

Delivering road safety in a challenging economic climate – The 3 Cs: Commissioning, Community and Culture

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ABSTRACT

Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) have evolved the 3 Es of Engineering, Education and Enforcement to the 3 Cs – Commissioning, Community and Culture – to meet the challenges of the current economic climate and greater public involvement in local decision making.

Working closely with Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Police, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, the Highways Agency, community groups, 3rd sector organisations and local business, SSRP has created a genuine partnering culture to achieve a progressive and holistic approach to road safety.

The focus of SSRP is on casualty reduction whilst recognising that local communities need to be engaged in the decisions that impact them.

The presentation will include examples for each of the 3 Cs:

Commissioning – Delivering an appropriate solution to an identified road safety issue through a variety of partners and methods. Examples will include how education, enforcement, engineering and training are used to tackle identified issues.

Community – Working with a community to address concerns about road safety. Examples will illustrate how schemes are funded and supported through each County Councillor's Local Community Fund and their direct influence over highway budgets through the Divisional Highway Programme.

Culture – Creating an environment of increasing road safety awareness delivered by SSRP and its partners. Examples will demonstrate how resources are shared between the partners to deliver education/training/publicity and road safety events.

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the credit crunch that began in 2007 and the subsequent recession in the UK, a coalition government was formed in 2010 which set out to reduce the budget deficit.

A fundamental element of the Coalition's road to economic recovery has been a reduction in government spending, with road safety taking its share of funding cuts.

All those involved in road safety and particularly government funded bodies have had to re-think how road safety can be delivered more effectively using limited resources.

At the same time there have been a number of key changes that have had an impact on road safety delivery. The Coalition has developed localism further with the introduction of the Localism Act 2011. This has given local authorities greater control as well as giving individuals and communities more rights and powers.

The Coalition's desire to move away from a top down, centralised approach can be seen in their stance on road safety targets. In the previous decade, government set centralised casualty reduction targets to be achieved by 2010 (outlined in "Tomorrow's roads: safer for everyone" DETR, 2000). The Department for Transport (DfT) released the "Strategic Framework for Road Safety" in May 2011 which gives a general direction for road safety in the UK but sets no hard targets. The responsibility is now on local authorities and service providers to prioritise and improve road safety and to be accountable for their decisions.

Many public service bodies and local authorities are being encouraged to broaden their horizons and think beyond their immediate responsibilities for service delivery. These bodies are looking to partner with others and share resources to deliver improved road safety for the communities they serve. The shift is towards a more holistic approach which focuses on positive outcomes rather than outputs. An example of this can be seen in the Fire and Rescue Service, which has placed increasing importance on road safety in recent years and is playing a greater role in improving road safety.

In the NHS Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) were replaced by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in 2013, following the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Some of the funding that used to go to PCTs is now being given to local authorities to create healthier communities. Part of this remit includes reducing road deaths and injury and could provide an additional funding stream for road safety initiatives.

The need for a holistic approach to road safety is outlined in the 2004 World Health Organisation (WHO) "World report on road traffic injury prevention":

"Road safety is a multi-sectoral issue and a public health issue – all sectors, including health, need to be fully engaged in responsibility, activity and advocacy for road crash injury prevention...Local knowledge needs to inform the implementation of local solutions."

In light of these factors, Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership has considered the delivery of road safety and has focused on the 3 Cs – Commissioning, Community and Culture.

2. THE 3 Cs: COMMISSIONING, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

2.1 WHAT ARE THE 3 Cs?

The 3 Cs are a way of framing how Staffordshire Safer Road Partnership (SSRP) thinks about road safety. Road safety has been summed up for many years by the 3 Es – Engineering, Education (Education, Training and Publicity, ETP) and Enforcement.

The 3 Es still summarise the practical tools used by road safety professionals. However, the *delivery* of road safety should to be considered in light of budgetary pressures, increasing localism and the mature engineering and enforcement sector in the UK.

Each of the 3 Cs sums up elements regarding the delivery of road safety – Commissioning, Community and Culture. Commissioning is the thread that links the 3 Cs together.

2.2 THINKING ABOUT THE 3 Cs

Commissioning is at the centre of SSRPs sphere of influence. It is the factor we have the most influence on and is central to our thinking when delivering road safety.

Budgetary constraints are always a reality in road safety but since the credit crunch funding for road safety is a significant issue in the UK. With the prospect of decreasing budgets in the medium to long term, the way in which SSRP continues to deliver an improving level of road safety is critical.

Commissioning is one method of delivery that can break up established patterns of thinking, structure delivery to achieve positive outcomes and take a holistic view on solutions.

By starting with what you want to achieve you increase the likelihood of realising your desired outcomes.

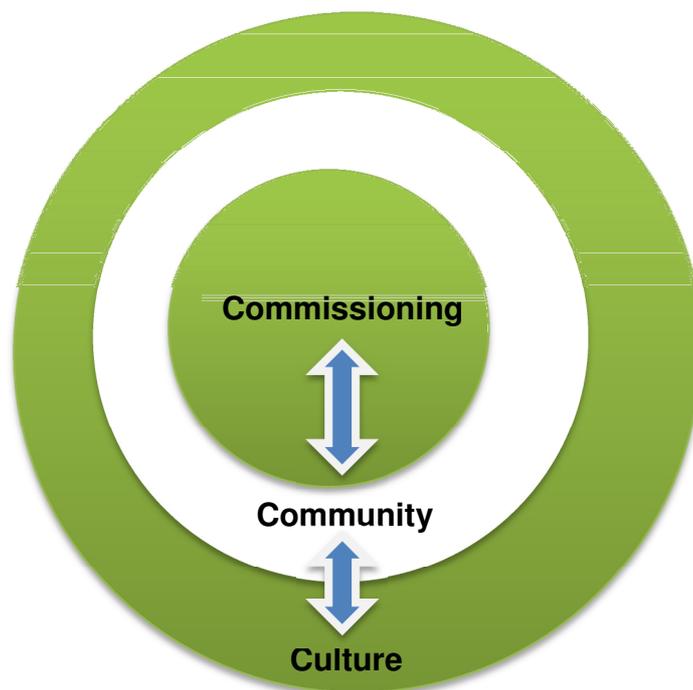


Diagram 1: Spheres of influence

The next sphere of influence SSRP has is in the Community. Communities need to contribute to the commissioning process – communities help to shape and influence the desired outcomes and are affected by the results of the outcomes.

Defining Community – the people that represent a geographical area or belong to specific groups of road users.

With the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 greater powers have been given to local authorities and communities. The expectations of the public have evolved. People now expect public service providers to be more responsive and to involve them in the decisions that affect them. Engagement must be at the heart of everything we do. It must be a dialogue with all the appropriate stakeholders at the right time. Through co-production communities can get involved in determining a solution for a given issue.

Genuinely engaging communities from the start on the issues that affect them should be at the forefront of our considerations when delivering road safety initiatives.

An open dialogue has been formed between communities and SSRP to discuss issues and agree solutions. This dialogue is facilitated through liaison with community representatives as part of the Divisional Highway Programme (DHP). The DHP brings together the vast number of requests for road safety improvements from the public and enables local issues to be prioritised by the elected Member.

The third sphere of SSRPs influence is Culture. It is affected by Commissioning and Community. Commissioning impacts Community which can bring about a change in Culture.

Equally a change in Culture can bring about a change in Community which can help shape outcomes in Commissioning.

Defining Culture – the ideas, customs and social behaviour of the community; the intellectual environment we live in.

In Staffordshire many Personal Injury Collision (PIC) cluster sites have been treated with engineering measures over the last two decades. Camera enforcement is well developed and police enforcement operations are routinely carried out.

Engineering and enforcement still play an important part in reducing casualties on the highway. SSRP continues to target all PIC cluster sites with engineering and enforcement measures. Route treatment is one engineering measure that is becoming increasingly important in reducing collisions as well as continuing to deliver local safety schemes at target sites. SSRP has also continued to invest in enforcement with the introduction of red light enforcement cameras, average speed cameras and a program of digitisation of the existing wet film cameras.

Targeting KSIs (Killed or Seriously Injured) with engineering or enforcement measures has become increasingly challenging. KSIs are widely spread across the County with fewer treatable cluster sites being identified. Trends in KSIs tend to be in groups of road users (e.g. motorcyclists) rather than geographical locations.

This is why trying to influence the culture towards increasing road safety awareness and safer behaviour is becoming increasingly important. By influencing the road safety behaviours of the society we live in, we can continue to reduce the number of casualties.

*SSRP wants **to inform** the culture with safer attitudes and behaviours and we need to **be informed** by the constantly changing environment we live in.*

We need to keep abreast of changes in society. This will help keep us relevant in our interactions with communities (e.g. social media); respond quicker to changes in behaviour (e.g. using mobile phones whilst driving) and to adapt to and harness change (e.g. technological advances).

The 3 Cs provide a framework that keeps the most important themes at the forefront of decision making. This can help SSRP face the challenges of the future and keep our priorities in the right order.

2.3 HOW DO THE 3 Cs WORK?

2.3.1 Commissioning

Commissioning is the most important of the 3 Cs: it is the thread that links them together. It is a methodology for thinking and acting to deliver the desired outcomes. Commissioning in the UK has been evolving in public service provision since the 1990's. Commissioning has been defined in different ways by different organisations.

Staffordshire County Council (SCC), a significant partner in the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership, has defined commissioning as:

“...achieving positive outcomes, through the best use of resources, to meet the needs of residents, communities and service users in Staffordshire.”

1. Achieving positive outcomes – outcomes aren't positive by default; we have to decide what outcomes we want to see and plan our activities to achieve them.
2. Through the best use of resources – making the most of what ourselves and our partners can offer.
3. To meet the needs of residents, communities and service users.

What are *outcomes*?

A key word in this definition is *outcomes*. How do we define outcomes?

An outcome is simply what comes out. It is the end result of what we have done. Outcomes are linked to outputs and objectives.

- The *objective* is what we are aiming to achieve
- The *output* is what we actually deliver and can measure
- The *outcome* is the end result, the product of our outputs

Staffordshire County Council's Strategic Plan (2014 – 2018) set out the following outcome:

“Staffordshire is a place where people can easily and safely access everyday facilities and activities through the highways and transport networks.”

In terms of road safety, this is the highest level outcome that the local authority has.

We start with the outcome we want to see and work out how it could be achieved.

For example:

- Outcome – people can safely use the highway and transport networks in Staffordshire.
- Output – there is a measured reduction in KSIs of 40% by 2020, i.e. one particular measure that points to a safer road network. This is a target that has been agreed by the SSRP Governance Board.
- Objective – SSRP and partners organise resources to use data led, targeted engineering, Education/Training/Publicity (ETP) and enforcement measures to achieve a 40% reduction in KSIs by 2020.

A further subset of objectives is required to provide further detail on the effective delivery of the outcome. Taking ETP as an example, further objectives could include:

- The promotion and delivery of the CBT (Compulsory Basic Training) Extra course for motorcyclists. Motorcyclists have been identified through analysis of the collision data as a target group for KSIs.
- Targeting priority schools with additional Road Safety Education – identified by casualty statistics, involvement in school Speed Indicator Device (SID) schemes and schools in the most deprived wards in the County.
- Publicise and hold tyre safety events with partners following insight from TyreSafe (a 'not for profit' organisation).

2.3.2 The 6 Stages of Commissioning in Staffordshire

Commissioning is a process of thinking and acting. Staffordshire County Council has identified 6 stages to the commissioning process.

1. What is the question?

What are we trying to achieve?
What are the issues we are trying to address?
What are our legal service obligations?
What is the possible future demand?

2. Know your customers

Who are our customers?
What do our customers care about?
Why do they care?
Where are they?
When do they care?

3. Outcomes and priorities

What are the desired outcomes?
Do the desired outcomes answer the question?
How are the desired outcomes prioritised?

4. What will it look like?

What mechanism will be needed to deliver the outcomes?
Are partnerships required?
Are different structures required?



Diagram 2: The 6 Stages of Commissioning

5. How will you get there?

How do we achieve the desired outcomes?
How can partners/stakeholders/communities help?
Is development of suppliers or providers required?

6. Measuring the impact

Are the desired outcomes being achieved?
Are the right performance management measures in place?
Have things changed or developed?

By commissioning this way we ask the right questions, in the right order, to get the right outcome. It brings clarity to what we are trying to achieve.

2.4 THE 3 Cs IN ACTION – STAFFORDSHIRE SAFER ROADS PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership consists of various public sector organisations including: Staffordshire County Council; Stoke-on-Trent City Council; Staffordshire Police; Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service; HM Courts and Tribunals Service and the Highways Agency. In addition, SSRP draws on the skills, experience and resources of a variety of private sector partners to deliver road safety initiatives around Staffordshire. Partners have included Michelin, JCB, Halfords, Boots, ASDA, Alstom, McDonalds and various local garden centres. SSRP also works with communities and elected Members to address road safety concerns in local areas.

Prior to the development of SSRP public sector bodies in Staffordshire were operating a number of road safety initiatives. They lacked co-ordination, offered no continuity or consistency and there were no agreed priorities. This resulted in the duplication of activities, inconsistent delivery and a poor use of resources.

The SSRP structure is designed to encourage communications between all partners. This not only ensures that good ideas are shared but also draws on the right skills and expertise for an innovative and co-ordinated approach to road safety. This improves the outcomes for residents, communities and service users whilst making the best use of limited funding and resources.

The SSRP Governance Board meets quarterly and consists of key personnel from each organisation. The organisations have differing priorities (i.e. enforcement, emergency response, road safety education and engineering) but they are all committed to the same outcome – reducing casualties, in particular KSIs, across Staffordshire. The Governance Board devises the strategic vision of the Partnership which is then passed to the Joint Operations Group to examine local priorities and develop solutions.

The SSRP team then works with various partners and stakeholders to agree an approach to meet these priorities. All partners have signed up to a service level agreement which is in place for a further five years demonstrating their commitment to the success of the Partnership.

SSRP has improved reporting and monitoring structures through the development of the Divisional Highway Programme (DHP). The DHP acts as a conduit between the public and road safety professionals by bringing together local knowledge and concerns with specialist expertise. As well as the £10,000 Local Community Fund available to each elected Member they also have the opportunity to direct £10,000 of existing highways budgets to address local issues.

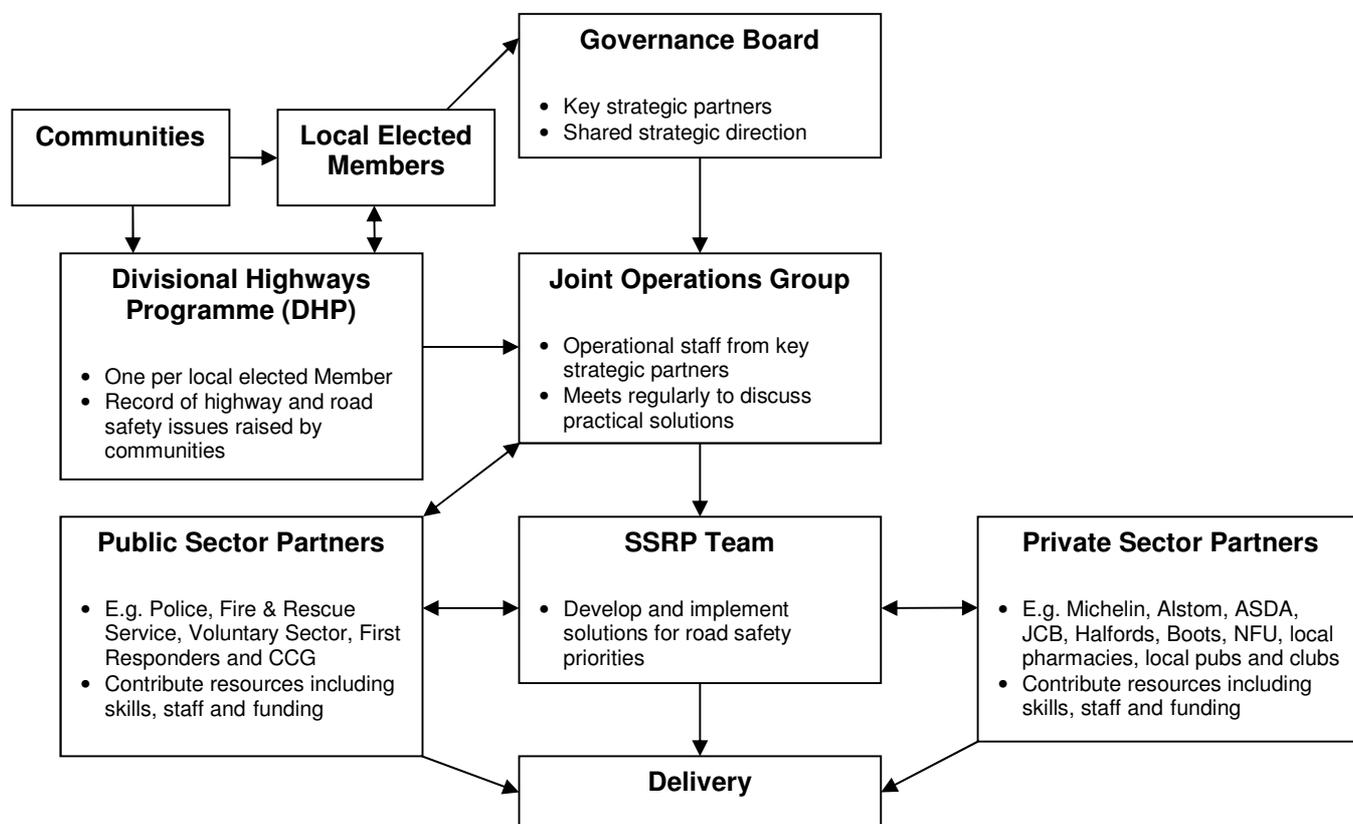


Diagram 3: Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership structure

Local communities can apply to their elected Members for funding for community projects, including road safety issues. Whilst SSRP receives direct contact from a variety of sources including members of the public, parish councils and community groups, all such requests are referred to locally elected Members to maintain their awareness and involvement in local issues. A DHP is developed for each elected Member area recording highway and road safety concerns raised by communities.

Communities are at the heart of road safety whether they are geographically based or form road user groups. SSRP recognises the need for communities to **feel safe** as well as **be safe**. SSRP uses a range of initiatives to support communities:

- Wheelie bin stickers displaying the speed limit
- Community Speed Watch scheme – a local group of volunteers is setup with SSRPs support to monitor vehicle speeds using hand held radar guns. Speeding drivers are sent a warning letter. Persistent offenders can be visited by the police to reinforce the message.

- Community SIDs – Speed Indicator Devices post mounted and trailer mounted to reinforce speed limits.
- ‘20 is Plenty’ school SIDs – Speed Indicator Devices that are activated during the school opening and closing times to reinforce a 20mph limit outside school premises.
- Community concern sites (mobile speed camera enforcement) – visits made by the mobile speed camera enforcement van to areas of community concern.

The use of these measures is driven by the local community and a greater desire from all partners to ensure communities are supported to feel safer and reassured.

In order to meet its objectives SSRP operates on an annual budget of £1.2m. The Partnership is now completely self-funded, receiving no local authority contribution and therefore it functions at no cost to the taxpayer. In addition to this each partner contributes to road safety whether that is construction, education in schools, enforcement or other risk reduction activities.

The Partnership continues to face a number of challenges that include:

- Limited resources
- Differing priorities of organisations involved
- Delivering consistent road safety message across Staffordshire
- Targeting resources to areas where there are road safety concerns
- Focusing on risk groups experiencing a high number of KSIs
- Monitoring vehicle safety issues
- Educating elected Members and the public on the solutions that are available, their cost effectiveness and feasibility.

These challenges need to be met with continuing innovation, forward thinking and the support of the partners.

2.5 PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

SSRP works with other public sector partners who will be involved in the project to identify where the skill sets of private sector organisations could support a road safety initiative. SSRP then liaises with potential private partners to establish interest in taking part in the project. This usually involves ensuring the project meets the objectives of that organisation, i.e. by reflecting their community commitment.

Commissioning

Once private partners have committed to the initiative, they are then involved in agreeing the aims of the project and developing plans for implementation alongside and on an equal footing with key strategic public sector bodies. This includes planning how the project will be delivered; resources required (staff, equipment, training and budget); location; logistics and risk management.

Staff who are involved in project delivery are regularly kept informed and are able to input into the process. Initiatives are delivered with robust project management by identifying and dealing with difficulties as they arise. On completion all partners are involved in a project debrief to identify what went well, examine any problems and discuss what can be learned from customer and staff feedback.

SSRP has been involved in many of these partnership arrangements since its inception. The examples that follow illustrate the 3 Cs in practice.

2.5.1 Case study – vehicle safety

Community and Culture

Leading safety organisation TyreSafe identified that tyre safety was becoming an issue nationally. They highlighted insufficient tread depths, damaged tyres and incorrect tyre pressure levels as key areas of concern. This was echoed by Staffordshire Police who had concerns regarding the selling of used (part worn) tyres.

In response to these issues SSRP partners developed an initiative which aimed to increase tyre safety awareness in Staffordshire, including informing drivers about fines and criminal consequences; free tyre checks; showing vehicle owners how to carry out tyre maintenance and enforcement against motorists with defective tyres.

The partners ran a pilot scheme in the Stafford area during October 2012, coinciding with National Tyre Safety Month. During the first phase, tyre company Michelin set up a mobile tyre bay at ASDA and at Alstom (a large local employer). This resulted in checks to 242 vehicles. 87% were found to have tyres with pressure levels that were very dangerous; dangerous; over inflated or temporarily acceptable.

Just 13% of vehicles had the correct tyre pressure. In addition Michelin found 14 vehicles with punctures, 1 with illegal tread depth and 3 with illegal tyre damage. Advice and training were provided to all 242 drivers and the vehicle details of those with defective tyres were recorded.

“Michelin has worked with Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership for four years and over that time we have run our 'Fill up with Air' events in various supermarket car parks and on the premises of other local businesses. This has enabled us to effectively communicate our message to drivers that regular tyre maintenance not only makes their car safer on the roads, but can also save money by reducing fuel consumption.”

Paul Cordle – Michelin

Staff involved in the delivery of the initiative received positive customer feedback. Many people were surprised by the problems identified with their vehicles and the possible consequences. The second phase of the initiative involved two weeks of increased police enforcement activity by the Road Policing Team. The activity took place in the Stafford area and consisted of general vehicle safety checks, including checks to tyres. Due to the success of the campaign further events were held in 2013.

“We would definitely like to participate in more events - we had really good feedback about the last event and I know that the event has prompted more people who didn't have time or were worried about the event, to go and check their tyres because of the results of those looked at on site. I present the results to all the employees that are in my business so that's about another 400 people.”

Christia Killen – EHS Manager, Alstom

2.5.2 Case study – target groups

SSRP also target groups of drivers who are classed as high-risk based on evidence captured from vehicle collisions and casualty rates. These higher risk groups include older drivers.

One contributing factor to the increasing numbers of incidents involving older drivers is poor eyesight, or drivers using glasses that are not to the correct prescription. Working in partnership with Boots Opticians and a number of Staffordshire garden centres, SSRP arranged a programme of free eye testing during the summer of 2012, aimed primarily at older drivers but available to all interested customers.

Boots Opticians conducted a basic eyesight check and where appropriate made recommendations for the individual to make an appointment with their own optician for a more thorough examination. Information was also provided to customers emphasising the importance of regular eye tests; and the implications of poor vision, including an increased risk of being involved in a vehicle collision, and the possibility of criminal conviction.

“I found our day with the Road Safety Team very useful as it gave us the opportunity to interact with the wider community in an environment where they felt comfortable and discussed the importance of good eyesight whilst driving. I would not hesitate to repeat this event.”

Lee Winters – Boots Opticians

2.5.3 Case study – Hixon

Community

Hixon is a village to the north east of Stafford. It is not intersected by any A or B roads but is close to both the A51 and A518. Hixon has several industrial estates and business premises on its outskirts in addition to the residential areas in the village. Traffic travelling through the village is mainly accessing homes and businesses.

Hixon Parish Council has campaigned for a number of years for road safety improvements within the village. Local safety schemes haven't been justified using the traditional evaluation because there hasn't been a recorded pattern of personal injury collisions to treat. However the community still remained concerned.

As a result, the following measures were implemented:

- School SIDs promoting '20 is plenty' installed in September 2010. This is a 20mph speed limit outside of schools during school starting and finishing periods using speed indicator devices.
- Mobile speed camera enforcement sites implemented on Church Lane April 2011 and New Road September 2012.
- Community Speed Watch scheme introduced March 2012. Community Speed Watch is a visible, volunteer based vehicle speed check using hand held radars.

Hixon Parish Council still felt that more could be done to improve the road use within the village and requested that a number of highways measures were considered in relation to speed limits, traffic calming and junction improvements. Supported by SSRP they commissioned a report to evaluate potential improvements to address the concerns raised. Staffordshire County Council is looking to implement some of these measures on behalf of the parish council in 2014/15, after the parish council had sourced funding from the local community.

2.5.4 Case study – delivery of road safety education

Commissioning

The number of road safety officers working for Staffordshire County Council (SCC) was reduced in 2012 following budgetary constraints. Rather than reduce the level of road safety education carried out in schools, SSRP along with Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) service agreed a solution to enable the delivery of the road safety education to continue.

SCC Road Safety and Education Officers have helped to upskill SFRS Community Safety Officers to deliver road safety education in the County's high schools. There are now more road safety professionals delivering education in the County's high schools than there were previously. SSRP are currently in discussion with the police with a view to getting more police officers to help deliver a programme of road safety education.

2.5.5 Case study – Biker Awareness

Culture

Biker Awareness is a campaign focused around three messages: 'Are You Biker Aware?', 'Think Bike' and 'Take Longer to Look for Bikes'. The campaign was a result of an increase in the number of KSI collisions attended by the police, where drivers were pulling out of junctions into the path of motorcycles. Therefore the campaign focuses on making drivers more aware of motorcyclists on the road, particularly at junctions.

The campaign includes a series of engagement events in shopping centres with information and resources to support the campaign. This is backed up by billboard advertising on heavily trafficked roads and the use of radio advertising through local radio stations.

The feedback so far is very positive and there has been good engagement at events. Further evaluation will follow to assess the effectiveness of the campaigns. As with all ETP measures, it is difficult to assess the actual impact of the campaign on casualty numbers. It takes time for initiatives to gain traction and for messages to transfer to behavioural changes.

3. SUMMARY

The 3 Cs help Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership to provide a relevant, focused service that is responsive, resilient and flexible. By commissioning positive outcomes, having a strong community focus and being involved in the cultural exchange, SSRP will continue to help deliver safer roads for Staffordshire.

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Author Biography

Tim Heminsley started his career in 2001 at a civil engineering construction company. He spent 7 years working as a site engineer then assistant site manager on civil engineering projects that included the construction of new roads, bridges, structures and highway drainage.

He moved from the private sector to the public sector in 2008, becoming a design engineer for Staffordshire County Council. Here he helped to design and deliver road improvements and new road schemes. In 2011 he took up the post of Project Engineer in the Accident Investigation Unit at Staffordshire County Council where he currently works.

His current role involves analysing personal injury collision data. From this analysis he proposes engineering and enforcement measures and helps to inform road safety education in Staffordshire. He regularly carries out Road Safety Audits on proposed and new schemes.

He is a member of the ICE and is progressing towards becoming an Incorporated Engineer.