

Road Safety Team scoops prestigious award

Issue Date – 10/11/2009

A high profile campaign to cut biker casualties on Staffordshire's roads has won a top national accolade.

Staffordshire County Council's Road Safety Unit has been praised for its dedication to helping make the area's highways safer for motorcyclists.

The team was presented with the prestigious Prince Michael Road Safety Award at a special ceremony held at County Buildings in Stafford last night (Tues).

The campaign, which was initially launched in 2005, was recognised for its achievement and innovation in helping to improve road safety.

The unit has carried out an array of initiatives including targeting routes which have a high proportion of motorcycle casualties to promote road safety, hosting awareness events for bikers and rider activities in partnership with Staffordshire Police.

It attracted £850,000 in Government funding earlier this year - nearly a quarter of the £3.6 million on offer across Britain and the biggest grant to be awarded.

The campaign's message has proved to be so powerful that the UK's top biker newspaper *Motorcycle News* hailed Staffordshire 'Britain's most bike-friendly council'.

Councillor Mike Maryon, Cabinet member for Highways, said: "This is a fantastic achievement for the Road Safety Team which has won national recognition of its tireless efforts to helping to save lives on Staffordshire's roads. "The latest figures show that bikers account for around 22% of those killed or seriously injured on the county's highway network - even though they represent only 1% of traffic. In 2008 nine motorcyclists were killed, 53 were seriously injured and 271 had minor injuries. There is still work to do but the presentation of the Prince Michael Road Safety Award confirms that we are making a real difference and will keep up the commitment to make Staffordshire's roads even safer."

Tony Spalding, chairman of the judging panel, added: "This award recognises the importance of local initiatives which are key to reducing the risk to bikers. All involved in the campaign deserve this public recognition."

The Road Safety Team was awarded Prince Michael International Road Safety Award for its hi tech black box system last year.

The equipment is fitted to young drivers' cars and aims to help them improve their skills by monitoring their driving patterns.

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