

Evaluate the disruption options available to target criminal activity on the road network.
(2000 words)

An efficient road network is vital to a thriving economy as nearly 80% of domestic freight in the UK is transported by the road, however what works for commerce also works for criminals (Department for Transport, 2020). Criminals use the roads to commit a range of offences including minor motoring offences to international organised crime (College of Policing, 2013). In 2019, 56,800 motoring offenders were prosecuted in Wales (Welsh Government, 2020). To help with this increasing demand, traffic officers have an array of tools and training to help them identify these offenders. This includes things like Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology, an array of powers and legislation as well as information sharing agreements with partner agencies such as Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). This essay will explore the various disruption options available to police officers to help target criminal activity on the road network.

The role and accountabilities of roads policing officers is extremely varied. It includes things like attending road related incidents, providing a visible presence on the road through proactive patrols, controlling the scenes of fatal crashes, providing a tactical response to vehicles that fail to stop and searching of individuals and vehicles which informs intelligence gathering (College of Policing, 2021).

In addition to the roles of a roads policing officer, the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) have established the ‘fatal four’ which is a set of priorities to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads (Parliament, 2016):

1. Drink and drug driving
2. Non-wearing of seatbelts
3. Inappropriate speed
4. Using mobile phones whilst driving (Northumbria Police, 2019).

These four priorities form part of local and national initiatives and strategies to help keep the roads safe, bring offenders to justice and promote public confidence and satisfaction (Joseph, 2021).

Organised criminals use a variety of evasive techniques for example using hire cars, obscuring number plates, using stolen vehicles and cloned plates (What Works, 2021). A useful tool in identifying these vehicles is ANPR. Registration numbers are captured by scanners or cameras

which is then cross referenced for a range of traffic and law enforcement purposes (RAC, 2020).

The pros of ANPR technology is that it provides a tactical option to disrupt, deter and detect criminal activity and by doing so, helps to increase public confidence in the police (National Policing Improvement Agency, 2009). The use of ANPR technology had contributed to the success of hundreds of investigations against serious and organised crime offenders, terrorist suspects and individuals involved in volume crimes (National Policing Improvement Agency, 2009). ANPR is useful for police who can browse data retrospectively to check if certain vehicles were involved in a crime, to corroborate alibis of suspects or to check for witnesses at an incident (Total Parking, 2021).

The cons of ANPR is that extreme weather can affect the accuracy of ANPR software which may have a knock on effect to missing persons investigations, intelligence gathering for serious investigations as well as limit the proactive response to uninsured or stolen vehicles (Away Some Article, 2020). In addition to this, there are many people who are concerned with the fact that images and records are kept and stored for a long time and could be misused which leads to privacy concerns from members of the public (NYLN, 2016). This goes against Article 8 of the Human Rights Act, a right to respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2021).

Section 163 of the Road Traffic Act (RTA) 1988 allows a constable in uniform to stop any vehicle being driven on the road to stop and account for their actions and to provide their name, address, date of birth and drivers licence (Gould, 2021). This often gives officers grounds to search the vehicle and its occupants for example if the occupants are being evasive, cannot account for their presence in a certain area, there is a strong smell of cannabis or alcohol or if the vehicle or occupants match descriptions of a recent burglary or robbery.

Section 163 RTA allows for a proactive response to criminals and still caters for a large percentage of drug seizures, cash finds and other motoring offences. For example, a proactive police operation in Hemel Hempstead led to over 100 drivers being stopped and searched which resulted in several arrests, seizures of drugs and cash as well as uninsured vehicles being taken off the roads (Hertfordshire Constabulary, 2020). This shows that proactive policing still has its place in modern day policing. In 2019 – 2020 stop searches resulted in almost 65,000 criminal acts being discovered and 34,000 arrests (Metropolitan Police, 2021).

However, the police are often scrutinised for their stop search powers in black and ethnic minority individuals compared with white people and feel some communities are being

targeted disproportionately (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, 2021). People have since become cautious of police officers powers under these circumstances since the recent murder of Sarah Everard (Chakrabarti, 2021).

ILP is a practice that uses technological advances in data collection and analytics to generate valuable intelligence that can be used to direct resources to ensure the best people are in the right places to do the most good (Fritsvold, 2021). Essentially, ILP is a policing model for crime prevention and reduction which focuses on hot spots policing, reoffending rates and repeat victimisation (Bartleby Research, 2021)

It is recommended that intelligence led strategies should be implemented to help reduce death and injuries on the road and to achieve a safe environment for all road users (Home Office, 2003). It is documented that due to an intelligence led approach you can have less roads policing officers whilst at the same time increasing their effectiveness (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, 2004). This shows that ILP is cost effective and its science based approach allows for a more targeted approach to criminality.

Due to ILP, intelligence-led operations such as drink drive campaigns over the Christmas period happen every year up and down the country due to information and data indicating there is a higher number of drink drivers this time of year. These operations are implemented in an attempt to reduce the amount of drink drivers and prosecute those who put other people in danger by consuming alcohol and getting behind the wheel (Fox, 2020).

On the other hand, the success of an ILP investigation heavily relies on intelligence, often from other agencies through information sharing agreements and collaborative working. No agency can be effective on their own (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2008). As such, more resources are required to ensure the constant gathering and analysis of intelligence to ensure all ILP operations are up to date and current.

Static and mobile speed cameras allows forces to catch those driving unsafely in neighbourhoods, exceeding the speed limit and catching serial offenders by subjecting them through the criminal justice system whether that be through an educational course, fine or sentence in court. They are often implemented to have a calming effect on the speed in a certain area, to reduce the number of collisions along a length of road and for major roadworks enforcement (Police and Crime Commissioner Thames Valley, 2021).

Speed cameras have the potential to reduce speed-related criminality by increasing offenders perceptions of the risk of being caught speeding and facing the consequences, which in turn

may also impact on recidivism rates (Steinbach et al., 2021). There is some evidence to suggest that the use of speed cameras can lead to decrease in both speed violations and road traffic collisions (Corbett, 1995). This shows that speed cameras is both a deterrent to the crime of speeding and driving without due care and attention as well as a safety measure to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries.

The disadvantages of speed cameras are the cost. For example, the upfront cost is high with a two-camera system costing £120–150 thousand pounds. There are additional costs for calibration and maintenance and there is always the risk of damage from those who reject their presence (Police and Crime Commissioner Thames Valley, 2021). In addition, Police Watchdog has reported that speed cameras are being used in ‘good hunting grounds’ and to increase profits rather than because they were a hotspot for speeding and collisions (Ahuja, 2020).

There has been a steady increase in drink and drug drivers in recent years with a 20% increase for drug driving arrests and an 11.3% increase in drink drivers (Fleet News, 2019). To help combat this problem, Section 6 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 enables an officer to administer a preliminary test to ascertain if a person is unfit through drink or drugs (Crown Prosecution Service, 2019). This allows officers to effect an arrest if there is presence of drugs in the subject’s saliva or breath (Bennett, 2020). Whilst the number of breath tests carried out by police has dropped, the portion of positive or failure to provide tests have increased which suggests that underlying offending behaviours may have increased (Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, 2020).

The benefits of these tests is that it enables officers to establish quickly and efficiently, at the roadside, whether it is worth arresting a person to investigate if they have been driving whilst being over the prescribed limit of drink or drugs (Road Law Barristers, 2021). This saves valuable time and enables officers to use their discretionary powers and make decisions expeditiously.

There are limitations to this process. For example, the DrugWipe test only checks for the presence of cannabis and cocaine currently despite evidence that other psychoactive substances are just as popular with drug users. In addition, studies have shown that there has been a lot of false positives and negatives in Australia with the DrugWipe test which can lead to a waste of officer’s time dealing with subjects who have not broken the law and further mistrust from the public who perceive the police as abusing their powers (Bennett, 2020).

Whilst roads policing is the primary responsibility of the police, local authorities and road safety partnerships also play a role (Joseph, 2021). Information sharing allows officers to instantly access DVLA records and other databases to see if drivers are disqualified, hold the correct insurance, MOT and tax etc. Intelligence has also led to intelligence-led policing which allows for a targeted response to policing the roads.

Roads policing has evolved from the old traffic officers who were focused on enforcing road traffic legislation to tackling wider concepts such as targeting criminals who use the roads for a criminal purpose (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, 2020). Technological advancements and disruption techniques such as ANPR, speed cameras and preliminary testing allows officers to react immediately at the road side and use their discretionary powers to decide when to arrest, give a fine or provide suitable words of advice. Powers under the Road Traffic Act allow officers to provide a proactive response to policing the British roads network by requiring drivers stop and give their details, providing powers to search under the right grounds and require a sample for alcohol/drug testing. However, there is still mistrust from the public regarding these techniques and powers and many feel they breach their human rights, are unfair to certain ethnic communities and cost the tax payers too much money to enforce and maintain.

Word Count: 1925

Assess the role of community policing in fostering and maintaining community cohesion.

(2000 words)

Community cohesiveness refers to our local community's capacity to be welcoming and supportive of individuals of diverse cultures, races, identities, and beliefs. A cohesive community is one in which people get along well (LGA, 2004). This essay will assess the role of community policing in fostering and maintaining community cohesion.

In Europe, community policing is a well-known idea. Many countries have used it, based on the problems that arise and the requirements that develop from society. The different police systems and techniques in these countries also have an impact on how Community Policing is structured (EUCPN, 2021).

In the early 1990s, community policing originated as a method of reducing rising crime rates as well as the improvement of the connection between the police and the general public. It was discovered through community policing that strong arrests for disorderly conduct and drunk driving had a deterrent effect on unrelated crimes such as robbery. This is regulated by the ideals of 'policing as community issue resolution' and 'policing by consent' in order to be more sensitive to community needs and expectations (NPCC, 2021).

Wilson and Kelling published a seminal paper in 1982 that defined the broken windows model of policing. In a nutshell, the model focuses on the role of disorder (e.g. broken windows) in the development and persistence of more serious crime (Wilson and Kelling, 1982). Disorder is not directly connected to major crime; rather, disorder causes communities to become more fearful and withdrawn, allowing more serious crime to creep in due to a lack of informal social control. Throughout the 1990s, the broken windows theory had a significant influence on police policy, and it has remained relevant into the twenty-first century (McKee, 2018).

Following the riots and disturbances in the northern towns of Bradford, Burnley, and Oldham in 2001, and the report of the Independent Review Team, the phrase "community cohesiveness" was established. This arose as a policy reaction to the perceived need for stronger community identity and purpose in the midst of more varied identities, transnational affiliations, and a general environment of fear and marginalisation (Bagguley and Hussain, 2019).

According to research, communities with poor levels of community cohesiveness have some similar characteristics (Bertotti, Adams-Eaton, Sheridan and Renton, 2009).

This research identified characteristics such as:

- Deprivation - the lower the level of cohesiveness, the less wealthy the area.
- Isolation - occurs whether a region is rural or urban, and is caused by physical obstacles such as major highways or waterways.
- Population churn - if a population is shifting in a region, for example, if individuals are only staying for a short time or have only recently arrived, this is referred to as population churn.
- Manufacturing decline - if a region has witnessed significant declines in conventional manufacturing industry.

There is always the possibility of tensions escalating into conflict inside every community. The source of tensions, conflicts, and divides will vary by region. There may be tensions and distrust between various ethnic or religious groups, urban and rural people, newcomers and long-term residents, or along inter-generational lines (Hickman, 2008). Councils and police sectors must be able to track and monitor local trends and "hot spots", as well as any national or international events that may threaten cohesion. Whilst identifying these possible tensions they must agree on and implement actions to manage tensions based on the belief that early intervention can make a significant difference in preventing incidents of public disorder.

Visible police patrol can decrease crime, but only if it is properly targeted to crime hotspots, according to reviews of the best evidence on 'what works' in policing to reduce crime (Sherman and Eck, 2002). Research into public expectations of policing in the UK has previously identified that the presence of a highly visible police force is strongly preferred by the public (Bradley 1998).

The traditional belief that targeting crime hotspots would simply result in the problem relocating elsewhere (known as "crime displacement") has been one of the challenges to implementing focused patrol in the past. New research suggests that increased police activity in high-crime regions doesn't always result in criminal displacement, and that the advantages of crime reduction may even expand to communities immediately surrounding the targeted locations (Bowers et al., 2011).

When implemented alongside community engagement and problem-solving, the National Reassurance Policing Programme, which tested the impact of neighbourhood teams, showed

that targeted foot patrol can improve public confidence in the police, perceptions of crime, and feelings of safety as well as reducing crime (Tuffin et al., 2006). The police implemented foot patrol to establish good, casual interaction with the public and to respond to local priorities. The appearance of an officer patrolling on foot may also serve as a “control signal”, indicating that the police are paying attention to local issues within communities (Innes, 2004). A follow-up review found that, while focused foot patrol may be required for improving public trust, it may not be adequate on its own without community participation and problem solving to have an impact. (Quinton and Morris, 2008).

It is critical that police forces and other government institutions gain the public's trust. Certain members of the public may fear the police as an organisation, whether as a result of direct interaction, word-of-mouth experiences, or rumoured incidents. This distrust, especially if other parts of the community believe they have more control over police and other agencies, can lead to an increase in fear and in extreme situations, a surge in violent behaviour (Goldsmith, 2005).

Insufficient or excessive formal police control may reduce the public's desire to fight crime and disorder, deflate law-abiding residents' sense of shared efficacy and willingness or ability to engage in informal control, or invite illegal retributive practises by some community members (Kubrin and Weitzer, 2003). The failures of community policing to develop greater community processes of community cohesiveness and organisation has been a main point of criticism (Kerley and Benson, 2000).

Around 30 years ago, police practitioners and scholars began calling for a change in police values, including the recognition of the public's involvement in the delivery of justice, which is today regarded a founding principle of modern policing (Dowler and Sparks, 2008). It is equally crucial for officers to understand the public's attitudes regarding the police: “Public opinion matters in part because widespread confidence in the police makes law enforcement officers' work easier and more effective”, according to one scholar (Skogan, 2006).

Institutional legitimacy of the police based on public confidence is especially important because it may encourage interaction between the public and the criminal justice system. Public voluntary compliance with the law and public commitment to the rule of law may improve if individuals feel their long-term personal interests will be properly served (Hinton and Newborn, 2009). Legitimacy motivates individuals to obey the rules not because they are afraid of being punished, but because they feel they should. To summarise, “the criminal justice

system, unlike other public institutions, is heavily reliant on legitimacy and consent: public support is critical if the police and other criminal justice agencies are to function both successfully and efficiently” (Jackson and Bradford, 2009).

Every area should attempt to map its community. A Local Authority should carry out this task, and the outcomes should be shared with local partners. This provides local authorities with a good idea of who resides in the region and where they live. It provides information of where conflicts occur between various groups, the variables that cause them, and where fault lines may arise in the future, as well as knowledge of present and possible divides amongst persons from the same group. It also provides awareness of the barriers and possibilities for individuals to mix or be brought together, as a starting point for judgments on whether cohesion initiatives are needed in the local area, who should be targeted, and how existing examples of excellent practise might be adapted to match the local area. This has been demonstrated in papers such as the research of community cohesion tensions in the Swansea region (Steele, 2012).

The most efficient approach to accomplish this is to form a multi-agency tension monitoring group led by an officer or officers from the local authority and/or the local police force. This should include key statutory sector partners (for example, housing, community safety, education, fire service, health, probation/youth offending team, community workers, neighbourhood wardens, police community support officers, and the National Asylum Support Service), as well as relevant representatives from the voluntary, community, and faith sectors (Home Office, 2014). Community engagement is an important component of neighbourhood policing. To understand the community’s requirements, you must have robust community engagement mechanisms in place, and this must be done in collaboration with other local partners. It is much easier to interact with communities when they are all working together.

Police in neighbourhoods are responsible for creating communities that are safe and feel safe by providing the right people, in the right places and in the right numbers. It is true that overall crime does generally decrease with effective community policing, but some disorders and criminal offences produce fear and insecurity, which can alter a person's daily routine. The purpose of neighbourhood policing is to build confidence in people, confidence that the police are working closely with their partners and communities to understand issues that matter to people, and are dealing with them. It is important for police to have community confidence as it provides legitimacy and the community support they need to prevent crime and bring offenders to justice. This is a crucial aspect of building a cohesive community (Colovor, 2018).

Local authorities need to work closely with neighbourhood police teams in order to improve cohesion. While the police are visible representatives of the statutory sector, many of the services which will benefit cohesion are only accessible through local authorities. In the world of law enforcement, police are known for their proactive approach, and they are therefore best equipped to deal with issues of crime and disorder, as well as refer cases to other agencies for issues beyond their remit. The public will have a much greater faith in the police as a force for good in their neighbourhood if this is accomplished successfully (Denham, 2009).

The confidence cycle is the relationship between improved public trust in the police and increased community participation. It may encourage a greater desire on the part of the people to cooperate with the police, enhancing intelligence gathering.

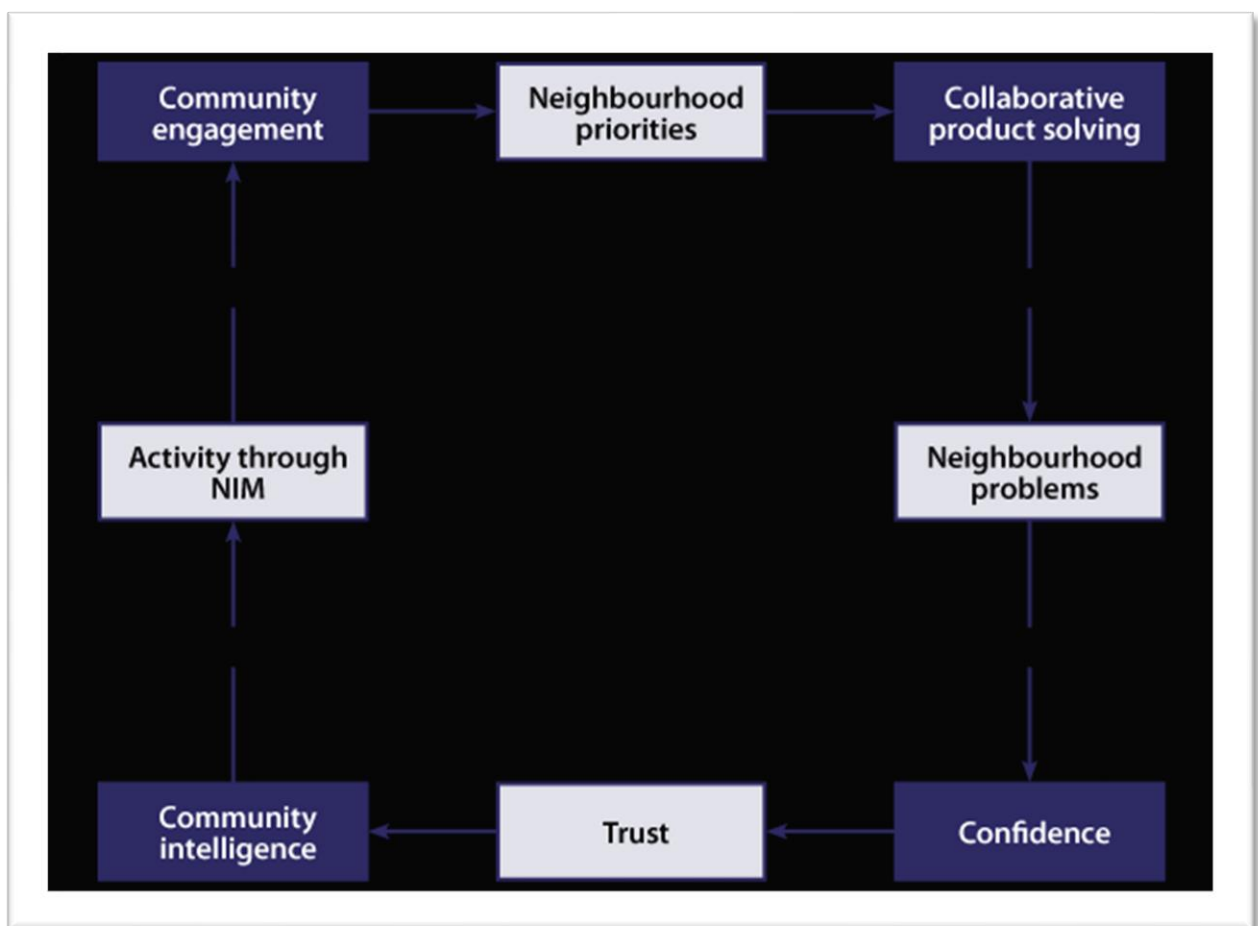


Figure 1: The Confidence Cycle (College of Policing, 2021)

In communities that are cohesive and resilient, incidents of anti-social behaviour, crime, and waste mismanagement are less likely to occur (CLES, 2014). Community security and social cohesiveness are mutually reinforcing ideas. The term “social cohesion” and “community cohesion” are sometimes used interchangeably, although they should be distinguished (Cantle 2001). Social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, minimising gaps in wealth and income, and generally helping people to have a sense that they are involved in a common endeavour, confronting similar issues, and are members of the same community are all part of social cohesiveness (Maxwell 1996). Communities that feel physically safe are more inclined to act cohesively, and vice versa. However, community cohesiveness does not mean the absence of conflict, but rather the community’s collective ability to handle the dynamic diversity of tensions and conflicts (Gilchrist 2004).

To conclude this essay, police should overcome hurdles arising from structural features to lessen apparent failure of existing Community Policing programmes in their efforts to enhance community cohesiveness and organisation (NCJ, 1994). By building efficient multi-agency arrangements and communication channels to exchange information among community residents, freely utilising information and communication technology, police should also encourage communities to join in the fight against crime. Overall, in order for Community Policing to achieve social and community cohesion, programmes should strive to reduce tensions within communities and tensions between police and communities while also improving the quality of police services including visibility, efficacy in dealing with community issues, and accountability to the community (LGA, 2004).

Word count: 1992