

RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON TO THE HMICFRS REPORT:

‘Roads Policing: Not Optional. An Inspection of roads policing’

Police and Crime Commissioner’s comments

I welcome the HMICFRS report on Roads Policing. It comes at a time when there is some considerable focus on this subject and a determination from all to increase the safety of road users, given it was published shortly after the recent Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety report into roads policing enforcement, in addition to the DfT, Home Office and the NPCC joint review of roads policing and Call for Evidence. I fully endorse such attention and the HMICFRS report provides a very comprehensive understanding of the challenge ahead for road policing, from both a national and on a Wiltshire centric basis, and helps identify areas for further examination and improvement.

In addition to the number of reports and concerted focus on road policing, the Prime Minister’s commitment last October to increase police numbers by 20,000 officers will undoubtedly have a positive impact on road safety. Indeed in Wiltshire I have committed to further invest in additional resources to support our Community Speed Watch schemes across the county and to strengthen our enforcement capability. This is in addition to our 36 fte officers dedicated to roads policing and our valuable CSW volunteers.

Whilst Wiltshire Police has undoubtedly undertaken some excellent work in roads policing, it is fundamentally correct that we take stock of anything further we can do to improve road safety. I fully endorse a collaborative partnership approach is the way forward and I welcome the APCC’s recent setting up of a dedicated new Roads Policing and Safety portfolio and am pleased to report the group has a Wiltshire representative, in my Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

Roads policing has always had a strong prominence in my Police and Crime Plan and as part of the process to refresh the document and the PCP Update 2020, I discussed at length with the Chief Constable my commitment to road safety and how this can be strengthened. As a result the Update included the following objectives which the Chief Constable fully endorsed:

Priority 1 - Prevent Crime and Keep People Safe

MAKE OUR ROADS SAFER

Speeding and road safety affects all our communities. Anti-social driving and speeding will be tackled in order to keep both road users and pedestrians safe. I will continue to ensure Wiltshire Police and partners:

- 1. Improve the safety of our roads by coordinated action through safety improvements and education for drivers and enforcement where necessary*
- 2. Support and invest in systems to improve Community Speedwatch schemes including support by our specialist Roads Policing Unit, local policing teams and the Special Constabulary*
- 3. Increase mobile enforcement and use of driver safety awareness education programmes, in collaboration with our partners.*

As Commissioner I have publicly stated that Wiltshire Police will increase the targeted enforcement of traffic offences, whether this is delivered via a new capability we plan to implement by the end of this year – and as referred to on the CC's response to recommendation 8 – or via other means such as additional police support to CSW schemes and increased support of national road safety campaigns. Our CSW volunteers work closely with the Community Policing Teams and are ably supported by the Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit. Across the Force area there are 120 CSW schemes operated by approximately 1200 volunteers who regularly monitor the speed of traffic within their areas and provide Wiltshire Police with useful intelligence.

With regards to raising awareness on roads safety and supporting national campaigns, in recent weeks the Roads Policing Unit have promoted a number of local initiatives that make up the Fatal Four, including a summer drink driving campaign, support to Road Victims Month and a campaign to tackle drivers who use their mobile phones whilst driving.

In addition to the local planned campaigns raising awareness of the Fatal Four I will be promoting the APCC's Roads Safety Portfolio forthcoming national public survey which aims to understand the public's view on general road safety and roads policing, including fixed penalty notices, and local enforcement.

I mirror the sentiments of the Chief Constable and his business lead for roads policing regarding the disaggregation of the Tri Force agreement in 2019. This has enabled roads policing resources to return to the direct control and responsibility of my Chief Constable. Following disbandment, the number of roads policing assets in Wiltshire has increased thereby bucking the national trend. The move has also ensured the Chief Constable is fully accountable to myself for his actions and has clear understanding of my commitment to road safety as a key priority. The move has also ensured that the specialist skills associated with roads policing has been used to support our Community Policing Teams.

I continue to invest in and foster a multi-agency partnership approach to policing our roads. Wiltshire Police has made great strides to improve the way our roads are policed. This has included continued investment in the Community Safety Partnerships and developing a strategic road safety group with our partners to ensure a joined up approach. The Strategic Road Safety Group (SRSG) which forms part of the Community Safety Partnerships for both Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council, has in the past six month's been reinvigorated. I provided the direction to the Chief Constable for the SRSG to be refreshed and strengthened. It is currently chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable and there is further senior representation with both my Deputy PCC attending, together with Wiltshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Highways. The SRSG has continued to function during lockdown and has drafted a revised strategy document and in addition to the representatives already detailed, has good input from a range of partners including both local authorities, the PCC and OPCC, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, Public Health and Highways England.

In addition to the work of the CRSG, it is important to note the importance of a well-designed and maintained road and we continue to work with our local authority partners on this. It is not just human factors, such as speeding, not wearing seatbelts or careless driving, that increase the risk of a crash occurring. Poor road design, poorly executed roads and inadequate road maintenance can also cause crashes and increase the severity of injury. A 'forgiving road' can assist safe road user behaviour and prevent or reduce injuries and we continue to raise awareness on this with our colleagues in our two local authority highways departments.

The Force is in the process of actively subscribing to the Nextbase product which will enable members of the public to upload video and photographic evidence to Wiltshire Police via a National Dash Cam Safety Portal (NDSP). This system is used by several other forces and given my inbox receives regular correspondence from frustrated residents wishing to share instances of reported driving offences, I very much welcome this additional technological resource I have asked the Chief Constable to pursue. This in addition to the other positive actions we are implementing in the area of roads policing and will undoubtedly help my aim to reduce road accidents and make the Wiltshire roads safer for all.

I am very optimistic about the future in terms of roads policing in Wiltshire. The Covid-19 pandemic and the period of lockdown in Wiltshire has indeed shown the importance of roads policing. With the roads being quieter as traffic volume decreased, some drivers saw it as an opportunity for speeding and other dangerous behaviours. The Wiltshire Police response was positive and given the then temporary suspension of the Community Speed Watch schemes, a targeted approach was taken by our Roads Policing Unit supported by our Community Policing Teams and the setting up of a number of speed checks across the force area, including the strategic road network of A-roads and M4 and many residential neighbourhoods and B roads. Such action ran in conjunction with an extensive public campaign.

Finally I commend the Chief Constable for commissioning this year a Continuous Improvement review of the Roads Policing Unit. This is timely given the recent attention and scrutiny to roads policing and the report's recommendations that fall directly within the remit of the police service. I will look forward to the outcome of this review and the areas identified for improvement.

Chief Constable's comments

The Chief Constable takes note of the recommendations within the recent HMICFRS report and is committed to addressing them - as detailed in the summary below - and ensuring that the force has a strong roads policing capability. The Chief Constable is committed to the development of a Roads Policing STRA over the next 12 months. A Continuous Improvement review of the specialist operations department, under which Roads Policing falls, has been commissioned for later this year which will identify any gaps and areas for improvement within the department following the return to force from a previous Tri-Force specialist operations model.

Business Lead's Comments

Roads Policing has gone through substantial change in the last 2 years with a transition from a Tri Force arrangement back to local control of specialist assets. This has allowed for a greater focus on local roads policing with a greater emphasis on proactive work, mainly based on the NPCC roads policing calendar. There have been some negative elements to Roads policing in recent years, with the safety camera partnership ending as well as the forces ability to accept dashcam footage being compromised. Both of these elements are now being explored again,

with a Wiltshire police led enforcement camera project and a trial on the use of dashcam footage being rolled out imminently. It is also worth noting that the Strategic Road Safety Partnership has been reinvigorated in the last 12 months and is now again up and running under the leadership of the ACC Operations.

Recommendations	Wiltshire response
<p>The report makes 13 recommendations, 6 for police which are referred to below;</p>	
<p>Recommendation 4 With immediate effect, chief constables should make sure that roads policing is included in their force’s strategic threat and risk assessments, which should identify the areas of highest harm and risk and the appropriate responses.</p>	<p>At this time there is no separate STRA for Wiltshire Roads Policing. It is suggested that a STRA could be produced in line with the Armed Policing STRA (APSTRA) but this would require substantial support from the business improvement department and based on experience of the APSTRA is likely a 6 month piece of work to implement.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 With immediate effect, chief constables should make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their force has enough analytical capability (including that provided by road safety partnerships) to identify risks and threats on the road network within their force area; • that information shared by partners relating to road safety is used effectively to reduce those risks and threats; and • there is evaluation of road safety initiatives to establish their effectiveness. 	<p>This again centres around capacity within the Business improvement department and is closely linked with recommendation 4 around producing the STRA. At the current time the capacity to produce data and analysis is reduced do to the COVID pandemic, making further demands difficult to achieve. There is a piece of work ongoing within the strategic road safety partnership where a sharing of data is being worked through with a company called Agilysis which is looking to provide a data product to the partnership drawing on all the partners data sources. This is very much ongoing but hoped will be a good usable product.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8 With immediate effect, chief constables should make sure that their force (or where applicable road safety partnerships of which their force is a member), comply with (the current version of) Department for Transport</p>	<p>With the removal several years ago of the Camera Safety Partnership within Wiltshire and Swindon the only enforcement of speed and red-light offences has been limited by our Roads Policing team and Community Policing Teams. The Force does support</p>

<p>Circular 1/2007 in relation to the use of speed and red-light cameras.</p>	<p>community speed watch. The Force is currently delivering a project of work (Community Speed Watch) to introduce a mobile enforcement camera and recruiting one post to proactively support Community Speed Watch and operational enforcement throughout the county.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9 With immediate effect, in forces where Operation Snap (the provision of digital video footage by the public) has been adopted, chief constables should make sure that it has enough resources and process to support its efficient and effective use.</p>	<p>The Force is currently in the process of signing up to The Nextbase product to deal with reported dashcam offences. All reported offences that are suitable to proceed either by summons or driver training will be dealt with and processed through our existing traffic administration department.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10 With immediate effect, chief constables should satisfy themselves that the resources allocated to policing the strategic road network within their force areas are sufficient. As part of that process they should make sure that their force has effective partnership arrangements including appropriate intelligence sharing agreements with relevant highways agencies.</p>	<p>At present Wiltshire has a resourcing model based on a previous collaboration (Tri Force) which has seen some adjustment since the dissolution of that arrangement. A review of the level of staffing needs to take place with the appropriate STRA in place to be able to answer this question with any degree of certainty. The force is fully engaged with partners both at a strategic level partnership meeting and a tactical one. Highways agencies are involved at both levels and intelligence sharing agreements are in place.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12 With immediate effect, chief constables should make sure that appropriate welfare support is provided to specialist investigators and family liaison officers involved in the investigation of fatal road traffic collisions.</p>	<p>When the department came back under local force control, the collision investigation unit (CIU) was formed. Part of the work here was to mitigate this exact risk around staff attending serious and fatal collisions. Because of this members of staff are required to attend annual risk assessed based medicals (RABM) with OHU. In addition the force has the TRIM process in place. Every time a serious collision is attended a report is sent to include the department supervisors who will check in with members of staff to ensure their welfare is taken care of. This is particularly relevant at the present time with COVID working practices meaning that staff are generally working from home.</p>

<p>Areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force-level support to national roads policing operations and intelligence structure is an area for improvement. • The efficient and effective exchange of all collision data with other relevant bodies is an area for improvement. • The awareness and understanding of the changes in the Professionalising Investigation Programme within police forces is an area for improvement. 	<p>Wiltshire currently supports all NRPOI campaigns. The main area for improvement is around how we feed the data back after the campaign – current processes do not allow for easy counting of the results. Collision data is shared at partnership meetings, notably the strategic roads policing partnership.</p> <p>The implementation of PIP within investigative CIU is not currently done as a general practice. There is one officer on the department who is accredited to PIP level 2 by virtue of previous experience in CID. It is worthy of note that any decision to upskill to PIP level 2 for investigative CIU would attract substantial resourcing and cost implications for learning and development.</p>
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