

Committee(s): Police Authority Board	Dated: 10 January 2024
Subject: City of London Police Cycle Team Trial Evaluation	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1- People are safe and feel safe
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Commissioner of Police Pol 03-24	For Information
Report author: Umer Khan, Commander Operations and Security.	

Summary

This report provides the Board with an update on the evaluation of the dedicated Cycle Team trial and decision taken by the City of London Police (CoLP) Chief Officer Team.

The Cycle Team trial is part of the CoLP's ongoing commitment to deliver upon the policing plan operational priority of keeping those who live, work and visit the city safe and feeling safe.

The trial was initiated in June 2023 and ran officially for 16 weeks as a tactical response, following an increase in mobile phone thefts committed by suspects on bikes and concerns raised by the community and elected members regarding anti-social behaviour being perpetrated by individuals on cycles, including the commission of road traffic offences. The capability has continued past the official trial period as there was good evidence that it was an effective tactical option showing good outcomes.

On the 15 December 2023, the CoLP Chief Officer Team considered options in a report on the outcome of the trial.

A decision was made to create a dedicated Cycle Team by moving existing established posts from other policing teams.

The report outlines the background, the trial & its' outcomes, the decision made and the impact of this.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Members note the report

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Police (CoLP) previously had an effective and dedicated Cycle Team until 2011. Since that time a cycle provision has been on offer with limited resources covering specific events such as the Lord Mayors Show and London Marathon. The number of people walking and cycling in the City has increased significantly with Transport for London (TfL) data showing that in 2022 people cycling represented the largest vehicular mode of transport during peak times. In addition there was a spike in mobile phone snatch offences in the summer of 2022.

Purpose of the trial

2. The aim of the trial was to enable a better understanding of the efficiency and effectiveness of a dedicated Cycle Team on several key policing issues including mobile phone thefts from persons and road safety attributable to anti-social behaviour on cycles, including commission of road traffic offences.
3. The intention was to increase visibility of officers by covering large areas of patrol more efficiently. These officers were tasked based upon data thereby making most efficient and effective use of mobile policing asset to support policing of specific cycle related issues and concerns, as well as acting as a deterrent for acquisitive crimes by providing a highly visible presence, supporting the City of London Police's standing Operation Niven, aimed at the prevention and detection of acquisitive crime such as mobile phone thefts, and additionally providing a timely response to policing incidents.

Period of trial

4. The initial agreed trial period was six weeks, however, due to tangible success within that period a further ten weeks was approved. This trial period enabled officers from frontline policing to be temporarily attached to the team without the need to re-model establishment, allowing the Force to understand the impact of a unit of this type on the specific focus areas whilst maintaining its ability to meet existing policing demands.

Unit structure

5. The team structure was two Police Sergeants and eight Police Constables. One Sergeant had overall leadership of the team, planning deployments, duties, tasking and training with the other dealing with the day-to-day operational tasking of the team. The hours of operation were 0700-1500 hours Mon-Fri and on alternate weeks Thurs-Fri 1300-2100. These hours were chosen for the high demand periods of commuting in the morning and based on data showing higher volumes of mobile phone snatches during these times.

Evaluation of trial period

6. As part of the trial a performance framework of both quantitative and qualitative returns was created to assist evaluating results. This was based on key focus areas of anti-social behaviour on cycles (including commission of road traffic offences), and mobile phone thefts from persons.

Key Data

Returns over 16 week period from 3rd July 2023:

Officer hours deployed – 2288

This is the actual hours spent out on patrol or engaging with the public. This does not include paperwork and any other work completed within the police station.

Key Messaging – 4414

This is the number of interactions with member of public to and keep them and their property safe as well as reducing crime. An example would be informing somebody standing on their phone in easy reach of a phone snatcher. Whilst this is significantly beneficial for visibility and engagement with public, there is also cross over with deterrent effect in the fight against terrorism.

Fixed Penalty Notices – 614

Predominantly cyclists contravening red lights with a mix of other offences.

Cycle warnings/Traffic Offence Reports (TOR) – 1444

A large part of the deployments were education and engagement focussed concentrating on warnings (Traffic Offence Report (TOR)) instead of enforcement. Officers complete the ticket in the same way as a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), but it is just put as “no further action”. It still requires the offender details, and this gives the opportunity to engage with a safety message.

Illegal E-bike and E-Scooter seizures – 111 This equates to approximately 6 units per week.

Other traffic processes – 75

Relating to non-cycle related offences, processed to court for traffic offences.

Stop searches – 42

Outcome rate for the period was 52%, significantly higher than national average. Officers on cycles in unique position on the road to view behaviours of drivers and blend into the traffic and not be spotted, providing grounds to stop and search.

Arrests – 47

Most arrests followed police initiated stops on vehicles or cycles. Cycles are often quickest to respond to calls for service due to the heavy traffic, one-way systems and general road lay out of the City.

Phone snatches (Op Niven) offences

One of the main focusses of the Cycle Team was supporting Operation Niven, in the prevention and detection of mobile phone thefts from persons (theft/snatch offences). Op Niven commenced in Summer 2022 as a result of a spike in 'theft and snatch' offences and has been running since then (including the duration of the Cycle Team trial).

A notable reduction in this type of offending was seen at the start of the trial and can be seen in Fig.1 below (2023 dark green).

For July-Oct 2022 the total number of phone snatch offences was 558 and for the same months this year it was 191. This is a reduction of 367 – 65%. The drop coincides with the start of the trial. (See Fig 1 below)

It should be noted, however, that the reduction and running of Op Niven is a result of an extensive multi team approach to tackling the issue and should not solely be attributed to the Cycle Team trial.

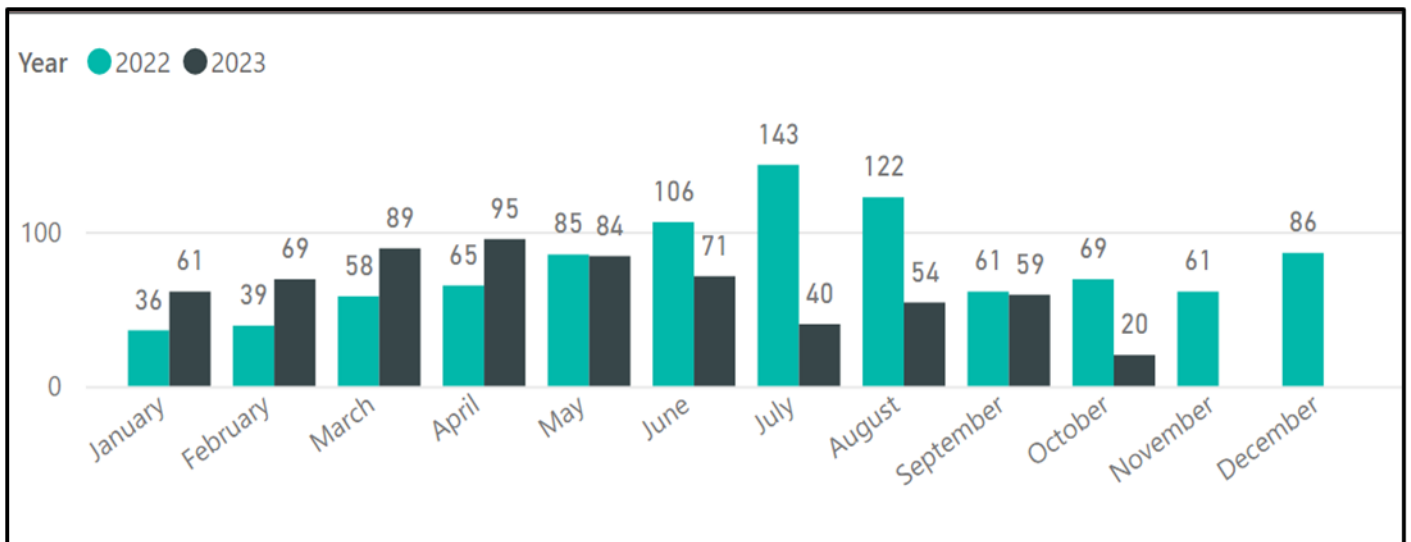


Figure 1 - Graph showing Theft/Snatch offences 22/23

Road safety data

7. Impact of the trial on road safety data has been challenging to evaluate. Injury collisions are reported to DfT via National Collision Recording system. When recorded the officer will record causation factors which enable links to be drawn between collisions and casualty type/offender type. With this comes limitation as often the causation factors remain unchanged and are based upon initial facts or theory and assumptions of possible causation of collisions. In addition this information is often delayed and historic. Further work will be done to assess this effectively in the future.

Current Position

8. Members and the Police Authority Board have expressed significant interest in the performance of the Cycle Team as they have seen the positive outcomes and received positive feedback from their constituents.
9. On the 15 December 2023, the CoLP Chief Officer Team considered options in a report on the outcome of the trial.
10. A decision was made on the evidence and data provided that the CoLP will create a dedicated Cycle Team by moving existing established posts from other policing teams.

Create a dedicated Cycle Team by moving existing established posts from other policing teams

11. This will see the permanent establishment of a Cycle Team of 2 Sergeants and 8 Police Constables. Additionally, for a pilot period each Response team will also, aspire to deploy two cycle officers per shift. dependant on resources and operational taskings and decision on the day. There are total of 5 Response teams, with a daily shift of morning, afternoon and nights). This would provide increased capability and visibility to Response Policing.
12. The Response deployment will be reviewed for its impact in due course with the aim that the deployments from Response do not impact on our service to the public in a detrimental way, noting we are currently graded 'Good' by the HMICFRS in this area and provide an extremely high level of service.

Financial and Resourcing Impact

13. Posts will be reallocated from units within Local Policing FTE [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to form a Cycle Team which will sit within the Neighbourhood Policing structure, reporting to the Neighbourhood Policing Inspector. The Cycle Team will be a key resource to assist in delivering the Neighbourhood Policing Strategy.

15. CoLP Finance has provided the following funding baseline (opportunity) costs for the posts. Costings for 2 x PS and 8 PCs. Table below shows the bottom, mid and top of scales for comparison purposes.

Cycle Squad: Costings using 2024/25 pay assumptions

	SP12	SP15	SP19
	£	£	£
PC	48,248	55,292	71,698
x8	385,984	442,336	573,584
	SP24	SP25	SP26
	£	£	£
Sergeant	81,685	83,460	84,491
x2	163,370	166,920	168,982
Total	549,354	609,256	742,566

(Source; Mark Paddon – Finance Business Partner CoLP)

16. Therefore the financial impact of the Cycle Team ranges between £549k and £743k. This is not an additional cost as established posts are being moved from elsewhere, but of course an opportunity cost to the business.



Future Plans

19. The Chair of the Board requested some insight in this update into any future plans for the CoLP to increase the use of cycles more widely in the future as a mode of transport/ tactical option. This is currently being explored in line with the CoLP Fleet Strategy and demand/evidence on future patrolling options in line with the changing demography and crime profile of the City.

Conclusion

20. The piloting and implementing of the Cycle Team are part of the City of London Police's commitment to deliver upon the policing plan operational priority of keeping those who live, work and visit the city safe and feeling safe. By continuing to provide a highly visible policing presence, this offers a significant deterrent against those who are intent on committing acquisitive crime and anti-social behaviour. Whilst deterring criminality from occurring, visible policing presence also presents an opportunity to engage with the public, providing key messaging to prevent the public from becoming victims of crime, as well as an added deterrent against wider terrorism threats.

21. The vision of the Cycle Team in relation to road safety is to continue to work with the most vulnerable road user groups through high visibility engagement, education and where necessary enforcement to create positive behavioural change. The aim is to alter attitudes of those recidivist offenders within vulnerable road user groups including cyclists who feel they do not need to obey road traffic laws or the highway code. We will do this by working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders and using an intelligence led approach. We will listen to our community to best meet their concerns.

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