



## Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland

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**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

Date: 18 August 2010

### **For the Attention of the Chief Executive**

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Road Safety Partnership Funding**

I write to you as the Roads Policing Lead for the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

You will undoubtedly be aware that there has been a significant amount of speculation in the national media over the last few weeks suggesting that the Government is 'axing' speed camera enforcement.

Those who are better acquainted with the facts will know that this is a gross exaggeration of the situation. Whilst the Government has indicated that it wants a different approach to roads safety with less reliance on fixed site cameras, it has stated that it is committed to road safety and sees camera enforcement as an important part of the approach going forward. However, it has made it very clear that decisions about how road safety is delivered should be made by local authorities in partnership with other agencies and with a greater degree of engagement from local people.

Despite those reassurances, there is a currently a significant threat to the future of the camera safety system as a result of the Government's decision to implement a 27%, in year cut in the Road Safety Support Grant. Some local authorities have passed on the cuts in full, whilst others have passed on disproportionate cuts above and beyond those imposed by Government. In a smaller number of cases, this has resulted in the complete cessation of camera enforcement operations and in many others the level of operation has been curtailed. Most others will run into financial difficulties in the fourth quarter of the current financial year unless some form of decisive action is taken to sustain them now.

ACPO is convinced that as part of a broader road safety strategy, safety cameras are an effective means of reducing road casualties. In recent years, we have seen a significant fall in the number of people being killed and seriously injured on our roads.

The degree of success has been such that we have achieved the Government's 2010 casualty reduction targets two years early. This is in no small part due to the development of road safety partnerships throughout the country and in no small part to the investment which has been made in speed enforcement.

I am aware that you have recently received a letter from the Roads Safety Minister, encouraging the continuation of safety camera enforcement as part of your overall casualty reduction strategy. However, this has not served to 'steady the ship' and there remains a significant degree of instability in the system and a great deal of uncertainty about the future. The media speculation has not helped the situation and speaking frankly, I am disappointed that the Government has not done more to intervene to correct the misinformation which has been spread or to provide a framework for further discussion.

I attach for your information a briefing paper, which outlines the stance which ACPO has taken on this issue. It explains why speed enforcement cameras are important, why they need to be sustained and what the consequences might be if they are not. It also sets out in summary, what needs to be done to protect the substantial investment which has been made in the system going forward. I would encourage you to take account of this information before you make any decisions which impact permanently on the future of your local camera safety partnership.

I am currently in discussion with officials in the Department of Transport to identify ways in which safety camera enforcement can be sustained in the future in a way which will meet the Government's emerging philosophy and allow the benefits of the system to be delivered in a more cost effective way. Terms of reference are being developed as I write and a working group is being established to consider the options going forward. It is likely that local authority representatives will be invited to be part of that group in due course. I also have a small team looking at ways in which the income from driver education programmes could be utilised differently to meet some of the shortfall in funding which exists.

I think we would all accept that in the current financial and political climate, we will have to do things differently in terms of road safety. However, we have a collective duty to ensure that in the process, we do not 'throw the baby out with the bathwater' and that the reductions in road casualties which we have achieved are not reversed. I am not suggesting that there are not alternatives to enforcement cameras but they have proven to be highly effective and if we remove them without alternative measures being put in place, casualties will almost inevitably rise. As things are currently developing, that seems likely to happen.

A significant amount of investment went into the creation of our road safety partnerships and it is essential that local authorities and other partners resist the pressure to make hasty decisions which would make them unsustainable in the short term. Once they close down, it is difficult to see a way back in the future without investment over and above the current level.

I would therefore urge you to find a way to sustain your local road safety partnership whilst options are considered. Unfortunately, I am unable to provide detailed timescales but I imagine that the options will be much clearer by the time the Comprehensive Spending Review decisions are made in the Autumn. I accept that it might be necessary to reduce the level of activity to manage within the reduced funding which is available but it would be preferable to do that than to close down operations completely.

I will update you in due course once further developments are known but in the meantime, if there is anything I can do to assist or you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me via Inspector [paul.taylor@southyorks.pnn.police.uk](mailto:paul.taylor@southyorks.pnn.police.uk)

You will be aware that the majority of road safety partnerships in England and Wales subscribe to the services provided by Road Safety Support (RSS)Ltd. The Managing Director of RSS [trevor.hall@acpo.pnn.police.uk](mailto:trevor.hall@acpo.pnn.police.uk) has a detailed understanding of the current situation on a national basis and is always willing to assist.

Yours faithfully

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