

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

Date: 5th April 2023

Report of: Transport Development Services Manager

Report to: The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

Request to secure additional £70,000 funding to continue Operation SPARC (Supporting Partnership Action To Reduce Road Casualties) for a 12-month period to target dangerous and antisocial driving across Leeds, with a particular emphasis on the Fatal 5 driving behaviours, in line with Vision Zero.

Operation SPARC operates as a partnership between Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Police to previous success. The funding will be used to cover the cost of additional working hours for police officers, through both the extension of police shifts (extended tours) and additional shifts, ensuring that this is delivered to provide added-value with roads policing.

Locations for enforcement activity will be led by data gathered from a variety of sources, detailed in the main report.

Operation SPARC is identified as a key element of the Vision Zero 2040 strategy, and addresses the following actions:

- ENF1- identify who is causing harm, develop and deliver data-led police enforcement operations to tackle dangerous and anti-social behaviours, including the 'fatal five' and stolen vehicle offences
- BEH1 – With West Yorkshire Police and West Yorkshire Safe Roads, incorporate careless driving to create a 'Fatal Five' road traffic offences, communicate this change and adapt operations accordingly.

Recommendations

- a) The Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation) is asked to approve the recommendation to extend funding for Operation SPARC using £70,000 of funding. This funding is expected to cover the cost of deployments for the financial year 2023/24.

- 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 until the end of FY 2023/24.

What is this report about?

- 1 A request to continue to target dangerous driving in Leeds following previous, successful operations. Operation SPARC (Supporting Police Action to Reduce Road Casualties) is a partnership between Leeds City Council Highways and Transportation and West Yorkshire Police.
- 2 In previous periods of Operation SPARC, the funding has permitted, on average, two additional police deployments per week using officers working on rest days. Deployments have been approximately six hours in duration. Methods to maximise the duration and impact of deployments will be implemented under the new funding arrangements to provide added value. This would include extended tours (at the beginning or end of shifts) to run deployments during peak traffic times when traditionally there has not been Roads Policing resources on the road due to shift handover.
- 3 The areas selected for enforcement activity will be data-driven, using various sources, including:
 - road safety casualty and collision data
 - reports of anti-social vehicle use to West Yorkshire Police and Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour team
 - vehicle insurance data
- 4 Enforcement activity will focus on the 'fatal five' driving behaviours: drink/drug driving, speed, seatbelts, distractions (mobile device use) and careless / reckless driving as well as vehicle safety / insurance offences and anti-social vehicle use.
- 5 Between July 2020 and October 2022, 4631 drivers were dealt with:
 - 4345 by roads policing officers and
 - 286 by the off-road bike team.
- 6 The most frequently occurring offence during this period related to lack of seatbelt use, followed by speeding. Future deployments will prioritise the offences to be targeted, through negotiation between Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Police. This period of funding is expected to prioritise speed offences, including enforcement in 20mph areas, followed by distractions, drink/drug driving, careless/reckless driving, and seatbelts.
- 7 Operation SPARC contributes to the city's Best Council Ambition around Health & Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Zero Carbon. In particular:
 - Delivering a safe and welcoming city for people of all ages and from all communities
 - Enabling every community in the city to have safe, connected streets and paths
 - Delivering a low-carbon and affordable transport network which encourages people to be physically active and reduces reliance on the private car, helping people to get around the city easily and safely
 - Being a child-, age- and dementia-friendly city.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 8 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, helping Leeds to achieve its Vision Zero ambition.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 9 Leeds City Council adopted its Leeds Safe Roads 2040 Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan in September 2022. This aims to eliminate all death and serious injury on our roads by 2040. To deliver this ambition an action was identified to use data to target enforcement activities. Operation SPARC delivers on this action alongside general roads policing. The strategy and action plan were subject to extensive consultation. No further consultation has occurred as part of this proposal.

What are the resource implications?

- 10 The £70,000 is funded from half funded from S106 (Travel plan) and half from revenue savings in year (vacancy saving and other general saving).
- 11 Each deployment consists of two police officers and a police vehicle for the duration of the deployment.
- 12 Council officer staff time will be required for detailed planning and monitoring of the project, with detailed outcome measuring, for liaison with West Yorkshire Police staff, and for continued planning and delivery of a supporting communications plan.
- 13 Governance of the ongoing project will take place through the Leeds Safe 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 West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- 14 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.

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

- 15 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.
- 16 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.

17 Funding for Operation SPARC is in addition to existing West Yorkshire Police funded roads policing in Operation Amberland. Ongoing monitoring of this programme to confirm additionality of enforcement is undertaken and reviewed at the Leeds Safe Roads Partnership.

What are the legal implications?

18 Enforcement of Road Traffic offences 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.

19 The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) has been delegated the authority to approve the recommendations contained within this report as identified in the Constitution.

20 Not eligible for call-in.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

21 By not funding the project, it may give the impression to the worst offending motorists that their dangerous driving behaviour is accepted or unlikely to be challenged. This would have a negative impact on progress toward and perception of the Leeds Vision Zero ambition.

22 The alternative proposal of not securing the funding 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.

23 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.

24 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).

25 Extending funding for the operation ensures continued additional police enforcement, tackling the most dangerous driving behaviours. The targeted approach ensures that the locations identified through data analysis will continue to be a priority.

26 If more funding were made available, it would not necessarily follow that more deployments could be made available as police resources are limited. This maximises available resources.

How will success be measured?

27 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.

28 A full evaluation report will be produced at the end of the Operation. This will be provided to The Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation) and reported at Scrutiny Board for Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth on an annual basis.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

29 Deployments will be expected to commence once the funding is available and run until the budget is exhausted, which is anticipated to be the end of financial year 2023/24.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Previous Highways Board Report including Operation SPARC overview
- Appendix 2 - Summary of outcomes of Operation SPARC July 2020 – October 2022
- Appendix 3 – EDCI for Operation SPARC

Background papers

Previous Report to Highways Board.