

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**HIGHWAYS, PLANNING AND ENERGY
CABINET MEMBER**

**SAFER ROADS HUMBER - IMPLICATIONS OF CUTS IN ROAD SAFETY
FUNDING AND FUTURE STRATEGY**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet Member of the implications for Safer Roads Humber of in-year cuts in road safety funding.
- 1.2 To seek approval, in principle, for North Lincolnshire Council's continued commitment to Safer Roads Humber, subject to funding availability.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Following the government's recent announcement of in-year cuts in capital and revenue road safety grants, a report was presented to Cabinet on 21 July, advising members of these, and other, grant cuts.
- 2.2 The impact on road safety was two-fold. There was a 27% revenue cut in the Road Safety Grant (RSG), amounting to £95k, and a 100% cut in the capital, amounting to £80k.
- 2.3 Since the RSG funding mechanism was introduced, in 2007/08, it has been used to fund a wide range of road safety activity, principally through the sub-regional Safer Roads Humber (SRH) Partnership. The core operations of SRH are safety cameras, diversion schemes (speed seminars), road safety marketing and communications, data collection and analysis, research and development and road safety project work.
- 2.4 The RSG was originally guaranteed for four years (2007/8 to 2010/11 inclusive). Other than the recently announced in-year cut, there is no indication yet as to the future road safety funding intentions of the government. That should become clearer following the comprehensive spending review in the autumn.
- 2.5 In anticipation of any announcement, it would be helpful for SRH forward planning purposes, to have some indication, in principle, as to partners' future plans regarding road safety generally and where SRH

sits within those plans. There is currently uncertainty as to other SRH partners' future intentions.

- 2.6 SRH staff are currently developing options papers, to assist partner organisations with their forward planning. This information is expected to be available by the end of September, in time to build into the Strategic Review Task Group (SRTG) process.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 There are three options for consideration:

1. Agree, in principle, to continue with the current arrangements, as a formal partner in SRH, subject to funding availability
2. Give notice of our intention to withdraw from the formal Partnership but thereafter procure services from SRH on an 'as-needs' basis (subject to SRH remaining a going concern)
3. Give notice of our intention to withdraw from the SRH Partnership and thereafter invest the RSG funding in alternative road safety or other council initiatives, not involving SRH.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

General:

- 4.1 The principal issue, which will determine the nature of our on-going relationship with SRH, is whether or not North Lincolnshire Council wishes to continue supporting the use of safety cameras. If it does, it will be necessary to contribute funding to SRH for that purpose.
- 4.2 Safety cameras have been established in North Lincolnshire since 2003. During that period, there has been a 69% decrease in people killed or seriously injured (KSI) at safety camera sites. Seventy-seven fewer KSI's have occurred at these sites than if no intervention had taken place. Appendix A contains further details of the positive impact safety cameras have achieved in the area.
- 4.3 The level of service that SRH is able to provide in the future depends on its total revenue stream, which is made up of RSG contributions from the four local authorities and diversionary scheme operating surpluses provided by Humberside Police. The level of diversionary scheme activity is directly linked to the amount of enforcement that takes place.
- 4.4 SRH has brought significant added value and operational efficiencies to the delivery of road safety services in North Lincolnshire and throughout the Humber sub-region. For example, operating surpluses

generated from speed seminars are reinvested in local road safety initiatives.

- 4.5 Most importantly, SRH has contributed significantly to reducing road casualties in recent years. Removal of, or any significant reduction in, the services provided by SRH (especially safety cameras and diversionary schemes) could lead to a reversal in the current downward trend in road casualties in North Lincolnshire, unless that funding is re-invested in other, equally effective, road safety initiatives.
- 4.6 It should be noted that SRH has a minimum funding level, below which its continued operation would no longer be viable. Work is currently under way to establish that funding level. This will be the subject of a future report.

Option 1:

- 4.7 Subject to funding availability, Option 1 is the recommended option. It will enable North Lincolnshire to continue to benefit from the added value and cost-effective road safety services delivered through the SRH Partnership, as described above.
- 4.8 Future funding requirements and service levels will probably be below current levels, as the SRH operation is likely to be scaled back, in order to manage the in-year and any future budget reductions.
- 4.9 Previous RSG awards and allocations to SRH, are as follows:

	Grant (Revenue)	Allocated to SRH	Balance
2007/08	£349,934	£309,892	£40,042
2008/09	£341,202	£311,715	£29,487
2009/10	£363,256	£282,983	£80,273
2010/11	£262,590*	£205,725**	£56,865

* 2010/11 grant is net of the £95,000 in-year cut to RSG

** Revised down from £280,153, following in-year cuts review

Balances were retained by North Lincolnshire Council and used to fund additional road safety work. For example, purchasing new flashing signs for the speed management strategy.

- 4.10 North Lincolnshire's ability to continue funding SRH operations will depend on future levels of RSG (or other road safety funding) from central government. Details of this will hopefully become clearer following the autumn comprehensive spending review. It will also depend on other partners' SRH funding decisions.

Option 2:

- 4.11 Option 2 will still enable the council to utilise SRH services, but on an 'as-needs' basis. This arrangement would mean the council losing any rights in the management of SRH, as it would no longer be a formal partner.
- 4.12 The unit costs of procured services would probably be higher than at present, due to the increased risk to SRH, and its remaining partners, of North Lincolnshire not being a formal partner.
- 4.13 This option would provide more flexibility in the delivery of road safety services, with RSG funding being available for investment in other road safety initiatives, outside the current scope of SRH operations.

Option 3:

- 4.14 Option 3 would effectively mean the end of police enforcement at the twenty-one core safety camera sites in North Lincolnshire and also the other, non-core sites that have been established (see Appendix A). These include some of the North Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership's speed management strategy sites, which SRH officers currently enforce.
- 4.15 Any future RSG would be available for the council to invest in other budgets.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 The in-year RSG revenue cut is £95k and the capital cut is £80k. The revenue cut represents 27% of the total revenue budget and the capital cut represents 100% of that budget.
- 5.2 SRH staff may be affected by funding cuts. Although Humberside Police employs those staff, all partners have some obligation to them under the Service Level Agreement and may have to bear a proportion of any redundancy costs, should that situation arise.
- 5.3 Similarly, SRH has leased accommodation, which may attract early cancellation penalty charges if SRH ceases to operate. There may also be I.T. implications, as SRH has recently acquired new and replacement specialist I.T. packages.
- 5.4 All the above risks have been considered in the SRH risk register and associated costs are accounted for in a contingency fund within the SRH approved revenue budget. However, it is vital that a firm decision on the future of SRH is made before the end of December 2010, otherwise the SRH Exit Strategy may have to be activated, which will start the process of winding up the organisation and incurring costs.

5.5 Those costs are estimated at £536k (for all local authority partners combined) and although SRH has accounted for the Exit Strategy costs in its budget, thus absolving the partners from additional liabilities, the £536k would effectively be 'dead money', which could otherwise have been invested in road safety improvements.

5.6 Under the SLA, North Lincolnshire's proportion of SRH liabilities is 19.38%.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 The Road Traffic Act 1988 places a duty on local highway authorities to prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety. This includes (amongst other things) studying the occurrence of accidents and taking measures to prevent such accidents, including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of roads, the giving of practical training to road users and the construction, improvement, maintenance and repair of roads.

6.2 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken in respect of this report and is available for inspection in the Safer Roads Team.

6.3 One of the underlying principles of road safety work is the reduction of risk. In light of the positive impact safety cameras have had at the twenty-one sites in North Lincolnshire, there is a risk that casualties at these sites may rise again if safety cameras are no longer operational.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 There has been extensive consultation between SRH partner organisations, about the impact of the in-year cuts and possible ways forward. However, at this stage, there is no consensus as to the future management arrangements under which SRH may operate.

7.2 More generally, road safety is known to be a high priority for the North Lincolnshire community. Indeed, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has National Performance Indicator NI 47 - reduction in number of people killed or seriously injured in road incidents – as one of its thirty-five highest priority Local Area Agreement (LAA) indicators.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Cabinet Member agrees, in principle, and subject to future funding availability, to adopt Option 1, to continue with the current arrangements, as a formal partner in SRH.

8.2 That a further report be brought to Cabinet Member, after the autumn comprehensive spending review and when more information becomes available from SRH regarding options costings.

SERVICE DIRECTOR HIGHWAYS AND PLANNING

Church Square House
P O Box 42
Scunthorpe DN15 6XQ
Author: Pete Scott
Date: 16 August 2010

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Road Traffic Act 1988 (c. 52)

North Lincolnshire Council Cabinet report, "July Budget Review, Reduction in Grants to Local Government 2010/11", dated 21 July 2010

Safer Roads Humber Policy Board reports, "2010/11 Revised Revenue Budget" and "Exit Report and Issues Document", as considered at Policy Board meeting on 22 July 2010.

Safer Roads Humber Enforcement Performance in North Lincolnshire

Safety Camera Sites:

- Safety camera sites in North Lincolnshire have seen a 69% overall reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured.
- 77 fewer people were killed or seriously injured in North Lincolnshire at camera sites than if no intervention had taken place.
- This reduction equates to over £14 million in savings to society (calculated as £189,200 per serious casualty for emergency services costs; legal & court costs; medical and health care costs; material damage; pain, grief and suffering; and lost economic output).
- Camera sites in North Lincolnshire have seen a 50% overall reduction in the number of injury collisions.
- 160 fewer injury collisions occurred in North Lincolnshire at camera sites than if no intervention had taken place.
- Around 600 hours were spent enforcing at core mobile camera sites in North Lincolnshire during 2009/10.
- In addition to core enforcement, around 120 hours were spent enforcing at non-core Speed Management sites in 2009/10 using motorcycle equipment.

Other Police enforcement:

- In addition, Safer Roads Humber provides funding for additional targeted enforcement. Over 600 hours of additional enforcement were spent in North Lincolnshire in 2009/10.
- This enforcement is intelligence-led and is based on tackling the main causes of collisions in the area. Offences targeted include: speed; mobile phone use; drink and drug driving; not wearing seat belts; winter driving issues (poor maintenance of vehicles); and driving document offences.