

NORTHUMBRIA SAFETY CAMERA PARTNERSHIP

Joint Report of the Chief Constable, Clerk and Treasurer

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Northumbria Police Authority to become a partner to the Northumbria Safety Camera Partnership and agree to the terms and conditions of the Service Level Agreement(SLA).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 1998, HM Treasury accepted the principle that, providing strict criteria were met, the costs of some enforcement activities arising from the utilisation of safety cameras could be met from the money raised from fines, levies and fees.
- 2.2 In April 2000 eight pilot schemes commenced to test the new mechanism against criteria which included:
- to be designed primarily to reduce road casualties;
 - to provide for additional effort, whether by additional cameras, or additional sites;
 - to demonstrate adequate explanation to the public; and
 - to be self-financing and to only cover allowable expenditure.
- 2.3 After the successful evaluation of the pilots it was announced that all police forces were able to form a partnership with the local traffic authorities and magistrates' courts, and apply to join the scheme.
- 2.4 Northumbria Police subsequently consulted with partners to consider whether to seek agreement from the Department for Transport (DfT) to hypothecate from existing and additional speed and safety cameras.
- 2.5 After extensive consultation the Northumbria Safety Camera Partnership was formed, comprising:

Northumbria Police
Northumbria Magistrates' Courts
Crown Prosecution Service
Northumberland County Council
Newcastle City Council
Sunderland City Council
North Tyneside Council
Gateshead Council
South Tyneside Council
Highways Agency
Northumbria Healthcare Trust
University of Newcastle

- 2.6 In January 2003 a business case was submitted by the Partnership to the DfT based upon a two year safety camera project at a total estimated cost of £4.4 million. Income from fixed penalty fines is anticipated to finance the enforcement costs plus a 10% contingency allowance.
- 2.7 In order to ensure the scheme operates in accordance with the criteria established by the DfT it is necessary for the Partners to agree and sign a SLA. The SLA ensures that all partners understand and agree their respective roles and responsibilities. Whilst not a legally binding document the SLA does set out the general spirit of the Partnership and the services that each partner is providing.
- 2.8 The Partnership requires a lead body that cannot be the Police Authority. Gateshead Council has agreed to act as lead authority for the Partnership. As lead authority, Gateshead Council will arrange the appointment of a Project Manager and Public Relations Manager, as specified within the scheme criteria. It will also act as Treasurer to the Partnership.
- 2.9 Whilst the costs of enforcement are funded from the anticipated fine revenue, should there be a shortfall of income over expenditure, the DfT requires that the Partnership shares the risk of any deficit. The SLA proposal for the Northumbria Safety Camera Partnership provides for the risk of any deficit to be shared in accordance with the respective business case bids as follows:

	%
• Northumbria Police	64.4
• Gateshead Council	7.4
• Newcastle City Council	8.8
• North Tyneside Council	5.6
• South Tyneside Council	3.6
• City of Sunderland	5.3
• Northumberland County Council	4.9

- 2.10 The police share of the deficit risk reflects the primary costs of the Partnership business case as belonging to Northumbria Police over the following main business areas:

- new Central Ticket Office(CTO) IT system;
- additional support staff to process tickets within the CTO; and
- additional police officers to enforce the safety cameras.

3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Nil.

4 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report, but participation in the Safety Camera Scheme will have implications for road users.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The funding mechanism of the Northumbria Safety Camera Partnership is that the costs of enforcement will be recovered from fixed penalty fine revenue. However, in the event that the Partnership makes a deficit, Northumbria Police will be committed to finance 64.4% of the deficit amount.

The Treasurer confirms that the cost of any deficit will be met from within the overall revenue budget.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Members are recommended to:

- i) note the contents of this report;
- ii) agree that Northumbria Police Authority becomes a partner to the Northumbria Safety Camera Partnership; and
- iii) agree to the terms and conditions of the Service Level Agreement, with regard to the sharing of the risk.