Hertfordshire Safety Camera Partnership – BRIEFING PAPER

1 Introduction

1.1 This briefing paper has been prepared to provide Scrutiny Members with background information with regard to the use of safety cameras in the county and the work of the Hertfordshire Safety Camera Partnership. It will give an overview of the partnership, including membership, funding and achievements.

1.2 To support this paper, the following Appendix A is attached:

- Hertfordshire Safety Camera Partnership Annual Report 2010 to Hertfordshire County Council’s Highways and Transport Panel

2 Background

2.1 The first safety cameras in Hertfordshire were installed in 1994 on the A505 in the north of the county. The Hertfordshire Safety Camera partnership was set up in October 2002 following a successful Department for Transport (DfT) pilot in seven areas across England and Wales that showed injury collisions and casualties reduced at locations where camera enforcement technology was used.

2.2 The aim of the Hertfordshire Safety Camera Partnership is to contribute to the reduction in road traffic collisions and casualties through speed and red light camera enforcement at known injury collision locations.

2.3 The Partnership began as a joint venture between the County Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary and Her Majesty’s Courts Service. The Highways Agency joined the Partnership in 2005. As part of this partnership the Police Safety Camera Unit went live in July 2003.

2.4 The Partnership currently operates to DfT Circular 01/2007 – “Use of Speed and Red-Light Cameras for Traffic Enforcement: Guidance on Deployment, Visibility and Signing.”

3 Funding Arrangements

3.1 Funding mechanisms have changed over the years however all fines produced through safety camera enforcement activity have always been forwarded directly to the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) and this remains the case.
3.2 Since April 2007 Local Authorities have received an annual Road Safety Grant allocation from the DfT. In Hertfordshire the whole of this Grant has been allocated to the Safety Camera Partnership. Significant in-year cuts to the Grant were announced in June 2010, reducing the available budget by over £1 million. The Partnership has agreed a reduced programme to the end of 10/11. The County Council has agreed that safety camera enforcement will continue to be funded. Discussions are currently taking place with partners regarding options post April 2011 which will depend on future levels of funding.

3.3 The Highways Agency funds safety camera partnership activity on its network (A1(M) and M25).

4 Partnership Management and Roles

4.1 Hertfordshire County Council is the lead partner, chairing the Project Board, with Police, Courts and Highways Agency represented alongside. The county council also provides finance and communications functions as well as involvement in site surveys, consultation, maintenance and implementation of infrastructure, and data analysis.

4.2 Enforcement activity, including processing of Notices of Intended Prosecution (NIP) and Conditional Offer/Fixed Penalty Notices (CO/FPN) is carried out by the Safety Camera Unit within the Constabulary. The unit provides the complete service from camera deployment to court file preparation, including investigations and enquiries.

4.3 The Magistrates (HMCS) Fixed Penalty Office processes payment of fines and licence endorsements, while the Highways Agency (HA) involvement is currently solely with regard to roadwork enforcement on HA roads.

5 Enforcement Equipment

5.1 At 10 August 10 there were 144 sites with 226 housings / platforms across the county.

5.2 Enforcement equipment consists of:

- Gatso rear facing cameras (majority)
- Truvelo front facing cameras (4 sites)
- LTI 20.20 laser detection devices in mobile vans
- Gatso red light cameras covering several traffic signal sites
- Time over distance cameras in the M25 and Hatfield Tunnel road works.

5.3 Since 2008 the Partnership has been adapting its static Gatso housings to digital technology. This new technology has realised operational efficiencies although the final phase has been placed on hold by the Partnership due to the funding cuts to the Road Safety Grant.

6 Site Selection and Implementation

6.1 Stringent criteria are used for the selection of sites, based on 3 year police Stats 19 casualty data, with emphasis being placed on the number of killed and seriously injured (KSI) collisions. Speed data is also required. The criteria vary for static, mobile and red light enforcement. Other measures must be considered as part of the selection process before safety cameras are chosen as the option. (See Appendix A - table on page 4 of the Annual Report for site selection criteria.)
7 **Signage and Visibility Requirements**

7.1 A driver must have an unobstructed view of a static housing or mobile enforcement van from a prescribed distance, dependent on the speed limit of the road. The posted speed limit is also required to be seen within the same driver’s view as the safety camera housing or enforcement van so warning signs showing a safety camera and 30 mph speed limit roundel are placed at all enforcement sites within “restricted roads” (roads where a 30mph speed limit applies by virtue of the presence of a system of street lighting). Where allowed, the Partnership has added further signs at some sites of high non-compliance, whilst considering sign clutter and urbanisation concerns, to improve driver compliance.

8 **Communications, PR and Research**

8.1 The Partnership has promoted a number of messages such as “Streetlights = 30” and “Which would you rather save? - 2 minutes or £60”, through various media. There has been much media interest over the years and the recent Road Safety Grant cuts and the effect on future Partnership operations has also been of interest.

8.2 In the most recent survey in Hertfordshire (September 2009):

- 49.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they were trying to speed less often that they used to
- 45.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they were making an effort to reduce their driving speed
- 41% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they had recently reduced their usual driving speed

8.3 Safety camera information is publicly available on Herts Direct, including qualifying collision data for each site, photographs, maps and descriptions of camera locations. The website also allows offenders to access their offence information through the Public Access computer system.

8.4 In September 2010 the AA reported that 69% of motorists accept speed cameras and an RAC Foundation report in November 2010 assessed that around 800 more people a year would be killed or seriously injured if all speed cameras were scrapped.

9 **Performance to Date**

9.1 **Collision Reduction**

9.1.1 The best reductions in KSIs are seen when a site is relatively new. Latest Hertfordshire figures to 31 December 2009, which compares the latest three-year data to the three-year data before the site was set up, shows:

- 64.4% reduction in the number of Killed or Seriously Injured collisions at camera sites
- 39.5% reduction in personal injury collisions at camera sites.

9.1.2 The Partnership does not expect to see further significant annual reductions but is confident that current levels of activity are helping to maintain the reduced levels of KSIs at safety camera sites. This programme, together with engineering and
education programmes, has contributed to the county’s lowest number of KSIs on record – 413 in 2009.

9.2 Enforcement Activity

9.2.1 In 2009/10 the Partnership issued 55,761 Notices of Intended Prosecution (NIPs).

9.2.2 Not everyone who receives a NIP ends up paying a £60 fine and receiving 3 penalty points. Some go to court while others may be offered the chance to attend a National Speed Awareness course. (See section 9.5 below.)

9.3 Road Works Enforcement

9.3.1 Road works enforcement, to protect the workforce, began in Hertfordshire in April 2006 with the M1 widening project. This scheme was completed in December 2008. In July 2009 the Partnership began to support two more Highways Agency schemes at the A1(M) Hatfield Tunnel and the M25 widening project between junctions 16 and 18. The Highways Agency funds the cost of this enforcement, through its contractors.

9.4 Safety Camera Unit Investigations / Court Team

9.4.1 Two Police Officers employed within the Safety Camera Unit have pursued various cases and achieved a number of successful prosecutions as a result. (See table on pages 7 and 8 of the Annual Report for more detail.)

9.5 Speed Awareness

9.5.1 Speed Awareness courses are run by HCC on behalf of the Constabulary. Selected drivers are offered this opportunity, in lieu of a fixed penalty fine and points on their licence, by the Safety Camera Unit. A bank of Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) run these courses on behalf of HCC. Evaluation by clients is overwhelmingly positive. To date over 30,400 drivers have completed a course in Hertfordshire.

9.5.2 This driver rectification course has elements similar to those of the National Driver Improvement and National Alertness schemes which evaluations have shown:

“that both courses have produced positive changes in attitudes, confidence to drive safely and intentions to drive safely in the future. At follow up, 99% of clients reported that they had changed their driving; 22% that their driving had changed a great deal and over 40% that it had changed quite a lot.” Dr Fiona Fylan, Brainbox Research Ltd & Professor Steve Stradling, Edinburgh Napier University 10 June 2010.

Dr Fylan also reported:

“There is clear evidence that after attending the scheme offenders have safer and more responsible attitudes towards road user behaviour than before. This is highly statistically significant. They report that the course provides them with information, knowledge and skills that will help them to stay safe on the road”.

Author
Theresa Casbard, Head of Road Safety, Hertfordshire County Council
theresa.casbard@hertscc.gov.uk