

Officers from a number of different agencies carried out spot checks across Northampton yesterday as part of the continuing operation. No action was taken against the driver in this picture *CE picture by KELLY COOPER*

HUNDREDS of cars were stopped in Northampton during one of the largest ever anti-crime operations carried out in the town.

More than 100 officers and representatives from 11 different partner agencies, including Trading Standards, HM Revenue and Customs, Environment Agency, UK Border Agency and British Transport Police, were split between two sites in the town from 9am until 8pm yesterday as part of a so-called "high impact day".

The intention of the operation was to target vehicles used by people involved in crime and teams of officers were set up in the Lidl car park in Far Cotton and at a location in Thorpeville, off the A33.

Superintendent Pete Windridge said: "The operation in Northamp-

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ton is one of the biggest we have undertaken of this nature and involves more partners than we have seen for some time, working together to target those people most likely to cause suffering to our local communities.

"This is a different aspect to our approach to Operation Guardian, but one that we hope will see many positive results. We hope Operation Guardian continues to demonstrate to our communities our determination to keep our county safe".

Earlier results from the operation held in the town included eight vehicles being seized from people and two people being arrested after officers found them to be wanted on arrest warrants.

As a result of a similar "stop and search" location in Kettering yesterday, a man in Wellingborough was arrested for theft from vehicles, and also in connection with drugs offences following the suspected recovery of cannabis, heroin and crack cocaine from an address in Great Park Street.

A woman was also arrested after a search warrant was executed in Barnes Close, Kettering, for suspected possession of drugs.

Other agencies involved in the operation included HM Court Services, the Vehicle Operators and Services Agency, the Department of Work and Pensions, SmartWater and Northampton Borough Council.

As the result of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) day of action earlier in the month 249 people were arrested and 431 vehicles were seized.

'This will send out a warning'

CRIMINAL activity in Northampton was likely to be "disrupted" by the high impact day, one of the inspectors in charge of running the operation has said.

Inspector Andy Hall, who was at the Lidl "stop and search" site yesterday, said the operation sent out a clear message to the local community that criminality of any type would not be tolerated.

He said: "The reason we pick the sites in Far Cotton and in Thorpeville is that they are near areas of high crime. The idea of the multi-

agency approach is that we can widen our audience of potential criminality.

"By the end of the day everyone will have known we have been here and with such a broad spectrum of partners here we can build up intelligence.

"If we stop someone for having no insurance then that could lead to us finding out they are wanted for another crime. We are using our wider powers to disrupt and arrest perpetrators of crime."

The operation in Northampton

involved more than 100 officers and representatives from 11 partner agencies and involved the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) equipment.

The vehicles stopped by officers were those that "flashed up" as having no tax or insurance or those that were deemed as "suspicious" in some way.

Insp Hall said: "We stop people whose vehicles flash up on the ANPR camera and officers use their experience to find vehicles that they think might look suspicious."

Eleven agencies join latest Operation Guardian sting

Hundreds face stop and search

