

Update on Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP)

A meeting with the Asst Chief Constable Sussex Police, LHA directors and HMCS on the 13th July confirmed the 58% reduction in funding for SSRP from the Specific Road Safety Grant made available to partnerships through the LHAS. This level of reduction was the result of the Government withdrawal of the capital grant, reduction of the revenue element by 27% (representing an average total grant reduction of 40%) and the previously agreed 18% grant withheld by the 3 Local Authorities.

As a result, the SSRP Strategy Sub-Group met to identify areas to negate the £400k gap between the latest business plan and the funding available. The plan was revised and a new conclusion on the budget requirements reached. A meeting of the SSRP staff at Shoreham identified further reductions and a new realignment of the budget.

Please see Activity Matrix Appendix 'A' that identifies the original business plan of £3.315m and the result of various cuts to reach the present business plan costs of £1.87m. It also shows the activities in priority order according to the 'points awarded' structure in respect of strategic priority value of each activity

The methodology employed to bridge the £400k gap, with Police support, was to utilise the anticipated Speed Awareness course surplus from this year. This figure is based upon the surplus from 2009/10 and is estimated at approximately £200k. Additionally, the Strategy Sub-Group agreed to widen the scope of the courses, raising the potential for another 8,000 clients per annum. When the normal ratio of accepted offers is applied, it is estimated that will translate into an additional £70k surplus.

Other adjustments have been made to the business plan, which include current vacant establishment posts not being filled in the Central Ticket Office, a reduction in consultancy hours and provision of cover for maternity leave. There is still a shortfall of approximately £45k in this year's expenditure forecast, but it is anticipated that there will be fluctuations in expenditure that may have a 'smoothing effect'.

CONSEQUENCE AND IMPACT OF CUTS

The savings of the latest round of cuts will compound the already significant impact on road safety being promoted by the Partnership.

For instance, since 1994 the introduction of cameras has contributed to the reduction of casualties across Sussex. On a rolling 12 month period, KSI casualties have been reduced at camera sites by 90 per annum, which is a 67% reduction from the 3 year baseline data. At fixed cameras this reduction is 72%. The former saving at all sites equates to a cost saving to society of £42m annually, using the DfT Highway Economic Notes (HEN) as a guide. It should be noted that any reduction in camera activity, including the long term effect of maintenance cuts, could lead to an increase in vehicle speeds, which in turn could lead to more serious injuries to road casualties. There is also

some jeopardy to the great opportunity, through referral, to educate drivers, via the Speed Awareness courses. These courses are an alternative method of case disposal and last year 7000 people benefitted from this form of driver education in Sussex. This is vital in trying to educate drivers and changing the culture regarding speeding to make it socially unacceptable viz a viz 'drink driving'.

Education is as important as enforcement and any further reduction in the current budget would mean a severe impact on delivery of schemes which are targeting key priority groups, regarded as the most vulnerable through data intelligence. Such Education projects delivered through the SSRP are those which were considered to have benefit across the whole Sussex area, as well as having the potential to be cost effectively delivered across Sussex, as opposed to on a local basis.

Specific projects for Brighton & Hove (non- pan Sussex or shared) that have been affected by the reduction in funding are:

- Child Pedestrian Trainer wages (no further funding from SSRP for the remainder of this financial year original support £22.5k – reduced by approx £14k)
- Biekeability Coordinator salary (funding reduced from £24k to £20k)
- Biekability Trainer mandatory assessments (funding withdrawn £1520)
- Speed Indicator Device (SID) Operator (salary for p/t operator funding withdrawn £11500) – vacancy now being held.
- White Nights event (funding withdrawn £8k)
- Warning Lights in Vicinity of Schools (funding withdrawn £7.7k)

NB. Brighton & Hove participate in several of the projects shown on Appendix A and the list above is purely those that are unique to B&H.

Early bookings and commitments were made by the SSRP Communications Manager to save money over the year, but there is now no funding available, which restricts the ability to support projects and events with additional marketing material once the current crop expires.

OPPORTUNITIES

There are potential revenue streams available through promotions such as the internationally award winning 'Embrace Life' video, which has potential customers world- wide, currently being primed.

Another is the development of the 'Routes' educational programme, with sales already agreed with Michelin and interest from as far afield as Australia. There is also an opportunity for international linkage on road safety research and evaluation due to this particular project.

The potential for centralising certain projects from an administrative perspective has already been outlined in Appendix 'A'. Speed awareness is

making significant progress in this field and will be looking to integrate by October.

There are opportunities to adopt a different style of marketing by utilising the internet in different forms, which has already proved its power by the success of 'Embrace Life'.

FURTHER WORK

The Strategy Group is identifying options for 2011/12, based on the Directors' meeting recommendations that funding scenarios of 0%, 25% and 50% be considered, with the aim of circulating a discussion document prior to the Leaders Group meeting, provisionally set for the 5th October. Although these levels of funding are purely hypothetical at this time, pending the Government's Autumn public spending review, it was felt that we should explore the options and have some provisional models for SSRP structure/function and to identify the risks and opportunities of each of these levels, ahead of any formal announcements or decisions regarding funding.

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