

# NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

23 APRIL 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

## Operational Support Service Unit – 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31 March 2008

### Report by the Chief Constable

#### UNIT OVERVIEW

The Operational Support Service Unit for this period comprised 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 strategic aims of the Chief Constable. The following is a resume of our work.

#### REDUCING CRIME

During the reporting period, the Dog Section carried out over 386 hours of mobile patrol and 134 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 at identified hotspots as well as providing high visibility to reduce opportunities for crime, particularly in industrial estates, town centres and retail parks over the Festive Season.

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 Operations Mermaid and Block as well as routine stop checks of vehicles and occupants across the Force Area.

Community Safety co-ordinated the second of the 2007/08 Safer Scotland Anti Violence Initiatives "Communities Against Alcohol Fuelled Violence" which ran between 1-24 December 2007. The table below shows the results achieved across the Force during this campaign.

<b>SAFER SCOTLAND – RESULTS</b>	
<b>COMMUNITIES AGAINST ALCOHOL FUELLED VIOLENCE</b>	
Total Numbers of ' <i>Drinking in Public Offences</i> ' detected by Males Under 18 Years of Age to include numbers of alcohol confiscation	31
Total Number of ' <i>Drinking in Public Offences</i> ' detected by Females Under 18 Years of Age to include numbers of alcohol confiscation	7
Total Number of ' <i>Drinking in Public Offences</i> ' Committed by Males 18 Years of Age and Over	5
Total Number of Visits to Licensed Premises	774
Quantity of Alcohol Seized (Litres)	301
Total Number of Offences Detected In respect of On Sales Premises	6

The third phase of Safer Scotland 'Communities Against Collective Violence' is currently underway. While it is recognised that as a Force we do not have an identified problem with 'Gang' Violence, a number of Area Commands have prepared problem profiles focussed on addressing the issue of City and Town Centre violence. The Force will also use the focus of the campaign to engage with and provide diversionary activities for young people. This initiative which initially was due to run 1-19 March has now been extended to run throughout March and until the end of the Easter Holidays which varies across Local Authority Areas. The Community Safety Department will co-ordinate the force response for this campaign.

The Crime Reduction Co-ordinator has continued to maintain and advertise the available technical equipment at our disposal to assist Area Commands in the detection of specific types of dishonesty offences, which in the past has proved very successful. Following a request from Central Scotland Police, permission has been granted to loan them equipment to assist them mount an initiative to deal with a spate of specific type of dishonesties in their area. This will be explored further and may result in reciprocal agreements.

The mobile CCTV Unit has been deployed extensively throughout the year with Special Constables covering 166 shifts, each shift being for a minimum of 4 hours. This resource has been invaluable in assisting the policing of events and our communities where particular problems are encountered.

The Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator, PC Mick Waters, continues to be proactive, assisting the Anti-social Behaviour Partnership in progressing orders against individuals. The Highland Council have agreed to maintain the funding of their Anti-Social Behaviour Team for a further year, and Northern Constabulary will continue to support this through the secondment of Constable Waters.

The most significant case being worked on at this time is the case against four adult brothers in South Kessock. An interim ASBO was granted at Inverness Sheriff Court on 12 December 2007 and is soon to go to a full hearing.

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 two spontaneous firearms incidents requiring the deployment of specialist officers. All

these incidents were successfully resolved in a proportionate manner without incident. Dog Section personnel attended and assisted at both these incidents.

All sections of Operational Support, particularly Emergency Planning, Road Policing, Firearms and Search continued to be involved in the planning for the SLP conference in Aviemore, which took place between 28-30 March 2008. The planning and policing response ensured the Event passed without incident and the Force attracted very favourable comments from the Organisers, the Aviemore Centre hosts, delegates and visitors alike.

A Spontaneous Silver Commander's Course was held in-Force between 3-7 March 2008. This training was facilitated by Kent Police and was attended by a number of senior officers from across the force which will strengthen and enhance force resilience in respect of commanding future firearms incidents.

Drugs search dogs were deployed on 47 occasions with a number of positive searches including Garve, Lochinver, Kinlochleven, Portree, Kildary, Kiltarlity, Wick, Alness and Fort William.

General Purpose dogs were deployed on a number of occasions to assist in the detection of crime; the following are some examples;

- Report received of an RTC in Dores where the driver had ran away - a handler and dog attended and traced the suspect.
- Following a report of a disturbance in Inverness City Centre, a handler and dog attended and located the suspect in a skip.
- After the report of an assault in Inverness, a handler and dog attended and located the suspect.
- A report was received of a male with a knife in Inverness, a handler and dog attended and traced the suspect.
- Following a report of a suspicious male in gardens in Inverness - a handler and dog attended and traced the suspect.
- A report was received of a Breach of Peace in Smithton where the suspect ran away - a handler and dog attended and located the suspect.
- After the report of a Robbery in Fort William, a handler and dog attended and located property from the crime.
- Following a report of a violent male in Inverness, a handler and dog attended and detained the suspect.
- A theft by Housebreaking was reported in Inverness - a handler and dog attended and located the suspect.
- Another report of an HB in progress in Inverness - a handler and dog attended and detained the suspect.

## **SAFER ROADS**

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

- Seatbelt/Speeding Action Day – 5 February 2008
- Rural Roads Weekend 23-30 March 2008

Ms Fisher was involved in a joint initiative with Inverness College delivering road safety driver education and awareness to all CITB apprentices. This initiative has been extended to take in other training establishments and training was delivered at Shetland College on 12 and 13 February 2008. Plans are in place to role this out to other venues across the Force.

Northern Constabulary in conjunction with MFR Radio continues with the Safe Drive adverts focussing on the National Road Safety 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.

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.

Landward - BBC programme went out on Friday 21 March at 1700hrs, there was a 10 minute piece on our work with Donald Geddes and the Driving Ambition input to schools. The programme was filmed at Kingussie High School at the start of February when Northern Constabulary along with Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue and The Highland Council delivered Driving Ambition, the team then went on to Lochaber High School for another Driving Ambition input.

Motorcycle Safety - Northern are currently working with MFR on a 3 month long radio campaign for motorcyclists. They have 3 presenters currently going through the bike test and are recording their experience; this is then backed up by presenter reads, website information and recordings of advice from Motorcycle Officers and the Road Safety Officer. We have approached TV Personality, Charlie Boorman, for audio on the scripts and currently await his decision.

ITV Granada TV Crew who are making a documentary type programme on the blue light response to Emergencies in the Highlands and North East have been shadowing the Road Policing Section and Dog Section for four weeks filming over the period. They have managed to attend some particularly serious incidents which have proved successful in highlighting the work of the Police and other emergency services, and we look forward to the final programming.

Rural Roads Weekend was held on 28-30 March and focused on mobile phone offences and other targeted offences. This was a media campaign only and no statistical returns were required. Despite the Force having significant resources deployed at the SLP Conference in Aviemore over that weekend, all areas of the

Force, including the Island Commands actively participated in hi-viz patrol and enforcement activity.

Regrettably, we have to report that despite the level of enforcement, education and partnership activity undertaken across the Force area to reduce road deaths, there were three fatal road collisions in the Northern Constabulary area during the period under review.

- ◆ At 1334 hours on Tuesday 15 January 2008 a two vehicle collision occurred on the A82 at Carr's Corner, Fort William when a Ford Transit pick-up turned right into an industrial estate across the path of a southbound pedal cycle. The cyclist, a 34-year-old professional International cyclist was killed. The driver of the pick-up, a 35-year-old male, has been reported to the PF for careless driving.
- ◆ At 1510 hours on Monday 4 February 2008 a two vehicle collision occurred on the A862 at Inchmore when an Eastbound Volkswagen LT35 van braked from speed to avoid a preceding van and crossed the carriageway. It then struck a Westbound Vauxhall Corsa, killing the 44-year-old female driver. Enquiries continue.
- ◆ At 1200 hours on Wednesday 12 March 2008 a two vehicle collision occurred on the A828 at Kentallen when a northbound Mercedes Sprinter van lost control and crossed into the southbound carriageway striking the front of a Scania HGV. As a result the driver of the Mercedes van, a 40-year-old male, was killed. Enquiries continue.

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. The findings of these accident reports will also be shared with the relevant Roads Authorities and other agencies so that any issues identified in respect of road engineering, design and signage can be considered.

Despite these tragic incidents the Force recorded five less fatalities than last year and remains on track to exceed all targets in respect of the reduction in persons killed, injured and involved in accidents on our roads.

The Northern Safety Camera Partnership, the day to day management of which is now overseen by our Road Policing Inspector, supported by Sergeant Dougie Bennion, has been involved in the following initiatives, as well as the routine enforcement action at all relevant sites across the North.

- From 28 January 2008 to 3 February 2008 a large screen Community Roadshow event took place at Eastgate Shopping Centre, Inverness with a new NSCP video.
- During January 2008, 135,000 Highland Council 'pay & display' tickets were issued for use at Inverness and Fort William car parks carrying information relating to car speed limits and the NSCP website address.
- On 21 January 2008 the second half of this year's 'Bus Back' poster campaign was launched and will run for 8 weeks on all main routes.

Analysis of the Fixed Penalty Fines issued over the past few years by the NSCP as a result of speeding enforcement identified certain trends, one of which was the number of Island based offenders. In an effort to raise awareness amongst visitors to the mainland of the mobile camera enforcement undertaken at identified sites across the mainland area of the Force, the NSCP placed adverts in the local media outlets through the Orcadian and Stornoway Gazette newspapers during February 2008. Further analysis will be undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness or otherwise of this strategy.

## **SAFER COMMUNITIES**

Funding has been secured following the submission of a bid to the Highland Anti-social Behaviour Partnership for a "mobile football pitch" which will be used across the Highland Area in partnership with Inverness Caledonian Thistle and NCH to promote health, social inclusion and community cohesion amongst youths. It is hoped that this equipment may be available for use during the Communities Against Collective Violence Campaign.

The Safe Highlanders and Islanders event for 2008 is currently being planned for May/June. Given the imminent changes to the Force, through its re-organisation to return more Officers to frontline operational duties, negotiations have taken place with Highland Council and they have agreed to take on the planning and co-ordination of this event in future years through their Education Services.

The Dog Section were involved in delivering 8 Public Reassurance talks and demonstrations to 8 separate groups including Police Probationers, Bishop Eden Primary School, Mulbuie Primary School, Nairn Brownies and Marybank Community Council.

Special Constable Co-ordination and Autumn/Winter Training Programme continued to be delivered over the review period with a number of topics and issues relative to each individual area and their learning needs. This has been a positive initiative delivered from the centre which is set to continue when the responsibility is transferred over to Human Resources in the next financial year. The training programme for Special Constables is continuing.

The Emergency Planning Section staff have been heavily involved in the work of the Force Planning team for Operation Manpower, the Scottish Labour Party Conference at Aviemore Highland Resort 28-30/3/07. They have also commenced work as part of the Force Planning Team for Rockness 2008 (7-8/6/08).

Planning has also commenced for Exercise Highport 2008, a statutory exercise under REPPIR (Radiation Emergency Preparedness & Public Information Regulations) due to take place 13-15/5/08 to test the response to a nuclear accident at the berths used by the Royal Navy nuclear powered submarines at Loch Ewe and Broadford Bay.

Force Public Order refresher training took place on 4-5 March 2008 which will allow the Force to maintain its resilience to meet its obligations.