

From: Matthew Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Road traffic policing
Date: 25 April 2018



Introduction:

1. Within the '[Safer in Kent](#)' Plan, one of the priorities the Commissioner has set for the Chief Constable is to 'Provide visible neighbourhood policing and effective roads policing'.
2. As the 'Gateway to Europe', Kent has 6,126 miles of roads, (UK's 3rd longest) and 204 miles of Strategic Road Network (UK's longest). With the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel providing the critical link to Europe, over 250,000 vehicles per day travel on the M20 and M2 motorways alone.
3. This paper provides an overview of how Kent Police works with partners to tackle the main factors which contribute to people being killed and seriously injured on Kent's roads, and to deter and disrupt criminality by making the roads a hostile place for those intent on causing harm to local communities.

Kent Police activity:

4. There is a duty on all police officers to deal with driving offences observed during the course of their duties.
5. However, the Roads Policing Unit (RPU) within Kent Police comprises of the following teams:
 - Road's Unit – responsible for policing and responding to emergency calls on the Strategic Road Network which have 'Gateway to Europe' status. They also work alongside other teams in patrolling the road network to reduce KSI collisions.
 - Proactive Task Team – provides high impact and high profile policing to disrupt serious and organised criminality through the use of marked and unmarked vehicles. Also used for a variety of escorts and major events.
 - Commercial Vehicle Unit – works with partners to build intelligence around commercial vehicles which travel through Kent and to identify persistent offenders. Also attends incidents involving commercial vehicles and conducts vehicle examinations.
6. The RPU also includes the Serious Collision Investigation Unit (SCIU) which attends and investigates all fatal and serious injury collisions (e.g. assessed as 'life threatening, or involving life changing injuries'), including any such collision involving a police vehicle.
7. For those involved in such collisions, their families and friends, there is a need for answers, but unfortunately there are often no other witnesses. In conducting a thorough investigation, SCIU officers will use technology and science to re-create the collision site and develop a number of hypotheses to identify the cause – this often necessitates road closures and disruption to other road users. However, it is vital that there is dignity in death and the impact on those affected must not be under-estimated; the SCIU endeavours to ensure there are no miscarriages of justice, whilst Family Liaison Officers provide information, care and support to bereaved families.
8. In addition, through specialist training in traffic legislation and equipment, the Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit supports regular officers in responding to calls on the Strategic Road Network and in providing high visibility patrols, education and enforcement.
9. The biggest dangers whilst driving, or most common causes of collisions are referred to as 'the fatal four':
 - Inappropriate speed - the speed limit is not a target, and vehicles should be driven at a speed that suits the conditions and type of road.
 - Using a mobile phone while driving - it only takes a moment's distraction to cause a collision.
 - Not wearing a seatbelt - people are twice as likely to die in a crash if they do not wear a seatbelt.
 - Drink/Drug driving - many functions required to drive safely are impaired by drink and drugs.

10. The table below shows the number of Officer Issued Notices in 2016 (January to December) and 2017 relating to speeding, seatbelt and mobile phone offences. Members will note that there was an increase in Notices issued for all three offences:

Officer Issued Notices	2016	2017	% change
Speeding offences	1120	1406	+25.5
Seatbelt offences	333	425	+27.6
Mobile phone offences	725	1079	+48.8
Total	2178	2910	+33.6

11. The number of arrests by officers for drink or drug driving in 2016 (January to December) and 2017 is also shown in the table below – once again Members will note the increases:

Reason for Arrest	2016	2017	% change
Driving whilst unfit (Drink)	454	500	+10.1
Driving whilst unfit (Drugs)	218	299	+37.2
Total	672	799	+18.9

12. In July 2017, Kent Police ran an initiative whereby RPU officers patrolled the M20 in an unmarked Heavy Goods Vehicle allowing them to see into cars and larger vehicles. Motorists caught committing offences were filmed and stopped by marked police cars. Across five days, 37 drivers were stopped for using mobile devices, 33 for speeding, two for driving an inappropriate vehicle in lane three, and one for a child seatbelt offence. In total, 25 fines were issued, 15 were reported for offences, and in 33 cases advice was given by officers.

13. Empirical evidence suggests that those involved in criminal behaviour are also a greater risk to other road users. As a result, the Force is running an initiative that uses intelligence to identify recidivist offenders who also pose the highest risk to other road users and creating intervention plans with a view to prosecution where appropriate.

14. Kent Police also participates in a number of European and national road safety campaigns, such as the [TISPOL European Traffic Police Network](#) 24 hour Speed Campaign and the [THINK!](#) Drug Drive national campaign.

15. Kent Police can and does enforce 20mph restrictions; however, it is the responsibility of the relevant Highway Authority to determine speed limits on the road network. Kent Police works with partners to ensure any appropriate limits are introduced and that such limits follow legislative requirements; namely Department for Transport circular, 01/2013, Setting Local Speed Limits. Where genuine issues arise, Kent Police conducts enforcement as part of its strategy to improve road safety.

16. Kent Police is represented on the Casualty Reduction Board, working with road safety education and engineering teams to ensure a partnership approach to casualty reduction. Recent meetings have seen Kent Police introduce the concept of the JDM (Joint Decision Model) to have a shared understanding of risk and to formulate a rationalised, legal decision making process. This includes the inclusion of the data recorded by Community Speedwatch.

17. Other partners Kent Police works with include:

- [BikeSafe](#)
- [Highways Agency](#)
- [Institute of Advanced Motorists \(IAM\)](#)
- [Kent Fire & Rescue Service](#)
- [Kent County Council](#)
- [Medway Council](#)
- [Vehicle & Operator Services Agency \(VOSA\)](#)

18. Online reporting for non-injury collisions was launched in September 2017, and is available via the [Kent Police](#) website.
19. In addition, with more motorists using dashcams, passengers using mobile phones, and an increasing number of cyclists and horse riders wearing helmet cams, Kent Police is leading on a national project that will empower the public to share footage of people committing traffic offences in a range of formats for police consideration.

Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership:

20. Kent Police is an active member of the [Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership](#) which is committed to influencing, educating and encouraging motorists to slow down, stay within the speed limit and help reduce the number of crashes and casualties through the combination of education, publicity and enforcement.
21. The Partnership is also responsible for the fixed safety cameras, mobile safety camera vans and red light safety cameras within the county, as well as the A228 average speed cameras. The table below shows the number of Camera Offences recorded in 2016 (January to December) and 2017 relating to speeding, seatbelt and mobile phone offences:

Camera Offences	2016	2017	% change
Speeding offences	48776	56213	+15.2
Seatbelt offences	365	555	+52.1
Mobile phone offences	101	85	-15.8
Total	49242	56853	+15.5

ANPR:

22. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology is used within Kent to help detect, deter and disrupt criminality at a local, force, regional and national level. In addition to being mounted within police vehicles, police monitored ANPR cameras are used at fixed site locations.
23. As a vehicle passes a police monitored ANPR camera, its registration number is read and instantly checked against a database of vehicles of interest. Police officers can subsequently intercept and stop a vehicle, check it for evidence and, where necessary, make arrests. The use of ANPR in this way has helped to detect many offences, including locating stolen vehicles, tackling uninsured vehicle use and solving cases of terrorism, major and organised crime. It also allows officers' attention to be drawn to offending vehicles whilst allowing law abiding drivers to go about their business unhindered.
24. In addition to providing, intelligence and lines of enquiry, ANPR can also confirm whether vehicles associated with known criminals were in an area at the time of a crime and dramatically expedite investigations.

Community Speedwatch:

25. With support and direction from Kent Police, [Community Speedwatch](#) enables volunteers to reduce excessive vehicle speeds on their local roads. Operating at the roadside in 20, 30, and 40 mile per hour limits, volunteers monitor the speeds of passing vehicles using portable speed indication devices.
26. Community Speedwatch activity never directly leads to prosecutions or penalties. The owners of vehicles seen repeatedly speeding or recorded at more than 50% over the limit are sent a letter of advice; officers may also visit owners in cases of repeat offending.
27. The scheme aims to:
- increase drivers' perception of the risks from speeding and encourage them to slow down
 - reduce collisions and the severity of injuries on local roads
 - improve the quality of life for local communities.
28. The details recorded are used to inform speed enforcement campaigns, educational opportunities and other road safety initiatives in the future, including the viability of enforcement activity such as the deployment of safety camera technology or engineering solutions.

29. The following table highlights local Community Speedwatch activity between January and December 2017:

Active Groups	Station	Sessions	Active Enforcement – passed to Specials	1st Record – Speeding (-50%)	Letter Sent MO2 – 2 nd time vehicle seen (-50%)	Letter Sent MO3 – 3 rd time vehicle seen (-50%)	Letter Sent FO1 - 1 st Time Excessive Speed (50%+)	Letter Sent FO2 – 2 nd Time Excessive Speed (50%+)	Letter Sent FO3 – 3 rd Time Excessive Speed (50%+)	Hand Delivered HD1 – 4 th letter
7	Ashford	240	1	1103	60	56	30	3	0	1
8	Canterbury	286	1	1380	46	25	57	0	3	0
7	Dover	281	14	1536	108	97	64	0	1	2
5	Folkestone	157	0	557	18	14	24	0	0	2
10	Maidstone	489	5	3094	129	161	142	5	4	1
1	Margate	19	0	130	0	0	23	0	0	0
3	North Kent	155	0	552	34	11	36	0	0	0
5	Sevenoaks	1055	16	6668	754	466	290	29	8	22
5	Sittingbourne	157	0	1024	67	23	48	0	4	2
6	Tonbridge	552	23	4779	319	494	179	5	21	5
9	Tunbridge	1107	31	5538	428	566	418	13	27	12
66		4498	91	26361	1963	1913	1311	55	68	47

Conclusion:

30. Based on the table below, it appears that the county’s roads are becoming safer as a result of on-going enforcement activity and extensive partnership working, with a 24% reduction in the number of road traffic collisions in 2017 (January to December) compared with 2016:

	2016	2017	% change
Fatal	59	58	-1.7
Injury	5266	3716	-29.4
Non-Injury	5721	4607	-19.5
Total	11046	8381	-24.1

31. The Commissioner is very supportive of the work that Kent Police and partners undertake in relation to road safety and is represented on the Safer Roads for Kent Strategic Board which meets quarterly and is attended by Kent County Council, Highways England, Kent Fire & Rescue Service and Medway Council.

32. Through the refreshed Police and Crime Plan, the Commissioner also acknowledges the importance of protecting those road users who are more vulnerable due to having no protection in traffic, such as motorcyclists, pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders.

33. The Commissioner provides funding to support the [Brake](#) road safety charity helpline for crash victims, which supports UK residents:

- if they have been bereaved or seriously injured in a crash;
- if they are caring for someone bereaved or seriously injured in a crash;
- if they are a professional, such as a police officer, teacher or health worker, wanting advice about how to help people affected by a crash

34. Victim Support also works closely with Brake in providing local community support to those bereaved or seriously injured through collisions, and the Commissioner has extended the Victim Support contract to include support for witnesses of serious collisions.
35. At the last meeting, Members will recall that they approved the Commissioner's funding proposal that included an increase in the 2018/19 police precept of £1 per month. This funding will enable the Chief Constable to recruit up to an additional 200 police officers, a number of whom will directly support roads policing and road safety across the county. This will be monitored through the Chief Finance Officer's attendance at the monthly Force Resource Board, and the Commissioner will receive regular updates from the Chief Constable at their 1:1 meetings and more formally at the Performance and Delivery Board
36. The Commissioner will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account for the totality of roads policing via their regular 1:1 meetings and formally, at the quarterly [Performance and Delivery Board](#). The next meeting is scheduled for 31 May – Panel Members and the public are most welcome.