

## **South Wales Police**

### **The planning process for the Rugby World Cup: how you were involved and how you prepared**

I was one of two senior police officers responsible for South Wales Police's policing of the event (in police terms the "gold commander"). I am an occupationally and operationally competent gold commander and have considerable experience of policing major events in South Wales and the Millennium Stadium. I shared responsibility with a similarly qualified colleague – Superintendent Steve Furnham - on a match by match basis.

I appointed the two match commanders (the so called "silver commanders") who are both experienced and qualified commanders. I set the initial policing strategy which was reviewed by the Gold Commander after each match.

In preparation for the event a dedicated planner was appointed and regular minuted meetings held to prepare for the matches and de-briefs in-between matches. The silvers and/or planner also attended multi agency planning meetings – the city steering group meetings - and fed any issues into our gold meetings.

I also attended the national Rugby World Cup Security meetings where representatives from all of the venue forces were present. The national meetings were chaired by a senior police officer. The group did not provide command and control but the role was one of co-ordinating and liaising between the police and Rugby World Cup and other interested parties. Silvers/planners also attended meetings around planning for the fan-zone.

A dedicated Police Security Co-ordinator was appointed and part of their role was also planning for the attendance of VIPs who have protected status. A dedicated intelligence offer was also identified. Part of their role was to liaise with the UK Football Planning Unit (who despite their name performed a specific role around rugby just for this event).

Testing exercises were conducted and the two friendly matches Wales played in Cardiff prior to the event were used by Rugby World Cup to test various aspects of their plan.

A specific table top testing exercise was conducted in the Millennium Stadium for events in Cardiff where a number of scenarios were tested. From a policing perspective my recollection is that they were around protest, response to a critical incident and terrorism. I can recall transport being raised and Rugby World Cup having a dedicated officer responsible for co-ordination who outlined their role. Part of their brief was to advise all that they could provide general information around ticket sales for different parts of the UK.

Part of our planning is around this issue of road closures. These are put in place by the Local Authority around two hours before the start and one hour after the

end of a match. They are in place as a safety and a security measure which the police help enforce when necessary.

### **Reports of significant queues and overcrowding on train services, including their causes and impact**

There is a queuing system on match days at Cardiff Railway Station. From information provided to me by British Transport Police it is my understanding that this is arranged by Arriva Trains Wales who engage a security company called Sword to manage the queues. From a safety and security aspect British Transport Police have primacy and we assist and support as required. It is a tried and tested process which works effectively on match days during the Six Nations and Autumn Internationals. There is inevitable congestion because of volume but it is well managed and clears in reasonable time.

During the early matches during the Rugby World Cup it was apparent that the queues were far longer than normal and took far longer to clear. From a safety and security perspective this caused congestion in Wood Street and delayed the opening of roads. There was no disorder – the profile of the rugby spectators and their demeanour does not naturally lend itself to this – but there was frustration. An offer was made to colleagues in British Transport Police to assist going forward but they were already engaged at a very senior level with the train providers.

A match commander has suggested the building work in the re-development of the bus station; and the configuration of where the spectators came from (few from the west and many from the east which is different to a normal match day) may have contributed to the queuing. I would suggest the railway companies are best placed to provide detailed explanations around the causes.

In terms of solutions additional capacity was created by the train companies for later matches and a revised queuing system which expedited the safe departure of spectators from the city.

### **The appropriateness and effectiveness of public transport provision for the events more generally (for example bus and taxi services and infrastructure)**

There were park and ride facilities and coach parking facilities which seemed to work well as per normal. There were a bus strike by Cardiff Bus and demonstrations on certain dates which appeared to have little impact on the event. There was some congestion on the M4 beyond what could normally be expected for the early games which may have been caused by spectators not being able to get on the train when traveling from the other side of the Severn Bridge.

The plan around the Airport for those matches where it came into play worked well.

**The effectiveness of communication around the events;**

From a safety and security perspective there was regular dialogue with all of the interested parties and plans that were tested. When the transport issues were identified there were meetings held to resolve which the police attended.

**Any public safety or other concerns arising from the organisation of these events**

South Wales Police has an excellent record of policing major events in Cardiff and of policing the Night Time Economy both during and outside major events. We feel that our neighbourhood policing style lends itself and adds to that feeling of safety for visitors to the city. There is a Cardiff After Dark policing operation every weekend with increased police numbers in the city centre; and additional resources are deployed for major events depending on the threat and risk posed. At its peak there were an additional 60 police officers deployed in Cardiff for the Rugby World Cup events (taking account of overlapping shifts). Cardiff is a safe city.

Late kick off times on a weekend presents particular challenges in terms of spectators returning home after the event. There is in effect a smaller time-frame for spectators to leave the city which leads to congestion. This could potentially lead to disorder if there were a different crowd profile from the one that attended these events.

South Wales Police worked closely with a variety of partners to keep the city safe both during the planning and operational phases particularly the Local Authority, Millennium Stadium management, British Transport Police and Rugby World Cup. On the ground partners such as Local Authority CCTV, street pastors and on this occasion Rugby World Cup volunteers were also critical to delivering a safe event. In addition South Wales Police ran operations with the Local Authority Trading standards department on certain match days targeting illegal street traders and also the Licensing Department to help ensure compliance with licensing laws. Licensed premises also used plastic vessels for drinks on match days. Additional resources were also deployed to deal with auto-crime.

I believe the sum of all of these measures creates a city centre environment that both feels and is safe.

**Any lessons learnt for future events of this type**

Clearly there needs to be sufficient capacity for the train providers to facilitate the timely departure of spectators from the stadium. During the latter matches a

British Transport Police supervisor worked in the command room and this proved helpful. From a safety and security aspect the planning and execution of the operation was successful. Later kick off times present a challenge for the reasons I have outlined.

**Any considerations given to minimalizing the impact on local businesses.**

The road closures are in place for both security and safety. As stated previously they are put in place two hours before kick off and released one hour after kick off. The match commander working closely with the Local Authority can vary this if there is an issue around public safety ( e.g. the Road closures being put on early if crowd numbers have built up and there is a serious risk of accident ). It is rarely done as the time parameters would appear to work and this balances the need to ensure public safety while minimising the disruption to the traffic infrastructure and hence potentially local businesses.

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