

From: Tim Read – Head of Transportation
To: Swale Joint Transportation Board
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Subject: **Road Safety Policies, Casualty Trends and Actions in Kent and Swale**
Classification: **For Information**

Summary: The number of road casualties in Kent and Swale has been increasing in line with a national trend. This paper updates Members on road safety policies, casualty trends and the actions being undertaken to improve road safety for Swale residents.

1. Introduction & Background

- 1.1 Keeping our roads as safe as they can be and tackling death and injury is a key priority for KCC, both in respect of a duty, to promote road safety and act to reduce the likelihood of road casualties from occurring (Section 39, Road Traffic Act 1988), as well as a moral and a financial imperative, particularly in respect of preventing long term disability and ill health.
- 1.2 In Kent the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road crashes fell by 50% between 2000 and 2010. Whilst the long term trend is down, in recent years the number of casualties has been increasing. In 2014 there was an 11% increase over the KSI figures for 2013 on roads in Kent including those managed by Highways England. On roads in Swale, 6 people died and 56 people were seriously injured in 2014, which represents a 35% increase in KSI casualties over the figures for 2013. A full review of road casualty trends in Kent, including information specific to Swale, is published on the County Council's web site at www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-safety.
- 1.3 The increase appears to be part of a wider national trend. Research by the Department for Transport implicates weather conditions and higher traffic flows for part of the increase. Our own research of the police records, alongside other data sources, is now being used to inform interventions for the coming year. This report outlines the key actions being taken over the coming year by the County Council.

3. The Kent Casualty Reduction Strategy

- 3.1 In order to press down on road casualties and improve road safety, the County Council has produced a new Road Casualty Reduction Strategy. The Strategy was approved following a report to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 24 April 2014 (Item B1) and we are now in the first full year of implementing the projects and interventions set out in the delivery

action plan. The Strategy and its latest action plan are published on the County Council's web site at www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-safety.

3.2 The Strategy looks to draw on a wider range of data to better define risk, and to use this to refocus the type and location of interventions in line with a 'safer systems' approach which is recognised as good practice at the national and international level. Safer Systems recognises the interplay between causation factors and targets interventions to reduce the potential for a collision as well as the severity of the consequences. The Strategy also highlights the need to better integrate education, enforcement and engineering measures, and to improve how we engage with our partners and stakeholders. Over the past year ongoing projects have included:

- Piloting of a 'damage only' crashes database where evidence of crashes can be entered on a county database by the public. This will be used by engineers alongside casualty data to identify casualty reduction measures (CRM). It is planned to launch a county wide system in early 2016.
- Trialling of a new road risk assessment tool will be carried out alongside the annual crash rate analysis to identify whether this methodology can improve our existing assessments. If successful, the tool will identify features (road side furniture, signs, lines, surfacing) which can be modified/ taken out/ improved to reduce the severity in the event of a crash. This information will then be used to potentially improve routes considered in the 2016/17 CRM programme.
- The upgrading of existing safety camera sites from wet film to digital operation was approved following a report to KCC's Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee on 17 September 2014. Following the subsequent approval at Procurement Board, a tender has been issued and, subject to the outcome, sites will begin to be upgraded in 2016. There are 8 fixed and 5 mobile sites in Swale district.
- Delivery of the Driver Diversionary Scheme programme including National Speed Awareness and What's Driving Us courses on behalf of Kent Police. In the current financial year to 31 October 2015, 1,505 people with Swale district postcodes (ME 9-13 inclusive) attended and completed these courses in Kent.
- Further educational and awareness raising measures, including an additional *Licence to Kill* venue for students in years 12-13 (5 Swale secondary schools attended performances this year) and a range of campaigns from mobile phones to drug driving, to address emerging trends in data for *at risk* groups such as young drivers and vulnerable road users as well as a new all-encompassing *Share the Road* campaign see www.kentroadsafety.info/.
- Launching of a new road safety web resource for parents and primary schools www.kentchildlife.com. Additionally, primary schools in the District benefitted from road safety roadshows; 22 schools received the Smart Brothers road safety show and a two week tour in Sittingbourne (20 schools) has just ended of the *Be Bright Be Seen* road safety show. A *Good Egg* child car seat checking clinic was also provided in Sittingbourne.
- Outline design is progressing on the CRM programme and new cycle routes and 20mph zones where these schemes can encourage more walking and

cycling to contribute to wider public health outcomes. Queenborough and Halfway have been identified through ward level public health data, although most roads already have a 20mph limit. It is hoped that some 10 schemes will be implemented in 2016 countywide, subject to due process and further schemes will be progressed over the coming years.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Kent Casualty Reduction Strategy includes a set of measures, presented in a Delivery Action Plan, which represents a refocusing of existing budgets and staff resources. Whilst there are no additional pressures on current budgets as a consequence of this report it is important to note that the case for prioritising additional funding in future spending plans is strong, where this will most likely impact on reducing risk of future casualties. The established average cost of dealing with a fatal crash is £1.9m and the average cost of dealing with a crash involving injury is £75,000 (*Road Casualties Great Britain Annual, 2012*). These figures include the wider impact on the public purse, through the emergency services, the NHS and Kent County Council social services over the first 18 months.

5. The Strategic Statement and Corporate Objectives

- 5.1 Improving road safety and reducing road casualties is in line with the KCC Strategic Statement 2015-2020; specifically outcome 2: Kent Communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life. The relevant themes in the Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-2016 are '*a safer and healthier County*' and '*enjoying life in Kent*'. There are also links with the County Councils' Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2013) in respect of our wider public health objectives.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Death and injury on Kent's roads must continue to be tackled as effectively as possible by all agencies involved. Whilst the long term trend is down, the number of people killed and seriously injured in Swale and on Kent's roads has increased in recent years in line with national trends. The County Council has produced a Road Casualty Reduction Strategy which highlights the need to act to improve road safety and sets out a series of interventions to press down on the likelihood of casualties from occurring in the future including in Swale and for Swale residents. Over the coming year the County Council will continue to work closely with the District Council and other community safety partners to raise awareness of road safety in Swale.

7. Background Documents

- 7.1 Information about the national, Kent and Swale records of road casualties can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics

www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-safety/crash-and-casualty-data

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