

## **Major highways upgrade to help cut motorcycle casualties**

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The second phase in a major improvement project which aims to help cut motorcycle casualties on Staffordshire's roads is set to be launched in early December.

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

The programme will focus on the stretch between Gailey Island and the county boundary past Weston Park. It will be undertaken in two stages, the second of which will start next spring.

The first phase of the project is expected to take around seven weeks to complete. The team will be working during the day from Monday to Friday.

The team will install warning signs to highlight junctions and speed limits 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 clearly seen.

The junctions of Congreave Lane, Ivy House Lane, The Avenue and School Lane will be closed individually while resurfacing work is carried out from December 14-18. Advance warning signs and local diversions will be put in place.

The first phase of the A5 works will cost £130,000 while the second phase is estimated to cost £205,000.

Similar improvements are planned to take place at a further seven routes across Staffordshire during 2010/2011.

The whole project is being funded by a £854,000 Department for Transport grant which will be spent over a two year period. Staffordshire County Council will be providing match funding for the scheme which will also include education and enforcement.

Local county councillor Rex Roberts, OBE, welcomed the improvements.

He said: "This is a major investment which will help to boost safety and make the busy A5 a more biker friendly road. Reducing casualties on Staffordshire's highway network is one of the county council's top priorities and we are determined to pull out all the stops to achieve that goal.

"Bikers account for around 22% of those killed or seriously injured on the county's roads despite the fact they represent just 1% of traffic. Nine motorcyclists were killed in 2008, 53 were seriously injured and 271 suffered minor injuries. This package of road improvements will reduce the risk of skidding, boost visibility and warn motorists in advance of any sharp bends or junctions that they need to be aware of. It really is a first class safety scheme."

Ends