

NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

18 JANUARY 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

ROAD SAFETY

Report by the Chief Constable

SUMMARY

To inform board members on the current position and action taken to date on the specific issues/concerns raised by Members at the Board meeting held on 22 November 2007.

BACKGROUND

At the last meeting of the Northern Joint Police Board held on Thursday 22 November 2007 in Inverness, a number of issues and concerns were raised by several Members in respect of road policing issues and road safety matters which required further clarification and information to be made available. The Deputy Chief Constable, Mr A G Sutherland agreed to provide the Board Members with a report informing on the issues identified for the next NJPB Meeting in January 2008. This report seeks to provide the necessary clarification on the specific issues raised and to provide reassurance to Members on Northern Constabulary's proactive contribution to Road Safety.

1. Pass Plus Scheme (PPS)

The Pass Plus Scheme is designed for new drivers to encourage them to take additional driver training once they have passed their driving test. The content of the PPS is aimed at expanding inexperienced drivers knowledge and skills on aspects of driving and other road types not fully covered in the Learner curriculum. The scheme is a national initiative administered and run by participating Local Authorities, who can access and provide funding and support to students to meet a significant percentage of the costs in participating in the scheme. As an example Northern Constabulary supports Highland Council in promoting the scheme through the Community Safety Partnerships. In addition, funding has been secured over the last 3 years from The Highland Council to run the Northern Constabulary 'Bikesafe' programme, aimed at young and inexperienced motorcyclists. Leaflets of the Pass Plus Scheme will be available at the Board meeting for information.

2. A82 South of Fort William (Serious Accidents)

Research has been carried out into the numbers of collisions on the A82 between Fort William and Ballachulish Bridge. For the period 1 January 2006 – 25 November 2007 there were a total of 93 non-injury, 26 slight injury, 3 serious injury and 2 fatal collisions. Detailed analysis of the 2 fatal collisions did not suggest tree sap or diesel spillage as the cause.

It has been ascertained that Devon and Cornwall Police run an initiative called 'Spiller Killer' aimed at educating HGV drivers on the dangers to motorcyclists of diesel spills. Information on this programme is being sought and will be evaluated. With regard to the particular concern raised, whilst accidental diesel spillage cannot be discounted at any location, this has not been apparent in our investigations on this particular stretch of road. It is more probable that as any HGV filling up with diesel in Fort William must negotiate at least 2 roundabouts before entering this stretch of road the likelihood is that any diesel, as a result of overfilling would be spilt on one of these two roundabouts. A search of 2007 incidents at these locations support this assumption. There was one incident reported at Morrison's roundabout in Fort William and two incidents on the A82 from Fort William to Ballachulish. On each occasions ScotlandTranserv were informed.

Following a serious road accident in late November 2007, and in response to a call from the local Area Commander supported by locally elected members, attempts were made by Operational Support and Road Policing to arrange an early meeting with all relevant Partner Representatives and Roads Authorities to discuss road safety concerns on this stretch of road. However, in response to a request by the main Roads Authority to have time to study and assimilate detailed information and reports provided by Northern Constabulary, it was accepted as prudent to wait for this to happen. This did not result in any routine inspection process carried out by the Roads Authority or Transport Scotland being cancelled or delayed.

I can advise that in early/mid December 2007 arrangements were made with Transport Scotland and other relevant parties to meet with Northern Constabulary on 16 January 2008 in Fort William to consider all the issues raised and hopefully carry out an inspection of the road along the route of concern. Inspector John Smith, Road Policing will be attending that meeting along with Laura Fisher, Road Safety Officer and the Area Commander and they will report on any outcomes or actions deemed appropriate and necessary in respect of engineering, road maintenance, signage and enforcement opportunities to the Head of Operations.

In addition, The Scottish Safety Camera Programme Office has recently asked all Safety Camera Partnerships to identify one new route for consideration of a route strategy. The NSCP has been tasked to research and submit information on the A82 along its length from Glencoe to Inverness, all within the Northern Constabulary policing area. If successful in having the A82 adopted as a route strategy within the national protocols laid down for Camera Partnerships, this will allow enforcement at any point along its length and not just at specific locations which meet identified accident criteria. This flexibility will allow a more proactive deployment approach to our camera enforcement strategy.

3. Deer Collisions

Across the Force area for the period January 2005 to date there have been 102 reported collisions attributed to deer on the roadway. Of this total, 17 of the collisions involved personal injury to vehicle occupants and/or driver. Out of the 17 incidents, 4 resulted in the deer being struck on the roadway. The remaining 13 resulted in the vehicle leaving the roadway to avoid the deer and colliding with other roadside obstructions etc. Along identified routes where deer are known to be a regular hazard, there are standard warning signs on display and the Traffic Scotland variable message signs at Ullapool and Rogie often carry a warning of deer on the roadway.

4. Bridge Closures

The closure of bridges is determined by obstructions or collisions on the roadway, persons threatening self-harm or high wind speeds, as deemed necessary dictated by the individual circumstances present at the time. Where persons threaten self-harm the decision on which lane or carriageways to close or restrict is the responsibility of the Police Incident Officer, often in consultation with the police negotiator if present.

The restriction on vehicles or closure of a bridge due to high winds is determined by levels of wind speed set by Transport Scotland who are in the process of publishing a 'Wind Management Strategy'. Intimation of these levels is provided by the Operating Companies and the Force Operations Centre informed accordingly once these levels have been reached. There are no roadgates available and there are no permanently signed routes for any diversion schemes in the event of a closure. Information can only be passed to motorists by officers on duty at road closures, via the local media or through use of the Traffic Scotland variable message signs. ScotlandTranserv have been requested to consider permanent signing for the strategic network bridge closures and a response is awaited. Where prolonged road closures are anticipated temporary diversion signage can be made available from the Operating Company or Local Authority

Agreement has recently been reached in ACPOS that the responsibility for manning and maintaining a road closure at a trunk road bridge would be by members of staff from the Operating Company. Individual Area Commands are responsible for making local traffic management arrangements in the event of a bridge closure.

5. Young Drivers (Involvement in Road Collisions/Traffic Offending)

Mr Ian Lowe, CJA has been requested to prepare a report on the number of young (17-24) drivers involved in collisions and reported for offences. Unfortunately this information will not be available until at least 12 January 2008. Should it become available in time for the January Board Meeting then it will be made available on the day through the Force Executive.

6. Incidents of Road Rage

Analysis of IMPACT Incident Recording for the period 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2007 (2 Years) under the subject code of 'Road Rage' show that there has been 112 recorded incidents following complaints from members of the motoring public.

Many of these reports were of a very minor nature, often occurring after a collision where the parties involved remonstrated with each other on who was to blame for the incident. There were a number of incidents which resulted from aggressive driving behaviour or following aggrieved or frustrated drivers gesticulating or voicing their anger at other drivers from within their vehicles which were subsequently reported.

In many instances reported to Police, there was insufficient evidence or credible independent witnesses available to provide corroboration to report the matter to the

Procurator Fiscal. Where appropriate warnings were given to the alleged offenders in such circumstances. Detailed research on each and every incident has not been undertaken on this occasion, however the information provided demonstrates the differences in public perception of what constitutes Road Rage and the difficulties Police have in gaining a sufficiency of independent evidence to support prosecution.

Out of the 112 incidents reported to police, 16 persons were reported for aggravated Road Traffic offences, Vandalism or Breach of the Peace charges as a result of their conduct. The table below provides a breakdown of incidents area by area over the course of the last two years.

Command Area	2006	2007	Reports to PF
Ross, Cromarty & Skye	6	6	3
Western Isles	1	1	1
Caithness & Sutherland	5	5	1
Orkney	0	0	0
Shetland	2	2	1
Badenoch, Strathspey and Nairn	6	9	3
Inverness	42	20	4
Lochaber	6	1	3
Totals	68	44	16

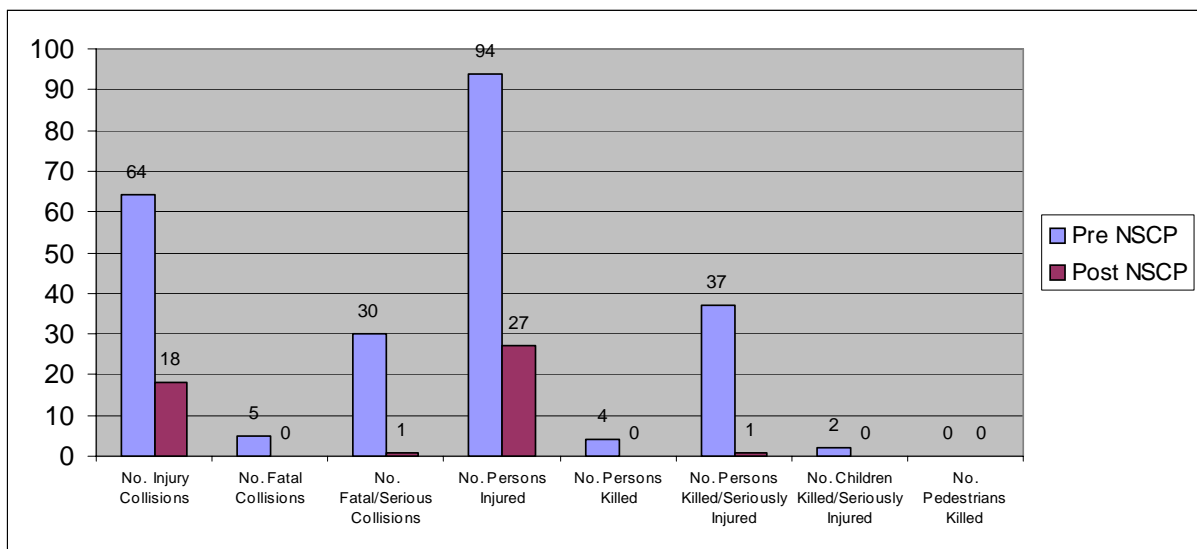
7. Northern Safety Camera Partnership Effectiveness

A degree of analysis of the effectiveness in reducing casualties for the period January 2000 - December 2003 and July 2004 - December 2007 for sites and routes operated by NSCP is ongoing.

Analysis has been carried out for each of the 29 identified sites at which the Northern Safety Camera Partnership operate.

The analysis compares the 4 year period from January 2000 to December 2003 prior to the NSCP being operational against the period of 3.5 years from July 2004 when the NSCP became operational to December 2007. Across all of the 29 sites the following figures and graph represents the changes in casualty figures.

	No. Injury Collisions	No. Fatal Collisions	No. Fatal/Serious Collisions	No. Persons Injured	No. Persons Killed	No. Persons Killed/Seriously Injured	No. Children Killed/Seriously Injured	No. Pedestrians Killed
4 years Pre NSCP	64	5	30	94	4	37	2	0
3.5 years Post NSCP	18	0	1	27	0	1	0	0
% change	-72%	-100%	-97%	-71%	-100%	-97%	-100%	



RECOMMENDATION

The Board is invited to note the report.

**I Latimer
Chief Constable**