

**Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee -
7th June 2005**

Road Safety and Casualty Reduction

**Information Submitted by Sergeant Mark Steventon
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The Role of Warwickshire Police's Road Safety Unit

1. The primary role of the Warwickshire Police Road Safety Unit is to inform and support the Warwickshire Police casualty reduction strategy. The small unit is comprised of police officers, qualified and experienced in road safety and collision investigation, who collate and analyse police collision data (processed by WCC) to identify specific casualty hot-routes on the county road network that are likely to be susceptible to high visibility police patrol and enforcement activity. Road policing activity is targeted and prioritised accordingly to maximise the casualty reduction benefits.
2. The Unit also responds to information from all sources concerning traffic management and road safety issues. Each problem is investigated and an appropriate action initiated. Proposed solutions often include speed enforcement, remedial engineering, improved signing or road user education. Many issues are resolved in partnership with other agencies with an interest in road safety and traffic management, including WCC.
3. In addition, members of the Unit act on behalf of the Chief Constable in consultations with the highway authorities and other agencies in relation to proposed traffic management and road engineering measures, event management, accident reduction schemes and road safety campaigns.

Warwickshire Police Casualty Reduction Strategy

4. It is generally accepted that high-profile police enforcement and patrol activity has a positive effect on casualty reduction and, since April 2001, an essential element of the Warwickshire Police casualty reduction strategy has been the identification of casualty 'hot routes' for targeted patrol activity. Twenty such 'hot routes' have so far been identified within the county, through a detailed analysis of recent collision data, linked with a number of other relevant factors. At present, four of these are issued each month for targeted enforcement by Road Policing Unit (RPU) shifts and other operational staff. Patrol time and casualty reduction benefits are carefully monitored and performance data are regularly published.

5. The opportunity has been taken recently to review all of the current 'hot routes' against appropriate criteria. The criteria adopted for the purposes of the review are as follows:-

5.1 The Number and Density of Road Traffic Collision (RTC) Casualties Along the Route.

- (i) This is the most influential factor in the selection process. Previous collision history has been found to be the most reliable indicator of the likelihood of further collisions and, therefore, of the potential benefit of casualty reduction activity. There is little proven value in attempting to assess accident risk by other means.
- (ii) As well as the number of casualties in relation to the length of the route within the previous three years, consideration will be given to the number of collisions; the rate of collisions per vehicle kilometres (i.e. the risk rate); the relative proportions of fatal, serious and slight casualties; and the proportion of child casualties. The number of damage-only collisions will also be considered in borderline cases.

5.2 Enforceability Factors.

- (i) Priority will be given to those routes where collision reduction can be achieved most effectively by police patrol and enforcement. Collision data analysis will show contributory factors that might be susceptible to such measures, such as alcohol, excess speed, mechanical defect and fatigue.
- (ii) Other policing issues relating to the route and the immediate vicinity will also be taken into account. Offences of 'no insurance' in relation to reported collisions can be identified from data analysis. Other crime-related incidents and public order issues will be highlighted by liaison with Traffic Intelligence Officers and taken into consideration.
- (iii) A survey of the route will be completed, in order to assess the health and safety implications of conducting road checks and stopping vehicles.

5.3 Other Casualty Reduction Options.

- (i) The immediate prospect of appropriate engineering measures to bring about casualty reduction, or the installation of safety cameras, will be taken into consideration. We will continue to co-operate with our partner agencies to apply complementary casualty reduction measures where they are most needed.

5.4 Proven Effectiveness.

- (i) The success of targeted police enforcement on any particular route will be measured in terms of casualty reduction relative to the time spent on patrol time and enforcement activity, the number of offences detected and

the number of arrests made. The level of performance in these areas will influence any review of existing 'hot routes'.

5.5 Speed and Traffic Flow Data.

- (i) Speed and traffic flow data will be analysed to assess the extent of speed limit violation relative to other routes.

5.6 Community Concern.

- (i) The level of community concern, in terms of correspondence with residents and representative bodies, will be taken into account.

5.7 Even Spread between Policing Areas.

- (i) As far as possible, the numbers of current 'hot routes' will be evenly divided between Northern and Southern policing areas, with proportionate attention to trunk roads.
- (ii) By adopting and publishing these criteria, we hope to maintain an objective, credible and transparent 'hot route' selection process that will be resilient to challenge.
- (iii) Our casualty reduction strategy requires a fairly long-term commitment to the selected routes. The recent review has been carried out four years after the original selection and it seems reasonable to retain the new selection for at least another four years. We will, nevertheless, continue to monitor the performance of the selected routes and other 'reserve hot routes', and minor adjustments or additions may be made from time to time.