

Swyddfa Comisiynydd yr Heddlu a Throseddau, Gwent
Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, Gwent

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Comisiynydd Heddlu a Throseddau Gwent | Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent:

Jeff Cuthbert B.Sc., MCIPD



The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

1st September 2020

Dear Home Secretary

Roads Policing: Not optional – An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales

As required by statute, I am writing to you to respond to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection 'Roads Policing: Not optional – An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales.

I completely agree that the police have a vital part to play in ensuring that the road network operates efficiently and that those who use it can do so safely. Gwent Police moved away from a dedicated roads policing unit in 2015/16, instead choosing to integrate the team into the Area Support Unit (ASU) in order to achieve efficiency savings. With this decision, roads policing responsibilities were divided across three teams: ASU, the Go Safe Casualty Reduction Partnership (speed enforcement vans) and Forensic Collision Investigation Unit (FCIU). The work shared across these teams covers various aspects of roads policing, ranging from prevention through to investigation with the excellent work undertaken by the FCIU showcased on the popular BBC Wales programme 'The Crash Detectives'.

I note that the report mentions that there is little or no reference to roads policing within police and crime plans. Although there is no specific reference to the area in my plan, in light of the Ministry of Justice review into service provision for victims of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) and the HMICFRS national review of roads policing, my office considered it timely to undertake a local review of roads policing in Gwent.

The review was undertaken during January and February 2020 with the report finalised in March 2020 and shared with Gwent Police not long after. The findings of this review identified several examples of good practice, particularly around partnership working. However, the findings also raised concerns over the availability of resources and apparent absence of a clear and cohesive

strategy for roads policing. This seems to support the findings identified within the HMICFRS inspection report. The report produced by my office, which now includes an addendum based on findings from the HMICFRS report, will be formally discussed at my Strategy and Performance Board (this is the meeting at which I hold the Chief Constable to account for her delivery of policing in Gwent) in September 2020. I look forward to understanding more about how Gwent Police intends to move forward with the recommendations raised and build on the work mentioned within the Chief Constable's comment to the inspection report which I include below:

We welcome this inspection report from HMICFRS which highlights the importance of this area of policing. Gwent Police works hard to promote safety, reduce harm and deny criminals the use of our roads. We recognise there is more to do and this report provides clear direction for Chief Constables and other organisations. We will continue to work with partners to implement the recommendations issued by HMICFRS and improve our effectiveness within this vital area of policing.

I agree with the Chief Constable that there is more that can be done to improve this area of policing but as previously mentioned, there are some good examples of work identified by my office as part of the review process.

Campaigns run by Gwent Police include 'Make the Right Choice', a drink driving campaign carried out during Christmas, National Speed Awareness week and Operation Utah. These operations have delivered notable results by tackling dangerous driving behaviours through enforcement, increased police presence and awareness raising.

Gwent Police also run daylong multi-agency initiatives called 'Surround the Town'. These days are organised by the Go Safe Co-ordinator and involve targeted activity such as Operation Options (encouraging use of seatbelts) and Operation Close Pass (an intervention to educate drivers about passing cyclists safely). There are also educational sessions for young learner drivers and public engagement in town centres to offer road safety advice. While it is difficult to measure numerically the effectiveness of these events, they do provide a platform to engage with a cross-section of the public and opportunities to tackle dangerous behaviours through targeted intervention initiatives.

I also include updates on the relevant recommendations as contained in the report below:

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.

It has been confirmed that roads policing does not currently feature in Gwent Police's strategic threat and risk assessments, although I have been assured that this will be re-examined through the ongoing review of the Operating Model.

Recommendation 6: With immediate effect, Chief Constables should make sure

- **Their force has enough analytical capability (including that provided to 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.**

I understand that, after a delay of two years, the GoSafe partnership now has the required software to undertake formal collision reduction analysis on site. Gwent Police also has the

capability for analytical support to identify threat, risk and harm on the road network but this information is not currently published as part of the performance documentation. I am also aware that relevant information is shared with local authorities in Gwent but unfortunately, there is currently no evidence to suggest that this information is being used to implement road safety initiatives.

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 Circular 1/2007 in relation to the use of speed and red-light cameras.

Welsh Government guidance issued to GoSafe in 2009 on its formation is very close to that as set out in the circular from the Department for Transport. The principles of the circular are reflected in GoSafe guidance with some flexibility applied to signing mobile sites. The Welsh Government guidance requires an update and I have been assured that will be progressed as soon as possible.

Recommendation 9: With immediate effect, in force 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.

Gwent Police has adopted Operation Snap. I have been informed that a working group has been established for continued business improvement with resources funded via the GoSafe budget although the expectation is that resources will likely need to be increased to meet demand.

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.

I have been informed that GoSafe resources are sufficient to meet demand within their current remit. Negotiations regarding uplift in funding to match policy decisions which are likely to increase resource requirement are underway and positive.

Partnership intelligence sharing with force systems requires improvement; members of the GoSafe Partnership have suggested that Welsh forces should consider the use of Galileo in line with English forces to improve this area.

Gwent Police has good partnership arrangements with Welsh Government senior road engineers involved in the strategic network and with South Wales Road Trunk Agency (SWTRA). The force also works well with Highways England and neighbouring English forces on Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) operations.


The lead collision investigator for Gwent Police also sits on the All Wales Strategic Road Safety Group and chairs the Gwent Road Safety Forum. However, it is acknowledged that partnership arrangements with local authorities needs to be refreshed and a strategic overview developed.

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.

Gwent Police has integrated the Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) process into all incidents involving road death and trauma. Its purpose is the early identification of the signs of pressure and stress. When an officer or staff member is referred, they receive an email offering the opportunity for an assessment. Gwent Police has trained many officers and staff across all areas to be able to provide this support.

In light of the feedback provided to you in this response, both the Chief Constable and I are aware of the significant work that needs to be undertaken to ensure roads policing receives the focus required but I am confident that this is a journey that has already begun. I will continue to support the Chief Constable to ensure that further progress is made against the recommendations identified in both my review and by the inspectorate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Cuthbert', written in a cursive style.

Jeff Cuthbert B.Sc., MCIPD
Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent