



ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO. AP13/13

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
30 APRIL 2013**

SUBJECT: SAFETY CAMERA ENFORCEMENT TEAM

SUMMARY:

1. This report provides an update on the performance and financial stability of the self-funded safety camera team.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to note this report and approve the continuation of the Safety Camera Team during 2013/14 on a self-funding basis.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Suffolk Safety Camera team exists to improve road safety across Suffolk by encouraging motorists to comply with speed limits. It provides for education and enforcement actions directed towards those who are found not to be doing so. This is achieved via targeted enforcement at locations with poor collision history, speed complaints or other areas of road safety concern through static road safety cameras or the deployment of mobile safety camera vans.
- 1.2 The team was initially created and operated via a Safety Camera Partnership involving Suffolk County Council and HM Courts service. Central government funding was initially available to support the schemes, but in 2011 all government funding was ceased and the consequence has been that the Constabulary has since assumed responsibility for the Safety Camera Team under a self-funding model utilising income from national speed awareness courses.
- 1.3 During 2012/13 the self funding model has been placed under some pressure as income levels have been lower than expected, leading to a projected financial loss for the year. This has led to the discontinuance of the casualty reduction team of five police officers that was being supported by the Safety Camera Team. Maintaining this team was having a disproportionate financial impact upon the reserves position.
- 1.4 There are recent positive signs that income levels are recovering which, together with action taken to reduce the cost base of the Safety Camera team, gives good reason to have confidence that the Safety Camera team can be sustained on a self-funding basis during 2013/14.
- 1.5 The Suffolk scheme operates in accordance with ACPO guidance on speed enforcement and the guidance from the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) who oversee the delivery of national speed awareness courses.

2. FINANCE

- 2.1 The Suffolk Safety Camera Team is provided for on a self-funding model following a previous decision made in 2011 by Suffolk Police Authority. This decision was initiated by Suffolk County Council withdrawing their revenue contributions to the scheme as a result of central government funding for safety camera operations being ceased.
- 2.2 The self-funding model for the Suffolk Safety Camera Partnership is entirely supported by income derived from running the national speed awareness courses in the county. These are offered to motorists as an alternative to a fixed penalty notice for a certain range of excess speeds. This programme is delivered in Suffolk under the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme guidance (NDORS), with AADriveTech having been awarded the contract to deliver the courses in Suffolk. Eligible motorists can opt to undertake a speed awareness course upon payment of £83.75 as an alternative to a fixed penalty notice and can choose the location of where to undertake the course amongst all participating police force areas. The Safety Camera Partnership then receives an income paid from NDORS for each motorist it detects who subsequently undertakes a speed awareness course and an additional income from AADriveTech for each person who undertakes such a course in Suffolk.
- 2.3 The self-funding model was designed to provide revenue support for the mobile safety camera van operators together with the associated office functions and staff

processing the activations. In addition the scheme projected that income levels would be able to support a team of five police officers to operate as a Casualty Reduction Team to take targeted action to further improve road safety in Suffolk through education and enforcement.

2.4 The 2012/13 budget for the Safety Camera team projected income of £943k, with a projected expenditure of £862k plus a further £296k to support the Casualty Reduction Team. The shortfall in overall funding of £215k this represented for 2012/13 would then be met from the accumulated reserves.

2.5 During 2012/13 it became apparent that the financial self-funding model was under strain, largely as a result of lower than anticipated income. It is now expected that income for 2012/13 will have been £608k, a shortfall of £335k against the projected income for the year. On recognising this steps were taken to reduce costs and these have contributed to the overall expenditure being £129k less than budgeted at £723k. A decision was also made that the income levels were insufficient to continue to maintain the casualty reduction team. These officers were transferred back to Constabulary budgets in January 2013 to remove this cost from the Safety Camera team budget. The overall effect has led to a greater than anticipated drawn down on reserves within the Safety Camera budgets during 2012/13.

2.6 **2013/14 Budget Projections**

The budget has been re-profiled for 2013/14 based upon expected income and expenditure following the changes made during 2012/13 as follows:

Total budgeted expenditure 2013/14	£783.6k
Total estimated income for 2013/14:	£805k

Reserve held at start of 2012/13:	£721.5k
Reserve carry forward to 2013/14:	£340k*

Of which £120k are allocated as reserves to meet wind-up costs.

*The income estimate is based on the expectation that enforcement levels are likely to be similar to 2012/13. Income only refers to the returns from speed awareness courses. Some additional income is generated from court cases which is paid directly to the overall Criminal Justice budget (estimated at some £75k per annum).

* The reserve carry forward is estimated as final accounting procedures for the 12/13 year are still under way.

2.7 There are a number of factors that may influence the future financial position:

- The first change to fixed penalty amount in over 12 years is anticipated this year, bringing the fine above the actual cost of most speed awareness courses. The increased amount will include an added amount for Victim Surcharge, which will be 'top sliced' from the fine income to Central Government. This is likely to encourage more motorists to opt for the course option.
- Work by the Suffolk course provider to encourage course completion rather than fine payment. AADrivetech have commissioned a short video introduction to the course which will be able to be viewed from their website.

2.8 It is anticipated that the financial position of the operation will now stabilise as a result of organisational and budget changes.

2.9 Collaboration work between the two offices remains on-going to achieve further savings and efficiencies. A number of savings have already been achieved through joint management and sharing of posts across the Norfolk and Suffolk schemes, contributing to the reduction in predicted expenditure in 2012/13.

3. SPEED ENFORCEMENT THRESHOLDS

3.1 ACPO national guidance on speed enforcement recommends that the minimum enforcement speed threshold should be at 10% of the speed limit plus 2mph. Thus for a 50mph limit this equates to 57mph, for a 30mph limit to 35mph. Most force areas operate to this ACPO guidance, but historically Suffolk has enforced at 10% + 3mph.

3.2 During the latter part of 2009, the then Safety Camera Partnership Manager proposed that enforcement thresholds should be reduced from 10% + 3 mph to 10% + 2 mph (the ACPO minimum recommended threshold). This recommendation was sanctioned by Suffolk Chief Officers at their meeting on 28 September 2009. It came in to effect in all speed limits on 5 April 2010 so that prosecutions commenced or courses were offered from and including the following speeds:

30mph limit	35
40mph limit	46
50mph limit	57
60mph limit	68
70mph limit	79

3.3 The reduction followed much publicity about the significant reduction in survival rates of casualties when involved in accidents with vehicles travelling at speeds perceived, by some, to be marginally over the limit. For example, it is much quoted that the survival rate of a pedestrian struck by a car travelling at 35 mph as opposed to 30 mph is reduced by as much as 40%.

3.4 ACPO guidance similarly indicates that national speed awareness courses can be offered to those motorists who transgress up until their speed was 10% plus 10mph above the speed limit, provided they have not undertaken a similar speed awareness course in the preceding three years. At speeds of 10% plus 10mph or more above the limit speed awareness courses are not issued; instead motorists will be issued immediately with conditional fixed penalty notices or for significant excess speed summonsed to court.

3.5 NDORS administer the offer and delivery of national speed awareness courses across England and Wales. They proscribe the course curriculum and maintain the national register to determine who is eligible for such courses, providing a payment to the Suffolk for each person detected in the county who subsequently undertakes such a course. NDORS have also determined the speed range within which they determine the national course is effective in influencing driver behaviour and can therefore be delivered, this range presently meeting with the ACPO guidance of being between 10% plus 2mph and 10% plus 9mph above the speed limit. NDORS would not fund the national speed awareness course being delivered outside of these ranges.

3.6 The technical advances and rigorous testing of detection equipment has meant that great degrees of accuracy and reliability are achieved, together with the fact that all detections are subject to secondary checks. Equally, motor vehicle construction and legislation has changed such that car speedometers are now far more accurate.

4. ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

4.1 Analysis of detected speed data indicates that approximately 90% of those motorists detected speeding in Suffolk fall within the ACPO guidance speed range to be offered speed awareness courses, with around 77% of those falling within the first 5mph of this speed range.

4.2 The following chart shows the total offences detected by year and the number of speed awareness courses actually completed. This indicates that a number of motorists are either found to not be eligible to undertake a speed awareness course or choose not to do so.

Year	Offences	Courses
2004/05	49717	
2005/06	41725	
2006/07	42376	
2007/08	33329	
2008/09	36173	1300
2009/10	37194	2992
2010/11	47009	19632
2011/12	44987	28818
2012/13	38098	21917

4.3 Enforcement levels have dropped in the past two years. The reasons for this drop in offences detected are believed to include:

- Changes in the staffing arrangements of the mobile camera van operators.
- Decommissioning of four fixed camera sites.
- Economic pressures on motorists – fewer journeys and increased fuel economy (evidenced by national data collection).
- Rebranding of the camera vans into Constabulary markings, resulting in greater visibility of the vans, improved deterrent action and greater speed compliance from motorists.
- The cost of the course is greater than accepting the fixed penalty in both money and time.

4.4 Course take up rates are difficult to measure over short periods of time because of the variable times between offence detection and course completion. It may be that significant numbers of drivers have completed a course and the restriction of only one course in a three-year period is starting to take effect.

4.5 Offence levels are not predicted to drop significantly from their current position. Measures have been put in place to ensure a more consistent speed enforcement capability around the county. Mobile staffing has been increased from to four personnel (without additional cost by adjusting existing resources). This will improve resilience and maintain safety camera van coverage during periods of leave or sickness absence. Enforcement levels were below expected levels last Summer but

have been seen to pick up since the Autumn and have since been maintained at more expected levels. These will continue to be closely scrutinised.

- 4.6 The Safety Camera team have contributed to delivering educative training to some 20,000 motorists a year in its work to support casualty reduction in the county.

5. DEPLOYMENT OF MOBILE SAFETY CAMERAS

- 5.1 Suffolk deployment is based upon known collision areas from past research, public complaints, policing team requests, referrals from the county council and known areas of poor speed limit compliance. The management of the operational team has been changed and greater use of the Safety Camera Officer will be made in the co-ordination of deployment. This includes using the Tasking and Briefing Page given to Roads Policing officers to better inform deployment.

- 5.2 Analytical work is presently underway to review deployment locations against collision sites, speed complaints and areas of known poor speed compliance. This work will be used to inform deployment of the mobile safety camera vans in future.

6. PUBLICATION OF CAMERA LOCATIONS

- 6.1 Previous Camera Partnership guidance from the Department for Transport suggested that the publication of locations of enforcement activity might be appropriate (these guidelines ceased to exist when grant funding arrangements stopped). This task was undertaken within the former Safety Camera Partnership by the County Council communications manager who circulated enforcement locations to local media on a weekly basis. These locations were widely spread throughout the county and varied little from one week to the next, following a trend towards enforcing on routes rather than specific locations. The camera locations have not been routinely publicised since the guidelines ceased and the county council withdrew from funding of the Safety Camera partnership.

- 6.2 The guidelines were superseded by ministerial recommendation that fixed camera statistics, including case disposal information, should be openly published each year per site, together with totals for mobile enforcement. This is achieved through a statistics page on our section of the Constabulary home page. The following is contained within our FAQ section on the web pages: *Suffolk Safety Camera team will seek to contribute to the reduction of casualties, caused by vehicle collisions on our roads. We will do this by speed limit enforcement, which may be carried out at any location in the county. Sites for enforcement will also be selected by taking into account collision data, intelligence, known poor adherence to speed limits and community concerns.*

7 OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 7.1 The Safety Camera team is an essential part of improving road safety in Suffolk and provides the primary enforcement activity for speeding in the county. Speed is nationally known to be one of the major contributory factors in fatal and serious road traffic collisions and it is likely that the absence of an effective capability for monitoring and enforcing the county's speed limits could lead to an overall increase in speeding motorists with a commensurate negative impact on road safety.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Effective speed enforcement remains an important factor in maintaining road safety on Suffolk's road network and this is significantly enhanced by the activity of the safety camera team.

- 8.2 The deployment of safety cameras must continue to be evidenced against known locations with a poor history of road traffic collisions, speed complaints or other road safety issues. The mobile safety camera vans primary purpose is to improve road safety and must not be deployed solely to generate income.
- 8.2 The self-funding model, however, has been under strain in the last twelve months. Recent action to reduce costs and indications that income is returning to expected levels do provide some confidence that the self-funding model can nevertheless support the safety camera team throughout 2013/14.
- 8.4 The safety camera team operates to ACPO guidance and thresholds on speed enforcement and complies with NDORS guidance in the delivery of the speed awareness courses. These standards should be maintained to ensure the scheme remains consistent with the application of these standards nationally.

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	No
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	No
Have human resource implications been considered?	Yes
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	Yes
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	Yes
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	No
In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission?	Yes