

NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

18 JANUARY 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICE UNIT 1 OCTOBER TO 31 DECEMBER 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 Antisocial 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 has continued to focus on the Force Strategic Priorities and actions arising from the Force TTCG process.

REDUCING CRIME

During the reporting period, the Dog Section conducted mobile and foot patrols in all parts of the mainland Force area. In addition to the normal routine patrols, handlers deployed at dedicated areas where crime “hotspots” had been identified. During the month of December and in an effort to deter seasonal crime and provide greater public reassurance, foot patrols were carried out in the main shopping areas, car parks and retail parks of all main Towns. In Inverness, these patrols were daily as part of Operation NEWSMAKER.

Community Safety co-ordinated the first of the 2007/08 Safer Scotland Anti Violence Initiatives “Communities Against Knives” which ran between 1-19 October 2007. During this initiative 192 knives were disposed of by members of the public in the knife disposal bins which were located at a number of police stations across the Force Area. A further 9 knives and 16 other offensive weapons were seized by officers during this initiative.

The second phase of the Safer Scotland Anti-Violence Campaign, ‘Communities Against Alcohol Fuelled Violence’ ran between 1-24 December 2007. This campaign focussed on the causes and effects of alcohol fuelled violence.

During this campaign, 43 persons were dealt with for drinking in contravention of local bylaws, 774 licensed premises checks were carried out and 301 litres of alcohol were confiscated.

The third phase of this Anti-Violence Campaign, 'Communities Against Collective Violence' is currently in the planning phases and will run in March, a report on this initiative will be prepared for a future Board meeting.

The Crime Reduction 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.

During the reporting period the mobile CCTV Unit has been used on a regular basis within the Inverness and Ross and Cromarty Areas.

The Antisocial Behaviour Co-ordinator, PC Mick Waters, continues to be proactive, assisting the Antisocial Behaviour Partnership in progressing orders against individuals where work continues on a number of cases throughout the five mainland area Commands.

On 12 December 2007, at Inverness Sheriff Court, four brothers who all reside in South Kessock, Inverness, were issued with an interim ASBO in relation to their continuing violent, threatening and intimidating behaviour towards other residents of South Kessock. The one condition is that they do not enter South Kessock, north of their own home. This matter returns to Inverness Sheriff Court in January 2008 for a full hearing.

The Force has recently upgraded its mobile ANPR capability, to more sophisticated technology, having taken delivery of eight new digital systems, fitted to a variety of vehicles across the mainland policing area. The new systems will allow for digital imaging and recording, faster processing, increased data storage, and improved search and research back office facility. Some of the units have also been fitted with fully integrated digital in-car speed detection equipment. This new enhanced equipment will assist our frontline officers to be more proactive in our fight against crime.

TACKLING SERIOUS CRIME

An additional Drug Search dog was trained and is now operational within the Dog Section increasing our pro-active capability. On its first search following licensing, the dog located drugs and a large quantity of cash in the North Kessock area.

Following a report of a serious assault in Ullapool by 2 males upon a licensee, where one of the males had resisted arrest and made good his escape, a dog handler attended and following an extensive search located and apprehended the suspect. Three handlers were involved in the search for the suspects involved in the series of Post Office break-ins and other similar crimes across the Highlands and neighbouring Forces in recent months. On one occasion when the thieves were disturbed in Lochaber, during the hours of darkness, and made their getaway over hillside and rocky terrain, a handler and his dog tracked, chased and apprehended

the main suspect. Another of the handlers and his canine companion located a safe from one of the break-ins.

In response to a report of a Housebreaking in progress in Beauly, a handler and dog attended, carried out a search, resulting in the suspect being located and apprehended.

Another report of an attempted Housebreaking in Dulnain, resulted in the dog section attending and being successful in locating and arresting the suspect.

Following a report of a road traffic collision in Inverness where the driver had run away, a handler attended, located and apprehended the suspect.

A dog handler attended and assisted with the apprehension of the suspect following a report of a stabbing in the Inverness area.

After a search involving a dog handler and his dog, two suspects for a robbery in Inverness were located and apprehended shortly after the crime.

Following a report of a theft by opening of a lock-fast place in the Maryburgh area, 2 handlers attended and following a search with dogs located three suspects who were apprehended.

In response to a report of a stolen vehicle in the Inverness area, a handler attended and one male was located and apprehended shortly after making good his escape from the vehicle.

During the reporting period, 41 drug dog searches were carried out at various locations and premises throughout mainland Force Area, with varying degrees of successful results. This proactive use of drug detection dogs has increased significantly and will be enhanced with the additional resource now available within the Section

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 the following National ACPOS campaigns during the period under review.

- 26-29 October 2007 - Winter Driving Campaign. This was supported by a series of radio adverts across the Force and news articles in local and national papers.
- 23-25 November 2007 - National Rural Roads Weekend. This was supported by increased enforcement, radio adverts and a press day at Ross County Football club to promote Pass Plus to young drivers.
- ACPOS Festive Safety Campaign ran from 7/12/07 - 4/01/08. During the 4-week campaign a total of 61 drink drivers were detected in comparison to 75 last year. There was one drug driver detected. A high proportion of those detected were young male drivers, and this year saw a significant percentage increase in female offenders.

Road Safety/Young Driver presentations were given at Inverness College over two days to 350 apprentice students. The speakers were representatives of the Institute of Advanced Motorists, Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service and Northern Constabulary. Pass Plus was also promoted at these events. Plans are underway to carry out the same presentations in Shetland in February, which if successful may see it rolled out elsewhere.

Driving Ambition pilots, another initiative aimed at educating school pupils as they take to the road will be held Kingussie High School on 15 January 2008 and Lochaber High School on 20 February 2008.

Northern Constabulary, in conjunction with MFR Radio, which provides a local perspective, continues to promote the Safe Drive adverts focussing on the National Campaign themes.

The Road Policing Section continues to be proactive in working with our statutory partners and roads authorities in providing advice, guidance and enforcement to the motoring public on our roads across the Force area. Our staff continue to target issues such as speeding, seatbelts, drink/drug driving and inappropriate driving on our trunk roads as well as our towns and rural environs.

Plans have been drawn up with VOSA for a series of 15 joint operations during 2008 co-ordinated through the Force Tactical Tasking process. A number of these checks will be conducted as part of the national Operation Mermaid. These joint operations target Road Hauliers, Bus Operators and other large vehicle operators, and as a consequence, as well as reducing crime on our road networks, unsafe or poorly maintained vehicles are prohibited from our roads until repaired and tested. This can have significant effect on the ability of commercial vehicle operators to operate profitably and within the terms of their Licence, so it is in their interests to ensure they meet the standards.

The Road Policing Section continues to be involved in providing specialist escort services to transport operators involved in Wind Farm Construction. This has been a heavy commitment with all costs being recovered from the developers. Work is ongoing for other significant abnormal load movements, some of which will require road closures and diversions.

Regrettably, we have to report that 3 fatal road collisions have occurred in the Northern Constabulary area since the last NJPB meeting.

- ◆ On 18 December 2007 a two vehicle collision occurred on the A82 at Corrychurrachan, Lochaber. As a result a local 50-year-old female driver sustained fatal injuries.
- ◆ On 28 December 2007 a three vehicle collision occurred on the A9 at Coulnagower, Ross-shire. As a result a local 36-year-old female driver sustained fatal injuries.
- ◆ On 30 December 2007 a single vehicle collision occurred on the A82 at Invergarry. As a result a local 22-year-old male driver sustained fatal injuries.

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

There were a total of 34 fatal collisions during 2007 resulting in 39 fatalities. Despite these tragic incidents the Force remains on track to meet all Government targets in respect of the reduction in persons killed or injured on our roads.

There is a separate report before the Board, detailing information in response to questions raised at the November 2007 meeting by several members in regard to Road Policing/Road Safety issues.

SAFER COMMUNITIES

The Dog Section continues to carry out training at venues which are public and where crime is or has been a problem, i.e. school grounds during holiday periods and weekends etc. The handlers regularly converse with the general public in these areas in an effort to forge good police/public relations and there has been some very positive feedback.

A successful bid for £22,000 was made by Northern Constabulary Community Safety Youth Development Officer to the Antisocial Behaviour Partnership for a "mobile football pitch". Once purchased and obtained, it will be used across the Force area in a partnership initiative with Inverness Caledonian Thistle and NCH to promote health, social inclusion and community cohesion amongst youths. The procurement process for this equipment has been initiated and once purchased NCH and ICTFC will lead the project.

Roads Policing have also been successful in a bid for funding to purchase Exhaust Sound Meters which will be used to enforce anti-social behaviour legislation in respect of drivers who modify their vehicles to make excessive noise emissions. This equipment has been obtained and is now available in all parts of the Force area.

A bid, made by Northern Constabulary Drug and Alcohol Co-ordinator, for £25,000 has been approved by the Anti-Social Behaviour Partnership, to support Force Funding in developing a DVD aimed at providing advice, guidance and raising awareness of the issues around Women, Alcohol and Personal Safety. Work on the DVD and tender process has begun.

The Force has participated in a number of emergency exercises, along with multi-agency partners to test their ability to respond to a range of major incidents and emergencies, including:

7/10/07 Mass Decontamination Exercise, Inverness

27/11/07 Orkney Harbours security exercise

Emergency Planning Section staff have co-ordinated the delivery of Force Public Order Training, held between 2 October and 4 October 2007, which will maintain our resilience and corporate commitment in the event of being called upon to assist at incidents in-Force or Nationally.

Emergency Planning Staff are heavily involved in planning for a number of emergency exercises and significant events, which are to take place in the Force in 2008, including:

- Exercise McMorris 27/02/08
- Exercise Highport 13-15/05/08

Test purchasing of alcohol was formally launched on 5 December 2007. Forces across Scotland had worked to bring themselves to a point where they were in a position to utilise the opportunity to carry out such purchases as afforded by Section 105 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. Northern Constabulary, in line with the ACPOS produced national Manual of Guidance for the Test Purchasing of Alcohol in Scotland, will in apply test purchasing on an intelligence led basis, and with the welfare of the test purchaser as paramount. Work is ongoing both in Force and with partner agencies, including the Licensed Trade, and Dialogue Youth Scotland to complete the necessary procedures prior to any utilisation of test purchasing.

On 29 and 30 November, officers from the Northern Constabulary supported by the Security Industries Authority (SIA) Investigators checked 13 sites around Inverness. Of the 16 operatives checked, 11 individuals were issued with warnings under Section 3 of the Private Security Industry Act 2001, i.e. working without an SIA Licence. Five operatives were deployed lawfully and were displaying their SIA licences. The SIA are carrying out follow-up work with the relevant companies.

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>

I Latimer
Chief Constable