

Roads Ahead

Police Federation Roads Policing Newsletter

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Welcome & Happy New Year Police Federation Lead on Roads Policing Alan Jones

I would like to thank all involved in what was a highly successful and informative Roads Policing 2008 conference.

To re-iterate a point raised in my address to conference, we do need a national stock take of resilience, capacity, equipment needs, skills and knowledge within traffic police domains. This should be high on the priority list for 2009 if we are to meet the requirements and demands over the next 5–10 years.

In my opinion, there are clear gaps in terms of how different forces address the need for standards and consistency, whilst trying to work to common objectives. The time is right to review and re-enforce key traffic objectives in terms of their focus and priorities.

It is very disappointing that the proposed project with Volvo to meet

national service needs has been lost - another unfortunate casualty of the current economic climate. DCC Adam Briggs told conference that he fully understood why the Federation had been pressing the case for vehicles and equipment, and promised to discuss the matter further with the new Chairman of Police Fleet Managers to try and find a way forward. I do feel that this project is worth pursuing and to add further weight to the argument, we have the support of the Home Secretary and the Police Minister. I am also more confident that CC Mick Giannasi can bring some positive news on this soon.



Home Office Minister Expresses Support

Home Office Minister Alan Campbell expressed support for a joint approach between his department and that of the Department for Transport on roads policing issues, priorities and delivery, which has been a major bone of contention for the Police Federation over recent years.

Geoffrey Biddulph, adviser to the Minister, took questions from delegates. Asked about Home Office counting rules and the need to consider drink/drug driving in the

overall scheme of things, Mr Biddulph stated that it is important that such serious issues are inclusive in any assessment of police performance, and that changes should be made to accommodate records of offending.



Our aim is to use this publication to open up informative channels of communication between all roads policing officers and associated bodies. We intend to focus on key issues that influence the delivery and professionalism of traffic officers around the country. If you have a roads policing news story or you require further details please email: roadspolicing@polfed.org

Department of Transport Focus on Mobile Phone and Seat Belt Legislation

Conference was pleased to welcome the Department of Transport Minister Jim Fitzpatrick, MP, on day two. The Minister spoke about the need to improve road safety and tackle offending in specific areas, including enforcement of mobile phone and seat belt legislation.

Motor Insurance Bureau project on track to meet completion deadline

The Minister also assured conference that funding for the MIB national database, continuous insurance enforcement, was still available and that the project was on track for completion in 2009. This should be hugely beneficial to traffic officers.



“The MIB are playing a very important role in helping to create safer roads for everyone. Along with our own plans for Continuous Insurance Enforcement, and combined with the work of the Police, we are confident of winning the fight against uninsured driving.”

Jim Fitzpatrick, MP

- **Uninsured motoring costs £500m every year and adds £30 to every honest motorist’s premium.**
- **160 people are killed and 23,000 injured each year in accidents involving uninsured and untraced drivers.**
- **There are nearly 2m uninsured vehicles in the UK - that’s about 1 in 20 of all vehicles on our roads.**



The Minister listens in to a call to the helpline from a Police officer. The outcome? The vehicle was seized.

Driving without due care and attention

During his address, the Minister mentioned the work being undertaken with regard to offences of driving without due care and attention becoming part of a fixed penalty notice process. Consultation is ongoing regarding this issue. It is believed that this will be referenced to those observed offences and relatively minor incidents of collision.

Roads Policing – not a stand alone activity...

Paul Monk from the Metropolitan Federation quizzed Jim Fitzpatrick, MP, about roads policing officer resilience. In response, the Minister stated that he did not disagree with the need for more officers, but suggested that roads policing should also be more integral at district level, not be seen as a stand alone activity. He explained that through the road safety performance demands, and greater understanding between the Home Office, Chief Officers should now have this firmly on their radar.



Occupational & Vocational Competencies for Traffic Policing

Conference heard from Dr Rachel Cragg of the NPIA who was leading development work towards the national level of occupational and vocational competencies for traffic police officers. She outlined progress so far, including engaging with ACPO and the Federation. The target date for delivery of her report was April 2009. Much of this formed the basis of ensuring the professional standards are harmonised across all forces, thereby overcoming the variables that currently exist. In his address Alan Jones, welcomed progress so far, but urged caution in relation to the ‘potential level of bureaucracy that this might generate’.

'Highway Hell'

Commander Shabir Hussain led a worthwhile debate relating to the problems associated with major road closures. Mike Farmer from the Road Haulage Association explained in some detail the problems that face hauliers – not only relative to congestion, but lost business opportunities, running costs and compliance with the law. Supt Nigel Russell and PC Chris Goddard of Gwent Police talked through policing demands at investigative incidents, also covering vehicle recovery and carriageway repair issues. Two major road closures on the M4, which caused mass disruption and raised questions in the Welsh Assembly, were used as case studies.

As any operational traffic officer knows, a serious incident, or presence of a marked police car with its lights flashing on one carriageway, can cause incidents on the other carriageway. Mike Farmer asked the Highways Agency to consider the use of

screens more readily at incidents and suggested police officers consider the implications of forward facing blue lights in distracting opposing drivers.

On behalf of the Highways Agency, Andrew Page Dove emphasised the responsibilities placed on his department to manage road closures and sought better communication and co-ordination between Agency staff and the Police. He also raised concerns over the effectiveness of Airwave technology.



A solution in 'One Box'

Chief Supt Jim Hammond and Chief Insp Mick Trosh updated conference on how integrated in-car technology is evolving, known as the 'one box' technology solution. This is a complex and demanding piece of work, but their presentation clearly highlighted the gaps and, more importantly, future requirements and expectations for future police vehicles. There is a clear need to address the connection between vehicle design specification and common standards if this work is to deliver to its potential. This point also notably questions how much demand might be placed on police drivers of the future in terms of operating in-vehicle technology.

Reducing Criminality with Operation Foist

More checks mean more people seeing the light

"It is a shocking statistic that a quarter of motorists fail to stop after a collision. Tackling people driving uninsured vehicles will help to improve safety on the roads." **Chris Lines**, Head of the London Road Safety Unit, TfL

Operation Foist was launched by the Metropolitan Police in order to target uninsured drivers as a means of improving road safety and reducing criminality.

Uninsured drivers are the drivers most likely to be involved in a hit and run. This is what recent research has found, and it is for this reason that the Metropolitan Police and Transport for London (TfL) joined forces in a colossal clampdown on uninsured drivers in London.

Following the launch of 'Operation Foist' in 2008, Ch Supt David Snelling told conference that officers from the Met's Traffic Unit seized 1320 uninsured cars in less than four weeks - all in the boroughs of Hackney, Haringey and Newham.

Using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), officers from the Traffic Unit have been dealing with drivers who continue to break the law and push up the prices of other people's insurance.

Of the 1320 cars seized, traffic officers have seized two Porsches, valued in excess of 150K, a BMW Z4 and a Hummer. Arrests have also been made, for a variety of offences including possession of Class A drugs - one car contained half a kilo of crack cocaine and £12,000 in cash. A number of robbery suspects were also arrested.

- High-visibility traffic patrols (bike / car)
- ANPR operations with TSG / BOCU
- Vehicle seizures
- Targeting persistent offenders



Parliament Matters

On 6th April this year we expect legislation to be introduced under the umbrella of the Road Safety Act 2006 relating to graduated fixed penalty notices, deposits and immobilisation. The task of ensuring authorised traffic officers have the knowledge and understanding of how the system will work is being addressed, but standards and consistency of approach has to be a priority. The system is welcomed by the Federation.

For more details please contact your local STOC rep or traffic command.

New EDM – Police Procurement of Vehicles, 12th January 2009

That the House notes that each police authority procures its own vehicles; recognises that the vast majority of police vehicles are built abroad; believes that all public sector bodies should do everything they can to support British industry; and urges the Government to work with chief constables to ensure that police forces purchase UK-built cars.



Transport Committee Activity

Report on Road Safety was published on 15th October and is available at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmtran/460/460.pdf

Current Enquiries

The enforcement activities of the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA)

12 November – uncorrected transcript at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmtran/uc1196-i/uc119602.htm

10 December – uncorrected transcript at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmtran/uc39-i/uc3902.htm

Next session will take place on Wednesday 14th January at 2.45 pm

Taxes & Charges on Road Users

17 December – uncorrected transcript at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmtran/uc103-i/uc10302.htm

Sharing Data & Information

One matter we need to significantly improve upon is sharing traffic policing information through a single data base across the UK. A simple but not widely recognised or used solution is through the allocated site on the NPIA Genesis database. The site allows specialist areas to share information and best practise. The facility is available at regional level via regional Roads Policing Senior Traffic Officers Conference groups (STOCs). If you are aware of successful initiatives that would benefit your colleagues please share the information.

www.genesis.pnn.police.uk

www.polfed.org