

For Information	
Public	
Report to:	Strategic Resources and Performance
Date of Meeting:	10th May 2019
Report of:	Chief Constable Guildford
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Agenda Item:	5

Rural Crime Update – April 2019

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Police and Crime Commissioner about rural crime activities and initiatives undertaken by Nottinghamshire Police. The report is broken down into a national and regional update and a local update for activity in Nottinghamshire.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Police and Crime Commissioner notes the contents of this report and the on-going activities in relation to rural crime.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure that the Police and Crime Commissioner is aware of the latest activity being undertaken by Nottinghamshire Police in relation to rural crime.

4. Summary of Key Points

4.1 National and regional update

- 4.1.1 There are national strategies in place for both rural and wildlife crime, which have recently been presented and agreed at the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). This is a particular development in terms of rural affairs as there are now documented, coordinated national priorities and activity for both areas. Each strategy has five identified priorities and a further shared priority between the two. These are listed below with copies of the strategies within the report appendices:

Rural Crime priorities

- Farm machinery, plant and vehicle theft
- Livestock offences
- Fuel theft
- Equine crime
- Fly-tipping

Wildlife crime priorities

- Badger persecution
- Bat persecution
- CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species)
- Freshwater pearl mussels
- Raptor persecution

Shared priority

- Poaching

4.1.2 Each priority has a national delivery group responsible for developing plans and driving activity. These groups are made up of key stakeholders, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) and enforcement bodies including the police. In addition, and mirroring the national ROCU (Regional Organised Crime Units) territories, regional enforcement groups are in place to coordinate and drive activity against the agreed priorities.

4.1.3 Nottinghamshire Police continues to hold the chair for the East Midlands Regional Enforcement Group ensuring we are connected and able to influence national debate and decision-making in both areas. One such example has been the advocating of social/digital/open source media investigative capacity within the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

4.1.4 As a consequence of the Regional Enforcement Group a growing network of officers is building across the East Midlands who have specialist knowledge, equipment and skills in the areas of rural and wildlife crime. The group is currently exploring how individual, discrete operations and engagement opportunities can be maximised through better coordination and collaboration.

4.1.5 The current NPCC lead for wildlife and rural affairs, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) Craig Naylor (Lincolnshire Police), has recently announced his retirement and as a result a process to appoint his successor will commence imminently.

4.2 Nottinghamshire update

4.2.1 New activity

New activity has primarily been aimed at tackling three areas of concern that most frequently occur or are raised by key stakeholders and rural communities through engagement events, correspondence/complaints and stakeholder meetings. These can be summarised as;

1. Knowledge and service at point of contact (Control Room)
2. Knowledge and service at point of attendance (police officers)
3. Lack of appropriate equipment to assist attending officers

1. All control room call-takers, despatchers, and Contact Resolution and Incident Management (CRIM) officers and staff have now received a specific training day input regarding wildlife crime and rural affairs. The objective is to raise awareness and knowledge of wildlife and rural affairs and therefore allowing for

a more informed and empathetic service to be provided. This included a short impactful video in which a farmer who was a victim of crime articulates the longer-term impact of the crime on his mental well-being, sleep patterns, fear of rural isolation and repeat victimisation. In addition financial and business costs and implications are explored and explanation provided regarding links to Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and less well-known legislation that can be applied. This is supported by a rural crime toolkit which has been developed and is electronically accessible within the Control Room and can be readily referenced when required.

2. For attending officers an electronic rural crime toolkit has been developed and is available to all officers through their agile working mobile devices. The toolkit can be amended and updated as required and provides an easily accessible and available resource to refer to prior, during, or after an incident. The toolkit, availability of new equipment, and a raised awareness of rural crime and its impact will be further emphasised and communicated with existing response officers in rural areas through shift briefings which are planned for 2019.

In order to ensure that the knowledge and awareness of rural crime and legislation continues to grow across the force, time has been made available within the year two phase four officer development programme for an input regarding rural crime and legislation. This is in partnership with learning and development colleagues and is scheduled to begin in June 2019.

3. To assist and support officers tackling rural crime an overall £20,000 investment has been made through the PCC/Chief Constable's crime fighting fund. This has allowed for the following equipment and training to be rolled out to frontline officers and rural areas to tackle rural crime:
 - Thermal imaging binoculars of the latest specification capable of detecting human-sized heat sources from over a kilometre away.
 - Handheld torches using the latest LED and lightweight technology capable of throwing a focussed spot-beam approximately 800m.
 - Handheld searchlights using the latest LED and lightweight technology capable of throwing a search-beam approximately 600m
 - Durable A3-sized metal signs giving enforcement messages on three specific rural crimes; hare coursing, poaching, and off-road vehicles (quads and bikes) – see appendices.
 - Providing training and protective equipment to a further four officers to utilise the force quad bike which has proven successful at engagement events and operationally.
 - Providing training for five officers to utilise the newly acquired force drone for rural operations.

4.2.2 **On-going activity**

Operational activity continues to focus on well-established and embedded operations which target hare coursing and poaching (Operation Bifocal), off-road vehicles (Operation Jericho), angling and riverside crime/ASB (Operation Traverse), and fuel theft (Operation Magna).

The Nottinghamshire Police Horsecatch Facebook page continues to expand and now has almost 3000 followers with more liveries and stables signing up across Nottinghamshire. Horsecatch recently pulled together a multi-agency meeting concerning a recent spate of ill-treated and neglected horses being abandoned which has affected the equine community.

Engagement and accountability continue to be addressed through the Rural Crime Partnership Group which provides a forum for stakeholders and partners to hear the latest updates from Nottinghamshire Police and also to raise any concerns or issues. The group continues to attract regular good attendance from a range of stakeholders including the NFU (National Farmers Union), NFU Mutual (National farmers Union Mutual), CLA (Countryside Landowners Association), NFRS (Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service), Local Estates and farm businesses.

The rural specials pro-active team has unfortunately seen a reduction in numbers and activity although still in existence over 2018. This has recently been raised and discussed with the new special constabulary senior leadership team and consideration given to how improvement can be made to the overall numbers, focus and activity of the team.

The force lead for rural crime continues to provide a rural crime input into various force projects, identifying areas that could improve and benefit our response and abilities to tackle and respond to rural crime. Engagement with the replacement command and control program team (SAFE) has involved discussion to ensure that rural crime types and management information regarding rural crime should be easier to abstract and identify in the future – improving our corporate understanding and informing our decision-making around rural crime. Engagement with the drone project has allowed rural-based neighbourhood policing team officers to be part of the first tranche of pilots and will ensure that rural crime is an area that will first benefit from the new technology and asset.

We do not currently have a performance monitoring regime for rural crime in Nottinghamshire. However, Chief Inspector Rooke receives community and stakeholder feedback at the rural crime partnership group. The £20,000 investment through the Crime Fighting Fund, as mentioned above, has been well received and the general direction is one of increased satisfaction. However, there are still pockets of frustration and dissatisfaction highlighted to us. The planned activity outlined below is aimed at trying to address some of these issues.

4.2.3 **Planned activity**

Identified areas of work for the future are summarised below:

- Continue to build and increase awareness of rural crime across the force.
- Continue to engage with relevant force projects to improve the corporate knowledge, understanding and ability to tackle and respond to rural crime, as well as make more informed decisions in relation to rural crime. This will

include a focus on developing an approach to better monitor force performance in this area.

- Continue to identify and develop opportunities for our rural community engagement offer.
- Explore collaborative opportunities that build and improve Nottinghamshire's engagement with rural communities, prevents rural crime in Nottinghamshire and pursues offenders committing rural crime in Nottinghamshire.
- Formalise internal governance.
- Maintain our commitment to rural crime operations.

5. Financial Implications and Budget Provision

- 5.1 To assist and support officers tackling rural crime an overall £20,000 investment has been made through the PCC/Chief Constable's crime fighting fund.

6. Human Resources Implications

- 6.1 Human resources implications are mainly in relation to the rural Specials Proactive Team. Work is on-going to increase the numbers with the new Special Constabulary senior leadership team.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

8. Risk Management

- 8.1 There are no immediate organisational risks associated with this report.

9. Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities

- 9.1 Linked with the Police and Crime Plan strategic priority of 'Tackling Crime and Antisocial Behaviour'.

10. Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations

- 10.1 There are no changes in legislation or other legal considerations that are relevant to this report.

11. Details of outcome of consultation

- 11.1 There has been no consultation in relation to this report as it is an update paper.

12. Appendices

- 12.1 There are no appendices attached to this report.