

Speeding

Speeding in the Bracknell Forest Borough has been raised as an issue by a number of Neighbourhoods and features on the action plans of many of the Neighbourhood Action Groups. It is fair to say that if an offender speeds along one road, they are likely to speed along many of the other roads that they are using during their journey. This in mind the key to reducing instances of speeding is to apply an appropriate mix of education, prevention and enforcement that results in people not wanting to speed, either through moral choice or because they fear being prosecuted and possibly losing their license.

The work to combat speeding starts at grass roots levels and must begin within the Neighbourhoods themselves. The majority of people that speed on local roads are local people themselves and a message needs to be sent to them that clearly demonstrates that their behaviour is both dangerous and anti-social. This begins with the 'speed watch' campaign. Speed Watch is a partnership between Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Thames Valley Police and participating Parish and Councils, which aims to help residents reduce speeding in their local area by providing support and advice. The project relies on the involvement and enthusiasm of local people wanting to improve the quality of life and road safety in their community. Sadly the number of people that volunteer to assist in this area of work is low and without sufficient numbers the scheme cannot hope to deliver its potential.

Sitting above the 'Speed Watch' campaign is the area of enforcement and more formal police and partnership activity. Police and partnership enforcement is undertaken by Local Beat Teams, The Roads Policing Department and the Safer Roads Partnership using varying methods and tactics. Thames Valley Police has joined forces with the 9 Highway authorities in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, the Highways Agency, The Crown Prosecution Service and the Her Majesty's Courts Service to take action.

Through the Safer Roads Partnership, the police, councils and courts are using dedicated road safety funding to target roadside enforcement and to educate drivers about the dangers and risks involved with a variety of road traffic offences. Thames Valley Police operate a speed awareness scheme run by DriveTech (UK), a driver training provider. The course aims to educate drivers about the dangers of speeding and change the public's attitude towards speed.

Four courses may be offered depending on the circumstances of the case:

Speed awareness workshop – Urban Roads. This is available to drivers detected doing between 35 and 39mph in a 30mph zone, or 46 to 50mph in a 40mph zone. The course is classroom-based, lasts two and a half hours and costs £74 – this is instead of the £60 fine and three penalty points.

Speed awareness workshop – Faster Roads. This is for drivers detected doing between 57 and 61 mph in a 50mph zone, between 68 and 72mph in a 60mph and between 79 and 83mph in a 70mph. The course is classroom based, lasts two and a half hours and costs £74 – this is instead of the £60 fine and three penalty points.

Rider Improvement scheme. This is for motorcyclists who are detected breaking the speed limit by 10mph or less in 50, 60, and 70mph zones. The course lasts four hours and costs £91 – this is instead of the £60 fine and three penalty points. Riders can pay to upgrade the course to involve an element of on road training. For those at higher speeds the course is an alternative to going to court but they will still have to pay the £60 fine and get three points on their licence.

Speed awareness course. This is for drivers who are outside the speed awareness thresholds and would normally receive a court summons. If they are less than 10mph over the threshold however, they can go on this course. This course is three hours in the classroom and two on the road. It costs £94 but the drivers will still get a £60 fine and three penalty points. The alternative is going to court.

Simon Bowden – Chief Inspector