

Additional funding for Operation SPARC (Supporting Police Action to reduce Road Casualties)

Date: 5 October 2021

Report of: Transport Development Services Manager

Report to: The Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- A six-month trial to target dangerous driving in Leeds, known as Operation SPARC (Supporting Police Action to Reduce Road Casualties) commenced in July 2020 as a partnership between Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Police. LCC highways balances totalling £66,200 were used to fund the initial trial. The period of the trial was extended due to the availability of additional enforcement being less than originally predicted.
- It is requested that a further sum of £67,000 be used from highways balances to extend the Operation until Summer 2022 due to the success of the trial.
- On average, the funding permits two additional Police deployments per week using officers working on rest days. Deployments are six hours in duration.
- The areas selected for enforcement activity are based on postcode areas in Leeds with the highest numbers of uninsured drivers and focus on the 'fatal 4': drink/drug driving, speed, seatbelts and distractions (mobile device use) as well as anti-social behaviour vehicles such as illegal use of quad bikes.
- In the first 12 months of the operation, 2,313 drivers were dealt with:
 - 2172 by roads policing officers and
 - 141 by the off-road bike team.
- The most frequently occurring offence during the Operation related to lack of seatbelt use, followed by speeding.
- Operation SPARC contributes to the city and council's ambitions around health & wellbeing, being a child and age friendly city, with safe, strong communities. In particular:
 - Keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable
 - Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
 - Supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles

- Enhancing the city now and for future generations

The Operation contributes to the following outcomes:

- Be safe and feel safe
- Enjoy happy, healthy, active lives
- Move easily around a well-planned, sustainable city that's working towards being carbon neutral

Recommendations

- a) The Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation) is asked to approve the recommendation to extend funding for Operation SPARC using an additional £67,000 of funding. This funding is expected to cover the cost of deployments until Summer 2022.
- b) Operation SPARC will be implemented by West Yorkshire Police, with support from and monitoring by Leeds City Council's Influencing Travel Behaviour team.
- c) Allow Operation SPARC to continue for a further 12 months to enable the evaluation of the operation post pandemic.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

To target dangerous driving and reduce the number of KSI collisions on roads in Leeds. This supports our Vision Zero strategy.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

An increase in police enforcement of the highest risk motoring offences leading to a reduction in the number of deaths and serious injuries caused by dangerous driving, occurring on roads in Leeds.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 1 Regular review meetings have been held with the police and LCC officers to monitor progress and identify next steps. The project has also been a standing agenda item at the Leeds Safer Roads Partnership meetings, where updates are provided by the police regarding progress.
- 2 Regular social media and communications activity have been carried out throughout the trial by the Influencing Travel Behaviour team (using Connecting Leeds channels) and West Yorkshire Police.
- 3 Ward members have been in contact with the Influencing Travel Behaviour team to suggest areas to target as part of the pilot. These requests have been considered by the Safer Roads Partnership members and areas have been targeted when deemed appropriate.
- 4 The Lead Member for Infrastructure and Climate has been briefed on Operation SPARC and is supportive of the extension.

What are the resource implications?

- 1 The £67K is funded from ITB balances from distributed surplus generated by the West Yorkshire Casualty Prevention Partnership.

- 2 Each deployment consists of two police officers and a police vehicle for a 6-hour shift. For the 'off-road' element of the project, two of the police off-road bike team and two police motorcycles are required.
- 3 Council officer staff time will be required for detailed planning and monitoring of the project, for liaison with West Yorkshire Police staff, and for continued planning and delivery of a supporting communications plan.
- 4 Governance of the ongoing project will take place through the Leeds Safer Roads Partnership. Meetings of the group are chaired by Leeds City Council's Transport Development Services Manager and take place on a 6-weekly basis. Membership includes Leeds City Council officers and representatives from West Yorkshire Police and Fire & Rescue Service.
- 5 The exact length of the project extension will depend upon levels of additional police activity undertaken each month and this may vary in line with other arising emergencies and wider issues, including ongoing Covid-19 demands. At this stage it is anticipated that this will be to the end of Summer 2022, at which point future funding streams and opportunities will be considered.

What are the legal implications?

- 1 Enforcement of Road Traffic law in Leeds can only be delivered by West Yorkshire Police. There is no remit within which this can be delivered in-house or procured from other service providers, as such enforcement activity is within the jurisdiction of West Yorkshire Police.
- 2 The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) has been delegated the authority to approve the recommendations contained within this report as identified in the Constitution.
- 3 Not eligible for call-in.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 1 Existing funding for the pilot project is expected to have been spent by the end of August 2021. If the funding and project are not extended, West Yorkshire Police would be unable to continue to provide additional hours of police enforcement to address dangerous driving behaviours.
- 2 Regular monitoring and review meetings will take place between council officers and police representatives. Reports on police activity funded by this initiative will continue to be provided monthly.
- 3 Funding for Operation SPARC is in addition to existing WYP funded roads policing in Operation Amberland. Ongoing monitoring of this programme to confirm additionality of enforcement is undertaken and reviewed at the Leeds Safer Roads Partnership.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 1 A reduction in dangerous driving will increase people's likelihood to walk and cycle, particularly for shorter journeys. This is both for personal safety reasons and because localities feel more welcoming to those using active travel modes. Consequently, there will be health benefits linked to air quality, and improved wellbeing.
- 2 Reduced reliance on motor vehicles will also reduce carbon emissions, contributing towards Leeds' climate emergency targets.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 1 The alternative proposal of not extending the project would result in lower levels of enforcement delivered by the police. In turn, this could result in a negative response from ward members and members of the public who have been largely in support of the operation.
- 2 Concerns around safety (both perceived and real) could increase, which would have a negative impact on the council's ambition to increase levels of active travel, thereby affecting health, wellbeing and air quality.
- 3 By not extending the project, it may give the impression to the worst offending motorists that their dangerous driving behaviour is accepted or unlikely to be challenged. Communications outlining the fact that already good levels of neighbourhood policing and roads policing enforcement are continuing would be required (as SPARC provides additional police hours for enforcement to take place).
- 4 Extending funding for the operation ensures continued additional police enforcement, tackling the most dangerous driving behaviours. The data-led, targeted approach ensures that the postcode areas in Leeds with the highest rates of uninsured drivers will continue to be a priority.

b) How will success be measured?

- 1 West Yorkshire Police provide monthly data on the activity funded as part of this initiative, in an agreed format, by the 10th of each month.
- 2 Qualitative data relating to complaints around anti-social driving behaviour will also be used to measure impact and effectiveness, particularly for the community-based element of this project.
- 3 A full evaluation report will be produced at the end of the Operation. This will be provided to The Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation)

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 1 Existing funding is due to be spent by the end of September 2021. The funding needs to be in place as soon as possible after this date.
- 2 Deployments will run from September 2021 until the budget allowance is exhausted, which is anticipated to be the end of Summer 2022.
- 3 During this time, future funding streams will be investigated.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – SPARC Overview

Appendix 2 – Data from Motor Insurers Bureau

Appendix 3 – Casualty Data by Ward

Background papers

Previous report to Highways Board

Appendix 1 – SPARC Overview

- 1 Operation SPARC has been operational since July 2020, and the initial funding of £66,200 has been fully allocated to deliver additional police enforcement activities.
- 2 The initial pilot project has seen almost 2,500 drivers dealt with to date for offences relating to the fatal 4 and vehicle defects. 26% of penalties were for seatbelt offences, 19% for speed offences, and 14% related to vehicle defects or no MOT. A full breakdown of penalties is shown in Appendix 1.
- 3 Casualty reduction work has continued to achieve positive results. Casualty data for 2020 correlates with reduced traffic volumes from March onwards, particularly during national lockdowns. In Leeds, the downward trend for all casualties from 2015 – 2019 continued, but this must be considered alongside the falling traffic levels. Casualties among vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and powered two-wheeler riders) saw an overall reduction. The number of serious or fatal injuries also reduced for all user groups, although this had increased for pedestrians and pedal cyclists in 2019. Furthermore, the vulnerable road user group aggregated the highest share of high severity casualties in Leeds in 2020 (60%). Therefore, despite overall reductions, continued pro-active work is required to protect the most vulnerable and to enforce against driving behaviours which lead to the most severe injuries.

Road User	Severities	All Casualties (January-December)							5 yr avg	2020 vs avg last 5yrs
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020			
Pedestrian	Fatal	4	5	7	15	8	1	7.8	-87.2%	↓
	KSI	95	94	97	90	104	55	96	-42.7%	↓
	All severities	385	389	321	315	327	187	347.4	-46.2%	↓
Pedal Cyclist	Fatal	2	2	0	1	2	1	1.4	-28.6%	↓
	KSI	59	64	55	62	63	48	60.6	-20.8%	↓
	All severities	321	347	281	286	236	221	294.2	-24.9%	↓
PTW rider	Fatal	4	0	2	2	6	2	2.8	-28.6%	↓
	KSI	66	70	68	69	62	35	67	-47.8%	↓
	All severities	192	181	170	144	137	87	164.8	-47.2%	↓
Car Driver	Fatal	3	2	1	3	1	5	2	150.0%	↑
	KSI	53	51	48	67	65	45	56.8	-20.8%	↓
	All severities	1,016	936	801	731	728	456	842.4	-45.9%	↓
Car Passenger	Fatal	2	3	5	5	5	2	4	-50.0%	↓
	KSI	29	35	33	25	40	29	32.4	-10.5%	↓
	All severities	510	519	452	341	361	192	436.6	-56.0%	↓
Goods Occupant	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	↔
	KSI	7	8	7	6	6	2	6.8	-70.6%	↓
	All severities	77	78	53	66	64	31	67.6	-54.1%	↓
Bus Occupant	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	↔
	KSI	10	4	9	6	3	1	6.4	-84.4%	↓
	All severities	147	94	115	111	47	19	102.8	-81.5%	↓
Other	Fatal	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.2	-100.0%	↔
	KSI	3	0	0	1	1	4	1	300.0%	↑
	All severities	11	2	8	2	1	9	4.8	87.5%	↓
Total	Fatal	16	9	15	26	22	11	17.6	-37.5%	↓
	KSI	338	333	324	337	356	231	337.6	-31.6%	↓
	All severities	2,664	2,551	2,203	1,994	1,907	1243	2263.8	-45.1%	↓

- 4 Operation SPARC is a partnership activity between Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Police, and is a key element of the developing 'Vision Zero' action plan.
- 5 Evidence from West Yorkshire Police and from Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour team indicates an increase in excessively high speeds and anti-social driving / riding behaviour during and following Covid-19 restrictions. Despite the success of the project to date, these and other dangerous driving offences need to continue to be addressed to improve feelings of safety among vulnerable road users, reduce road casualties (particularly high severity collisions) and to support council ambitions to increase rates of active travel across the district.
- 6 During the Covid-19 pandemic, reduced traffic volumes and increased levels of walking and cycling were observed. Operation SPARC enables the most vulnerable road users to continue to walk and cycle by building confidence relating to safety. The rise in active travel rates can be supported and maintained through the extension of the project.
- 7 Alongside the operation, there has been an ongoing programme of engineering, driven by analysis of casualty data. The Local Transport Plan has identified 7 schemes to be developed during 2021/22, with a budget of £678,000. A further feasibility, initial design and costing of 12 schemes for 2022/23 has been approved.
- 8 A package of education, training and publicity has continued during the academic year of 2021/22, despite ongoing challenges due to Covid-19. Practical pedestrian and cycle training took place during periods when schools were open and virtual lessons and activities have been developed for use when access to schools was restricted. A full campaign and event calendar was delivered, including online and social media campaigns as well as a return to face-to-face road safety events and training.
- 9 Operation SPARC contributes towards the enforcement element of the Safer Roads Partnership, ensuring a well-rounded approach to road safety intervention. It will form a major element of the Vision Zero action plan, feeding into pillars such as Safer Streets, Safer Speeds and Safer Behaviours.
- 10 The operation will continue to target the postcode areas in Leeds with the highest levels of uninsured drivers, as provided by the Motor Insurers Bureau (appendix 2). As there is a close correlation between areas with high levels of uninsured drivers and collisions, an overview of casualties by ward area can be seen in Appendix 3.
- 11 In addition, there is a correlation between clusters of collisions / casualties and areas of social deprivation in Leeds. Data-led interventions will contribute towards improving safety for those living in the areas of highest social deprivation.
- 12 Tackling the most dangerous driving behaviours will improve safety for the most vulnerable road user groups who together accounted for 60% of all casualties in West Yorkshire in 2020.
- 13 For the off-road element, operations will focus on key locations identified by the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour team.
- 14 If this proposal is accepted, it is anticipated that the funding extension will allow a similar number of deployments as in the pilot project, given the almost equal level of funding. It is difficult to predict whether the same number of drivers will be dealt with as it is hoped that over time, the number of offences reduces due to robust enforcement activity.

	Total	Roads Policing	Off-road Bikes
Individual Drivers Dealt With	2,585	2,444	141
Speeding Tickets Issued	488	483	5
Seatbelt Tickets Issued	672	660	12
Mobile Phone Tickets Issued	101	101	0
Advice Given to Drivers (No Formal Action)	358	335	23
Vehicles Seized	214	190	24
VDRS/No MOT/Dangerous Parts/Dangerous Loading	359	358	1
Dangerous Driving/Driving without Due Care/S59 Warnings	103	77	26
Other (Arrests, Other types of TOR)	283	230	53

Appendix 2 – Data from Motor Insurers Bureau

Top 20 MIB offending motorist's postal districts – defendants compared to population

Top 20 - Previous 10 Years				Top 20 - Previous 3 Years			
Postal district	District	Sum of Population	Defendant index >2,500 population	Postal district	District	Sum of Population	Defendant index >2,500 population
BD 3	Bradford	33,336	4.55	BD 3	Bradford	33,336	4.28
BD 8	Bradford	31,893	4.36	BD 7	Bradford	35,214	4.12
BD 9	Bradford	28,532	4.27	WF13	Kirklees	27,521	3.76
BD 7	Bradford	35,214	4.05	BD 8	Bradford	31,893	3.70
BD 1	Bradford	3,790	3.92	BD 5	Bradford	32,021	3.30
HX 1	Calderdale	24,249	3.41	BD 9	Bradford	28,532	3.19
WF13	Kirklees	27,521	3.39	LS11	Leeds	34,737	3.12
BD 5	Bradford	32,021	3.31	LS12	Leeds	40,736	2.84
BD21	Bradford	26,636	2.99	LS 9	Leeds	37,383	2.70
BD 4	Bradford	31,147	2.98	LS 8	Leeds	47,805	2.63
LS11	Leeds	34,737	2.79	BD 4	Bradford	31,147	2.61
LS 9	Leeds	37,383	2.78	BD21	Bradford	26,636	2.59
LS 8	Leeds	47,805	2.75	BD 2	Bradford	29,799	2.48
LS12	Leeds	40,736	2.45	LS 7	Leeds	29,437	2.34
BD 2	Bradford	29,799	2.29	HX 1	Calderdale	24,249	2.23
LS 7	Leeds	29,437	2.24	BD12	Bradford	16,821	2.19
LS10	Leeds	35,616	2.17	LS10	Leeds	35,616	2.07
LS 1	Leeds	3,887	1.99	BD 6	Bradford	29,771	2.07
HD 1	Kirklees	23,788	1.92	BD15	Bradford	15,713	2.04
BD15	Bradford	15,713	1.82	BD 1	Bradford	3,790	1.95
Total		573,240	3.05	Total		592,157	2.90

Appendix 3 – Casualty Data by Ward

Ward	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Adel and Wharfedale	41	34	58	33	21	187
Alwoodley	54	19	24	14	40	151
Ardley and Robin Hood	109	113	104	129	53	508
Armley	111	77	76	65	44	373
Beeston and Holbeck	137	123	140	110	65	575
Bramley and Stanningley	48	45	40	37	28	198
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill	88	93	84	64	49	378
Calverley and Farsley	60	38	34	34	28	194
Chapel Allerton	85	94	49	72	54	354
Cross Gates and Whinmoor	49	41	43	27	25	185
Farnley and Wortley	68	70	63	58	26	285
Garforth and Swillington	58	43	39	43	25	208
Gipton and Harehills	150	107	112	85	60	514
Guiseley and Rawdon	51	48	42	24	19	184
Harewood Ward	90	64	80	99	55	388
Headingley and Hyde Park	80	57	52	49	40	278
Horsforth	32	43	46	33	24	178
Hunslet and Riverside	151	154	130	151	86	672
Killingbeck and Seacroft	67	41	45	59	36	248
Kippax and Methley	39	43	26	35	14	157
Kirkstall	68	76	41	47	36	268
Little London and Woodhouse	290	234	173	183	114	994
Middleton Park	64	59	76	59	28	286
Moortown	45	50	32	36	22	185
Morley North	68	61	68	68	28	293
Morley South	68	55	59	49	25	256
Otley and Yeadon	65	52	53	42	40	252
Pudsey	54	28	22	29	28	161
Rothwell	67	52	38	35	17	209
Roundhay	47	57	32	29	28	193
Temple Newsam	49	55	38	25	16	183
Weetwood	54	47	28	31	32	192
Wetherby Ward	44	30	43	53	33	203
All Wards	2551	2203	1990	1907	1239	9890

