

Cleveland Safety Camera Partnership Scheme

Executive summary

Background The review of the Cleveland Safety Camera Partnership Scheme took place in October and November 2006. This executive summary reports on the main findings and recommendations of the review.

The aim of the review was to examine ways of achieving savings of £300K or £500K on an 'assumed' Cleveland Safety Camera Partnership Scheme revenue budget of £1,108,506.

The Review Team examined the organisational structures and functions of the partnership; analysed a draft 2007/08 budget, the 2006 advertising budget and the 2006 survey on the impact of the advertising.

The Review Team carried out semi - structured interviews with senior council officers who represented the Local Authorities along with the Project Manager and operational supervisors and staff.

The Review Team took cognisance of the advice contained in the draft consultation paper issued by the Department of Transport (DfT), dated August 2006, which stated there should be 'integration of camera activity and partnerships into the wider road safety delivery process from 1 April 2007'.

Local Authorities There was definite support for the Safety Camera Partnership from the 'Chief Engineers'. There was consensus that it was right to undertake a review of the partnership, because of the change in funding and recent advice from the DfT.

There was a view that the deployment of cameras should be 'data led' and there should more involvement of local Road Safety teams in decisions to deploy mobile cameras. It was felt that it would help to ensure other road safety options were considered alongside their use.

There was support for 'invest to save' initiatives.

The views of the 'Chief Engineers' extended to the use of the partnership PR budget to support local road safety resources. This was to give more balanced support to all road safety options.

Revenue budget expenditure The partners supplied projected revenue costs for the 2007/08 budget, along with reasons for expenditure. The 2007/08 revenue budget has been calculated to be £775,105, subject to the recommendations contained in this report being accepted. This figure is a reduction of £333,401 on the 'assumed' revenue budget of £1,108,506.

It is a reduction of £280,249 on the provisional revenue allocation of £1,055,354 to the Safety Camera Partnership by the Local Authorities.

Invest to Save The CTO process of issuing NIP's and Fixed Penalty Tickets is labour intensive and 'ripe' for automation. Initial enquiries have identified 2 systems that could automate the process.

One system, 'Star Trak', could result in a savings of £100,000 over 5 years.

The other system, 'Eros' could result in savings in the region of £374,000 over 5 years.

It is recommended the latter option be further investigated.

Managing the revenue budget The responsibility for managing the budget lies with the Project Manager. The fact that it is administered by Middlesbrough Borough Council, makes it more difficult for the Project Manager to manage.

It is recommended that consideration be given to Hartlepool LA administering the budget, which would also result in £9,000 savings to the partnership.

Public Relations Function The Public Relations (PR) post was a mandatory requirement as per national guidance to safety camera partnerships.

The cost of providing the PR function is £191,500, made up of £42,700 for the PR Manager and £148,800 for the advertising budget. From this budget, £28,000 is paid to two companies, Fused (£10,000), and PR Works (£18,000).

Fused provide all the creative's, artwork, printing, booking of airtime on TV and radio. Their costs include the £4000 for the maintenance and updating of the web site.

PR Works provides up to three press releases, (together with professional photography if required) per month.

£8,000 is spent each year on surveys, as per national guidance. In March 2006, a survey involving a total of 400 telephone interviews was conducted.

A summary of the results is as follows:

- 18% (71) of respondents stated the advertising campaign had made them more favourable towards Safety cameras.
- 41% (163) of respondents said that the main source of the awareness came from the TV, with 12% (47) of respondents remember seeing local campaigns on TV.
- Only 5% (20) of respondents said local campaigns were effective.
- Only 1 person reported seeing the web site, although the PR Manager reports that it has 250,000 hits a year.

The results indicate that national television is the best medium for advertising, and that only a small proportion of respondents thought that local campaigns were effective.

In the 2006/07 advertising budget, £43,200 was allocated to the duplication

and distribution of the Gotcha DVD. The 2006 survey reported that only 10% (40) of respondents remembered it.

The survey results for the 2005/06 do not appear to support the continued spending of £150,000 each year on a safety camera advertising campaign.

Options for the future of the PR function and budget

DfT advice (August 2006) stated that partnerships should 'continue to pro-actively provide information about safety cameras as part of a wider approach to road safety related communications'.

The 'Chief Engineers' put forward views that were consistent with the above advice. It was proposed that each Local Authority could utilise their own 'in house' professionals, to tap into existing channels of communications. They believed the monies spent on the PR function, was out of balance with what was being spent on other road safety issues and it needed to be addressed. This option would significantly reduce the monies needed to be spent on outside advertising.

If decisions are made to use the current PR budget to support local road safety initiatives, and to use 'in house' professionals, it would question the existence of a PR role that solely dealt with issues surrounding safety cameras.

The following options are therefore suggested as a possible way forward:

1. Extend the role of the existing PR Manager, to co-ordinate the wider approach to road safety related communications for all the partners.
2. Develop a policy, where specific local issues are dealt with at a local authority level, and utilise a senior manager from the partnership bodies, supported by the Project Manager, to issue any statements/information about the deployment and effectiveness of safety cameras in general.
3. Use the Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association (LARSOA), to co-ordinate the wider road safety related communications for all the partners. At a regional level, there is already collaboration on specific road safety campaigns.

The Review Team believes that there is a need to standardise the style of coordination across Cleveland, to ensure that the methods of communicating the use of safety cameras is dealt with in the most effective and efficient way.

This view is based on the fact that the operational teams that work on behalf of the partnership are in organisations that have a Cleveland wide responsibility. Option 2 does not deliver this.

Whilst the less expensive option would be option 3, the risks associated with it relate to whether the Project Manager could take on this responsibility.

The Police Camera Team

The police camera team comprises of a police staff supervisor and 5 constables.

The constables are deployed on mobile camera speed enforcement; internal and foreign force enquiries (arising from speed offences); installation / retrieval of films (from fixed camera sites); analysis, and recording of VRM which they send to the CTO.

There are substantial abstractions that affect the deployment of camera team, e.g. enquiries; court; courses; completion of Court files and assisting with film viewing by drivers. These are not routinely monitored and analysed.

It is recommended that there should be a system to monitor and evaluate abstractions and the reasons for them.

Camera deployment is not generally 'intelligence led', although the Data Analyst, based at Cannon Park, receives and keeps data, from the Local Authority telemetry system, about excess speed on 'designated' roads, speed survey data from 'complaint' roads and accident 'hot spots'.

It is recommended that a process is developed, to ensure the deployment of cameras is 'intelligence led'.

The Review Team believe that the change to 'intelligence led' deployment could deliver the same results with fewer resources. For this reason it is proposed that the team should be reduced by one constable.

Central Ticket Office (CTO)

The CTO team comprises of a supervisor; two senior clerks; 7 admin clerks. There is currently one vacancy that need not be filled with the present workload. This is reflected as a saving in the budget. The CTO issues NIP's and conditional FPN's offers; initiates enquiries to trace drivers; and a 'revert to summons' process when driver fails to respond.

The percentage of staff costs claimed against the supervisor and 1 senior clerk represents the ratio of supervision afforded to the SCP and other CTO duties.

Legislation dictates that a constable must be involved in the fixed penalty process and the issue of a conditional offer of a FPN. As there are constables in the police camera team, there is no longer a need for a constable to be employed in the CTO. This post could be filled by a support staff member. The reduction in costs for this post is reflected in the draft 2007/08 budget.

It is estimated that automation of the CTO process could save up to half of the staff costs. It would also assist in smoothing out the peaks and troughs of the work caused by the manual processes of recording VRM data from the camera film.

HM Court Service

The Court team deals with the processing of payments for FPN arising out of the safety camera partnership. It comprises a supervisor; a team leader and 4 admin staff. They deal with payments for FPN's; receipt and endorsement of driving licences; and the 'revert to summons' process.

The team also deal with other FPN's, and have estimated that camera partnership work accounts for 77% of their work. This ratio is reflected in the staff costs they have charged against the partnership budget.

Operational Management of the safety camera

The Review believes that there is a need for greater operational co-ordination across the functions and increased collaboration with local road safety teams.

partnership

The operational co - ordination of the partnership is not straightforward, because its functions are on different sites. There is no process, except the monthly meeting of the Partnership Board, to co-ordinate these functions.

Increased co-ordination and more 'intelligent' use of resources could significantly improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the partnership resources. This could free up resources to tackle other road safety priorities.

The Review Team recommends that the Project Manager chairs a weekly or fortnightly operational meeting, involving representatives of the partnership functions, and including local authority road safety officers to make the best use of the information available and help to improve the co-ordination of their activities:
