

## Best Transport Team / Partnership of the Year



### OPERATION ZENITH

#### Introduction

Launched in April 2010, the Operation Zenith motorcycle safety campaign was developed to reduce the number of motorcyclists involved in collisions on Grampian's roads.

The early success of the campaign can be credited to an innovative multi-agency approach designed to raise awareness of motorcycle safety by drawing upon shared experience and resource.

#### Background

During 2009, motorcyclists accounted for only 2% of road users in Grampian and yet 26% of those killed on the area's roads were motorcyclists, indicating the disproportionate vulnerability of this road user group.

With a diverse range of issues associated with road safety, tackling the problem singularly would be resource intensive, potentially developed from a limited viewpoint and with limited scope in terms of deliverable interventions.



Led by Road Safety Grampian (the Police and Fire and Rescue Services), Operation Zenith was therefore developed and sees the North East's Road Authorities (Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and The Moray Councils, as well as Bear Scotland) working in partnership with the Scottish Ambulance Service, local motorcycle groups, Community Safety Partnerships and the North East Safety Camera Partnership (NESCAMP) to tackle motorcycle safety issues jointly.

Working in a coordinated manner, the partners reviewed best practice in this field before collectively developing the content of the strategy. The strength of the partnership lay in the ability to share knowledge and focus energies and resources to develop a strategic approach to addressing common issues. The resultant framework initiated by Operation Zenith now allows all agencies to work jointly towards the shared target of a 15% reduction in casualties over the next five years.

The success of collaborative working has been acknowledged by the partners who note that the unique joint approach has increased the overall impact and success of the campaign which would have been difficult to achieve individually. In addition, improved motivation and a greater sense of a 'can do' attitude towards the achievement of casualty reduction has been promoted amongst their own groups.

## Collaborative Working to Achieve Successful Delivery

A working group including representatives from each of the Operation's partners meets on a monthly basis to review performance and plan future interventions.

As a result of the multi-agency partnership, Operation Zenith is able to improve motorcycling safety by drawing together expertise from within the group to consider a range of approaches from education and awareness through to developing engineering solutions.

Rider skills were identified by the group as being a key area within which to consider improvements and in order to promote a uniform message the



'Bikesafe' course was successfully reinvigorated, with attendance increasing by 65% compared to the previous year. It was recognised that many of those that should be targeted were unlikely ever to attend, so funding was secured from Aberdeenshire Community Safety Partnership to offer 100 offending riders the opportunity to undertake a free independent skills assessment under the Enhanced Rider Scheme.



Information was distributed via email and through the circulation of 1,000 information packs to local motorcycle dealers and trainers, the ease of which was again facilitated by liaising closely across the various partnership groups. This information



self-populated onto motorcycle websites and forums helping to stimulate debate and greater awareness resulting in an increase in those undertaking advanced training, as reported by local trainers. A local bike dealer supported the campaign by loaning a sports motorcycle which was used as an icebreaker to help engage with bikers on a one to one basis at popular motorcycle venues, open days and events.

With each of the partners having an established communications portal, it was possible to draw upon this and jointly use Internet and Intranet sites of the various partners and major employers in the region to promote a unified campaign adopting the 'Look Twice...Think Bike... Think Biker' message to staff.

When considering the physical safety aspects of the road infrastructure, riders from the police's motorcycle unit audited three routes popular with bikers in Grampian and recommended signage, maintenance and engineering improvements; work which has subsequently been taken on by the roads' authority partners. This improved level of understanding between road users and those maintaining the network has helped to prioritise improvements.



Another area of joint working between the police the local authorities has been on the development of new, temporary high visibility motorcycle signage on routes with high casualty rates to promote safe rider messages to bikers. Following feedback from motorcycling groups, trials of new anti-skid manhole covers have also been launched on certain routes to examine their potential to further improve motorcyclist safety.

## Safer September Open Day

Following analysis of accident data which concluded that motorcycle collisions typically peaked during September, the inaugural 'Safer September' Open Day was organised by partners to engage directly with motorcyclists on safety. Around 300 bikers attended the event which offered manoeuvrability courses, bike simulators, drag test demonstrations highlighting the importance of appropriate clothing, Dr Bike clinics, assessed rides from the Institute of Advanced Motoring, and was supported by exhibitors from motorcycle and safety organisations. The careful preparation of the event made possible by pooling resources, contacts and experience of the group are credited with the successful uptake of and response to the event.

**Sunday 22 August 2010 ~ 10am to 2pm**  
**Woodhill House Car Park,  
 Westburn Road, Aberdeen**

In the North East accident statistics show that September is the most common month for collisions involving motorcyclists.

As part of the **OPERATION ZENITH** Motorcycle Safety Awareness Campaign, we would like to invite you to join us on the above date for an Open Day Exhibition promoting motorcycle safety and specifically, a Safer September.

A whole range of activities and events will be on offer during the day, including:

- Manoeuvrability Course;
- Assessed rides by advanced motorcycle riders from the IAM;
- Drag Testing;
- Bike Clinic;
- Exhibitions from a wide range of motorcycling organisations;
- Various prizes including track sessions at Knockhill Racing Circuit, motorcycle clothing, tyres and much, much more.

Supported by:

Logos for: ROAD SAFETY GRAMPIAN, OPERATION ZENITH, Aberdeenshire Council, Shirlow's, SILLET Tyres, and other local organizations.

## Evidence of Progress

Operation Zenith did not set out to change attitudes overnight, but set out on a five year journey to reduce serious and fatal road traffic collisions within the motorcycle user group by 15%. The impact of this joint campaign has been extremely positive and it is considered that the engagement with over 4,000 motorcyclists during 2010 not only

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raised awareness, but contributed to the following reductions in motorcycle injury collisions in the biking calendar year from March to October 2010:

- Fatal injury collisions down from 6 to 5 (-16%)
- Serious injury collisions down from 57 to 48 (-16%)
- Slight injury collisions down from 81 to 62 (-24%)

An online evaluation of Operation Zenith, completed by nearly 200 bikers, also confirmed the success of the campaign with 80% of respondents stating that they felt the campaign had a positive impact in terms of increasing awareness levels of motorcyclists and their safety.



The motorcycling fraternity has commented positively via media and internet 'chat rooms'. Positive feedback has also been received from communities across Grampian who have jointly felt the benefits of the work carried out and seen for themselves the positive action carried out by all of the partners in tackling an issue of long standing community concern.

## Conclusion

Operation Zenith represents an innovative collaborative approach, covering a diverse spectrum of measures developed to reduce motorcyclist collisions which has only been made possible by the improved communication, knowledge sharing and resource management of the partnership.

Creative approaches, not normally feasible when working individually, have been adopted and increased awareness, both within the group and externally, of the key issues surrounding motorcycle safety have been explored from various viewpoints.

Although only launched in April 2010, the campaign has already been recognised for awards including the Scottish Accident Prevention Council's Road Safety Award, and by COSLA. Early signs are extremely encouraging and lessons learned during the Operation will be used to influence its ongoing development in future years.

Further information on Operation Zenith is available by visiting [www.grampian.police.uk/operationzenith](http://www.grampian.police.uk/operationzenith).