

Safe and Sustainable Communities

Review of Motorcycle Accidents in Derbyshire

July 2007

**Report of the Improvement and Scrutiny
Committee Working Group**

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1. Executive Summary

The Improvement & Scrutiny Committee was asked by the Director of Environmental Services to undertake a review into the ways the County Council works to reduce the number of motorcycle accidents on the county's roads, and the number of people killed or seriously injured as a result of these accidents.

The Council Plan 2005-2009 has a priority **“To improve our roads and provide good public transport”** an action to achieve this aim is **“We are working with others to cut accidents, deaths and injuries on our roads”**. Should the outcomes and recommendations of this review be implemented, the review will have contributed to this priority of the Council Plan.

Derbyshire experiences a higher proportion of accidents, in which motorcyclists are killed or seriously injured than most other counties. The main reason for this is the popularity of the county with motorcyclists from many parts of the UK, and from abroad. Matlock Bath in particular has for many years been a popular meeting place for motorcyclists, especially in the summer months. The Derbyshire countryside, with its hilly terrain and many twisting roads, attracts a large number of leisure bikers, many of whom like to test their machines and their own motorcycling skills along the county's roads. Other major roads, such as the A6, which is used to approach Matlock Bath, and the other “leisure routes” have a large proportion of motorcyclists at certain times.

The vulnerability of a motorcyclist, compared to a car driver, dictates that they are more likely to be killed or seriously injured in a collision.

The Council's Environmental Services Department intends to take measures to reduce the incidence of motorcycle accidents to meet Government prescribed targets of a 40% reduction by 2010 of all motorists killed or seriously injured. In Derbyshire, motorcyclists make up a large proportion of this group

The Scope of the Review

The review scoping report set out the following issues which would be considered during the course of the review;

- The percentage of deaths and serious injuries as a result of motorcycle accidents, compared to other road users within the county
- Comparisons with national statistics for such accidents

- Methods employed by other county councils to reduce accidents
- Methods employed by other agencies, such as the Police, to reduce accidents
- The impact of road safety campaigns, both by DCC and those of other organisations, aimed at reducing motorcycle accidents
- The availability and effectiveness of speed detection equipment for potential use on the county's roads
- The effectiveness of training for motorcyclists in the county

To obtain this information it was agreed that the following methods would be used;

- Interviewing officers of the Environmental Services Department
- Researching methods used by other County Councils
- Researching methods used or recommended by other agencies responsible for road safety
- Interviewing representatives of Motorcyclists' user groups
- Cabinet Member for Community Safety Services

Presentation on Statistical Data

The first stage of the review was a presentation made to the full Improvement and Scrutiny Committee in September 2006. This was made by Alan Prosser, Highways Safety Officer, and gave the Committee;

- statistics of motorcycle accidents within the county, compared to other vehicles
- the severity of injuries suffered by those involved in these accidents
- comparisons of casualties suffered by age of rider and power capacity of their vehicle

The characteristics and common accident patterns between the two age groups – 16 to 21 years and 31 to 50 years - were compared, along with the different actions to reduce casualties, employed by the County Council and aimed at the 2 different groups.

The locations of the worst accident areas within the county, for motorcycles was also displayed, along with the 7 "worst routes" on which the Council was conducting a sign campaign to attempt to reduce the number of accidents.

Shortly after this presentation, two Members of the review working group undertook a tour of one of the 7 most dangerous routes, accompanied by officers of the Environmental Services Department's Road Safety Division. The tour followed the A6 from Matlock Bath to Cromford, the B5035 past Carsington Water into Ashbourne, the A515 towards Via Gellia and the A5012 to Cromford before re-tracing the A6 back to Matlock.

A number of safety initiatives which were being used by the Council to try to reduce accidents were discussed during the tour. These included educational campaigns, the "Think Bike" poster campaign, the "Bike Plus" subsidised rider training course and speed enforcement campaigns.

At the conclusion of the tour, Members agreed it would be important to consider the Police perspective on this matter and a meeting was held with Chief Superintendent Lynn Harris and members of her staff.

The Police Perspective

During November 2006, members of the review working group met with C. Superintendent Lynn Harris, C. Inspector of Road Policing, Paul Berry and Inspector Matt Pickard of the Derbyshire Constabulary. The Police officers were very supportive of the endeavours the County Council was making to reduce motorcycle accidents and undertook to work in partnership with the Council wherever possible. Derbyshire's Road Safety Partnership, which would be in receipt of new Government funding arrangements from April 2007, could make motorcycle safety one of its top priorities. Funding could be made available for safety camera projects, educational initiatives and promotional campaigns, which could be used to support the campaigns organised by the Road Safety Team.

The Police officers were able to advise Members on the different speed detection systems currently available and their potential use on two wheeled motor vehicles (TWMVs).

It was agreed that there was scope for the County Council and Derbyshire Constabulary to work closely together on a number of initiatives to help address the number of accidents involving motorcycles.

Motorcycling Organisations

Working group Members sought an opportunity to discuss this review with motorcyclists who actually used the county's roads.

A meeting was held in March 2007 with representatives of the British Motorcycle Federation (BMF) and the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) and officers of those divisions of the Environmental Services Department who were instrumental in road engineering, maintenance and highways safety.

This gave the opportunity for the "road users" to discuss issues with the "road providers". The motorcycling organisations' representatives were particularly pleased to have a chance to meet with the Highways officers and the review working group Members and it was an opportunity to further links between the officers and members and the local motorcycling networks – which was considered useful for future partnership work in reducing accidents.

It should be noted that the representative of MAG subsequently wrote a letter to the Motorcycle News, praising the County Council for its efforts in reducing accidents and claiming that Derbyshire County Council was a pioneer authority in involving both its officers and motorcycling road users in its work to reduce accidents.

The meeting identified the "three Es" – Engineering, Education and Enforcement as the main bases for reducing accidents.

The Ridewell Event – Cleveland

In researching the work being done in other areas of the UK, this review identified one example of good practice - namely the "Ridewell" event. Organised by Cleveland Police in partnership with Stockton on Tees Borough Council, Ridewell is held one a Sunday in July each year and takes the form of a festival aimed at motorcyclists. A number of attractions such as displays by the Yamaha Racing Team, trade stands and competitions all help to draw a large crowd of motorcycling enthusiasts. The Police use this opportunity to get the safety message across by having their own displays, talking to bikers and offering a very popular observed ride facility in which bikers are viewed riding their machines by Police officers who then give advice and make suggestions to improve rider safety. The feedback from people attending the event was very positive, especially for the observed rides with many riders saying they felt their riding skills improved as a result.

Members of the review working group felt strongly that a similar event would help the situation in Derbyshire and the Cleveland Police officers invited us to visit this year's event. This was scheduled to take place on Sunday 8 July, and working group Members were to report back at this meeting. However, due to the heavy rain which fell in the last week in June, the event venue was flooded and the organisers had to regretfully cancel this year's event. The Improvement and Scrutiny officer has maintained contact with the organisers who have offered to meet with officers and Members of this Committee at a future date to discuss the potential benefits of a similar event in Derbyshire.

Bikers Attitudes

Throughout this review it has been suggested a number of times that, no matter how many campaigns, enforcement measures and engineering facilities are used, there will always be an element of the motorcycling population who will take risks with their riding for the thrill of speed and pushing themselves and their bikes to the limit – and unfortunately, over the limit.

There are a number of internet websites where riders submit their own reviews of roads in the UK. This report will show a number which have been posted for roads in Derbyshire which give an insight into the frame of mind of some motorcyclists who travel in and around the county.

Speed Detection and Enforcement

There are numerous methods available to detect the speed of vehicles but not all can identify motorcycles as distinct from other vehicles. However, there is equipment which can identify different types of vehicles, including motorcycles, as distinct from others. The report gives details of equipment which has been trialed by the County Council at some of the “dangerous routes” and the impact the use of this equipment could have on accident reduction.

Recommendations

1. That the Strategic Director of Environmental Services prioritises his Department's budget to fund the following initiatives;
 - ❖ an increased level of promotional campaigns to include;

- continuing and expanding the ongoing leafleting/DVD campaigns
 - promoting the Derbyshire Bike Plus course more widely
 - holding an event similar to “Ridewell” in Cleveland, as a pilot initially, but with the intention of holding this event annually
 - promoting rider safety through local schools/local motorcycle retailers to reach young riders
 - continuing and expanding the “Think Bike” and “Too Die for.....?” signage campaigns on the 7 most dangerous routes
 - investigating the possibility of promoting the safety message on Bikers’ websites
- ❖ the purchase of additional data-capture and speed detection equipment for use on the 7 most dangerous routes
2. That the appropriate officers in the Environmental Services Department work in partnership with representatives of local motorcycling organisation networks when developing schemes to improve road safety for motorcyclists
 3. That the appropriate officers work closely with the Derbyshire Road Safety Partnership to strengthen the work done by the County Council and its partners to reduce motorcycle accidents
 4. That resources be directed at purchasing more data-capture equipment which will enable the detection of speed of motorcycles and allow more vigorous enforcement of speed restriction
 5. That the fact that data-capture and speed detection equipment is being used on the 7 dangerous routes, be promoted to road users
 6. That the appropriate officers use information obtained from the data-capture equipment to co-ordinate enforcement campaigns with Derbyshire Constabulary, to be targeted geographically and on occasions when motorcycle activity is high

1.2.3 The Next Stage

The report will be referred to the Cabinet for consideration. It is recommended that:-

- (a) the Chair of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee presents the report to the Cabinet.
- (b) following consideration of this report and subject to the Cabinet agreeing to the recommendations, it is suggested that the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee receives a report at a date to be determined, to outline progress made.

2. Motorcycle Casualties – the Current Picture

The presentation given to the full Improvement and Scrutiny Committee in September 2006 gave information on the latest available casualty figures, which related to 2005. It showed that, in Derbyshire, of all those people killed or seriously injured (KSI), 48% were car users and 28% were motorcyclists (riders of two-wheeled motor vehicles or TWMVs). National statistics show that, whilst motorcyclists represent 1% of all traffic, they account for 18% of KSIs. Therefore the Derbyshire figure is considerably higher than the national level.

The County Council has been given targets to meet to reduce the number of accidents for all motorists within the county. There had been a trend of reduction between 2002 and 2005 but the Council was not on track to meet a 40% reduction by 2010.

The trend for the types of accidents involving motorcyclists was divided between older people on large, powerful bikes, who tended to be involved in accidents caused by excessive speed/loss of control (these were generally in the summer/at weekends) and younger riders of smaller machines who tended to be involved in accidents on weekdays, at junctions and/or in poor weather. There were, therefore, two distinct groups of riders which the council should be targeting.

The Council was using different methods to reduce casualties within these 2 distinct groups. For the younger riders group the following initiatives were currently used;

- DSA “Arrive Alive” campaign
- Joint initiative with Chesterfield College/Police
- Bike Plus subsidised rider training
- “Think Bike” Campaign

For the older age group;

- Motorcycle Awareness Campaigns from 2001 – 2006
- “To Die For....?” Signs at bends prone to loss of control accidents
- Motorcycle Forum meetings
- Bike Plus subsidised rider training
- Awareness days – Matlock Bath and Darley Moor
- Shiney side up partnership initiatives
- 2006 Routes campaign

The latter campaign is specifically targeted at the 7 worst routes, these being;

A5012 Via Gellia
A621 Baslow to Owler Bar
A57 Snake Pass
B5035 Wirksworth to Ashbourne
A515 Ashbourne to Alsop-en-le-Dale
A624 Chinley Head to Glossop
A6 Matlock Bath to High Peak Junction

Many of these routes feature on websites aimed specifically at motorcyclists, particularly the leisure riders who tend to use the routes at weekends and in the summertime. An insight into how some of these riders perceive our roads is given in the following section of this report.

Members might like to note that, for the year 2006 (ie. whilst this review was being undertaken) there were 11 fatal motorcycle casualties and 115 serious injuries caused to motorcyclists. Comparisons with [previous years' figures is shown below;

DERBYSHIRE excluding Derby - MOTORCYCLIST CASUALTIES

	Fatal	Serious	KSI	Slight	Total
1995	11	128	139	216	355
1996	8	104	112	202	314
1997	9	112	121	247	368
1998	7	126	133	198	331
95-98 ave	9	118	126	216	342
1999	14	140	154	268	422
2000	14	134	148	226	374
2001	11	135	146	253	399
2002	16	155	171	302	473
2003	16	129	145	294	439
2004	8	119	127	238	365
2005	15	118	133	239	372
2006	11	115	126	246	372
% below ave	26% above	3%	0%	14% above	9% above

3. Bikers' "Road Reviews"

The following paragraphs are extracts from a Bikers' website on which motorcyclists are able to post reviews of their favourite routes in the UK. Recent ones which refer to routes in Derbyshire are shown below.

"B5023 Duffield to Matlock"

This is the alternative route to Matlock now the 50 signs are up on the A6 (Derby to Matlock). The road starts in Duffield at the first left turn as you enter the village from Derby. The road takes you through villages at a legal 60 mph. The road is always empty! Take this road until you get to the traffic lights at a village called Cowers Lane. Go straight on through Wirksworth and Cromford. At the bottom of the hill turn left onto the A6 and 1 mile to Matlock.

This route is fast and has plenty of knee-down corners and fast open straights – there are no coppers....they are all on the A6!"

"A621 – Sheffield to Sheffield"

Starting from Owlmer Bar roundabout on the A621/B6054, follow the A621 through the first few twists (newly re-surfaced), down Baslow Hill to the roundabout. Turn right, through Baslow to the second roundabout and turn left (now the A619). Take the first right (still the A619 and go for it! Through the fabulous 13 bends and take the first right onto the A6020. The first half mile is dead straight, slightly downhill with a hidden dip to get airborne and then stand on the brakes for the roundabout. Straight across and follow A6020 through some nice twisties to the T junction with the A6 at Ashford in the Water. Turn right and follow the A6 up Taddington Dale where the road eventually opens up into dual carriageway (Taddington Bypass) and drop down on the other side for the run into Buxton through the nice twisties alongside the river Wye. At the first roundabout you come to, turn left up to and straight on at the lights to a second set and bear left onto the A53.

As you climb out of Buxton, turn right just past Rocky Bay Garage onto the A54. Take the left fork after approximately 1.5 miles (still the A54) and follow the road all the way to the lights at Bosley – but be prepared to get airborne and watch out for suicidal sheep!

Right at the lights along the A523 Cat and Fiddle, eventually re-joining the A54 for the drop into Buxton. Turn right at the first set of lights, re-tracing your earlier route back to the roundabout on the A6, but this time turn left onto the second roundabout and turn right (still the A6) out past the golf course (watch out for low flying golf balls!) and drop down through Doveholes to the roundabout at

Barmoor Clough. Turn right and follow the A623 past Sparrowpit, down through Peak Forest (be careful here.....watch out for radar traps) up over Tideswell Moor, through Wardlow Mires and drop down through Middleton Dale to Stoney Middleton and Calver. Go straight on at Calver lights, back through Baslow village and up the fabulous Baslow hill to the Owler Bar roundabout starting point. Stop here for a fag/leak and do it all again!"

"A537 – Macclesfield to Buxton

Probably the most demanding road in the UK. Approximately 10 miles of quality "A" road. Loads of bends and undulations. Off camber bends a-plenty. Sundays in summer are mad! If you survive, go through Buxton on the A6 through Bakewell to Matlock Bath. Loads of bikers meet there all through the summer.

Come and have a go if you think yer hard enough! See you there."

"A5012 – Cromford to A515

This road is both fantastically twisty and exceptionally beautiful. The route swoops and soars over the low Peaks, great speed (up to 70mph at least)

Known locally as Via Gellia, you should point out that the A515 is heavily patrolled by the boys in blue, unmarked cars.....be circumspect especially just right towards Buxton – long inviting straights.

Once into Buxton head past the hospital and up towards Whaley Bridge past the Goyt Valley. If you think the A5012 is good this is even better, and better still (mainly uphill) but be advised it takes no prisoners.

I'd add my weight to the A5012 being a GREAT route but if you then continue up the A515 to Buxton you should keep an eye out for the boys in blue. This is a favourite section for them to pull over bikes and cars. It's so straight that people race along it but there are some tricky blind summits and there have been a lot of accidents. The police tend to sit on top of a long incline so they can time people between white markers as they approach. They used to also operate a number of unmarked police cars.....

I've never seen anyone stopped on the A5012 except for the 30mph approach to Cromford where I've seen a hand held radar gun in use, so go easy here also.

A few more warnings about the A5012 are that at certain times of year it's pretty slippery as it tends to collect and retain a lot of fallen leaves. Also there are a number of quarry lorries on the old Roman route (Via Gellia) which are (a) slow if loaded and (b) cause a lot of nice slippery limestone to be spread around the

entrances. There is a short section between a sharp right and a sharp left (going towards Buxton) where a big pool collects after heavy rain. There is usually a temporary flood sign but don't go racing on dark nights during a storm! If you keep to the crown of the road you should avoid most of the puddle."

It can be seen from these comments that most tend to encourage potentially dangerous driving. However some do offer warnings of tight bends, junctions and approaching traffic islands (all of which will be signed for all motorists) but also highlight areas where, for example, rain water collects, fallen leaves may be hazardous or quarry lorries exit sites.

Whilst the County Council has no power to control the content of such websites, it may be possible to use these as a means to get the safety message across and provide safety information for the routes where most motorcycle accidents occur.

4. Dangerous Route Tour

In September 2006, working group Members toured some of the 7 worst routes.

The route of the tour began in Matlock Bath, continued along the A6 to Cromford, the B5035 past Carsington Water into Ashbourne, the A515 towards Via Gellia and the A5012 to Cromford before re-tracing the A6 back to Matlock.

Along the route the following issues were discussed;

- The siting of the “Think Bike” Campaign signs, at the start of each dangerous stretch of road, and at other points along each route wherever possible
- The well received roadshow, which had been situated in Matlock Bath on one occasion during the summer
- The “Bike Plus” subsidised rider development course, sponsored by the County Council
- Concerns were raised by the Members of the “direct access” approach to motorcycle training which, in effect, enables newly qualified riders to progress from no experience at all to riding the most powerful machines within 4 days
- The perceptions of many motorcyclists that accidents were mostly the fault of car/lorry drivers, when the actual evidence pointed to problems mainly being excess speed of motorcyclists and the inability to negotiate bends at appropriate speeds
- The routes visited on the tour provided a naturally linking circular route which was favoured by a number of riders wishing to test their machines and their own riding skills, often putting themselves and other road users in danger,
- It was noted that, along the route, there were a number of residential villages which, at times of heavy motorcycle traffic (ie summer weekends) suffered considerable noise nuisance and danger when attempting to cross the main roads either on foot or in vehicles
- Particular note was made of the recent re-surfacing of the A5035 along Carsington Water, where double solid white lines had been placed to dissuade overtaking along stretches of the road where this would be dangerous
- Reference was also made to the fact that, where the biggest problem, as far as serious motorcycle accidents was concerned, was the larger sports bikes ridden by older motorcyclists, there was also the younger motorcyclist to consider. Whilst a lot of the information

available from the Road Safety team was applicable to all riders, a separate educational campaign, targeted specifically at young riders of smaller machines, through schools and youth organisations would be appropriate. However, this would impact on the current resources available to the Road Safety Team and this could be addressed further by this Review.

- If further resources were available, the educational campaigns could be extended to target many more riders. There may be potential to encourage more involvement by motorcycle dealerships and the motorcycling specialist media to help promote and sponsor the “Bike Plus” scheme, hopefully resulting in it being offered free of charge to riders.
- Since the educational campaigns had been introduced, there had been a downturn in fatal/serious accidents along the most dangerous routes. It was considered that if these campaigns were continued and increased this would contribute to an improvement of these figures.

At the end of the tour it was agreed that it was important for the working group to consider the Police perspective on this matter and that a meeting would be held with the appropriate Police officers. Future action would also include contacting other County Councils which encountered similar problems and discuss the methods they used to prevent motorcycle accidents in their areas.

The “Direct Access” courses which were offered by numerous training centres around the country were an issue of concern for the working group members. These offered rapid result courses by which riders could potentially go from complete beginner to being able to take a large powerful bike on the road within a matter of 4 days. Although the County Council has little influence over the system which facilitates these courses, it may be possible to highlight the potential dangers of this system and seek to change the law relating to set a minimum length of time a training course should be.

5. The Police Perspective

Following the dangerous route tour, the review working group met with Chief Superintendent Lynne Harris, C. Inspector of Road Policing, Paul Berry and Inspector Matt Pickard of the Derbyshire Constabulary.

Ch Supt Harris informed the meeting that, at a strategic level, the Road Safety Partnership was in the process of expanding its membership and its role, and that senior officers of DCC, Derby City Council, the Police were working to this end. It was anticipated that other agencies would be brought into the partnership, for example, the Derby and Derbyshire Primary Care Trust, and it was crucial that all the work undertaken by the individual partners was co-ordinated to form a holistic approach to accident prevention.

The Police officers made reference to the excellent work undertaken by the Road Safety Inter-agency Facilitator who was based in the Highways Safety team but who worked for all parties on the Road Safety Partnership. The work of this officer, who was currently employed on a temporary fixed term contract on a part time basis, was highly regarded by the Police officers who has been disappointed to hear that the current post holder was due to leave to take up another post.

It was considered very important to the success of the future accident prevention work of the Road Safety Partnership that the role of this post be expanded and preferably made fulltime and as long term as possible.

From April 2007, new Government funding arrangements would be in place for Road Safety Partnerships and Ch Supt Harris suggested that the Derbyshire Road Safety Partnership should make the prevention of motorcycle accidents one of its top priorities, with resources being directed to initiatives working towards this aim. The funding would not just be to fund safety camera projects, but would be available for educational initiatives and promotional campaigns which could be used to support the campaigns organised by the DCC Road Safety Team.

Road Safety Equipment

The various speed detection systems currently available were discussed. The new SPECS 3 system was capable of detecting motorcycles as well as other vehicles as it recorded average speed across a given distance. The equipment was currently awaiting Government approval but earlier versions of the equipment had had a good effect on drivers' behaviour. The system was relatively portable in that it could be left on one site for a period of time but later moved to other target areas.

The PEIZO system helped gather "intelligence" on motoring activity, eg. where motorists were speeding or driving dangerously, and helped organisations target resources to the areas where it was needed. This system was to be the subject of a

presentation to be made by DCC officers to the working group members at a future date and is referred to later in this report.

Educational campaigns

The Police input into educational projects was discussed. Whilst they tended not to do a lot of educational work (for example with schools) patrol officers do carry copies of the DCC "Bike Plus" advice packs to hand out to motorcyclists whenever possible. In addition, the use of Rider Improvement Programmes, to which people could be referred via the Court system, was being looked at further.

It was agreed that educational work through schools could be expanded when officers visit to discuss road safety in general.

Partnership Working

It was noted that the Police and DCC worked closely together wherever possible to reduce the number of motorcycle accidents within the county. The Police were keen to be part of any campaigns used to this end.

Many factors contributed to motorcycle accident statistics, not least the high influx of visiting riders to the county during the summer months in particular. In 2006 the county had enjoyed especially fine weather, increasing the number of visitors, but accident statistics had actually reduced. The police officers said that this was primarily as a result of the work of, and the initiatives undertaken by, the DCC Road Safety team and the Police were very appreciative of the Council's efforts.

6. Motorcyclists' Organisations

The Review Working Group Members had a meeting with representatives of motorcycle organisations and officers of the Environmental Services Department on 1 March 2007.

David Short, the Campaigns Manager of the national Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), Ken Wells, Margaret Wells and Rod Nuth, all of the British Motorcycle Federation (BMF) attended the meeting, along with the following officers of the County Council;

Nick Gibson – Traffic and Safety Officer NE Area
Dick Hardy – Area Maintenance Manager
Peter Reed – Principal Engineer, Highways Reclamation
Paul Robinson – Traffic and Safety Manager, NW Area
Simon Tranter – Asst Traffic and Safety Manager, NW Area
Alan Prosser – Road Safety Manager
Andy Adlington – Road Safety Officer

The purpose of the meeting was for the review working group members to discuss the ways in which the County Council could work to reduce motorcycle accidents, injuries and deaths, with motorcycling road-users themselves. It was hoped that the perspective of the motorcyclists would add to the outcomes of the review.

The following matters were discussed in more detail;

- There was scope for better communication between the County Council and motorcycling road users. There was a local forum which covered Derbyshire and this could be used as a network for information sharing on highways and safety issues. This would also strengthen the relationship between motorcycling road users and the Council, which could be perceived as an “us and them” relationship at present.
- The motorcyclists' organisations were pleased to be involved in the review and wished to offer positive help to the County Council in its endeavours to reduce the number of accidents.
- It was suggested that methods to reduce accidents could be categorised as the “3 Es”, that is Engineering, Education and Enforcement. This would require input by the Highways and Engineering teams, Road Safety educational campaigns and the local Police

- On the engineering perspective, Simon Tranter explained that roads were all dealt with consistently in respect of warning of approaching bends and the use of crash barriers and other methods. There was some debate as to whether or not crash barriers were useful, or potentially caused more damage, in accidents involving motorcyclists. For example, it was not desirable for a motorcyclist to be flung back into the line of traffic by a barrier, and also some barriers cause serious injury and death when a rider could pass under them, or impact on sharp edges. Simon would welcome the expertise and feedback of motorcycling road users when considering improvements to certain routes and this was something which more formal links with the motorcycle forum could achieve.
- The local motorcyclist forum could also help local Councillors who receive complaints from residents concerning noise nuisance and speed related issues in respect of motorcycles. An exchange of views between the different parties could help bridge the gap between motorcyclists and those who live on the routes favoured by them.
- The County Council's promotional campaigns were discussed. Alan Prosser outlined the work that Andy Adlington had been undertaking, which included promotional days at Matlock Bath where motorcyclists congregated at weekends, poster and leaflet campaigns and the special information packs which were made available to riders through numerous sources, including motorcycle shops and clothing retailers. Campaigns included high profile signage on certain routes/seasons and the promotion of the Derbyshire Bike Plus scheme which subsidised a one-day rider development course. It was stressed that the Team was undertaking as much promotional and campaign work as it could, given its resources.
- The motorcycling organisation group representatives were impressed with the endeavours of the Council to date and welcomed the opportunity to work more closely with the Council's officers in helping to combat the problem of accidents on the county's roads.

At the conclusion of the meeting it was agreed that the review would recommend the continuance of the contact made with the motorcycle organisations during the meeting and involve them in the council's endeavours to reduce the number of accidents within the county.

Members should be aware that, a few days following the meeting, the Improvement and Scrutiny Officer received emails from the Motorcycle organisations representatives expressing their gratitude at being given the

opportunity to meet with Members and Officers who have the responsibility to improve road safety for their members. Subsequently, David Short of MAG, sent the following letter to the "Motorcycle News" journal;

"As bikers we are quick to criticize, with justification, those politicians, councillors and others who are blatantly anti-biking with their policies. I would therefore just like to give praise to Derbyshire County Council for their positive efforts to consider bikers needs and concerns in their transport planning. I went to represent MAG at a recent meeting with Derbyshire County Council to talk about casualty reduction strategies. The Councillors and Officers were very receptive to ideas to promote biker safety without resorting to the usual "crack-downs" and negativity. They are reviewing the use of roadside furniture, seeking advice on crash barriers and other aspects to improve our safety. They have an innovative biker education programme and are considering a major biker event similar to the proven "Ridewell" event in County Durham.

With none other than Rocket Ron Haslam endorsing the sensible approach being taken by the Council, I say let's acknowledge good work. MAG says "Well Done Derbyshire County Council! You are setting the standards others should follow"

7. Motorcycle Speed Detection – A Knowledge Led Approach

The working group members met at a site on the A6 near Cromford on 25 April to view new data capture equipment which the County Council is currently piloting. Officers of the Environmental Services Department demonstrated the equipment, which is capable of identifying different types of vehicles, including motorcycles, the direction and speed of travel and various other items of information. Such information is essential in determining where the Council's resources should be best targeted to reduce accidents. For example, on a given stretch of road, if speeding vehicles were more common at a certain time on a particular day, speed enforcement activities could be concentrated at those times, thus taking the "guesswork" out of when was the best time to undertake enforcement.

Derbyshire is the first county to use this particular system and the manufacturers are very supportive of the Council in piloting the system.

Currently the system was installed at 3 locations in the county, on the A6, on the Via Gellia road and at Owler Bar. These had been chosen because of their popularity with motorcyclists and the high proportion of accidents involving bikes. These sites had been identified using the accident statistics on which Andy Adlington based the selection of routes for the motorcycle publicity campaigns. The Via Gellia and Owler Bar routes were identified as the two worst routes in the county. In addition to the permanent monitoring sites, portable radar equipment is also being used to cover these two routes. This has made it possible to collect data on motorcycles at defined points along the route with the hope that the data will help in the understanding of motorcyclist behaviour.

An example of data capture for the Owler Bar site for August/September 2006 showed that 2148 motorcycles exceed the speed limit. (The system identifies the speed of each bike and 136 of the vehicles logged were traveling in excess of 90mph). This information not only confirms the route as "dangerous" for motorcyclists but can aid decisions on where and when to target enforcement, educational campaigns and different infrastructure to help reduce accidents.

An example of the impact of the use of similar equipment in Humberside resulted in a 57% reduction, over 3 years, in the number of KSI casualties across all the sites surveyed. This resulted from a targeted enforcement campaign using data from systems such as these, albeit not as

sophisticated, thus providing an excellent example of what can be achieved.

The cost of installing a new site to detect motorcycles is around £10,000, although existing traffic measurement sites could be upgraded at a cost of £7,000.

To add VMS (Variable Message Signs, whereby the motorcycle detector could be used to trigger a VMS, thus targeting motorcycles) costs £10,000 and to provide ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition, which can calculate a journey time of an identified vehicle for enforcement purposes, costs £25,000 per site. These costs are indicative and as take-up of these systems increases, so costs reduce.

The data for each site is accessed remotely from County Hall at Matlock on a daily basis and is loaded into web-based analysis software (C2 Web). This is a scalable product thus allowing bespoke developments to be added in the future as required by the needs of the Authority. This application has the benefit of using the internet to share data, if required, by reducing the need to have expensive back office systems for each user. In the future appropriate reports could be made available to the public.

Given the cost of a fatal or serious accident, (currently calculated at over £1m per fatal accident) and the County Council's dedication to reducing the number of motorcycle accidents on our roads, the Council should benefit in the long term from further investment in this system.

8. Conclusions

Derbyshire County Council has a responsibility to reduce the number of motorcycle accidents on the county's roads. This responsibility is not just to reach Government imposed targets but also is a moral obligation to prevent death and serious injury to people traveling on the county's roads. However, the safety of motorcyclists and other road users should be a high priority of Derbyshire County Council and this should be evident in the amount of resources the Council makes available to achieving improvements.

Some of the recommendations of this review could have resource implications as they would impact on staffing levels, the funding of promotional events and campaigns and require the purchase of additional equipment. However, as the outcomes of this review could contribute to the aims of the Council Plan, the implementation of the review's recommendations should be given high priority.

The Strategic Director of Environmental Services will be requested to prioritise his Department's budget to accommodate this expenditure, although if this is not possible in the short term, the Strategic Director should give priority to funding the recommendations in the next financial year.

Throughout the review it has become apparent that there are a number of methods the Council can adopt to help reduce motorcycle accidents. Broadly these can be grouped into the **"3 Es" – Education, Enforcement and Environment.**

Education

The Council does already run imaginative promotional campaigns and displays warning signage at target locations. The review working group found that the work currently undertaken by staff in the Road Safety Team was exceptional given the resources currently available for this work. The Council is fortunate in having a "captive audience" in the large number of motorcyclists who congregate in Matlock Bath at weekends during the summer. The Road Safety team already aims promotional campaigns at the motorcyclists who visit Matlock Bath and there is scope to do more "educational" promotional work in this area.

An event such as "Ridewell", organised by Cleveland police in partnership with Stockton on Tees Borough Council, should be considered very

seriously. Initial discussions with the Police officers who organised the event indicate that the event has led to a reduction in motorcycle casualties in their area. A recommendation of this review will be to explore the possibility of running a similar event in Derbyshire.

As well as targeting the older, leisure motorcyclists the Council should endeavour to reach the younger, first-time motorcyclists who often lack road sense. Links with schools and colleges would help to reach these riders.

Enforcement

Enforcement of speed restrictions and other traffic measures will have to be considered in partnership with the Derbyshire Constabulary. The Derbyshire Road Safety Partnership will be a valuable resource in achieving a more vigorous approach to dangerous riding. To enable the Council and its partners to target their efforts where they are most needed, the use of efficient and modern data-collection equipment is important. The Council should look to invest in the best equipment available for use on the county's most dangerous routes and ensure that information obtained is used to undertake intelligence lead enforcement campaigns.

Environment

The infrastructure and use of signage and street furniture is, to a certain extent, prescribed by national legislation. However, the Council can and should consider the safety of motorcyclists when determining the use of road markings, signage, crash barriers, surface types etc in those areas which are prone to motorcycle accidents. There would be merit in the County Council's engineers and road safety team liaising closely with local motorcyclists' organisations and networks to ensure these routes are developed to benefit motorcyclists as far as possible.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The review working group wishes to commend the work currently undertaken by officers of the Environmental Services Department, particularly those in the Road Safety Team, who - given their current resources - do a considerable amount of work to reduce motorcycle accidents.

The working group Members wish to record their thanks to the following individuals and organisations who contributed to the review;

Representatives of the Motorcycle Action Group (David Short) and the British Motorcycle Federation (Rod Nuth, Ken Wells and Margaret Wells)

Derbyshire Constabulary (C. Superintendent Lynne Harris, C. Inspector Paul Berry and C. Inspector Matt Pickard)

PC. Steve Darby of Cleveland Police

The officers of the Environmental Services Department who have taken part in meetings with the working group during the process of this review.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Strategic Director of Environmental Services prioritises his Department's budget to fund the following initiatives;
 - ❖ an increased level of promotional campaigns to include;
 - continuing and expanding the ongoing leafleting/DVD campaigns
 - promoting the Derbyshire Bike Plus course more widely
 - holding an event similar to "Ridewell" in Cleveland, as a pilot initially, but with the intention of holding this event annually
 - promoting rider safety through local schools/local motorcycle retailers to reach young riders
 - continuing and expanding the "Think Bike" and "Too Die for.....?" signage campaigns on the 7 most dangerous routes
 - investigating the possibility of promoting the safety message on Bikers' websites
 - ❖ the purchase of additional data-capture and speed detection equipment for use on the 7 most dangerous routes
2. That the appropriate officers in the Environmental Services Department work in partnership with representatives of local motorcycling organisation networks when developing schemes to improve road safety for motorcyclists
3. That the appropriate officers work closely with the Derbyshire Road Safety Partnership to strengthen the work done by the County Council and its partners to reduce motorcycle accidents
4. That resources be directed at purchasing more data-capture equipment which will enable the detection of speed of motorcycles and allow more vigorous enforcement of speed restriction
5. The fact that data-capture and speed detection equipment is being used on the 7 dangerous routes, be promoted to road users
6. That the appropriate officers use information obtained from the data-capture equipment to co-ordinate enforcement campaigns with Derbyshire Constabulary, to be targeted geographically and on occasions when motorcycle activity is high