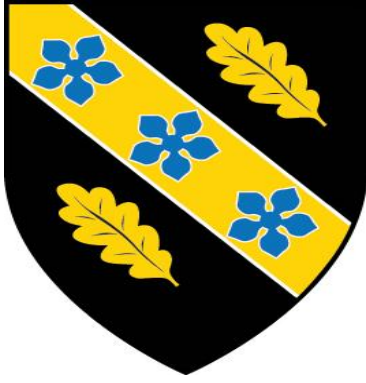




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The Criminal Use of E-Bikes in Gwent and the Efficacy of Strategies in Tackling Them

Christopher Thompson

2134417

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Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed: C. Thompson

Date: 27/12/2025

STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA.

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Date: 27/12/2025

STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the challenges faced by Gwent Police in responding to criminal and antisocial behaviour involving electrically assisted bicycles (e-bikes). With e-bike use rising for both legitimate and illicit purposes, police officers are encountering new operational difficulties.

Through semi-structured interviews with seven officers from across response and neighbourhood policing teams, the study identifies three main themes: difficulties in pursuing and identifying offenders, insufficient training and policy guidance, and legislative and organisational barriers to enforcement.

Officers noted that offenders often exploit gaps in police capability and regulation, undermining both enforcement efforts and public confidence. The findings highlight the need for targeted training, clearer operational guidance, and potential legislative reform.

This research contributes to the understanding of how police adapt to emerging forms of mobility-related crime and offers practical recommendations for improving policing practice.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the efficacy of current policing tactics in responding to e-bike enabled crime, with a focus on understanding the broader societal and legal implications of these tactics. This chapter provides the background and context for this research project and explains why the research is so important.

1.2 Background and Rationale

In recent years, the use of e-bikes has increased significantly. They are used for practical reasons such as commuting or recreation, but increasingly, they are also associated with crime and anti-social behaviour. While e-bikes offer clear advantages for getting around and supporting sustainability, their misuse is creating new challenges for police and dangers to the public. Offenders often take advantage of the speed, agility, and relative anonymity that e-bikes provide, and they can move through areas that police vehicles can't reach, making enforcement especially difficult.

These developments have raised concerns about public and officer safety, as well as whether current policies and laws are effective. E-bikes have been linked to crimes such as drug supply, theft, and anti-social acts, especially in urban residential areas. Although police have some legal powers to act, officers face real obstacles when confronted with incidents involving e-bikes — particularly when it comes to pursuits,

identifying suspects, and seizing bikes. Rapid advances in technology and the easy availability of e-bikes have made these problems even harder to manage, and lawmakers are struggling to keep pace.

This study examines how frontline and supervising officers in Gwent Police are experiencing challenges related to e-bike enabled crime, such as pursuit difficulties and legislative barriers. While there are national discussions underway about how to update and enforce e-bike laws, there's little practical research on what officers actually face on the ground. Gaining insight into their perspectives will help shape future policy.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study is to explore police officers' experiences of responding to criminal and anti-social behaviour involving e-bikes within Gwent Police.

The objectives of the research are to:

1. Examine the operational challenges faced by officers when dealing with e-bike related incidents.
2. Explore officer perceptions of training, policy awareness, and organisational readiness.
3. Identify any perception of legislative barriers to enforcement.
4. Consider how current policies could be improved to support frontline policing.

A qualitative research approach was implemented to achieve these aims. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with several serving police officers from a

range of operational roles within Gwent Police. This approach allowed the participants to reflect on their own experiences in depth, allowing for an analysis of emerging themes.

1.4 Structure

This dissertation is structured across five chapters. Chapter Two presents a review of existing literature relating to e-bike usage, criminal exploitation, and policing and legislative responses. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology and ethical considerations underpinning the study. Chapter Four presents the findings as a thematic analysis of the interview data. Finally, Chapter Five discusses these findings in relation to existing literature and presents recommendations for policing practice and future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The principal aim of this chapter is to identify and analyse relevant sources of literature that offer insight, commentary, or key data on the issue of e-bike usage, its criminal use, and the efficacy of strategies, if any, that have been implemented by police and other authorities with an aim at tackling the issue.

Although several objectives of my study relate to the issue in Gwent specifically, namely the extent of the issue in Gwent and evaluating Gwent's current strategies and enforcement policies, I am not anticipating that there will be any existing literature specific to Gwent.

The sheer speed and extent of the expansion of e-bikes usage in the United Kingdom has created a phenomenon that poses a unique challenge to police forces around the country, particularly in high crime urban areas. Due to the relative nascency of this issue, the literature is very much still a developing area of research; this is a contemporary issue with little to no historical literature from which to draw a chronological analysis. The review will, therefore, assess literature on a thematic basis and seek to identify any gaps in research that would be valuable for me to consider in my own research and for the benefit of policing as a whole.

The objective of this review is to assess the current breadth and quality of literature regarding e-bikes and their impact on crime and policing. Where possible, literature has been selected which contain an element of illegal e-bike usage, although due consideration is also given to e-bikes that are legal but are used in an illegal way. The objective will be achieved through examining a variety of sources, notably

research publications, academic journals, legislation, journalistic commentary, and other sources which address the potential solutions to the issue at hand.

2.2 Legislation and Parliamentary Debate

It is first important to establish the literature, largely legislation and guidelines around it, which draws the line between a legal and an illegal e-bike. Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPCs) were categorised following the Statutory Instrument (*The Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles Regulations 1983*) and amended version (*The Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (Amendment) Regulations 2015*) by limiting their specifications to a certain wattage, and speed. More recent guidance (Department for Transport, 2024) confirms that a legal EAPC must be fitted with pedals that can propel it, have a continuous rated power not exceeding 250 watts, and function so that electrical assistance is cut off by the time it reaches 15.5 miles per hour. In any event, legal EAPCs cannot be used by anyone under the age of 14.

Lord Lucas of Chilworth (1983) debated in Parliament when these regulations were first created that it was purely for the purpose of setting out the “type of machine” that would take advantage of exemptions to MOT vehicle testing, licences, insurance, and safety helmets. Lord Chilworth noted their benefits to the handicapped and their pollution-free bonus to the environment. Potential for criminal exploitation of this fairly new technology does not appear to have been something under consideration by the legislators at the time.

When the aforementioned amendment to the regulations was introduced in 2015, criminal exploitation again does not appear to have been under consideration. Instead, the purpose was to actually make e-bikes more accessible and widely used.

The Minister of State Department for Transport, Baroness Kramer (2015), debated at the time that the amendments were warranted due to “significant improvements to technology” and overly restrictive requirements in the UK. Thusly, the 1985 weight limits for EAPCs were scrapped and the maximum motor power increased from 200 to 250 watts. Baroness Kramer did qualify that there was no evidence from other European countries, where EAPC usage was higher, that they posed any safety risks. Noted advantages were easing of congestion and facilitating goods delivery; no disadvantages were reported.

In more recent years, a flurry of debate around e-bikes has been noticeable in Parliament. Interestingly in terms of the geographical context of my study, the first reference to an EAPC, e-bike, or electric bike in Parliament in the context of nefarious or criminal uses was a question put to the Home Secretary by Jessica Morden MP (2022) who is the MP for Newport East where I am based as a police officer and my own MP. Morden asked what the Government was doing to improve awareness of e-bike use and to support the police in tackling their antisocial use, to which the Home Secretary responded that they would be working with police forces to tackle the inappropriate and criminal use of e-bikes.

Morden made a further motion in December (2022) noting the “alarming trend locally and across the UK” of antisocial and illegal activity on e-bikes, but that Gwent Police was doing what they could to crack down on it with some successful seizures despite noted budget cuts to the police service in the past decade.

Morden led the charge in Parliament again (2024) by motioning for a Bill to require the Secretary of State to commission a review of the legislation and guidance

relating to e-bikes, referencing also the related safety problems of recent years with toxic lithium battery fires occurring once every two days in London in 2023.

Although Parliamentary sources are not necessarily the best literature to reference, in the absence of actual scholarly research from which to draw conclusions for this study, it is a particularly valuable resource for understanding the nature of the issues and what those across the political spectrum are aware of and actively trying to do to improve matters. I am surprised by how little the criminal exploitation of e-bikes has been raised in Parliament, although it is very interesting that it is the MP for Newport East who seems to be leading the charge mostly alone on this issue. It reflects the concerns of Newport constituents and that perhaps Newport is burdened by this issue over and above the rest of the UK.

2.3 Peripheral Studies

An examination of scholarly research available on this topic shows a complete information vacuum where e-bikes overlap with crime. I cannot locate a single piece of research which addresses the objectives of my study.

By far the most prevalent topic of research relating to e-bikes is their road safety implications. There is a very peculiar nexus of research out of China into this topic that is almost the sole home of this specific sub-topic. One literature review (Ma et al., 2019) sought to bring sources of literature together and concluded more than 90% of e-bike traffic accidents were caused by risky riding behaviours, including speeding, running red lights, illegal lane occupation, and cycling contrary to the flow of traffic.

Another Chinese study (Liang, Meng and Zheng, 2021) concluded, after comparing data between accidents involving conventional bicycles and e-bikes with like-for-like or against pedestrians, accidents between e-bikes and pedestrians were high-occurrence events and they exposed pedestrians to the highest injury risks.

Elevated injury risk was investigated by Trichinopoly Krishna et al (2021) as well. They concluded that mandatory helmet legislation for EAPCs should be introduced to mitigate a safety issue that is likely to increase with increased EAPC usage. They stopped short of commenting on how this might be applied in practice in terms of enforcement and that this would presumably be limited to EAPCs and not vehicles which exceed those limits such as adapted “off-road” e-bikes.

It is worth highlighting for my own research that this is an issue which disproportionately affects children and males. An American study (Goodman et al., 2023) found that males accounted for 82.5% of e-bike injuries and the most common age group was 10- to 13-year-olds contributing 44.3% of the injuries noted among children sampled. It is also interesting to note only 2.7% of those who suffered an e-bike injury were wearing a helmet.

Even in peripheral issues around both legal and illegal e-bike use there is a scarcity of research. There is a significant gap in research and a complete vacuum where e-bikes intersect criminality, which has emboldened me even further to undertake this study.

2.4 Use of E-Bikes For Criminal Activity

I cannot identify any official data on the use of e-bikes for criminal purposes. The overwhelming majority of literature on how e-bikes are exploited for crime is from journalism which offers social and political commentary on the issues but offers little more to benefit this study. For that reason, I have decided to only highlight a few of the more significant or interesting articles I have come across.

Parashar (2025) expounded for the Daily Mail on the “epidemic” of theft facing London, where criminals are using e-bikes with dangerous modifications to reach top speeds and remain stealthy.

Bowden (2024) reported on ‘Operation Crush’, an initiative by Hampshire Police particular to repeat offenders who are served with a disposal notice and their vehicle being crushed if they are illegal or being used illegally.

City of London Police (2024) made a press release to announce five illegal e-bikes and e-scooters were seized every week. Between 2022 and 2023 their crackdown on illegal e-bikes had reduced phone snatching offences by 40%.

2.5 Overview of Strategies

The most useful application of my research is likely to be its use as a springboard for recommendations to Gwent Police about effective strategies to combat the issue. An effort has been made to target this aspect of the literature with a view to building on that later in the study.

It is worth noting that any effective strategies against this issue are not necessarily going to be adopted if the budget for it is not available. In April 2025, the Metropolitan Police announced a series of cuts, one of which was a 55% budget reduction to the MO7 taskforce which includes tackling e-bike crime under its remit (Obese-Jecty, 2025).

Calvin Bailey MP (2025) noted in Parliament that e-bikes were a “key enabler of mobile phone theft”. In order to tackle this, he referred to effective work being done by Councillor Jo Blackman; “simple” measures such as ending the off-road sales loophole. This is more relevant to regulation of e-bike sales although police should still be cognizant of these developments.

Also in 2025, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Cycling and Walking (APPGCW) produced a report (APPGCW, 2025) on the threat of illegal e-bikes with recommendations for tackling the risks posed from their unsafe and illegal usage.

One section is very pertinent to my objectives as it gives recommendations for tackling the threat. Some of its recommendations are more relevant to a study of e-bike sales regulations, for instance it recommends ending the “road-legal” loophole whereby illegal vehicles are sold under the guise of being for “off-road use”, and withdrawing unsafe e-bike items from sale immediately (whether they lack appropriate product specification or exceed limits to be considered an EAPC). One sub-section recommends giving police clear powers to act. The APPGCW concluded police needed clearer and faster enforcement powers separate from the Road Traffic Act, as well as the ability to improve police data collection, and encouraged working with Trading Standards to crack down on irresponsible sellers and importers.

Conversely, the charity Wheels for Wellbeing (2025) who campaign for enhanced access to the benefits of cycling for disabled people responded to the APPGCW

report that some of their recommendations aimed at restricting e-bikes would disproportionately impact disabled workers who work in the “gig economy” where e-bike use is prevalent. One of Wheels for Wellbeing’s counterproposals to APPGCW’s report that is relevant to this study is making the purchase of devices that are illegal to use on the highway illegal in itself, absent of any declaration of a legal purpose for which it will be used.

Police resources are a relevant factor to the ability to undertake effective enforcement programs. Nick Smith MP for Blaenau Gwent and Rhymney (2025) which comes under the Gwent policing authority asked the Minister for Policing and Crime Prevention about the problem of e-bikes which are “chipped to go faster and have become a new danger”. The Minister responded that 60 additional officers would be available in Gwent Police to help tackle the antisocial behaviour involving e-bikes and other vehicles. This a rather non-specific answer and does not factor in that these new officers are likely to be general response roles and not dedicated to tackling the issue of e-bikes.

In addition to police resources being a factor for consideration, some police forces have taken to using e-bikes themselves for patrols. This has been implemented on the Isle of Wight (PCC for Hampshire, 2023) to tackle anti-social behaviour and associated crime, be more visible in the community, and respond quicker. There has been a notable uptake in adoption by police departments in the United States as well with reporters in California (Young, 2023) and Virginia (McNeill, 2024) both lauding advantages in engagement and less fatigue among officers on patrol.

Markham (2025) reported on the use of technology to combat the issue, where police could utilise portable electromagnetic pulse (EMP) devices to interfere with the

motor's control circuit thus disabling it. Digital RF (2014) demonstrates the EMP stop in action with an electric car, although the safety implications of its use with e-bikes would undoubtedly require thorough investigation of risk before rolling out.

2.6 Conclusion

I did not anticipate before conducting this literature review that Newport East, my local police station, would be so uniquely at the forefront of political debate on the issue at hand. This has encouraged me even further to undertake the study as there is clearly an appetite within the community and its political leaders to address this issue, and it is one in which Gwent is particularly affected.

The scarcity of literature, particularly scholarly research, on this topic is notable. I think Gwent Police and the rest of the UK police forces would greatly benefit from further studies beyond the purpose of this one, particularly with regard to statistical analyses of how e-bikes are being utilised for crime, and studies into the efficacy of specific proposals such as EMP devices or other technology.

This research topic is clearly a very new issue that society is facing, and it will take time for necessary research to be undertaken, reported, and acted upon. Having only been mentioned in Parliament for the first time in 2022 and the pace at which it has risen to a hot political topic shows how much of an issue this now is and how much the UK as a whole, but particularly Gwent, is in need of solutions.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter of this study identified and analysed the existing literature relating to e-bike usage, its criminal use and the efficacy of current strategies in tackling them. This review highlighted an obvious gap in current research, particularly in relation to the link between e-bikes and crime, emphasising the need for more primary research to explore this area.

This chapter of the research project aims:

To identify and justify an appropriate research approach to investigate e-bike usage, its criminal use and the efficacy of current strategies in tackling them.

Research is defined as “a process of steps used to collect and analyse information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue (Creswell 2008, p.27)”. Throughout this chapter, the framework of the Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2023) will be used to help select the most appropriate research method for this project.

3.1 The Research Onion

The model known as the Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2023) has been chosen to assist in identifying the most appropriate research method. For this dissertation, an interpretivist philosophy, inductive approach, and qualitative strategy have been adopted.

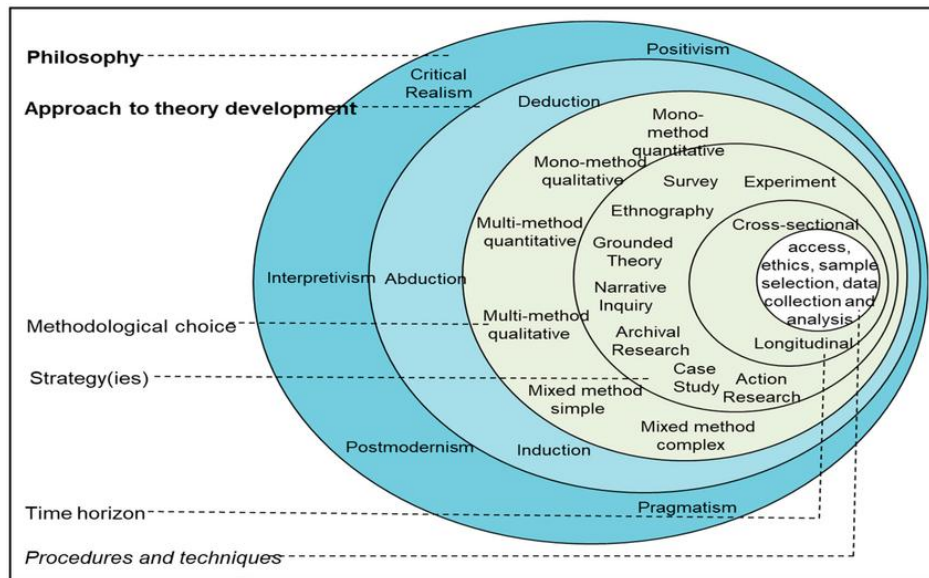


Figure 1.1 – The Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2023)

3.1.1 Research Philosophy

The study adopts an interpretivist philosophy, which assumes that reality is socially constructed and best understood by exploring participants' lived experiences (Bryman, 2016).

Interpretivism is suitable for capturing multiple views, which is significant as this study aims to understand how politicians, senior decision-makers, and police officers perceive and respond to e-bike crime.

3.1.2 Research Approach

In this study, the qualitative data that has been collected will be analysed to identify patterns and potential explanations. This will be conducted using an inductive approach. This approach suits new or developing topics where there is little existing

theory. which makes it more appropriate than deductive research which evaluates established hypotheses (Bryman, 2016; Saunders et al., 2023).

3.1.3 Research Strategy and Choice

This study will adopt a monomethod design, relying entirely on interviews as a source of primary data with the chosen strategy being semi-structured qualitative interviews. This approach will allow participants to provide their insights into the issue and allow the flexibility to of follow-up questions where necessary (Creswell, 2023).

While surveys could reach a larger number of people, this study is exploratory in nature and aims to gather detailed insights from those with direct experience. For that reason, qualitative interviews are a better fit than quantitative methods.

3.1.4 Time Horizon

Although this issue is growing, given the project's scope it is not possible to conduct a longitudinal study, therefore a cross-sectional design is adopted with the data being collected at a single point within the dissertation timeframe.

3.2 Techniques: Data Collection and Analysis

3.2.1 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with three groups of participants:

1. Frontline police officers with experience of e-bike related incidents.
2. Senior officers or officers involved in policy decision making.
3. Local Member of Parliament, who was the first MP to raise the issue of criminal use of e-bikes in Parliament.

Following a flexible question guide, the interviews will be recorded with consent and transcribed for analysis.

3.2.2 Interview Question Matrix

A summary of the interview matrix is provided in the table below, while the full matrix is included in Appendix A.

Objective	Example Questions	Participants
Explore the extent of criminal e-bike use	“How common is the misuse of e-bikes in your area?”	Frontline Officers
Examine policing challenges	“What challenges do you face when tackling offenders on e-bikes?”	Frontline Officers
Evaluate strategies and policies	“What strategies has your force tried, and how effective have they been?”	Senior Officers
Assess political/legislative influences	“Do current laws support or hinder police action against e-bike misuse?”	Senior Officers, MP
Investigate political context	“What prompted you to raise the issue with Parliament?”	MP
Generate recommendations	“If you could change one thing tomorrow, what would it be?”	All Participants

3.2.3 Sampling

Participants will be selected that are directly relevant to the research aims. The expected sample is:

- 4-6 frontline officers in Gwent.
- 2-3 senior officers.
- 1 Member of Parliament (Newport East).

The sample size is suitable for this qualitative study, as the aim is to gain detailed insights from the participants over covering a large number of them.

3.3 Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) developed a six-step process for thematic analysis which will be used to analyse the interview transcripts using the following steps:

1. Familiarisation with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

3.4 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is prioritised within qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) established four elements to achieving trustworthiness in research which are

credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Stahl and King (2020) built on this work with the caveat that the four elements need not always be employed, as long as it is demonstrated that the needs of the consumer of the research are met.

3.5 Limitations

This research study has several limitations. It is important to acknowledge these to avoid straying away from the aims of the research or towards bias (Sumpter et al., 2022).

The findings will not be generalised due to the small, context-specific sample. There may be limited access to participants due to operational demand or political availability. Some responses may be constrained by organizational sensitivities. The researcher's professional role might introduce bias.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

An important aspect of any research study is ethical consideration. It is incumbent on the researcher to ensure that participants are "Safe from harm and protected from unnecessary stress (Cacciattolo, 2015)". To aid with this, in line with university procedures, an ethics form was completed and approved.

To further safeguard and protect participants the following will also be implemented:

- **Informed consent:** Participants will be informed that they can withdraw at any time and fully briefed prior to interviews.

- **Confidentiality and anonymity:** Police officers will be anonymised and data securely stored on password protected devices.
- **Sensitivity:** Care will be taken not to compromise operational security.
- **Voluntary Participation:** No participant will be compelled to contribute.

There are no foreseeable concerns that any participant will be at risk of psychological harm because of this study.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has completed its objective of identifying and justifying an appropriate research approach to this study. By outlining the framework that will be used, it has justified the use of interpretivist philosophy, inductive approach, and semi-structured interviews. The summary question matrix demonstrates the link between research objectives and interview design, with the full version included in Appendix A.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I intend to present the findings from seven semi-structured interviews that I conducted with police officers within Gwent Police. Participants included response officers, neighbourhood policing team sergeants, and inspectors, which provided a range of perspectives.

I have analysed the participants' responses for any emerging themes. The findings set out in this chapter are derived directly from the interview data and, where appropriate, verbatim quotations from the participants are included (see Appendix B for interview transcripts). Participants are referred to anonymously, such as 'P1' for the first participant, and so on.

This chapter presents three main themes I have identified from my review of the data. A critical discussion of the findings, including their implications for future policing strategies, is provided in the following chapter.

4.2 Identified Themes

4.2.1 Theme One: Operational Challenges

The first theme I identified from the interview data derives from the participants' experiences of responding to criminal and antisocial behaviour which feature some element of e-bike usage. This is in contrast to the use of e-bikes as a policing tool

which was discussed more infrequently. Participants highlighted significant operational challenges.

There was a common perception that offenders tend to be very aware of the limitations faced by police when dealing with e-bike users. P1 stated, "*I'm pretty sure criminals know that we're not allowed to follow them*", suggesting criminal e-bike users exploit known constraints of enforcement.

P2 stated, "*Riders of e-bikes will generally be wearing sometimes full-face helmets... at a minimum, they'll be wearing a balaclava*". Participants appear to suggest that the anonymity of such individuals reduces opportunities for immediate intervention and subsequent investigation by police.

Safety concerns arise out of such operational challenges. Participants noted the risk of injury to offenders and other members of the public which restricted options for pursuit. P5 noted, "*We can't really chase after them because we're not allowed to pursue them in most circumstances. We don't want them to fall off and hurt themselves or hurt somebody else*". P6 elaborated on how police had to adapt their approach to e-bikes as a result of the safety concerns, noting they had to "*think outside the box*", such as plane and drone deployments and strategic operations like Operation Harley aimed at detaining the e-bike users while they are static.

Despite the existence of some legal powers, participants expressed frustrations at a gap between legislation and practical enforcement which presented a major operational challenge. P7 stated, "*Powers are there on paper, but they're really hard to enforce... because it's hard to get hold of them*".

Overall, this theme highlights how operational challenges are a significant barrier to fixing the issue.

4.2.2 Theme Two: Officer Training

It emerged from the data that there is likely to be areas of improvement in training and competence of officers on the subject of e-bike policy and strategies.

Several frontline officers reported that guidance had focused more on what could not be done, rather than equipping them with practical tools that could be used. P3 stated, *“All we’ve been told is basically that we obviously can’t pursue them”*. That emphasis on restriction rather than positive actions was echoed elsewhere. This suggests that officers have been left to navigate e-bike incidents without structured support, or that there is at least a common perception of that among frontline officers.

The lack of clarity on policy also extended into more supervisory roles. P4 stated, when asked about Gwent Police’s policies, *“I should be aware of them. I’m sure we have got a strategy in place, some form of policy. I’m not aware of it”*. There appears to be a disconnect between Gwent Police policy-makers and operational awareness for both junior and senior officers.

An absence of training was a recurring point in the data. P6 confirmed that there was not any training that specifically targeted e-bikes. Similarly, P1 reflected that e-bikes had not been addressed in their initial officer training, stating there was *“nothing from a trainer that was specifically around e-bikes... now since we’ve been out and I see how commonly they’re used”*.

Overall, this theme highlights a gap between the increasing prevalence of e-bike use by criminals and the training and guidance provided to officers (both junior and

senior), which is likely to impact the effectiveness of police when responding to such incidents.

4.2.3 Theme Three: Organisational and Legislative Barriers

This theme explores the broader structural and regulatory barriers that were identified by participants. Legislative limitations, organisational barriers, and the wide availability of e-bikes were highlighted by participants across the board.

A prominent concern that emerged was the lack of registration or traceability of e-bikes, P2 stated, *“e-bikes at the moment, a common thing we have is them being unregistered”*. The absence of identifiable ownership in combination with the ease with which offenders can evade the police was a significant barrier to enforcement.

The widespread availability of e-bikes appears to exacerbate the challenges. P5 stated, *“I think you could do with tightening up the sale of bikes, making them harder to sell”*. This view was shared by P6, who said *“nothing’s actually required for you to produce any kind of IDs or anything like that”*.

Further operational barriers are added by the physical environments in which e-bikes are commonly used. The data suggests that offenders frequently exploit areas that are inaccessible to police vehicles. P7 stated, *“The moment they go onto pavements it becomes really tricky for us in vehicles”*. P1 reported uncertainty on how frontline officers are expected to intervene effectively, saying *“There’s not a clear way of how we’re supposed to stop these offenders”*.

In terms of other legislative barriers, P7 suggests there may be a loophole being exploited, stating *“They’re just being sold, as long as they put our legal disclaimer,*

these are for private property, they've got no other legal responsibility...". P5 reflects that the law takes time to catch up with issues and that there is upcoming legislation that may remove some of the current barriers to enforcement.

4.3 Conclusion

In conclusion of my analysis of the seven interviews I conducted with Gwent Police officers, key themes emerged from the data: operational challenges, gaps in officer training and policy awareness, and barriers to enforcement. These insights have highlighted significant issues Gwent Police are facing which should be a good starting point for any person interested in reviewing and creating new strategies for combating this widespread issue.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to meld Chapter 4's findings with the wider evidence and literature available. It interprets what participants' accounts reveal about operational challenges and limitations and the fitness of current legislation in seeking to combat e-bike related offending. It then sets out pragmatic recommendations for Gwent Police and wider policing, acknowledges the research project's limitations and signposts areas where further research would be beneficial.

5.2 Operational Challenges

Interview data from participants suggests a consistent pattern of enforcement constraints in tackling e-bike offending, shaped largely by the following:

- Risks of pursuit – i.e., safety of offenders, officers, and the public
- Impracticality of pursuit – i.e., practical barriers to stop mobile offenders who divert easily into areas inaccessible to police vehicles.

Participants reported taking a cautious approach when the risk of serious injury outweighed the prospect of a successful stop. This picture from the participants appears to be consistent with literature that was previously reviewed in Chapter 2. It is in line with Ma et al (2019) and Liang et al (2021) who demonstrated elevated injury risks in e-bike incidents with pedestrians. This further underlines why the participants' attitudes towards pursuit tended towards restraint. The concentration of injuries among young males reported elsewhere (Goodman et al., 2023) adds some

further context to ethical considerations, suggesting high restraint is the safest approach in areas with high youth footfall.

It has been shown that operational challenges are compounded by offender anonymity (through use of helmets, face coverings, and so on). This limits opportunities to identify offenders and undermines subsequent investigations.

Several of the participants believed that offenders exploited known police restrictions on pursuit, which naturally leads to the erosion of deterrence and damages public perception of police capability. We have seen that some police forces have demonstrated that targeted non-pursuit tactics can disrupt offending with e-bikes. For example, City of London Police (2024) reported weekly seizures of illegal e-bikes and a consequential reduction in phone-snatching incidents, illustrating the potential of intelligence-led and innovative approaches when they are properly funded and implemented. These examples resonate with the participants' desire for clear tactics that balance people's safety with visible results with reduction of crime.

5.3 Officer Training

Participants consistently reported an absence of a force-specific policy and a lack of targeted training on e-bike strategies generally. While Gwent Police's general risk assessment frameworks were well understood, participants felt these did not sufficiently address the distinctive and escalating features of e-bike offending, for example evasion and low identifiability of offenders. This theme resonates with national conversations we have seen calling for clearer powers, standardised guidance and an improvement to data capture to support decision-making and policy creation for frontline officers to follow (APPGCW, 2025). Resource constraints were

a recurrent feature in the interviews, and are also reflected in the wider environment. For instance, parliamentary debate has highlighted significant budget pressures on police units involved in tackling e-bike crime (Obese-Jecty, 2025). These pressures naturally make training an attractive option as it can have a wide impact at a low cost.

There have been examples of innovative training in practice, such as police forces adopting e-bike patrols to enhance visibility and responsiveness. These examples (PCC for Hampshire, 2023; McNeill, 2024), suggest that tactical innovations can align with neighbourhood-policing principles and in both literature and interviews, officers are consistently open to simple and scalable measures, such as the following:

- Short briefings on identifying illegal or modified machines.
- Guidance on capturing evidence when a pursuit is not practical or safe.
- Clarity on pathways for post-incident investigations.

5.4 Organisational and Legislative Barriers

Participants expressed frustration at a perceived gap between powers that exist “on paper” and their usability in practice. Under UK rules, an Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle (EAPC) must have pedals that propel it, a continuous rated power not exceeding 250W and assistance that cuts off by 15.5 mph, and they are exempt from registration, insurance, and licensing requirements (The Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles Regulations 1983; The Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (Amendment) Regulations 2015; and Department for Transport, 2024). However, parliamentary discussions that accompanied these frameworks largely emphasised a positive view

of e-bike development through the lens of accessibility and technological progress in House of Lords debates (Lord Lucas of Chilworth, 1983; Baroness Kramer, 2015), with little to no focus on criminal exploitation until much later (Morden, 2022). The accounts of the participants in this research project suggest that today's criminal misuse of e-bikes – often involving unregistered or modified machines– exposes a regulatory gap.

Recent policy debates have begun to grapple with that gap. Proposals include clearer and faster enforcement powers outside the core Road Traffic Act provisions, improved traceability (for example registration or other identifiers), and other steps to address off-road sales of road-illegal e-bikes (APPGCW, 2025; Bailey, 2025). The participants' experiences provide on-the-ground confirmation of the content of those debates, highlighting why traceability and control on sales matter operationally. Focus should be aimed towards deterring repeat offending and more impactful police powers.

5.5 Public Confidence

Participants were concerned that e-bike offenders' ability to evade police intervention may undermine public confidence and encourage other criminals to exploit such weaknesses. However, visible, intelligence-led operations which aim to seize e-bikes and disrupt criminal activity can conversely demonstrate competence to the public and potentially alter the perceptions of criminals so that they are discouraged from using e-bikes to facilitate their crimes. The positive impact reported alongside e-bikes seizures in the City of London provides a concrete example of how focused efforts can change local crime patterns (City of London Police, 2024). The implication

appears to be not that pursuit is the answer, but a coherent strategy with well-trained officers and innovative tactics. It shows that positive results can be achieved without impacting safety risks.

5.6 Recommendations

Here I seek to set out recommendations that can be considered by Gwent Police and wider police forces to take a multi-faceted approach to tackling e-bike enabled crimes.

5.6.1 Develop a clear force policy and accessible guidance for officers.

Guidance relating to e-bikes that encompasses available legal powers, decision making frameworks, and proportionate tactical options (including non-pursuit disruptions), should be drafted, distributed and regularly reviewed and updated by Gwent Police. Guidance and policies should be provided through concise, quick reference aids that are suitable for briefings and mobile access, with the document containing embedded links to relevant legislation and any other appropriate sources, so that frontline staff can act lawfully and with confidence.

5.6.2 Introduce targeted training.

Gwent Police should provide staff with short, modular units that cover the following:

- Identification of illegal or modified machines.
- Undertaking a dynamic risk assessment in spaces with high footfall.

- Effective evidence capture and pathways for post-incident investigation
- Local diversion and partnership options
- Specific strategies and legal powers

Delivery of such modules can utilise the existing e-learning platform to minimise administrative workload and cost.

5.6.3 Support and promote legislative and regulatory changes.

Ongoing policy work on registration and traceability, controls of sales (including closing off-road use sale loopholes), and clearer enforcement powers can be supported by Gwent Police through PCCs and working in conjunction with national policing bodies.

5.6.4 Expand partnerships and collaborate on problem-solving.

Gwent Police's focus should be on both prevention and disruption. This could be achieved through targeted patrols in high activity areas, engagement with retailers, environmental design considerations (such as to reduce phone-snatching opportunities), and working jointly with Trading Standards on supply chains.

5.6.5 Improve data and its evaluation.

Gwent Police should introduce standardised tagging of e-bike related incidents and outcomes to improve local intelligence and enable future evaluation of interventions. They should then share any learning across teams and regional partners to obtain as

much benefit from the data as possible. This recommendation echoes national calls for better police data on the issue, and it would also potentially provide an evidential basis for future legislative changes (APPGCW, 2025).

5.6.6 *Be innovative.*

Gwent Police could situate itself at the forefront of tackling this issue by taking innovative approaches through use of technology. Budget constraints notwithstanding, there are emerging options to utilise technology such as trialling portable EMP devices (Markham, 2025) or exploring other options for developing technologies.

5.7 Limitations

This research project was conducted within a single police force, with a small sample of serving officers. While this provided rich qualitative insights into the realities of e-bike exploitation on the ground, the perspectives of other interested parties (such as community members or policymakers) were outside the project's scope. The findings naturally reflect the participants' perspectives at a specific point in time.

In terms of methodology, the original plan sought to include an interview with a local MP to provide a policymaker's perspective. However, this interview did not take place as it fell outside the scope of the ethical approval that was granted. In line with ethical guidance, this data source was therefore excluded from the final project.

5.8 Further Research

Comparative studies from other police forces would help to test whether findings are specific to Gwent Police or more systemic. In addition, it would be beneficial to include perspectives of other interested parties.

Future research should also evaluate the impact of new measures (for instance, if controls on off-road sales are introduced), as well as any new technologies that become available, with rigorous testing and ethical scrutiny being an essential component.

5.9 Conclusion

This research has shown that enforcement is often limited not by willingness but by safety-led pursuit policies, operational challenges (offender mobility and anonymity), and legislation that has not fully kept up with the escalation of e-bike crime.

Analysis of existing literature and this project's research data shows a broad alignment between two. The recommendations proposed above are designed to be realistic, scalable, and sensitive to budgeting constraints.

In a rapidly evolving context, the priority should be to equip officers to act confidently and consistently to disrupt crime enabled by e-bikes.

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7 - Appendices

7.1 Appendix A – Question Matrix

Research Objective	Interview Questions	Intended Participant(s)	Rationale
Explore the extent and nature of criminal/antisocial use of e-bikes	- How common is the criminal or antisocial use of e-bikes in your area? - What types of offences do you most often see involving e-bikes? - How do offenders typically use e-bikes to facilitate crime or evade police?	Frontline officers	To gather first-hand operational accounts of misuse.
Examine challenges faced by police	- What challenges do you face when tackling offenders on e-bikes? - Do you feel you have the necessary tools, powers, or resources? - Have you received any specific training or guidance?	Frontline officers	To identify operational and organisational barriers.
Evaluate policies and strategies	- Has your force developed strategies for e-bike related crime? - What strategies have worked well or poorly? - Have you considered initiatives from other forces? - Do you see benefits in police e-bike patrols?	Senior officers	To compare approaches across forces and assess effectiveness.
Assess influence of legislation, resources, and politics	- How significant is e-bike crime compared with other priorities? - What roles do budget and resources play? - Does current legislation support or hinder policing? - What policy changes would you like to see?	Senior officers, MP	To explore constraints and opportunities at structural and political levels.
Investigate local/national political context	- What prompted you to raise the issue in Parliament? - What feedback have you had from constituents? - Do you think there is a gap between public concern and government action? - How should MPs and councils support police?	MP	To capture political drivers and public concerns.
Generate recommendations	- What measures would be most effective in reducing e-bike related crime? - If you could change one thing tomorrow, what would it be? - Is there anything we haven't discussed that you think is important?	All participants	To inform practical and strategic recommendations for policing.

7.2 Appendix B – Interview Transcripts

7.2.1 Appendix B1 – Participant 1 Transcript

[Interviewer]

So the first question is how common is a criminal or antisocial use of e-bikes in your area?

[Participant]

Yeah, so it's very common I'd say in Newport. Obviously most calls we're going to you at least see one Sur-Ron, just e-bike in general, doing whatever they want. Criminals on them seem to be quite smart as well in the sense that they know that we're not going to follow them, not going to chase them, especially if they don't have a helmet. So they use that to their benefit really.

[Interviewer]

So you're saying then you'll see e-bikes at calls that don't directly involve e-bikes, but just random calls you go into then you're seeing e-bikes popping up as well?

[Participant]

Yeah, so just like when we're on mobile patrol, if we're going down Chepstow Road, you see them a lot, Aberthaw Road I believe it's called, see them just driving along.

[Interviewer]

What types of offences do you most often see that involve e-bikes?

[Participant]

I think it's mainly just driving antisocially, driving in a manner that falls below what's expected really. You see them popping wheelies, obviously driving without proper gear, and then obviously you get them off road as well.

[Interviewer]

Do you go to many calls where e-bikes have actually been involved in an offence?

Or are these just observations you have whilst you're, like on mobile patrol?

[Participant]

I wouldn't say we go to that many calls involving e-bikes. I think recently I can think of one call I've been to where a boy was knocked off his e-bike on the road by a car, but apart from that I can't really think of any other calls I've been to.

[Interviewer]

How do offenders typically use e-bikes to facilitate crime or evade police?

[Participant]

Obviously they, they're quite smart on their e-bikes, they know they can get places where the police cars can't. They're obviously quite fast as well, so if we're on foot we've got no chance of catching them. They don't have any number plates or anything like that, so we can't run them through to see where they're registered to. A lot of them I'm sure aren't even registered to be honest.

[Interviewer]

That brings me on to the next question, which is what challenges do you face when you're tackling offenders on e-bikes?

[Participant]

Well yeah, obviously with all the health and safety that's involved, there's not a clear way of how we're supposed to stop these offenders on e-bikes, especially without having blue lights as well, not as if I can try to pull them over or anything like that and, obviously they can just get away much easier than we can stop them.

[Interviewer]

Do you feel that you've got the necessary tools, powers or resources?

[Participant]

No, not really. Any time I see an e-bike it's normally just general Obs in the area, because we're not supposed to chase anyone anyway, and then they'll just keep going. I'm pretty sure criminals know that we're not allowed to follow them.

[Interviewer]

So have you received any specific training or guidance on tackling e-bikes?

[Participant]

Honestly no, not that I remember. Nothing from a trainer that was specifically around e-bikes. It's more of an issue that I didn't really think about whilst I was in training, but now since we've been out and I see how commonly they're used, it would obviously be something that would be helpful to know about whilst in the initial training period.

[Interviewer]

What measures would be most effective in reducing e-bike related crime?

[Participant]

I think it'd just be stronger powers in order to stop them or prevent them. Obviously being able to not pursue but even follow them might help to find maybe an address

or someone involved, because at the moment there's not really much we can do about that.

[Interviewer]

So if you could change one thing tomorrow regarding e-bikes, what would it be?

[Participant]

I think it'd just be enabling us to have more chances in order to catch whoever's on them. At the minute, I know there's obviously quite a big risk involved with potentially catching an offender using an e-bike, but I think there needs to be a higher threshold for what we can do in order to try and combat the issue.

[Interviewer]

Is there anything that we haven't discussed that you think is important related to e-bikes?

[Participant]

No, I think that's been covered quite well.

7.2.2 Appendix B2 – Participant 2 Transcript

[Interviewer]

How common is the criminal or antisocial use of e-bikes in your area?

[Participant]

Well, I would say it is incredibly common. Because we work in an area where drug supply is very, very high, and criminals, I find, often make use of e-bikes as a way of facilitating this drug supply.

So that's sort of like the criminal element, I sort of say for that. And the antisocial element as well, I say again, that is very, very high, it's highly linked to the criminal side.

But it's more the high speed that they're riding around. Weaving in and out of traffic. Being a general nuisance to members of the public.

And just being generally just antisocial in their use of these e-bikes, e-scooters. All of that sort of stuff. We get plenty of calls involving these types of vehicles.

Unfortunately, there's not much we can do in the short term. Which is potentially increasing how common it is for the use of these bikes. But I would say they're very, very common for criminal use.

And there's definitely an antisocial element then that is, I would say personally, directly linked to the criminal use.

[Interviewer]

So what types of offences do you most often see involving e-bikes?

[Participant]

So, it sort of links in a little bit with my answer to question one. I think the most common offences that we would associate with the use of e-bikes is the drug supply. It's what people are using them for.

They're generally untraceable. And things like that. However, I think the most common offences that we see with people using e-bikes is committed by every single person using them.

And those are the traffic offences. So, it's a mechanically propelled vehicle that they're riding on a road. Therefore, they need to have the appropriate insurance policy in place.

And they also need to have an appropriate licence in order to ride them. Now, these individuals, they do not have insurance. They do not have the appropriate licences to ride them.

The vehicles aren't registered. They don't display any vehicle registration markers, VRMs. No number plates. So, there's a whole plethora of traffic offences that have been committed by every single person who rides one.

Even if they're not involved in drug supply. But I would say the most commonly associated crimes with the use of e-bikes would be your drug supply.

[Interviewer]

How do offenders typically use e-bikes to facilitate crime or to evade the police?

[Participant]

So, it comes down to, again, with traceability. So, e-bikes, generally speaking, do not have VRMs associated with them. So, that means that they're not traceable by technology available to us, such as active number plate recognition, ANPR.

But they are also, they're a lot more nimble than vehicles that we currently have available to us. So, they can get down smaller paths, they can make tighter turns, they can do things quicker.

So, they're very, very handy for criminals to get away, and it's that ease of use. They're also a lot easier to steal. So, it could be very, very easy for one crime to be committed, and then criminals get away on an e-bike that they have then stolen due to the ease of how they are to steal.

When it comes to evading police, we've also got a bit of an issue at the moment where the offenders feel that they're untouchable on e-bikes. Because they know that the chances of us wanting to initiate a pursuit when they're not wearing helmets, we don't know the ICI, as we say, the identity, the capability, and the intention of that person. It's all very, very sort of unknown.

So, I think they use the e-bikes in that way to evade police as they know that we're potentially not going to be prepared to take that risk.

[Interviewer]

Okay. So, what challenges do you face when tackling offenders on e-bikes?

[Participant]

So, personally, in investigations I've been involved with, it comes down to a sense, again, of anonymity. Riders of e-bikes will generally be wearing sometimes full-face helmets, but generally, at a minimum, they'll be wearing a balaclava. They're riding around very, very fast, which means being able to identify somebody. You don't have

that much time, and again, when they're wearing a balaclava, it can make it incredibly difficult to identify them.

And again, touching back to an answer on a previous question, it is our risk assessments when we are thinking about pursuing them. A lot of the riders said, we don't know the ICI, they're maybe not wearing a helmet, which means a pursuit, which is inherently dangerous anyway, becomes even more dangerous.

And you've only got to look in the news at certain high-profile cases, such as the one in Ely, where officers were alleged to have been pursuing two boys on an e-bike, which unfortunately resulted in their death. Of course, it turned out that the officers weren't pursuing them. However, it is again down to that public perception as well.

I don't think, as police, we're willing to take that risk for that. So, I'd say that would be the biggest challenge that we have.

[Interviewer]

Okay. So, do you feel that you have the necessary tools, powers or resources?

[Participant]

So, as a response police officer, I would say at the moment, no. But again, that's probably because of my job role, and it's maybe not necessarily something that I

would necessarily be focussing on. However, if we were to be looking down the lines of a specialist department, a roads policing team or roads policing unit, I think that yes, we do have the necessary tools.

We have use of stinger, we have use of stop-stick. Powers, again, it's exactly the same powers as if we were stopping a vehicle. It is a mechanically propelled vehicle at the end of the day, so whether it be car, motorbike or in this case an e-bike.

So, the powers exist. So, I think we do have the powers. And resources, I would say yes, we do have sufficient resources.

Again, if you're on a roads policing team, if you are specially trained in pursuit or maybe tactical pursuit and containment, otherwise known as TPAC. And it's those teams then that can make use of the tools that we have, like I said, the stinger, the stop-stick, the faster cars, the high-performance cars. We have the powers there.

We've got section 163, you know, require a vehicle to stop. And if a vehicle fails to stop, it doesn't differentiate between a car, a motorbike or an e-bike. It's exactly the same offence, it's all there.

So, I think yes, as a police force, we do have the necessary tools, the necessary powers and the necessary resources. I think it's just about actually being able to use them.

[Interviewer]

Have you received any specific training or guidance in relation to tackling e-bikes?

[Participant]

So, I am a response driver, which means I have the ability to utilise blue lights on police vehicles, and I also have the three exemptions in law. Now, with regards to specific training or guidance, I am not authorised to pursue vehicles, whether that be an e-bike, car or motorbike. And the guidance is that if I was to instruct a vehicle to stop by activating my blue lights, if they fail to stop, then I am to abort immediately.

Because once they fail to stop, they are then aware that they have to, they are required to stop and they're choosing not to. At that point, then it becomes a pursuit and I'm not trained to do that. So, I've not been given the training to pursue, which means that I then have the specific guidance given to me to say, turn all your lights off, turn the other way, so that nobody can then say that you pursued them in the event that anything was to happen.

[Interviewer]

Okay. In your opinion, what measures would be most effective in reducing e-bike related crime?

[Participant]

So, personally, I think we need to go right to the source. E-bikes at the moment, a common thing that we have is them being unregistered. However, I feel that e-bikes should be registered, just like vehicles such as cars and motorbikes.

I know that can be a little bit difficult, you know, managing that, the administration that it would need. However, I think that that basic thing of registering that bike and then being able to trace the owner and having some sort of like owner traceability, just like you have with a V5 document. So, in the event that we seize them or find them, we're then able to attribute them to somebody a lot easier.

And that will then help us when it comes to having, say, persons in custody or conducting an investigation. We can then have access to records that will be able to help us identify who it is that actually owns these bikes. Because at the moment, anybody can say, no, it's not mine.

I don't own it. And that can be quite a challenge then in attributing that bike to that person when we want to attribute it all to one crime. So, yeah, I would say that would be effective.

The next measure I would say would be effective is not being scared to pursue. I think that, of course, policing, we've got to be able to police without fear or favour. Now, I understand that the risk associated with pursuing somebody without a helmet is, of course, inherently increased.

However, they are riding around like this on a day-to-day basis anyway. And I think that having the ability then to pursue, being able to tell other officers in the area

where these people are, so we can utilise those tools that we have, such as Stinger, in order to be able to bring the pursuit to a safe conclusion. I think we need to be able to have that.

So not being worried about that risk assessment, carrying on and working as a team to come together and tackle them, gathering intelligence, listening to the community if they say that there's bikes travelling around in particular areas. Is that going to be a storehouse around there that we can potentially get a warrant to and raid? So I'd say those are the most effective ways, I think, in being able to reduce crime with e-bikes.

[Interviewer]

Thank you. So, if you could change one thing tomorrow in relation to tackling e-bikes, what would it be?

[Participant]

So, I would like to see an operation being formed. A targeted operation that focusses on e-bike crime, because at the moment I don't think we've got anything like that. And having specialist officers, such as from roads policing teams, who are able to be out there, proactively looking for these bikes, working with intelligence that people are submitting to us, and taking a proactive step in tackling them.

So yeah, and that team then may be able to be specialists in gaining those warrants. They would be able to have time dedicated to it. So yeah, I would certainly like to see a team being formed to be a central hub for dealing with e-bikes.

[Interviewer]

Is there anything we haven't discussed that you think is important in relation to e-bikes?

[Participant]

I don't think so. I think we've discussed quite a lot in regards to the trouble that they cause, the crimes they're associated with, how I feel they could be best dealt with going forward. But what I do think though, is I think that a study into the tackling of e-bike crime is going to be very, very beneficial to police forces.

Because that will then hopefully identify areas where more research can be conducted, so we can have that little bit of a groundwork to begin with, before going out there then on the streets. And I think as well, it will really, really help potentially in getting funding. So having that study, having a study here for the tackling of e-bike crime, will hopefully then be able to get a little bit of funding in place to show that actually this is a big issue, and this is something that people want solving.

But at the moment it doesn't seem we've got enough here. But yeah, thank you ever so much.

7.2.3 Appendix B3 – Participant 3 Transcript

[Interviewer]

How common is the criminal or antisocial use of e-bikes in your area?

[Participant]

Very common, it's something I see on a daily occurrence basically.

[Interviewer]

So, what types of offences do you most often see involving e-bikes?

[Participant]

Hmm, that's a good question. I don't know... I haven't necessarily... Just dangerous driving, um, going straight through red lights, umm and yeah just making off from police basically by going through parks and alleyways and stuff, that's what makes it difficult for us. But yeah just reckless driving basically, without due care and attention.

[Interviewer]

So, how do offenders typically use e-bikes to facilitate crime or to evade police?

[Participant]

Yeah, that's the thing. They use them to evade police basically because they're fully aware now, I think, that we can't stop them and we just basically have to pass observations to see where they're going. As soon as they make off down a field or through, like I said, an alleyway, they know they can get away unless NPAS can assist us, but that's never really the case.

[Interviewer]

So, what challenges do you face when tackling offenders on e-bikes?

[Participant]

Well, most of the time they're all covered up, so we don't know who they are, where the bikes are being stored, there's no registrations on them to try and identify them or link them to certain people, you know. They're just getaway vehicles that we can't track or trace basically.

[Interviewer]

Do you feel that you have the necessary tools, powers or resources?

[Participant]

Definitely don't have the necessary resources to deal with them. Yeah, like I said earlier, we can only pass obs when we see them, we can't engage in any sort of

pursuit. I know recently that NPT have been doing some operations involving NPAS to try and capture these vehicles, but apart from that we are pretty much hopeless unless there happens to be an RPSO unit available to assess.

But, like I said, resources are very low at the moment, so that provides its own challenges.

[Interviewer]

Have you received any specific training or guidance in relation to e-bikes?

[Participant]

No, to be honest. Well, no, we haven't. All we've been told is basically that we obviously can't pursue them, but in terms of any training or anything that's been provided, no.

[Interviewer]

So, what measures would be most effective in reducing e-bike related crime?

[Participant]

Hmm, that's a good question. Measures, I'd probably say realistically the only thing we can do is try and put on more of these operations whereby, you know, you have units going out maybe like on overtime or, you know, on rest days that there could be some sort of operation. But the best way to deal with it from our point of view would

definitely be undercover sort of things, so non-marked vehicles, maybe wearing civil clothing.

That would be the best way to try and tackle the issue and just try and intercept them whilst out and about in the estates because, you know, they can obviously see us coming in our police cars and everything. But if we would go in civvies, I think we'd have more of a chance. And obviously, like I said, the use of NPAS was helpful, but I know that's rather expensive.

But yeah, I understand why we're not allowed to pursue them because of the dangers and risks involved. And that's not something I can really argue with. I know you'd have to be advanced drivers to try and deal with that situation.

But yeah, I just feel maybe more operations and more tactics in the sense that we're in civil clothing and marked vehicles to try and catch them out.

[Interviewer]

So, if you could change one thing tomorrow, what would it be?

[Participant]

In regards to catching the e-bikes? If I could change one thing, I would say, yeah, just more of what I mentioned earlier in regards to the operations and stuff. Because I know, obviously, the risk involved with pursuing, so I can't see that becoming an option.

But just more operations and more tactics in that sense, really. Just using neighbourhood, gathering intel and then, yeah. Like I said, if you walked around in civil clothing and went to the local estates and stuff, I can probably guarantee you'd see a couple of e-bikes over the space of like, you know, an afternoon shift or, but yeah.

Just probably organised, you know.

[Interviewer]

And is there anything we haven't discussed that you think is important in relation to e-bikes?

[Participant]

No, like I've obviously heard that different countries are dealing with them in different ways by bringing out new technology to like stun the bikes and stuff. But I can't imagine that would ever be available to us in Gwent, to be honest, due to financing and resources. But no, nothing really I wish to add, basically.

7.2.4 Appendix B4 – Participant 4 Transcript

[Interviewer]

The first question is, has your force developed strategies for e-bike related crime that you're aware of?

[Participant]

I should be aware of them. I'm sure we have got a strategy in place, some form of policy. I'm not aware of it as I'm obviously a response inspector.

I don't tend to get involved so much in that area of business, it's more NPT related. So it hasn't been highlighted to me, but there would more than likely be a strategy on it.

[Interviewer]

Are you aware of strategies that have worked well or poorly in tackling e-bikes?

[Participant]

No, I wouldn't know anything about that. Again, it's NPT focus really, which I haven't been involved in. So in the response world, unless it's reactive to a call or an incident, then we wouldn't specifically be proactive in trying to target them.

[Interviewer]

Do you see benefits in policing e-bike patrols? So that's the police using e-bikes to patrol streets and tackling...

[Participant]

I don't know enough about that field really to be able to give you a comprehensive answer on it. I know it has been, it's starting to be used more and more within the Met and other forces as well. I know South Wales is starting to utilise e-bikes as well.

It's probably an efficient way in trying to tackle people using them and trying to locate people. But I just don't have enough knowledge in this area to be able to give any comprehensive ground whether we should adopt that use in Gwent and how much of an issue and problem it is within Gwent itself.

[Interviewer]

So in relation to e-bike crime, and we're looking at crime that's enabled by, facilitated by the use of e-bikes, etc. How significant is this sort of crime compared with other priorities within the force?

[Participant]

It's a significant crime because as you said it's associated with serious crime such as robberies, thefts, things like that which are obviously related to the use of e-bikes. It enables them to commit crime and it's a clear problem for us within our force but a lot

of other forces. The Met is a prime example of how effective offenders use e-bikes to actually target victims and then make off really quickly.

So it is a significant problem and it's an escalating problem as well. Has it been used to significant effect at the moment in Gwent? I haven't heard it so much.

It is probably occurring but not at the level of certain forces which have big cities.

Cardiff is a prime example and obviously London. It's probably an escalating issue for us which we've got to start tackling and addressing which has probably been on the radar of SMTs.

For me, yeah, have we seen a significant rise in it? Without the data I wouldn't know really. It is a serious crime and it's obviously enabling them to commit more crime so it's something which needs to be tackled.

[Interviewer]

What role do budget and resources play in tackling e-bike crime?

[Participant]

In terms of resourcing, it's something for more proactive departments, NPTs, who are able to come up with strategies, formulate plans to be able to deal with them. It is vital that we resource it to be able to tackle the crime. If that's whether we start to use e-bikes more often to be able to address it then that's something we probably need to do and that will cost money.

But it's probably worth investing money and time to be able to address it if it's becoming an escalating problem. You see it with the e-bikes, you see it with the Sur-Rons or whatever they're called. They're becoming more powerful, they're becoming quicker.

You can see it when you're driving around when I drive around Cardiff, especially when we're doing 20 mile an hour zones. They're speeding past you and it's just so easy to make off on them and then to go off-road and then be gone. And it's frustrating, it is when you see them out there, it's frustrating.

So it is something I think we need to invest money and resource into.

[Interviewer]

Thank you. So does current legislation support or hinder policing of e-bikes?

[Participant]

I don't know enough about it. Obviously it's illegal to use them on roads. So how would we remedy that if we're going to utilise them as an organisation?

I don't know.

[Interviewer]

I know you're not directly involved in the policing of e-bikes, but what policy changes would you like to see with regards to policing them?

[Participant]

Again, I don't have enough knowledge in what specific policies relate to the use of e-bikes. And whether we change our approach or have to change what's in our policy to become more effective, I don't know.

[Interviewer]

And do you have any idea on what measures would be most effective in reducing e-bike related crime?

[Participant]

Just effective targeting. So where are they most likely to use the e-bikes, where is crime taking place, where are the hotspots? Targeting those specific locations, who the offenders are using most, targeting them, being proactive around locating them.

I'm sure there will be a lot of approaches that we can take to be more effective in it.

Seeing what other organisations do, how does South Wales police it more effectively, maybe adopting things that they do. The Met, they would probably be the best at this.

You can't knock them off their bikes unfortunately, so that would be the one thing I would do. It would definitely be the most effective.

[Interviewer]

If you could change one thing tomorrow regarding policing e-bikes, what would that be? Presumably knocking them off their bikes.

[Participant]

Yeah, well if I could change one thing that we could do in terms of our approach, probably invest more time and resource into it. To be able to understand the problem, map out the issue, how often is the e-bike actually being used, how often are they using it in crimes within Gwen. And then investing time and resource into managing it and dealing with it.

But again, this isn't a remit that we're highlighted to. Most response inspectors won't know what our data looks like around this. Maybe that's something that we should get better at doing in terms of sharing our data around the use of e-bikes and how much of an impact it is having on communities in Gwent.

[Interviewer]

Thank you. And the last one, is there anything that we haven't discussed that you think is important in relation to this?

[Participant]

No, probably more knowledge around this field would be good, because it is an escalating issue.

7.2.5 Appendix B5 – Participant 5 Transcript

[Interviewer]

The first question is, has your force developed strategies for e-bike related crime?

[Participant]

I would say there's no real overarching strategy. It's left down to the local NPTs really to do their own thing. There's a national strategy, which is there's a national meeting that I attend on behalf of one police, which looks at how to deal with, and they call like e-mobility crime. So that's the use of bikes, electric bikes, scooters, and they're involved in crime. So that's a national meeting. So as I come to the National Police Chief Council, I take part in. And if there's any learning from that, then I can obviously feed down through to sort of like the other NPTs. And they look at the legislation, so how to sort of improve legislation on e-bikes to reduce the amount of them out and about. Tactics, so what we're looking at tactical, how we tactically deal with off-road bikes, if you like pursuits and tactical contacts and that sort of stuff. And then technology, how we're looking at improving technology to deal with them. So then there's talk of like a I mean, like a sort of a machine that can stop the battery without so bashing that will catch them, you can stop them, you can cut the battery off, so they will stop them. So there's all that, so that's a sort of a quarterly meeting that I go to, but I think there's like an up order somewhere in the force. There used to be a, there used to be a, I used to lead with another inspector and sergeant about six years ago, and then it got through in Newport. We've got an operational action plan for the whole force about five or six years ago. So I'm not sure if there's a

overarching strategy now per se, but there's certainly a national one that we feed into, if that makes sense.

[Interviewer]

So the strategies that we've been using, which have worked well and which have worked poorly.

[Participant]

Well, we, we tend, what we do, what we do in my team, and I think it's sort of replicated across the other parts of the force, is that we look at, we do like planned operations where we go out in mass and we look to try and stop the bikes. We do a mixture of plainclothes patrols and high-vis patrols. and we then try and go to areas where the bikes are being used. And we know that through our own intelligence, really. We go out and like plain cars and we just try and get into an area where we think we can stop the bikes we can, the downside is obviously the world where we've not, you know, we fell before is that we can't really chase after them because we're not allowed to pursue them in most circumstances. We don't want them to fall off and hurt themselves or hurt somebody else. So we've got to try and detain them when they're on stop. And that means go to areas where they're either driving or riding quite slowly or where they are, they're stopped. They're meeting people and everything like that. So which is quite difficult because we, the time that they know our vehicles, they know our faces, they know our cars, so they can see us coming a long way. Then they go off and chase, then they go and ride. and it's difficult then to chase them. They will actually want the police to chase them. So when we've done

like patrols or operation of that, it hasn't been too successful. However, we used the drone earlier this year. So every operation we do now, we try and get a drone operator to come out. And what that means, we can get the drone up and they can follow the bikes out or something to go anywhere near them. So a lot of the offenders don't know that they've been followed, drone can then follow them to a location where they either stopped or they go into a house or a garden and then they can call the officers in and we can seize the bike off them when they're actually stopped or off the bike, and we've had quite a bit of success with that where the drones have done the work for us. It just means that we don't have to start chasing after them and then once they know we're there and then they just go to ground then. So that's quite good. And then we used the NPAS plane in September where that we can use, and we were the first ones in Gwent to use that. So we had a plane come down and they're better than the drone because they can stay up for longer. They can step overhead for about 6 hours. They fly quite high. And they've got an observer on there and it's all video recording and they can guide us in. So we're able to arrest a couple of people there for drug offences when they were using the bikes and the plane was able to follow them back to the house and pull the officers in. So that was really successful. So We found with air support, it makes it a lot easier for us to catch the bikes. We also had some success in seizing bikes of warrants and drug warrants. So if we do, if we come across them in our travels, then we will, we will seize the bikes there. A lot of the time it's just a little bit of luck where we're out and about and we see them, they don't see us coming in the dark, whatever, and we grab them there and we seize the bikes there. We used to see them under section 59 and then, but unfortunately we'd have to get the bikes back. So we see them under no insurance now when the bikes get crushed, basically. So we've done some

work with vehicle recovery to make sure they don't, they don't, you know, they don't get the bikes back. We've done some sort of videos of the bikes being crushed and sent those out as messages. We always publicise what we do. Nearly every bike we seize we put on Facebook. All the operations that we do, we always put on Facebook and just get good traction. Public seem to like it. So we do get a lot of people watching it. So now hopefully then that feedback in with people with that reporting to us. We work with like we work with different partners. So social housing, we work with them. They should let us know if they see, if they know, any of their tenants with bikes and where they've been stored. We want public to give us a shout as well. Who's riding them where they've been stored, so we can again, stops us having to chase after them. And that's it really, it's quite simple stuff. That's the only real way that we're going to get the bikes off these kids. You know, there's education goes on, there's school work that goes on, you know, try and give them the warnings of bikes. But some of these kids, especially in Newport... They're not just... there's two different types of off-road bike obviously. There are the ones who are near enough law-abiding people, but they go and use off-road bikes and go over the moorland, common land, go through woods, and they're doing this as a bit of a leisure pursuit. And in relation to that, we will try and work with the landowners a little bit and block off places, so where we get reports of bikes being used in those sort of areas, and we'll have a look with the landowner farm owners and see what you can do. Can you block that area, they're going through that way, can you put a stone there? can you put a hedge there? So we've done a bit of that in the past. We work with the council about putting calming measures down when we can, but sometimes they're quite reluctant to do that because of cost and also we need to make sure that there's disabled people with mobility, people with mobility issues can get through, so

you can never really completely gate off an area. And then, but the ones in Newport, the ones with the Sur-Rons, the e-bikes, the ones that ride like 50 miles an hour with balaclavas on, they're, most of them, are drug dealers, they're using it to actually pursue their criminal activity. So there's two types. So most of the people, we stop on e-bikes. They usually run off if we can catch them, they usually got drugs on them. And then we try and charge them and take them out of circulation, dealing with the drug offences. So there's two different types. And in the west of the force, you're finding that in Caerphilly and Blanda Gwen, it's almost exclusively off-road biking on the moorlands and the hills and the valleys. But in Newport, it's more the kids on bikes who are involved in criminality.

[Interviewer]

Have you considered initiatives from other forces?

[Participant]

Yeah, as I said, we're on this national thing. It's on the national meeting where best practice is always raised. So we do take part in that. So I can, you know, any updates on technology. I know there's legislation, new legislation being brought in. There's discussions about technology and also improving our tactics. So that's the work ongoing. So we feed into that. We do, we have done benchmarking with other forces. We've got some replies with other forces. Again, they do pretty similar, really. They just do operations in areas, trying to catch them when they can. We can use smart water spray. We've had, so if we can't catch them, but we put smart water spray on them so if we come across them again, we know they're the ones on our

bike. So we've got that from under the force. Merseyside are a lot more robust with the off-road bikes, and they'll have tactical contact with them because their off-road bikers are the ones who have committed firearm offences, a lot of their murders, a lot of their drug OCG criminality, are people on e-bikes, so they've got a little bit more of rationale then to go and be a bit more forceful. Well, in fact, we haven't got that in Newport, so, yeah, we do. we do link in with other forces. I say that forum that I attend is a good way of doing it, really.

[Interviewer]

I have seen some other forces implementing e-bikes themselves and officers using them. So, do you see benefits in police using e-bikes for patrols?

[Participant]

I know they do in South Wales. I don't know what I don't know how much success they've had with that. I would... I'm not overly for it, I think it just may cause more issues than it's worth really. If we start, if we're going to, if we're going to go on e-bikes, then what we're, I'm assuming what the aim of that is that we will go into areas of vehicles and people can't go. So we'll end up then riding up pavements or riding along, you know, through housing estates to try and catch these people, because otherwise what's the point of having them? But I think that would end up being a bit dangerous really, and they will then, the kids, would get wind of that and they would enjoy the chase. So you're still in a situation where you have to chase after them, I think it's a lot better if we use our support to follow them to a location. They've got to stop eventually, follow them to a location and then get the troops in to catch them

when they're actually static. There's a risk assessment now, we've got a risk assessment when it comes to bikes. So we follow that, and the risk assessment is that we should, when we approach them, we should, we should be in uniform. We should disclose that we're police officers, which makes it a bit more difficult, so I don't, yeah, I just think it will end up being, we'll end up someone injuring themselves, they'll end up enjoying the chase and we still won't be in a situation really where we can adequately stop them. I think we need to have a look at other methods, as I say, air support, having people in areas where we know they stop, because we know these kids are hanging around. Locations outside shops... as long as we've got enough staff, you can grab them. I think when it comes to off-road bikes on the valleys and the moorland and the farmland up in the north, then perhaps have an off-road vehicle or off-road bike capability to get up to there and then engage with these people, maybe different and maybe beneficial because you would think that a lot of people out there are a little bit more receptive and what have you and it's quite a lot out of the way. So to get access to the areas where they go, you might need a couple of off-road bikes. So I wouldn't say no to like, that's an off-road bike capability, but I wouldn't say at the moment I wouldn't push for e-bikes.

[Interviewer]

So how significant is e-bike crime compared with other priorities within Gwent?

[Participant]

Well, we get more complaints about people on e-bikes than we do anything else really from the public. They see it, you know, they see all the kids all masked up, you

know, in dark clothing, you can't see them in the night, going through red lights, driving on pavement. So it just looks, it gives an impression of a bit of lawlessness. And often they go by police cars, they drive by police cars, and people go, well, what are you doing about this? They see that we're sort of complicit in it a little bit. So we do get a lot of complaints about off-road bikes. Priority wise, it's definitely a priority for my team. we will run operations now. We haven't done, we tend to do less during the winter because they are less prevalent, but from after Christmas now we'll end up doing, try and get a couple of them to try to do at least two a month where we'll have the operation, so it is a priority. The crime, we say the crime that they associated with in Newport is more to do with drug dealing. Touch wood, we haven't had a massive, we don't have the situation where there's lots of violence, firearms, but they are, the crime that they're associated with in Newport is obviously drug supply, which is obviously very significant and is a massive priority for us. So when we do like the enforcement, not just on the days of the off-road bikes, but also through warrants and that sort of stuff, then seizing bikes is one of our main aims, really. So yeah, I do I think, yeah, it's definitely a priority and it's definitely significant, but we don't have that. We're not finding that they're connected at the moment with like robberies or more violent crime. I think we get the old one. It's more to do with the drug supply that they're being used for, where they used to be on pedal cycles and foot, now they're zipping around on these bikes.

[Interviewer]

So, what role do budget and resources play in tackling e-bike crime.

[Participant]

Yeah, resources is a problem because as I say, we need them. When you do an operation, you love officers to do it. There's no point just going out with like a couple of plain cars or a couple of marked cars because you need people to go to different areas. So that's why we only run one or two a month really, because we haven't got the staff, I've only got 4 PCs on my team. Yes, so resourcing is, that's always difficult. So we, so when we do plan, we, with my 4 PCs, we get support from other neighbourhood teams. So we always tend to help each other. So I'll get, I'll get support from the centre on the town and also Newport West to get as many officers out as we can, get support from the rural crime team. So they will come out and they will help us with the drones, get support from occasionally the Serious Organised Crime team will come out and help with us as well. RPSO, so we know we plan these days, we do get support, but then we will go over to other areas and support them. Cost/budget wise, we do get money, we can get money through the level 1 tasking for over time and budgets if we need extra officers to come in. I have got a budget for off-road bikes, so I've got people, so if I do need, it's not a great deal of money, but if I need people to come in and work a bit of extra time, or if they work on enough to get an arrest, then we can use that budget. Well, ideally, what we could do is we could get a bit more money from budget and help from partners, really. I know, over in the West Caerphilly, did provide like 2 CSOs at one point and a vehicle for them to just deal with off road bikes. I don't think they do anymore, but we've never had that in Newport. So if we could get some support and funding from other agencies to provide like, you know, a drone, maybe, you know, then of course you've got to get trained up to do it, and there's limited licensing, the force doesn't want a lot of people trained to do it because they've got to get refreshers and the cost of it. So

at the moment, the only people trained are the Rural Crime Team and RPSO, so if we do want a drone, we've got to go out and ask for that, which is a bit frustrating, but that's the way it is. NPAS, when the plane comes out, they take out of our yearly NPAS budget, so for mileage, so it doesn't really cost anything other than obviously the mileage, so it's not too costly, and they will you know. But we can't, obviously use up all our mileage for that because obviously the helicopter needs to be used for more life-death sort of situations. So, the superintendent will authorize us using the plane, so realistically I can probably only use it a couple of times a year because other parts of the force might want to use it. So, but yeah, it's a... budget-wise, it would be nice, perhaps, to have other, get other funding streams to think about, a drone or camera or another, off-road, like a vehicle... But we don't really need that over in Newport, it would be more for the West, or some perhaps more dedicated staff. But, you know, I don't think we're at that at the moment, but that's where we are basically with it.

[Interviewer]

Does current legislation support or hinder policing of e-bikes?

[Participant]

I don't think we support it. I think we're a little bit behind the times. I think, like everything in the law takes a bit of time to catch up. I know there's a bill going through Parliament now, which will make it slightly easier to seize them, but I still don't think it's going to really help us that much. I think the problem you've still got, most of the people on e-bikes, they're doing it illegally anyway, they broke the law

anyway, so they're either drug dealing or they haven't got a licence, haven't got insurance, so there are offences there. Once we grab them, we can seize the bike, we can crush it. The problem you've got is catching them.

And the amount of availability there are of the bikes. So, I do think the law is helpful in that respect. I think you could do with tightening up the sale of bikes, making them harder to sell. I don't know whether you can ban the sale of them completely like you can with like vapes and zombie knives and all sorts of stuff that they do now, but it gets to that stage where potentially you could only sell these particular Sur-Rons at registered places for particular purposes, and the sale on Facebook and other sites is banned completely to stop that sort of that supply potentially. So the legislation for me would be there to sort of try to stop them coming out into circulation to start with, that would help.

And then I think not so much legislation, but tactics, I think we need to be a bit more potentially more robust with some of these riders. I'm not saying we want to start smashing into them, but I think being slightly more robust with tactics and tech, with trying to get the equipment there to potentially sting them or use a machine to stop the battery and have some support backup in relation to that would be helpful as well. And then make offenses that they can make with these bikes aggravated, so if you're committing an offence by using an e-bike, then you get more of a sentence because obviously the dangers the e-bikes cause, the fact that the public, you know, there's issues all over, there's worse issues in other cities, you know, where they go into, you know, 20 of them riding through city centres and all sorts. So they are quite intimidating, so you could look at legislation around, you know, aggravated offences might be helpful as well.

I'm sure there's other legislation you could do, you could look at as well to tighten up and more punishment for these sort of things. But it is difficult when they're actually out on circulations and tighten up the sale and the supply of them, and then when you are caught, increasing the sentencing, especially if you're caught on an illegal bike, making that aggravated or what have you, would be helpful.

[Interviewer]

Yeah. Excellent. Well, you've sort of covered the next question, because the next one is what policy changes would you like to see? So you mentioned perhaps like tightening up the tactics side of it. Is there anything else you think policy-wise?

[Participant]

No, I think definitely a bit more support when it comes to the tactics. Usually the drones and the planes, getting a lot more people trained up to use the drones. Having stronger action from sort of social housing, so if you've got their tenants using the bikes and for them to take further stronger action on their tenancy, you can technically then breach their tenancy, so we would like them to be a little bit more robust as well. You know, the policy is that we should be in uniform, so we go in plain cars, but we're in uniform because they've got to see that with the police, we sort of try and stop them. So, maybe that could be revisited as well, so we've got a little bit more of an opportunity. And then look at the technology, you know, making sure that we use the best technology we can to try and stop these bikes as best we can, really.

[Interviewer]

Fantastic. Thank you. So with your experience and your knowledge of all this, what measures would be most effective in reducing e-bike related crime? I appreciate it's probably covered in some of the other questions.

[Participant]

I think definitely stopping the supply of them out on the streets through tighter legislation. I think making sure that when we do seize the bikes, they never go back. Making sure that if we catch anybody, they are dealt with for road traffic offences like dangerous driving or dangerous riding, no insurance, no licence rather than just seizing the bike and then they get away with it. So, we're following up with, I know they've gone and they've run off but making sure that we follow up and we do that. Making sure that we follow up with social housing, so they take the necessary action as well. What's the question? Sorry, what was the last bit?

[Interviewer]

It was just what measures would be most effective in reducing?

[Participant]

So yeah, definitely legislation, definitely when we do seize them, making sure that the bikes are not sent back to them, and really just more sort of operations, more,

you know, support from air support, it is really handy, to try and get them out of circulation really and catch as many as we can. They are expensive bikes, so it's not a question of them where, like a pedal cycle, we nick a bike off someone and then a day later they can get another one for 100 quid. Some of these bikes are really expensive, so if we can tighten up the sale and supply of them, then once we do seize the bikes off these people, then really, potentially, it's not quite as straightforward as them, "Oh let's just go and get another bike". We do get them stolen, unfortunately, but I've noticed, with the extra enforcement that we do and the fact we have the air support, we do see several bikes that there are less of them, I think, certainly around here, less, you still get them, obviously, but there are there are less of them. They do tend to know that we will try and grab them when we do these operations to try and seize them, and if we get two or three every operation, at least that's making a bit of a dent in it. So, yeah that's sort of what I would say really.

[Interviewer]

And if you could change one thing tomorrow, what would it be with regards to e-bikes?

[Participant]

I think I would probably look at the legislation to stop them from coming out and being supplied. The Sur-Rons, most of the Sur-Rons that are on the street are illegal. They can't be ridden on the public road, so I would tighten up the legislation to stop their sale, supply, only like very, very limited dealers or what have you to try and stop them from coming out into society. I would look at face coverings as well, banning

certain face coverings, and this is again, we're going down the route of some like really draconian stuff now, but under certain Section 60 legislation, we can ban face coverings, but I think they go around, they're quite intimidating, they're wearing like these face masks, balaclava, so again, you know, what they're doing is illegal anyway, so they're probably wouldn't stop them, but some legislation around, yeah, the banning of face coverings maybe, or certain areas where if we get an issue, we can then do that.

But I think once they're out on the street and they're whizzing about it, we've sort of lost the battle a little bit really. So, the legislation in relation to that and also, we know where bikes are being stored, we can't necessarily go into the houses and seize them. We can go into garages and side buildings and gardens, so that's why it's important that we go in straight away and seize the bikes. But if we knew where bikes were being seen, then it's good for intelligence, but we can't necessarily then go to go in and seize it. So, we have again, I know this is more draconian but if we have powers where we thought a bike was being stored, to get a warrant, maybe to the Magistrate and say, "Look, we know there's an off-road bike being stored here. Can we go in and seize it?", that would be really helpful as well, but I know that's probably not going to happen.

But if we're on the premises legally anyway through other like misuse of drugs, warrants, whatever, we can seize them under like they're being used to deal with drugs, whatever. But if we don't have that, then we'd be struggling to get onto people's property. Unless we know the bikes are just being ridden and we know they're in that garden and all that. But something around being able to go onto land and seize the bikes, if we know they're there and we know they're legal, then that'd be helpful.

And, a bit more support when it comes to tactical contact, maybe, but only when it's done safely with trained officers, and you know stingers and that sort of stuff. And a bit more, maybe a bit more support from local authorities regarding calming measures. I know we can't stop, like, completely gate areas, but we can certainly put posts up and A-frames up to slow them down a little bit. So if they do have to slow down, then we can go to that location and we can grab them when they've had to stop and slow down. So that'd be helpful as well.

[Interviewer]

Thank you. Last question, is there anything that we haven't discussed that you think is important?

[Participant]

No, I don't think so. I think it's just two different issues. You know, it's the bikes being used by drug dealers and the off-road bikes up in the... countryside, where people are just churning up the grass and causing the danger, but they're doing it for leisure purposes. And there's probably two different aspects and two different ways to deal with those. And not all situations or action fits one problem, if that makes sense, you've got to look at it different ways, you know.

7.2.6 Appendix B6 – Participant 6 Transcript

[Interviewer]

The first question is, how common is the criminal or anti-social use of e-bikes in your area?

[Participant]

I'd say particularly common here, I think, and I'd probably say this area is one of the more frequented areas by these types of bikes. Very common amongst the drug dealing fraternity, unfortunately, because it means they can get around quite quickly, and use those means to evade us, unfortunately.

[Interviewer]

So what types of offence do you most often see involving e-bikes?

[Participant]

So the inherent offence, obviously, the road traffic offence, is that they are, just by being on the road and riding them, uninsured, and without licences, et cetera, is there. But the sort of severity, then, I think, leans more towards the drug supply that is being facilitated by these bikes, and the use of them. I think if you were to ask me what I associate crime-wise with them, my first thought would be the supply of controlled drugs.

[Interviewer]

How do offenders typically use e-bikes to facilitate crime or evade police?

[Participant]

They're very quick, these bikes. I think if we were going on the Sur-Ron-type bikes, obviously, they're just one brand of bike. They are, I think they go up to about 70 miles an hour, they're quite nippy, they can go around these side streets, down the lanes, and everything else, and now and then, by their very nature, they're very hard to get hold of.

The means that would be required to try and stop these is significant for the safety of the people on the bike themselves, the wider public, the other road users, and ourselves as the officers. It is quite significant, and they know that, and I think they know some of the limitations put on us by tech and tactics, but also by risk assessments that form part of those considerations, and I think they've become wise to that, and they've used that to their advantage.

[Interviewer]

So, I know you've brushed up on a couple, but what challenges do you face when tackling offenders on e-bikes?

[Participant]

I think the first one is the danger and the vulnerability of these people while they're on the bikes. The riders themselves often don't wear any sort of protective gear, they're not wearing helmets, they're not wearing protective clothing. The manner of driving that they undertake whilst they're on them is dangerous.

I'm sure, I'd like to think the vast majority of us now have seen them sort of flying past us on main roads or cutting people up and the like. So again, that nature of riding is inherently dangerous per se anyway. So, the vulnerability is a particular issue.

The manner of driving and the risks they're willing to take are a particular issue. The speed, the manoeuvrability and the evasiveness is very difficult, particularly on the estates, and that is a challenge. From a resourcing point of view, it's very difficult for us to contain.

We don't pursue or chase them. Very limited circumstances now where that would be authorised, and understandably so. So the resource intensiveness of trying to contain and trace these is another challenge.

Another challenge as well is the availability of them. I could just walk in to a shop, walk out, nothing's actually required for you to produce any kind of IDs or anything like that. So the availability and the lack of control of the distribution does provide another challenge.

[Interviewer]

Thank you. Do you feel you have the necessary tools, powers or resources to tackle e-bikes?

[Participant]

I would say not. I'd say we're probably at a bit of a disadvantage when it comes to trying to tackle the e-bike problem. We've been quite, I don't know what the upcoming questions are, but we've had to be quite, think outside the box, really, in terms of ways we can try and tackle these issues and contain the problems that they're inflicting on the community that we work in.

Whether that's the recent plane deployments or the deployments of the drone and things like that, but obviously they are quite resource-intensive operations, and they are something we have to daily fix. I'd say as a neighbourhood team here today, with the basic day-to-day resources that we have available to us, we're not in a position to really tackle those problems fully. We will have days, operations, Operation Harley, I'm sure you've come across as part of your research work, where we will go out on foot and try and detain these bikes and riders while they're static, and they're not moving around.

That is quite, we have to be quite lucky, really. It's a bit of a snapshot in time that they are static and not moving on the bike. Again, that presents its own challenges.

We've had some success, but I think it would be fair to say that success is mixed.

[Interviewer]

Have you received any specific training or guidance with regards to e-bikes?

[Participant]

No, not really.

We don't have any training per se that's focused towards e-bikes specifically. Your general risk assessments and health and safety considerations that run across every piece of work we do is obviously going to be present, but that's common sense.

There is a risk assessment that was drawn up that was as a result of some of the Operation Harleys that had taken place.

When we initially started, there was a bit of a method to try and tackle this problem.

That wasn't there, so that's something that sort of grew with the problem, and organically, really, as we've been out there and tested what we can and can't facilitate. But no, I think, would be the short answer on that one.

[Interviewer]

So, given your experiences and your understanding, in your opinion, what measures would be most effective in reducing e-bike related crime?

[Participant]

There has to be some regulation of the bikes themselves, really. I think that would be right up towards the top of the tree for me. Whether there's some sort of registration system of sorts, whether that's at the point of sale, as similar to what you would have with a car dealership or something similar.

That would probably be the main one I would suggest. And then we'd have to have a look at some sort of control measure in relation to disabling the bikes themselves. I think we're all kind of on the same page now.

You can't really go chasing them through the streets. The risks are just massive. But there has to be some sort of measure where we can disable the bike remotely.

Obviously, they are electric, so there are methods where that could probably be done. People who are more technologically advanced than me, I have heard through various channels of conversations within the Op Harley world of devices which can disable these bikes from a distance and things like that. Something like that would be perfect.

It would take the risk of the pursuit away. You wouldn't have to get particularly close and the bike would slow down. That would just be perfect.

A bit of a dream from where we are now, really. Something like that would be helpful. And I think a renewed focus on it.

I think for a long time, because of the difficulty in tackling them as a problem, they probably fell in the box of this is really difficult. And I think here, especially locally, we've looked to use our colleagues in NPAS and the drone and these Operation Harleys in different forms to try and find that bit of success where we can.

We're only a small team, we haven't got massive resources, but we recognise the problem and the facilitation of the crime that they are enabling, and we have to do something about it.

So a renewed focus on a bigger scale in relation to tactics and tackling them as well I think would be good. So I think across those three, preventative at point of sale perhaps, the management of them, either out and about committing crime and some sort of disabling of this electric function they're operating and then a renewed focus over the top would be welcome across the board, really.

[Interviewer]

If you could change one thing tomorrow with regards to it, what would it be?

[Participant]

I think it would be... well, yeah, if I could get rid of them, that would be nice. I mean, it's difficult because the thing that comes straight to your mind is if you see one, it's just taken and destroyed, and I think that's because we see the worst of them.

There are plenty of people I know, who you speak to, for example, in the local superbike shops and, they ask to have them, they use them on land that they're permitted to do so, as recreational vehicles.

And that is how they were designed and intended to be used, and on that purpose, they're perfectly fine and good luck to you if that's what you enjoy. So I wouldn't want to say just get rid and if I see one I can just crush it, because there are people who

don't use them like that. But yeah, I don't know, maybe that regulation at point of sale would be a good start.

It's not going to help the ones that are already out there, but it might perhaps help us mitigate some of the problems to come.

[Interviewer]

Is there anything that we haven't discussed that you think is important?

[Participant]

I think it's just key to sort of that differentiation I've stumbled into there. They are recreational vehicles for people to use, and they *have* got a function, and I'm sure manufacturers across the board, like Sur-Ron mentioned them earlier, design them for.

But I think we do have to be realistic that when you see them going around the estates we certainly work in here, the primary use is for the facilitation and transportation of controlled drugs. So I think that differentiation is important, but we operate within the area we work in, and where we work, they're not used really as recreational vehicles.

They are used, unfortunately, for nefarious activities. But no, I think that's it.

7.2.7 Appendix B7 – Participant 7 Transcript

[Interviewer]

So the first question is, how common is the criminal use or anti-social use of e-bikes in your area?

[Participant]

In this area, it's quite prevalent. We see it predominantly for drugs and also linked to anti-social behaviour. So if you use an example of McDonald's, it's very rare that if you were to go down there that if there was five or six youths would be very rare that they were just on foot. They'd usually be with e-bikes. That's the mode of transport they're using to get to these locations and get away from them. It's just easier than, you see very old what I call old-fashioned pedal cycles now. As a minimum we see e-bikes, under that bracket we also get Sur-Rons in this area which are predominantly used for drug dealing. They'll make off from the police, get high speed, driving dangerously, and it's very hard to get hold of those in order to search those people on those and see those bikes.

[Interviewer]

So what types of offences do you most often see that are involving e-bikes?

[Participant]

If I split that up, so e-bikes, I would say they can involve drug dealing and also anti-social behaviour. So we tend to see the younger children on e-bikes. But we have ad-hoc sort of instances where we've got 14 - 15-year-olds on Sur-Rons also. But I would say e-bikes, predominantly anti-social behaviour, but they can travel further afield now because the e-bikes, instead of just pedalling where they might just stay on the estate where they live. They now go further afield into retail parks. Other areas of Newport might see them, so they're travelling further because obviously they'll be able to just use the battery on the bikes to travel further as long as they're fully charged. Certainly the Sur-Rons, in my experience, whenever we've been able to grab someone off a Sur-Ron or stop someone on a Sur-Ron, I don't know if I've ever had an occasion where they haven't been arrested for supplying drugs. So I would say supplying drugs for the Sur-Rons yeah.

[Interviewer]

How do offenders typically use e-bikes to facilitate crime or evade the police?

[Participant]

A Sur-Ron will very rarely be stored, in my opinion, in an address where that person, perhaps if they are a drug dealer, lives. They'll have a stash house where they'll keep drugs, they'll keep their modes of transport, all there. And they'll go to those addresses, pick up the bikes, pick up the drugs, and ultimately then those bikes aren't ridden... They're ridden on roads, but they're ridden legally, there's no

insurance, very often they haven't got a license to ride those bikes. They go off road, we can't get off road in cars, we can't pursue them in cars, on foot, we're almost a little bit powerless with what we can do with them without injuring ourselves or them. So yeah, typically they're used in that manner. ASB, you'll always find the bikes right by them so if you do pull up and they're in a car, they're on that bike before you even got out of the car and they're gone. So they are a tool that's used to evade us, yeah, quite regularly, yeah.

[Interviewer]

So what challenges do you face when tackling offenders on e-bikes?

[Participant]

Catching them. Yeah, they're powerful, especially if they've got throttle kits on them, where they become motor vehicles, they can get up to 40 miles an hour. A standard e-bikes, you might have your normal Carrera e-bike, which would be limited in generally to, I believe it's seventeen miles an hour, I don't think they're going to go faster than that. The throttle kit, they go twice as fast, so an e-bike turns into a Sur-Ron quite quickly. So I would say the e-bikes - is actually getting hold of people on them. I don't tend to find your shoplifters have got them because obviously they are quite expensive bikes and people who shoplift are tended to do it to fund a habit. So, they haven't got the means to buy bikes or if they had that money they'd be using it to buy drugs. So the main challenge we find is getting hold and they go onto pavements, the moment they go onto pavements it becomes really tricky for us in vehicles. We're obviously not able to pursue them but the moment they go to a

pavement they can go, they dart between bollards, they're gone, so the main challenge we find is getting hold and they're quite powerful vehicles.

[Interviewer]

Do you feel you have the necessary tools, powers or resources to tackle them?

[Participant]

Powers, yes, as in there's legislation that allows us to deal with them, sort of like 165. You can use your misuse of drugs act search powers if they're relevant to that particular scenario. Tools, I would say no, that comes under sort of like the policies we've got for not allowed to pursue vehicles. Resources, on the neighbourhood team that we are here, it's one of probably a dozen problems that come our way. So it's having the time to put aside a day, we call Operation Harley, as you've probably heard, where sometimes it can take a good three to four weeks to plan that operation for what inevitably you might get one Sur-Ron with a person for a drug supply offence. So it's quite a lot of planning. You might try and get a plane, a drone, or we might just get lots of officers from neighbourhood teams across Newport to try and do that. So I wouldn't say we got necessarily got the tools. Powers are there on paper, but they're really hard to enforce those powers because it's hard to get hold of them. Resources, it takes planning to do an operation, and inevitably, if you could plan an operation, then you come in that day to two or three prisoners in the custody and that's gone. So I would say, we struggle, we struggle.

[Interviewer]

Have you received any specific training or guidance in relation to e-bikes?

[Participant]

Not in relation to e-bikes, if we talk Sur-Rons... So e-bikes, obviously they don't, a legal e-bike would be a motor vehicle. So your powers, you've got to deal with those in relation to chasing them on foot, all that sort of thing, it's a little bit different. Sur-Rons, not specific training, but I'm aware of the risk assessment that comes under that is called just the single motor vehicle guidance where if you do grab a Sur-Ron, it's not allowed to be moving. Ideally, you'd have three officers there in an ideal world, but the main thing is it's got to be static. We can't be hitting these people off these bikes in vehicles or grabbing them at 20 miles an hour. So I wouldn't say specific inputs like on a green training day, nothing like that, or a red training day, but I'm aware of the guidance and the policy in relation to Sur-Rons and what I can and can't do with them. Yeah.

[Interviewer]

What measures would be most effective in reducing e-bike related crime?

[Participant]

E-bikes, so obviously you get your e-bikes at Halfords and like my son's got an e-bike. So he just rides it legally on a road or whatever with a helmet on or he goes to

a bike park. We're talking here, youths and people who use them to commit crime. I wouldn't say, the sale of e-bikes, you're never going to stop that. I think there could be bigger scrutiny around the throttle kits that are sold, you can buy them on eBay, Amazon, anything. Because ultimately a throttle kit, people who sell those, they know that that's to make that bike more powerful, which then makes it a motor vehicle. So there should be, I think, you know, where as in I can't sell drugs on eBay, you can sell these throttle kits when they're illegal, so why are we letting them be sold? So I think closer scrutiny of websites who sell those for them to be taken down, I know that creates then a black market for being sold from people's houses, but that would be good, the throttle kits for e-bikes. Big thing for the Sur-Ron is, to the best of my knowledge, if I was to buy a Sur-Ron from Sur-Ron, the company, my details would be on there, but I get rid of that there's no legal requirement to pass on. You know like a vehicle if you were to move a vehicle on, the V5 documents, there's that. That could put a bit more scrutiny around who buys them in the first place. I would argue, ideal world, if they know they're selling that vehicle to a person, is there, could they make any sort of checks to say, right, what's that person's criminal history? Are they suitable to be owning that vehicle? If they're not, could they be sort of legally responsible if anything were to happen? It could just put a bit more pressure on them. The other one as well, and a more practical measure would be I know, I think it's West Midlands police are trialling and it would work on the e-bikes actually, but the main problem we get is the Sur-Rons around here. There's a piece of equipment they're trying, I think it's West Mids where a Sur-Ron goes past you, because of the limited powers we've got and tools to stop them, it basically zaps and kills the battery. So imagine you've got like a, it's not a taser, but it's like a gun like that and you fire it at the battery of that Sur-Ron and it kills it and it brings it to a natural stop

where by then we can use our powers. So that would be something, would be interesting to see where that trial's gone, the cost of that equipment, if it is effective for that to be brought in, because that would solve those issues in that question in relation to resourcing and tools. Because if that's one tool, we can just have on an NPT, even if it was just one of them for Newport. But on this day, we're going to do this operation, you see a Sur-Ron, you remotely do that, brings it to a stop, everyone's safe. So that would be certainly something I would look at, yeah.

[Interviewer]

So if you could change one thing tomorrow, what would it be?

[Participant]

I think that kit. I saw it about six months ago, you know, like an article that they're doing, but I haven't seen the results of any trial or the cost of that equipment. I would imagine it would be several thousand. But I don't see that to be a lot of money if then these operations I have to set up where we're paying officers overtime, we're paying planes to fly above Newport. As long as they're maintained, I'm assuming they're as easy to maintain, there's like a speed gun or something, like a mobile speed gun. So that would be, as long as that's been successful at trial, if that works, I think that would be my number one thing because it would save me time getting resources, saves me time getting planes and drones and changing officers' shifts, all that, because that could just be something that me and you now go out today and go, okay, there's three of us in today. We're going to take that, not speed-gun, but that version of it, to Beaufort Road, and we're going to go and get some Sur-Rons. Great.

And the sale of the Sur-Rons, there needs to be a bigger scrutiny. Legalities around that, I don't know, but these are being sold, and the same as like the e-scooters. They're just being sold, and as long as they put that legal disclaimer, "These are for private property", they've got no other legal responsibility to say that. So, I think bigger scrutiny around the sellers of these vehicles as well.

[Interviewer]

Thank you. Is there anything that we haven't discussed that you think is important?

[Participant]

No, I don't think so. No, I think that's everything, mate.

7.3 Appendix C – Ethics Form

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS

This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Christopher Thompson			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☒	Taught Postgraduate Student	☐	Postgraduate Research Student

3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	
4	Campus:	Swansea
5	E-mail address:	2134417@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07791631064
For students:		
7	Student Number:	2134417
8	Programme of Study:	Professional Policing Practice
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Samantha McAlister Wilson

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☐	NO	☒
					Date
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
		Institute Research Committee	☐		
		Other (write in)	☐		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	<u>UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice</u>	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
3	<i>[List any other relevant documents here]</i>	☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☐
7		Employed	YES	☐	NO	☐
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☐
9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	The criminal use of e-bikes in Gwent and the efficacy of strategies in tackling them
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2	Proposed start date:	28/03/2025	Proposed end date:	December 2025
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> <i>Proposed Research Question</i> <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>			
3	Purpose of Research Activity To explore the issues faced by Gwent Police and the wider police forces in the UK on the rising issue of e-bikes, particularly in their criminal use, and to explore the efficacy of strategies aimed at tackling the issue. (this box should expand as you type)			
4	Research Question What is the extent of the issue of use of e-bikes in committing crimes? What strategies are available for tackling e-bikes? (this box should expand as you type)			
5	Aims of Research Activity To recommend an effective strategy for Gwent Police to tackle criminal use of e-bikes. (this box should expand as you type)			
6	Objectives of Research Activity An examination of the extent and nature of the use of e-bikes in criminal activity within Gwent and more widely and generally around the UK. An evaluation of the effectiveness of Gwent's current strategies and enforcement policies. An examination of the strategies adopted by other police forces and their efficacy. An exploration of potential improvements that could be made by Gwent or wider authorities to mitigate the issue of e-bikes.			

	(this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	Due to limitations I expect in respect of obtaining quantitative data, a mixed method approach will be necessary to fill in with qualitative information where there are gaps in data or such data is not accessible to me. I will consider the usefulness of interviews, case studies, and surveys to fill in these gaps of data as well as secondary sources such as journalistic publications. (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	• Within Gwent Police, particularly my working area of Newport East, based at Maindee Station. • Remotely (this box should expand as you type)
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	N/A (this box should expand as you type)

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	☐
		YES	☒
11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. Freedom of information requests may be necessary to obtain raw data on e-bikes and their illegal uses, however it is entirely possible that this information is not being collected as it is still a relatively new phenomenon. There may be information I can obtain from Gwent Police that they do not release publicly, but that will entirely depend on what they are willing to disclose. Any sensitive information obtained from Gwent Police will not be disclosed in my research. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	☒	☐
13	A resilient Wales	☒	☐
14	A healthier Wales	☒	☐
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☐
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☒	☐
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☐
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☐
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	An aim of this research is to prevent crime, particularly drug-related crime which has become prevalent through the use of e-bikes which are very challenging for police to pursue. E-bikes are arguably making our communities less safe and there is a danger to both the riders of these bikes and police in pursuit of them as they are often in violation of traffic laws and being ridden dangerously to evade the police. Reducing the use of these e-bikes would inhibit criminal activity and make other road users more safe. It would also reduce pressures on Gwent Police who are struggling to enforce and pursue the problem. Wales would prosper from an effective strategy against e-bikes. The police forces in Wales would also be able to be more resilient against this developing threat. A reduction in e-bike use would hamper drug dealing significantly and therefore remove harmful substances from the community. This would foster a healthier Wales and more cohesion within the community as pressures on police would be somewhat relieved and they can divert resources to tackling other issues. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☐	☒
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☒	☐
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☒
	Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

	Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐

3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		

	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected?	The number is currently unknown but expected to be less than 10. (this box should expand as you type)
11	Who will the participants be?	Police officers and those in adjacent roles (this box should expand as you type)
12	How will you identify the participants?	Participants will be identified through professional networks and contacted individually to ensure their participation is voluntary and informed. (this box should expand as you type)

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☐	☐	☒
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐

19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☐	☐	☒
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☐	☐	☒
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	(this box should expand as you type)			

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	(this box should expand as you type)			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes ☐	No ☒
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
	Risk to participants: Personal data Sensitive organisational information. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: Adhere to GDPR practices. Either do not use or redact where necessary, or use the information in more general terms. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities		
	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest		
	Risk to the investigator:	How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:	

	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to the University: N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to environment: N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	N/A – debrief will not be required to interview participants.

	(this box should expand as you type)
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	I will be approaching participants in advance of any interview. I will explain my research topic and the purpose of an interview. I will then obtain full informed consent to interview before conducting it. I will inform them of their right to withdraw and how I will collect and store their data. (this box should expand as you type)
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	Anonymity is being offered universally. There will be no need to include any personal data. Any identifiable information will either omitted or redacted. (this box should expand as you type)

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 “GDPR” and the Data Protection Act 2018 “DPA”)?	YES	NO
1	“Personal data” means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	It is not anticipated but if personal data does arise in interview or otherwise, it will be dealt with accordingly. There is no fundamental reason why personal data would need to be collected. (this box should expand as you type)		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ –	☐	☒

	(a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),		
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	 (this box should expand as you type)		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☒	☐
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☐	☒
11	Other – specify:	☐	☐
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	Manual files will be kept safe in my home environment. If I am taking them into a public space, I will ensure they are safely hidden from view and kept near my person. All computers and laptops etc that are used are password protected and they will be locked when not in use. Any storage devices will be encrypted. (this box should expand as you type)		

Data Protection			
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒

17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	Electronic transfer in the form of emails or transfer between computers via USB stick will be encrypted. Any files will be securely disposed after completion of research. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Just me <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Me <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	Data will be stored on my personal computer securely. My accounts are passworded. USB sticks if in use are encrypted. All files relating to my research project will be securely disposed of within 1 month of final submission. No data will be archived. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Signature of applicant:	CHRISTOPER THOMPSON	Date: 18/05/2025

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:		Date:
3	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
5	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☐	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY

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