

Roads policing should be integrated into service to make it 'indispensable', says police chief

Officers are living in a 'dream world' if they believe traffic police can only be used for roads policing duties, according to the ACPO lead for the area.

Meredydd Hughes, ACPO lead on roads policing and chief constable of South Yorkshire Police, cut 60 of his own officers from his traffic units to bolster the force's tactical firearms strength.

Speaking at the Federation's first annual Roads Policing conference, Mr Hughes told a packed conference hall: 'If I had to do it again I would do so. If you think a chief officer can reinforce a firearms team, which is necessary for the safety of the police officers and the public, by taking officers from neighbourhood



Meredydd Hughes, ACPO lead on roads policing

policing teams you are living in a dream world. But if I can take

traffic officers then that has to be the way forward.'

Mr Hughes said that the officers who transferred to the firearms unit were happy with the decision because it allowed them to discharge their roads policing duties.

However, an inspector from Humberside Police told Mr Hughes he had just 15 traffic officers providing 24-hour cover for the largest BCU area in England and Wales.

He added: 'Welcome to my dream world, Mr Hughes.'

In his speech, Mr Hughes said roads policing could not be viewed as a separate policing function.

'You can't divorce roads policing from other aspects of polic-

ing. The answer is to integrate roads policing to make it indispensable. We have to make the best use of what we have got. Let's remember the reality.'

Mr Hughes also hit out at what he called 'right wing fanatics' who criticised new police powers to seize illegal vehicles. Operation Takeaway, a recent West Midlands Police operation, led to the seizure of 173 cars and 40 arrests in one day.

'The impact of those important new laws can not be underestimated. We need to put them to use. The rise in demand for scrap metal from China means we are able to seize more cars and get them off the road and get rid of them.'



Accident rate is cut when black boxes are installed in pursuit cars

Forces with black boxes fitted in patrol cars are witnessing a dramatic fall in their accident rate.

Thames Valley Police saw a 15 per cent drop in damage to vehicles after they installed the device that records accident data.

The force has also saved an estimated million pounds due to installing the boxes.

West Midlands Police also trialed black boxes in one area and compared the results against areas without the devices. The number of accidents fell by nearly a quarter in cars with black boxes.

In police cars that did not have them, the accident rate

increased by 14 per cent in one area and 47 per cent in another.

Alan Jones, the Federation's lead on roads policing issues, found that only a quarter of forces have black boxes which could help to officers to learn lessons from accidents and prevent mistakes being repeated.

In 37 per cent of forces none of the pursuit vehicles are fitted with the black box system.

'Black boxes mean fewer accidents, fewer injuries and it saves lives,' a representative from RSG Engineering, which supplies boxes to fifteen forces, told the Roads Policing conference.



Lack of roads police means an increase in 'psychopath' drivers on roads

A motoring underclass with no regard for the law is taking over the country's roads in the absence of a visible police presence.

Quentin Willson, who presents and produces Britain's Worst Driver on Channel Five, told the roads policing conference: 'Drink drive is up and so is hit and run. We have a million uninsured drivers. That is a shameless statistic.'

'They don't care. They drive like psychopaths and they are unaccountable. They wouldn't stop if they hit somebody because they know if they carry on they won't be caught.'

'Even normal law-abiding people are taking risks because they know there are no police around.'

Mr Willson told the Roads Policing conference, held in Kegworth, that the numbers of marked police cars on the road



Quentin Willson: 'Shameless' drink drive statistics

needed to double to stem the problem.

'There is no substitute for the powerful visible deterrent of a marked cop car. If we don't we will see more and more serious crashes as those in the motoring under classes will get bigger and bigger.'

