

**Report to:** Place Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 17 March 2021

**By:** Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

**Title:** Road Safety Programme Interim Outcomes

**Purpose:** To provide the Place Scrutiny Committee with an update on the interim outcomes of the Road Safety Programme

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- (1) To note the following positive interim outcomes of the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Road Safety Programme:
- a. Notice of Intended Prosecution (NiP) Trial - receiving the redesigned NiP and leaflet significantly reduced speeding reoffending by 23% within 6 months. Over the 6-month trial this meant 170 fewer reoffences than business-as-usual, or 6 per week. This would translate to 560 fewer reoffences over the 6 months if everyone in the trial had received the new leaflet and NiP;
  - b. The Anniversary Trial - Drivers who received the Anniversary letter were 8% less likely to speed between 7 and 12 months later than those who did not. Over the 6-month trial this meant 80 fewer reoffences than business-as-usual, or 3 per week; and
  - c. High Risk Sites Trial - preliminary results from 8 schemes have indicated over a 50% reduction in the average number of crashes per annum and over a 60% reduction in the average number of casualties per annum
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## **1 Background Information**

1.1 In 2015/16 East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) Road Safety Team secured funding to address public health priorities in East Sussex, identified through the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF). The PHOF had identified that the proportion of people Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) on roads in East Sussex was higher than the average rate for England (64.5 per 100,000 population v 39.3 for England 2012/14 data). However, in common with East Sussex the majority of County Councils in England over this period had a KSI rate higher than the England average.

1.2 Since then, whilst figures have fluctuated on an annual basis the KSI rate for the majority of County Councils has remained higher than the average for England. For the three year period 2017-2019 the average rate of KSIs for England was 43.2 per 100,000 population, compared to a rate of 73.7 for Hampshire, 72.0 for Cambridgeshire 68.1 for East Sussex and 59.7 for West Sussex. It should however be noted that whilst East Sussex has historically had a higher level of KSIs than many other areas, it is difficult to make direct comparisons with other areas due to both methods of data collection and recording across police forces, and the differences in road networks and infrastructure. In addition, in 2019 a new national data reporting system CRASH was introduced which means that data is not directly comparable with previous years.

1.3 In summary, the ESCC Road Safety programme has tested the effectiveness of a variety of behavioural interventions to reduce KSIs within identified priority groups. The programme of behaviour change work has been supported by the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) formerly part of the Cabinet Office (previously termed the 'nudge unit'). BIT provided support across three main areas of the programme; initial data analysis and development of robust evidence base; support

with the design and implementation of appropriate projects based on this analysis; and support with the creation and evaluation of robust trials.

1.4 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 priorities as evidence shows they are the groups at highest risk both of being involved in and causing a KSI:

- Motorcyclists (particularly middle aged 'leisure' motorcyclists)
- Young Drivers (17-25, particularly young males)
- Drivers distraction /speeding and behaviour in relation to vulnerable road users

1.5 As the evidence indicated that the vast majority of KSIs and over 90% of collisions result from driver carelessness or error, there was the need for specific measures to address these issues. These behaviour change initiatives have been developed alongside a trial to improve road safety through targeted infrastructure and speed management schemes at high risk sites. This report provides an update on the interim outcomes from a number of the trials. The previous report to the Place Scrutiny Committee which provides further background to the Programme is attached at Appendix 1.

## **2 Supporting Information**

### **Update on Progress on Behavioural Interventions and Impact**

2.1 A full programme of behaviour change work has been developed and is in the process of implementation. This work has been developed with the support of BIT and partner organisations and designed to demonstrate statistically significant impact.

2.1.1 Three of the trials have concluded (two of which have reported outcomes) and one which will be analysed and reported in Spring 2021. One trial which will focus on motorcyclists and was due to launch in May 2020 had to be postponed to Spring 2021 (tbc) due to COVID related restrictions. A further trial designed to reduce the risk of collisions/KSIs of young drivers and their passengers could not be delivered this year due to COVID related restrictions as it was not possible to deliver the engagement campaign to students. An end of programme report is currently scheduled to be considered by Place Scrutiny Committee in November 2021.

2.1.2 Three of the trials are intended to reduce both the severity and overall rate of re-offending which evidence indicates is a suitable proxy for delivering sustainable positive change in driving behaviour and reducing the future risk of being involved in a KSI collision. Speeding offences have been used as the intervention point for these trials as these make up the bulk of all offences and there is strong evidence of the impact of speeding on the subsequent number and severity of collisions (and the key factor in whether a collision is a KSI).

2.1.3 The majority of data collection for these trials was completed before the COVID pandemic started. The pilots were also run as randomised controlled trials (RCT), which means we can be confident that the reductions in speeding offences we saw were statistically significant - i.e. that they were caused by the redesigned letters. These results have been analysed and validated by the Behavioural Insights Team.

### **2.2 Notice of Intended Prosecution (NiP) Trial**

2.2.1 This trial involved sending an amended Notice of Intended Prosecution (NiP) letter and accompanying leaflet to a cohort of people caught speeding over a 12 month period from January 2019 (52,000 drivers), using behavioural insights techniques. The effectiveness of this revised letter and leaflet on subsequent speeding offences was assessed against unaltered versions sent

to a control group of offenders to evaluate the impact of behavioural techniques on driver behaviour. The original and revised documentation are attached as Appendix 2.

2.2.2 The new NIP letter used simplified wording and highlighted a clear call-to-action for drivers to confirm who was driving the vehicle at the time of the offence. The new leaflet aimed to persuade people to change their driving behaviour by using an emotive headline and photograph, addressing the misconception that collisions are out of drivers' control and explaining the rationale behind speed limits.

2.2.3 The sample group for the NIP Pilot were randomly divided into four groups and sent either:

- An amended letter and amended leaflet
- An amended letter and old leaflet
- An old letter and amended leaflet
- An old letter and old leaflet

2.2.4 Speeding re-offence was then analysed after 6 months to test which combination of letters and leaflets had the biggest impact. People receiving both the amended NIP letter and amended leaflet, were 23% less likely to reoffend within 6 months, compared to the group who received the old NIP letter and old leaflet. This meant 170 fewer reoffences within 6 months than business-as-usual, or 6 per week, and this would translate to 560 fewer reoffences in Sussex if everyone in the sample had received the new leaflet and NIP

### 2.3 The Anniversary Trial

2.3.1 The sample group for the Anniversary Pilot was all drivers in Sussex who had received at least one speeding offence within the last three years. Half of this group, around 55,000 drivers randomly selected, were sent a one-off letter just after the New Year in 2019, designed to remind them of their offence and encourage them to drive more safely in future. Whilst the other half of this group who did not receive this letter were used to enable effective analysis of what, if any, impact the letter had.

2.3.2 The letter included a photo of the person's vehicle breaking the speed limit, a message reminding them of the offence and the related consequences of speeding, and a request not to speed in the coming year. Its design used several ideas from behavioural science, including the 'fresh start' effect, using the New Year as a timely opportunity for people to commit to changing their driving habits, as well as personalisation, by showing people a picture of their own car caught on camera as a surprising and powerful reminder of their previous offence. A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix 2

2.3.3 The results show that the positive effects of the trial in reducing subsequent speeding offences persists at 12 months, which is extremely encouraging suggesting lasting impact and more sustained behaviour change. Drivers who received this amended letter were 8% less likely to speed within 12 months compared to those who did not receive it. Over a 6-month period, this equated to 80 fewer reoffences. If applied to all offenders across England and Wales, this may lead to around 2,500 fewer reoffences over six months. Those reductions would be in addition to the effect of any speed awareness courses taken by this group.

### 2.4 The Crackdown Trial

2.4.1 Over the next few months, we will receive the full analysis and results of the Operation Crackdown Trial.

## 2.5 High Risk Sites Trial

2.5.1 The high risk sites trial has made physical changes to the way roads appear to drivers at certain sites, to test how this changes their behaviour. The sites were selected based on their relative priority and their suitability for low cost traffic management type of interventions. The aim of the interventions was to produce a consistent message along each section of road so that a driver is aware of the road environment and character, and able to moderate their driving so that it is appropriate to the potential hazards present. This type of intervention is sometimes termed as producing a 'self-explaining' road environment. To date 16 schemes have been implemented across East Sussex.

2.5.2 The initial analysis undertaken has been on those high risk routes that had a minimum of eight months of 'after' crash data prior to the introduction of the national lockdown, however the length of monitoring period prior to the introduction of the national lockdown ranged from 8 months to 28 months. These routes are:

1. A275 – Cooksbridge
2. B2087 - Ticehurst to Flimwell
3. A264 - Blackham bends
4. A2100 - The Mount to Battle Road
5. B2110 - A22 to Blacklands Crescent, Forest Row
6. A267 - Cross in Hand to Boship
7. A22 - Forest Row to Nutley
8. A295 - Hailsham

2.5.3 Across these eight routes the preliminary results have indicated:

- over a 50% reduction in the average number of crashes per annum
- over a 60% reduction in the average number of casualties per annum

2.5.4 Further monitoring will be carried out as additional 'after' data becomes available, and further tests will be carried out to determine the statistical significance of these reductions.

2.6 **Financial Analysis** – £615,000 was allocated to the Behaviour Change trials and £332,000 to the High Risk sites trial. The balance of £53,000 funded the Safer Streets Report.

## 2.7 **Next Steps**

2.7.1 A full communications programme will be developed to disseminate the results of this work. There has already been significant interest in this work at national and local level within road safety and public health communities and beyond, and it is expected that this will increase when full outcomes are available.

2.7.2 Work is continuing on the delivery of both aspects of the programme, including completing analysis and preparation and development of detailed plans for future potential trials. A final report on the outcomes of both aspects of this programme will be completed later this year and this will inform the future direction of our Road Safety programme.

## 3. **Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 Analysis has shown that the single most significant factor in reducing KSIs in East Sussex is to target driver behaviour which includes speeding and reckless driving. The programme of work undertaken has therefore focused on the development and implementation of behaviour change schemes alongside work on targeted and evidence-based infrastructure schemes at high risk sites.

3.2 The committee is recommended to note the positive interim outcomes from three of the trials which have shown a reduction in speeding re-offences and a reduction in crashes.

**RUPERT CLUBB**

**Director of Communities, Economy and Transport**

Contact Officer: Charlotte Marples

Email: [Charlotte.Marples@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Charlotte.Marples@eastsussex.gov.uk)