

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES  
POLICY & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, ON  
20 NOVEMBER 2009**

**Membership**

Councillors:-

D. Abrahall	* J. Knapman
* K. Bentley	* D. Morris (substitute for D Abrahall)
* J. Deakin	* C. Pond (Vice-Chairman)
* M. Fisher	M. Skeels
* M. Garnett	* S. Walsh (Chairman)
R. Howard	* L. Webster

(\* present)

The following officers were in attendance throughout the meeting:-

Graham Redgwell Governance Officer  
Janet Mills Committee Officer

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am

**52. Apologies and Substitutions**

The Committee Officer reported apologies and substitution notices as follows:

Apology	Substitution
Councillor D. Abrahall	Councillor D. Morris
Councillor M. Skeels	

**53. Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were recorded

Member	Personal Interest as:
Councillor S Walsh	Member of the Police Authority
Councillor M Fisher	Member of the Police Authority
Councillor K Bentley	Member of the Fire Authority
Councillor J Knapman	Member of the Fire Authority
Councillor D Morris	Member of the Fire Authority
Councillor E Webster	Member of the Fire Authority

**54. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**55. Matters Arising**

With regard to the Street Lighting Scrutiny, the Chairman commended the officers for producing a full set of very detailed minutes on what was considered to be a lengthy and very complex scrutiny. The Chairman wished to record a note of thanks to the officers for their thorough work and attention to detail.

Graham Redgwell, Governance Officer, advised the Committee that a number of witnesses wished to pass on their thanks to Members for being given the opportunity to present their views. Some witnesses wished to record that although the outcome may not have been how they had wished it to be they found presenting information to the Committee a positive experience.

The Chairman gave a note of thanks to Councillor C. Pond for his exemplary Chairmanship and for producing such a balanced report which had now been sent to the Cabinet Member.

**56. Two Wheeler Road Safety****Introduction**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Committee and outlined the order of business for the meeting. The Committee was advised that two Essex County Council Officers would be giving presentations to the Committee and would be later joined by officers of the emergency services involved in the Casualty Reduction Board, to form a panel of witnesses that would answer Members questions.

**Witness Session**

The Committee received background reports, a briefing report SSC/12/09 and brief presentations from Rosemary Welch, Network Safety Manager and Helen Baggett Road Safety Data Analyst.

**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 the 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 ECC, the Police, Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance Service and Highways Agency.

A Casualty Reduction Board Strategy for the period 2007/2011, which included motor cycles, had been introduced. This superseded the Essex County Councils 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:

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 3 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 offender. 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:

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 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 sub divided into Young moped/scooter (inexperienced riders)

Other riders on a weekday commute to work, 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 year 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 risk 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, 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.

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 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; Gt. 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. (Circulated subsequently. Governance Officer)

**Witness Panel Mike Green and Mr. Adam Pipe Essex Police Force and Mr. Paul Bowers from Essex Fire and Rescue Service, Helen Baggett and Rosemary Welch**

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 Members 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 which takes priority, the same rules applied to motor bikes.

Members questioned the design of roundabouts. Some seemed to be particularly dangerous for 2 wheeled vehicles, especially if the rider had to cross over lanes so as to take right hand exits. The Committee was advised 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 any rider,

having had no experience, 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 cycles met at weekends. The Committee was advised that there were currently 6 specialist Police Officers that worked on a Sunday. A further 9 officers would be allocated next year. Different roads had different danger characteristics; there was a mixed approach to law enforcement. The range of interventions were as follows:

- 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 (HGV). Members questioned what interventions had been undertaken to tackle this issue.

The Committee was advised that statistics from the Department of Transport had shown that there had been few incidents of KSIs involving these vehicles but when it 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 8 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 various checks could be undertaken safely. This had been a particularly successful approach with significant fixed

penalty notices being issued and in some cases vehicles 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 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 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 next meeting of 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; 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 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 Essex Fire and Rescue Service these were as follows:

- The Community Wheels Project.

The Wheels 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 Essex Youth 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 scooter as a form of transport to colleges 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 2 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, the scheme was competing against many other priorities of the educational timetable. The Fire Service commended the road safety officers involved.

In conclusion to questions from Members 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. Initially there had been 25 people involved in delivering the strategy. There were now 1,500 fire brigade 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 in summary advised the Committee that the Department of 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.

## **57. The Way Forward**

Members discussed how they would wish to take this scrutiny forward. It was agreed that visits to the following places would form the basis of further consideration.

- Local motor cycle clubs to gain riders point of view
- Motor cycle training facility
- Motor cycle retailer
- Essex Fire and Rescue community project
- Essex Police training facility

Members also requested that the following information be provided for consideration.

- The views of the RAC and AA
- The Epping Forest Strategy Document
- Statistics showing European motor cycle KS1 rates.
- Analysis of Road Collisions and Casualties in the District of Epping Forest

It was further agreed that the next Committee meeting would be used to consolidate findings and formulate recommendations to be forwarded to the Cabinet Member. (Graham Redgwell advised that the Heritage scoping document would also be available in January for consideration of Members).

**58. Date of Next Meeting**

Members confirmed the date and time of the next scheduled meeting as being Friday 11 December. Members noted they would be advised shortly regarding venues and times of visits. (NB: this meeting was subsequently cancelled-Governance Officer)

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.10

Chairman