



Department for
Transport



ROADS POLICING STRATEGY

This is a statement agreed jointly by the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Department for Transport and the Home Office. Its purpose is to set roads policing in the context of overall police work, establish the issues which are a continuing priority for road policing, and identify the principles which should underpin operational practice and the development of policy.

Virtually everyone in the country uses roads every day, as drivers or as pedestrians.

With 30 million vehicles in Great Britain, the roads are busy and hazardous. Their unlawful and anti-social use affects people's safety and sense of security. Bad road use also contributes to the 3,500 people killed and 35,000 people seriously injured each year on the roads.

Roads policing seeks to ensure that people can all use the roads, go about their daily life and get round their towns safely and without being harmed or intimidated by unlawful and anti-social behaviour on the road. This is particularly important for the elderly, for children, and also for the economically and socially disadvantaged, whose children, as noted in the Government's Road Safety Strategy¹, are five times more likely to be killed than those of the most fortunate.

Roads policing also seeks to deny criminals the use of roads for carrying out crime.

Road policing is therefore an important and visible element in the police's commitment to protect the public, to help maintain safe communities and civil society, and to support law-abiding citizens' confidence in the law.

The maintenance and development of proactive road policing, in partnership with the other authorities and agencies involved, will contribute to and support the rest of the policing function.

Road policing will focus on the following actions

- *Denying criminals use of the roads by enforcing the law;*
- *Reducing road casualties;*

¹ *Tomorrow's Roads – safer for everyone*, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, March 2000

- *Tackling the threat of terrorism;*
- *Reducing anti-social use of the roads;*
- *Enhancing public confidence and reassurance by patrolling the roads.*

Proactive road policing, in partnership with the other authorities and agencies involved – local councils, local highway authorities and the Highways Agency, voluntary and community bodies – will contribute to and support the rest of the policing function. It will form part of the police's work in local Crime and Disorder Partnerships and in the development of Local Policing Plans.

Adherence to this Roads Policing Strategy is part of the delivery of the National Policing Plan

1. The five key priorities of the National Policing Plan 2005-08² include '*reducing people's concerns about anti-social behaviour*', and addressing road crime is part of that task. This strategy is based on the intelligence-led analysis contained in ACPO's *National Strategic Assessment on Roads Policing*³. The assessment was carried out in accordance with the National Intelligence Model (NIM), and the strategy will be implemented through a 'Control Strategy' - also in line with the principles of the NIM - which ACPO is developing. ACPO have also established a Road Policing Intelligence Forum to support the implementation of the strategy. Casualty reduction features specifically in the Policing Performance Assessment Framework, together with a performance indicator, namely the number of people killed or seriously injured in a police force area relative to the number of vehicle kilometres travelled.

Roads and how they are used matter to everyone

2. Roads are part of everyday life. Nearly everyone uses them every day, as a driver, vehicle passenger, cyclist or pedestrian. Roads are the arteries of our communities - linking homes, businesses, the shops, the library, the bus stop, schools.

Road crime affects people's well-being and safety

3. Roads and vehicles need to be used with respect for other people and road users. Every year, some 3,500 people are killed and over 35,000 are seriously injured in road collisions. Together with less serious casualties, there are over 200,000 'Personal Injury Collisions' every year. 95% of collisions are due to drivers' behaviour; unlawful or anti-social driving is a factor in a high proportion.

4. There is a financial cost to the economy, and to the individuals concerned. The cost of all road accidents in 2002 to the UK is estimated at just under £18,000 million - including lost output, human, medical and police costs, as well as physical damage. The wider impact on personal and family life goes far beyond the money involved.

5. Bad driving, even where not leading to a collision, is threatening and intimidating to other drivers. The most serious transgressions are dangerous driving, driving under the

² *National Policing Plan 2005-08*, Home Office, November 2004

³ *National Strategic Assessment - Roads Policing*, Association of Chief Police Officers, November 2004

influence of drink or drugs, and excessive speeding. But other bad driving - such as 'tailgating', aggressive overtaking, undisciplined lane behaviour and verbal abuse - also make other road users feel threatened.

6. Bad driving also affects pedestrian road users, through careless driving, speeding, failure to respect road crossings and traffic lights and in other ways. This amounts to significant anti-social behaviour.

7. The factors contributing to accidents are varied and numerous. The police have however identified the four key behaviours which contribute to avoidable deaths and injury by making collisions more likely, and by making the resultant injuries worse. These are excessive and inappropriate speeding, failure to wear seat belts, drink and drug driving, and careless, dangerous and generally threatening driving and riding. The police will deal with these behaviours by:

- continued operation of the National Safety Camera Programme, dealing with road sites and traffic light junctions with a known history of collisions and casualties;
- a national police Drink and Drug Driving campaign, to ensure that people are deterred from this activity by significantly increased risk of detection;
- a national police Seat Belt campaign, to increase the level of seat belt wearing, especially by rear-seat passengers and children;
- a highly visible police presence on the roads.

Road behaviour is a social issue

8. Vulnerable and disadvantaged people particularly need proactive road policing. For example, children in Socio-economic Class V are five times more likely to be killed on the road than those in Class I. A high proportion of pedestrians injured are children or older people, reflecting both their greater vulnerability and their greater dependence on getting around on foot.

9. Abandoned vehicles, wherever they are left, are unsightly and hazardous - but they are a particular problem in housing estates, disfiguring residents' surroundings, undermining confidence in the community, and challenging efforts to establish a crime-free environment.

Vehicle fraud and crime have wider consequences

10. Other crime directly relates to the use of vehicles. Driving vehicles without a tax disk or without an MOT certificate are criminal offences. Moreover, the vehicles concerned are also more likely to be in a dangerous condition and a risk to others. They are also more likely to be uninsured, a problem which adds an estimated £30 to the premiums paid by law-abiding motorists.

11. Honest vehicle owners expect the law to be upheld and offenders punished.

Road policing supports wider policing

12. Research shows significant links between involvement in other criminal activity such as theft and burglary and the commission of motoring offences. This is reflected in police experience that active road policing contributes to wider policing, including the detection and arrest of criminal suspects.

Criminals must be denied unchallenged use of roads

13. Criminals use roads to carry out a great deal of their activity - ranging from burglary and theft to drug dealing and terrorism. Proactive road policing can deny criminals the unchallenged use of the roads, and is an effective measure for containing and deterring crime.

Road policing combats the threat of terrorism

14. The threat of terrorist activity in the UK remains high, and is likely to do so for the foreseeable future. Terrorist networks need to use roads, and can be detected in doing so by pro-active road policing. Terrorist networks are also involved in organised crime including smuggling, which also involves use of the roads, and is thereby vulnerable to police activity.

15. The police will use the Roads Policing Intelligence Forum to enhance the gathering and use of intelligence.

Important new technology is being deployed

16. The pilot 'Operation Laser' project demonstrated the value of ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) technology, and the Government has put in place funding from fixed penalty revenue, to allow the further roll-out of the technology. This will enable officers in equipped vehicles to identify any vehicles of interest, whether for breaches of road traffic law or general criminal matters. This tool is being backed by the continuing improvements made by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to the vehicle and driver databases, and the data links between them and the Police National Computer. This approach is wholly consistent with use of the National Intelligence Model. The UK police are world leaders in use of ANPR, and the intention is to retain this lead.

17. Other technological advances mean more scope in future for managing traffic - varying speed limits, warning of problems, signing diversions, and experimenting with hard shoulder running. Tackling road congestion is a key Government priority. Doing so safely, with the full involvement of the police, is paramount. Adopting the best and most efficient incident management and investigation techniques will help maintain safe and smooth traffic flow.

Technology complements the role of police officers

18. But technology cannot wholly replace the police: an adequate police presence on the road is also vital. For example, safety camera technology is successfully reducing speeding, collisions, deaths and casualties at the 5,000 or so fixed and mobile camera sites in Great Britain. An independent review of the first three years of the national safety camera programme⁴ found that there was a 32% reduction in the number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit at camera sites; the number of personal injury collisions was cut by 33%; and the number of people killed or seriously injured by 40%, over and above the UK's overall general downward trend in numbers killed or seriously injured. But physical police presence is needed to deal with speeding elsewhere on the road network, including the motorways, - and there are other significant problems which camera and other technology cannot yet detect, including drink and drug driving, careless and dangerous driving, and failure to use safety belts.

The police will enhance public confidence and reassurance by patrolling the roads

19. The roads are part of our public space. Unlawful and unruly behaviour on the roads and in vehicles needs to be challenged and lawful standards need to be asserted, as they are on the streets and in other public places. 'Road rage' is a serious and unacceptable problem.

20. Effective policing of the roads is therefore an important and visible element in the police's commitment to protect the public, maintain safe communities, maintain and strengthen civil society, and support law-abiding citizens' confidence that the law is being upheld.

21. The police will constantly maintain proactive road policing, They will also seek to understand better the problems road policing must address and to develop the best solutions to them. They will develop and implement a strategy for tackling anti-social behaviour on the roads.

22. The volume of traffic on the road is increasing and the free flow of traffic needs to be maintained and enhanced. ACPO has agreed a division of roles and responsibilities with the Highways Agency, whereby the police will continue to be responsible for law enforcement but, on the strategic road network, will be able to cease a range of non-core tasks and so release resources for core road policing priorities. A Road Patrol Strategy will clarify issues and responsibilities.

Performance monitoring

23. The number of people killed and seriously injured ('KSIs') relative to traffic (measured as vehicle kilometres) will continue to be the Best Value Performance Indicator for road policing in the Policing Performance Assessment Framework. This

⁴ *The national safety camera programme, Three year evaluation report*, University College London and PA Consulting Group, June 2004

provides an important and meaningful measure of *outcome*, rather than activity or input, since it is outcomes which represent bottom line success to the public.

24. The four most significant dimensions of unlawful, disorderly and dangerous road and vehicle use are:

- Drink and drug driving;
- Speeding;
- Failure to use seat belts;
- Driving which is dangerous, careless or threatening to other road users.

25. It is not appropriate for the high-level Policing Performance Assessment Framework to include Best Value Performance Indicators at this level of detail. But, as part of this strategy, the police will develop simple and practical indicators of success which police forces locally can use and report to their Police Authorities.

26. Information on *police activity* in relation to these issues (e.g. number of arrests for drink driving, speeding, or careless driving) will be of interest, though this reflects resource input as opposed to success in challenging the problem.

27. The objective will therefore be to develop *indicators of outcome*. These could for example include:

- the proportion of breath tests following collisions which show positive, providing an indicator of the prevalence of drink driving, which can be monitored over time;
- data from speeding monitoring devices such as those at safety camera sites, which provide an indicator of the prevalence of speeding;
- data on levels of observed compliance with seat belt use;
- and local opinion polling to monitor how safe and secure people feel on the roads.

Working in partnership locally

28. The KSI measure is one over which the police do not have full control, underlining the degree to which roads and how they are used is a shared responsibility, involving the police, local highway authorities and the Highways Agency, and also voluntary and community agencies. The police will maintain and develop their working together with all these agencies, including through local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. Through the development of their Local Policing Plans, individual forces will seek to discuss and establish with all the relevant stakeholders appropriate indicators, objectives and monitoring arrangements and will report on the evidence obtained.

The national partnership

29. No aspect of police work should be considered in isolation. Each force needs to deploy resources in response to local circumstances and priorities within a national framework. This statement, jointly developed and issued by Home Office and Transport Ministers and by the Association of Chief Police Officers, recognises the role of road policing in addressing wider priorities - such as promoting a greater sense of safety and security in the community - as well as headline objectives - such as reducing the toll of deaths and injuries on our roads.

30. All the parties to the statement look forward to working together and with other interested agencies to the continuing development and implementation of an effective road policing strategy.

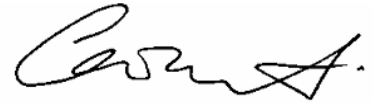


Richard Brunstrom,
Head,

**ACPO Road Policing
Business Area**



David Jamieson,
*Parliamentary Under-
Secretary of State,*
**Department for
Transport**



Caroline Flint,
*Parliamentary Under-
Secretary of State,*
Home Office

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