

**1 December 2003**

## **Traffic Speed and Road Safety**

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### **Report of Head of Overview and Scrutiny**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To report on a recent presentation to Members of the County Council and the Police Authority about traffic speed and road safety issues.

#### **Background**

2. Members will recall the previous presentations to the Sub-Committee about road casualty reduction, which is Target 8 in the County Council's Local Public Service Agreement. There have also been discussions in the Durham Member Area Panel about fixed speed cameras (with a recent request to Cabinet to make representations to the Chief Constable and Police Authority about the issues). It was against this background that Members of the County Council and the Police Authority received a presentation from the Chief Constable and Officers from Environment and Technical Services Department about speed and road safety issues on 9 October 2003.

#### **Presentation Issues**

3. The Chief Constable outlined to Members the main types of road casualties and costs associated with these. The role of the Police was driven by the Road Policing Strategy and Intelligence Led Policing, which directed the nature and extent of tasking, giving the opportunity to deploy the mobile speed camera and handheld speed guns where accident levels were greatest, instead of having fixed speed cameras. It was appreciated, however, that a review of current mobile sites was required and in those which no longer met the relevant criteria, there may be public criticism if signs were removed. Whilst speed of vehicles could be a factor in terms of the seriousness of injuries sustained; the numbers of accidents as a direct result of speeding were statistically small. Central to tackling road speeding was education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement.
4. The Director of Environment and Technical Services outlined how accident prevention schemes and the safer routes to school programme were contributing to casualty reduction. Education was ongoing in schools and there was encouragement in the form of national campaigns, including the national driver improvement campaign. Enforcement by the Police was undertaken at sites with a proven accident history. The County Council had also carried out some

pilot work with active speed signs, which had been encouraging. There were proposals for new joint working with the Police in relation to speeding issues and a review was being undertaken into speed camera hypothecation.

5. Members present referred to the apparent lack of involvement in any initiatives of motor insurers and insurance issues for younger people. Reference was also made to the need for the County Council to re-visit how it carries out traffic calming. Members referred to the positive effects of active speed signs, where these had been piloted.
6. In closing the meeting, Councillor Joe Armstrong asked Members of the County Council to consider whether opportunities existed to increase the number of active speed signs in the County (perhaps on a District basis, via the Member Area Panels, using contributions from each Member's fund). Councillor Armstrong also asked the Chief Constable and Members of the Police Authority to bear in mind in any future policy deliberations, the importance the County Council places on tackling inappropriate speed.

### **Recommendation**

7. Members are asked to note the position.

### **Head of Overview and Scrutiny**

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