

Report to: Lead Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety

Date of meeting: 26 April 2018

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: East Sussex County Council Road Safety Programme Update

Purpose: To provide Lead Member for Communities and Safety with an overview of the East Sussex County Council Road Safety Programme, the latest developments in this programme and plans for next steps

RECOMMENDATION: The Lead Member is recommended to endorse the latest developments in the East Sussex County Council Road Safety Programme and plans for next steps.

1. Background Information.

1.1 In 2015/16 the Road Safety Team secured funding to address public health priorities in East Sussex, identified through the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF). The PHOF had indicated that the proportion of people Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) on roads in East Sussex was higher than the average rate for England. However, it should be noted that it is hard to make true comparisons as the ways in which this data is recorded/collected nationally does vary and Sussex Police are known to be robust in their reporting of road crashes so, whilst East Sussex does have particular challenges with KSIs, other areas may be underreporting.

1.2 There are a number of factors that add to the timeliness of addressing this which include the fact that large scale gains as a result of road improvements have been made in the past and there is now significantly less funding available for such large scale investment in major road projects. Furthermore we know that over 90% of KSIs in East Sussex and nationally are caused by driver error. Therefore, the work being undertaken in the current East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Road Safety Programme aims to take a multifaceted and evidence based approach to improving road safety with the aim of reducing KSIs.

1.3 In summary, the programme of work that we are seeking to undertake over approximately the next 3 years (the duration of the project) is:

- Further analysis into the location and causation factors for KSIs across East Sussex.
- Further analysis into the effectiveness and reach of existing interventions to address road safety.
- Develop a series of projects based on the above analysis and evidence for successful initiatives to reduce KSIs in East Sussex.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 As evidence indicates the vast majority of KSIs result from driver carelessness or error, specific measures are required to address these issues. This programme, therefore, will develop a range of behaviour change initiatives to provide targeted interventions to reduce KSIs within the identified priority groups.

2.2 These behaviour change initiatives will be developed alongside work to improve road safety through targeted infrastructure and speed management schemes. This overall programme of work is being carried out with the support of the expert Behavioural Insights Team who, as part of the Cabinet Office, were the world's first government institution dedicated to the application of behavioural sciences. Work was focused initially on detailed data analysis to determine priority groups and issues, and then develop appropriate and evidence based behavioural insights approaches designed to reduce KSIs on East Sussex roads resulting in an improvement in overall road safety.

2.3 An overview of the ESCC Road Safety Programme, the latest developments in this programme and plans for next steps are included at Appendix 1.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1. Lead Member for Communities and Safety is requested to endorse the background and objectives of the ESCC Road Safety Programme, the latest developments in this work and the plans for the next steps.

RUPERT CLUBB
Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Charlotte Marples, Programme Manager, ESCC Road Safety Programme

Tel. No. 07983 763544

Email: Charlotte.Marples@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

An overview of the ESCC Road Safety Programme, the latest development in this programme and plans for the next steps

1. The Behavioural Insights Team

1.1 As the focus of this programme of work is the development of appropriate behavioural insights initiatives as outlined in the Lead Member report, a process was undertaken at the end of 2016 to secure support from dedicated experts in the successful design and application of behaviour change approaches. Following a procurement process supported by the ESCC legal and procurement teams, a contract was signed with the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). This team, formerly part of the Cabinet Office (the 'nudge' unit), are considered the leading experts in this area and have a strong track record in the application of successful behaviour change techniques across a range of challenging policy areas.

1.2 The support provided by the Behavioural Insights Team is in three key areas:

- Initial data analysis and focus for the behaviour change projects
- Support with the design and implementation of appropriate projects to address identified target groups and issues
- Support with design and evaluation of project success criteria to inform the future direction of the Road Safety Programme.

2. Data Analysis

2.1 Following in depth data analysis, supported by the data team at the BIT, to determine priorities for attention, the following groups/issues were agreed as a priority as the groups at highest risk both of being involved in and causing a KSI:

- Motorcyclists
- Young Drivers (17-25)
- Drivers in relation to vulnerable road users (e.g. cyclists and pedestrians).

2.2 Occupational drivers remain a priority group (for all collisions as opposed to KSI specifically) and work continues in this area coordinated at a pan Sussex level via the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP), a pan Sussex collective that uses combined expertise to make the roads safer and reduce collisions. Partners include, the three Local Highways Authorities, Highways England, Sussex Police, East and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services and the NHS Sussex Trauma unit at Brighton Hospital.

3. Workshop and Development of Projects

3.1 A workshop was held in April 2017 with senior programme partners across a range of organisations including Sussex Police, Highways England, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and Public Health, chaired by the Director of the BIT. The purpose of the workshop was to propose a list of pilot projects to address the key focus groups and issues identified by the initial data analysis. These projects include, for example, changing the nature of current engagement events planned with motorbike enthusiasts during 2018/19 to improve attitudes to and awareness of road safety issues and changing letters sent by Sussex Police to drivers caught speeding to deploy evidence based behavioural insights approaches designed to reduce future risk.

3.2 This list was approved by the ESCC Road Safety Programme Board, chaired by the Assistant Director Communities. Further data analysis has been carried out to determine the detail of each of the trial projects and work is currently taking place to develop these further and implement. The BIT are providing in depth behavioural insights expertise to support three of these projects, including revising the Sussex Police Notice of Intended Prosecution letters with the aim of reducing re-offending rates (a proxy for reduced risk for subsequent collisions). Behavioural science will also be used to boost the effectiveness of Operation Crackdown, a scheme where traffic offences are reported by members of the public. The aim of these projects is to reduce subsequent re-offending which evidence has shown is a strong predictor for future collision /KSI risk.

3.3 Additional consultancy support from the BIT will enable us to review and improve the effectiveness of our existing interactions with Powered Two Wheeler (P2W) drivers. Motorcyclists are a high risk group for KSIs and this work will encourage them to make a pledge to others regarding their driving behaviour, as there is strong evidence that pledges made in this way produce sustained behaviour change and are effective in reducing subsequent risky behaviours. In addition we will evaluate which aspects of our work with this group are most effective to enable the more effective targeting of resources in future. The ESCC Communications Team will also be leading one project within the programme of work. This will be focused on the smart utilisation of a range of appropriate social media platforms. This work will focus on reducing the risk of collisions amongst younger drivers, a key risk group for KSIs, particularly in the first couple of years of passing their driving test.

3.4 This overall programme of work, currently in the process of being implemented has an expected initial reporting date of late autumn/winter 2018 when it is expected that emerging findings will be available, followed by a more comprehensive report the following year. Whilst some of these projects will require longer time frames for evaluation than this, these projects are being designed with some interim success criteria with the aim of informing the future direction of the Road Safety Programme. In addition it is expected that this programme of work will also provide learning and evidence which can be applied to other areas of ESCC's policy agenda.

4. Current Work and Next Steps

4.1 Currently work is taking place to implement the priority behaviour change projects with key project partners, notably Sussex Police as outlined above. The BIT has been commissioned to provide external expert support with the detail of the design, implementation and evaluation of these projects. Detailed project plans and suitable evaluation measures for these are currently in the process of being developed. In depth data analysis will enable the development of appropriate trial protocols which will enable eventual outcomes to be measured.

4.2. Despite the relatively short term timeframe for this programme of work, whilst actual KSI reduction cannot be measured, we can measure elements such as diversion from courts for offences towards speed management courses, reductions in speeding as indicators of likely traffic offences and reductions in rates of re-offending following an initial offence. All of these types of indicators are known to be strong predictors of safer driving behaviours which over time are likely to lead to fewer KSI collisions. It would, of course, be possible to actually measure these rates at a date further into the future to determine whether that has indeed been the case. Furthermore whilst the evidence base for both the behaviour change work and the selected road infrastructure projects is sound, there are of course other factors influencing KSIs, for example economic factors or weather conditions. Behaviour change is, by its very nature, long term and incremental (though sustainable).

4.3 Alongside the work on behaviour change, work is also taking place on the development and implementation of speed management and road infrastructure projects. Work has taken place by the ESCC Road Safety Team to develop a better understanding of high risk locations across East Sussex for collisions, in particular KSI collisions, with the aim of determining what speed management interventions may be appropriate where evidence exists to support their effectiveness. Detailed and in depth analysis of the level of KSIs occurring on our A and B class network has identified 36 sections of road that could benefit from further investigation for an appropriate and evidence based intervention to

be introduced. These investigations are ongoing and have involved detailed discussions with Sussex Police. This year we will be carrying out the following work: three signing and lining schemes, two vulnerable road user route studies, one lower speed limit and four route enhancement/maintenance schemes.

4.4 The Road Safety Team is now progressing this work with further investigations, route studies, consultation and is in discussion with contractors to support these schemes. The schemes, which will be implemented over approximately the next 18 months will be monitored alongside the behaviour change work taking place. This will ensure the same robust methodology and evaluation criteria will be applied to both aspects of this work which will enable better targeting of future road safety work and ensure the effective allocation of future resources to road safety infrastructure schemes where these are known to be most effective.

4.5 Whilst in engineering terms a 12-18 month timeframe may be too short to learn anything of real significance in terms of evaluating long term impact, it is anticipated that we will be able to undertake some before/after studies of work already undertaken to gauge how effective this type of approach is. Together with the emerging findings of the behaviour change work, this will provide useful information for the future direction of the Road Safety programme and deliver some wider learning to support other areas of ESCC's agenda.

5. Governance

5.1 This work is overseen by a Project Board which meets every two months. Members include Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Public Health and Highways England. The Board is chaired by the Assistant Director Communities and oversees all elements of the Road Safety Programme.

5.2 In addition, regular updates are provided to the SSRP of which ESCC is a member and the Project Manager has presented the work at the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee and Safer Communities Board on several occasions where broad support for the work was expressed.

6. Communications

6.1 Work with the Communications Team will be ongoing throughout the duration of the programme. Communications representatives for ESCC attend Board meetings. The Communications Team are supporting the projects which are being implemented over the course of the next few months with a very specific focus on the work which is planned on using social media platforms to engage with younger drivers at high risk of being involved in a KSI.

6.2 An interview has also been held with BBC Radio Sussex on the work being done by ESCC for broadcast. BIT and the SSRP have also provided interviews to Radio Sussex on this work. It is expected that regular updates will be provided to BBC Radio Sussex throughout the implementation of the programme as there is considerable interest in the approach being taken by the Council to address road safety. The growing interest and awareness of the programme is very positive, both in terms of raising the profile of ESCC as a pioneer in this area and enabling the emerging learning to be widely disseminated across the road safety community and beyond.