
ROAD SAFETY ISSUES SCRUTINY PANEL

20 DECEMBER 2006

Councillor Allen
Councillor Hayes
Councillor Peel
Councillor R. Silvester
Councillor R. Wilkinson
Councillor Williamson

Officers:

James Dearling – Senior Democratic Services Officer,
Legal and Democratic Services
Mark Edwards – Principal Road Accident Investigation
Officer, Environmental Services
John Evans – Head of Highway Management,
Environmental Services
Jeff Fisher – Principal Engineer, Environmental Services
Trevor Higson – Principal Road Safety Officer,
Environmental Services
Tony Kelly – Group Engineer (Highways), Environmental
Services

Councillor Allen in the Chair

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved – That the minutes of the previous meeting,
held on 29 November 2006, be approved.

15 BEST PRACTICE – PRESENTATION

The Panel received a presentation on best practice of the
councils awarded Beacon status for road safety. The
Panel considered case studies from the six Beacon
councils: Nottingham, Devon, Knowsley, Lincolnshire,
Norfolk, and Northamptonshire. The Panel was informed

that all of the problems identified in the Beacon council areas were to differing degrees also recognised in Bolton. Information was presented to the Panel indicating that much of the intervention practice followed by the Beacon councils was directly applicable to Bolton.

The Panel was informed that intelligent cameras able to automatically read number plates and calculate average speeds over a known distance were used in Nottingham to enforce speed limits. It was indicated that the apparatus used in such a scheme was subject to approval from the Department for Transport.

The Panel was informed that joint action with motorcycle user groups figured in the best practice of both Devon and Northamptonshire councils. Among the lessons identified from these councils' practice was the merit of involving motorcyclists in road safety scheme design and maintenance, including route auditing by user groups, and the worth of a diesel spill telephone hotline.

Information was presented to the Panel indicating that Knowsley council promoted off-road routes for its safer routes to school initiative, that Norfolk council supported Kerbcraft and safer routes to school, and that Lincolnshire council colour coded its routes and used this in its education, training, and publicity.

During the ensuing discussion a number of points were made and clarifications given:

- in Nottingham intelligent cameras were used primarily on ring roads, especially where a route appeared to be a higher speed limit than it was;
- the Panel was advised of the need to demonstrate a speed related casualty record at any site before a speed camera could be erected;
- while the evidence from a Watchman speed recording device could not be used to prosecute speeding motorists, the data gathered by the system could encourage police deployment of

resources to tackle speeding motorists; and

- Panel members were informed that funding streams for road safety education schemes were often irregular.

The Head of Highway Management submitted a report to the Panel which described the identification, assessment, and implementation of best practice in casualty reduction and traffic calming in Bolton. The report included best practice identified in national guidelines and standards. This best practice was described to the Panel in six areas: management of casualty reduction; accident investigation and research; education, training and publicity; consultation; design and construction of projects; and member involvement.

The Panel was informed that accident data collected by Greater Manchester police was compiled into a database accessible to Bolton officers and the Greater Manchester Transportation Unit. Also provided to the Panel were brief details of the presentations currently being staged before the council's area forums. The Panel was advised that members of the public had not always received feedback from consultations as promptly as they should have.

During the ensuing discussion a number of points were made:

- the value of signage indicating road accident hotspots and relating casualty figures was suggested, but their long-term impact was questioned;
- since many main roads constituted ward boundaries in Bolton then information to councillors concerning road accidents possibly needed to cover areas wider than wards; and
- Panel members suggested that a recent planning committee decision underlined the need for the

council to act in any instance of a proven road safety issue.

Resolved – That the report and presentation be noted.

16 DRIVE AND SURVIVE

The Head of Highway Management submitted a report to the Panel which described the Drive and Survive road safety scheme in Cheshire. The report provided information on the development of the multi partnership scheme, its duration, and aims. The Panel was informed that the course objective was “To assist young people to be more responsible on the roads and thereby hopefully make them think about the consequences of their actions, and help them to become better and safer drivers.” The report contained details of the course content, including presentations, demonstrations, and testimony from those who had lost family members in car crashes.

During the ensuing discussion a number of points were made:

- Panel members suggested the merit of showing a video of accident statistics and images to drivers shortly after they passed their driving test;
- the value of investigating a road safety DVD used by Liverpool City council which depicted teenage behaviour from a peer’s viewpoint was suggested;
- given the difficulty of communicating to teenagers and young people, the value in road safety education of stressing injury rather than death was suggested;
- Panel members agreed the merit of including an element of shock tactics in road safety messages;
- the Panel was informed that the council was a

service provider to Greater Manchester Police for remedial training, running a one and a half day course which cost £150 and featured training from driving instructors; and

- Panel members were advised that from April 2007 all police forces were required to have a speed awareness course.

Resolved –

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That information be obtained on the annual number of new drivers in Bolton.

17 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS INTO TRAFFIC CALMING IN LONG LANE, BRIGHTMET DRIVE AND BLENHEIM ROAD, BOLTON

The Head of Highway Management submitted a report which informed the Panel of the casualty reduction performance of the Long Lane and Blenheim Road traffic calming schemes and the degree of compliance of the traffic calming features with standards. The report made clear that of the thirty-eight road humps surveyed, fifteen exceeded the specified tolerance and six of these exceeded the regulation maximum of 100mm. The Panel were informed that following previous investigation and analysis the decision had been taken not to undertake remedial action in relation to road humps which exceeded regulations by only a marginal amount. The Panel was advised that the council's Traffic Calming Code of Practice provided for the reshaping and removal of road humps when road maintenance work was undertaken.

During the ensuing discussion a number of points were made:

- in response to a suggestion from a Panel member, officers undertook to survey the road hump opposite the school and examine the gradient of the speed cushion at the junction of Blenheim Road and Long Lane;

- Panel members suggested that the profile of road humps, rather than just their height, was also important;
- the Panel was advised that the gradient for road humps adopted by the council was 1:18, but that many of the road humps on Long Lane pre-dated this standard and were steeper – typically 1:12; and
- in response to a request from a Panel member, officers undertook to examine the gradient at the junction of the north end of Mornington Road and Sofa Street.

Resolved –

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That information be provided on road humps and gradients as described above.

18 A COMPARISON OF BOLTON'S CALMING ASSESSMENT AND PRIORITISATION SYSTEM WITH ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS IN OTHER GREATER MANCHESTER AUTHORITIES

The Head of Highway Management submitted a report which informed the Panel of the traffic calming assessments used in Greater Manchester by neighbouring authorities and how these compared to Bolton's. The report indicated that Oldham, Salford, and Trafford used systems similar to Bolton's and that Wigan was to adopt a version of the same system. Outline details of the systems followed by Bury and Rochdale were provided to the Panel, along with the information that Manchester did not formally assess traffic calming requests.

In response to suggestions from Panel members, officers advised that inclusion of an assessment of the distance from the frontage to the highway might be problematic in Bolton's assessment system, and indicated that details of the number of killed or seriously injured merited inclusion.

The Panel was informed that children of people living in disadvantaged areas were more likely to have accidents, and that this should be discernible in accident data.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

19 TRAFFIC CALMING IN LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET

The Head of Highway Management submitted a report which informed the Panel of the London Borough of Barnet's review of traffic management measures. The report stated that Barnet's review was undertaken as part of a significant road resurfacing programme in the Borough. The report contained details of Barnet's policy and a summary of how it compared to Bolton's

Panel members suggested the value of monitoring Barnet's review of traffic management measures and its road casualty rates.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

20 ACCIDENT AND CASUALTY TRENDS IN BOLTON COMPARED WITH OTHER AUTHORITIES

The Head of Highway Management submitted a report which informed the Panel of research into casualty statistics in Bolton compared with those of other local authorities. The report summarised selected findings from a recent Greater Manchester Transportation Unit study, commissioned by the council, to identify accident and casualty research into trends between 1994 and 2005 and also identify issues and possible target groups. In addition the final section of the report detailed Best Value Performance Indicator 99 in 2005 compared with both 2004 and the average of 1994-98.

The Panel was advised that a decrease in the number of killed or seriously injured in Bolton during the baseline period 1994-98 made further subsequent reductions difficult compared to other areas.

During the ensuing discussion a number of points were made and clarifications given:

- in response to a question from a Panel member, officers advised the Panel that studies suggested altering daylight saving time would not improve

road safety;

- the Panel was informed that the number of killed or seriously injured in road accidents was highest on the northern side of Greater Manchester, possibly due to different travel patterns. Panel members suggested better public transport links might also be responsible;
- Panel members highlighted the road casualty improvements made by Salford and Stockport and suggested factors such as the number of pedestrian crossing points might be responsible. Also, the Panel proposed that information on the location of pedestrian accidents be obtained from Salford and Stockport;
- the long term effect of the extensive use of the Watchman system speed recording devices in Tameside had yet to be confirmed;
- the possible value was suggested of a suitably qualified highways officer from Salford or Stockport visiting and sharing firsthand their practice with Bolton; and
- Panel members emphasised the need to improve road junctions, particularly with respect to lines of sight, and enforce parking restrictions on corners.

Resolved –

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That information be obtained on Salford and Stockport's road casualty reductions as described above.

21 ACCIDENT STATISTICS FOR AREAS OF DISADVANTAGE IN BOLTON

The Head of Highway Management submitted a report which informed the Panel of research into accident and casualty statistics in Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) areas in Bolton compared to non-NRF areas in Bolton. The report compared statistics between NRF areas, with non-NRF areas, and with the whole of Bolton. The Panel was advised that high accident rates in central NRF areas were due to the high volume of traffic and that these rates were not all related to local people but included those driving through the ward.

During the ensuing discussion a number of points were made and clarifications given:

- in response to Panel members questioning whether there was any research indicating that cultural differences might lead to more accidents, officers stated that data collected by Lancashire police apparently indicated that people from an ethnic minority were more likely to be involved in accidents both as pedestrians and drivers; and
- the Panel was advised that the incidence of main roads passing through a community appeared to be a factor in road casualties. Panel members suggested that community facilities either side of a main road generated pedestrians and were a factor in accidents.

Resolved –

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That information be obtained on any research addressing cultural differences or ethnicity as factors in road casualty rates.

22 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered the approach to be taken to the remainder of the scrutiny review in the light of information gathered to date (for example, future meeting dates, information required, methods to obtain information, and

future witness sessions).

Panel members indicated that the main focus of the next meeting of the Panel would be to identify areas for the Panel's recommendations. It was proposed that for the next meeting a list of possible areas for recommendations be compiled from members' suggestions.

Resolved –

(i) That a list of possible areas for recommendations be compiled from members' suggestions; and

(ii) That the next meeting of the Panel be arranged for 1.30pm on 17January.