

**Report of the Chief Constable to the Chair and Members
of the Operational Policing Panel
24th November 2011**

**Executive & Presenting Officer: Mr Sean White, Assistant Chief Constable
(Crime & Operations)**

Status: For information

Cleveland & Durham Specialist Operations Unit

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the working of the Cleveland and Durham Specialist Operations Unit.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of the report.

3. Overview of Unit

3.1 The Cleveland and Durham Specialist Operations Unit came into existence on the 1st April 2011 with the official launch of the Unit occurring on 8th April 2011. The launch provided the opportunity to promote the unit both internally within the organisation and externally through both the local and national press. This has generated considerable interest from regional and national police forces including colleagues in the United States of America, Holland and Hong Kong, the latter having visited the unit this month.

3.2 The unit comprises the following business areas:

- Firearms Operations
- Firearms Training (Urley Nook)
- Armed Response Vehicles (ARV)
- Road Policing Unit (RPU)
- Motorcycles

- Collision Investigation
- Casualty Reduction
- Traffic Management
- Camera Enforcement

A full break down of some of the main functions each branch performs is attached at Appendix A.

- 3.3 The formation of the Unit has provided for a greater level of co-operation and sharing of assets between the Cleveland and Durham forces. This has resulted in significant operational benefits including cash savings such as reduced overtime requirements.
- 3.4 A uniform shift pattern has now been adopted across both Cleveland and Durham areas to offer conformity in working practices. Further developments this year, once Oracle is embedded, will see the equivalent of £177,000 of increased officer productivity time being realised.
- 3.5 Roads Policing across the Force has experienced a positive benefit from being combined with Durham through the sharing of assets e.g. ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition), cross border working and co-operation with both planned operations and assisting Districts in dealing with their neighbourhood priorities e.g. metal theft.
- 3.6 In car CCTV has now been rolled out to nearly 50% of Roads Policing Unit (RPU) vehicles in Cleveland. The unit's Management Team have made a commitment to find external funding for all vehicles to be equipped with CCTV and eventually ANPR.

4. Operations

- 4.1 Since its inception the Unit has been involved in a number of successful joint operations which have sustained a number of positive results, some of which are summarised below.
- 4.2 Operation Crassus
Operation Crassus took place in May 2011 at Teesport and involved Tees Harbour Police, Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC), Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and RPU Officers from both Durham Cleveland Police.
- 4.3 As a result 24 vehicles were stopped and 8 pieces of plant equipment were examined. 11 offences were identified giving a 45.8% offence rate.
- 4.4 Operation Mermaid
'Operation Mermaid 3' took place in May 2011 at Scotch Corner, at the junction of the A1 with the A66. This was a regional operation and involved

Cleveland, Durham, North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, VOSA and the Environment Agency.

- 4.5 During the operation a total of 41 vehicles were brought into the check site for examination of the vehicle and the driver's documents. Of the 41 vehicles, 35 UK registered vehicles and 6 foreign registered vehicles were checked, and a total of 27 offences were identified, which gives an offending rate of 65.8%.
- 4.6 Operation Forge
In June 2011 the Specialist Operations Unit assisted Hartlepool District in carrying out an operation targeting scrap metal theft. The Hartlepool Mail were also present during the operation. 15 vehicles were checked resulting in 6 arrests and the seizure of one vehicle.
- 4.7 TISPOL Europe-wide co-Alcohol and Drug Driving Enforcement Campaigns
During the campaign carried out in August 2011 by the Cleveland and Durham Specialist Operations Unit, 102 offences were enforced by patrolling traffic officers and 602 offences enforced by the Camera Enforcement Unit.
- 4.8 ACPO Summer Drink & Drug Driving Campaign 2011
This campaign ran throughout June 2011 focusing on drink and drug driving enforcement in order to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads over the summer period.
- 4.9 Operation Tourist
An operation involving multi-agency checks on passenger carrier vehicles (PCVs), carried out on three separate dates during July 2011. 25 vehicles were stopped and 15 offences were identified.
- 4.10 Operation Mermaid
Operation Mermaid took place at the A66 Long Newton in July. During the day 28 vehicles were checked and 14 offences were identified.
- 4.11 Operation Hansell
The Operation Hansell became operational in June 2011, and is an ongoing operation supporting neighbourhood policing in addressing metal theft and associated offences across both force areas. The Operation Hansell team has conducted targeted activity around specific scrap metal dealers. This activity has been conducted in conjunction with partners and local NPT staff, consisting of intelligence and ANPR led disruption actively targeting scrap metal thieves.
- 4.12 The team is also extending the use of Smartwater and other covert devices. British Telecom (BT) have donated equipment to help identify thefts at sub stations. The team is working closely with Cleveland Police's metal theft lead to develop intelligence packages and co-ordinate a response to repeat victims and the targeting of offenders.

4.13 The team is seen by RPU management as a significant step in providing support to neighbourhood teams in both force areas. It is designed to combine the specialist capabilities of RPU such as ANPR, Tracker and targeting of road using criminals, with key contacts RPU have developed within the metal reprocessing industry and partners whom are suffering thefts e.g. BT, Virgin media etc.

5. District Support

5.1 The Unit has proactively and visibly provided cross border working, providing varying levels of support to Districts.

5.2 A prime example of cross border working was seen following an armed robbery in Consett, County Durham, during which a highly organised and professional team of West Yorkshire criminals stole over £100K during an ATM delivery. A second getaway vehicle was identified by SOU staff and pursued for over 80 miles at high speed, over 3 counties, including Cleveland, ending in York. 4 professional criminals were arrested and the full cash sum recovered. It is highly likely that all four will receive substantial terms of imprisonment.

5.3 RPU assisted Middlesbrough District in the pursuit of a stolen car, successfully detaining the driver, whilst the two passengers managed to make off. Following the pursuit, the footage from the pursuit vehicles was quickly downloaded. Four hours later the two occupants of the stolen car were caught trying to burgle an occupied private dwelling in order to steal another car. They were quickly identified from the on-board CCTV during the pursuit. Without the CCTV it would not have been possible to link the two offences or identify the offenders from the initial pursuit. Three people were arrested and are suspected of being involved in a number of 2 in 1 burglaries. The footage from both police vehicles was evidentially crucial and as a result the driver of the vehicle was charged with Aggravated TWOC, Dangerous Driving, Disqualified Driving, Fail to Stop, and Fail to Provide. The two passengers were jointly charged with Aggravated TWOC (allowed to be carried), Attempt Burglary (dwelling) and Motor Vehicle Interference.

5.4 Some further examples of work undertaken by the Unit in this area include:

- RPU attended Teesside Park in partnership with the Fire Brigade to educate young drivers. This is an initiative that has been running for some years and is designed to target the 'Cruise' scene that congregate at Teesside Park every Wednesday evening.
- RPU assisted Middlesbrough District with a crackdown on 2 in 1 motor vehicle thefts, with no further incidents occurring during the evening and the Unit helping to successfully recover a £40,000 Mercedes which had been stolen in the Durham area.

- Staff have conducted 2 'diesel dipping' operations with staff from HMRC which led to the seizure of 3 vehicles.
- SOU officers and also been involved in several regional operations that have required use of their specialist training and tactics, this has resulted in recovery of over £400,000 of drugs and a large quantity of counterfeit goods.

6. Traffic Management & Casualty Reduction

6.1 The traffic management and casualty reduction functions, which include the camera enforcement teams across both forces, now have a combined management structure.

6.2 Camera Enforcement Unit

The formation of the combined Traffic Management and Casualty Reduction Unit has resulted in the harmonisation of the thresholds of speed detection ensuring consistency across the two force areas and that ACPO guidelines are adhered to.

6.3 Referrals to the National Driver Offending Rehabilitation Scheme (NDORS) for both forces are now offered to drivers at a consistent level and in all speed limits. Both forces have a contractual arrangement in place for the delivery of the NDORS courses which should give the potential for re-investment into casualty reduction initiatives in the future.

6.4 Current working practices and systems are currently being looked at with a view to increasing efficiency and productivity in terms of speed enforcement. Current ongoing work includes the upgrading of back office systems.

6.5 Community Speedwatch

The Community Speedwatch scheme has already been rolled out successfully across the Durham area and the Unit is looking to use the knowledge and experience gained from this in implementing the scheme in the Cleveland area, again ensuring a consistent approach to speed management across the Cleveland and Durham areas.

6.6 Traffic Management

The team are aiming to ensure that a consistent approach with regards to traffic management at events, road works or in emergencies is delivered. This includes working with local authorities to support their Safety Advisory Groups on advising communities wanting to hold events in their area.

6.7 Casualty reduction

The unit has a casualty reduction officer who will be using their knowledge and skills from working in partnership with Durham organisations, to progress casualty reduction initiatives which will benefit in both Cleveland and Durham.

This includes the roll out of Community Speedwatch and casualty reduction initiatives aimed at vulnerable road users e.g Wisedrive and Ridewell.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

There are no financial implications arising as a result of this report.

7.2 Diversity and Equal Opportunities

Following the recent interviews for upcoming vacancies within the Unit, there will be an increased number of female and ethnic minority officers within the team over the coming six months.

7.3 Human Rights Act

All actions undertaken by staff in the Unit will be proportionate, legal, accountable and necessary for the role they are carrying out and will comply with the Human Rights Act.

7.4 Sustainability

The unit now has an established mission statement, business plan, risk register and performance regime which is providing both strategic direction and accountability from individual constable level performance through to the Joint Police Authority Management Board. It is considered that the unit is highly sustainable for the foreseeable future.

7.5 Risk

The unit has a detailed Risk Register and Business Plan that is reviewed monthly by the management team and quarterly by the Police Authority Strategic Board.

8. Conclusions

8.1 The Cleveland and Durham Specialist Operations Unit has established itself very quickly and its officers and staff have continued to perform to a high standard. There is a general view amongst the team that this has been a worthwhile venture. There are still some areas where further work and harmonisation is required, and this is progressing. It is considered that these initial positive steps have laid a strong foundation upon which to build in the future.

8.2 It is anticipated that this continued working will see improved productivity and further enhanced performance.

Jacqui Cheer
Temporary Chief Constable

Specialist Operations Unit Functions

- Firearms Operations
 - Overview and scrutiny of all firearms officers and deployments
 - VIP visit co-ordination and planning,
 - Category A prisoner movements that require firearms support
 - Specialist weapons examination for court and evidence purposes
 - Planning and exercising of firearms plans for both forces
 - Tactical advisor and firearms rotas
 - Armoury/weapon maintenance
- Firearms Training (Urley Nook)
 - Provision of firearms officer and command training
 - National representation on firearms working groups
 - Income generation through external course provision
 - Support to operational deployments
- Armed Response Vehicles (ARV)
 - Provision of 24/7 armed response across Cleveland and Durham
 - Operation Sentry, dedicated patrol of the Teesside chemical industry
 - Combined road policing capability
- Road Policing Unit (RPU)
 - Provision of 24/7 roads policing officers
 - 24/7 mobile ANPR capability
 - Provision of pursuit capability and advisors
 - Support to local and national priorities
 - Operation Hansel – metal theft team
 - Senior Investigating officer cover for all serious and fatal collisions
 - Stolen vehicle examination and covert target operations
- Motorcycles
 - On road and off road motorcycle capability
 - VIP and Cat A prisoner escorts
 - Cycle racing and event escorting
 - Motorcycle rider education (RideWell / BikeWise events)
 - Income generation through escort and training provision
 - Major contributor to local priorities involving motorcycle nuisance
- Collision Investigation
 - Provision of 24/7 specialist collision investigation
 - Support to operational deployments
- Casualty Reduction
 - Across both forces, focused casualty reduction initiatives
 - WiseDrive event
 - Young driver and driving improvement schemes

- Cycle and child safety schemes
- Overview of all collision data, trends and analysis

- Traffic Management
 - Partnership working through SAGs and road safety groups
 - Overview of all road and highway changes/developments
 - Review of fatal collision sites for highways implications

- Camera Enforcement
 - Support of casualty reduction initiatives
 - Tasking in line with locally, public set priorities
 - Nation Driver Offender retraining scheme