



Minutes

Name of meeting

POLICY COMMISSION FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

Date and time

THURSDAY, 7 JUNE 2007 AT 6.00 PM

Venue

COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT

Commission

Cllrs David Williams (Chair), Henry Adams, Mike Cunningham, Heather Humby, Susan Scoccia, Julian Whittaker

Cabinet

Cllr Ian Ward

Cabinet Secretary

Cllr Alan Wells

Other Councillors

Officers Present

Stuart Love – Director Environment and Neighbourhoods
Pete Taylor – Traffic Manager
Tracey Skipper – Road Safety Officer
Louise Biggs – Overview and Scrutiny Team
Vicki Sampson – Committee Services

Stakeholders

John Matthews – HM Coroner

Apologies

Vanessa Churchman

1. **Notes of Evidence**

1.1 The Notes of evidence arising at the meeting held on [3 May 2007](#) were agreed (Paper A)

2. **Declarations of Interest**

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. **To Take Evidence From:**

John Matthews, HM Coroner, IW

3.1 The Coroner spoke to the Commission about the trauma caused to all those involved with road traffic collisions, and he explained that many could be prevented or avoided. Although highway conditions were always looked at and evidence received at the inquest, this rarely contributed to the accident, with the most common cause being human error. Some collisions however, were more than minor errors of judgement, with the most common

cause being excessive speed. In the Coroner's experience, drink and drugs were not often a factor in road traffic collisions and most incidents happened at night.

- 3.2 Education was seen as a long term solution. Rigorous policing of road safety and the enforcement of speed limits in areas where there had been evidence of excessive speed, such as the Military Road and Forest Road was discussed. This would appear to be the best short-term solution. There was a need to make speeding socially undesirable in the way that drinking and driving had been. There was discussion around aiming education at passengers and girlfriends of drivers, to try and persuade the driver to slow down: they need to become empowered to speak out. Legislation, such as a three year probationary period, was discussed and it was felt this could be taken forward nationally. A staggered driving test was also discussed.
- 3.3 Improving road surfaces could sometimes have lead to excessive speed as the roads were made more attractive to speeding drivers. There were common areas which seemed to be used for racing.
- 3.4 There was discussion on how traffic lights, for example between Brading and Beaper Shute, and mini-roundabouts, had noticeably slowed down traffic. The 20mph limit through Brading also appeared to be working, as did speed-bumps. There were areas which appeared not to be benefiting from the 20 mph limits as they were not being enforced. Re-active speed signs and partnership working was also discussed. These measures were expensive, but the costs needed to be looked at alongside those of a road traffic accident, which involved the emergency services, benefits paid out to those involved, aerial photographs, vehicle examinations officers and the inquest itself, the cost of which was met by the council. In addition to this, there was the cost of human suffering, which could last a lifetime.

(ii) Tracey Skipper – Road Safety Officer, IW Council

- 3.5 Tracey Skipper explained that the Driving Standards Authority was looking at changing the driving test to address current issues and concerns. Currently, during the first two years of passing the test, six points on the licence resulted in a temporary ban. However, as only 55% re-applied, the remainder could be driving illegally. It is likely that the road policing unit on the Island will be reduced in the future. Drinking and driving is on the increase as the public realise that the police are not always testing drivers. The Safety Camera Partnership are becoming more involved in other road safety and speed initiatives and are more responsive to where these issues are a problem. Community Watch would be starting at the Fairway in Sandown in approximately two weeks. It will not be possible to rely on enforcement to improve road safety at this time. Education was needed to make improvements.

- 3.6 Children needed road safety education throughout their lives, from the age of 4/5 onwards, when they would be taken outside and shown how and where to cross the road safely. There could be further refresher training at the end of primary school age, with the Head-On Safe Drive Stay Alive training at High School. Training children within school is labour intensive and to implement this on a wider scale would require further resources. Parent volunteers are often happy to help in this training. It was felt that the Education Department could get involved with expanding this initiative. David Randini also visits schools to assist with road safety training.
- 3.7 It was stressed that not all incidents are caused by young males, or members of cruise clubs with modified, high performance vehicles. Speeding is not age specific. The issue of addressing problems created by older drivers was also being looked at. Better driving courses to boost confidence and closer liaison with hospitals and GPs would be needed. There had been a drink-driving campaign in 2006 involving the Road Safety Unit and nightclubs on the Island. Free Southern Vectis Nightclubber tickets were given out along with taxi information etc. There could be a repeat of this exercise and since data sharing with the police has increased, they could become involved in this, as could the A&E department. This all links back to the council's own licensing department.
- 3.8 Skid pans and skid cradle training (which is a more realistic option used by the police) were discussed. Adding weight to a vehicle was also thought to be an important part of driver training as this changes the feel of the car. It was felt this training would be a beneficial experience for new drivers.
- 3.9 There had been a recent speeding campaign when drivers were offered the choice of points and a fine or watching an educational video about speeding. This was a great success and the presentation had a positive and emotional impact. It was hoped this could be repeated. The use of shock tactics and how this was appropriate for certain age groups was put forward. For example, the use of wrecked cars and photographs of accident scenes. It was confirmed that the consent of the families involved was always sought on these occasions.

4 Actions

- 4.1 Members to consider attending an inquest at the invitation of the Coroner. **(All)**
- 4.2 Road Policing Unit to be invited to attend a meeting of the Commission. **(Louise Biggs)**

The meeting closed at 7.35pm