

# POLICE

## Police Magazine Update

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### **Government urge speeding up investigation of road traffic incidents to help economy**

Police officers need to deal with road traffic incidents on major roads more speedily in order to do their bit to help Britain's economy, according to MP Mike Penning.

In 2010 there were more than 18,000 full or part closures on motorways lasting more than 20,000 hours in total and Mr Penning, Under Secretary of State for Transport, appealed to forces to use new technology.

He spoke to delegates at the Federation and ACPO National Roads Policing Conference this month and said that many forces had still not bid for specialist 3D scanners which can speed up the investigation of the scene of an incident.

The government made £2.7 million available to fund new technology which can make a 3D scan of the whole of an incident scene rather than having to use a number of investigators looking at different sections of a scene.

Mr Penning said that although he understood an incident had to be properly investigated and the scene protected 'I cannot afford for the majority of the road network to be closed for as long as it is now'. Some motorway closures can last up to 12 hours.

He also said that they are looking at legislation regarding drug drivers to make it easier for police officers to prosecute offenders. The government has asked a panel of experts to look at introducing a law following lobbying by the Federation's Road Policing Group.

Figures from the Department for Transport show drug driving was seen as a 'contributing factor' in 1,094 road traffic accidents in 2010 – including 51 which proved fatal.

Mr Penning, a former fireman, added that he himself had been to accidents where the driver appeared 'out of their tree' and it was assumed they were drunk but that it was difficult to tell. Currently neither adequate legislation to define drug driving or the technology to test for drugs is in place. The government has announced they will provide drug testing kits for use within police stations.

### **Lone officers would increase visibility on roads**

Police leaders in roads policing should consider single-crewing officers to get more out of less resources.

Stuart Donald, assistant chief constable of Humberside Police, spoke to delegates at the Federation and ACPO National Roads Policing Conference this month and advocated single-crewing as a means to increase 'visibility' and 'confidence'.

The senior officer, who has commanded his own force's traffic unit, said: "I really see community support officers and police officers patrolling on their own. We need to get more out of the existing resources."

He added that research suggests officers are much more likely to engage with the public when they are not talking to their colleague although he acknowledged it was a contentious issue and proper risk assessments would still need to be done.

Mr Donald, a member of ACPO's Roads Policing Business Area, said where he was based in Grimsby they had made regular use of Special Constables to patrol as well as community wardens.

He added: "Is it policing on the cheap? Well of course it is cheaper but if it's done well it's maybe part of the new challenge or part of whatever the big society is."

He also called for roads policing officers to be 're-empowered' and to give them their discretion back to help increase time on the streets and reduce the amount paperwork.

Mr Donald said: "I do think we can re-position roads policing officers and get them recognised as the professionals they so clearly are."