

AGENDA ITEM 5	
SSC/16/11	
Committee:	Safer and Stronger Communities Committee
Date:	9 September 2011
Scrutiny Review on Two Wheeler Road Safety (Minute 11/February and 33/ July 2011)	
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In July 2011 (Minute 33) the Committee considered a report on the responses received as a part of the monitoring of the twenty-four recommendations set out in its formal Scrutiny Report on Two Wheeler Road Safety (dated February 2010).

Following that meeting a final draft scrutiny report has been prepared for this Committee's approval, which seeks to present the outcomes of the review in a stand alone document for publication. It also aims to draw that particular review to a conclusion. As this Committee is now a Task and Finish Group of the Economic Development, Environment and Highways Policy and Scrutiny Committee, the final report will have to be forwarded to that Committee for its endorsement.

Action required by the Committee:

The Committee is requested to consider its agreement to the final monitoring report on Two Wheeler Road Safety for forwarding to the Economic Development, Environment and Highways Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

Scrutiny

Improving Public Services

TWO WHEELER ROAD SAFETY

Final Monitoring Report of the
Safer, Stronger Communities
Policy & Scrutiny Committee

July 2011



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GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY	
ECRB	Essex Casualty Reduction Board
DART	Scheme encouraging purchasers of motorbikes to join an Advanced Training Scheme at no cost
DfT	Department for Transport
KSI	Those killed or seriously injured
SMIDSY	Collision with a motor cyclist where the car driver has not seen the bike (“sorry mate I didn’t see you”)
SSCPSC	Safer and Stronger Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
VOSA	The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency

Summary of the outcomes of the original Scrutiny Report on Two Wheeler Road Safety

In February 2010 (Minute 11) the former Safer and Stronger Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee (SSCPSC) agreed its scrutiny report on Two Wheeler Road Safety, which included twenty-four recommendations. The review had been initiated as a result of the Committee's wish to consider one particular aspect of road safety in depth. Given that nationally motor cyclists make up just 1% of road users but 20% of traffic related fatalities, the Committee decided to focus upon two wheeler road safety in Essex.

In his preface to the original scrutiny report (dated March 2010) Councillor Walsh, the Chairman, reflected that:

'Two Wheeler road safety in Essex has been an issue for Councils, the Emergency Services, other road users, the general public and the motor cycle riding community for a number of years.

Despite a series of initiatives, the casualty rates have remained static, at a level that is too high. This scrutiny sought to investigate how the various agencies in Essex, particularly the road safety partnership known as the Casualty Reduction Board, have tried to deal with the situation.

Through witness sessions and by other research, the Committee was pleased to learn that a great number of initiatives are already in place and have had some success. However, from our evidence gathering, and mindful of the Essex casualty rates, we have made 24 recommendations, some of which are general and others specific to various agencies.

The Committee hopes that, if adopted, these recommendations will make a positive contribution to reducing accidents and casualties amongst the motorised Two Wheeler riding community.'

An integral part of ensuring the effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny processes is to monitor what outcomes are achieved in practice as the result of a Committee's scrutiny review. To this end the Safer and Stronger Communities Committee (as a Task and Finish Group of the new Economic Development, Environment and Highways Policy and Scrutiny Committee) undertook the task of finding out what progress had been made over the past year towards reducing motorcycle accidents and casualties, and what reaction had occurred in relation to the individual recommendations it had made last year.

At its meeting on 15 July 2011 (Minute 33) the Committee received a report setting out some of the activity that has taken place over the past year together with information relating to the individual recommendations.

The Committee considered report SSC/12/11 that had been collated on the large number of individual recommendations that had been made, and invited Nicola

Foster, Group Manager Road Safety, (County Council's Highways Service) to update it on the issues covered in the original Scrutiny Report.

It was noted that the Scrutiny Report and a substantial part of the update report had been considered by the Essex Casualty Reduction Board (ECRB) at its meeting in May. The ECRB is a high-level performance management board that oversees the performance against the relating to casualty reduction. It meets quarterly.

Membership of the Board comprises a member and / or lead officer from each of the core partner organisations. The core partner organisations currently include:

- Essex County Council
- Essex Police
- Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
- East of England Ambulance Service
- The Highways Agency

The Board's function is to provide broad strategic direction and support to the groups that implement and deliver the strategies of the Board. These include the KSI Project Management Team, the Safety Camera Working Group and the Essex ITS. Further information about the Board may be found on its website.

Since the 1994-98 baseline was set for the 2010 KSI (Those killed or seriously injured) reduction target, the annual number of P2W KSI casualties in Essex has been consistently high and above target. Although the provisional out-turn of P2W KSI casualties for 2010 was 18% below the annual average for the baseline period (1994-98), it is above the target by 45 KSI casualties.

Overall, trends pertaining to motorcycle crashes in Essex over the past 2 years in Essex remain unchanged to those identified in 'Audit of Personal Injury Collisions involving Motorcyclists in Essex: 2006 to 2008', and are in line with national trends.

The Government has issued its casualty reduction targets, which represent 20% reduction in KSI by 2020.

Following the Highways Service Transformation restructure of road safety, the Road Safety Team has been reorganised to facilitate the countywide delivery of the road safety service. Therefore its work will be more data led that will enhance the targeting of resources to those areas where they are needed to address problems.

As the Fire Service and Police are being restructured at the moment, there is not a clear picture of the staff resource available to road safety as a part of the Road Safety Partnership.

Although the Department for Transport (DfT) road safety grant for safety cameras is no longer available, the income from driver and rider awareness courses should provide the majority of income required to support the fixed site safety camera operation. The remainder will be taken from the budget that has been allocated to the ECRB. For 2011-12, there are no financial threats to the delivery of the road safety service.

In response to the individual recommendations set out in the Safer and Stronger Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee's Scrutiny Report 'Two Wheeler Road Safety', the following information is provided on the activity that has taken place since that Report was published in March 2010.

- **Recommendation 1**
to the Essex Casualty Reduction Board (ECRB)

That the cross agency approach be supported as the most effective way of handling this issue.

The Committee was reassured that there is a cross agency approach to two wheeler road safety.

The ECRB reviews data and monitors targets on a quarterly basis. Various meetings (including Warplan and Battle Plan meetings) are held on a regular basis between the partner organisations to co-ordinate the delivery of strategic partnership plans designed to improve motorcycle road safety. It was confirmed that the Partners are in the process of drafting a joint Road Safety Strategy that will include a motorcycling strategy and activities to reduce motorcycling KSIs. It is hoped that the Strategy will be in place by February 2012.

- **Recommendation 2**
to the Essex Casualty Reduction Board

That the level of proactive work being undertaken 'on the ground' by all agencies be welcomed and supported.

Since the original review, the Committee noted that the proactive approach it had witnessed previously was a continuing feature of the ECRB approach. Activities include Bikesafe (a police rider training programme); Pit Stop Days (Police stop riders at road side where they are invited to discuss safety issues and have an assessed ride); Scooter Skills Days and Scooter Pit Stops in urban areas; attendance at Motorcycle events such as Battlesbridge Classic Bike show, Fire Bike (attendance at 65 events and engaged with 7,700 users).

The County Council is also preparing an engineering report on passive safety. It is intended that Motorcycling Warplan will examine how passive safety may be translated into action on the roads (e.g adaptation of structures/sign posts/road environment to offer protection to road users).

- **Recommendation 3**
to the Cabinet Member for Education/ Head of Training Standards/ Retail outlets
NB it has been established that the proper Cabinet Member for this recommendation is the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation.

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.

Bike Safe courses are in fact a Police initiative, while the Roadrunner programme is led by the Highways Authority. However, all partners take any opportunities that may arise to promote and support each others' initiatives.

- **Recommendation 4**
to the Cabinet Member for Highways/ Highways Agency

That Essex County Council and, where appropriate, the Highways Agency, should be encouraged to introduce state of the art speed camera technology for use on Essex roads as soon as resources permit.

While the Committee wanted to encourage the introduction of speed camera technology, it was acknowledged that the present financial conditions will make progress more difficult.

Rear facing cameras are an option where a reduction in motorcycling casualties is of prime importance, and the Committee was advised that the Highways Authority was intending to put a case forward for introducing such cameras on the A127.

- **Recommendation 5**
to the Government

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.

It was confirmed that Partners would consider whether or not to support this view when any opportunities may arise.

- **Recommendation 6**
to the Essex Casualty Reduction Board

That the Essex Casualty Reduction Board be invited to update and republish the Essex Two Wheeler Strategy.

It was confirmed that activity was already underway to update the Road Safety Strategy by February 2012, including a Two Wheeler Strategy.

- **Recommendation 7**
to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

That the County Council incorporates the lessons learned from a review of the data analysis into the Speed Strategy, which it will be preparing in 2010.

It was confirmed that accident data was not necessary for the review of speed limits in order to determine whether or not a speed limit is an appropriate intervention to reduce specific user group KSIs.

- **Recommendation 8**
to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

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.

The imposition of speed limits had already happened on some of routes with high rates of motorcycling KSIs such as the B1022, and B184 that now have 50mph limits. These roads are policed on a regular basis and also subject to other interventions. Speed limits have also been imposed as part of the Epping Forest Strategy on the A104, A121, B172 and B1393. Shiny side up signs also support work on KSI routes.

‘Where You Look Is Where You Go’ (WYLIWYG) verge marker treatment has been completed on the B1057 for the 2011 motorcycling season. If speed limits are deemed to be an appropriate engineering intervention on motorcycle KSI routes they will be identified through the Safer Roads programme and implemented accordingly.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful for individual Members to receive statistical data on the impact of the speed restrictions when they have been in place for more than six months.

- **Recommendation 9**
to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

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.

The Department of Transport (DfT) ‘My name is Tom’ campaign for motorcyclists last year highlighted their vulnerability and raised driver awareness.

It was confirmed that the needs of motor cyclists are taken into account when changes are made to road layouts in Essex as well as current standards and best practice.

The process of mounting Shiny Side Up signs will provide opportunities to check for potential visibility issues on routes with high motor cycling KSIs.

- **Recommendation 10**

to the Cabinet Member for Education/ Principals of Essex Colleges

NB it has been established that the proper Cabinet Member for this recommendation is the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation.

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.

The thrust of the recommendation to encourage educational establishments to require training of new motor cyclists was noted.

The County Council will continue to promote scooter days at colleges (rider training and safety discussions for those using mopeds/scooters to attend college). Furthermore the motorcycling 'Warplan' group is currently investigating new approaches to target young riders.

- **Recommendation 11**

to the Cabinet Member for Education

NB it has been established that the proper Cabinet Member for this recommendation is the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation.

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 schools' work on road safety issues generally.

It was noted that motorcycling is being considered as part of the delivery of the Road Runner initiative.

- **Recommendation 12**

to the Head of Trading Standards

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.

In view of the practical considerations associated with this recommendation, it was agreed that there is potential for the Trading Standards Service to work with other parties such as the Police and District Councils to run a campaign advising parents on restrictions on the use of off-road bikes.

- **Recommendation 13**

to the Chief Constable

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.

Essex Police already operates in such a manner, which has produced positive results. Operation PETREL was cited as an example; and R v SUDBURY highlights a successful prosecution where the Crown Court imposed a severe penalty for Dangerous Riding following a KSI P2W collision on the A131.

- **Recommendation 14**
to the Chief Constable

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.

Essex Police has primary responsibility for Epping Forest District, and it deploys a number of staff each weekend to Epping Forest in response to P2W KSI activity in the area. KSI casualties have decreased with the forest area itself with additional attention paid to the A113 in particular and Theydon Bois. The importance of keeping all relevant parties fully informed of each others' actions was noted.

- **Recommendation 15**
to the Epping Forest conservators/ Cabinet Member for Highways

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 of secondary growth at known accident black spots. Speed limits with average speed camera surveillance were the only viable alternative.

It was noted that requests would be made to the Epping Forest Conservators for the selective cutting back of secondary growth when the relevant site visits by Highways Officers had been made.

- **Recommendation 16**
to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

That the Cabinet Member for 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 (a) consider how such use might be controlled; and (b) whether any sites could possibly be designated for off-road use.

While the Cabinet Member had been made aware of the recommendation, the Committee had received no information in respect of the damage to flora and fauna by off-road vehicles.

- **Recommendation 17**
to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

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.

It was confirmed that these issues are often dealt with through the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) workstream involving a PRoW enforcement officer or Police Wildlife Liaison Officer.

The Trading Standards Service has advised that Harlow District Council's Community Safety Team has been successful in running "Catch & Crush" projects to seize and destroy equipment from frequent offenders.

- **Recommendation 18**
to VOSA (Vehicle Operators Service Agency)

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.

In response VOSA has confirmed that it has no mandate or equipment to carry out such checks.

- **Recommendation 19**
to the Chairman of the Committee

That the Committee should add a scrutiny of road safety issues in relation to Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) to its Forward Look.

- **Recommendation 20**
to the Chief Constable

That the objectives of the Police operation on the A12 – Operation Mermaid – be supported.

- **Recommendation 21**
to the Chief Constable

That the Chief Constable be asked whether it would be possible for Members to have the opportunity to see Operation Mermaid in action.

Response to recommendations 19, 20 and 21 above

Operation Mermaid is a nationwide policing initiative to take dangerous vehicles off the road, and in Essex it has proven to be a very successful operation.

In May 2010 the Committee had undertaken a visit to meet with police officers, revenue and customs officers engaged in Operation Mermaid at the Boreham Interchange on the A12 dual carriageway. There was a briefing as to how the process worked, prior to witnessing police officers carrying out vehicle and driver checks, interpreting tachographs, and undertaking follow up action.

Members were advised that vehicles were selected from the main carriageway based on intelligence, past experience, vehicle condition or loads carried. A police motorcyclist would escort the selected vehicle to the lorry park where it was recorded, and allocated a parking bay. A police officer would then engage with the driver to check the hours driven from the tachograph to establish the travel pattern of that driver. Any discrepancies would be dealt with and, depending on its seriousness, a driver might have to have an enforced stop, a fixed penalty notice or further processing through the legal system. Vehicle condition was examined and again if faults were found they would be dealt with appropriately. These checks were thorough and conducted by experienced traffic officers.

On the day Revenue and Customs Officers were taking part in the exercise as one of the partner agencies involved in Operation Mermaid. These Officers were checking upon trading activities. Other partners include the Border Agency, Trading Standards, and VOSA (Vehicle Operators Service Agency).

Those Members who had taken part in the Operation Mermaid visit concluded that it had been very informative providing them with an important insight as to how measures are in place to ensure our roads are kept safe for all users.

- **Recommendation 22**
to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

That the County Council always bear in mind the particular dangers caused to motor cyclists by leaving potholes unrepaired.

The Highway Maintenance Strategy has clear response times to defects and takes into account the vulnerability of motorcyclists when assessing priorities.

- **Recommendation 23**
to the Chief Constable

That the Chief Constable's views are sought on the intended operation of the scheme and for advice on how the Committee's concerns can be alleviated.

On the imposition of roadside fines, the Committee noted the limited scope of the Police powers in this matter.

Road Side Deposits are now taken by Roads Policing officers from those persons who do not reside in the UK or are of no fixed abode and relate to ALL Road Traffic offences. In the main this practice is primarily used in support of commercial vehicle operations where multiple driver's hours and mechanical offences are identified with driver(s) having to deposit a fixed sum prior to leaving the location. Failure to pay often results in the clamping of their vehicle until such time as payment has been made. At present there is no suggestion of rolling out to all officers within the force.

- **Recommendation 24**

to Southend on Sea Borough Council/Thurrock Council/ Transport for London/ London Boroughs adjoining Essex.

That the Committee's report is forwarded to those councils for information and that they, along with other neighbouring authorities such as Transport for London, are encouraged to act jointly with the Essex County Council and the Essex Casualty Reduction Board on any initiatives.

The Committee noted the County Council's efforts to work with Southend and Thurrock Unitary Councils, and the Metropolitan Police.

Conclusions

In conclusion the Committee noted the replies it had received to the recommendations it had made as a result of its original scrutiny review on Two Wheeler Road Safety.

In June 2011 the Committee had become a time limited Task and Finish Group of the Economic Development, Environment and Highways Policy and Scrutiny Committee, and therefore this monitoring report was commended to its parent Committee for its endorsement. While it was likely that the Committee would no longer exist in July 2012, its membership did consider that it would be useful to keep all County Councillors updated on two wheeler road safety issues.