

Chief Constable doubles police numbers in the Borders following FM's statement

Chief Constable Iain Livingstone has doubled the operational presence in the Borders in response to the First Minister's statement yesterday but he still does not consider it appropriate or proportionate for officers to establish check points or road blocks to simply enforce travel restrictions.

He said: "I've consistently underlined my compassion and concern for everyone affected by the highly restrictive measures which are, unfortunately, absolutely necessary to control the spread of the virus and, ultimately, protect life.



"Following the announcement by the First Minister, there can be no doubt that, other than for the most essential journeys, people should not be travelling between Scotland and other parts of the UK.

"Additionally, travel restrictions between local authority areas within Scotland which came into effect on 20 November, continue to apply and as from 00.01 hours on Boxing Day, 26 December, these increase to a blanket ban for mainland Scotland.

"I remain clear I do not consider it appropriate or proportionate for officers to establish check points or road

blocks to simply enforce travel restrictions.

“These restrictions are a preventative measure to halt the progress of Covid and Police Scotland will support this approach with a strong operational profile to deter those who would put others at risk.

“Today, I have authorised the doubling of our operational presence in the Border areas of Scotland.

“These highly visible patrols will be proactively deployed on our road networks to continue our operational activity to ensure drivers and vehicles are in a fit condition to drive. The patrols will also deter anyone who might be considering breaching the coronavirus travel restrictions.

“Our experience throughout the pandemic is that the overwhelming majority of people have demonstrated personal responsibility to do the right thing and I am hugely grateful for that support and co-operation. That must continue and I expect the roads to be quieter than usual over the coming days.

“We have been clear throughout this public health crisis that your police service is here to support our collective effort to combat coronavirus. Though the rules have changed often and, at times, quickly, officers and staff will continue with common sense, empathy and discretion to work with our fellow citizens to help keep everyone safe.

“It is the consent of the public from which policing in Scotland draws its legitimacy. As our communities expect, where officers encounter wilful, persistent or flagrant breaches we will act decisively to enforce the law.”