

**Warwickshire Police Authority – 20 January 2010**

**A New Approach to Road Safety**

**General Report of the Chief Constable**

**Summary**

The purpose of this paper is to invite the Police Authority to work with the Force in developing a new approach to road safety that is focused on the twin outcomes of reducing the number of people killed and injured on our roads, and building public confidence. The intention would be to take the mechanisms we use to identify and deal with our criminal High Harm Causers, and apply them to those who pose a particular danger on the roads – a group we might label as 'Risky Road Users'. We believe this would be a unique approach nationally, and it will involve a cultural shift in how we view offending on our roads. The key elements would be a punitive approach to Risky Road Users, and an educative/engaged approach with those whose driving, whilst falling short of the required standards, poses less of a danger to themselves and others. The outcomes sought will be:

- Reduced road casualties
- Criminals denied the use of the roads
- Enhanced public confidence and reassurance

**Recommendation**

The contents of the report are noted and agreed in principle. The Authority are invited to nominate a lead member to work with the Force on developing this approach.

**Introduction**

The need for a clear strategy for road safety is demonstrated by the fact that in Warwickshire you are more than 7 times likely to die as a victim of a road crash than as a victim of crime. On average 43 people are killed and around 337 people sustain serious injuries each year on the county's roads as a result of collisions (KSI).

In addition, many criminals make use of the extensive Warwickshire road network to go about their unlawful activity, and they and others present a risk of harm to others through the manner of their driving or a deliberate disregard of the law.

The Force is on target to deliver a reduction in KSIs for 2009/10, the stretched target the Force has brought in with the Police Authority to exceed the central government led target for 2010. This has been achieved through extensive partnership working with a wide range of agencies concentrating on Enforcement, Education and Engineering (3 E's). Key agencies are working together are the Police Road Safety

Unit, Warwickshire County Council Road Safety Team, Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership (which includes Police, Fire, Ambulance, Highways Agency, PCT). We now want even better reductions, whilst at the same time getting public support for our approach, hence the revised approach.

## **Enforcement**

Warwickshire Police have embraced the 'Fatal Four' concept which attributes a higher degree of risk caused by drivers who:

- Drive at excessive speed
- Fail to wear a fitted seat belt
- Drive under the influence of drink or drugs
- Are distracted, primarily through use of mobile phones whilst driving

A series of successful proactive operations, led by the Operation Task Force (OTF) have been conducted to target and prosecute drivers for these offences.

There is widespread public support for positive action against drink drivers and use of mobile phones, but calls for more flexibility in the approach to speeding in particular. There is no doubt that speeding is a major factor in road crashes and the Force must continue to adopt a firm approach in relation to these offences, however schemes such as Community Speed Watch, Bikesafe and Speed Awareness Courses evidence that prosecution is not the only means of changing driver behaviour.

Discretionary use of powers where appropriate can be as effective as automatic prosecution (possibly even more so), and can have a positive impact on public confidence. This should be set alongside a strong enforcement approach for Risky Road Users and criminals who use the roads (experience shows that these people are often the same).

## **Roads Policing Strategy for 2010/11**

It is therefore recommended that the 2010 /11 Warwickshire Police roads policing strategy continues to focus on:

- Reducing road casualties and
- Denying criminals the use of the roads

With the addition of:

- Enhancing public confidence and reassurance by:
  - (i) Pro-actively targeting those who present a greater risk of harm to other road users through the manner of their driving or their unlawful or anti-social use of a vehicle(s) – the Risky Road Users.
  - (ii) Publishing results of positive action taken against such drivers / riders
  - (iii) Educating the general public on key road safety issues, safe driving / riding behaviour through:
    - Localised leafleting and marketing campaigns
    - Encouraging the discretionary use of powers e.g. advice, verbal caution / vehicle defect rectification scheme, where proportionate and appropriate.
    - Proactive engagement with schools, colleges, youth groups etc
    - Reviewing the extension of schemes such as community speedwatch, Bikesafe and speed awareness courses

- (iv) Developing new and innovative road safety partnership initiatives, particularly involving new partners who are in a position to significantly influence public opinion.

The Authority are invited to nominate a lead member to work with the Force on developing this approach.

**ACC Bill Holland**

**Supt. C. Ruston-Wadsworth**