

To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

Subject: Road Safety

Date: 18 December 2024

Introduction:

1. As illustrated in the table below, on average 52 people are killed on Kent's roads every year, and many more suffer life changing injuries.

	2021	2022	2023	2024 (to date)
Road deaths	57	54	45	37
Serious injury	746	745	843	772

2. These tragic and often avoidable events always have a significant and life-long impact on the families affected, the individuals who have to live with their injuries, and the local community.
3. That is why, in the [Making Kent Safer Plan](#), one of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) priorities for the Chief Constable is to 'Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero'.¹
4. Preventing harm and saving lives is a core mission of policing, so this paper:
- provides an overview of the enforcement activity Kent Police undertakes to support Vision Zero;
 - outlines partnerships that work in collaboration with Kent Police to make our roads safer; and
 - highlights the support available to road victims and their families to help them cope and move forward.
5. The PCC is grateful to Kent Police for its assistance with this paper.

Kent Police teams that focus on roads policing and wider road safety issues:

6. Road safety is the responsibility of all police officers, and the Head of Roads Policing regularly engages with Divisional colleagues to ensure officers and staff are suitably trained and equipped to contribute.
7. This is achieved through a Road Safety Forum and an interactive SharePoint page that provides advice and guidance for Divisional officers on all road safety related legislation, including impaired driving, vehicle defects, seat belts, mobile phones, eyesight testing and much more. The SharePoint page also informs officers of the regular National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Road Safety Campaigns.
8. The following teams are specifically tasked with road safety:
- Roads Policing Unit (RPU) – 42 specialist officers who work a 24/7 shift pattern and are trained in Advanced Driving and Tactical Pursuit and Containment. They have additional capabilities including a variety of road safety related enforcement tactics such as speed detection, vehicle prohibition and window tinting analysis. The officers use a fleet of high powered marked and unmarked cars and motorcycles to respond to calls and promote road safety across the county.
 - Road Safety Unit – Eight officers trained to the standard above but with enhanced qualifications to examine commercial vehicles. These officers proactively focus on collision hot spots and areas of specific risk to road users.
 - Camera Safety Team – Six members of staff who work a flexible shift pattern to provide mobile and static speed enforcement across the county, ensuring coverage in locations and at times of highest risk.
 - Serious Collision Investigation Unit – 20 officers who investigate fatal or life changing collisions. The officers are supported by a team of Forensic Investigators and conduct high quality investigations which maximise opportunities to bring offenders to justice and identify risks for other road users.

¹ ['Vision Zero'](#) aims for zero, or as close as possible, fatalities on Kent's roads each year by 2050.

- Special Constabulary RPU – 20 volunteer officers who are trained to the same standard as regular RPU officers and who use the same fleet of vehicles to respond to calls and promote road safety.

National operations with Kent Police engagement:

9. Kent Police participate in road safety campaigns coordinated by the NPCC.
10. For the period November 2023 to November 2024 (inclusive), enforcement activity consisted of the following:
 - Nov 2023: insurance enforcement – 58 uninsured vehicles seized, and drivers prosecuted.
 - Dec 2023: impaired driving enforcement – 392 drivers prosecuted.
 - Feb 2024: mobile phone enforcement – 207 drivers prosecuted.
 - Apr 2024 (month long campaign): ‘fatal four’ enforcement – 85 drivers prosecuted for use of mobile phone/distraction offences; 3,954 for speeding offences; 171 for driving whilst impaired; 73 for seatbelt offences; and 61 for other criminal offences.
 - Jun 2024: Two-Wheeler Week – 20 riders prosecuted.
 - Jul 2024 (month long campaign): ‘fatal four’ enforcement – 108 drivers prosecuted for use of mobile phone/distraction offences; 4,840 for speeding offences; 236 for driving whilst impaired; and 138 for seatbelt offences.
 - Sep 2024 (two week campaign) – ‘fatal four’ enforcement – 6 drivers prosecuted for use of mobile phone/distraction offences, 3,550 for speeding offences, 122 for driving whilst impaired; and 28 for seatbelt offences.
 - Oct 2024: Op Dark Night – a focus on vulnerable road users (data still pending).
 - Nov 2024: Op Drive Insured – to date 48 vehicle seizures; operation remains ongoing.
11. Where a month is missing, there was no national campaign. Data is also still being processed for the more recent operations, therefore the figures may increase.

Enforcement activity relating to ‘fatal four’ offences:

12. Kent Police will enforce road traffic law in order to promote safer roads and to achieve a reduction in the numbers of people killed or seriously injured. This will be achieved by focusing efforts on offences which have a direct relationship to road safety.
13. The table below illustrates the enforcement activity from static cameras, mobile cameras and police officer deployments. Enforcement includes Fixed Penalty Notices, Traffic Offence Reports, summons and arrests (arrests are in relation to alcohol or drug impairment only).

	Excess Speed	Mobile Phone	Seatbelt	Alcohol/Drug Impairment
Oct 2023 to Oct 2024	72,052	1,765	2,179	2,248

Note – Data is incomplete as some still being processed

14. The Force adheres to the view of the NPCC that education is more likely to achieve an improvement in driver behaviour and accordingly will make full use, where appropriate, of diversionary courses as a disposal option for traffic offences.

Enforcement of 20 mph limits and zones within Kent:

15. As per the Department of Transport circular 1/2013, successful 20 mph zones and 20 mph speed limits are generally self-enforcing (i.e. the existing conditions of the road, together with measures such as traffic calming or signing, publicity and information as part of the scheme, lead to a mean traffic speed compliant with the speed limit).
16. To achieve compliance there should be no expectation on the police to provide additional enforcement beyond their routine activity, unless explicitly agreed. Enforcement may be considered where a Traffic Regulation order is in place and other priorities permit; this will be by way of:
 - Targeted enforcement where there is deliberate offending or disregard of limits where those limits are clear.
 - Where limits are not clear (that is they do not feel like/look like the limit or area, or are on inappropriate roads), they will not be routinely enforced (i.e. no regular planned attendance where there is no intelligence of deliberate offending).

17. Through Community Speedwatch, the Force will support appropriate engagement activities within 20mph limits and zones to assist residents where possible to advance the cause of road safety within their local areas. This could include the Speedwatch Manager exploring opportunities to initiate speed checks.
18. Where activity identifies persistent repeat offenders, these will be passed to local Community Safety Units for appropriate and proportionate intervention.

Operation Voice:

19. In 2023/24, the PCC secured funding from the Department of Transport to run a pilot initiative, Operation Voice. This involves RPU officers targeting high risk domestic abuse perpetrators who regularly use motor vehicles; the objective being to minimise the risk they cause to their victims and other road users.
20. In December 2023, activity focused on drivers in Ashford, Chatham, Gillingham, Margate, Ramsgate and Dover.
21. This year, Operation Voice has been conducted three times, with activity taking place in Thanet, Medway and Canterbury. A total of 47 vehicles were stopped. Five people were arrested for impairment offences and one person for domestic abuse related matters. 53 Traffic Offence Reports were issued for road safety related offences and three drivers reported for summons.

Working with other agencies to support Vision Zero:

22. Kent Police chair a weekly meeting with Kent & Medway Safer Road Partnership members during which all fatal and serious injury collisions are discussed. There is representation from Kent Fire & Rescue Service (KFRS), Kent County Council (KCC), Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership, Medway Council and National Highways.
23. Risks to road users are discussed and opportunities to reduce these risks are identified for each partner through tasks such as remedial engineering work, education, or enforcement.
24. Examples include prioritising works to restore road markings or repair road signs, holding engagement sessions with companies employing large volumes of delivery drivers and nominating new locations for speed enforcement checks.

Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership:

25. The [Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership](#) (KMSCP) was formed in July 2002, to reduce death and serious injuries on the county's roads.
26. Contrary to popular belief, safety cameras are not placed on roads where they will make the most money. Enforcement only takes place at sites where there is a history of fatal and seriously injured casualties and where speed has been a contributory factor in crashes.
27. The Partnership comprises: KCC, Medway Council, National Highways and Kent Police and is responsible for the operation of speed, red light and average speed safety cameras within Kent and Medway.
28. It utilises a mix of camera types including mobile safety camera vans, fixed site cameras, red light cameras and average speed cameras. The mobile safety camera vans also detect mobile phone and seatbelt offences, and are used to support NPCC Road Safety Campaigns and Kent Police Road Safety Operations.
29. There are 75 fixed camera sites, 76 mobile camera van sites and four red light cameras currently in Kent.
30. New camera sites are assessed regularly, the most recent being created in October 2024 in support of Community Speedwatch in East Division.
31. Over the past 12 months, 20,412 offences were detected by mobile cameras, and 22,996 detected by fixed cameras operated by the KMSCP.
32. The Partnership is committed to influencing, educating and encouraging motorists to slow down and stay within the speed limit, to help reduce the number of crashes and casualties through the combination of education, publicity and enforcement.

Community Speedwatch:

33. [Community Speedwatch](#) (CSW) is a road safety initiative coordinated by Kent Police and run by local communities with the aim of reducing deaths and injuries on Kent's roads.
34. There are currently 60 active CSW groups in Kent. Over the past 12 months the CSW have sent 12,708 warning notices to speeding drivers. 136 drivers were visited at their homes by police officers for education purposes and a further 143 drivers were reported to the DVLA for tax offences.
35. Of note, 93% of drivers that received either a warning notice or a home visit have not been observed by CSW volunteers speeding again.
36. The CSW Manager attends all Road Safety Forums and officers from the RPU and Road Safety Unit engage and support CSW volunteers during deployments when possible.
37. Repeat offenders are nominated to the Road Safety Unit for targeted enforcement activity through proactive patrolling by police officers.

Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership:

38. Bringing together key stakeholders to identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration, the Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership (KMSRP) supports Vision Zero.
39. The Strategic Board which provides governance and oversight across the partnership is chaired by the PCC. The Board comprises of senior officers and elected members from the following organisations:
- Kent Police
 - KCC
 - Medway Council
 - KFRS
 - National Highways
40. Whilst the Board provides governance, delivery plans are developed and actioned through a Tactical Coordination Group. This group oversees the outputs from the safe system working groups, and other working groups which support key messages to all user groups across the county.
41. The KMSRP supports road safety campaigns coordinated by the NPCC, utilising assets created by partners to ensure consistent and key messages are shared with the public.
42. The KMSRP has recently commissioned the development of a joint strategy that will bring together all partners with a formalised agreement and a cohesive vision – it is anticipated the strategy will be adopted in 2025.
43. Examples of activity undertaken by the KMSRP include:
- Drink and Drug Drive Campaign
- Collaborative campaign launched in December 2023, as part of the Operation Voice project. The project aimed to tackle drink and drug driving, with a focus on violence against women and girls and the nighttime economy.
 - Partners of the KMSRP supported with a campaign refresh, buying in targeted social media messaging and distributing pub packs.
- Young Driver and Passenger Course
- Partners of the KMSRP have committed to contributing to the future of the course across Kent and Medway (developed by KCC).
 - The joint funding will support a refresh of the videos, and re-development of the fifth partnership session
 - The course is the only intervention delivered across Kent to young drivers, and has been agreed by the KMSRP as best practice.
 - KCC hosted the first 'parent of a young driver' webinar in October which was supported by all partners, with Kent Police providing a Sergeant from the Road Safety Unit to provide information on legislation.

Bike Safe

- Kent Police and KFRS have worked together to deliver Bike Safe across 2024.
- Partners of the KMSRP have supported a number of key events across the county (open days, motorcycle events, large family events).

Supporting road victims:

44. The road safety charity Brake receives circa £40k funding from the PCC each year to support road victims.
45. [Brake's National Road Victim Service](#) is a free, professional support service that is able to help with practical challenges and provide emotional support, from day one of a crash onwards.
46. The majority of road victims supported have suffered a bereavement, but Brake also provides support to those who have suffered physical injuries in a road collision. Such injuries can have a life changing impact and require specialist support in order to secure better prospects of longer-term outcomes, especially through early intervention.
47. To ensure road victims and their families are able to access appropriate support, the Office of the PCC has worked with Brake and Kent Police to change the referral mechanism to an opt-out process. This has resulted in a greater number of referrals:
- In the 12 months preceding the introduction of the opt-out process (September 2021 – September 2022), 25 referrals were made to the service in Kent. 7 from Kent Police.
 - In the 12 months following the introduction of the opt-out process, 93 referrals were made to the service. 69 from Kent Police.
 - In 2023/24, 120 referrals were made to the service in Kent. 94 from Kent Police, of which, 56 went on to receive full caseworker support.
48. Of those supported in 2023/24, 87% reported they were better able to cope and build resilience to move forward with daily life following engagement with the service. 21 of the 120 referrals were also onward referred for additional mental health support.
49. The increase in referrals is welcome; the Office of the PCC will continue to work with Brake and Kent Police to ensure road victims and their families receive the best possible support in their time of need.

Holding to account:

50. One of the principle ways the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account is through the quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.
51. Open to Panel Members and the public on a non-participating basis and also live streamed, the meeting is chaired by the PCC and papers are submitted by the Force in advance and published [here](#). The Chief Constable is required to attend the meeting in order to present and discuss the papers and answer questions about delivery of the [Making Kent Safer](#) Plan and policing generally in the county.
52. The PCC will also continue to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular weekly briefings and receive bespoke briefing notes and updates from the Force as required.
53. All services and projects the PCC funds are subject to regular monitoring, with the Commissioning Team providing oversight and governance. This is to ensure they operate to an appropriate set of standards, delivery and outcomes are monitored, and the impact fully recognised.

Recommendation:

54. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report.