

NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

22 NOVEMBER 2007

Agenda Item	
Report No	

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICE UNIT

1ST AUGUST TO 30 SEPTEMBER 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 was focused on the Force Strategic Priorities and actions arising from the Force TTCG process.

REDUCING CRIME

During the reporting period, the Dog Section carried out over 400 hours of mobile patrol and 300 hours of foot patrol throughout the force area, both as part of normal duties and at the request of Area Commanders to deter instances of anti social behaviour at peak times and identified hotspots as well as providing high visibility to reduce opportunities for crime, particularly in industrial estates, town centres and retail parks.

Road Policing Officers similarly continued to patrol our 'A' class roads and elsewhere, tackling crime and offences on the roads network. This included proactive intelligence-led operations such as Operation Matron as well as routine stop checks of vehicles and occupants.

Community Safety co-ordinated the planning of the first of the 2007/08 Safer Scotland Anti Violence Initiatives "Communities Against Knives" which is to run between 1-19 October 2007. Results will be available for the next Board meeting.

The Crime Prevention Co-ordinator continued to administer the use of available technical equipment at our disposal to assist Area Commanders in response to, and

the detection of, specific types of dishonesty offences, which in the past has proved very successful.

The mobile CCTV Unit continues to be used on a regular basis with Area Commands and at events. Inverness routinely makes full use of this facility at weekends and it was also deployed at events such as the Black Isle Show in Ross-shire, World Orienteering Championships, Loopallu in Ullapool, Belladrum in Inverness-shire, the World Mountain Bike Championships in Lochaber and the Runrig Concert at Drumnadrochit amongst others.

The Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, PC Mick Waters, continues to be proactive, assisting the Anti Social Behaviour Partnership in progressing orders against individuals.

- ◆ An ASBO in relation to a prolific shoplifter has been extended to 2010.
- ◆ An interim hearing has been held for an Inverness Town Centre drunk who harasses tourists for money.
- ◆ A full ASBO has been issued to a 16 year old male recidivist whose behaviour was impacting on the housing estate in which he lived.
- ◆ An interim ASBO has been issued to a 37 year old female in relation to her conduct towards her neighbour in Nairn.

Work continues on a number of other cases throughout the five mainland area Commands.

TACKLING SERIOUS CRIME

The Firearms Support Section provided assistance to Area Commands at three spontaneous firearms incidents requiring the deployment of specialist officers. All these incidents were successfully resolved in a proportionate manner without incident.

A dog handler attended the report of a theft of a motor vehicle in the Kiltarlity area and, following a protracted search of a wooded area, located the suspect and handed him over to local officers.

Two handlers were involved in the search for a male person wanted in relation to a large number of thefts of high value copper. Following searches of open areas, the male was traced and detained by the handlers and handed over to CID.

Two handlers were called to assist in tracing a suspect of a serious assault in the Inverness City centre. Following a search, the suspect was located in an industrial wheelie bin and handed over to local officers.

A handler was requested to assist with the search for a male person who was wanted on a number of warrants. On searching the Tomnahurich Cemetery the male was located and handed over to CID.

Following a report of an RTC at North Kessock where the driver had run away, a handler attended and carried out a search locating the driver some 2 miles away.

During the reporting period, the drug search dogs were deployed on 37 occasions with some varying results. These searches were spread throughout the mainland Force areas.

Two handlers were deployed to a Firearms incident in the Inverness area where they provided containment and assisted with the arrest.

In addition to the above, the drug dog handlers carry out searches of possible outside drug stash sites as a matter of routine where quantities of drugs have been seized.

SAFER ROADS

The Road Safety Officer, Laura Fisher, continues to represent the Force at National Road Safety Fora, and administer and collate the Force response to National ACPOS campaigns.

- ◆ Rural Roads Weekend (Young Drivers) 24-26 August 2007
- ◆ Seatbelt/Speeding Action Day – 13 September 2007

Ms Fisher continues to plan a joint initiative with Inverness College to deliver road safety driver education and awareness to all apprentices with the Further Education establishment.

In August 2007, the Scottish Executive funded a Road Safety Scotland Drink/Drive Leaflet initiative in conjunction with the Clydesdale Bank Scottish Premier League Football Association. This initiative stemmed from an idea submitted by our Road Safety and Road Policing Sections.

Northern Constabulary in conjunction with MFR Radio, continues with the Safe Drive adverts focussing on the National campaign themes.

The Road Policing Section continues to be proactive in providing advice, guidance and enforcement to the motoring public on our roads across the Force area, targeting issues such as speeding, seatbelts, drink/drug driving and inappropriate driving.

Operation Mermaid, a partnership approach with the Vehicle and Operations Standards Agency (VOSA) is supported throughout the Northern Constabulary area targeting Road Hauliers, Bus Operators and other large vehicle operators, and as a result unsafe or poorly maintained vehicles are removed from our roads until repaired and tested. This can have significant effect on the ability of commercial vehicle operators to operate so it is in their interests to ensure they meet the standards.

The Road Policing Section have also been involved over a protracted period in providing escort services to transport operators involved in Windfarm Construction. This has been a heavy commitment with all costs being recovered from the developers.

The Bikesafe initiative continues to be provided in various areas of the force particularly Western Isles, Shetland and Ross & Cromarty during the period under

review. This is a proactive approach by Northern Constabulary to educate motorcyclists on safer riding.

Regrettably, we have to report that there were four fatal road collisions in the Northern Constabulary area during the period under review.

- ◆ On Thursday 9th August 2007 a one vehicle road traffic collision occurred on the A839 public road east of Lairg. As a result of the collision a local 35 year old male sustained fatal injuries.
- ◆ On Friday 24th August 2007 a two vehicle road traffic collision occurred on the A95/A939 junction at Grantown on Spey. As a result of the collision a local 44 year old male motorcyclist sustained fatal injuries.
- ◆ On Saturday 25th August 2007 a one vehicle collision with a pedestrian occurred on the B865 dual carriageway near to Millburn roundabout, Inverness. As a result of the collision a 22 year old male pedestrian sustained fatal injuries.
- ◆ On Sunday 2nd September 2007 a two vehicle collision occurred on the A82 Onich to Fort William road at Innis Na Birlinn Corran. As a result of the collision a 45 year old male motorcyclist sustained fatal injuries

Full accident investigations were carried out by the Road Policing Section in each incident and reports were submitted to the Procurator Fiscal for the relevant area.

Despite these tragic incidents the Force remains on track to meet all targets in respect of the reduction in persons killed or injured on our roads.

SAFER COMMUNITIES

The Dog Section has secured the use of training venues within residential and individual areas, patrolling those that are vulnerable to youth disorder and vandalism. An example of this is the Northern Meeting Park, Inverness, which is habitually used by youths outwith hours for anti social behaviour and underage drinking. Police now have access to it at all times and train and patrol there at regular intervals.

A funding bid has been prepared and submitted to the Anti Social Behaviour Partnership for a "mobile football pitch" which will be used across the Force in partnership with Inverness Caledonian Thistle and NCH to promote health, social inclusion and community cohesion amongst youths. The result of this bid should be known by late November.

A problem solving and awareness training day was held in September with attendees from Police, SWD, YAT, Community Learning and Leisure and the ASB Partnership. This was based on an exercise which promoted communication, identified roles and responsibilities with a view to considering early intervention re Youth related ASB.

The Safe Highlanders and Islanders AGM was held in September with the main topic being its continuance in its current form. Due to the commitment required in the administration, funding and running of the event as well as some agencies unable to commit to the event, a report will be submitted to Highland Council highlighting the

above. The event is hugely successful and very well evaluated and targets approx. 2700-3000 primary seven children across the Force.

The Autumn/Winter training programme for Special Constables commenced in August with training now being regularly delivered on a monthly basis. A one-off training weekend took place at the Scottish Police College in September attended by approximately 100 Special Constables from three Forces, including Northern Constabulary.

Following planning by the Emergency Planning Section, the Force participated in the following emergency exercises, along with multi-agency partners, to test their ability to respond to emergencies:

- 9/08/07 – cascade exercise for emergency at UKAEA Dounreay site
- 31/08/07 – tabletop exercise for Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment
- 12/09/07 – Exercise Lonestar – strategic level liveplay exercise for Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment
- 20/09/07 – Wick Airport liveplay exercise
- 25/09/07 – Inverness Airport liveplay exercise
- 26/09/07 – Stornoway Airport tabletop exercise

Planning is taking place for the Force's participation in a number of emergency exercises and major public events in 2008, along with the development of a strategy for the Highlands & Islands Strategic Co-ordinating Group, the multi-agency civil contingencies group for the Highlands & Islands.

The Drugs & Alcohol Safer Communities Strategy is: the discouraging of drug and alcohol abuse "through education, treatment and management of availability".

The period under review saw a great deal of work carried out by ACPOS Test Purchasing Group to ensure that the Forces in Scotland were in a position to 'go live' in respect of the opportunity to carry out Test Purchasing of Alcohol (TPA) afforded by Section 105 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. Northern Constabulary is represented on this Group by the Force Drugs and Alcohol Co-ordinator. These efforts were directed at producing a national Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to be utilised by all Scottish Forces when, based on intelligence, they decide to implement TPA.

Through the ACPOS Security Industries Authority Implementation Group (Northern Constabulary is represented on this Group by the Force Drugs and Alcohol Co-ordinator) work has been ongoing to address the need for clear guidelines and areas of responsibility involved in the interface between Police and the Security Industries Authority (SIA). The Private Security Industry Act 2001 comes into effect in Scotland on 1st November 2007.