

Action Plan to Reduce Motorcycle Theft, Anti-Social Behaviour and Motorcycle Enabled Crime

Introduction

Motorcycling has real potential to help solve significant transport mobility challenges, including cutting congestion and emissions, easing pressure on transport networks, supporting social mobility and connectivity, and supporting the economy and growth.

But motorcycle theft, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and motorcycle-enabled crime are undermining this potential to help support wider social and public policy objectives.

These issues affect motorcyclists directly, but they also affect the police, local communities and businesses, and they colour how motorcycling is seen more broadly. That reputational damage has real consequences: it feeds calls to restrict legitimate, lawful motorcycle access in rural and urban environments which is where motorcycling benefits can be realised. It is a barrier to motorcycling's wider benefits being recognised and supported.

The scale of the issue is significant. Thousands of motorcycles, scooters and mopeds are stolen across the UK each year, and many are drawn into wider criminal activity, including theft from pedestrians, shops and businesses, plus county lines drug operations that cross police and local authority boundaries. Rising concern about the anti-social use of motorcycles, including high-powered eBikes that are often misidentified as motorcycles, has brought new attention to this area, with further measures introduced in the 2026 Crime and Policing Act.

This comprehensive ten-point plan proposal creates for possibly the first time, a fully rounded and joined up strategy to tackle the key issues involved. It combines strong enforcement with prevention and engagement, bringing together police, government and industry stakeholders. It draws on technology, intelligence gathering, analysis, targeting, vehicle registration and rider education to tackle theft, ASB and other related crime at their source.

By addressing these issues head-on, we can reduce the harm they cause to individuals, businesses and communities, deliver safer streets and better road safety for everyone. It will remove reputational barriers that stand in the way of good policy making for motorcycling.

This plan sets out an ideal set of measures. Some can be, and already are being, put in place by industry and motorcycling organisations. Others will take time, effort and resources, and some are aspirational for now. Bringing them together in one place gives motorcycling a clear structure to work towards, through stronger and deeper partnerships, rather than through piecemeal individual initiatives, so that Motorcycling's full contribution to society can finally be properly supported.

September 2026.

The Ten Point Plan

1. Police Enforcement Best Practice Guidelines in Addressing ASB, motorcycle theft and motorcycle-enabled Crime

Objective: To enhance the effectiveness of policing efforts in tackling motorcycle-related anti-social behaviour (ASB) and other crimes.

Actions:

- **Develop Best Practice Guidelines:** Several police forces have already had success in reducing ASB and crime involving motorcycles through targeted enforcement. These successful strategies should be shared across all forces through a national best-practice framework. This could include:
 - **Identification of Hotspots:** Use of data and intelligence to pinpoint areas with high levels of motorcycle-related ASB and motorcycle-enabled crime.
 - **Dedicated Police Motorcycle Task Forces:** Specialist task forces, like the Met Police Venice Squad, that are specifically trained in tackling motorcycle crime, to be expanded across other UK police forces. These officers would patrol known hotspots and use available intelligence to conduct regular operations to intercept illegal riders.
 - **Community Policing Initiatives:** Officers working closely with local communities to gather intelligence on illegal riding activities and identify habitual offenders.
 - **Roving Task Forces:** Establish hard-hitting, roving task forces with specialist skill sets to conduct surprise checks, seize illegal bikes, and apprehend offenders.
 - **Improving knowledge for enforcement purposes:** Ensure that guidance is available to support police officers regarding the identification of non compliant high powered eBikes – Action enacted by the Motorcycle Industry Association and the Bicycle Association – guidance can be downloaded here: <https://mcia.co.uk/posts/mcia-and-bicycle-association-step-in-as-government-stalls-new-police-support-guide-amid-surge-in-illegal-e-bikes>

Impact: These efforts, alongside forthcoming changes under the Crime and Policing Bill will help to drive down the number of motorcycle thefts, deter illegal motorcycle use, disrupt criminal activity, and reduce the incidence of bikes involved in ASB and crime.

2. Stronger Sentences with Greater Impact on Offenders

Objective: To increase the deterrent effect for individuals involved in illegal or anti-social motorcycling/eBike behaviour by implementing tougher penalties under both existing laws and future powers under the Crime and Policing Bill.

Actions:

- **Stricter Penalties for Offenders:** Implement stronger penalties for illegal riders, such as:
 - Larger **fin**es for unlicensed riders, those riding underage, or individuals riding after being banned.
 - Automatic **points on the licence** for offences, and immediate revocation of licence for repeat offenders.
 - **Prosecution of the full range of offences** for each and every detection of the illegal use of high powered eBikes – not just insurance offences, but also offences related to rider licenses, registration, number plate and VED evasion.
 - **Community Service** requirements for young offenders or those caught riding a motorcycle or high powered eBike illegally, with a failure to comply resulting in a custodial sentence.
 - **Focus on Repeat Offenders:** Ensure that repeat offenders face escalating penalties, including longer bans, larger fines, and, in severe cases, imprisonment.

Impact: Tougher sentences will help deter illegal riding and send a clear message that ASB and motorcycle-related crime will not be tolerated.

3. Enhanced Provision of Secure Parking

Although a notable number of local authorities make provision for secure motorcycle parking, this is by no means widespread or a 'default' measure within Local Transport Plans, local strategies, or in infrastructure guidelines for new developments.

Actions

- Local authorities to be required by Government to provide secure on-street motorcycle parking by default, alongside existing provision for cyclists. This to be a requirement of local transport plans and strategies.
- Plans for major workplace developments to include secure motorcycle parking, with the same for residential elements where there is a requirement to reduce the impact of car traffic.

- Government to support activity by motorcycling organisations to educate more 'hard to reach' motorcycle users to use secure facilities. (*hard to reach riders are defined as those who use motorcycles purely for personal transport and do not belong to a motorcycling organisation*)

4. Off-Road Bike Registration

Objective: To utilise current voluntary provisions to create a system for tracking off-road motorcycles that are not typically subject to road registration, making it easier to monitor, trace and return stolen bikes.

Actions:

- **Mandatory Registration of new off road bikes under the currently voluntary off road registration scheme:** Introduce a mandatory registration requirement for all new off-road motorcycles, including those that do not typically require a road tax, insurance or number plate. This would involve mandating BUT NOT ALTERING the scope of the current registration scheme: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protect-your-off-road-vehicle>
 - **All off-road motorcycles registered at the point of sale**
 - **Recorded Transfer** of ownership for second-hand bikes to ensure clear tracking of ownership when motorcycles are sold or passed on.
 - **Current scheme to remain free** for motorcycle buyers to incentivise the programme and generate support for it. (Failure to do this, could impact significantly on authorised off road motorcycle sport)
 - **Incentivise the voluntary registration of existing bikes:** As the legislation would unlikely be retrospective, there is a need to incentivise voluntary registration of the existing Parc. Properly done, this could see the resale value of unregistered bikes declining as they become increasingly difficult to sell without registration.
 - **Maintain Zero VED for Off-Road Bikes:** Ensure that off-road bikes remain zero-rated in order to incentivise the programme and generate support.

Impact: This system would make it harder for stolen motorcycles to be sold or used illegally, as unregistered bikes would have little market value. Additionally, an off road bike would have its frame number recorded on the 'limited' V5 which is issued as part of the scheme and recorded on the DVLA database, this will aid 'keepership' checks and the identification of seized bikes

Although it would be unlikely to address determined criminality and ASB, where currently number plates are commonly removed from road registered motorcycles and frame numbers often ground off, it would make detection and enforcement more straightforward.

By mandating the existing voluntary scheme, but not altering its current scope, the negative if unintended consequences for legitimate off road riders and motorcycle sport, including cost, which came from previous proposals for off road registration, can be avoided.

5. Security Marking, Embedded Tracking and Security Devices.

Objectives: To work with industry and manufacturers to introduce tracking technologies, where this is possible, directly into motorcycles prior to them being placed on the market, to aid in the recovery of stolen vehicles and deter illegal activities.

Ensure that insurers have details of the full range of additional security products available to them when quoting for insurance.

Actions:

- **Tracking Device Installation:** Open a discussion with manufacturers and importers aimed at identifying and removing the barriers to extending the current options for factory-installed tracking systems to all new motorcycles. Previous objections to this from some manufacturers are often for valid reasons. These issues need to be understood, analysed further and ways found to overcome them. This would allow law enforcement to track stolen bikes in real time and recover them more effectively.
- **Government and Industry Partnership:** Relevant branches of the Government to work with the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA) to develop positive incentives for manufacturers who implement tracking technology in their bikes.

Security Marking. The current MCIA and Datatag 'Master Scheme' is very effective at discouraging theft and aiding recovery. This programme should be extended to all new motorcycles sold, with barriers to this explored and overcome. This is another area which would benefit from more hands-on government support.

Insurers to have access to a complete list of third party security device products. The majority of security device lists displayed to insurance customers are out of date, not showing a large proportion of the new products offered over the last several years. This means very effective security devices that are available to buy now do not appear to be 'recognised' by insurers, which discourages many from bothering with them.

By having a complete list of products available to underwriters, consumers will be more encouraged to invest in – and use – additional security.

In some cases, a customer might not be able to get insurance without an additional security device, so it is unfair to make that demand, then not display at least a list of all the independently certified devices that they can show to be using.

- **Incentives for Riders:** Provide incentives for riders to retro-fit older bikes with tracking devices and security marking. The form of these incentives needs to be discussed

Impact: Embedded tracking systems and security marking, plus more widely used additional security devices will deter thieves and help law enforcement recover stolen motorcycles more quickly.

6. Further Develop the Motorcycle Theft Deterrent, Detection and Mitigation 'Eco-System'

Objective: Improve intelligence, enhance targeted operations, create a greater emphasis on port operations and better share best practices.

Actions:

- **Improved and Better Integrated Reporting of Motorcycle Theft:** Work with local police forces to improve how motorcycle theft is recorded. Currently, motorcycles stolen from homes are often categorised as burglaries rather than thefts. Ensuring that all motorcycle thefts are accurately recorded will provide a clearer picture of the scale of the problem. Action across police forces to gather data on a national basis.
- **Targeted Operations Against Theft Rings:** Resources and prioritisation needs to be improved to increase the number of targeted operations against organised crime gangs involved in motorcycle theft. This could involve enhanced controls at ports to prevent stolen bikes being exported and specific efforts to intercept stolen bikes before they are sold.
- Bring together policing's national intelligence capability, Europol, Interpol and Border Force and relevant motorcycling organisations such as the MCRG, building on the success of the National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS), in order to target and address the flow of stolen motorcycles leaving the UK through UK ports and the criminal gangs behind this activity.
- **Best Practice Guidelines:** Share intelligence between forces on successful methods for tackling motorcycle theft and criminal gangs and ensure that best-practice and expertise is exported across regional police forces

Impact: By 'closing off' avenues available for organised motorcycle theft operations, we send a clear message that this type of crime 'does not pay' This in turn reduces the availability of stolen bikes, or high-powered eBikes for use for criminal activity and ASB.

7. Greater Regulation of Online Sales Channels

Objective: To ensure that stolen or unregistered motorcycles cannot be easily sold through online platforms.

Actions:

- **Ownership Verification:** Introduce stricter regulations on online sales platforms to ensure that sellers can prove ownership of the motorcycle before listing it. This would involve verifying VIN numbers and proof of ownership before items are posted for sale.
- **All 'written off' bikes to be de-registered by DVLA.** Frames to be crushed on higher category write-offs, repaired motorcycles from lower categories to be re-registered and new or age related number plates issued by DVLA under the current regulations for re-registration of vehicles.
- **Stricter control on Sale of Log Books and Frames:** Introduce regulations which stop the sale of log books with motorcycle frames.
 - Regulations will need to allow exemptions for the trade in rare and heritage frames which are sold and purchased for legitimate reasons to restorers of heritage motorcycles, many of which need to be re-registered anyway. (only 0.7% of thefts relate to machines older than 40 years, rising to a still low 3.6% of thefts among bikes older than 25 years.)

Impact: These actions will close major avenues for selling stolen motorcycles, end much of the current motorcycle 'cloning' that takes place and make it more difficult for criminals to profit from stolen goods.

8. Greater Control Around Importation of Electric and Other Motorcycles

Objective: To put in place greater controls around the importation of motorcycles that enter the country via non official distributors and importers. In the case of high powered electric bikes which have a motorcycle specification for speed and power, these can be imported under false commodity codes (ie 'Toys' or 'Bicycles').

The lower prices of these products which are avoiding vehicle registration, 'fuels' illegal and anti-social behaviour and products have an increased chance of landing up in criminal hands due to their lower price.

Actions:

- **Open a discussion with the UK Government Regarding:**
 - **Tighter Importation Controls:** Enforce stricter importation controls on all motorcycles, including electric motorcycles and high powered eBikes, ensuring that the movement of such goods have been declared accurately on Customs' importation declarations, including any applicable duties licenses certificates and permits.
 - **Tariffs on Non-Official Imports:** Better monitor commodity code declarations on motorcycles and eBikes imported by unofficial importers. This will help prevent cheap, potentially unsafe motorcycles or high powered eBikes being imported as 'toys' or via another

incorrect code as a way of avoiding duties, which in turn reduces the likelihood of products entering the hands of criminals.

Impact: This will limit the number of illegally imported bikes available for criminal activities or anti-social behaviour.

9. Enhancing Rider Awareness

Objective: To improve rider awareness of both road safety and theft prevention. Consider a targeted campaign to create 'pariah' status for ASB riding.

Actions:

- The police, motorcycle manufacturers, security companies and motorcycle rider groups to join forces and collaborate to promote a range of crime prevention measures
- **National Rider Education Campaign:** Launch a joint campaign funded by the government and the motorcycle sector organisations, to educate riders about the risks of theft, how to prevent it, and the implications of illegal riding.

Particular consideration will need to be given to how to reach those groups who are considered 'hard to reach' when it comes to messaging aimed at the motorcycle world. These groups of individuals actually comprise around 2/3 of those who ride, but for the sole purpose of work education and other utility/practical purposes. This is a significant group who are more likely to consider themselves 'transport users' than 'motorcyclists'. The types of motorcycles ridden by this group occupy a high proportion of current motorcycle thefts.

- **Incorporate Theft Prevention in Training:** Ensure that all rider training programmes, particularly those for new and young riders, include a focus on theft prevention, security measures, and responsible ownership.
- **Anti Social Behaviour.** Develop a campaign aimed at making ASB riding even more socially unacceptable, harnessing the support of those who ride legally to propagate messages. Action enacted by the Trail Riders Fellowship with cross- sector support: <https://rideright.org.uk/>

Impact: Better-educated riders will be less likely to fall victim to theft and more likely to adopt secure practices. ASB becomes increasingly more socially unacceptable.

10. Provision of Riding Space

Objective: To provide legal, safe spaces for "motorcyclists" to practice, reducing the temptation to ride illegally or dangerously in urban areas.

Actions:

- **Controlled Riding Spaces:** Develop designated practice areas or tracks near urban centres where young riders and those wanting to ride legally can practice and develop their riding skills. These spaces could be open to all riders, regardless of experience, and would provide a controlled environment for safe riding.
- **Collaboration with Youth Groups:** Partner with local youth community groups to run supervised practice sessions and education programmes in partnership with the Auto-Cycle Union (ACU). This will encourage young people to engage in responsible motorcycling and could act as a stepping stone to formal training and licensing.
- **Formal Training Pathways:** Riders who use these spaces should be encouraged to progress into formal motorcycle training and eventually complete their motorcycle tests.

Impact: Offering safe, legal outlets for “motorcyclists” will reduce the appeal of illegal riding and create an opportunity for positive engagement with the legitimate riding community.

Background to the Proposals – Further Reading

Well organised crime groups have moved into motorcycle crime due to the lucrative nature of the trade and the fact that motorcycles, unlike cars, are generally much easier to steal and often less likely to be equipped with advanced security systems.

These factors, coupled with cuts in police resource over a number of years, have meant that criminal gangs operating in this area have been able to do so with relative impunity, where being caught is unlikely to result in either significant fines or convictions. Although some force area figures moved in a positive direction in 2024, motorcycle theft has surged in aggregate over the last decade, particularly in major UK cities, with motorcycles, scooters and mopeds often being stolen to order to be used in criminal activity, exported overseas via UK ports or broken up as parts for re-sale.

London has become a primary motorcycle theft hotspot with criminals often targeting high-value models, like Yamaha, Honda and BMW, and bikes with engines of 125cc or under featuring prominently in current theft statistics..

But beyond the statistics there are real people who are adversely affected by motorcycle theft, broader motorcycle enabled crime and anti-social behaviour. The financial and emotional impact of motorcycle theft on owners can be very serious.

For many riders, motorcycles are often more than just an important mode of transport – they also represent a passion, a lifestyle and a significant personal

investment. Losing a bike to theft can be devastating, not only because of the monetary value of the bike but also because of the personal attachment many riders have to their bikes, the theft of which can lead to wider health and mental-health issues.

There is also an adverse knock-on impact on future insurance premiums. In high-risk areas like London insurance premiums can be disproportionately high as a result of the risk of theft, sometimes pricing motorcyclists out of coverage altogether and unable to replace their stolen bike. Some underwriters no longer offer insurance to the London market. As a result, some riders have been forced to leave the motorcycling community altogether.

The impact on individuals and communities, businesses and the economy from motorcycles, mopeds and high powered eBikes being used in crimes, ranging from ASB, street and shop thefts to wider robbery, knife crime and organised drug related activity is a persistent problem.

Motorcycles and high powered e-bikes are also increasingly featuring in wider anti-social behaviour (ASB) which is having an adverse impact on individuals and communities, resulting in a range of negative behavioural, social and health impacts, as well as having an increasing impact on wider police resources and the effective delivery of problem-oriented community policing.

A growing phenomenon in recent years has seen the growth of the illegal use of high-powered eBikes. These are unregistered, untaxed and uninsured, sometimes used to terrorise neighbourhoods with anti-social and dangerous riding. The user profile appears to be mainly young riders, who are often not wearing helmets, travelling at high speed and able to escape down alleyways and paths if pursued by the police putting themselves and the general public at significant risk.

These products are often regarded and grouped with wider motorcycling by the general public, which is having an adverse reputational impact on motorcycling as a whole.

At the same time as organised crime gangs have moved their operations into motorcycle theft and motorcycle-enabled crime, the number of police officers in England and Wales has fallen, with significant reductions in frontline police numbers occurring between 2010 and 2018. Additional budget cuts under government austerity measures have also forced the police to prioritise their limited resources, with violent crime often being prioritised over property crime.

With fewer officers on the streets and stretched resources, many police forces have simply been unable to dedicate the time and manpower needed to tackle the ad hoc and organised crime involved, with specialist local police teams previously involved in vehicle-related and vehicle-enabled crime often disbanded in the face of other policing priorities.

That said, there have been some positive developments in terms of wider policing of motorcycle theft and motorcycle enabled crime activity with some police forces

responding to the rise in criminal activity with a combination of new initiatives, new partnership activities and targeted intelligence-led enforcement operations:

- **“Operation Venice”** set up by the Metropolitan Police in 2016 established a specialist unit employing a combination of intelligence-led strategies, covert surveillance and advanced technology to disrupt the organised crime gangs behind motorcycle theft. The Met’s initiative has also seen a reduction in the number of stolen motorcycles and mopeds being used in other crimes.
- **The National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS)**, a national police unit hosted by Hampshire & Isle of Wight, has brought together policing’s national intelligence capability, Europol, Interpol and Border Force, together with a number of motorcycling organisations, to seek to address the flow of stolen vehicles being exported via UK ports and destined for overseas markets. Stolen bikes are often either stripped down and sold as parts – often impossible to trace- or shipped abroad to countries where they are resold at a premium. Additionally, some stolen motorcycles are stripped with parts fitted to a new frame and then re-registered and sold on with a new “cloned” identity. NaVCIS activity at UK ports has seen a 29% increase in stolen vehicles destined for overseas markets being identified and intercepted at UK ports in the second quarter of 2024.
- **The National Vehicle Crime Reduction Partnership (NVCRP)** has been established to deliver a more joined-up and coordinated response bringing together police, government, manufacturers, and industry experts to combat vehicle crime. A key focus of the partnership is to enhance intelligence and data exchange to help stakeholders better identify and respond to emerging threats and trends with targeted strategies employed to disrupt and dismantle the criminal networks responsible for vehicle crime. A wider aspiration of the partnership is to also conduct academic research in support of increasing the collective understanding of vehicle crime, its drivers and its impact on victims.
- **The Motorcycle Crime Reduction Group (MCRG)**, a partnership comprising representatives from rider interest groups, the insurance and security industries, motorcycle manufacturers, retailers and the police, with links to and contributions from the Home Office, is working through a partnership approach to educate riders and develop to implement wider, effective strategies to reduce motorcycle theft and crime, including through identifying best enforcement and education practice across regional UK police forces. The MCRG links with the National Vehicle Crime Working Group. Which is led at senior police level.

In addition to targeted law-enforcement operations, the police have also established partnerships with motorcycle manufacturers, security companies and motorcycle rider groups to promote crime prevention measures. These include an increase in the fitting of advanced security features by manufacturers to new motorbike models, including immobilizers and keyless ignition systems, as well as encouraging motorcyclists to use heavy-duty locks, chains and alarms, and the fitting of tracking devices to make stolen bikes easier to recover.

It is clear that a significant and persistent problem has developed. The overall growth in motorcycle theft over the last decade, plus motorcycle enabled crime and its increasingly organised nature, often featuring serious and organised criminal groups,

coupled with the rise of the anti social and illegal use of high powered eBikes, with associated criminality, requires a multi-pronged and comprehensive approach across a range of sectors. This includes the police, Home Office, local authorities, manufacturers, riders and other key stakeholders. Developing and enhancing existing linkages in this area to create a powerful anti-motorcycle theft and crime 'ecosystem' is important to address the issue. This needs to sit alongside additional regulatory measures, infrastructure improvements and the education and support of riders to deter and prevent thefts.

Key to the success of such an approach will be to put in place effective measures to target and disrupt the activities of the organised crime groups involved in this area of crime.

This should include a wider emphasis on enhancing the intelligence picture of the current crime landscape, mapping the organised crime groups involved, developing a better understanding of how the criminal networks are currently operating across the UK and overseas, and providing better intelligence to Chief Constables and frontline police officers to target the criminality operating within their regions and across regional boundaries. Ideally, this should happen through the setting up of dedicated enforcement teams focused on motorcycle theft and motorcycle enabled crime.

Additionally, if the enhanced intelligence picture created provides clear evidence of serious and organised criminal activity then consideration should be given to establishing Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) with National Crime Agency (NCA) support, to address the crime groups operating across territorial boundaries and international borders.

This plan outlines ideas for further exploration to reduce motorcycle-related and enabled crime. The aim is to build on what is already being done, in order to create a comprehensive 'eco system' of crime and anti-social behaviour reduction.