

NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

15 JUNE 2007

Agenda Item	
Report No	

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICE UNIT

1ST MARCH TO 30TH APRIL 2007

Report by the Chief Constable

UNIT OVERVIEW

The Operational Support Service Unit comprises the following Sections, which are based at Police Headquarters and Burnett Road Police Station, Inverness; Dingwall Police Office and the NSCP Office, Tain. In addition, one officer from the Community Safety Section is seconded to the Highland Council Anti-Social Behaviour Team in Inverness:

- Community Safety
- Dogs Section
- Drugs & Alcohol Co-ordinator
- Emergency Planning
- Firearms
- Northern Safety Camera Partnership(NSCP)
- Road Policing Section, inc. Road Safety.
- Special Constables co-ordinator

Our work during the period focused on the strategic aims of the Chief Constable. The following is a resume of our work.

REDUCING CRIME

The ACPOS 'Get Real' DVD is a drugs education training package targeting schools, workplace, youth and adult groups to be delivered in line with the ACPOS Drugs Strategy by trained Police Officers. Since August 2006 training in its use has been taking place at the Scottish Police College. To augment this and reduce abstractions from Force a one-day training session took place for Area Command colleagues at Police HQ Inverness on 23rd April 2007. Evaluations to date, from audiences where the DVD's content has been utilised, have proven to be very favourable.

Operational Support concluded the Force participation in the Safer Scotland Violence Reduction Campaign 2006/07. A number of positive outcomes were achieved in highlighting the impact of violent crime on our community. It is intended that the Force will build on this as part of the 2007/08 Violence Reduction Campaign which is again being co-ordinated by Operational Support in conjunction with the ACPOS Violence Reduction Team.

Mainland Area Commands have continued to utilise the technical equipment purchased by the Community Safety department to assist with the detection and prevention of crime. Feedback has indicated that in one Area Command this equipment has assisted in the reduction of thefts.

As reported previously, the Force took delivery of a purpose built 7-camera Mobile CCTV Unit, in January 2007. Due to the demand for use of this vehicle a further 4 Special Constables have since been trained to operate the vehicle. The vehicle is deployed every

week to assist with Crime Reduction particularly targeting Anti-Social Behaviour. During April the vehicle was deployed as part of Operation Baggage, a vandalism reduction initiative in Fort William, Golspie, Alness and Inverness. Officers from the Operational Support unit were also deployed to each of these areas to support Area Commands with the initiative.

TACKLING SERIOUS CRIME

The Force firearms section have recently completed a four week Initial Firearms Course. Ten officers from across the force successfully completed the course which has now increased our resilience to 71 authorised firearms officers.

Two Royal Visits have taken place within force during the period and section staff assisted in providing firearms and search staff in relation to both visits.

Our Dog Section currently operates two drugs detection dogs. These were made available along with handlers for all requests from Area Commands to assist at drugs searches during the period of the review.

The drugs dogs were active in a number of Areas and recovered drugs in Inverness, Ross Cromarty and Skye, Caithness and Sutherland and Badenoch Area Commands. The amount of drugs seized varied from personal amounts to larger quantities.

Training was carried out with the Force Firearms Section utilising the dogs and firearms officers and using the FIDO head mounted camera, which is a device to assist in searching higher risk venues.

SAFER ROADS

Unfortunately during the period the following fatal road traffic accidents occurred;

On Saturday 24th March 2007 a three vehicle collision occurred on a single carriageway section of the A9 at Cuaich, Badenoch where a Ford Transit camper van collided with a BMW car and a Peugeot 306 car killing the 50-year-old male driver and 44-year-old female rear offside passenger in the Peugeot.

The Highland News Group featured this collision in an article detailing the work involved in dealing with and investigating fatal collisions.

On Tuesday 17th April 2007 a single vehicle fatal collision took place on the B9163 road at Cullicudden, Ross and Cromarty when a Peugeot 407 motor car left the roadway coming to rest in a field. As a result the rear offside passenger, a 42-year-old female, died at the scene and the front seat passenger, a 70-year-old female, died on 19th April.

In each case full investigations were completed and reports submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

The Road Policing officers continued to provide high profile patrols on the main arterial trunk route network to deter and detect irresponsible driver behaviour. These patrols are directed by the Force Tactical tasking process to areas where intelligence indicates greatest need.

Further work by Road Policing Officers included a police supported DVLA enforcement operation between 2nd April and 11th May targeted at unlicensed vehicles. This resulted in 132 vehicles being clamped, 81 impounded and 48 released on payment.

The Management of Occupational Road Risk Seminar (MORR) took place in Coylumbridge, Aviemore on Friday 27th April 2007. This was held as part of UN Global Road Safety Week in partnership with Highland Road Safety Sub Group (Northern Constabulary, Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service, In Trans and Highland Council) and ROSPA.

130 delegates from all over Highlands and Islands and from other parts of Scotland attended with the majority being businesses local to the force area. The seminar was opened by the Chief Constable and closed by the Chief Fire Officer.

The aim of the day was to highlight to employers their duty of care under health and safety law to ensure the safety of staff, passengers and anyone else who may be affected by their organisations activities.

In conjunction with MFR, Northern Constabulary is about to start year two of the Moray Firth Radio Safe Journey campaign. Over the next 10 months there will be a series of Road Safety Adverts to be aired in Highland and the Island areas which will include Speeding/Seatbelts, Child Safety, Drink/Drugs, Rural Roads, International Walk to School, Winter Safety and Mobile Phones. As a result of last year's campaign MFR have been nominated for a National Radio award under the category called Community Initiative.

Officers within the Community Safety department had been working with a number of partner agencies in preparation for this year's Safe Highlander in May at a number of locations across Highland. The main event was held in Inverness over a two-week period when approximately 3,000 children were expected to attend. This is an experiential learning event aimed at a number of Community Safety initiatives included in which is road safety.

During the months of March and April 2007, Northern Safety Camera Partnership staff were deployed for a total of 148.95 hrs at the identified deployment sites This lead to the issue of 828 Conditional Offers of Fixed Penalty.

Work by the NSCP Communications Manager during the period has lead to a substantial increase in marketing of Partnership Operations with several instances of positive media coverage being achieved. Local Press regularly feature deployment details and forthcoming campaigns include a targeted issue of speed limit advice to hire and fleet companies and a Highlands-wide Bus Back advertising campaign.

An analysis of accidents over several preceding years was made which showed that up to 25% of fatalities during the period were motorcyclists. Although not possible in all cases to ascribe speeding as a contributory factor, it was recognised that efforts should be directed to attempting to enforce speeding legislation in respect of motorcyclists. To this end, both Partnership Camera Vans were equipped with multi camera equipment systems to enable detection of speeding motorcyclists. This was recently the subject of a positive press launch and the equipment is now in regular use.

SAFER COMMUNITIES

Our Emergency Planning Staff are involved in planning for Force participation in the following exercises/events to ensure our preparedness to deal with major incidents should they occur;

- ◆ UKAEA – Tactical level Tabletop Exercise – 25 April 2007
- ◆ Rockness – Music festival – 9 and 10 June 2007

- ◆ World Mountain Biking Championships – Aonach Mhor 3 to 9 September 2007
- ◆ Exercise Lonestar – Strategic Exercise - 12 September 2007

Emergency Planning staff also committed to produce and publish a Community Risk Register to meet the requirements of the Civil Contingencies legislation. Northern Constabulary, along with multi-agency partners in the Highlands & Islands Strategic Co-ordinating Group, has now produced a Community Risk register which has been published on the Force website.

To break down the myths and encourage information sharing between agencies, the Drugs and Alcohol Inspector from Operational Support and colleagues in Crime Support ran the 14th in a series of Information Sharing Seminars at Police HQ on 27th April 2007. 50 professionals attended including GPs, Health and Local Authority staff from management and front line. Evaluations of the day supported the need and value of such days with indications of changes in thinking by those attending.

In our 2006/07 Policing Plan we set a target to provide 10 deployments of the mobile CCTV system to assist Area Commands respond to public disorder and anti social behaviour.

This action has been achieved with a total of 102 deployments so far throughout the year of the Mobile Display Vehicle. This is further complemented by 35 deployments of the new purpose-built 7 camera Mobile CCTV Vehicle.

Northern Constabulary currently has 227 special constables, who provide extra police coverage during peak periods on a voluntary basis. They are also utilised at special events such as royal visits and football matches. A small team of specials has also been trained to operate the newly acquired mobile CCTV unit.

The Force continues to recruit new special constables. The Special Constables co-ordinator based within the Unit will be attending various events throughout the summer to raise awareness of this valuable resource.

Finally, the Dogs Section carried out talks, demonstrations and presentations to interest groups. These have included Fearn Primary School, Royal Naval Association, Lochaber work placements and probationers to name but a few.

The Dog Section was also deployed on foot patrols in areas where disorder and vandalism were prevalent in the Inverness area.

I Latimer
Chief Constable