

**REPORT:** Environment & Urban Renewal  
Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> January 2011

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Environment & Economy

**SUBJECT:** Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership (CSRP) and  
Safety Camera Enforcement in Halton

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report on the impact of Government funding reductions on the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership (CSRP) and how these will affect Halton.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

### **2.1 It is recommended that the Board:**

- (1) Notes that because of the withdrawal of the dedicated Road Safety Grants by Government, which have been used to support the CSRP since its inception, and because of the severe cuts to funding for Council services, the Council cannot commit to making a financial contribution to CSRP beyond 31 March 2011.**
- (2) Notes that if the CSRP were to no longer exist in its current form, this could result in camera enforcement reducing or even ceasing altogether on Halton's roads from January 2011.**
- (3) Notes that discussions with partners, regarding the future of the CSRP and camera enforcement, are ongoing and a verbal update maybe possible at this meeting, or alternatively, that it may be necessary to bring a more detailed report on this matter to a future meeting of the Board.**
- (4) Endorses the intention of officers to continue to deliver road safety education, training and publicity (RSETP) work locally, in conjunction with neighbouring authorities and the emergency services as resources permit.**

## **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 CSRP was established in April 2007, comprising representatives from the five highway authorities, (Halton, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington and Highways Agency), Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and the Courts' Services. Its remit not only included the management and development of Cheshire's speed and red light cameras, but also the delivery of Cheshire wide strategic road safety, education, training and publicity initiatives.

The work undertaken by CSRP has complemented but cannot usurp that traditionally undertaken by each of the partner organisations. In short:

- Each highway authority has a statutory duty to provide tailored road safety education and engineering measures to create safer roads
- The Fire and Rescue Service attend collisions and promote community safety
- Cheshire Police investigate traffic collisions and target illegal road use
- Magistrates courts administer justice.

Central Government expected road safety to be tackled across a broad front via these partners, but the core business of the CSRP has remained camera enforcement of speed limits and red light running at known collision sites.

- 3.2 Since 2007, the four highway authorities have received a Road Safety Grant (RSG) from the Government, with each putting the majority of it into a pooled CSRP budget to fund activities by the Partnership including camera enforcement. The remainder was retained in Halton's case to fund two temporary members of staff and for the delivery of road safety initiatives locally. The Police and Fire Service provide no financial support, but provide resources for specific activities, such as Driver Engagement Days. In 2009/10 funding for the CSRP was as follows:

<b>Highway Authority</b>	<b>Total RSG received</b>	<b>Grant retained by Highway Authority</b>	<b>Contribution to CSRP</b>
Cheshire East	£1,131,000	£452,000	£678,781
Cheshire West & Chester	£849,444	£339,777	£509,667
Halton	£396,517	£158,607	£237,910
Warrington	£420,452	£168,181	£252,271
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,797,694</b>	<b>£1,119,065</b>	<b>£1,678,629</b>

The total CSRP expenditure with sundry incomes, including speed awareness course surplus, amounted to £1,953,385. This was primarily revenue, with the smaller capital proportion being used to fund a speed limit review across the Partnership area, and to purchase cameras and other equipment. Of this budget, the majority was used for CSRP staff and associated expenditure, and just 27% for RSETP project support through the component agencies, though not all projects were available in Halton (an example being the £192,866 IMPACT initiative).

- 3.3 In June 2010, the Coalition Government, cut the road safety capital grants completely (i.e. £75K) and reduced revenue funding by 27% (i.e. by £90k). These cuts meant an immediate curtailment of any capital works that had not been committed and revenue supported project work outside of the core revenue area (staff, accommodation & associated costs) in order to protect the CSRP establishment.
- 3.4 RSG had always been due to finish on 31 March 2011 but it was hoped that a dedicated replacement fund would be provided. Unfortunately, this has not happened. If the CSRP is to be continued, the local authorities will have to provide funding from other services to pay for it. Due to the severity of cuts it has experienced and the subsequent review of Council services that is now underway, it

is not considered prudent for this Council to commit limited funding to an external partnership without determining local priorities in the first instance.

- 3.5 Whilst the other partner local authorities are also faced with budget reductions they are not as severe as Halton's in overall percentage terms. Discussions are therefore ongoing between officers and Members of the CSRP Board as to whether the CSRP can continue and if so in what form. Options being explored include, for example, the potential for providing a service if 30% of current funding levels were provided. However, preliminary indications are that at these levels a very much reduced service would be provided with, in all probability, those contributing the most getting the lion's share. At the time of writing only Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington have indicated any preparedness to consider a 30% contribution but this is without the benefit of any detailed analysis of what would actually be available for that amount.
- 3.6 Officers are now carrying out a full review of the costs and benefits of CSRP to Halton and camera enforcement in particular, with a view to informing Members how road safety in Halton can be taken forward. This will include the potential for continuing partnership working. This could form the basis of a future report to this Board. What the Board should recognise is that very significant reductions in road casualties were under way before the CSRP was formed and this trend has continued across the borough. Indeed, our general killed/seriously injured numbers over the whole of Halton have fallen at a faster rate than at all but one of the four remaining camera sites that still have any accident history.

#### **4.0 FUTURE DELIVERY OF RSETP WORK**

- 4.1 Not subscribing financially to CSRP would bring a more local focus to RSETP activities and free our remaining staff to concentrate on purely Halton issues, with work that is guided by local accident/casualty analysis as was the case before the RSG supported CSRP was created. Through Road Safety Great Britain and regional contacts we will continue to remain abreast of current issues and developing trends and we will work with our neighbours on areas of common interest.
- 4.2 Cheshire Police, as main beneficiaries of CSRP funding distribution, have indicated that safety cameras will be switched off in Halton on 1 January 2011 if this Council is unable to replace the lost RSG contributions. However, the Police should, in theory, still be required to carry out speed limit enforcement. Any surplus from speed awareness courses they may be able to sustain should provide them with an income stream to support speed enforcement. However, that would be a matter for the Chief Constable to determine. They are also obliged to continue supplying accident data.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct policy, social inclusion, sustainability, best value, legal or crime and disorder implications resulting from this report.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES.**

##### **6.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Children and Young People in Halton' priority.

## **6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton' priority.

## **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Deletion of the RSG by Government could lead to an increase in road accident casualties.

## **6.4 A Safer Halton**

Deletion of the RSG by Government could lead to an increase in road accident casualties.

## **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Halton's Urban Renewal'.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Nationally, road safety officers agree that deletion of the RSG by Government will naturally have an impact on RSETP work. It is very probable that casualties will rise in Halton in the years ahead through loss of this grant and the halving of our road safety staff numbers. This will have a very direct impact on service delivery to known target groups. Lack of funds to keep the CSRP operating in its current form and fund Police camera enforcement could also impact on incident numbers. However, quantifying the casualty growth risk is impossible as so many factors come into play, ranging from car ownership levels, improvements in vehicle technology and changes in legislation affecting drivers, to changes in vehicle design and public perception of road safety issues.

## **8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES.**

8.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 There are no background papers under section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972