

KENT & MEDWAY SAFETY CAMERA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 20 November 2008 Phoenix House

PRESENT: Ian Procter (Chairman), Kent County Council (IP)
Bryan Shawyer, Medway Council (BS)
Chief Inspector Roscoe Walford, Kent Police (RW)
Claire King, Her Majesty's Courts Service (CK)
Chris Rogers, Project Manager (CR)

APOLOGIES:

- Richard Burton, Highways Agency (RB)
- Katherine Barrett

1) Minutes of and Matters arising from previous Board meeting (10 September 08) if not otherwise on agenda:

• **M20 "Controlled Motorway" and cameras:**

CR said there was no progress on this. RB had e-mailed an update to CR which said that the draft Statutory Instrument is still awaiting approval alongside the public consultation and the Impact Assessment. This could all take six months to complete. IP is concerned that the scheme on the M20 has affected traffic movements and drivers' reactions to the cameras interrupts traffic flow. The installation of the 'ruler' markings in early 2008 brought about the biggest change in road user behaviour and IP wonders if this has resulted in any change in crash patterns. CR knows the period that the lines were installed so he will ask Jacobs to look out any crash records.

Action: CR to ask Jacobs to look at M20 crashes before and after installation of road markings

CR has been to meetings about the A282 Dartford Crossing area. A SPECS time-over-distance average speed camera system is being installed to cover the existing 50mph and 60mph speed limits northbound although CR was not shown any speed surveys at all and the safety benefits were minimal. The scheme is not part of the Partnership's remit and will be dealt with purely between Kent Police and the HA.

The Board expressed a concern that safety cameras could be seen to be being used by the HA in a wide-spread manner, and their justifications were not being well publicised. Whilst there is, no doubt, a justified reason for each of these schemes the public might begin to feel that cameras are now being used less discriminately. The Board asked CR to write to RB to express their concern.

Action: CR to write letter to RB (done)

Matters arising continued:

• **Feedback from other meetings and sub groups:**

CR apologised that no Technical/User Group meeting had yet taken place partly due to leave and Medway moving offices.

ACTION: CR to organise meeting

• **Staffing - HMCS**

CK had just submitted a report to CR which was tabled. The report sought a small amount of funding for work undertaken at Gail House by staff based there. CR agreed that this was quite right and this is how it works with the Police who charge by the hour for HQ staff. However the previous arrangement with HMCS was that some staff at Phoenix House work on offences which are not camera related. CR does not charge for their ground space/floor rent on the basis that HMCS don't charge for their HQ staff. However, in the case of the Police the Partnership pays 80% floor space to account for the non-Partnership activities in the Police areas.

CR felt that this was a good time to reassess that arrangement and either agree that it was still equitable or for the charging of Gail House staff to be considered alongside HMCS paying for floor space at Phoenix House.

ACTION: CK to assess options with Maria

• **Camera Operators linking with Traffic Specialists**

RW and DC had not prepared proposals but CR had met with Roads Policing specialists from each BCU and from Coldharbour, together with Phil Hibben etc. This had been a very useful meeting as it seemed that every BCU had a traffic resource and were keen to use it. The problem was internal communications in that other Police staff didn't know how to raise issues and concerns for the local traffic facility to look at. The service that the public, and perhaps DC, were looking for appears to be

there but isn't being well directed. CR now has a single contact to direct any public requests or indeed any internal requests.

CR was also interested in the Partnership possibly working with the local BCU motorcycle teams (etc.) for them to support our camera vans. Further discussions would be held to pursue options.

- Matters arising continued:

Camera Team staffing - update

Unfortunately Sue Weston could not attend to meet the Board this time. Sue and David Currie had provided updates for CR to report at the meeting. A more formal operational report would become a regular feature at future meetings.

The seventh Camera Operator is PC Stuart Russell-Thomas and he will start on 1st Dec (*he did*). Stuart will assist the Enquiry Team with arrests (etc.) as well as be a county-wide floating Camera Enforcement Operator. Another team member has been on long-term sick but returns on 24th Nov (*he did*).

Christine Carpenter has been with Kent Police for 37 years based in the APUs and latterly at Phoenix House. She has been involved with the safety camera work since their implementation. The Board thanked her for her hard work and wished her well in her retirement. David Currie is reviewing the team structure in the Case Review area and is advertising for a new team leader to fit a slightly revised structure. RSS will also have a look at our processes to see if they can advise on any improvements on workflow etc. (if any).

David Currie and CR are still trying to move forward the 'Public Access' system whereby offenders can look at photographs and documents on line. Currently this is with Kent Police IT.

The Camera Operators are now working a formal shift pattern that they agreed with David Currie in the summer. This came into effect in September. Operators are out until later than before and CR reported that the public has already noticed from the phone calls that he and Katherine are now receiving.

BS asked how well the mobile camera equipment works at night and he also enquired about any health and safety issues related to night working. CR explained that the mobile camera equipment can measure speed accurately in the dark but that clear images relied on a certain level of street lighting. The Team were currently visiting every site to see where the lighting levels were good enough, and where they were not sufficient. Any images that weren't clear would be rejected by the Operator and also later the Central Ticket Office may also weed out others if they felt that the image was not adequate for court use.

Once every site had been assessed then CR would work with Sue Weston to examine any options that there might be to use other types of enforcement (working with the local BCU and bike teams, or use Stuart to stop vehicles, etc.).

CR also asked the Board for its view at those locations where visibility at night may be poor. Is it the Partnership's role to 'deter' offences or to 'detect'? If the device cannot reliably pick up every offender then is that a problem or is the presence of the van a deterrent in itself? The Board agreed that the prime role of the Partnership, and its vans, was to deter drivers from speeding. Part of that effect is the threat that an offence may be detected and penalties issued. However, at any site very few 'tickets' are actually issued even in daylight as drivers generally slow down without the need for punitive action, and this is the success of the Partnership. The Board was happy that the vans should be deployed even if the equipment inside cannot always be used. It is acceptable for the Operator to park up and perhaps not even switch on the device since the vans are well marked and should serve to deter most drivers from speeding. If the presence of the van doesn't seem to be sufficient deterrent then other forms of enforcement will need to be pursued. **The Board confirmed that CR speaks on their behalf when he says that the 'fear of detection' is the Partnership's role.**

In terms of Health and Safety, Sue had reported that she had carried out risk assessments with each Operator and was now visiting each and every site to write an assessment of each one. This would take time. Where there may be difficulties at any site (night or day) then each would be examined to see if mitigating measures can be put in place (e.g. hardstandings to park the van off the carriageway). The Board wished to reiterate that the safety of the Police's staff was important and they would support

any proposal, where possible, to improve any identified risks. CR added that in some cases the crash records might show that there is not a severe night-time problem and so withdrawing enforcement could be an option in a few locations. RW suggested that the local BCUs should be contacted to ascertain any local issues or input on risks, the nature of the area and reportable incidents that might affect the Operator's safety. The Board asked what equipment the vans had in terms of hazard lamps, and CR clarified that the vans have a light bar on the roof and strobes to front and rear. CR and the Board await the outcome of the risk assessments.

DC's report to Chris also suggested that the current throughput of offences, at around 3000 per month is likely to be the 'norm'. These reports from SW and DC were very comprehensive this month but in future CR is expecting brief information on the frequency of site attendance; the time and day of each site's attendance; the number of hours of enforcement supplied; the number of Enquiries and successful conclusions of enquiries etc. etc. IP was keen to stress that 'ticket numbers' were not a measure of performance (if anything the number of offences should continue to decline). The Board would not wish to see ticket numbers used as any measure of success and these do not need to be included in any regular Operational Report to the Board. IP suggested that it would be relevant, if possible, to report on the numbers of Court cases and their successes/outcomes.

Action: CR to discuss with DC and SW

RW raised a suggestion to lower the tolerance or 'threshold' at some or all camera sites. Compliance was now very high and extra offences could be processed with existing staff. If thresholds were reduced at the 30mph sites then more offenders could be referred to SpeedAwareness if the SpeedAwareness scheme also reduced its acceptance level. This would give the Police and Local Transport Authorities more opportunities to engage with more drivers and to educate. This is mainly an issue for the SpeedAwareness Board since it could potentially have the greatest impact on them.

IP asked what road safety/casualty reduction benefits this could bring. Not all 'new' offenders would necessarily take up SpeedAwareness nor might they be eligible. Whilst it might appear to be desirable to move closer to ACPO thresholds there needs to be a careful assessment of what positive benefits this brings. It was felt that the Technical/User Group could consider the choice of which cameras to lower the threshold (is it those with good compliance or those with poor compliance? Or those with good casualty reductions or those with less positive casualty reductions?). There could be a trial use of lower thresholds but the Group needed to establish what would be the measurable motivations and outcomes for changing the threshold.

IP also asked RW to set up a SpeedAwareness meeting as this is clearly an important issue for the SpeedAwareness Board.

Action: RW to set up meeting

- Matters arising continued:

Events 2008: A letter had been sent to Pete French thanking him, in particular, for his help at the events this year. All the camera operators had positively contributed at some time.

- Matters arising continued:
- **EU tender process**

137 Expressions of Interest were received but these first have to go through a Pre-Qualification quality questionnaire which will weed out a large proportion that do not meet KCC's financial requirements etc. (some didn't even bother to return the PQQ). KB, Anne-Marie and Kelly will then assess those that pass the PQQ against the tender doc. Chosen short-list will then come in to pitch in the new year.

2) Communications

KB had provided CR with a briefing:

- **Recent press coverage:**

CR was very pleased that the media had responded positively to the trial 'enforcement' of seat belts and mobile phones. ITV Meridian had run a long article (about four minutes) wherein they showed old 'clunk click' adverts and similar seat belts advertising over the decades. The response was very supportive so far although it seemed to focus mainly on the seat-belt angle and less about the mobile phones (contrary to the view that mobile phone use was the bigger 'anti-social' activity). This had also been picked up by BBC Radio and some local papers. Press were keen to receive on-going updates and news during the trial.

Katherine had already circulated, by e-mail, some of the highlights of the seat-belt and mobile-phone research and public perception surveys showing general support for our initiative.

- **Feedback from campaigns:**

Streetlights mean 30mph – despite eye-catching and memorable campaign the actual knowledge by drivers that a 30moph limit can be identified by the presence of street lights was still around 34% and was not much higher than last year. KB would be looking at further activities and ways to continue to get this important message across.

'Grow up. Slow down.' young driver campaign – Digivan had been out with high exposure. Some sites suggested by the Police were not as busy as we would have liked so the van and 'street screens' had relocated themselves to busier locations when necessary. Good reactions to promotional give-away materials and to the adverts themselves.

Formal Evaluation is difficult. SAMedia (who ran the digivan and streetscreens) have sent through an evaluation of their own on how appropriate the sites were. Previously Focus Groups had said that this should be the right way to get a message across. Ideally we need to assess how effective the videos had been in changing attitudes and behaviour. KB suggests carrying out that evaluation just before the next phase. Currently there's not much traffic to the website for us to ask or put on a questionnaire.

CR explained that KB's intention was to issue a simple Press Release saying that our vans had been out and about and that anyone who missed them could see the videos on our website (or on YouTube). The expectation was that this PR would get very little coverage by the press and we might be lucky to get a column-inch buried somewhere in a few local papers.

However, YouTube was used as a convenient means to host these videos, with links from our own website. Some of the adverts were graphic and detailed, but one of the simplest least 'offensive' videos had been withdrawn from YouTube whereas the more explicit videos remained available for viewing. YouTube had not contacted us to notify or explain their action. The withdrawn video was a short, simple, straightforward film of a young man crossing the road and being hit, with no blood and no apparently offensive material. This video is almost identical to the DfT's 'Think' video (of the young lad hit in slow motion, in black and white, when the pigeons fly up). However our advert was at normal speed and in colour but lacked any words, text or road safety message and so YouTube's users might have thought that this was actual genuine footage of an actual crash with a real victim, but we don't know. This advert has been out on the digivans and streetscreens and we had no complaints about any of the material used.

CR's suggestion was that we might attract a little more interest in our campaign, and draw in more viewers to the website, by actually highlighting the fact that a video had been withdrawn and was, instead, available on our own website (if we had the technology to display it). Katherine's PR could therefore draw attention to the fact that we had had one of our adverts 'banned'. IP agreed that this was likely to get us a better response; that the PR should be worded as proposed initially with the straight-forward facts about the Digivans, street-screens and the campaign's aims etc., but then add in towards the end of the PR the fact that the videos could be seen on YouTube except for one which had been withdrawn and so was available on a different website. This wouldn't highlight our activity as potentially offensive but the Press could choose to pick up the matter of the withdrawn video.

RW and IP asked for copies of the adverts.

Action: KB to send out copies (done)

'Speed shatters life' boards - New green boards were going up at camera sites showing the number of casualties that were recorded before the device was installed, commissioned by Medway Council using Kent Site Services (who is one of Medway's chosen contractors for sign work). Medway to inform their own staff not to take these signs down, and CR to write to KHS (Caroline Bruce) so that she might inform her own teams about what was going on. **Action: CR to write to Caroline Bruce (done)**
Signs are due to come down in New Year (late January/early Feb).

Magistrates presentations - KB had contacted Malcolm Dodds about getting into 'Bench Meetings' but with limited success so far. CK felt that it should be fairly easy to get a slot in the Magistrates' sessions (meetings or training). CR said that we had been told that their meetings were always well-packed and their training programmes equally committed. Partnership had offered to set up its own 'open house' or training sessions, with venues and refreshments fully funded by partnership. Magistrates would, however, have to come in their own time and at their own expense, or claim expenses from HMCS. CK

also thought this was a good idea but CR explained that this too had been thwarted as we had no way of contacting Magistrates to let them know that these events were on. CK offered to pursue all of these options since they all looked viable.

ACTION: CK to seek way forward for our own sessions to be advertised or for slots in existing programmes

Roscoe is involved in a possible 'conference' with KF&RS, and this might also be an opportunity for the Partnership to get some of its messages across. **RW and KB can discuss options.**

Licence to Kill? – running this week (w/c 16/11/08). Excellent response (as always). Productions are in Maidstone on 21st – all welcome. BS wondered if some of the presenters/speakers were becoming less current as some had been in circulation for a while. KB would look at feedback.

Driving Business – Safely (business driver campaign) – Recent activity has focused on fleet managers; next phase is proposed to focus back on drivers themselves with main messages about: keep to speed limits, don't use mobile phones and always wear a seat belt.

CR thinks that KB is organising some dashboard stickers with information for drivers. Roscoe would be keen on seeing these for the Police's own fleet and possibly traffic patrols might be able to give them out. Tac.Ops are proposing to set up their own bespoke 'lorry'/goods vehicle team who would be expert on Construction and Use legislation etc. **KB to discuss with RW**

3) Events in 2009

CR explained that it had been their intention to attend more shopping centres, car parks, Motorway Service areas, supermarkets etc. on weekdays. For various reasons this had not get very far but we had done a few supermarkets and Motorway Services. CR suggested that a way forward might be to dedicate a van and Operator to a five-day-per-week programme and to employ an events organiser who would book them up to go to locations five days per week (possibly three weekdays and two weekend days). An extra operator could be taken on for this role, or an extra Operator added to the team and then we pool from the team one to go to the events on a weekly/daily arrangement. IP asked for a more detailed business case which CR and KB were happy to do if this idea sounded like it had some merit. IP not sure if we actually needed a real Camera Operator or whether a well-briefed individual can talk through how the cameras work. **Action: CR and KB to draft proposals**

4) Phone and seatbelt enforcement

Good Press coverage mentioned above. Nothing else to report at this stage other than the fact that it's now underway with letters being sent to owners of vehicles.

5) Future Funding and new Memorandum of Understanding

CR highlighted that the current MoU had only been signed for two years and will expire at the end of March 2009. Kent Police wished to be reassured that this did not spell the end of the Partnership and that the project would continue to be funded from April 2009.

The Board were keen to reassure Kent Police that the Partnership intends to continue; both KCC and Medway Council will be receiving grants and they will continue to need support to run their cameras.

6) SpeedAwareness

All going well but group needs to meet.

7) Deposit Fixed Penalty Notices

RW explained that new legislation was coming into effect countrywide whereby a Fixed Penalty can be issued to foreign drivers (non UK licence holders) and/or for foreign vehicles (e.g. driver's hours etc.). This was predominantly for drivers stopped at the roadside. Fine could be £80, £100 or £200. A deposit could be taken on-the-spot pending prosecution of the offender – this might be £300. This is instead of the current system of arresting them and holding in custody. If driver opts out of deposit or the fine then they will be arrested. Lots of detail and process still unknown but Kent and Manchester seem to be leading on this new initiative. CK confirmed that she can accept a 'fine in advance'.

8) Feedback from other meetings and sub-Groups:

- National Conference – IP reported that he found this useful and, as always, he was enthused with the interest and momentum showed by the Partnerships nationally.
- CaRe Partnership – RW said formalisation of CaRe was still on-going.

Any Other Business: None. **Date of next meeting:** 16th January 09:15 for 09:30 start