

## FINAL REPORT – SECOND DRAFT

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### TWO WHEELER ROAD SAFETY

*(Foreword to be added by Chairman)*

#### **Background**

Under the changes to the Committee structure agreed by the County Council in 2008, the scrutiny of road safety moved to become part of the remit of the Safer and Stronger Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee. Although it had other business to deal with at that time, the Committee then made it clear that starting in 2009 it would wish to look at one particular aspect of road safety in depth and that this should be an area of activity of particular concern in the county.

The Council's Road Safety Plan adopted in 2005 placed particular emphasis upon four areas of activity where improvement would be sought. These covered:-

Young drivers (17 to 25 years of age) and their passengers.

Speeding.

Drinking and Driving.

Motorcycle casualties.

In the first three categories, evidence was now available that showed that clear and sustained progress had been made and that the targets set for 2009/10 should be achieved. However, in the final category it was clear that, although improvements had been made, further work was required. It was apparent that far too high a number of motorcyclists were being killed or seriously injured on Essex roads. **It is a sad fact nationally that motor cyclists make up just 1% of road users but 20% of traffic related fatalities. Essex is no different.**

In the light of this irrefutable evidence, a scrutiny of Two Wheeler road safety was the first road safety topic to be chosen by the Committee. In this respect Two Wheeler included any powered transport such as motorcycles, scooters and mopeds – it did not include pedal cycles.

A scoping document for the scrutiny was drawn up to reflect the Committee's concerns and this is attached as Annex A to this report.

#### **Scrutiny process**

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The Committee agreed that, given that the responsibility for road safety lies with the statutory agencies, it should concentrate its scrutiny on working with those organisations. Five persons closely involved with road safety in the county were invited to a witness session, these being:-

Rosemary Welch, the Network and Safety Manager for the County Council,

Helen Baggett, Road Safety Data Analyst in Highways and Transportation, Essex County Council.

Mike Green (title to be added)

Adam Pipe (title to be added)

Paul Bowers (title to be added)

The detail of the evidence given at that session is set out in Annex B to this report. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to question all five witnesses together, allowing them to respond as a 'panel' and stressing the nature of the joint work undertaken. It also welcomed the open and constructive stance taken by the witnesses, which enabled the Committee to gather a large amount of information in a short time scale.

In addition to the oral evidence, a number of documents were made available to the Committee, as follows:

- Essex Casualty Reduction Board leaflet: 10 tips to help motorcyclists stay safe.
- Essex Powered Two Wheeler Strategy.
- Statistical data provided by Essex County Council in respect of the four priority areas for action.
- The Epping Forest Battleplan.
- Euromap Report – annual number of moped and motorcycle rider and passenger fatalities across Europe in 2007.
- Views of the national motoring organisations.

At the follow up meeting to the witness session, the Committee went through all the points raised previously and discussed information which had been gathered subsequently. Committee Members also reported on their knowledge of local motor cycle clubs and events; routes known to be popular with motor cyclists; feedback from constituents; and personal experiences as motor cyclists. The items discussed at this meeting are set out in Annex C to this report.

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It was also agreed that a visit for all Members to one or more of the projects organised by the statutory agencies would be arranged. It was acknowledged that this might take some time to organise due to the emphasis on other road safety activities by those agencies over the Christmas/New Year period 2009/10 period. It was agreed that the final report should not be delayed in order to facilitate this visit, but that any additional comments then made could be added to the report as a codicil.

On the Committee's behalf, the Chairman attended the Inside Government National Road Safety Conference. He made a written submission to the Committee of the presentation made by, and discussion he had had with, Mr Chris Hodder of the British Motorcyclists Federation. The comments made backed up the evidence which had been given locally.

He also attended a Road Safety GB conference dedicated to motor cycling issues. This enabled the Committee to be advised of projects already undertaken by other local authorities and of up to date advice from Transport for London and the Driving Standards Agency (DSA).

#### **Conclusions**

It was made clear by the DSA at the above conferences that no changes to the testing regime for motor cyclists were proposed. The Committee had to bear that unequivocal statement in mind in formulating its proposals.

The Committee also had to bear in mind that motor cycles were made for a worldwide market and that the UK Government would find it very difficult, if not impossible, to impose rules on design and power output on its own. There was no evidence of a general wish amongst governments to introduce such legislation.

The Committee decided to group its findings and recommendations into three categories:-

- General issues relating to motor cycling
- More specific issues
- General issues relating to road safety which went beyond motor cycling and which could be the subject of follow up scrutinies

In coming forward with its proposals, the Committee acknowledged the long history of motor cycling in the county. **The Committee's wish was that it would not want to prevent anyone experiencing the pleasure of motor cycling but it did not want to see them killed or seriously injured whilst doing it.**

#### **Findings and recommendations**

##### **GENERAL ISSUES**

<b><u>Findings</u></b>	<b><u>Recommendations</u></b>
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The Committee was satisfied that it had chosen the correct road safety issue to consider as far as Essex was concerned. There was clear statistical data to back up that view. It was, however, reassured that the statutory agencies in Essex were well aware of this issue and had a number of projects in hand to improve the situation.	
The Committee welcomed the cross agency approach being taken, as evidenced by the work of the Essex Casualty Reduction Board and by the officers who attended its meeting. It felt that far less progress would be made should all these agencies be working in isolation.	<p>That the cross agency approach be supported as the most effective way of handling this issue.</p> <p>That the level of proactive work being undertaken 'on the ground' by all agencies be welcomed and supported.</p>
The Committee was impressed by the level of data collection and data analysis described. This was felt to be a vital tool in enabling appropriate strategies to be prepared.	

### SPECIFIC ISSUES

The education and training of riders was felt to be vital. Anybody could obtain a provisional licence and go straight on to the road. Anyone with a full licence could drive a powerful machine with very little experience. Equally, anybody with a full licence returning to two wheeler use in mid life could buy and use straightaway a large and powerful machine s/he was incapable of controlling. Evidence presented to the Committee made it clear that the majority of accidents involving motor cyclists were due to an action or error by the motorcyclists themselves.	That all retailers, schools, colleges and licensing authorities should be encouraged to publicise the availability of Bike Safe courses and actively encourage both new and returning motorcyclists to attend such a course prior to taking to the road.
The Committee noted that excess speed was often a contributory factor in a number of fatal or serious accidents. The technology available	That the County Council and, where appropriate, the Highways Agency, should be encouraged to introduce state of the art speed camera

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with most existing speed cameras often found it impossible to capture the number plate details of speeding motor cyclists. New technology now coming into operation should be able to overcome this problem.	<p>technology for use on Essex roads as soon as resources permit.</p> <p>That, despite the difficulties involved in acting alone, the Government should be urged to consider the introduction of legislation to allow for the fitting of speed governing devices on motor cycles.</p>
The County Council's Two Wheeler Strategy, although a helpful document, had been prepared several years ago and was now out of date.	<p>That the Essex Casualty Reduction Board be invited to update and republish the Essex Two Wheeler Strategy.</p> <p>That the County Council incorporate the lessons learned from a review of the data analysis into the Speed Strategy which it will be preparing in 2010.</p> <p>That, in particular, the Council should seek to impose appropriate speed limits on roads known to be popular in the motor cycling fraternity and which are perceived by the public to be 'race tracks' and should liaise with the Essex Police Force regarding the proactive policing of any such limits.</p> <p>That, in designing any changes to road and roundabout layouts, the County Council should always take into account the requirements of motor cyclists, especially the need for them to see and be seen clearly by drivers.</p>
The Committee welcomed the work being undertaken with young people in conjunction with the Young Essex Assembly, colleges and schools. It particularly welcomed the action taken by some educational establishments in requiring new motor cyclists to undertake a days training (Bike Safe Younger Rider Training) before being allowed to bring a machine on to their premises.	<p>That all educational establishments should be encouraged to require new motor cyclists to undertake training before being allowed to bring a powered machine on to their premises.</p> <p>That the Cabinet Member for Education and the 2012 Games be invited to consider how two wheeler road safety could be incorporated into both primary and secondary school's</p>

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	<p>work on road safety issues generally.</p> <p>That Trading Standards be encouraged to run a campaign (possibly in the pre Christmas period) advising parents of the restrictions on the use of off road bikes and what parents should look for when seeking to purchase such a machine.</p>
The Committee was concerned that, given the current structure of Essex Police, each of the five Divisional Commanders might decide to prioritise different road safety policies.	That the Chief Constable be invited to consider that, whilst the ability to target particular local issues should always remain, the Force should set clear parameters with respect to Two Wheeler safety and enforcement within which each Division has to operate.
The involvement of the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service was particularly welcomed. It was felt that motor cyclists might be more willing to relate to its staff than with the Police and County Council staff.	
The Committee noted the particular concerns in the wooded area of the Epping Forest district, which is a traditional meeting point for motor cyclists and which covers the boundaries of two police forces.	<p>That the Chief Constable be invited to confirm how the Essex and Metropolitan Police Forces liaise to deal with motor cycle gatherings in the Epping Forest area.</p> <p>That a general cutting back of trees in the forest to form a buffer zone is acknowledged to be undesirable and not a viable option, although the Forest conservators should be invited to consider some selective cutting back at known accident black spots. Speed limits with average speed camera surveillance was the only viable alternative.</p>
A number of environmental issues came up during the scrutiny.	That the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Waste be advised of the Committee's concern that the use of off road bikes could cause a great deal of damage to the flora and fauna of the county and invited to consider how such use might be

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	<p>controlled.</p> <p>That district council Environmental Health Officers be asked to consider the impact on the environment and on local residents of the use and noise of off road bikes.</p> <p>That, given the Committee's concern about unauthorised alterations to motor cycles, that might impair their safety or increase environmental damage (e.g. with noise), VOSA should be asked to set up testing points near known Two Wheeler safety/nuisance black spots.</p>
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### OTHER ISSUES

A number of issues in relation to Heavy Goods Vehicles had been raised during the scrutiny.	<p>That the Committee should add a scrutiny of road safety issues in relation to Heavy Good Vehicles to its Forward Look.</p> <p>That the objectives of the Police operation on the A12 – Operation Mermaid – be supported.</p> <p>That the Chief Constable be asked whether it would be possible for Members to have the opportunity to see Operation Mermaid in action.</p>
The Pothole reporting system used by the County Council was felt to be a good example of its kind.	That the County Council always bear in mind the particular dangers caused to motor cyclists by leaving pot holes unrepaired.
The Committee had concerns about the use of Police powers to impose fines at the roadside. This was regarded as a reasonable deterrent but the Committee was worried about the potential for scams by criminals masquerading as the Police.	That the Chief Constable's views be sought on the intended operation of the scheme and for advice on how the Committee's concerns can be alleviated.
It was noted that Southend on Sea and Thurrock Councils were separate road safety authorities.	That the Committee's report be forwarded to those councils for information and that they be encouraged to act jointly with the

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	Essex County Council and the Essex Casualty Reduction Board on any initiatives.



## Scoping Document for scrutiny

<b>Committee</b>	Safer and Stronger Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Topic</b>	Two Wheeler Road Safety (covering any powered two wheel private transport)r	<b>Ref:</b> SSC-SCR-08 File E.41.01/8/8
<b>Objective</b>	Consider whether key indicators in respect of deaths and serious injury amongst motor cyclists in Essex show it to be an issue of concern and, if so, to consider how improved safety standards may be bought about.	
<b>Reasons for undertaking review</b>	Remit for road safety has passed to this Committee and it is an activity that has not been scrutinised for some time.  Anecdotal evidence had suggested to the Committee that two wheeler safety is perceived to be poor in Essex and this view was subsequently backed up by statistical data.	
<b>Topic suggested by</b>	Committee	
<b>Method</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial briefing to define scope</li> <li>• Task &amp; Finish Group</li> <li>• Commission</li> <li>• Full Committee</li> </ul>	Yes	
<b>Membership</b> <i>Only complete if Task and Finish Group or Commission</i>	N/A	
<b>Issues to be addressed</b>	What are current ECC policies in relation to road safety in general and to two wheelers in particular? Is it known why Essex actually has a poor record of deaths and serious injuries amongst motor cyclists? Where do most accidents occur (i.e. main roads, country roads, suburban areas) and when (weekdays, weekends, at night)? Current campaigns to train, and improve standards of, motor cyclists. Views of agencies involved in motor cycle safety and how the agencies work together. Can Members help to remove any 'log jams' in the system to assist	

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	initiatives to improve safety levels?		
<b>Sources of Evidence and witnesses</b>	Essex County Council Essex Police Essex Fire and Rescue Service The Motor Cycle Forum The Essex Battleplan Data analysis held by the County Council Individual Bikers (via Councillor Robinson if willing)		
<b>Work Programme</b>	Sole item at meetings in November and December 2009.		
<b>Indicators of Success</b>			
<b>Meeting the CfPS Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Critical Friend Challenge to Executive</i></li> <li>• <i>Reflect Public voice and concerns</i></li> <li>• <i>Own the scrutiny process</i></li> <li>• <i>Impact on service delivery</i></li> </ul>	Yes  Yes  Yes		
<b>Date agreed by Committee</b>	April 2009, and reiterated in July 2009 by reconstituted Committee.		
<b>Future Action</b>			
<b>Governance Officer</b>	Graham Redgwell	<b>Committee Officer</b>	Janet Mills
<b>Service Lead Officer(s)</b>	Rosemary Welch, Network and Safety Manager  Helen Baggett, HT Data Analyst		

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ANNEX B

#### **Two Wheeler Road Safety: summary of witness session November 2009**

##### **Rosemary Welch Network Safety Manager**

Rosemary Welch gave details of her role and background with the County Council and the Casualty Reduction Board.

The Committee was advised as follows:-

The Casualty Reduction Board was established in 2005 as Essex County Council had not met the required targets in the reduction of the number of those killed or seriously injured in the County. The Board was made up from a number of officers from the County Council, Essex Police, Essex Fire & Rescue Service, East of England Ambulance Service and the Highways Agency.

A Casualty Reduction Board Strategy for the period 2007/2011, which included motor cycles, had been introduced. This superseded the Essex County Council's Powered Two Wheeler Strategy published in 2001.

Four key target areas had been identified:

- Young drivers (17 to 25 years of age) and their passengers
- Speeding
- Drinking and Driving
- Motorcycle casualties

These target areas had received key interventions via the following actions:

- Education
- Law enforcement
- Engineering (roadway traffic calming methods)
- Encouragement

Graphs and data presented to the Committee showed how casualties had been greatly reduced in the first three key target areas since the introduction of the strategy. Generally speaking the number of those killed or seriously injured (KSI) in these key areas was now below the target level. Work would continue in these areas to build on this success.

The strategy had not been so successful with regard to motor cyclists.

The Casualty Reduction Board strategy was to be updated in 2010. Work would continue in the first three target areas; however, seeking a reduction in the number of motorcycle KSIs would form the main area of the work for next year.

In answer to Members questions the following responses were made:

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Members asked for clarification regarding the reduction of those KSI in relation to speeding. The Committee was advised that there had been 167 cases in July 2007 and these had been reduced to 87 cases by September 2008.

With regard to the introduction of speed cameras on the A127 dual carriageway, the Committee was advised that figures collected had shown that there had been a 50% reduction in the number of incidents over the last three years. It was regrettable that current speed cameras did not always capture images of speeding motor cyclists.

An explanation of how average speed restrictions on the A12 worked was given to Members. The Committee was advised that all vehicle number plates were time recorded at the beginning of the restricted zone and then recorded at the end of the restricted zone, thus the time taken and therefore speed of the vehicle could be captured. The cameras and information collected could not be used for any purposes other than law enforcement of offenders. However, the Police did have cameras that could capture data in respect of other issues.

There were some legal issues that prevented the use of existing cameras from identifying motorcycle speeding offenders. However, advancements in camera technology would change this in the near future.

Members noted the successful reduction in the number of KSI in the three key areas and acknowledged that the number of deaths and serious injuries amongst motorcyclists continued to be at an unacceptably high level.

With regard to young drivers, work undertaken had proven to have been a great success.

With regard to whether seasonal changes affected the figures, the Committee was advised that the number of cases usually increased between May and July as the good weather encouraged more motorcyclists onto the roads.

#### **Helen Baggett Road Safety Data Analyst**

Helen Baggett gave a brief personal introduction and explained her background and the work she undertook as a road safety data analyst. The Committee was advised that her role was to analyse personal injury data and use local and national research to provide information to inform the strategy produced by the Casualty Reduction Board.

The Committee received a presentation which gave details of motor cycle road collisions and casualties in Essex.

The main findings from the research were outlined to Members. Responses made to questions from Members were as follows:

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- Motor cycles made up 1% of the traffic in Essex but were involved in 24% of the cases of KSI.
- 90% of all cases of KSI involved male riders, most of whom resided in Essex.
- Statistics had shown that KSI occurred in one in six car related accidents and one in three motor cycle accidents.
- With regard to motor cycle incidents, 65% of these were considered to be the fault of the rider. There was a more equal fault percentage when other vehicles had been involved.

Research had revealed two main target areas. These were:

- Males aged 16 to 18 years of age, mostly riding mopeds and scooters.
- Males aged 21 to 50 years of age, mostly riding motor bikes over 500cc engine capacity.

For the purposes of interventions, these target areas could be further sub divided into:

- Young moped/scooter (inexperienced riders).
- Other riders on a weekday commute to work on mostly urban riders.
- Weekend leisure riders involved in rural incidents.

Causes of KSI were different in each of the three target areas.

With regard to males aged 16 to 18 years old moped and scooter riders, most cases were attributed to lack of driving experience. Most cases involved the rider using poor braking, lack of consideration of road surfaces and avoidable risk taking.

With regard to the weekend leisure riders, these involved older riders and in most cases were in rural areas and caused at road junctions or speeding on bends. The incident of KSI was the highest in this target group.

Roundabouts played a key role in a number of incidents.

A map showing the geographical locations of collisions involving older motor cycle riders on larger bikes was shown to the Committee. The map showed that most urban collisions occurred in Chelmsford and Colchester, and that most rural collisions occurred in Basildon, Braintree, Epping Forest and Tendring. Rural collisions involved local residents and visiting riders but most lived within the local area of the incidents.

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The high number of incidents in the Epping Forrest district was noted by Members. The Committee was advised that riders involved had come from the local district or from the London area.

The Committee was advised that there were seasonal variations. Further analysis of the seasonal trend had revealed an increase in the number of KSIs during the summer months in the riding for leisure category. It was understood that, during pleasant weather conditions, riders perceived less danger. The increase during August and September, shown on the graphical presentation, was attributed to new, inexperienced 16 year old moped users. The August and September increases in cases also coincided with the taking up of college education and the need for the student to have a form of transport.

With regard to the involvement of car drivers deemed to be at fault in motor cycle accidents where the category of males was aged 30 years old or under, most car drivers were recorded to say that they had not seen the motor cyclist. This was known as SMIDSY which stood for 'sorry mate I didn't see you'.

Members questioned if there had been research which showed the number of KSI in Europe. Rosemary Welch advised the Committee that there were similar road safety systems across Europe. Great Britain was in the top three countries for the implementation of road safety measures. The information could be made available for the consideration of Members.

#### **Witness Panel session - Mike Green and Adam Pipe, Essex Police Force; Paul Bowers, Essex Fire and Rescue Service; and Helen Baggett and Rosemary Welch, Essex County Council**

The Chairman invited Mr. Adam Pipe and Mr. Mike Green from Essex Police and Mr. Paul Bowers from Essex Fire and Rescue Service to join Helen Baggett and Rosemary Welch to form a Panel to answer Members questions. The three new Panel Members gave a brief personal introduction and explained their involvement in the work of the Casualty Reduction Board. Although individual panel members gave responses to Member's questions, the whole panel concurred with the individual answers given.

Members questions were answered as follows:-

Members commented that the procedure at mini roundabouts was little known and could be confusing, especially when three vehicles arrived at the same time. Members questioned how did the driver establish who had the right of way? It was explained to Members that entrances to mini roundabouts were differentiated. The Highway Code set out who takes priority; the same rules applied to motor bikes as applied to any other vehicle.

Members questioned the design of roundabouts. Some seemed to be particularly dangerous for two wheeled vehicles, especially if the rider had to cross over lanes so as to take right hand exits. The Committee was advised

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that systems were in place to record such incidents and that all accident sites were surveyed. If necessary, road engineering measures were adopted to better 'channel' motorists.

With regard to motor cycle rider training the Committee was advised that Essex Police advocated the Advance Training Scheme, as it was considered that most accidents were due to motor cyclist actions.

With regard to the Epping Forrest district, Members questioned whether trees were of particular danger to riders. The Committee was advised that Sweden had introduced a 25 yard zone between roadways and trees. In Britain there was a need to consider conservation issues and the protection of ancient woodlands. Currently, cutting back of vegetation could be undertaken on specific routes. The introduction of average speed checks in the forested area was considered to be a better solution to the problem.

Members commented that a 125cc motor cycle was much more powerful than a similar bike from 30 years ago and questioned what national safety measures the motorcycle manufacturing industry had taken. The Committee was advised that legislation to make motor cycles more visible had been introduced in 2004. Manufacturers now needed to ensure that bike lights were wired in, making it impossible for the rider to independently turn off the lights whilst the vehicle was in motion. Legislation could be introduced to make the riders clothing more visible, as many continued to ride in black leathers.

Members questioned what training or safety schemes were undertaken by motorcycle retailers. The Committee was advised that a new scheme (DART) had been introduced where the retailer reduced the overall cost of the motorcycle and provided an opportunity for the rider to join the Advanced Training Scheme at no cost to the purchaser. In light of the current economic situation the scheme may not be widely taken up as it was acknowledged that this did adversely affect the retailer's profit margin.

The basic requirement to get a provisional motor cycle licence was explained to Members. The Committee was advised that there were no prerequisites for any rider; having had no experience they could go from using a pedal cycle to a motorised vehicle in the same day.

It was recognised that motor cycles were often used for leisure and that motorcyclist/motorcycle clubs had 'meets'. Members questioned what Police interventions were taken when large groups of motor cyclists met at weekends. The Committee was advised that there were currently six specialist Police Officers that worked on a Sunday. A further nine officers would be allocated next year. Different roads had different danger characteristics; so there was a mixed approach to law enforcement. The range of interventions where as follows:

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- Police officers positioning refreshment pit stops along weekend leisure routes where they could offer refreshments and engage with and provide road safety education to riders.
- Giving the rider the opportunity to join the Advanced Training and Ride Schemes rather than being prosecuted for an offence. There had been 100 riders on the Bike Safe Scheme this year. Police had set a target of 500 riders for next year.
- A mixture of education and road engineering, (i.e., the introduction of double white lines on Kitts Hill, Lower Burnham Road, had dramatically improved the safety position).
- Positive law enforcement where an offence had been committed.
- Targeting areas where issues had been raised by residents and Parish Councils had led to a mixture of education and positive law enforcement in Leaden Roding. The success of this intervention had led to letters of congratulations being received from local residents.

Members questioned whether lower urban speed limits (40mph) should be introduced across districts such as Epping Forest, where KSIs remained high and also questioned whether setting lower speed limits for dangerous bends and setting a default speed of 50mph in rural areas would improve the situation. The Committee was advised that there had been a recent Government consultation on the speed strategy. Currently the Government was not taking forward any default figures. Essex County Council was currently reviewing its strategy on speed limits. Essex Police supported the introduction of a default 50mph speed limit in rural areas.

It was recognised that Essex had witnessed many problems with overseas drivers of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). Members questioned what interventions had been undertaken to tackle this issue. The Committee was advised that statistics from the Department for Transport had shown that there had been few incidents of KSIs involving these vehicles, but that when they did occur it invariably had major consequences. A recent collision on the M25 motorway had resulted in one death and the road being closed for eight hours. There was some weak foreign legislation regarding the safety of vehicles. To ensure that vehicles were road worthy and that drivers were acting responsibly a monthly multi agency operation called Operation Mermaid targeted these vehicles. Police vehicles would escort the vehicles to a nearby roadway service station where a significant number of safety checks could be undertaken safely. This had been a particularly successful approach with significant fixed penalty notices being issued and in some cases vehicles being taken off the road. Essex Police had expressed alarm at the number of hours some drivers had undertaken without rest. It was not unusual to find that a driver had not had a rest within the previous 48 hours and in some cases, such as the incident on the M11 in 2001, the Driver from Germany had not slept properly for seven days. In all cases involving driver hours the



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drivers were fined and lorries were clamped until the driver had rested properly. So far there had been 350 drivers issued with fines for this offence. Other offences included poor vehicle maintenance in general and, in some cases, lorries with no brakes.

A new initiative where 40 police officers would be able to issue 'on the spot' fines and collect money from drivers from foreign countries or drivers with no fixed abode was to come into force next year was outlined to Members. Members raised concern that this approach, whereby police officers could collect money, could be open to abuse and 'scams' at the roadside. The Chairman agreed to raise the matter at the Police Authority.

Members suggested that the matter of HGVs could be a possible future item for the Committees work plan.

It was recognised that there was an equal (50/50) ratio of blame where motor cycles had collided with cars. Members questioned why advertising campaigns seemed to be directed at car owners. The Committee was advised that television advertising was Government funded and driven. The Transport for London publicity on motor cycle driver's behaviour had been considered as being very beneficial. Locally there was publicity on a county based level also targeted at motor cycle behaviour and the skills of moped users. Driver campaigns had also been undertaken by Essex County Council via local radio.

Members asked whether raising the minimum age limit for those applying for motor cycle licences would be beneficial. The Committee was advised that maturity played a part in determining the age limit. Raising the age limit did not automatically raise the level of the rider's maturity. Personal engagement with young riders was considered to be key intervention. There was currently a local schools training scheme where adult or young riders were given a half day riding experience and given information about the need to wear protective clothing.

Members asked whether it would be beneficial for long term motorcycle licence holders to be retested before being able to continue to ride. The Committee was advised that these riders would benefit from attending a Bike Safe Scheme; however the process would be difficult to administer and it was not mandatory at present.

It was acknowledged that the introduction of average speed cameras on some roads had resulted in the reduction of road accidents. Members questioned whether motor cycle number plates could be recognised by the cameras. The Committee was advised that current camera systems did not capture rear facing views and, as such, number plates on motor cycles could not be captured. New technology would be available shortly which would change the situation.

Members questioned whether motor cycle manufacturers should be permitted to produce motor bikes that could travel at excessive speeds. The Committee

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was advised that it was recognised that speed limits would vary in other countries. In the UK legislation would be required to change this situation. However, it was considered that it was the way the motor cycle was driven rather than the speed which caused most problems.

With regard to questions regarding the involvement of the Essex Fire and Rescue Service the Committee was advised as follows:-

The Essex Fire and Rescue Service was ideally placed to give out key road safety messages to young people. Currently there were two partnership funded community projects undertaken by the Service, as follows:

- The Community Wheels Project

This Project engaged with people about their local areas. Using a core set of data and local maps, key educational and awareness information was delivered to young people via 51 sites across the county. The aim of the project was to impact on young riders' behaviour. It was acknowledged that to change a culture was a long term matter. The Young Essex Assembly was involved in the project as 'road safety champions'. It was considered that peer pressure amongst young people was a positive influence, especially after collisions had occurred.

- The Fire Bike Project

The project had undertaken 34 events that had engaged 3,000 riders. Currently one fire bike was in operation. The bike raised interest from other riders. Once engaged the riders would be given road safety information. The introduction of a second Fire Bike was currently being investigated.

Members commented on the need for young people to use mopeds and scooters as a form of transport to college and questioned what training was given to these young riders. The Committee was advised that work was undertaken with all schools and colleges as these establishments had a duty of care to those riding two wheeled motor vehicles on their sites. For that reason, Road Safety Officers undertook Bike Safe Younger Rider Training days. The riders needed to pass a test before they could enter the educational sites. The extension of the scheme to younger than college age riders was being considered. More could be done however, as the scheme was competing against many other priorities of the educational timetable. The Fire Service commended the road safety officers involved in this work.

In conclusion to questions from Members, each member of the panel was asked to summarise what they considered had worked well and what had worked not so well.

**Rosemary Welch** summed up representing the Essex County Council. The Committee was advised that it was acknowledged that work undertaken in the areas of education, community engagement and publicity had led to successful outcomes. There had been an increase in partnership resources.

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Initially there had been 25 people involved in delivering the strategy. There were now 1,500 fire service officers and 300 police officers which could give out key messages and deliver key packages. The Casualty Reduction Board Motor Cycle Strategy was to be reviewed. Key initiatives to be implemented during 2010/2011 would stress the importance of motor cycle training.

**Adam Pipe and Mike Green** representing Essex Police Force advised the Committee that the Department for Transport (DfT) had complimented the Casualty Reduction Board upon its partnership working. Southend on Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Borough Council were now getting involved in partnership working. The Board met on a fortnightly basis to move work forward and to quickly pick up any emerging trends. The importance of getting the message across to the public was recognised.

Currently there were five police traffic bases and Unit Commanders decided how local road safety campaigns should be undertaken. It would be more beneficial to have a cohesive strategy across the whole of Essex Police Force.

**Paul Bowers** representing the Essex Fire and Rescue Service advised the Committee that the Service was now heavily involved in casualty reduction. The Casualty Reduction Board and excellent partnership working had played an important role. Currently there were 51 sites in the community which delivered key messages to change cultural behaviour. A note of caution was given to Members that as number of casualties reduced there would be a reduction in funding. This could be an issue in the future.

The Chairman thanked the panel members for attending the Committee to give presentations and answering questions from Members.

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ANNEX C

#### **Two Wheeler Road Safety: Discussion session held on 15 January 010**

The Chairman reported on his attendance at a recent National Road Safety Conference. A note of the main issues discussed was circulated at the meeting. The main points were

- In general there needed to be more police officers on the roads

The problem with the number of KSIs in the over 40 year old rider's category was recognised as being related to:

- This category of rider usually rode larger more powerful motor bikes
- Some riders had no instruction
- Most had a false sense of security whereby believing that they were safe drivers.

With regard to the smaller population of younger riders category the problem with the number of KSIs was recognised as being related to:

- The need to impress their peer groups

Members questioned whether there should be national legislation to prevent manufacturers producing motor cycles that could reach speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour. It was noted that European legislation had not prevented the production of 'super bikes'. Members suggested that there should be national legislation to allow the fitting of speed restriction devices.

The use of Internet advertising to promote illegally organised motorbike scrambles and meetings of 'off road' motorbikes was discussed. A number of examples where this had taken place on Canvey Island and how it had been addressed by police positive enforcement, introducing a 50 mile per hour speed limits and by closing off lay-by meeting places, were outlined to Members. The effects upon wildlife from off road bikes being used on open 'public' land, was raised by Members. The Committee was advised that the matter had been recognised by the Natural England organisation. The problem of off road bikes being used on the roads in and around the Harlow area was also discussed.

Members raised concerns that these types of off road bikes did not meet the legal standards to be driven on the highway. It was recognised that in some cases parents purchased 'off road bikes' for their youngsters. The tragic case whereby children had been accidentally killed whilst riding off road bikes during an outing with their parents was cited as a point in case. Although it was recognised that most sellers were reputable and authorised, Members raised concerns that there was a potential for these vehicles to be sold in large numbers. In particular Members were concerned that some sellers advertised on the internet and set up a temporary business accommodation,

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leaving no avenue for inspection by statutory bodies or parental redress. The need for parent education was suggested.

Members questioned the role of Trading Standards in this matter and suggested that the final road safety scrutiny report, which would highlight key issues, should be forwarded to them.

Members recognised the need for young people to encounter a certain 'controlled' amount of danger in order to gain 'life skills. A balance between being over cautious and allowing young people pleasure in riding motor cycles of all kinds needed to be found. The benefits of introducing a recognised scheme to train young 'mini bike 'riders at the earliest possible age was briefly discussed.

Moving through the first draft report, Members again discussed the places where it was known that motor cycle riders frequently visited in large numbers. Members again noted what preventative measures were in place. Whilst commending the actions already taken, Members concluded that the introduction of a lower speed limit on local unrestricted roads surrounding the 'troubled areas' could only be beneficial.

A problem with large numbers of riders meeting in High Beech in Epping Forrest district (not included in the draft report), was highlighted to the Committee. The Committee was advised that up to 200 motor cycle riders regularly met on Sundays at the 'Hut' Royal Oak. The venue was considered to have a nostalgic appeal especially to older riders as it was close to the oldest speedway motorcycle track in the UK. The main problem was that riders, as a tradition, seemed to consider that the local roads were also a race track. Concern was raised that the police were aware of the riders but there appeared to be no police engagement with riders or positive law enforcement. Members questioned why, when these meetings were widely known locally, there could not be a police presence in identified motor cycle meeting days. It was suggested that the matter be raised at a future meeting of the West Essex Area Forum.

It was noted that both High Beech and the Epping forest were very close to the Metropolitan Police area. Members considered that a more co-ordinated, systematic cross border policing approach was required.

Councillor Pond advised the Committee that meetings between the Essex County Council and the Corporation of London were currently ongoing. In future Councillor Webster would be invited to attend the meetings.

The matter of noise created by large gatherings of motor cycles was discussed, Members wondered if manufacturers could be lobbied by environmental health officers to introduce quieter machines or at least exhaust pipes.

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With regard to an Essex wide co-ordinated approach to dealing with this road safety issue, Members suggested that meetings should be held with appropriate Members and officers from the Essex Unitary Authorities.

The conservation of ancient woodland meant it was not viable to fell ancient trees to create a 'safe buffer' zone between the roadside. The trees alongside the smaller roads within 10,000 acres of the Epping forest was again discussed. Members concluded that the introduction of a lower (40 miles per hour) speed limit in these areas would be beneficial.

Members updated the Committee regarding any local visits which they had undertaken related to the road safety issues since the November Committee meeting. It was noted that some planned visits by Members had not proceeded due to the exceptionally bad weather.

Councillor Walsh advised the Committee that there was to be a Road Safety GB Powered Two Wheeled Seminar which was to be held on Wednesday 3 February 2010. Members should advise Graham Redgwell by Tuesday 19 January should they wish to attend.

As a related matter, and in particular because of the current exceptionally bad weather (deep and prolonged snow), a Member highlighted to the Committee the need to quickly report pot holes and ruts in the road to the Highways Department. A Members recent experience had shown that the Highways Department had acted very quickly to repair the road surface, particularly if the damage was deemed to be a danger to motor cycle users.

Members requested information regarding the number of people undertaking motor cycle training schemes.

Members continued to have concerns regarding the proposed scheme whereby police officers could enforce and collect money from the public in the way of on the spot fines. It was suggested that the Chief Constable of the Essex Police Force be invited to explain the scheme. Graham Redgwell advised the Committee that this action would be captured in the recommendations of the final report, when it would be requested that the Chief Constable attend to answer questions on road safety and other related matters.

Members were also asked to consider whether any further witnesses needed to be heard before the Committee formed its recommendations for the Cabinet Member and drafting its final report. It was agreed that no further witnesses were required and that an updated final report should be considered at the next meeting.