

Safety boosting project aims to cut motorbike casualties

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A project which aims to cut motorcycle casualties on a busy Staffordshire commuter route is set to start next week.

Staffordshire County Council is spearheading the scheme which will see a raft of road safety measures introduced on the A518 west of Stafford.

The work is being part funded by a Department for Transport grant of £854,000 which is being spent over a two year period.

The county council is providing match funding for a range of projects which will also include publicity, education and enforcement.

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

A total of 23 personal injury accidents were reported to the police on this stretch of road between July 2008 and June 2010.

One was fatal, five people sustained serious injuries and 17 sustained slight injuries.

The work is due to start during the week commencing Monday, November 22.

Local county councillor Mark Winnington said: "This is one of the many initiatives that reaffirm the county council's commitment towards making the A518 safer for all motorists.

"We are 100% committed to making Staffordshire's highways as safe as possible for motorcyclists, who are some of the most vulnerable road users.

"Improvements like these make a big difference when it comes to the number of people being injured or killed on the county's roads and are something that I, and the community, wholeheartedly welcome."

Rural sections of the A518 will be improved at:

- The county boundary near Newport to the 40mph speed limit at the west of Gnosall village
- From the national speed limit, east of Gnosall, to the 30mph speed limit at the west of Haughton village
- From the national speed limit to the east of Haughton village, to the 30mph speed limit on the outskirts of Stafford

The highways team will be installing warning signs along the A518 to highlight bends, junctions and other features as well as installing '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. The posts crumple on impact and absorb the majority of the vehicle momentum thereby reducing the potential risk to the vehicle occupants.

Road markings will be improved and verge marker posts will also be upgraded to help define bends.

Land owners and farmers are also being asked to make sure that the highway is kept clear of debris and that excessive vegetation is pruned back.

The project, which will cost around £58,000, is expected to take around seven weeks to complete. The team will be working Monday to Friday.

Similar improvements have already been completed along targeted routes and more are planned to take place on several other roads across Staffordshire.