

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

In modern days, the road network is used to enable the commission of crimes. The type of crime committed are not just limited to traffic offences. The roads are used to evade arrest, traffic goods, drugs and people. Studies have also shown that about a quarter of offenders committing roads related offences have also committed other mainstream offences as well (Transport Research Laboratory, 2003). Disrupting criminality on the roads is an important tool for crime reduction that has been sadly overlooked in the last decade. A reduction in numbers of dedicated roads police constables has left a gap where criminals have seen respite from being targeted. However recent investment in road policing is showing promising results for reducing crime (Staffordshire Police, 2020). This essay is going to evaluate the options available to officers to disrupt and target crime on the roads network. This essay will also look at roads policing in a wider context. There are several options when looking at crime disruption on the roads.

First, some of the technology available to forces to disrupt criminality on the roads.

Automatic Numberplate Recognition (ANPR) is defined by the college of policing as “an effective way of identifying vehicles and matching them against predetermined indices or flags. It is a proactive policing tool for response policing and investigations, which can prevent crime by targeting criminals through their use of the roads” (College of Policing , 2013).

ANPR provides useful data to officers on the ground when it comes to tracking movements. Providing real time and up to date locations allows the right resources to be deployed in the right locations. Being able to track the movements of suspect vehicle also allows for officers to develop intelligence around the frequent routes used by criminals and deploy covert and overt resources to intercept criminals using the road network.

It is also very useful as ANPR is linked to the police national computer. This allows for warning markers to be placed on vehicles for things such as, prohibition notices, driving without insurance, drugs intelligence, failing to stop or being stolen. This provides information that can be picked up by all ANPR cameras no matter what force the suspect travels into. When the vehicle activates the camera that information can be passed to officer on the ground.

ANPR is not without its drawbacks. ANPR is very useful when there is a number plate to read. Many criminals are using tactics to avoid recognition from these cameras. For example, using tape to change or alter number plates, the use of cloned plates and plate flippers where the number plate is flipped to avoid being seen by the cameras. Number plates not conforming to regulations can also be hard to read and as such extraction of the image may not be successful (Kaur, 2016).

Trackers are also another useful tool. Trackers can be factory fitted or even retrospectively fitted by third party dealers. They also have the ability to immobilise the vehicle and prevent it from starting, in some high-end systems this can be done remotely. Providing up to date vehicle location data is valuable when trying to locate an offender or stolen vehicle. However, one obvious limitation is that a tracker and immobiliser must be fitted to work. Also, for the equipment to have the desired effect it must be fitted correctly. Where not fitted correctly the equipment can behave unpredictably or not at all. When deployed correctly trackers have seen to increase the rates at which vehicles are returned to owners to 95%

ASSIGNMENT 2 COHORT 1/21

compared to only 40% overall (Rewire Security, 2021). That is a staggering increase in vehicle recovery compared to vehicle not fitted.

Another way officers can disrupt criminality on the roads systems is to use powers they have to stop and check vehicles. There are a few pieces of legislation which allow officers to stop vehicles.

Section 163 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 states “a person driving a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road must stop the vehicle on being required to do so by a constable in uniform or a traffic officer”. This is the most common legislation used to stop check vehicles. However, in recent months there has been controversy surrounding the use of Section 163. Victim advocate groups have campaigned that there needs to be changes to the act. The home secretary has announced that all s163 stops will be recorded, like stop and search. This is in an effort for the use of the legislation is more transparent and accountable (Stop Watch, n.d.).

Section 4 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 “allows either all vehicles or those selected by a particular criterion to be stopped in a particular locality in order to locate an offender or witness involved in an indictable offence (subject to authorisation)” (College of Policing, 2013). College of policing also advises that when deployed it should be used whilst giving little warning to the suspect and strategically placed road checks to be used so there are no escape routes.

Working in partnership with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to revoke or deny criminals access to operator’s licences. Denying the use of heavy goods vehicles to criminals and organised crime groups directly impacts their ability to move illegal goods, drugs and even people on our roads. This type of enforcement however has not proved to be as effective as others in deterring and disrupting criminality on our roads. In a report published by the RAC, it is stated that they are worried by the shockingly high levels of infringement shown in data published by the DVSA. They go further to say that the sanctions available are inadequate to reduce the level of non-compliance (RAC, 2020). This suggests that even though avenues are available to partner agencies either the sanctions are not used enough, or they are not adequate to prevent further criminality.

Being proactive on the roads can help detect motoring offences being committed by criminals and organised crime groups.

In the UK we used a points-based systems for traffic offences, this provides officers with an extremely useful tool to take criminals off the roads and deny them access to our roads network. Enforcing traffic offences such as driving without insurance, drink and drug driving, careless and dangerous driving all come with heavy points penalties or driving bans. Enforcement of these offences will lead to bans, denying criminals access to our roads. Since the 20’000-officer uplift started Staffordshire Police have increased roads policing officers by a third and have seen promising results. Having more officers on the front line proactively policing the roads has been shown to reduce crime (Staffordshire Police, 2020).

There is also the ability of courts to impose driving bans. Courts can issue driving bans if the offences being committed are being facilitated by the use of vehicles. This can be used in cases of drug trafficking or being the getaway driver in the commission of an offence. Section 146 of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 provides for a general power to disqualify a person from driving following a conviction for any offence. There is no requirement for a vehicle to have been used during the crime.

ASSIGNMENT 2 COHORT 1/21

I would also like to touch more broadly on roads policing and the challenges that are faced nationally by forces across England and Wales. I believe this will contextualise why despite having numerous disruption tactics available to them, local roads policing units are now seeing an increase in crime on the roads and fatalities.

Since 2010 the number of police officers have fallen by approximately 14% (20'600) (Office for National Statistics, 2019). This has had an obvious impact on roads policing numbers in England and Wales. With a reduction in police, spending during this last decade has also decreased. Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabularies, Fire and Rescue Services estimated a decrease in spending for all policing functions to be 6.1%. When looking at roads policing spending this decreases dramatically by 34% in real terms (HMICFRS, 2020). This had a direct impact on the number of dedicated roads policing officers, between 2010 and 2014 there was a 22% drop to dedicated roads policing officer and 2015 to 2019 showed a further 18% drop (Home Office, 2020).

With austerity and the drop in dedicated roads policing officers, crime detection on the roads has fallen. This is worrying as the roads network is used by all kinds of criminals and organised crime groups. Austerity has also forced those in specialised roles to be called away to assist other departments such as general response police teams. As normal response officers cannot keep up with the demand placed on them, roads policing officers have moulded into more of a support role than dedicated to roads policing. This has left roads policing units struggling to resource traditional roads policing enforcement under-resourced (Norbury, 2020). The parliamentary advisory council for transport safety has recommended in their 2020 report that the uplift of 20'000 officers should be used to increase the number of dedicated roads policing officers which would go a long way in prioritising roads policing (Norbury, 2020).

With a reduction in road policing officers detection of crimes taking place on the roads has fallen, but this has also had an effect on the detection of other crimes on our roads. Thefts, burglaries, violent crimes, criminal damage are all crime that can be facilitated by vehicles who use the road network. In a study conducted by Essex Police in 2018 for those arrested for drug driving offences their offending history was also checked and they found that 48% of those arrested had prior criminal convictions for more serious offences as above (National Police Chiefs Council, 2019).

In conclusion, roads policing officers and partner agencies have a wide range of options available to disrupt criminals on our road network. ANPR is a useful tool and plays a major part in the detection of these crimes and provides useful intelligence when looking to apprehend suspects, but it is not perfect. There are some obvious issues identified with ANPR systems such as cloning of plates, obscuring them or not being able to read them. Trackers are a useful for locating stolen vehicle or vehicles of interest. In reducing crime, they have had a significant impact. The legislation available to officers is critical in preventing and detecting criminality. However, with more scrutiny being placed on the use of some legislation it could put off officers using it. Whilst commercial vehicle enforcement in conjunction with partner agencies is vital in denying criminals the use of our roads there is some evidence to suggest that the legislation and powers available are either not adequate or not being used enough.

Roads policing has been relegated in the last decade. With a lack of funding, numbers and resources, criminals have seen some respite. The evidence shows that police numbers have been drastically cut in the recent decade. Which in turn has caused a drop in dedicated roads policing officers. This has led to an increase in deaths on our roads and the decrease in detection on criminality on our roads. It is welcome that an uplift of 20'000 officers will help with the demand being placed on officers, but forces should take the advice of the

parliamentary advisory council for transport safety and use this as an opportunity of boost numbers of roads policing officers. Also, to revert to dedicated roads policing units, instead of using them in more of a support role. A wide range of effective tactics are available to officers to disrupt criminality on the roads but unless there are enough officers to make use of them, they are no longer going to be effective. **1956 words**

Assess the role of community policing in fostering and maintaining community cohesion. (2000 words)

Neighbourhood policing is probably one of the most researched aspects of modern British policing. Neighbourhood policing relies on evidence-based policing to be effective. The use of evidence (theories and models) to more effectively solve community issues and engage communities.

There has been a long history of failings in British policing contributing to a breakdown of relationships between communities namely from black and ethnic minority communities. Some prominent examples would be that of the Stephen Lawrence enquiry, Brixton riots and closer to home the violent clashes with the miners striking. The effects of these examples can still be felt today (Gormally & Deuchar, 2012). There is mistrust in the police from communities effected by these failings and others. There is a lot of work being done to engage communities and rebuild the trust the police once held. This essay will assess what role community policing has in fostering and maintaining community cohesion.

Neighbourhood policing has a wide range of responsibilities. This essay will be looking at how community engagement, solving problems and promoting the right culture positively impacts communities and helps build better cohesion within them.

Community engagement as defined by Myhill is "The process of enabling the participation of citizens and communities in policing at their chosen level, ranging from providing information and reassurance, to empowering them to identify and implement solutions to local problems and influence strategic priorities and decisions" (Myhill, 2006). When reviewing existing evidence, it was found that there was strong evidence for reducing disorder and anti-social behaviour, increasing feelings of safety, increasing community relations and changing officers attitudes (Myhill, 2006).

The College of Policing guidelines provide a framework for community engagement which includes practical advice for officers and senior management on how to best engage communities.

Having a visible presence is one piece of advice given by the college of policing. It is recommended that police presence targets hotspots for crime and disorder to be most effective. Also, social media can be used to maximise visibility. Targeted foot patrols are an opportunity for officers to engage with communities by having conversations, finding out about community problems and gathering intelligence. Maintaining this presence over time is likely to lead to higher public confidence and trust in police (College of Policing , 2021).

Community mapping is an important aspect of engagement as it allows for officers to target their engagement to make sure they're getting the most value out of the time spent engaging with communities. Identifying what communities exist in a local policing area is useful as different communities engage differently with the police. It is also important, for example after a critical incident, that resources are directed to the right communities. Understanding the key figures and make up of communities allows officers to identify opportunities for engagement. Partner agency engagement is also important when identifying opportunities

ASSIGNMENT 2 COHORT 1/21

for engagement, agencies may already have opportunities set up which the police could play a role in and benefit from this (College of Policing , 2021).

The college of policing also recommends that police forces provide and encourage ways for communities to act and play a more active role in policing their local communities. This could be starting a neighbourhood watch, encouraging volunteer work with police or partner agencies and even joining consultations via police surgeries and offering opinions and solutions to the community's problems. There are also a lot of simple ways to improve community cohesion such as holding activity days or community days for local residents, promoting interfaith work, with schools and local colleges to promote and encourage community cohesion and others (National Police Improvement Agency, n.d.).

Section 34 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 places a requirement on forces to seek the views of the public about crime and disorder in their neighbourhood and hold regular meetings for this consultation to take place. This provides an opportunity to allows key figures in the community to raise concerns directly with the police and other agencies.

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 there are partners with statutory obligations under this act, these are: the police, local authorities, the fire service and local health boards. Whilst not all partners bare the same responsibility all have a duty under the act to implement strategies to tackle crime, disorder, ASB and drug misuse. The police tend to play a big part in this goal as we act as primary service providers and referrers to partner agencies. We also hold responsibility for the reduction of crime, disorder and ASB all of which are significant influences for community cohesion.

The local authorities tend to play more of a role for the environmental factors that contribute to these issues. They operate environmental departments, housing departments, education all which contributes to the resolution of these issues. All which have significant impact on community cohesion. Some influences that can lead to less cohesive communities can be deprivation, lack of affordable housing, lack of facilities and public services. All areas that fall under the remit of the local government.

Local health boards who run community health teams and drug and alcohol services also play a significant role in reducing the amount of drug misuse in communities. Drug use is a wide issue for most areas in the UK and as is evident we can't arrest our way out of the problem. Drug misuse is often a flashpoint of community tensions and without the local health boards to help reduce drug use, we will never be able to solve the root cause of this issue.

Problem orientated policing or problem-solving policing was first spoken about by Goldstein in 1979 where the idea of tackling the underlying problems causing crime and disorder is the most effective way to solve issues within the community (Goldstein, 1979). This was further expanded upon by Eck and Spelman in 1987 where they introduced the SARA model (Eck & Spelman, 1987).

SARA stands for scanning, analysis, response and assessment. Scanning entails research being conducted on police and partner agency systems to identify hot spots of crime and disorder, people who are most at risk of harm, repeat victims and focussing on the people most likely to cause harm to community members. It also involves and community led approach to signal crimes, issues that disproportionately effect the community and low threat/risk/harm incidents that might not lie with the police. Both approaches are important to have the desired impact of reducing crime and disorder within communities and identifying hot community issues which effect quality of life (College of Policing , 2021).

ASSIGNMENT 2 COHORT 1/21

The analysis part is analysing the problem to find the root causes of the problem to be better placed to target the right people or places and reduce demand long term on the police. For this to take place the problem needs to be well defined with multiple sources of information used and specifying exactly what the problem is (College of Policing , 2021). By targeting the underlying issues that give rise to a problem, officers hope to provide a long-term solution that will last. Tackling these problems will improve the quality of life for the communities we police, solving the problem at the route and preventing it further. Successful implementation of this model furthers the confidence in police and community cohesion (Weisburd, et al., 2010).

Simply, the response is how the police are going to respond to the identified problem. There are several factors affecting how police respond to problems that have been identified. This could be taking a preventative approach to the problem (Glenn, 2020). There are a variety of powers/policies available to officers including offering support to high-risk offenders when they're at risk at reoffending, taking swift and decisive action, dissuading further problems and sending a message to communities that the police are taking action. However, for long term preventative approaches to work there needs to be a partner agency approach which usually take time to see results (College of Policing , 2021). Not all problems are dealt with by police, some partner agencies have a duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to deal with problems that come under their remit as outlined above.

The assessment part is overlooked but it is an equally important step. Some questions that should be considered are "Did the response achieve their intended effects? Were the objectives met? If not, why? Did each person and/or agency carry out their responsibilities? In future would a different response elicit better results?" (Glenn, 2020). Ideally after assessing officer will be left with more evidence to either support the planned response or enough evidence to change the response to elicit better results in the future. The best measure of success is if the community is satisfied that the problem has been resolved (College of Policing , 2021).

Problem orientated policing is important for community cohesion because by offering sound solutions to community problems and involving communities in the problem-solving process, we set them up to be able to handle these issues autonomously. Getting locals to buy into that sense of community and continue to engage to make it a better place. Hopefully, officers can win the trust of those communities as well (National Police Improvement Agency, n.d.)

Promoting the right culture within the police and the communities serves as one of the most important aspects in building cohesive communities and trust within the police. Within neighbourhood policing community cohesion is important as it leads to less crime and less demand on resources. But without the consent of communities the police struggle to make a real impact. Importantly the public can help police by reporting crime, giving information, reporting suspicious activities and following instructions from officers. Without that support it makes the job of a constable substantially more difficult.

There is a strong link between public perceptions of procedural justice and police legitimacy and when police legitimacy is high the public are more likely to cooperate (Quinton, et al., 2015). Some of the values contributed to procedural justice align with the code of ethics within policing. The first part of procedural justice which applies is fair decision making. Asking communities for their views, really listening and taking those views into account when making decisions. Also, when making decisions, doing so impartially and based on the facts. It is also important for those decisions to be communicated in an open and honest way. The other part is the respectful treatment of communities and individuals belong to those communities. Again, this can be achieved by being open and honest with people about the decisions made and the process behind it. Treating people with respect during the decision-

ASSIGNMENT 2 COHORT 1/21

making process making them feel valued. The adverse is also true when procedural justice is not adhered to it can push people further away from the overall goal of the police force (Quinton, et al., 2015).

In conclusion, the evidence shows that neighbourhood policing plays a crucial part in community cohesion and building trust in the police. Starting with engaging communities in the policing process and building that trust between officers and the communities they serve. There are several ways for officers to do this and the evidence shows they are effective at engaging people and bringing communities together. It is evident that the police cannot build cohesive communities on their own. Partner agencies are crucial in promoting community cohesion and solving the issues which cause tensions within communities. Community mapping allows officers to gain a better understanding of the make-up of their communities allowing a more targeted presence and identify opportunities for engagement. Understanding the make-up of communities allows for officers to better understand what issues may be affecting cohesion and implement solutions. The addition of problem-solving policing as part of community policing improves the quality of life for the communities by involving partner agencies in this process, we can tackle issues at the root cause. Hopefully, providing a lasting solution to the issue. Finally, there is strong link between public perceptions of procedural justice and police legitimacy. Some of the core values of procedural justice can be attributed the code of ethics. Procedural justice is useful for building trust with communities and promoting cohesion as the process makes communities feel valued. Overall community policing is important to promoting community cohesion and building trust within the police. If we are to start making real changes to the perceptions of the police force and get communities back on side, community policing is an integral part of this. **2079 Words.**

Bibliography

- College of Policing , 2013. *Disrupting Criminality*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.college.police.uk/app/roads-policing/disrupting-criminality>
[Accessed 11 Jul 2022].
- College of Policing , 2021. *Neighbourhood policing guidelines*, London: CoP.
- Eck, J. E. & Spelman, W., 1987. *Problem-Solving: Problem-Oriented Policing in Newport News*, Washington DC: Police Executive Research Forum.
- Glenn, K. M., 2020. *The S.A.R.A. Model*, s.l.: Criminal Justice Know How.
- Goldstein, H., 1979. Improving Policing: A Problem-Oriented Approach. *Crime & Delinquency*, 25(2), pp. 236-258.
- Gormally, S. & Deuchar, R., 2012. Somewhere between distrust and dependence: young people, the police and anti-social behaviour management in marginalised communities. *The International Journal on School Disaffection*, 9(1), pp. 51-66.
- HMICFRS, 2020. *Roads Policing: Not optional an inspection of roads policing in England and Wales*, London: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services.
- Home Office, 2020. *Police workforce, England and Wales: 30 September 2019*, London: Home Officer.
- Kaur, S., 2016. An Automatic Number Plate Recognition System under Image Processing. *I.J. Intelligent Systems and Applications*, Issue 3, pp. 14-25.
- Myhill, A., 2006. *Community engagement in policing* , London: National Police Improvement Agency .
- National Police Chiefs Council, 2019. *Roads Policing Strategic Review* , s.l.: NPCC.
- National Police Improvement Agency, n.d. *Cohesion Guide*, London: College of Policing .
- Norbury, F., 2020. *Roads policing and its contribution to road safety*, London: PACTS.
- Office for National Statistics, 2019. *Full time equivalent police officers at 31 March 1977 to 2019 in England and Wales*, s.l.: Home office.
- Quinton, P. et al., 2015. *Fair cop 2: Organisational justice, behaviour and ethical policing*, London: College of Policing.
- RAC, 2020. *Roads policing review: call for evidence, RAC Foundation response*, s.l.: s.n.
- Rewire Security, 2021. *UK vehicle Theft Statistics UK Vehicle Theft Statistics – Thatcham Anti Theft Car Tracker*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.rewiresecurity.co.uk/blog/vehicle-theft-thatcham-insurance-gps->

trackers

[Accessed 1 September 2022].

Staffordshire Police, 2020. [Online]

Available at:

<https://www.staffordshire.police.uk/news/staffordshire/news/2020/july/increase-in-investment-in-roads-policing-is-driving-down-crime/>

[Accessed 28 August 2022].

Stop Watch, n.d. *Home secretary announces recording of all traffic stops*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.stop-watch.org/news-opinion/home-secretary-announces-recording-of-all-traffic-stops/>

[Accessed 29 August 2022].

Weisburd, D., Telep, C. W., Hinkle, J. C. & Eck, J. E., 2010. Is problem-oriented policing effective in reducing crime and disorder?. *Criminology and Public Policy*, 9(1), pp. 139-172.