

Tilley Award

Summary

Fun and Safe Motorcycling

Motorcycle disorder is a problem that the residents of the Gateshead West Area Command have suffered from for many years. Traditional policing methods have failed to address the problem which residents find annoying and which can be extremely dangerous.

A scan of the problem revealed that during the period March 1999 — March 2000 the Gateshead Area received 1000 calls relating to these incidents. In addition, regular complaints were being received at police community forums and by the local council (G.M.B.C.). The seriousness of this activity was highlighted when a five year old child sustained serious injuries caused by an off road motorcycle being ridden on a footpath.

The ownership of the problem was handed to PC Roney, who utilised the tools of problem solving to find and implement a sustainable solution. Examination of all police data, interviewing patrol officers, speaking to the victims and offenders, and examining the identified locations formed the Analysis. The causes were soon established as a combination of boredom, love of motorcycling, and their lack of understanding of the offences committed or the dangers involved. The location was a magnet to them due to the ease of access to the land and the fact it was the norm for offenders to ride there.

The response was then developed by designing a project to either divert the offenders away from the activity, or if they wished to continue with motorcycling then to provide a better location for them. In addition, to work with the G.M.B.C. and the landowners to prevent future offending.

The project was in three phases,

- Zero Tolerance — Enforcement aspect, which consisted of the training of all police officers, then a combined effort to identify offenders, after which they were either prosecuted or warned, and where applicable the motorcycles destroyed.
- Motorcycle Project at Warden Law, Houghton Le Spring for the use of all the offenders if they chose to use the site.
- Offender forum to educate on the dangers of motorcycling.

Various initiatives were implemented to discourage motorcycle use in the problem areas.

The assessment showed at the two locations the number of incidents reduced by an average of 63%. More importantly, the victims commented that there had been a marked reduction in the problem. Instead of a continuous and annoying drum of motorcycles the problem had reduced to the occasional motorcycle.

Tilley Award

The Gateshead West Area Command adopted Problem solving as their style of policing in April 1999, which was labelled Community Orientated Problem Solving (C.O.P.S.). This entails all police officers proactively identifying the real concerns of the community before implementing sustainable solutions using the principles of problem orientated policing. This project was chosen as it addressed quality of life issues by utilising a systematic problem solving approach, that traditional methods could do little to prevent, and in some instances compounded.

Fun and Safe Motorcycling

The Problem

Motorcycle disorder is a problem that the residents of the Gateshead West Area Command have suffered from for many years. Traditional policing methods have failed to make any impact at all; in fact our response to the problem was creating part of the motorcyclists 'fun', i.e. escaping from the police vehicles, which was relatively easy for them to do.

Previous initiatives by officers from Northumbria Police motorcycle section and local beat officers to address the problem have proven unsuccessful and on occasions officers using off road motorcycles have sustained injuries.

This problem escalated in 1999. Regular complaints were being received at community forums hosted by the Police in the Gateshead area and concerns were being raised not only at a local level but also with senior police officers (including ACPO level) and the leader of Gateshead Council. The seriousness of this activity was highlighted the same year, when a five year old child sustained serious injuries including a broken leg caused by an off road motorcycle being ridden on a footpath. At court, the youth offender was fined £150 and had 6 points put on his licence (which he did not have because he was too young).

Scan

The scan revealed that during the period March 1999 — March 2000 Northumbria Police received 6000 calls relating to motorcycle disorder, 1000 of those calls related to incidents in the Gateshead Area. Peak periods for calls were the summer months. In accordance with force policy, every call had to be attended and then resulted on the force computerised incident recording system. The cost to the force for all 6000 calls to be responded to is estimated to be £100,000 per annum. This figure includes costs for control room call takers, officers to deal, supervisor's checks etc.

This project was put forward to the next stage over many other problems, due to the amount of resources it was occupying with no end result.

Under the C.O.P.S. initiative, PC Rob Roney was given ownership of the problem as he was identified as the right person with the right skills; he was an experienced motor patrol officer and advanced auto crime examiner.

The Analysis

Analysis was carried out by

- Analysing incidents to identify key locations and the usual police method of dealing with this type of offence
 - Speaking with the local patrol officers
 - Examining the scene to establish the offenders route to the scene
 - Examining the scene as to its attraction
 - Videoing the scene and offenders
- Speaking with the victims who live nearby
Speaking with the landowners of the location where the motorcycles are used
Interviewing offenders to establish the reasons for committing the offence and why they use a particular location
Liasing with local authority to find out their views and information

Analysis of 100 of the incidents showed that in all cases the offenders were not stopped and no further action could be taken. Often, incidents would be updated by officers indicating, "Offenders made off on arrival of police". or "Offenders are off road and I am unable to get access to them"

One of the problems for uniformed officers was, that on seeing either the uniform or a police car, offenders immediately made off and were rarely if ever identified. One big problem in the analysis stage, was that it was difficult to identify the offenders in order to speak to them to establish the answer to key questions, such as, who they were, where did they come from, how they got there and why?

Experience gained from the patrol officers and videoing the activities showed that the motorcyclists worked in groups and often changed riders, so, when a person was riding, a number of others stood around and watched. However, they slowed when pedal cyclists were about. The use of mountain bikes seemed to provide an ideal solution to get access to these persons. The rationale was that officers in covert mountain bike clothing would be able to approach these youths in a safe and controlled manner / environment and at that point identify themselves as police officers thereby being able to deal with these persons. A funding application was made to Gateshead Council Community Safety Grant Scheme and an award of £2000 was made which allowed the purchase of 4 mountain bikes and cycle clothing for, 6 officers. Two additional officers were equipped from funding provided by the Area Command. This enabled the offenders to be approached and interviewed.

Two areas were identified which proved magnets for motorcycles: Marley Hill Quarry (K1 area), a disused RIB mining site and Blydon Burn (K2 area), a recreational area running alongside residential areas and notably very near to an area of poor housing, high unemployment and crime/drug related problems. It was found that youths on motorcycles would travel considerable distances through housing estates, on footpaths and on roads to reach these sites. These two sites had become so well known that

users would travel in vehicles towing trailers with motorcycles on the back to access the site. It subsequently transpired that the public would travel from as far away as Teeside to the site.

Further analysis revealed that few off road motorcycles stolen in the area were ever recovered. There was a strong feeling that many of these motorcycles were part of the problem.

The causes of the problem were established quickly and found to be:

- Love of motorcycles and riding them
- The thrill of riding off road and the challenge this presented
- Freedom to be out and about
- Boredom for youths
- Ignorance of the law
- Location had been used for years and it had become an accepted site
- After years of use, the location became practically purpose built for this activity
- Location was easily accessible
- The offenders were not discouraged by parents

Other issues identified were:

- Majority of offenders appeared to be aged 10 -21 years
- Holiday periods, in particular the long summer break were peak times for offending
- Afternoons and early evenings tended to be favoured
- Easy access to hot spots

The Response

The Partners who were involved in the analysis, were brought together to devise and implement the solution. This included representatives from Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council (GMBC) Community safety department, legal services, engineers, highways, and education in order to provide their expertise. The offenders themselves were included, as it was important to establish and understand their needs.

The aims were established as:

- Reduce incidents of motorcycle disorder for police
- Improve the quality of life for the residents who are suffering this problem
- Divert the offenders into legal activities
- Financial savings for Northumbria Police in officers time

The success of the project would be measured on a number of fronts:

- Reduction in calls to the police, which could easily be monitored using the force computer system
- Number of motorcycles stopped and examined
- Number of persons who were stopped who then re-offended
- Number of vehicles stopped that were stolen
- By targeting the two main areas of concern i.e. Marley Hill and Blaydon Burn to see if this would reduce the number of motorcycles in the residential areas
- Feedback from previous complainants as to whether they had noticed an improvement in the problem and thereby their quality of life
- Photographic and video evidence of the problem and the vehicles stopped
- A reduction in the number of requests to the force stolen vehicle squad for examinations of seized motorcycles. This could be monitored by speaking to Paul Burns the examiner from that squad.

The response was then developed by designing a project to divert the existing offenders away from the activity, or where they wanted to continue, to provide an alternative venue. In addition, to work with the G.M.B.C. and the landowners to prevent future offending.

The project was developed as a three-phase strategy as follows:

- Zero Tolerance — Enforcement aspect
- Motorcycle Project at Warden Law, Houghton Le Spring
- Offender forum

Zero Tolerance — Enforcement aspect

The first phase involved numerous initiatives:

- 1) Briefings/ advisory notes for all patrol officers

Each shift and area team within the area command had a 1-2 hour input from PC Roney outlining the need for this project, its aims and goals. Additionally, officers were brought up to date on various aspects of road traffic legislation, the seizure, retention and disposal of motor vehicles, actions required from officers involved in incidents of motorcycle disorder, and how they, as operational officers could link into the initiative.

Advice sheets giving guidance to the officers, which were suitable to be given to the public, and notes on the seizure, retention and disposal of motor vehicles with a flow chart were produced and handed to all officers.

These officers were then tasked with patrolling hotspot areas to stop and identify offenders.

- 2) Authority was granted to allow the use of both video and still cameras. PC Roney undertook the photographing and videoing of offences and where possible identifying offenders.

- 3) Local garages, identified as being in the locality of incidents of motorcycle disorder, were visited and requested not to sell petrol to youths on unregistered or "scrapper" motorcycles
- 4) It was known through research that the incidents were worst during the school summer holidays. All schools in the Area Command with children aged 10 upwards were visited and the nature of the scheme outlined. Posters and advice notices were left at the schools for the information of the staff and pupils alike. Head teachers were encouraged to give out information at assemblies.
- 5) Owners of Marley Hill were contacted and gave notice that no motorcycles or other motor vehicles were to be used on their site. Written notice was supplied to the police from RJB mining to negate later claims by motorcyclists that permission had been obtained from the landowners. Site plans were provided to the police showing bridle paths and footpaths on the site and access points.
- 6) Officers working in pairs but in a team of 4 provided plain clothes patrols in the target areas.

PC Roney provided uniform support in a liveried police Ford Maverick that also contained tools and equipment for the examination of motor vehicles. All vehicles stopped were subject of full examinations, and a written record made to be updated on the stolen vehicle squad's computer system.

Two local recovery firms Bodyline and Reg Vardy Garages - who were already on the force stolen vehicle recovery scheme were appraised of the initiative and readily agreed their support. This was seen as important as recovered stolen vehicles would have to be stored indoors.

Juvenile offenders stopped were seen at home in the presence of their parents and dealt with accordingly. Offenders stopped riding on footpaths, bridle paths and the like were dealt with for offences under the road traffic act for careless / inconsiderate driving.

The Project was started with a press launch, with local councillors and the Area Commander Supt. Graham present. A clear message was sent out to potential offenders.

Results

A total of 75 motorcycles were stopped during the operational phase of the initiative. In addition, two quad type vehicles were stopped. 14 of the vehicles stopped were found to have had their engine and / or frame numbers tampered with or removed. These vehicles were all recovered under the umbrella of the Northumbria Police stolen vehicle scheme.

In all cases where the vehicles were seized but could not be formally identified, PC Roney visited the riders and their parents. A statement outlining how they came to be in possession of the vehicle was obtained. All those affected agreed to hand the

vehicle over to the police. The principal adopted was that of the "Barnsley Principal". This briefly relates to the fact that all motorcycles manufactured are stamped with both engine and chassis numbers. It is reasonable to assume that the only reason a person would tamper, alter or remove these numbers would be to hide that vehicle's identity. It follows therefore, that the only reason to embark on this course of action would be to hide the true identity of the vehicle. All the riders and their parents were given the opportunity to claim back the vehicle using the civil courts, however none chose this route and all the vehicles were destroyed. An additional reason for having the frames destroyed was that in some cases the headstock had been drilled; This in itself could cause additional stress fractures in the metal. Bearing in mind the robust nature of off road motorcycling, there was a clear and obvious safety implication in the event of component failure.

One person of previous good character was arrested for handling a stolen motorcycle and received a formal caution. All other persons stopped riding their vehicles were dealt with by means of a verbal warning, which was in keeping with the educational nature / tone of the initiative.

Warden Law Project

A regular comment passed to the police and council when researching the problems of motorcycle disorder was that there was nowhere for young motorcyclists to go where they could ride their machines in safety, within the law, and where they did not cause a nuisance to nearby residents.

Warden Law, Houghton is a go-karting centre set in its own grounds some 10 miles from Gateshead. At this site, there is an off road motorcycle track which costs £3.00 per day per motorcycle, notably not per child. Additional facilities at the site include a competition standard go-karting track, cafeteria and shop, and garage/mechanic facilities.

A scheme was set up as follows:

- Any young person could sign up for the scheme
- The cost of using the site was discounted by 50% using money from the grant from Gateshead Council
- Application to join the scheme was made through Gateshead Council and details passed to PC Roney
- A home visit was undertaken by the officer to ensure that parental consent had been obtained
- An examination of that persons motorcycle took place to ensure its safety and authenticity

Both rider and parents were given an input and advice sheet in relation to rider and road safety

Subject to all checks being correctly completed the applicant was given a membership card and discount vouchers for use at Warden Law

Information packs were prepared outlining the initiative and giving additional advice in relation to vehicle security, learner rider scheme etc.

Details of the scheme were incorporated in posters and flyers delivered to local schools, colleges, libraries, and youth clubs etc.

Offender Forum

The overriding aim of this project was to improve the safety of motorcyclists and to improve the quality of life of those affected by motorcycle disorder. The easy solution was to prosecute any person found offending. However, in reality all this would do would be to alienate those persons and to send out the wrong message. Additionally, failing to address the principal causes would merely seek to displace the problem. It was felt that the best way to achieve the goals of the project was to educate those persons at the core of the problem.

The proposal was to hold an offender forum at Gateshead Civic Centre and to invite any person stopped using a motorcycle as part of this initiative to attend.

In a move from the norm, it was agreed that unless there were exceptional circumstances i.e. regular or repeat offending, no persons would be prosecuted for comparatively minor offences. This would include summary offences of careless driving, driving otherwise than on a road, no crash helmet etc. In addition, there would be an opportunity for like-minded people with a common interest to meet up with a view to becoming more organised and in the long term to set up a club and to look at developing a site for motorcycles in the Gateshead area.

The offender forum was held at Gateshead Civic Centre for offenders and their parents. Officers from the area command team, motorcycle section, community officers and PC Roney attended to represent the police. A total of 43 persons attended the forum including parents. The forum was well received by those attending who showed no hostility towards the police; to the contrary, there was praise for the informative, friendly and groundbreaking approach to the problems. It was found in an open question I discussion session that none of those attending fully appreciated how their actions impacted on others, and the effect it had on the quality of life of residents. Parents who had purchased motorcycles for their children indicated that they would either ensure there was no re-offending, or stated they had disposed of the vehicle.

The police officers attending, in speaking to offenders gained a better appreciation of the enthusiasm they had for their sport, and the frustration they felt in not having a local off road site they could use.

Location / Remedial Action

The initiative to target the offenders was seen as possibly the most important part of this project. However, there was a concern that the environment where the motorcycle disorder was most prevalent failed to discourage the problem and would attract, future offenders. To this end action was necessary to make these areas less inviting.

RJB mining as owners of the Marley Hill site were approached and readily agreed to help in any way they could to address the problem. Restricting access to their site was an obvious solution, however it had to be borne in mind that many public rights of access existed on the site. Any action taken had to be sympathetic to the walkers, horse riders, cyclists etc. Action taken by RJB in consultation with the police, Gateshead MBC and other interested parties included:-

- Signs at main access points at a cost of £400 each
- New gates which would allow horses and pedestrians to pass but would make it extremely difficult for a motorcycle to pass
- Large rocks, boulders and other obstructions to break up runs

In Watergate Park a Warden has been appointed. Actions are ongoing in conjunction with local groups i.e. Ramblers Association, horse riding groups to restrict vehicle and in particular motorcycle access to the site.

At Blaydon Burn an entire site has been fenced off to prevent access to disused quarry.

Assessment

Angela Dixon, the mother of Ian Dixon, the injured child was approached and welcomed this offensive against the unlawful use of the motorcycles. She indicated that there had been a clear reduction in the problem, but that she would welcome further initiatives.

Dr Roger Ford, a local resident who has horse stables had previously complained to Northumbria Police regarding nuisance by motorcycles. He later complimented the officers on the initiative, which was affecting his quality of life and that of his family.

PC Trevor Austin, Community Officer in the Marley Hill area reported that at his community forum there had been outstanding praise for the initiative. So much so, that instead of being told about all the motorcycles, residents were asking, "Where have all the motorcycles gone".

Jason Dent one of those offenders stopped was interviewed. He welcomed the police approach. In particular he found the Offender forum of benefit stating, "All motorcycle riders should attend these sort of forums".

None of those persons stopped were found to re-offend.

PC Roney has trained officers involved in the project in basic examination techniques. These skills are being used by those officers in the normal course of their duties, resulting in fewer requests from qualified examiners to conduct examinations. This in turn has a cost saving for the force.

The Warden Law site was visited by 20 persons who made use of the facility. The site was seen as an important aspect of the project, however the distance to the site proved an obstacle. Parents were not always able to provide transport, however providing this facility was seen as important as it provided a suitable site for riders.

Reductions of 75% and 50% were recorded as a result of interrogating the Northumbria Police computer system. (Reduction is based on the number of calls received at the commencement of the project) see attached graph.

Analysis is based on the following criteria. The initiative commenced its operational phase at the beginning of August 2000. The chart in the Appendices shows that in July 2000 the calls to the police had reached their highest ever level. Reductions are based on the highest totals recorded by the computer system in 2000 for the relevant areas.

Members of the public who had contacted the police to complain about motorcycle disorder were approached to see whether they felt there had been a noticeable reduction in disorder. After all, this project was intended to benefit them. One person was contacted in each of the target areas. They commented that there had been a marked reduction in the problem; instead of a continuous and annoying drum of motorcycles, the problem had reduced to the occasional motorcycle.

Paul Burns, a civilian stolen vehicle examiner commented that prior to this initiative he examined 5-7 motorcycles per week seized by the police in the Gateshead West area. This has now reduced to the point where he rarely, if ever, has cause to carry out any examinations.

John Welch, director of Bodyline has endorsed the project and reports that there has been a marked reduction in requests for his firm to uplift motorcycles. This in turn has financial benefits for his firm when not making recoveries out of hours and in doing so incurring staff costs calling recovery drivers out.

Local patrol officers involved were pleased, if not somewhat surprised that they were able to stop and carry out examinations on so many vehicles. They stated they were now more confident at stopping and examining motorcycles and would carry on doing so by using the mountain bikes.

PC Roney has produced a training video, which is available to officers in the Area Command, especially new probationers and to the training officers. The video shows incidents of motorcycle disorder, original motorcycles and those where the identity has been tampered with showing both engine and frame numbers.

Conclusions

It is felt that for the first time a real impact has been made to address this problem. Local press coverage described the project as "innovative as it appears effective"

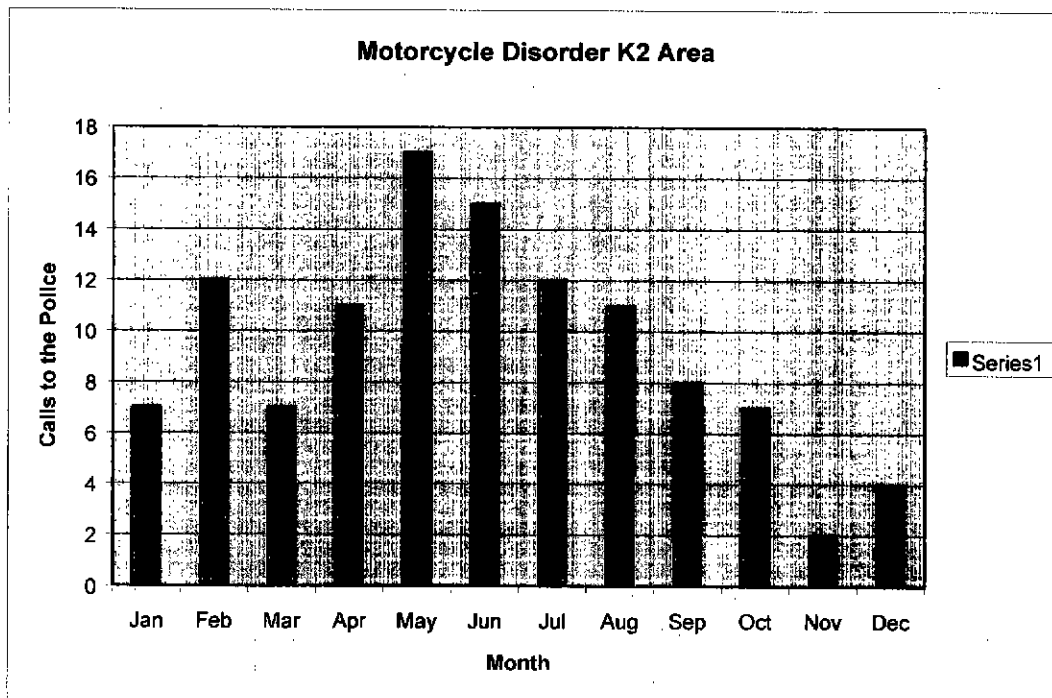
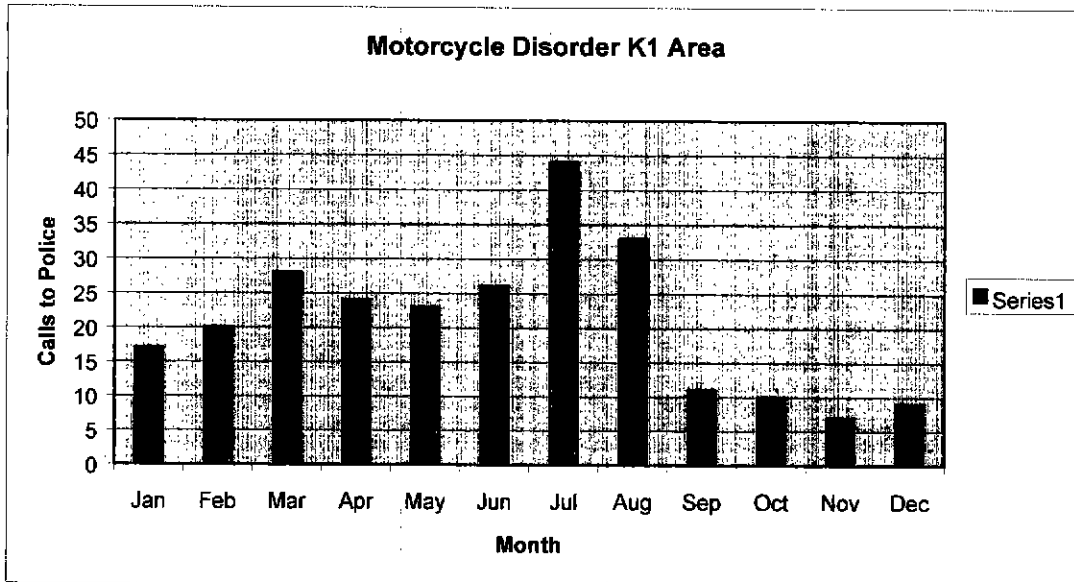
The reductions in calls of 75% and 50% respectively were more than anyone could have anticipated or expected. The local area commander, Supt Graham having seen the original proposed project, described it as "an excellent example of what can be achieved when thinking out of the box".

It was never anticipated to eliminate this problem during the first year, but by carrying on with this initiative and changing the culture of the youth of the area to engage in more responsible behaviour if they participate in this activity, eventually the problem will be alleviated permanently.

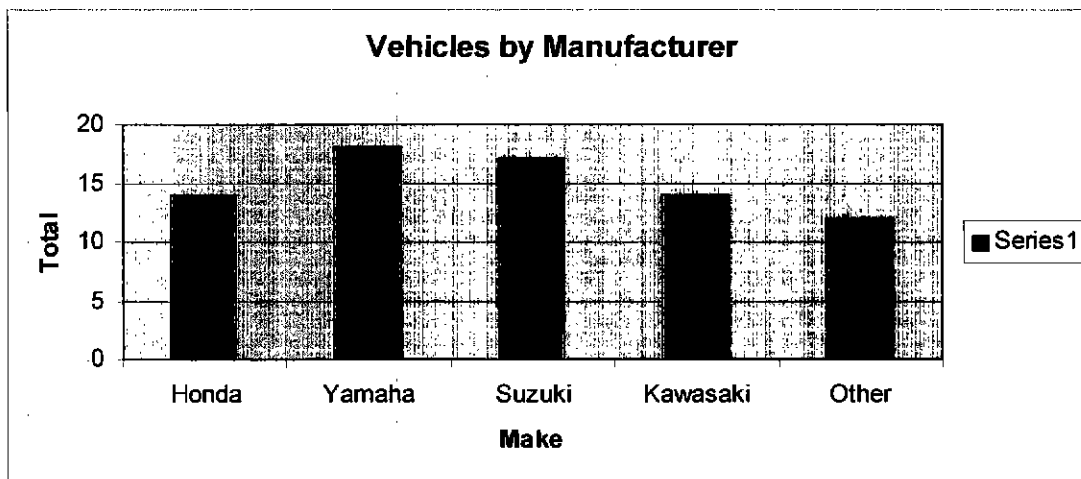
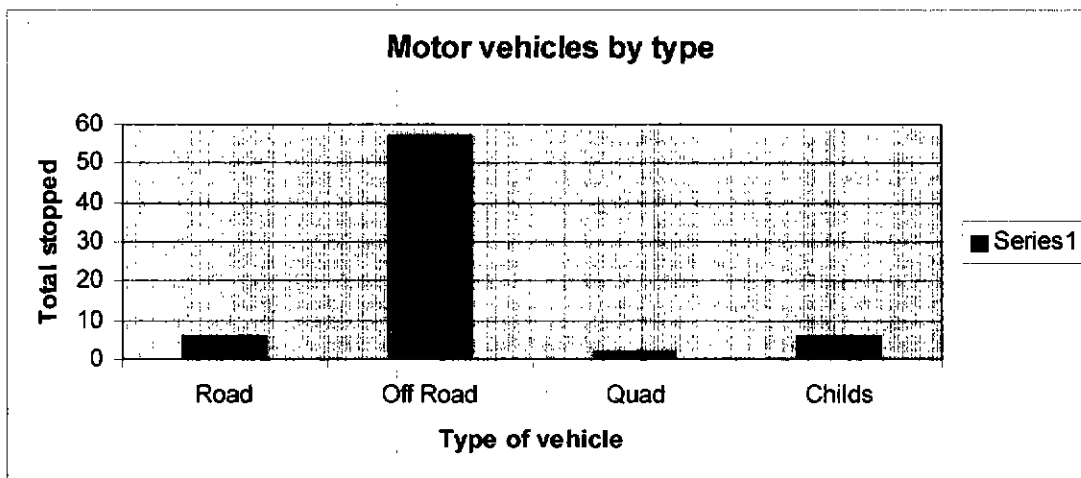
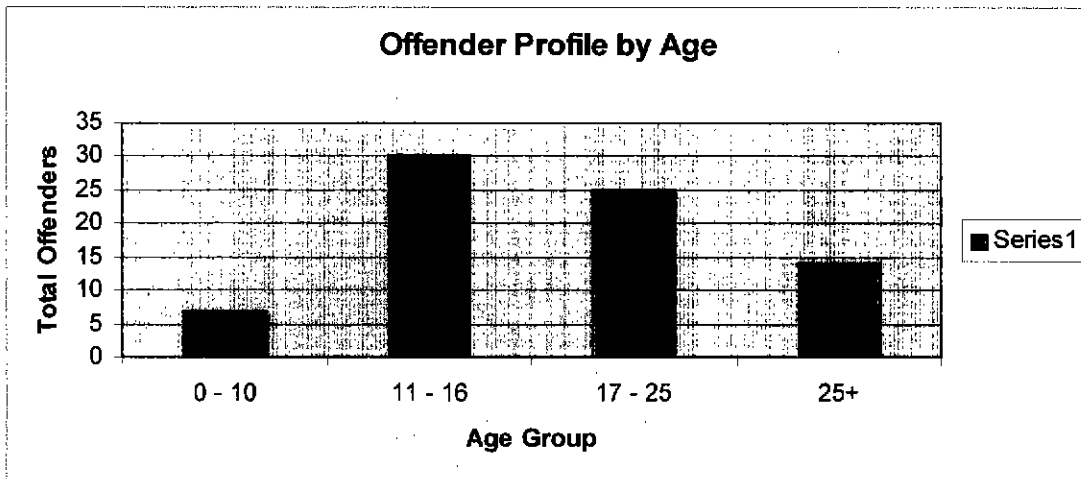
Supporting Documentation

- 1. Graphs showing reduction in calls**
- 2. Graphs showing age profile of offenders, vehicle type etc.**
- 3. Advice sheet - seizure, retention & disposal of motor vehicle**
- 4. Advice sheet for motorcycle users & parents part 1**
- 5. Advice sheet for motorcycle users & parents part 2**
- 6. Vehicle examination check sheet**
- 7. Print of access gates and RJB signs (Remedial action)**
- 8. Motorcycle scheme application form, voucher etc.**
- 9. Motorcycle project poster**
- 10. Copy of press report of project**

Motorcycle Disorder Statistics



Motorcycle Disorder Statistics



Motorcycle disposal

A nuisance Problem, A COPS Solution

The Problem

The Area Command, like, many others in the force has a clear and obvious problem with motorcycles. These vehicles come in all shapes and sizes and cause immense nuisance problems for the residents living within the Area Command. The vehicles are ridden around wasteland and roads giving access to such land.

Police officers tend to shy away from the problem as the seizure and disposal of the vehicles has always been seen as something of a nightmare. These guidelines are intended to facilitate the easy seizure and subsequent disposal of the vehicles.

Motorcycles fall into three distinct groups as follows:

- Road going machines manufactured for use on the road..
- Dual purpose machines ie Yamaha DT125. This vehicle commonly known as a trials bike, is manufactured in the first instance for use on the road however are as equally comfortable on rough terrain and for "off road" use.
- Competition designed machines. These machines are designed to competition standard and are *not* road legal. The vehicle will have tyres not for road use, no lights etc.

In all cases, the motorcycles will have the engine stamped with a manufacturers engine number, unique to that machine, and will have the stock (the part of the motorcycle that holds the handlebars) stamped with a chassis or frame number, again unique to that vehicle. There is no reason for any person to remove the chassis or engine numbers from a motorcycle other than to disguise its identity. If removed it should be treated with the greatest of suspicion.

DISPOSAL

An authorised SMV examiner should examine motorcycles seized where the numbers have been removed, most area commands have examiners. In addition SMV squads both north and south will examine seized vehicles.

There are two distinct ways of disposal of the vehicles as set out below.

Disclaimer obtained

Where the user of the vehicle signs a disclaimer, and in the case of a juvenile it is endorsed by the parent the following should be submitted to the ASM for disposal by crushing.

Vehicle examiner statements, which will include the fact that the relevant numbers, have been removed.

Completed Pro-Forma report outlining seizure and enquiries, and requesting destruction.

No Disclaimer obtained

Should the person from whom the vehicle has been seized decline to relinquish ownership by way of disclaimer, then disposal will have to be done through the Legal Department at HQ. This historically has been the aspect that most officers shy away from. However the process is very simple.

The following will be required.

1. A brief subject report outlining the circumstances of the seizure, including all details of any person whom may claim to have title in the vehicle.
2. A statement from the OIC. The rules for this type of statement are different than those for a criminal case. The statement will in effect be a subject report in statement format and will include hearsay evidence and any relevant enquiries the OIC may have made.
3. Vehicle examiner statement or report that will include the fact that the relevant numbers has been removed.

The Legal Department will write to any persons claiming title in the vehicle and give them a period of 14 days to make claim and for that person to instigate proceedings under the police property act. Should no correspondence be forthcoming they are informed that the property will be destroyed by crushing.

NB All vehicles disposed of will be crushed or destroyed in accordance with current force policy. Vehicles cannot be provided to local authority projects and the like. The intention is to remove this problem from the streets.

Gateshead West Area Command

Motorcycles: Advice for users and parents

Introduction

Motorcycles are an everyday part of life, with many members of society enjoying the freedom and pleasure they offer.

The problem of unlicensed, uninsured and nuisance motorcycles are also part of everyday life, with scores of teenagers using the vehicles on common land, housing estates and other areas to which they have access but do not have permission. Daily complaints made to the police clearly indicate that the riders and their respective parents are unaware of the law in relation to the use of the vehicles, when and how they can be used, and any regulation in relation to that use. This advice letter is intended to give guidance to users so they do not fall foul of relevant legislation. Included are aspects of current legislation, which regulates the use of motor vehicles in this country.

- Roads

A road is defined as *any highway and any other road to which the public has access and includes bridges over which a road passes.*

A highway is described as *a way which the public has a right to pass and re-pass by foot, horse or vehicle, or with animals. Highways will include public bridleways and footways; they also include public bridges over which they pass.*

Using a motorcycle on a road includes riding it, of pushing it, or even parking the vehicle on a road. The road covers the road itself, footpaths, bridlepaths, and grass verges.

- Insurance

A person must not use on a road a motor vehicle when there is not in force a policy of insurance in respect of third party risks. Riding, pushing or even parking a motor vehicle on a road requires insurance.

- Driving Licence

A person cannot drive a motor vehicle on a road unless the holder of a driving licence authorising them to drive a motor vehicle of that class. The relevant ages in respect of motorcycles are:

Moped 16 years

Motorcycle 17 years

- Headgear

The regulations require that every person driving or riding a motor bicycle to wear protective headgear. Where protective headgear is worn it must be of an approved standard i.e. subject of a kitemark. This indicates that the standard of the headgear is satisfactory to afford adequate protection. In addition, the chinstrap must be securely fastened; otherwise the offence of driving without a helmet will be made out.

- Tyres

Many motorcycles manufactured for off road use have tyres fitted to them, which are unsuitable for use on a road. These tyres are marked on the tyre wall with wording to that effect i.e. unsuitable for use on the road. These tyres will normally have obvious "nobbly" tread patterns designed to dig into mud and other soft surfaces and are specifically designed for use on muddy tracks and the like. The use of such tyres on a road type surface is particularly dangerous.

! Lights

In order to be used on a road motor vehicles are required to have minimum lighting standards i.e. white light to the front, red light to the rear, brake light etc, and, when fitted the lights have to be maintained in good efficient working order.

• Driving standards

In relation to the use of the vehicle two specific offences may be committed in relation to the riders manner of driving

Dangerous driving: A person who drives a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road or other public place is guilty of an offence.

A person who drives a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road or other public place without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other persons is guilty of an offence.

Examples of dangerous driving could include a motorcycle in such a poor state of repair that its use would be dangerous, three persons on the same vehicle not wearing helmets where the average person would regard that driving as dangerous.

Examples of careless driving could include riding on a footpath causing pedestrians to fear for their safety, or riding on public land to the discomfort of other users.

Guidance

The police have an obligation to the public at large to ensure that the use of motorcycles is correctly regulated and the legislation in place is enforced. The problem of young persons riding motorcycles unlawfully is widespread.

If a person wishes to have the use of a motorcycle then please ensure the following:

- The motorcycle is not ridden on common land or land owned by the local authority. It is not used on roads unless all aspects of the law are complied with.
- ❖ Where the vehicle is to be used on *private* land, the permission of the landowner is obtained, in writing if possible.
- ❖ Irrespective of whether the vehicle is used on the road or off road, that the appropriate protective clothing and headgear is worn. Serious injuries occur even at very low speeds.
- ❖ *Where* it is necessary to transport off road motorcycles that they be transported on a trailer and not ridden to that location.
- \$. The use of the vehicle is safe and other members of the public are not disrupted or put at risk due to that vehicle's use.

This information sheet has been prepared by PC 3591 R.Roney, Gateshead West Police Station. In the event of any queries or other advice please contact the above officer or any other police officer who will be happy to help.