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Casualties increase on speed camera roads

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CASUALTY rates at a number of speed camera sites in East Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire have worsened since the controversial devices were installed.

Five of the 86 sites, or six per cent, operated by Safer Roads Humber have seen injury rates increase since the cameras were put in, the latest annual report reveals.

The five so-called "red" sites include the A1079 at Bishop Burton, Beverley Road, Hessle, Saltshouse Road, Hull, the A18 Barton Street/North and the A46 Weelsby Road, Grimsby.

A spokeswoman said patrols had been stepped up at the sites or local councils had done engineering works.

The report reveals that about £2.3m was raised from nearly 34,745 speeding drivers - an eight per cent increase on the 31,990 motorists who were caught the previous year.

About half - £1.04m - from those drivers who accepted a fixed penalty notice and three points on their licence, went to the Treasury. The rest - £1.23m - from drivers who went on courses, thereby avoiding points, went towards running the partnership and safety projects.

The £75 course fee was raised to £95 after the organisation, which employs about 50 full-time and part-time staff, faced cuts to its own funding.

Revenue from the speed awareness courses rose by £385,000.

Another 2,485 cases went to court.

However, the body stated there has been a 59 per cent reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured at core safety camera sites over an eight- year period and a nine per cent cut in the average speed at the sites.

It claimed the 411 people whose lives have been saved or have avoided serious injury equates to a saving of more than £73m.

Explaining the increase in course fees, a spokeswoman said: "The bottom line is that in January last year we were hit so hard with in-year cuts that one of the things that we had to look at was how we were going to manage that, as well as efficiency savings in staff and reductions in campaigns."

No staff had been made redundant but there were unfilled vacancies, she added.

In 2009, the Conservatives pledged to block "Labour's army of speed cameras", which had trebled over the previous decade.

Since Safer Roads Humber set up, four sites have been decommissioned, two because changes to the road layout made them obsolete and two others because 20mph speed limits were introduced.

The head of safety at the AA, Andrew Howard, said: "I would have said speed cameras are here to stay, but they are expanding nothing like as fast as they did in the early period of the Millennium.

"Eighty per cent think speed awareness courses are a good idea, 90 per cent say they would go in one if they were offered one.

"Seventy per cent of our membership says speed cameras are acceptable and that figure has bounced between 69 per cent and 75 per cent for the last 10 years.

“The curious juxtaposition is that people like speed cameras and 20mph zones near their houses but don’t like them as they go into their journeys.”

Safer Roads Humber partnership manager, Mick Harris, added: “We have now been operating safety cameras at core locations for eight years. We are really pleased that reductions in casualties and collisions have been maintained over this time.

“However, there is still a minority of drivers who continue to speed at our sites and therefore we will continue to enforce the speed limit. We are also pleased that the partnership was able to expand its remit in 2007 following a change in how it is funded. Safety camera enforcement is just one activity for the partnership.

“We now administrate speed awareness courses and undertake other enforcement activities to reduce the number of casualties caused by hazardous road-use such as drink driving or using mobile phones behind the wheel. We also work closely with vulnerable groups such as young people and motorcyclists to reduce their casualty risk.”

Safer Roads Humber is made up of East Riding Council, the Court Service, Highways Agency, Hull Council, Humberside Fire and Rescue, Humberside Police, North East Lincolnshire Council and North Lincolnshire Council.

alex.wood@ypn.co.uk