

## Summary of Review of the Policing of Fixtures Between Chester and Wrexham (Home and Away).

### Summary/Conclusions

The review team were very impressed with the football operation that is put into place by both forces with regard to this fixture. Both forces provided strong evidence of an auditable planning process. Tactical / deployment plans were detailed and evidenced contingency plans against identified risk.

It is clear that this is a very high risk fixture. It is one of the top 10 risk fixtures nationally. The historic disorder that has occurred has been significantly reduced through the use of the 'Safer Transport' tactic.

It is recognised that this tactic is a high end tactic that fans either love or hate. Feedback has come from several sources during this review to indicate that some fans would not attend this fixture without this tactic being implemented, whilst some fans think it is too restrictive.

The tactic is a club initiative and a condition of entry for away fans into the ground. Both police forces provide a supporting role in order to prevent crime and disorder whilst on route to the ground and during the ingress into the stadium. [REDACTED]

The view of all the officers on the review team was that this tactic has prevented the significant problems that have occurred in the past. From the strategic objectives and throughout the operation in both forces the main consideration we have found is for the communities of both Chester and Wrexham. The overriding ambition of both forces is to keep the public safe. This includes the risk groups from both clubs.

Interviews with the Safety Officers and SAG chair were very positive about both policing operations which in effect mirror each other. We found strong links had been established and meeting structures were in place for Police from both forces, Safety Officers and the SAGs both pre and post the fixtures to ensure the operations were reviewed and feedback acted upon.

The 'Safe Transport' tactic was reviewed by the SAG in July 2015 and it was agreed by all parties, that in the continued interests of safety, both games will remain all ticket, with away supporters travelling to the matches on officially organised coaches.

Throughout the review it was clear that all involved are seeking to move towards a normalised kick-off time for both fixtures of 3pm on a Saturday. This is a positive step for the fans and one that we feel is possible in the short term with the 'Safer Transport' tactic in place.

There is an overarching aim to try and move away from having to use this tactic but, maintaining public safety at the heart of the plan, this should be part of a staged approach developed over a few seasons, as part of a de-escalation plan.

There should be acknowledgement from all parties that the ultimate desired outcome of a normalised fixture, with no 'Safer Transport', may not be realistically achievable based on Intelligence or the behaviour of fans from both clubs. It is also recognised that Chester rail station is some distance from the ground, unlike Wrexham's that is nearer. This will require further consideration by the stakeholders as to transport options.

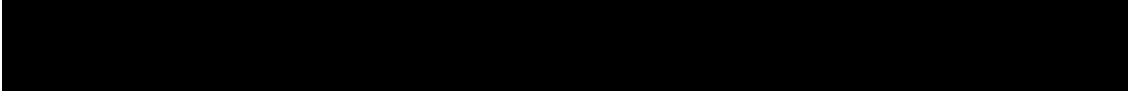
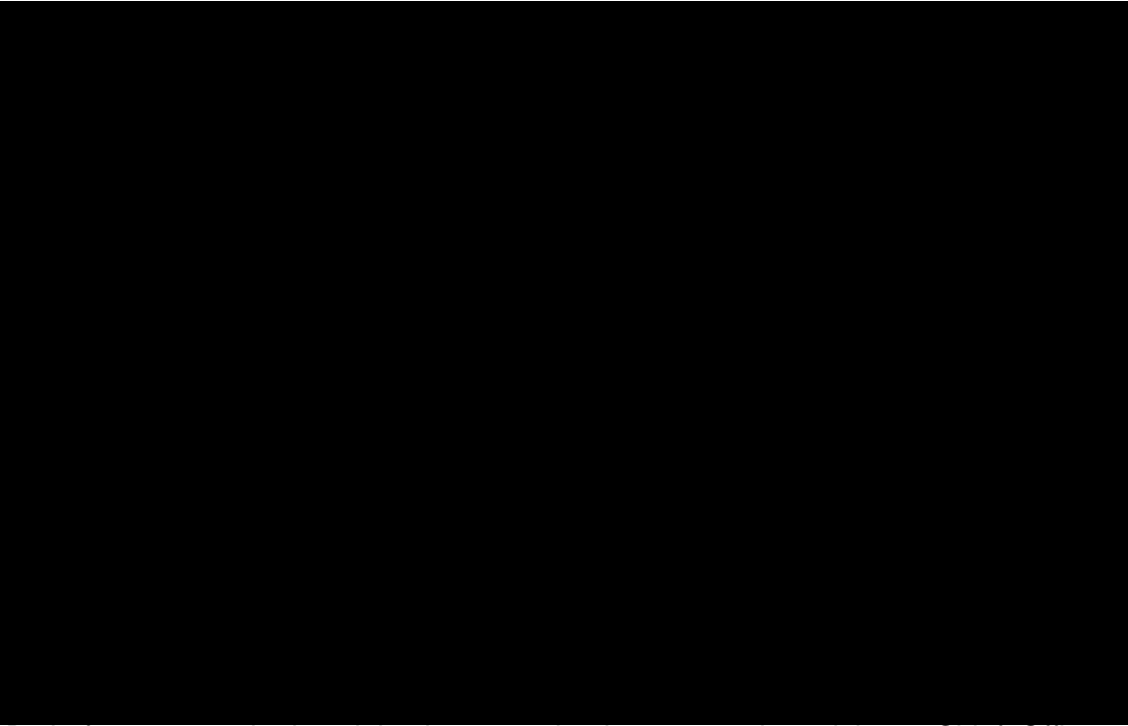
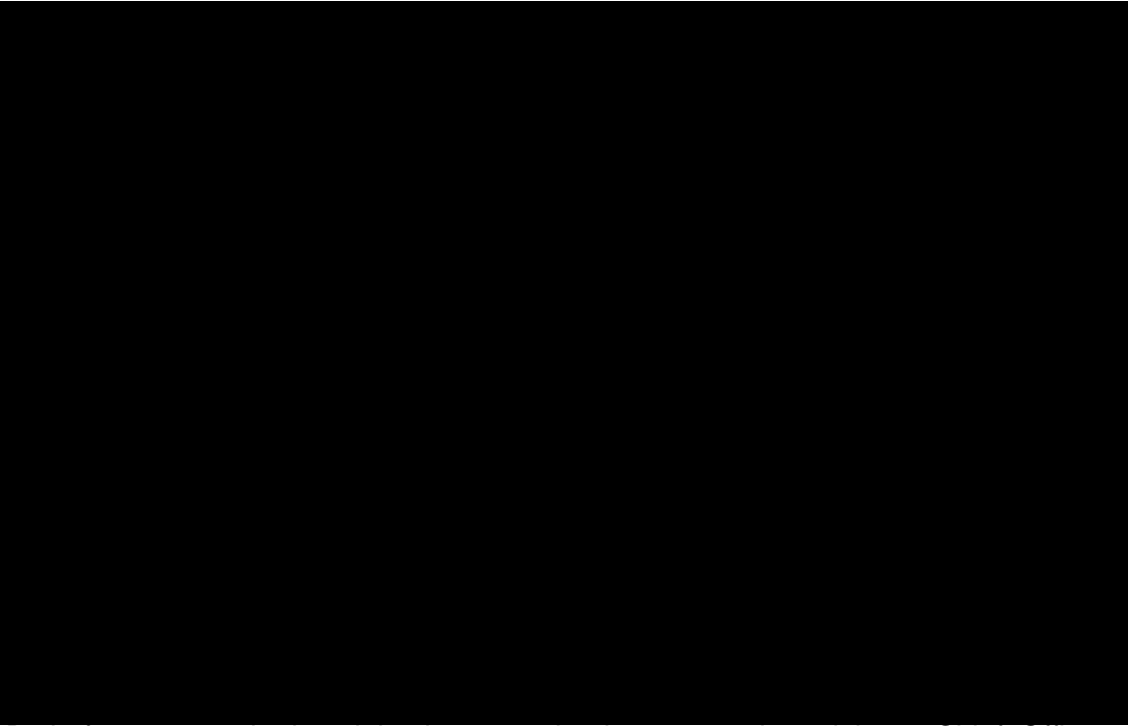
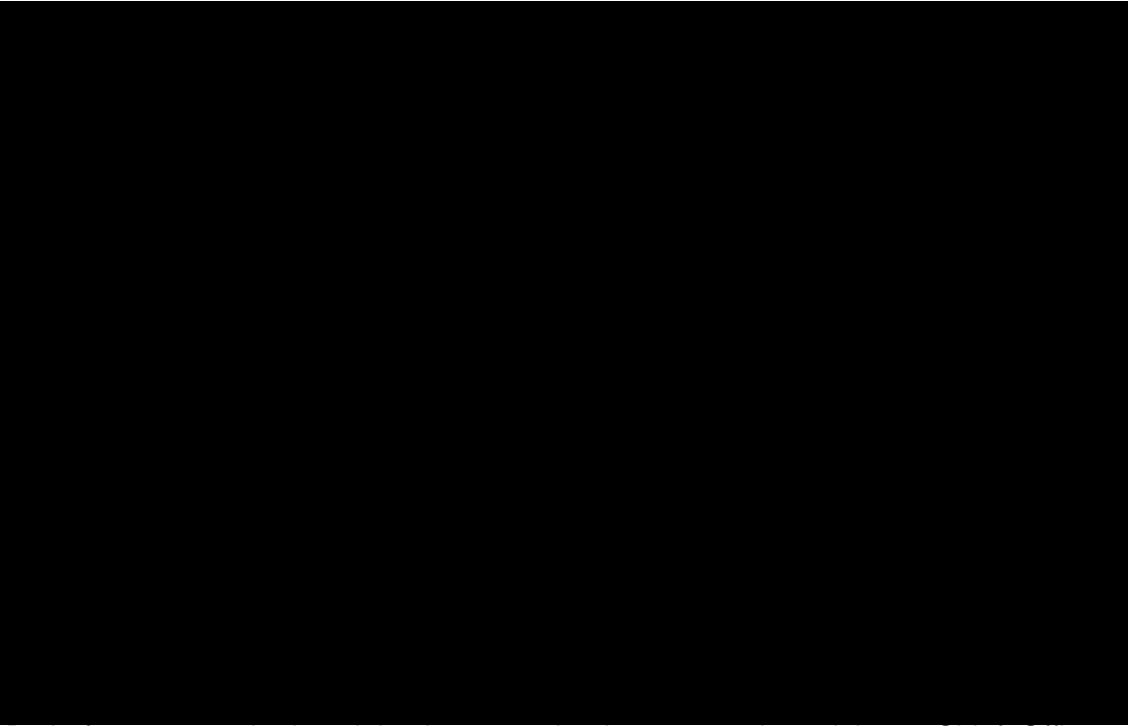
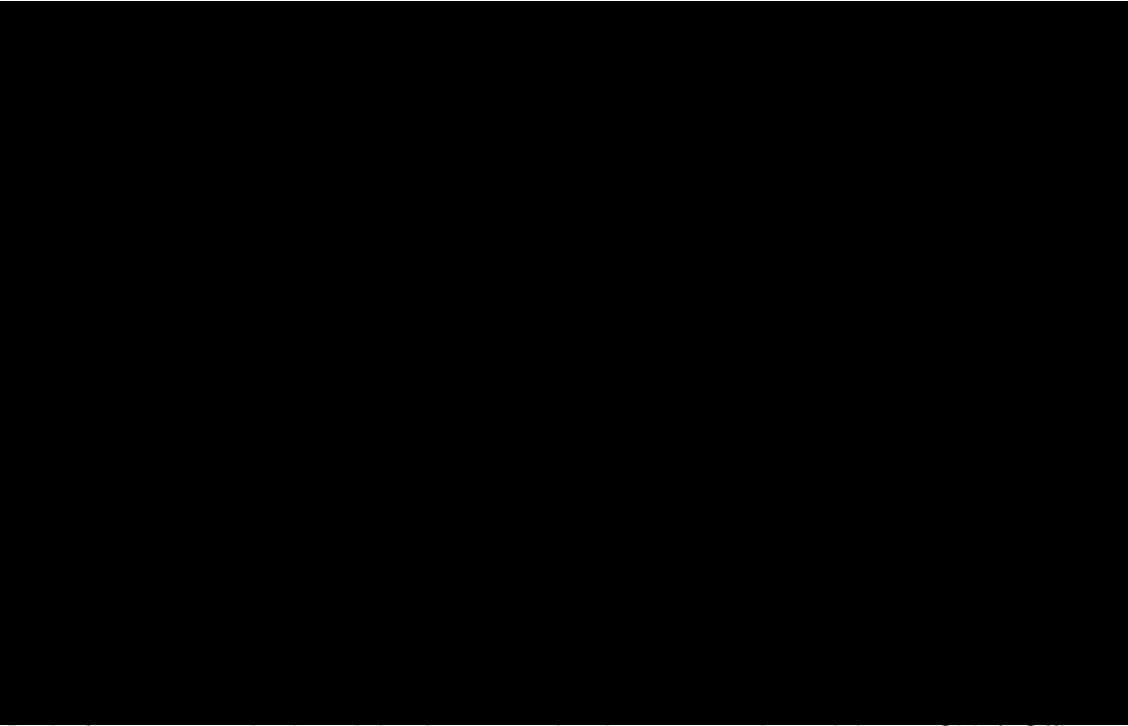
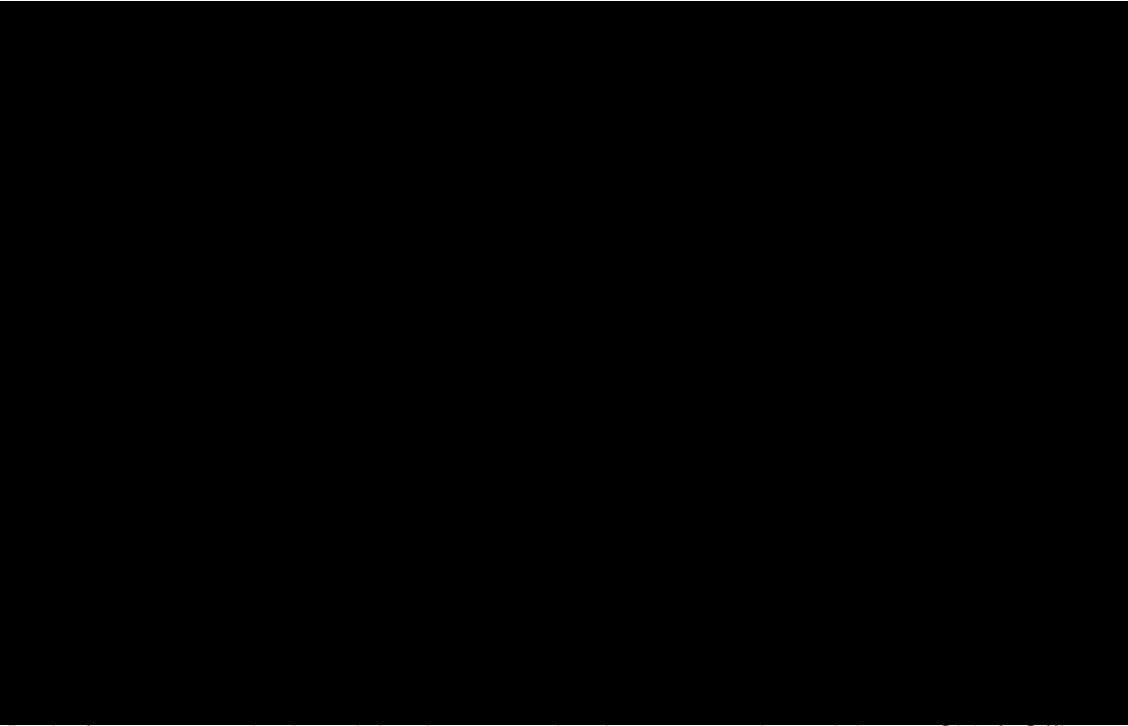
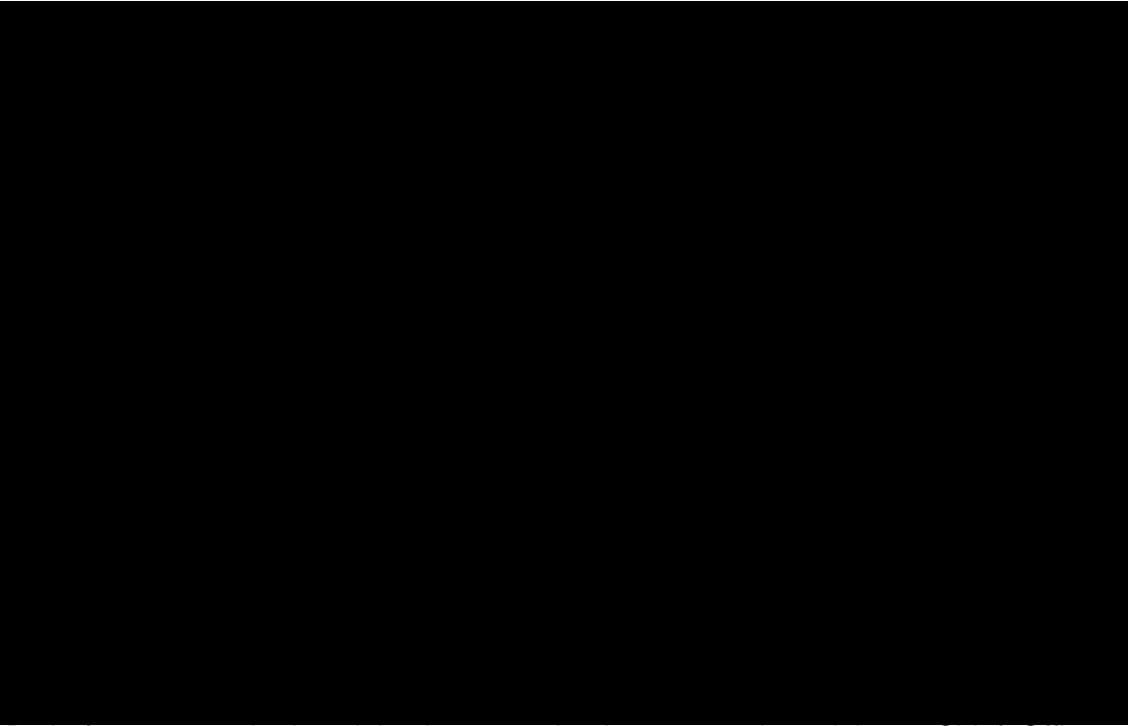
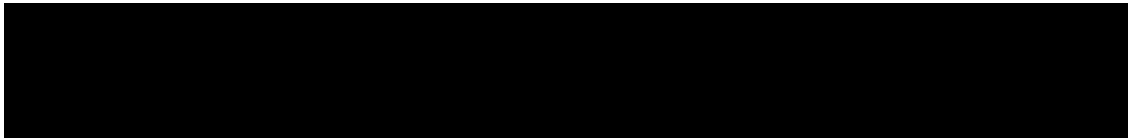
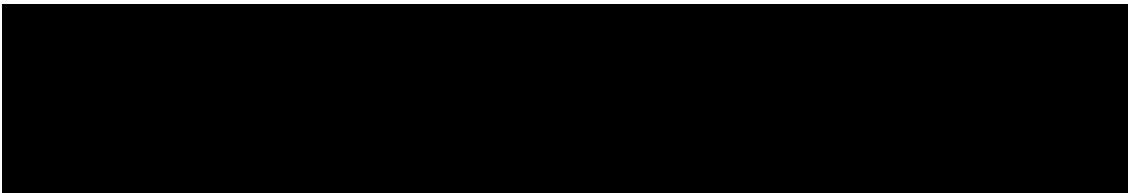
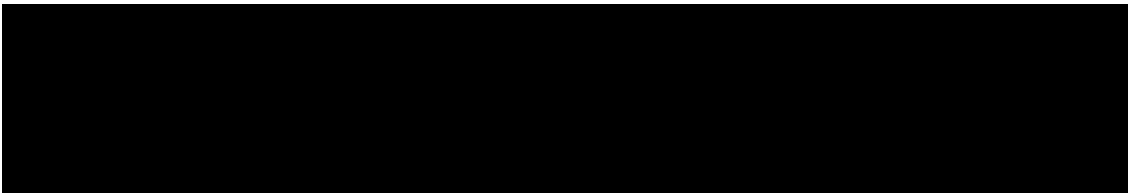
In the context of what we have found is a very good policing operation with strong partnerships and public safety in mind the recommendations made are relatively minor in nature to the overall event. A summary of the recommendations can be found at the end of this report.

We have found numerous examples of good practice from both forces that we intend to weave into our own football planning in Merseyside. The individuals we have spoken to, without exception, have been passionate about making these fixtures as safe as possible for both those attending and the wider communities within Cheshire and Wrexham. We thank these individuals for the time they have given us.

Supt. Simon Irving

Merseyside Police.

## Recommendations

1. 
2. Both to forces consider greater consistency in overarching strategic objectives for these fixtures.
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. Both forces to submit a joint letter to the league, endorsed by a Chief Officer, requesting consideration to the timing of this fixture and clashes with other events and operations that are planned in the Force areas. Fan Groups to be liaised with during the planning phase to offer a rationale.
10. 
11. Cheshire Police to work with Chester FC and see if there is any feasibility in the club setting up a supporters club.
12. Both clubs to communicate with the Football Supporters Federation and consider involving them in the planning and de-brief process.
13. 
14. 

15.

16.

17. Key stakeholders (to include SAGs, club, police from both forces, supporters groups and reps from the FSF) to formally review and develop a plan to normalise the kick-off time in the first instance and develop a staged approach to scale back the 'Safer Transport' tactic.

The review was conducted by Merseyside Police and consisted of;

1. Supt Simon Irving – Football Command cadre / Silver / Lead Officer
2. CI Chris Gibson – Silver / Bronze Commander / Bronze football cadre / Force Co-ordination role
3. CI Gary O'Rourke – Silver / Bronze Commander / Bronze football cadre
4. Sgt Tracy McNally – Merseyside football operation
5. Con Lee Lomax - Football Intelligence Officer (Liverpool FC)
6. Con Steve Roberts - Football Intelligence Officer (Everton FC)
7. Con Phil Devereux – Tactical Advisor (Force Co-ordination)
8. C/Supt Rob Carden - assisted with a review of the Gold Strategies

Consultation was undertaken with the below individuals;

a. Cheshire

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| i. ACC Mark Roberts         | - Gold Commander / National Lead for Football Policing |
| ii. Supt Beverley Raistrick | - Uniform Operations and Regional Collaborations       |
| iii. C/Insp Richard Rees    | - Silver Commander                                     |
| iv. Sgt Carl Capewell       | - Sports and Events Planning                           |
| v. Steve Povey              | - Safety Officer at club                               |

b. North Wales

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| i. ACC Richard Debicki   | - Gold Commander          |
| ii. Supt Robert Kirman   | - Silver Commander        |
| iii. Con Louise Evans    | - Operational Planning    |
| iv. Con Paul Davies      | - POTAC                   |
| v. Con Christopher Jones | - POTAC                   |
| vi. Peter Jones          | - Wrexham Supporter Trust |
| vii. Toni Slater         | - SAG Chair               |
| viii. Martin Bradley     | - Safety Officer at club  |

B. Documents reviewed by the team were;

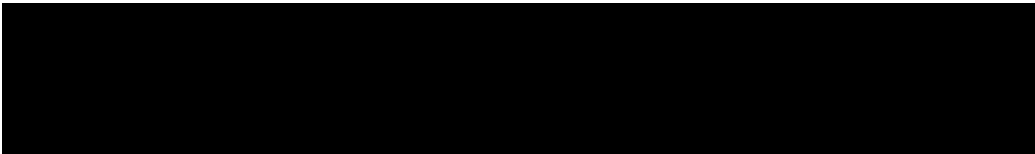
Cheshire document	Fixture date - 22/9/14	Fixture date - 3/10/15
Gold Strategies	✓	✓
Silver Tactical plans	✓	✓
Bronze deployment plans	✓	✓
Confirmation of skills / training	✓	✓
Evidence of TACAD in planning	✓	✓
Intelligence documents	✓	✓
Planning meeting notes and minutes	✓	✓
Debrief notes	x	✓
Financial costs	✓	✓
Briefing Documents	✓	✓
Control logs	✓	✓
N. Wales document	Fixture date - 7/3/15	Fixture date - 19/3/16
Gold Strategies	x	✓
Silver Tactical plans	✓	✓
Bronze deployment plans	✓	✓
Confirmation of skills / training	✓	✓
Evidence of TACAD in planning	✓	✓
Intelligence documents	✓	✓
Planning meeting notes and minutes	✓	✓
Debrief notes	x	x
Financial costs	✓	✓
Briefing Documents	✓	✓
Control logs	✓	x

## Findings of Review

Appropriateness of collection plan and assessment of the risk for disorder and anti-social behaviour.

1. DFOs produce comprehensive intelligence reports to inform the threat assessment.
2. Historic incidents of disorder are given full cognisance with regard to the overall intelligence picture.
3. There is limited intelligence regarding the risk of disorder at the fixtures.
4. Match category, C-IR is appropriate.
5. Good evidence of debriefing has been identified.

Proportionality of the policing response – consideration of

1. ECHR 1998, Code of Ethics 2014, HMIC 10 Key Principles for Use of Force, NDM, APP 2016, CoP, National Police Public Order Training Curriculum and JDM
2. Safer Transport successfully used by both clubs, resulting in no arrests or football related crime outside the stadia.
3. 
4. Review team find tactic extremely effective in reducing risk to the wider communities of both Wrexham and Chester.
5. Developed in conjunction with the clubs/
6. Feedback from SAG and Safety Officers was extremely positive.
7. Impact on the town/City during match days is negligible.
8. Tactic meets the Gold strategy.

Proportionality of the tactics and justification against the impact on human rights and the code of ethics.

1. Tactic devised as a proportionate, necessary and justifiable response to the continuous threat of violence and disorder and likely disruption to community as a whole.
2. Police are under obligation of Article 1 of HRA to protect property.

3. Police have a positive obligation under Article 2 to protect individuals whose lives are at risk from criminality of others.
4. Supporters and residents have rights, under Article 8 to have respect for private and family life demonstrated and also attendees have right of peaceful assembly and freedom of association with others – provided there is no threat to public safety.
5. Tactic does not curtail the individual or groups ability to gather, make excess noise, chant and enjoy the event within the confines of the law.

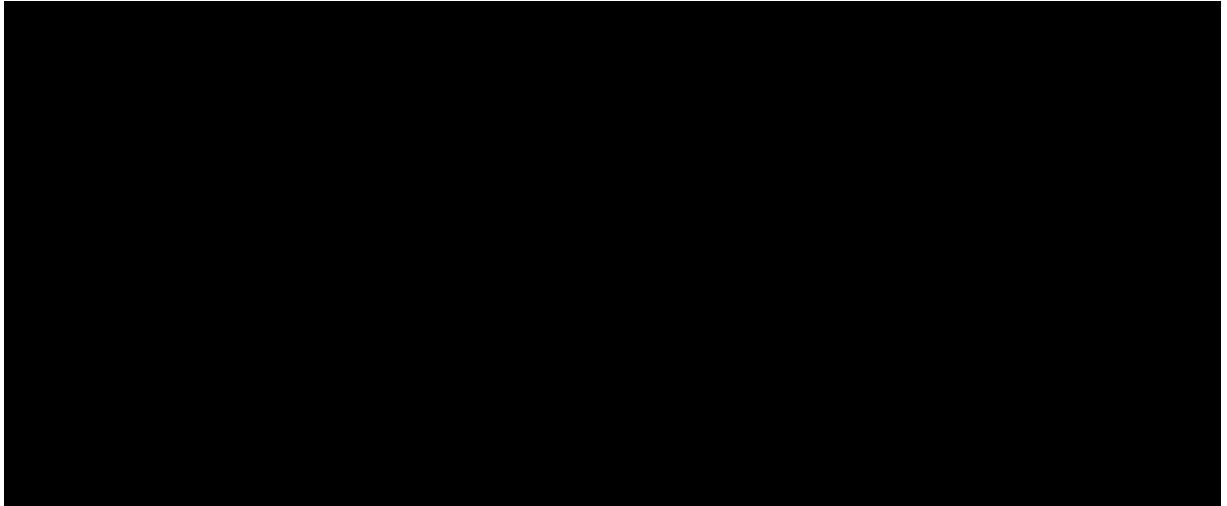
6.

7.

Opportunities for the police to mitigate the risk of disorder, violence and anti-social behaviour.

#### Rail Network operation

1. There is evidence that both forces receive proactive support from BTP pre / post match on the rail network.



Opportunities for other stakeholders to mitigate the risk of disorder, violence and anti- social behaviour.

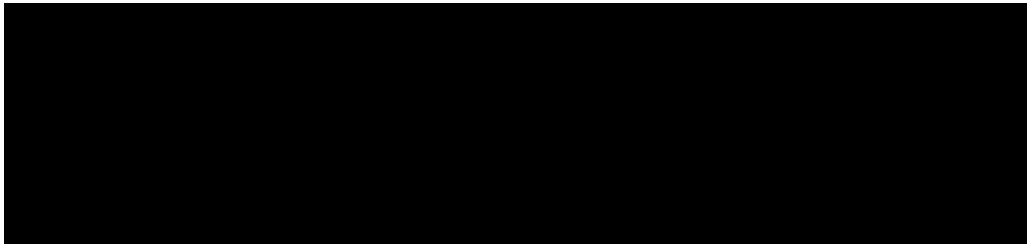



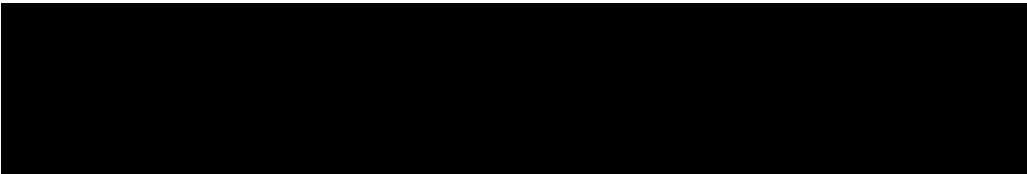
#### Football Supporters groups

1. As part of the review we spoke with Mr Peter Jones who is part of the supporter trust who own Wrexham Football Club. Mr Jones provided feedback that the 'Safe Transport' tactic both to and from the Wrexham and Chester football matches works well. He did indicate that he receives complaints from supporters of Wrexham who state that the safe travel removes freedom of choice and can be an inconvenience for the supporters. It is clear that there is divided opinion between those who support the idea and those who are against it.
2. Like all we have spoken to, he would like to see a move away from having to utilise 'Safe Transport' but again, in common with the club officials and SAG members we have spoken to, accepts it may not be possible in the short term. Positively he did state that he is happy with the style of policing of the home supporters at Wrexham and has seen an improvement of the policing style when Wrexham visit Chester.
3. Mr Jones does have meetings with the police and is obviously engaged in the planning process.
4. Chester do not have an active supporters group.
5. The Football Supporters Federation (FSF) will be able to offer advice to the club / police on the establishment of a supporter group and will also provide



feedback from a fans perspective on the club / policing operation. To the best of our knowledge, the FSF have never attended any pre or post match briefings or taken in any Chester / Wrexham, Wrexham / Chester football matches.

#### Safety Officer / Stewarding Operation

1. 
2. The Ground Safety Officers (GSO) from both clubs were very complimentary about the police operation.   
  
 It is clear that the GSOs understand the wider impact on the city centre and indicated that the 'Safer Transport' tactic has little impact once the fans are inside the stadium.
3. It was clear that both GSOs want to be fully involved in the planning process for this fixture but do have full time jobs alongside this role. It is noted that some thought and flexibility needs to be applied when arranging planning meetings involving these crucial stakeholders.
4. 

#### Media

1. Both forces, as stated above, have effective media (including social media) strategies. It is clear that the local papers from both force areas have been negative in their view of the 'Safer Transport' tactic.
2. North Wales police have involved their local paper, the 'Wrexham Leader', in their match day operation and this has reduced some of the negativity

surrounding the fixture. This was seen as a positive step and should be a future consideration by Cheshire with the 'Chester Chronicle'.

Any continuous professional development and learning for those involved in planning and policing football matches in both Forces.

#### Silver and Bronze Command

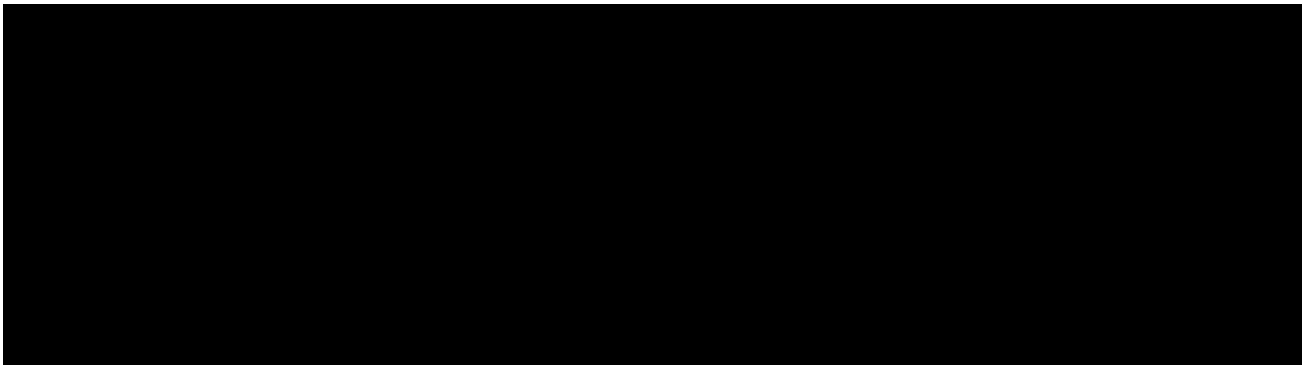
1. Both forces operate in line with NPCC and APP Guidelines in that all commanders are trained to Silver or Bronze command level and are Policing Events accredited.
2. It is evident that the Silver Commanders are experienced in policing football matches with a small cadre being utilised for the fixtures.
3. At Bronze level Commanders must attend their annual CPD event and maintain their personal portfolios, however there is no formal accreditation process in relation to performing the Bronze Command role for football.

#### Dedicated Football Officers (DFOs)

1. The DFO's from both forces are trained and qualified by the UK Football Policing Unit and clearly have a good working relationship for these fixtures sharing information and intelligence and support throughout.

#### Planners

1. Unfortunately Con. Heidi Goldsack, the DFO and planner from North Wales was deployed in France so the review team were unable to meet with her. It is evident from the range of documentation provided by both forces and speaking with Sgt. Carl Capewell from Cheshire that both have a vast amount of knowledge and experience with planning for such fixtures.



Opportunities to develop a consistent approach to cost recovery.

1. Both forces adhere to the National Policing Guidelines on charging for Police Services within the footprint of the stadium.
2. Resource levels and costings are agreed in the early planning stages with Special Police Services (SPS) agreements drawn up and signed by both parties.