



Gwent Roads Policing Review

Author: ACC Ian Roberts
Date: 14th January 2021



1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

On 3rd September 2020, the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) presented a report to the Scrutiny and Performance Board entitled “*Gwent Roads Policing Review*”. This review was commissioned in light of the Ministry of Justice review into the service provision for victims of Road Traffic Collisions and also HMICFRS inspection of roads policing in England and Wales.

Gwent Police is committed to continuous improvement and welcomes the review into Roads Policing by the OPCC. The force acknowledges that serious harm caused on our roads remains unacceptably high and an increased level of focus and investment is required in order to contribute to making our roads safer and to reduce casualties. The force also recognises that in doing so, it must maintain roads policing support for operations to tackle serious and organised crime and to counter the threat from terrorism and extremism.

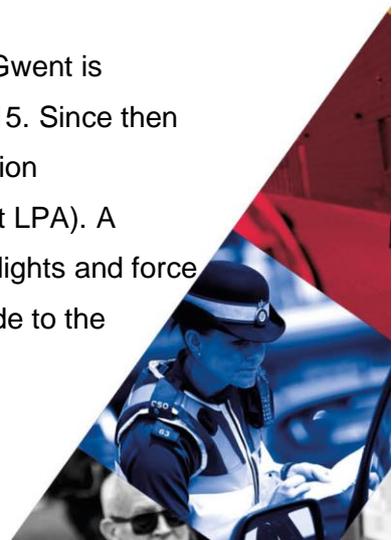
Following a decade of fiscal restraint, Operation Uplift provides the force with an opportunity to reconsider its operating model and its strategy for policing the roads of Gwent.

The force commenced a comprehensive review of its operating model in February 2020 and this programme of work is led by the Assistant Chief Constable. The scope of this review includes a review of all specialist uniform capabilities.

The purpose of this paper is to summarise the current position of the force in terms of its roads policing capabilities and initiatives, and also to set out its plans for the future in response to the specific recommendations within the OPCC report.

2. ROADS POLICING IN GWENT

The current structure which supports the delivery of roads policing activity in Gwent is primarily the result of the last major review of the force operating model in 2015. Since then there have been some amendments, most notably the expansion of the Collision Investigation Unit and an uplift in resources within the Area Support Unit (East LPA). A summary of existing force structures, along with examples of operational highlights and force roads policing operations is set out below, followed by the changes being made to the



department as a result of the Operating Model Review, followed by the work being done in regards to recommendations set out in the OPCC report.

Area Support Units

Area Support Units (ASU's) were established in 2015 as part of the Uniform Operating Model review. This was a new approach for Gwent Police and the result of a thorough continuous improvement project which reviewed the demands on specialist uniform teams, which considered of value for money principles in the midst of a period of budget restraints and also which took account of a good practice benchmarking review across similar forces England and Wales.

ASU's were formed by bringing together the former Gwent Police Roads Policing Unit and Support Group. Their core purpose is to provide specialist uniformed operational support to Local Policing Areas, with particular focus on: denying criminals the use of roads; responding to serious and fatal road collisions; providing advanced method of entry and search capabilities; and providing the force's primary capabilities for public order. This model formed part of a wider approach to decentralising specialist operational functions which had historically been based at Police Headquarters.

ASU officers are trained in a range of specialist skills such as: advanced police driving; Tactical Pursuit and Containment (TPaC); Taser; advanced Method of Entry; search; and Level 2 Public Order.

The force has two ASU's which form part of the Local Policing Area structure, providing 24/7 cover. This was in response to a review of the threat from Serious and Organised Crime and the capability and capacity needed to address this, especially relating to OCG members regularly failing to stop for police officers when driving motor vehicles

This investment has resulted in a significant impact on the disruption of Organised Crime in the Gwent area. The ASU provides effective support to local policing but also supports force and regional covert investigations. Below is a summary of outcomes from operations in May 2020 which were either led or supported by ASU teams. During this month the force seized a total of 81 kilograms of controlled drugs from vehicles which already had markers for being involved in organised criminality, with the drugs having a combined street value of over £3 million. Over 100 vehicles were seized for offences under Section 165 of the Road Traffic Act for offences relating to insurance or driving licences. During May a further 89 traffic



offence tickets were issued and scores of pre-emptive TPAC and stinger deployments were carried out. In total roads policing activity directly result in 113 arrests.

Partner agency working continues to be a strength, as demonstrated in September as the force embarked upon a weeklong national campaign called '*Project Edward*.' The purpose of which was to work with partners to achieve a week without a road death across the UK. No deaths were recorded within Gwent during the operation and the force saw some of the best results nationally, with 966 speeding offences recorded, 213 breath tests administered, 60 eyesight tests being conducted and 70 traffic offence tickets being issued, amongst several other outcomes.

Go Safe Partnership

Gwent Police has a long-standing partnership with Go Safe, with the pan-Wales partnership aimed at reducing casualties on our roads. The remit of the partnership is much wider than that of enforcement vans and casualty reduction officers with a wide range of operations held in partnership with not only Go Safe but other partner agencies such as the DVLA. Below are some operational highlights from the past 12 months;

Operation Options

An operation aimed at education rather than enforcement. The operation involves a team of officers actively stopping vehicles at the roadside having identified officers in relation to seatbelts. The driver is offered the option of receiving an educational course rather than a fixed penalty. The educational course is then delivered by South Wales Fire and Rescue working in partnership with Go Safe.

Operation Snap

A national operation that allows member of the public to upload captured images of poor driving. They can then upload a statement which is then investigated by dedicated Snap officers. The offences are also mapped so a large picture is built for further enforcement with speed enforcement vehicles. The national operational lead for Op Snap is Gwent Sergeant Jason Williams who continues to develop and improve the operation nationwide.



3 R Operation

The 3 R Operation consists of 2 or more vans at any one time along a certain stretch of road, most recently the Newport Southern Distributor Route (SDR). The idea being the operation is that once a driver passes one speed van they instantly begin to speed or race again. If they then encounter a second, third or even further van this alters their perception of the road, and ultimately their driving behaviour.

In a recent operation, over 400 drivers in one day were caught speeding or driving dangerously along the SDR.

Operation Tutelage

A national operation which uses data captured via ANPR that is checked against the motor insurance data base and identifies vehicles on the road with no insurance. The Central Ticket Office then send out advisory letters to the registered owner. Over 80% of the vehicles who receive a letter then go on to be insured, compared to 30% of vehicles who hadn't received a letter. The persistent ones, approximately 20% are then added to the Gwent Intel Systems and allocated out to officers.

Collision Investigation Unit

Gwent Police has a dedicated Collision Investigation Unit which has the remit of investigating around 100 road collisions involving death and serious injury each year. This team currently comprises of sergeants, constables and police staff. This team has a range of specialist capabilities including forensic scene and vehicle examinations, advanced interviewing and family liaison. Since the expansion of this unit in 2017, records show that the team have completed 78 criminal investigations resulting in 21 successful prosecutions so far. A further 10 prosecution cases are pending. The outstanding work carried out by the Collision Investigation Unit has resulted in the creation of the highly acclaimed television series 'Crash Detectives'. This series has no doubt had a significant impact in terms of highlighting road safety issues and the diligent work of Gwent Police when investigating serious collisions. The knock-on effect on public confidence cannot be accurately assessed but the series has been the subject of widespread commentary which enhances the reputation of policing, not just in Gwent but across Wales.



Operating Model Review

A review of the Operating Model across the force was commissioned at the beginning 2020 which included Uniform Policing workstreams, including the Area Support Units. Several options were considered and developed ultimately focussing on improving the delivery of roads policing with Gwent. The result is that the business case for a newly formed 'Roads Policing and Specialist Operations Unit' has passed through the Service Improvement Board will be formed in Summer 2021. This department will be managed centrally under the Operational Support workstream, with a new centralised Inspector role providing strategic leadership to the team. This post will create a direct link between Force Tasking and LPA tasking priorities and ensure the team is tasked consistently across all areas of the force.

3. RESPONSE TO OPCC RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Develop an understanding of why there has been a proportionately high number of young driver deaths in Gwent. This work should include research around the nature of the incidents involving young people, hotspot locations and prevention measures available to reduce casualty numbers.

Gwent Police acknowledges that young drivers are disproportionately involved in deaths and serious injuries on our roads. The force is actively engaged in supporting national campaigns to reduce the 'fatal five' main causes of serious collisions; speeding, mobile phone use at the wheel, seatbelts, alcohol, and drugs. However, we know that with a greater investment in data collection and analysis, we can better understand the root causes of road collisions in our area. Through the operating model review, we will ensure the force has sufficient skills and capacity in this area. We will also review our policy for attendance and data collection in relation to all road collisions

Recommendation 2

Consider ways of increasing resourcing to ASU West to restore to full staffing numbers.



Gwent Police agrees with this recommendation and, as a short-term measure, the force has recently undertaken a selection process to fill existing gaps in our ASU teams.

Recommendation 3

In light of Operation Uplift, consider further opportunities for additional investment into roads policing

Gwent Police agrees with this recommendation. The Operating Model Programme Board commissioned a series of reviews in February 2020. Within the scope of this work was a stated ambition to review the force's investment in roads policing capabilities. A business case proposing a re-purposing of Area Support Units has been submitted at Service Improvement Board early in 2021 and approved.

Recommendation 4

Draft a strategic document outlining roads policing delivery in Gwent, including the development of objectives that align the with Operational Delivery Plan

Gwent Police agrees with this recommendation. The Gwent Roads Policing Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment has been drafted to inform and identify the strategic threat and risk assessment for the roads policed in Gwent. The document includes our aims and objectives set in line with the operational control strategy – Protect, Pursue, Prevent and Prepare.

The STRA will be used to draft a strategic outline for roads policing delivery in Gwent in the coming months to tie into the rebranding and restructuring of the department as discussed above.

The document will concentrate on an approach for roads policing as a whole force approach, rather than something preserved for teams with specialist capabilities.

Recommendation 5

Establish additional performance measures to evidence proactive roads policing activity.



Gwent Police agrees with this recommendation. The Assistant Chief Constable has now included performance metrics relating to serious and fatal road collisions in his Operational Performance Board and further consideration is being given to metrics which will provide insight to our performance in this area

Recommendation 6

Consolidate data recording processes to improve data integrity, coupled with a review of the cause behind disparities in the current available data.

Gwent Police agrees with this recommendation. The Assistant Chief Constable will commission a review of force policy relating to deployment to road collisions, investigations into offences relating to these incidents, and the reporting requirements for injury and non-injury collisions. This review will be completed before the new fiscal year 2021/22 and will form part of our roads policing strategy going forward.

Recommendation 7

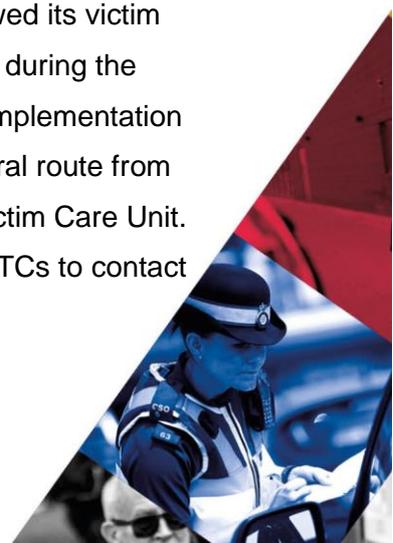
The Strategy, Performance and Change department conducts research to measure and compare the relative benefits between the ASU and RPU models.

Gwent Police agrees with this recommendation and this work has already been undertaken by the Operating Model Programme Board. A business case for change has been approved and a post implementation review will take place in due course.

Recommendation 8

Review current victim referral pathways for victims of road-related crime and KSI RTCs in light of changes to BRAKE's victim support service funding.

Gwent Police agrees with this recommendation. The force has recently reviewed its victim services model there are plans to make changes in this area. It was identified during the review that the new model would be able to address this gap and a detailed implementation plan is currently being drafted. This will include mapping and agreeing a referral route from both Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and Area Support Unit (ASU) to the new Victim Care Unit. When a referral is received by the VCU they will contact people affected by RTCs to contact



a needs assessment. Following this the VCU will be able to refer those affected by RTCs to generic support agencies (housing, health etc), Connect Gwent Partners and Brake.

4. Ownership and Review

The action plan set out above will be owned by the Assistant Chief Constable. Gwent Police will record the recommendations of the OPCC report within the Continuous Improvement Department library. Progress against these recommendations will be reviewed by the Deputy Chief Constable through her governance meetings for reviewing outstanding areas for improvement

