



Cynulliad National  
Cenedlaethol Assembly for  
Cymru Wales

## **Enterprise and Learning Committee**

### **Road Policing in Wales – Y Maniffesto 2009**

#### **Background**

1. The police service in Wales intends to produce a Maniffesto, setting out the key tasks which should be undertaken to improve policing the roads of Wales, as part of the implementation of the Wales transport strategy. Its purpose will be to explain clearly to its staff, 'what road policing is about and why, to ensure where we concentrate our efforts and resources, and where they can be of most value'.
2. The Maniffesto will be a joint policy document, which will be formally adopted by the Welsh Assembly Government and the four Chief Constables in Wales. It is hoped that this greater synergy will deliver better road management, particularly on the strategic road network.

#### **Introduction**

3. We welcomed the opportunity to consider the draft Maniffesto and to present our views. At our meeting on 29 January 2009, we scrutinised Richard Brunstrom, Chief Constable of North Wales and Head of Roads Policing Business Area for the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Cymru; Mark Warden, Head of Stakeholder Engagement and Enforcement Programme Director, and David Collings, Area Manager Wales, Vehicle and Operators Services Agency (VOSA); and Kevin Barry, ACO, South Wales Fire and Rescue on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Services.
4. The witnesses provided written memoranda, the links to which are attached at Annex 1. The transcript of oral evidence is at Annex 2. VOSA undertook to provide additional evidence, which is reproduced in summary at Annex 3. We thank the witnesses for their cooperation and assistance with our inquiry.
5. The report which follows summarises the evidence examined and makes recommendations both to ACPO Cymru and the Welsh Assembly Government, where appropriate. A summary of the recommendations is on p.7.

## **Partnership working**

6. We warmly commend the partnership approach to road policing set out in the draft Manifesto and were impressed by the commitment to such collaborative working expressed by the services we scrutinised. By ACPO Cymru's own admission in its written memorandum, there has been a lack of integrated multiagency road management in Wales. It was however obvious to us that through collaborative working the services are dealing with the devastating effects of serious incidents and casualties, and are managing the significant workload entailed.

## **Dealing with road casualties**

7. We begin our discussion of the evidence we scrutinised by emphasising the tragic human cost of major road traffic incidents and the unquestionable trauma of the removal of fatalities from the scene. The impetus for greater consideration by the relevant agencies of how to deal more expediently with such occurrences is the UK Government's casualty reduction programme. We were informed that an all-Wales casualty reduction [safety camera] partnership involving the 22 local authorities, the four police forces, and the Welsh Assembly Government, will commence operations on 1 April 2009. The partnership will be non-statutory and will receive some £8 million funding from the Treasury. We will take a keen interest in the work of the partnership and its impact and will recall witnesses in due course.
8. The agencies are already considering how they can work more effectively together to ensure the dignity of the casualties and the needs of the road users, and are discussing a number of interesting proposals. More work is required to develop them fully and we look forward to hearing of these.

## **Economic impacts of road policing in Wales**

9. As well as the human cost of serious incidents, congestion of whatever origin clearly has economic impacts also. We recognise the benefits to the economy of more effective road policing together with the possibilities of a reduction in crime, a greater reassurance of national security against terrorism, and a decrease in traffic congestion.
10. Wales has two major arterial corridors as part of its road network, the M4, which leads to the south west coast, and the A55, which runs to the significant port of Holyhead. Both of these are vulnerable to congestion as a result of major and minor incidents and the volume of traffic. The relevance and timeliness of our work was borne out the day before our hearing, when the M4 was shut between junctions 24 and 28 for most of the working day after a lorry overturned and crashed into the central reservation near junction 25. The incident created 10 mile tailbacks and unwanted congestion on other routes around Newport.

11. Such occurrences have worrying social and economic impacts, greater than those experienced in England, given the difficulties caused by the geography and topography of Wales and the less well developed network management here. A report by SEWTA, the regional transport consortium for south-east Wales, found that traffic congestion costs Wales some £600 million each year. We are only too aware of the human frustration caused by delayed arrival during working or leisure time.

### **The role of Traffic Officers**

12. We learned of the important role of traffic officers to stop, control and direct traffic, which currently rests with police officers in Wales. In instances such as delays caused by abandoned road works and to enforce key aspects of the Manifesto, we were convinced by the arguments presented to us that the creation of such a role here could underpin efficient road network management in the future.
13. The power to create traffic officers in Wales is contained in the Traffic Management Act 2004. Part 1 of the Act empowers the National Assembly for Wales, in its capacity as the Highway and Traffic Authority for the strategic road networks in Wales, to establish a Traffic Officer Service in Wales. The Act enables traffic management functions on motorways and other trunk roads currently carried out by the police to be carried out by designated Traffic Officers. The Act provides for Traffic Officers to have powers to stop and direct traffic, and place and operate traffic signs to deal with incidents and keep traffic moving. The Highways Agency, which has responsibility for management of the trunk road network in England (power devolved from the Secretary of State for Transport) now has approximately 1200 Traffic Officers, or Highways Authority Traffic Officers (HATO), as they are called there. The Welsh Ministers have yet to use their powers under the Act to create designated Traffic Officers.
14. We were encouraged to learn that the role of traffic officer could be created in Wales without additional cost, by upskilling existing staff. **We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government uses powers under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to propose secondary legislation to establish a Traffic Officer Service in Wales and works with ACPO Cymru to train and upskill current personnel to implement the service.**

### **Policing in urban areas**

15. There are greater numbers of casualties in urban areas than on trunk roads; upsettingly, children are frequently the victims of such incidents. The challenge of policing such areas is the mistaken assumption on the part of a substantial majority of drivers that pedestrians should take precautions against speeding vehicles rather than drivers being held responsible for disobeying the law. We know that this is in stark

contrast to most of northern Europe, where street zoning and play zones are commonplace.

16. We consider this important since one of the major strands of the Manifesto is to reduce road casualties, by focussing enforcement, 'to detect, disrupt and confront unlawful activity on the roads', which includes anti-social behaviour. Not surprisingly the Chief Constable agreed with us that a culture shift was required. **We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government undertakes an evaluation of best practice with regard to zoning in northern Europe and reviews current policy regarding the implementation of 20 mph zones, home zones and quiet lanes.**

### **The role of the Vehicle Operators Services Agency (VOSA)**

17. VOSA outlined its role in its written memorandum as focussing on the mechanical condition of vehicles, and the dangers of overloading and driver fatigue. We are aware of the challenges the agency faces in testing Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and Public Service Vehicles (PSVs). In 2007, HGVs and PSVs were involved in 2,854 fatal or serious accidents in the UK.
18. We have previously reported on the impact on the sustainability of the road haulage industry of the considerable increase in foreign registered HGVs travelling to the UK. We were alarmed to hear that VOSA's random compliance surveys indicate deterioration in the roadworthiness of HGVs registered outside the UK. This is because enforcement is more fragmented across Europe and that many countries have less robust road safety laws.
19. We wished to ascertain therefore the impact of the introduction of on-the-spot penalties by the police and VOSA from 1 April 2009. VOSA explained that it utilises an operator compliance risk score, with every operator having a red, amber, or green marking. It does not hold records for non-domestic vehicles entering the UK. Mr Warden was optimistic that fixed penalties would overcome such problems as vehicles with defects being driven immediately after a prohibition notice had been served - a frighteningly common practice, it would appear.
20. On 8 April 2008, the UK Government announced an increase in funding of £24 million to support VOSA's High Risk Traffic Initiative (HRTI). As a result, Wales has two dedicated teams on the A55, one based at Ewloe, and one at Holyhead, and a further team on the M4 at the Coldra interchange, all working 24/7.
21. A further aspect to our scrutiny concerned the impact of the current economic downturn on businesses and the likelihood of an increase in infringements owing to a lack of spending on plant, machinery, and safety. **We recommend that ACPO Cymru and VOSA analyse any emerging trends with regard to an increase in infringements**

**which may arise in the coming months and report their findings to the Department for Transport for further consideration.**

### **The role of the Fire and Rescue Services**

21. As described in their written memorandum, the Fire and Rescue Services have clearly defined responsibilities, obligations and skills in prevention, education, casualty care and the extrication of entrapped people. In 2007, the Fire and Rescue Services responded to just over 3,000 road traffic collisions, extricating some 600 casualties from their vehicles. The balance of their work has shifted considerably to a ratio of 25:1 in favour of road casualty rescues as opposed to fire rescues in recent years.
22. In oral evidence, Mr Barry shared his opinion that new thinking in operational tactics could underpin more effective responses to incidents and emergencies. He suggested that there was scope for the use of the private sector in the clearing of roads and the operational response to accidents on major roads. He believed – and in this the witnesses were unanimous - that extrication from the scene of an incident or accident could be executed in a quicker and smarter way, whilst allowing for dignity for the deceased.

### **Educating the public**

23. At a time of unprecedented change in educational policy, with the introduction and implementation of initiatives such as the foundation phase and the 14-19 learning pathways, we consider that there is an opportunity to incorporate good practice on defensive driving in the curriculum in a structured way, so that children and adolescents can be instructed in the best practice.
24. We firmly believe in the importance of educating young drivers before they go on the road. There is a pressing need to address the often fatal consequences of the macho culture of owning and driving a car. Drivers aged between 17 and 25 hold 10 per cent of the driving licences held in this country, but account for something like 30 per cent of fatalities and seriously injured casualties.
25. We questioned the witnesses and ascertained that some good work is happening, but VOSA admitted that it was being done in a rather ad hoc way. The Fire and Rescue Services have signed up to a fire service educational strategy and are awaiting funding to develop the programme.
26. Much of the proceedings of our hearing on the Manifesto were given over to discussing the importance of education. **We therefore recommend:**

- **Given the current commitment to collaboration between the services that they undertake joint planning with the aim of delivering an evaluated, high-quality package on the relevant tactical areas of the Manifesto and related issues in schools and other educational institutions;**
  - **That the Welsh Assembly Government prepares and issues guidance to heads on how this instruction might most usefully be included and delivered at different stages of the curriculum.**
27. The draft manifesto we examined was an internal police document. Given its target audience, some of its language was not as accessible as we would have wished for our use and that by the public. **We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government provides adequate funding and support, and works with ACPO Cymru and other key stakeholders to design an effective publicity campaign and to ensure wide dissemination of a driver-friendly version of the Manifesto.**

#### **The Committee's Draft Proposed Legislative Competence Order on Traffic Free Routes**

28. The Chief Constable again expressed his support for an organised network of traffic-free routes, given that such integration would underpin road safety, by what he termed 'deconfliction'. This development would ensure safer routes for all users, including those such as cyclists and horse riders, away from busy traffic routes.

#### **Further work by the Committee**

29. As we stated in paragraph 6 of our report, we will wish to consider the work of the all-Wales casualty reduction partnership when it becomes operational and begin to evaluate its impact on ensuring that the road network is more effectively managed in Wales for the benefit of all our citizens.

## Summary of recommendations

- We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government uses powers under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to propose secondary legislation to establish a Traffic Officer Service in Wales and works with ACPO Cymru to train and upskill current personnel to implement the service.
- We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government undertakes an evaluation of best practice with regard to zoning in northern Europe and reviews current policy regarding the implementation of 20 mph zones, home zones and quiet lanes.
- We recommend that ACPO Cymru and VOSA analyse any emerging trends with regard to an increase in infringements which may arise in the coming months and report their findings to the Department for Transport for further consideration.
- We therefore recommend:  
Given the current commitment to collaboration between the services that they undertake joint planning with the aim of delivering an evaluated, high-quality package on the relevant tactical areas of the Maniffesto and related issues in schools and other educational institutions;  
That the Welsh Assembly Government prepares and issues guidance to heads on how this instruction might most usefully be included and delivered at different stages of the curriculum.
- We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government provides adequate funding and support, and works with ACPO Cymru and other key stakeholders to design an effective publicity campaign and to ensure wide dissemination of a driver-friendly version of the Maniffesto.

## **ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1 – Written Memoranda**

#### **Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom, ACPO Cymru**

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-els-home/bus-committees-third-els-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=113402&ds=2/2009>

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-els-home/bus-committees-third-els-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=113419&ds=2/2009>

#### **The Vehicle and Operators Services Agency (VOSA)**

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-els-home/bus-committees-third-els-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=113682&ds=2/2009>

#### **Fire and Rescue Services:**

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-els-home/bus-committees-third-els-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=113526&ds=2/2009>

### **Annex 2 – Transcript of proceedings**

#### **Committee meeting, 29 January 2009**

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-els-home/bus-committees-third-els-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=115024&ds=2/2009>

### **Annex 3 – Additional Information provided by the Vehicle and Operators Services Agency (VOSA) – see below**



**A494 Ewloe****A55 Holyhead****HGV****HGV**

Year	Nationality	Roadworthiness Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2007	GB	107	54	50.47%
	Non GB	210	76	36.19%
2007 Total		317	130	41.01%

Year	Nationality	Roadworthiness Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2007	GB	46	17	36.96%
	Non GB	189	72	38.10%
2007 Total		235	89	37.87%

Year	Nationality	Roadworthiness Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2008	GB	357	121	33.89%
	Non GB	481	130	27.03%
2008 Total		838	251	29.95%

Year	Nationality	Roadworthiness Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2008	GB	89	23	25.84%
	Non GB	381	111	29.13%
2008 Total		470	134	28.51%

**Trailer****Trailer**

Year	Nationality	Roadworthiness Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2007	GB	22	10	45.45%
	Non GB	184	110	59.78%
2007 Total		206	120	58.25%

Year	Nationality	Roadworthiness Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2007	GB	24	11	45.83%
	Non GB	161	105	65.22%
2007 Total		185	116	62.70%

Year	Nationality	Roadworthiness Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2008	GB	85	29	34.12%
	Non GB	412	205	49.76%
2008 Total		497	234	47.08%

Year	Nationality	Roadworthiness Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2008	GB	39	21	53.85%
	Non GB	332	186	56.02%
2008 Total		371	207	55.80%

**Drivers Hours**

Year	Nationality	Traffic Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2007	GB	385	82	21.30%
	Non GB	800	343	42.88%
2007 Total		1185	425	35.86%

Year	Nationality	Traffic Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2008	GB	602	114	18.94%
	Non GB	1377	410	29.77%
2008 Total		1979	524	26.48%

**Drivers Hours**

Year	Nationality	Traffic Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2007	GB	92	7	7.61%
	Non GB	771	272	35.28%
2007 Total		863	279	32.33%

Year	Nationality	Traffic Encounters	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2008	GB	181	32	17.68%
	Non GB	1464	432	29.51%
2008 Total		1645	464	28.21%

**Overloads**

Year	Nationality	Weighed	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2007	GB	217	65	29.95%
	Non GB	411	134	32.60%
2007 Total		628	199	31.69%

Year	Nationality	Weighed	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2008	GB	364	154	42.31%
	Non GB	650	201	30.92%
2008 Total		1014	355	35.01%

**Overloads**

Year	Nationality	Weighed	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2007	GB	54	10	18.52%
	Non GB	511	170	33.27%
2007 Total		565	180	31.86%

Year	Nationality	Weighed	Prohibitions	Prohibition Rate
2008	GB	76	17	22.37%
	Non GB	882	219	24.83%
2008 Total		958	236	24.63%