since 2005 the recording system used by Sussex police means that serious and slight injuries<sup>2</sup> are being recorded differently to some other regions. The recording of injuries is consistent across Sussex because of the electronic system used, however the resulting statistics show a comparatively negative picture of road safety here, and make like for like KSI comparisons across the country impossible. This situation is likely to continue until 2011 when a country wide recording system may be in place.

9. Accurate data and proper interpretation of the statistics is important because different agencies use road safety data to highlight particular priorities and allocate significant resources for action. The Scrutiny Board looked at the target groups and risks identified by the different road safety agencies working in East Sussex and tried to evaluate the initiatives intended to address them.

10. The following are highlighted in various reports and agencies' documentation indicating the perceived priorities for targeting road safety resources in East Sussex:

- 17 – 24 year old male drivers and their passengers (particularly newly qualified drivers)
- Riders on powered two wheelers
- Drink drivers
- Occupational drivers (people who drive for a living)
- Older drivers (due to poor eyesight and poor reaction times)
- Bad/careless/reckless drivers
- Drivers using mobile phones or not wearing seat belts.
- Pedestrians, particularly certain groups such as children in specific geographical areas.

11. The Scrutiny Board found that while the target groups had been reasonably identified, the package of actions devised to deal with them lacked evidence of a joined up strategic approach by the various agencies responsible. The Board considers it essential that there is common agreement by all the partners involved in devising an overarching road safety strategy and that future road safety targets must be aligned with it.

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<sup>2</sup> The earlier system allowed discretion by investigating officers in determining what constitutes a 'serious' injury; 'serious' was commonly reserved for significant or life changing injuries. The electronic system in Sussex now automatically categorises some relatively minor injuries, such as a broken finger, as 'serious'.



## **Recommendation 1.**

**Local targets for road safety should be developed for East Sussex to promote a robust debate amongst partners about how best to use our combined resources to reduce KSIs further. Any future road safety targets must be clearly linked to the initiatives being put in place to achieve them.**

### ***Actions to reduce road casualties***

12. Activities that can be undertaken to reduce road casualties fall broadly under three headings: ***enforcement, engineering and education***. Achieving the right balance in emphasis between these three activities is important.

#### ***Enforcement***

13. Evidence provided to the Scrutiny Board suggests that while police enforcement activity may improve short term KSI reduction targets, such improvements are unlikely to be sustained in the longer term. There are occasions, however, when targeted enforcement campaigns are necessary, particularly where there are indications that a 'no fear' culture has arisen.

14. The Police consider that fear in motorists should be increased by making every police car a potential threat of enforcement, maximising the use of plain vehicles, public reporting and more publicity of operation successes.

#### ***Engineering and road improvements***

15. Engineering and road improvements reduce the risks posed by environmental factors along targeted routes or at specific locations. Evaluating the success or failure of a scheme involves counting the number of casualties, typically over three years, *after* the improvement and comparing that with the number of casualties over the three years before. In East Sussex the sites with the most casualties have now been treated and engineering measures are not necessarily the right solution for the remaining locations.

#### ***Road safety education***

16. Road safety professionals suggest that focusing on road safety education and driver behaviour is likely to result in longer term positive changes in driver attitudes, and possibly a sustainable reduction in KSIs. Identifying inappropriate driver attitudes amongst at-risk groups and then changing those attitudes is the key challenge.

17. Compared to enforcement and engineering activities, measuring the outcome or benefit of any one specific road safety education campaign is difficult. Partly this difficulty relates to the absence of clearly articulated overarching aims. Furthermore, with many people driving into the county, particularly motorcyclists at weekends for example, local road safety education campaigns will only have limited effect unless supplemented by countrywide campaigns.

### ***Key players and partnerships***

#### **East Sussex County Council**

18. The County Council has statutory responsibility for achieving the DfT's national target to reduce KSIs. To achieve this it has undertaken a wide range of activities to promote road safety, many of which are in partnership with other agencies such as Sussex Police or the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP). Activities include road safety engineering, speed management and road safety education. At the time of writing there is uncertainty about whether the Coalition Government will set a new national KSI target.

19. For many years, government KSI targets have been accompanied by specific road safety capital and revenue grants. From April 2011, there will no longer be a specific ring-fenced grant to support road safety initiatives and enforcement at a local level. Instead, there will be a wider local government funding settlement (received via the Department for Communities and Local Government) allocated on a formula basis. This approach is designed to give greater autonomy and flexibility in tackling road safety problems.

20. Clearly however, resources will become increasingly limited in future whereas the potential demand for road safety spending could so easily become limitless. Given that perfect safety is not possible, someone has to balance costs and risks so that we end up with a proportionate response. The County Council therefore faces some important and difficult choices:

- How much resource to allocate to road safety initiatives in future
- How to spend those resources effectively and efficiently
- Whether or not to identify a separate pot of money specifically for road safety at all
- Whether or not to promote local road safety targets to replace the earlier, crude national targets which took little or no account of our local circumstances.

21. The County Council has already begun to make savings in its road safety budgets resulting from in-year reductions to road safety grant income for 2010/11. Budgets for local safety schemes, speed management and road safety engineering budgets are to be cut by between 40 and 70%. The road safety engineering team is to be incorporated into the Transport Strategy Team with significant staff savings.

22. Road safety engineering accounts for the greatest proportion of County Council expenditure on road safety. Until recently the County Council has spent significant resources analysing and prioritising the numerous public requests for traffic calming schemes and pedestrian crossings it receives each year. Resource limitations and the high cost of individual schemes mean that only a small number of these requests are actually implemented each year.

23. For some time now the Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee has noted that most *hotspot* locations requiring engineering solutions to reduce KSIs in East Sussex have been treated. From the vantage point of KSI figures, therefore, there would be minimal benefits in continuing to focus on such schemes. There is a strong argument for considering all future requests for road safety schemes and other integrated transport schemes under a single set of criteria where safety considerations feature highly, but not exclusively, in decisions about what transport schemes to build.

24. This logical conclusion, however, is likely to be unpopular with the public because very few proposals for safety schemes are likely to get built. Currently there is insufficient information and communication to help Members and residents understand the logic of this new approach. There also appears to be little guidance and assistance available to help residents develop alternative local solutions. Organised residents groups and parish councils may well be able to access sources of funding and assistance unavailable to the County Council.

25. As regards the future of road safety engineering budgets, the Council's Road Safety Specialist has advised adopting a 'whole route' approach rather than targeting specific locations. 'Walking a route', it is envisaged, leads to the identification of straightforward, cost effective benefits such as ensuring that critical road signs are not obscured or providing additional speed-reducing road markings at appropriate points. Early indications are that this approach could help to make the road environment more consistent across the County and identify safety and maintenance issues for prioritisation under highway maintenance budgets. The effect of this approach on reducing KSI numbers in East Sussex is, however, not yet clear.

## **Recommendation 2.**

**Information should be provided to Members and residents to explain: (a) why funding will be reduced for conventional road safety engineering schemes (such as pedestrian crossings), and (b) the benefits of a 'whole route approach'. The information should include pointers and assistance to help residents consider alternative self-help solutions.**

## **Sussex Police**

26. Traffic enforcement is undertaken by the police using speed cameras via the SSRP and through the Road Policing Unit (RPU) which operates from four locations across Sussex: Haywards Heath, Hove, Chichester and Polegate which is the coordination centre for East Sussex. In East Sussex 35 police constables<sup>3</sup> are directly engaged. The RPU uses a 'risk-based approach' to target resources to particular locations. Additionally, the RPU seeks to influence divisional staff to tackle infringements as part of their work and provides tactical advice to local authorities on engineering solutions. It has strong links with the SSRP and its sub groups.

27. Sussex Police consider that there has not been an effective, consistent, overarching, Sussex wide strategy for many years. However, the position has improved in the last two years. KSI reduction across Sussex is now a force-wide priority and features prominently in the published Sussex Police Plan.

### ***Enforcement and Operation Triangle***

28. In May, June & July 2010, the County Council agreed to provide additional funds to Sussex Police to pursue an enforcement programme named *Operation Triangle* on the A26 and A267. This was accompanied by a publicity campaign with an education component to complement an otherwise purely enforcement initiative. The targeted locations were selected on the basis of high historical KSI numbers. During the operation the Police:

- stopped 5 drivers over the alcohol limit
- seized 2 vehicles for antisocial driving and 11 for driving without insurance/licence.
- issued 161 endorsable tickets (mainly for mobile phone use and speed)
- issued 52 non endorsable tickets (mainly seatbelt)
- issued 14 no insurance tickets.

29. Additionally reports from the Police indicate that, during the operation, a number of violations were detected which could not be followed up due to lack of resources. The Scrutiny Board was concerned that all the possible benefits were not being drawn from campaigns such as Operation Triangle.

30. Encouragingly, the local press responded very positively in support of the operation. Local newspapers published 'naming and shaming' articles showing photographs taken by the local press itself and those sent in by readers showing drivers using mobile phones and not wearing seat belts.

31. There was no discernable change in the number KSIs occurring either during or following the enforcement period. Nonetheless, the Police consider the operation to be a success. With such low KSI rates on any given stretch of road success or failure in KSI terms would be dramatically altered by just a single KSI occurring. While the Police consider that

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<sup>3</sup> Reduced to 33.5 posts (October 2010)

aiming to reduce KSIs is not an appropriate sole measure of the value of this operation, they do think that other important safety benefits were identified.

### **Recommendation 3.**

**Police enforcement operations, such as Operation Triangle, should ensure that all possible benefits are realised, including for example: (a) following up and taking action for all violations; and (b) using the data collected to help build more accurate profiles of those most likely to be involved in road crashes.**

### ***Community involvement***

32. The Police work closely with communities to improve road safety and see community engagement as essential in reducing casualties in the long term. With the limited resources available, they consider that their enforcement task ahead is impossible without community involvement. With a high potential demand from communities, the police provide a staged response so as not to raise unrealistic hopes.

33. The community 'speed watch' scheme is a positive example of community engagement in traffic enforcement and has proved effective in improving and maintaining compliance with speed limits. Every driver 'captured' receives a warning letter.

34. Operation Crackdown is a web based public reporting initiative which is becoming an increasingly valuable means of gathering evidence about anti-social driving behaviour.<sup>4</sup> It is leading to effective targeting of those perhaps most likely to have a crash. There has been only a very gradual extension of the scheme across the region with relatively little active public promotion to date. That is because the Police have tried to respond to all reports received, thus ensuring public confidence in the scheme as it grows.

35. Until recently there has been considerably more take up of Operation Crackdown in West Sussex compared to East Sussex. However, in September 2010 there were as many hits on the website for East Sussex as there have been for West Sussex. Public reporting through Operation Crackdown represents the 'tip of the iceberg' because most members of the public are currently unaware of its existence.

36. The Scrutiny Board hopes that Operation Crackdown will continue to expand, particularly in East Sussex. However, it may not be possible for the police to continue to give a personal response to every individual who makes a report. That will not be a problem if the public understand that the purpose of sending in reports is to enable the police to better prioritise its enforcement activities. The Police might wish to focus the operation by publicising the most serious violations that the public should report.

37. The Police consider that public reporting is probably more efficient than deploying mobile units to target a handful of main roads to stop marginally speeding drivers who are, on the whole, driving safely. The police consider that a sustainable future goal should be to achieve widespread compliance as much through *fear of being reported by the public*, rather than by omnipresent (and thus unaffordable) police units.

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<sup>4</sup> The link between certain types of anti social behaviour and anti social driving is gradually becoming clearer, and thus assists with prioritising whom to target. However, the police are insistent that there is no known causal link between street or community anti social behaviour, or even *road rage*, and KSIs.

**Recommendation 4.**

**Publicity and support for Operation Crackdown should be given a boost in East Sussex. Dealing with the resulting increased volume of reports will require managing public expectations about the response they can expect and how the data is to be used. If necessary, the police should highlight the most serious violations it wants the public to report.**

***Diversion courses for drivers***

38. The current East Sussex network of static speed cameras together with mobile police enforcement operations across Sussex identifies some 22,000 speeding violations per year. Of those, 60% are considered to be relatively minor in nature and those drivers are offered a speed awareness course, a so called diversion course, instead of a fine and licence points. The course, which incorporates a practical training element, costs the driver £105.

39. The Association of Chief Police Officers has recently recommended adopting national guidance to extend the threshold for diversion courses to include all speed limits, and with wider parameters than is currently the case in East Sussex. The intention is that offenders travelling at 10% plus 9mph<sup>5</sup> will now be eligible for educational training. However, the courses will only be theory based and will cost the driver £85.

40. The County Council runs diversion courses and individuals who have attended report being “impressed with the manner in which the course was conducted, the content and relevance”. At present only 50% of eligible speeding drivers choose the course, the remainder pay the fines and receive licence points. Since 2008 approximately 6,500 drivers have attended courses in East Sussex generating some £250,000 which has been spent on road safety activities through the SSRP. The Council’s road safety specialist has developed a further course designed for those caught using a mobile phone whilst driving. At this stage there is no pan Sussex agreement for such a course.

41. Until now there has been little research carried out to assess whether diversion courses are effective in changing driver behaviour or in reducing KSIs. Initial research<sup>6</sup> seems to suggest that drivers who accept the courses are statistically significantly less likely to commit a further speeding offence. However, these initial findings need to be validated by further research being carried out by DfT before definitive conclusions can be reached. There is currently no evidence available to demonstrate a correlation between running diversion courses and reduced KSI numbers.

**Recommendation 5.**

**Diversion courses for drivers committing relatively minor offences should be continued and expanded in Sussex to include mobile phone usage violations (providing that consistency of approach across the whole of Sussex can be achieved). Additionally, the results of DfT research into the value of such courses in reducing KSIs should be carefully monitored and the scheme improved accordingly.**

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<sup>5</sup> This equates to a maximum of 42mph in a 30mph limit; 53mph in a 40mph limit etc.

<sup>6</sup> Study by Lancashire County Council in conjunction with Brainbox Research Ltd., reported by the East Sussex Road Safety Specialist.

### **Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR)**

42. ANPR technology is now very powerful and has a wide range of local and national benefits. It will play an increasing role in traffic enforcement which provides a broader intelligence flow. Across Sussex in 2009, ANPR systems helped capture 2,223 drivers for document / insurance offences of which 702 were in East Sussex.

43. The Scrutiny Board was encouraged by the effectiveness and impact of this activity. In time, data may emerge which may provide pointers as to particular groups of unsafe drivers. Even if no particular benefits are directly delivered to KSI numbers, there appear to be other public benefits to be derived.

### **Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP)**

44. The SSRP coordinates partnership working on road safety across the whole of Sussex. It evolved from a pre existing Sussex safety camera partnership, a key function it still retains. In 2007 the partnership expanded to take on a much wider road safety brief and began to develop initiatives to try to hit the government's 2010 KSI target across Sussex but without specific DfT guidance on how that was to be done.

45. The partners collectively form the SSRP. Each partner is represented on each of the SSRP's groups and sub groups, which are: the Leaders'; Strategy; Education; Training and Publicity; Enforcement and Engineering; and Camera Groups. This structure is supported by the Shoreham office which provides support and co-ordination for data, communications, camera operations and projects.

46. The SSRP is not a legal entity in its own right. West Sussex County Council was appointed as lead authority and acts as treasurer to the partnership. DfT Specific Road Safety Grant was made available to partnerships, via local highway authorities, to encourage the adoption of the wider road safety remit using a *partnership ethos*. This grant was provided to each of the three member local authorities: East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

47. Initially each authority 'passported' its grant to the partnership and then submitted bids for partnership funding for local road safety initiatives, particularly for engineering schemes. East Sussex was the first to withhold a portion of its road safety grant and use it directly to support its own road safety initiatives.<sup>7</sup> The other authorities followed suit later.

48. In 2010/11 East Sussex County Council withheld £210,00 compared to the other authorities as follows:

<b>Item</b>	<b>ESCC</b>	WSCC	B&HC
Road Safety Grant received <sup>8</sup>	<b>£1.098m</b>	£1.531m	£0.483m
Contribution to SSRP	<b>(£0.888m)</b>	(£1.251m)	(£0.395m)
Retained by the authority	<b>£210,000*</b>	£280,000	£88,000

<sup>7</sup> The Transport and Environment Lead Member reported that SSRP had previously underspent its budget and partly in response, East Sussex County Council retained an element of the road safety grant for local road safety initiatives. The SSRP acknowledged that project slippage and associated underspends had occurred in the past, but the accounting system shortfalls have now been addressed.

<sup>8</sup> The implications of the recently announced in-year cut in area grants to local authorities (2010) were unclear (as at July 2010) but in a worst case scenario the SSRP may only have operating revenue of £1.29m plus £327k contributions as previously highlighted from an originally anticipated £2.8m to carry out its business plan.

\*Used for:

Savings and efficiencies:	£150,000
Three-month targeted police enforcement campaign on A26 / A267:	£15,000
Seat Belt monitoring linked to additional police enforcement:	£3,500
World Cup Drink/Drive campaign:	£2,000
Supporting other work as agreed by the ESCRSG during 2010/11:	£39,500

49. In addition to the area based grant income, the partnership has received other income, for example in the current year: £235,000 from Sussex Police derived from charges levied for speed awareness courses; £65,000 from the Highways Agency to be used to make a new road safety video; £27,000 from the Highways Agency for safety camera maintenance on trunk roads.

50. The stated aims of the SSRP are to:

- achieve economies of scale for identical road safety activities across Sussex;
- enable the sharing of relevant data across Sussex to enable a locally targeted response, and
- provide a consistent approach to road safety for people travelling across the area.

51. However, due to significant failures in effective partnership working, no clearly articulated overarching strategy has been achieved, let alone pursued, either by the SSRP or the local authorities. The Scrutiny Board found that this was due, at least in part, to confusion as to whether SSRP or the individual local authorities are supposed to coordinate road safety activities (including those carried out by individual local authorities) within the three areas of the SSRP's remit.

52. Furthermore, the Scrutiny Board found it difficult to avoid the conclusion that due to lack of clear, cohesive external direction to the SSRP by the respective local authorities, the SSRP has assumed a sense of independent identity divorced from the needs of the local authorities responsible for setting it up. This lack of focus and direction manifests itself in the repeated observation that "the SSRP is still evolving" by partners and individuals.

53. Theoretically, strategic direction for the SSRP is provided by a Leaders' Group comprising three Transport Lead members from the three local authorities and Sussex Police and representatives from the Fire & Rescue and Courts authorities. The Leaders' Group approves the joint objectives, policy, budget and an agreed joint programme of the partnership. It undertakes an annual review of effectiveness of the partnership and approves the annual report produced by the Strategy Group.

54. The SSRP Manager sees the Leaders' Group as providing a *democratic link* between partners and the partnership to ensure accountability and proper use of resources. The East Sussex Lead Member agrees and describes his role as considering and responding to proposed strategies and challenging under performance – a role perhaps best described as an oversight or scrutiny role rather than an executive role. He acknowledges that the Leaders' Group has experienced difficulties and disagreements over the years and concludes that its effectiveness seems to depend critically on the openness of its Chair and SSRP lead officers.

55. Sussex Police expects the Leaders' group to provide active leadership and a clear direction over the SSRP strategy. Against this criterion, they consider that, historically, there has been a lack of cohesion within this Group making it less effective than it should have been. It advises that it should now work much more closely with the police link officer to achieve a clear consensus about the future strategy.

56. The SSRP Strategy Group is now trying to create an overarching strategic assessment incorporating strategy and review, risks and outcomes. It provides strategic coordination and programming to achieve the priorities and objectives agreed by the Leaders' Group and recommends policies, priorities, objectives and programme to the Leaders' Group. A written

strategy has been produced in recent months. The Strategy Group oversees three sub groups: speed cameras; education, training and publicity, and engineering & enforcement.

57. The effectiveness of the Strategy Group has varied depending critically upon the individuals chairing and supporting it. There have been periods where it has not been as proactive as it could have been. Currently it is considered to be more effective with the introduction of a new Chair (from Sussex Police) who has helped focus the group.

58. With recent efforts and increasing effectiveness of the SSRP Strategy Group, the Police consider that the SSRP has finally begun to deliver an increasingly effective pan Sussex programme with more clarity about what the division of responsibilities between agencies should be.

59. SSRP money is allocated to different projects through a process of bidding. Bids for road safety initiatives are submitted annually to the partnership by each constituent authority. Prioritisation and evaluation of the bids is carried out using a points system by a sub group of the Strategy Group which recommends to the Strategy Group which bids should be funded.

60. At the time of the Board's visit in June 2010, 35 bids for the current year had been received. The winning bids now had to demonstrate that their outcomes could effectively be evaluated against original aims. The process was further strengthened recently by the formation of two further all-partner groups: the *intelligence group* gathers relevant data from a wide range of different sources and uses this to highlight priorities to be targeted. Once the bids are agreed, the *tactical group* decides how each project is to be implemented by suggesting ways to tackle the particular problems evidenced by the data.

### **The future**

61. Impending financial pressures and the change in local authority funding arrangements for road safety will dramatically affect the way the SSRP needs to operate in the future. Most significantly, government road safety grants to the Sussex local authorities are unlikely to continue in their present form making the future of road safety funding uncertain.

62. Despite recent process improvements designed to ensure better financial control and evaluation, the way SSRP is currently funded and organised is inherently inefficient and insufficiently flexible to meet the future needs of East Sussex. In particular, the bidding system appears to be over bureaucratic and it is questionable as to whether it is sufficiently responsive.

63. The arrangements appear to have resulted in repeated allegations of unfairness by one party or another. For example, the safety camera funding formula currently means that East Sussex contributes 35% of the total funding for just 26% of the camera infrastructure. The emerging financial landscape affecting public authorities means that East Sussex will need to vigorously challenge this kind of agreement.

64. The current funding arrangement for the SSRP comes to an end in March 2011 and so something new will be needed if the SSRP is to continue to undertake any pan Sussex road safety activity and coordination. One possible option to explore would be for the SSRP to continue undertaking operations paid for by each local authority. An obvious starting point is to consider the safety camera operation which, assuming it will continue in some form, could continue to be managed successfully by the SSRP as it has for many years. A second area for consideration is road safety data which is discussed below.

### **Speed cameras**

65. The question of whether speed cameras save lives is the subject of heated debate. Police and road safety professionals argue that the success of cameras is evidenced by measurable reductions in the numbers of KSIs, where they are located. Conversely, anti-camera campaigning groups allege that cameras exist primarily to raise revenue and that official KSI reduction figures disguise normal statistical fluctuations; these, they suggest, are so significant that, over time, large KSI reductions are statistically likely to happen by chance



regardless of the presence of a camera. They argue that the number of KSIs has actually increased at a few camera sites.

66. Currently there are 19 fixed safety cameras in East Sussex. The Council's road safety specialist reports that at those locations the number of KSIs has reduced by, on average, 70% since their introduction. In number terms, this equates to a reduction from approximately 350 casualties over the three year period before installation down to approximately 160 in the three years following installation. Additionally, the operation of safety cameras generates income through the diversion courses.

67. Research shows that nearly all road crashes result from the combination of a number of factors. Excessive speed is considered to be an important contributory factor in many road crashes by most road safety professionals. Current opinion is that if safety cameras are switched off then vehicle speeds are likely to increase at those sites along with the risk of increased KSIs.

68. In August 2010 some counties, for example Oxfordshire, switched their safety cameras off. The consequences are being awaited and initial indications are that vehicle speeds and risk have significantly increased at camera sites. It is now very likely that the cameras will be switched back on again.

69. Given the limited resource available for future mobile enforcement, retaining fixed cameras in East Sussex will help to achieve a necessary and cost effective balance between fixed and mobile speed enforcement. A pan Sussex camera agreement could continue to achieve economies of scale, but the contribution from East Sussex should be in proportion to the number of cameras being operated in the county.

#### ***Road safety data***

70. The Scrutiny Board found the data collection and analysis work of the SSRP to be an impressive feature of the SSRP operation. The resulting information gives an exceptionally comprehensive picture of the factors and causes of KSIs across Sussex leading to the possibility of targeting enforcement at very specific routes and delivering the right message to particular groups of people.

71. Police casualty data is 'cleaned' and checked by individual partner authorities with additional checking by the SSRP. This shared approach to improving the data results in high quality information. The final data for the whole of Sussex is stored and used by the SSRP and made available to partners on request. The SSRP provides additional support where necessary to ensure accurate validation of incident data with each of the partners.

72. The quality of the resulting information enables a more rigorous approach to be taken to evaluating the likely effectiveness of proposed schemes. The data analysis and interpretation work carried out by the partnership is designed to prevent 'knee jerk reactions' to dealing with KSIs statistics by the constituent authorities. Therefore, pan Sussex data collection and interpretation work being carried out by the SSRP needs to be preserved in order to inform priorities both locally and across the area. Indeed, Sussex Police have indicated that they regard this work as sufficiently important for them to wish to take it on rather than allow it to lapse.

#### **Recommendation 6.**

**A safety camera operation should be continued in East Sussex. A pan Sussex camera agreement should continue if it is cost effective, but the contribution from East Sussex should be in proportion to the number of cameras being operated in the county.**

#### **Recommendation 7.**

**Road safety data collection and analysis work, as currently carried out by the SSRP, should continue to be undertaken and developed at a pan Sussex level in order to inform priorities both locally and across the area.**

### **East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group**

73. West Sussex formed a local casualty reduction board in 2007 to work alongside the SSRP by coordinating casualty reduction activities on a county wide basis. It brought together key partners such as the Police, Fire & Rescue and council road safety staff to direct and coordinate road safety activity more effectively within West Sussex.

74. An East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group ('the Group') was established in 2009 with the aim of delivering a road safety strategy for East Sussex within the SSRP's broader strategy. Organisations represented on the Group are: East Sussex County Council, Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, South East Coast Ambulance Service, East Sussex PCTs and the Highways Agency.

75. The Group's approach is to undertake a thorough interrogation of the casualty data and to promote partnership working at East Sussex county level. This, as yet embryonic, group has formed in response to a 'wake-up call' in East Sussex designed to provide a new level of engagement.

76. There is widespread support for the Group. The East Sussex Fire and rescue Service, for example, considers that it should be *the* forum for integrated road safety delivery in East Sussex perhaps supplementing pan Sussex functions provided by the SSRP. The Service comments that whilst *the opportunity has been provided for clearer local integration, this opportunity has yet to be maximised*. It considers that now is the time to reconsider how to deliver a coherent joint agency approach to road safety that captures data, balances resource against risk and evaluates what works to improve our intelligence and road safety strategies for the future.

77. The East Sussex Road Safety Specialist considers that the introduction of the East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group SSRP has helped clarify the role best played by the SSRP and importantly helped everyone gain a better understanding about which functions are best undertaken on a pan Sussex basis those best done locally.

78. As yet the Scrutiny Board is unclear about the extent to which the East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group is delivering better, coordinated activities on road safety in East Sussex and whether it has actually helped to clarify respective roles and responsibilities. Key to future success will be effective and ongoing leadership of the Group. It is unclear who will undertake this role in the future, and somewhat bleak, funding landscape.

79. In the Transport and Environment Department in East Sussex County Council, for example, significant cost savings are to be made in the field of road safety. Current indications, as indicated above, are that the road safety engineering team is to be incorporated into the Transport Strategy Team with significant staffing savings. The Council's current Road Safety Specialist is due to retire early in 2011 and it is as yet unclear who will then assume the County Council's role of road safety officer *champion*. That role will be critical in providing leadership to the Casualty Reduction Group and it is difficult to envisage how such a Group can function effectively without sufficient resources attached to its leadership.

### ***The future strategy for East Sussex***

80. The County Council's Road Safety Specialist is currently preparing a road safety strategy for East Sussex. He is determined that it should be informed by data and to this end

has sought the latest road casualty information from the SSRP. The initial conclusions and findings from this piece of work are that the priority targets are:

- Powered two wheelers – split into two main categories, over 500cc and under 125cc;
- Pedal cycles – particularly children though casualties appear to be increasing throughout the age ranges;
- Pedestrians – children, young people and over 75s;
- Children (0-15) – mainly as passengers, pedestrians and cyclists;
- Young people (16-24) – car drivers in this age range particularly vulnerable though a higher proportion of passengers than other age ranges;
- Older people (60+) – all casualty classes represented, though higher than average ratio of KSIs to slight casualties in pedestrians.

81. The people most affected by road safety issues appear to be vulnerable road users from whom, in most cases, it is their interaction with other vehicles (particularly cars) that causes injury. Cars have seen increasing numbers of safety features added to them over the past two decades, but these have invariably benefited vehicle occupants rather than other, more fragile, road users.

82. Information gleaned from scrutinising socioeconomic database alongside the road casualty data provides further insights. For example:

- Most casualties (approximately 65%) occur within 10km of the injured person's home.
- The problem is predominantly urban in nature.

83. It is envisaged that the East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group will prioritise the above target groups and then undertake further work to look into the more detailed causes to inform any specific actions that need to be taken. This appears to be a sensible and realistic approach.

## **The future of road safety in East Sussex**

84. With much less money specifically earmarked for road safety, the future case for local authority spending on local road safety initiatives will be judged against a wide range of competing priorities. Road safety activities will not receive funding without positive and measureable outcomes being identified at the outset.

85. The Scrutiny Board has been surprised at just how difficult it is to demonstrate links between many road safety initiatives and reduced KSIs. It is only comparatively recently that attention has been given to evaluating the benefits of many of the initiatives currently in place. This work shows that performance indicators need to go well beyond simply measuring percentage reductions in KSIs. Other measures are needed to judge the genuine value of individual local road safety initiatives. Indeed, as we have seen for some initiatives such as Operation Triangle, a reduction in KSIs is not even a significant indicator of success.

86. As the local road safety strategy develops and initiatives are identified, decisions will need to be taken as to who will provide and manage those activities. Some operations, for example safety cameras and the data function, will best be provided at a pan Sussex level. The Lead Member for Transport and Environment needs to work with our partners to identify those activities and agree a funding arrangement to reflect the proportion and cost of undertaking those activities in East Sussex.

87. The overall approach should be to use the data to identify specific local needs; identify activities which will make a measurable improvement; and then ensure efficient targeting of joint resources to carry out the activities efficiently and without duplication.

88. In concluding, we must bear in mind that this report has covered just a part of the whole road safety picture. For example, many road safety initiatives are run nationally, such as the high profile television advertising campaigns for drink driving and seat belts usage; some local initiatives might usefully complement this work. Additionally, there are a host of other possible actions that fall within the remit of local organisations, as illustrated by the example of the Ashdown Forest Conservators, in the introduction to this report.

**Recommendation 8.**

**The East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group should own and develop the future road safety strategy for East Sussex and adopt a strategic commissioning approach towards the management and provision of all road safety initiatives. A County Council road safety officer champion will need to provide active leadership to the Group for this to be effective.**

**Recommendation 9.**

**The relationship between East Sussex County Council and the SSRP needs to change fundamentally to one where the SSRP is 'commissioned' to undertake specific activities, such as the safety camera operation or road casualty data collection and analysis, that are best carried out at a pan Sussex level.**

**Recommendation 10.**

**The Lead Member for Transport and Environment should continue to work with our partners to identify activities best undertaken at pan Sussex level and to agree a funding arrangement that reflects the proportion of those activities occurring in East Sussex.**

## Appendix 1: Committee support, membership and evidence

### ***Committee membership and project support***

Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board Members: Councillors Richard Stogdon (Chairman), Jon Freeman, Terry Fawthrop, Barry Taylor and Dr Laurie Bush.

Board meeting dates: 20 November 2009, 10 February 2010, 29 April 2010, 17 June 2010 and 27 October 2010.

### ***Evidence***

The Board would like to thank all the witnesses who provided evidence in person in writing, and members of the public who responded to press coverage requests for evidence.

#### **Written and oral representations:**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Details</b>
East Sussex County Council	Colin Clarke, Road Safety Specialist
East Sussex County Council	Mark Amis, Team manager - Road Safety Education
East Sussex County Council	Helen Joslin-Allen, Principal Planning Research Officer
East Sussex County Council	Cllr Matthew Lock, Lead Member Transport and Environment
East Sussex Fire and rescue Service	Gary Walsh, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Sussex Police	Assistant Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney has particular responsibility for Protective Services within Sussex Police which includes road policing and KSI reduction.
Sussex Police	Superintendent Steve Barry, Head of the Road Policing Unit (RPU) is the responsible officer who 'owns' the government KSI reduction target (as Head of the RPU) and identifies the role each police division needs to play to reduce KSIs.
Sussex Police	Robin Smith, Divisional Commander, East Sussex
Safer Sussex Roads Partnership	Ken Seymour, Partnership Manager
Safer Sussex Roads Partnership	Brian Baker, Data Manager
Safer Sussex Roads Partnership	Phil Henty, Operations and Finance Manager
Safer Sussex Roads Partnership	Neil Hopkins, Communications Manager

### ***Evidence papers***

<b>Item</b>	<b>Date</b>
SSRP Response to DfT Road Safety Partnerships, Funding and Delivery	February 2010
Legal Agreement between the SSRP partners	2007

Written submission by East Sussex Fire and rescue Service	October 2010
Written comments by Sussex Police	October 2010
Written comments by Colin Clarke, Road Safety Specialist, East Sussex County Council	June – October 2010
Operation Triangle on A26 and A267 – results data	October 2010
Evidence supporting the effectiveness of diversion courses for drivers	August 2010
Written comments by Lynn Evans, Head of Communications, East Sussex County Council	April 2010
SSRP response to DfT Road Safety Partnerships, Funding and Delivery	February 2010
West Sussex County Council Internal Audit review of SSRP and follow up statement	August 2008 / June 2009
Sharing Responsibility – Changing Behaviour, a scrutiny report of the Community Scrutiny Committee, Wealden District Council	January 2010
East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group – various papers	Various
Transport Safety – is the law an ass?: Dr Chris Elliott lecture to the 2008 Lloyds Register Educational Trust/Imperial College	May 2009
A Safer Way – road safety beyond 2010: Consultation response from East Sussex County Council	November 2009
DfT shared space project: Stage 1 appraisal	November 2009

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