

Third phase of a major project to help cut motorcycle casualties

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The third phase of a major improvement project which aims to help cut motorcycle casualties on Staffordshire's roads is set to be launched.

Staffordshire County Council is spearheading the scheme which will see a raft of road safety measures introduced on the busy A5, to the west of Gailey Island.

The next part of the project will start during the week commencing Tuesday, May 4 and will focus on the stretch of road between the Shropshire Union Canal and the County Boundary past Weston Park.

The investment is aimed at drastically reducing casualties among some of the county's most vulnerable road users.

The latest figures released by Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership, which covers Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, revealed that 364 motorcyclists were killed, seriously injured or sustained slight injuries in 2009.

The county council's highways team will install warning signs along the A5 to highlight bends, junctions and other features as well as putting in 'passive posts' which help to reduce the risk of injury following a collision. They are designed to take the brunt of the force if they are struck by a motorcycle or vehicle.

Sections of the carriageway will be resurfaced to boost skid resistance while road markings and verge marker posts will also be put in place. Improvements will be made to the drainage system and vegetation will be cleared to ensure that the safety measures can be seen.

The first phase of the scheme cost £130,000, the second phase cost £120,000 and this section will cost around £85,000.

This part of the project follows on from the safety improvements that were carried out further along the A5 last year.

The team will be working from Monday to Friday and the work is expected to take around nine weeks to complete.

A section of Blymill Lane will be closed during the project. Motorists will be diverted along Hatch Lane, onto Beigherton Lane and then onto Watling Street.

Two way temporary traffic lights will also be put in place on the stretch of the A5 while some of the work is being carried out to ease the flow of vehicles.

The project is being partfunded by a Department for Transport grant of £854,000 which is being spent over a two year period. Similar improvements

are planned to take place at several other routes across Staffordshire during this year and next year.

Staffordshire County Council is providing match funding for the schemes which will also include education and enforcement.

Nick Lloyd, Head of Road Safety, said: "Road safety is a top priority for the county council and this major investment into a busy Staffordshire route reflects that view.

"We are working hard to make the roads as safe as possible for motorcyclists with the latest figures showing that the number of bikers who were killed, seriously injured or sustained slight injuries in 2009 was 364 while in 2008 the figure was 418.

"However, even one motorcycle casualty is too many and we are 100% committed to reducing accidents through highways improvements such as these and through education and enforcement."

Motorcyclists who would like to hone their skills this summer can visit www.staffsaferroads.co.uk for information on training opportunities.