

<b>For Information</b>	
<b>Public</b>	
<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Strategic Resources and Performance</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> May 2021</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>DCC Barber</b>
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<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>6</b>

## **Rural Crime Update – April 2021**

### **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 are agreed through the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). The current NPCC lead is Chief Constable Martland, Cheshire Constabulary is stepping down due to retirement and will be replaced with DCC Debbie Ford, Northumbria Police. Each strategy has five identified priorities and a further shared priority between the two.

#### **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 holds 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. The meeting has been chaired by force lead Chief Inspector Rogers and the meeting structures were redefined and attendance reviewed. Meetings continued to take place virtually throughout 2020 through the pandemic. Chief Inspector Heather Sutton will take over as force lead from 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

4.1.4 As a consequence of the Regional Enforcement Group there is a growing network of officers across the East Midlands that have the specialist knowledge, equipment and skills to tackle and advise on all areas of rural and wildlife crime. The group continues to look at opportunities to collaborate on proactive operations and engagement opportunities. By pooling cross border resources on this agenda, we are far more equipped to make the required impact. This includes developing a regional annual engagement and events calendar, where rural and wildlife crime officers can be present and educate and raise the profile of the issues.

## **4.2 Nottinghamshire update**

### **4.2.1 Training**

Training has been undertaken to address some knowledge gaps and misconceptions about the severity and impact of rural crime, both within the Force Control Room and frontline staff. Feedback from community members is that Nottinghamshire police continue to be more responsive to the calls for service relating to rural crime and demonstrating a better understanding. The force control room are also making best use of an App called 'what3words' which is routinely used by farmers, landowners and rural communities. This enables callers to explain exactly where an incident is occurring in the absence of any street or postcode and enables police resource to be directed quickly to the remote rural location.

The recruitment that has taken place through 2020/2021 continues through Operation Uplift and provides the opportunity to educate new and incoming frontline staff on rural crime as part of basic training. All second year phase four officers are now receiving training on rural crime and legislation as part of the syllabus.

The rural crime toolkit has been updated and is available to all officers and staff on their agile devices. This is a simple guide that takes officers through the legislation and options for dealing with offences, as well as listing the details of the trained wildlife officers who are based across the force area.

Wildlife and Rural crime are intrinsically linked and in 2019/20 SNB grant funding was secured to train a further 5 officers, including a Sergeant in Wildlife Crime Enforcement. Due to the Covid19 pandemic this training was postponed and was finally delivered virtually in March 2021. As the course was delivered virtually this enabled 21 Wildlife Crime Officers (WCO) to receive nationally accredited training, and therefore there are now WCO's based within each NPT team.

SNB grant funding was also given to train rural response, neighbourhood policing officers and special constables in large animal handling. This was in response to feedback from the rural community and officers themselves about the inherent risks when dealing with loose livestock on rural roads. Again, courses were disrupted through Covid19, but delivery of the training commenced through summer 2020 and has been very well received.

We have delivered greater resilience to the Off Road bike capability by training further NPT officers, we now have 16 officers across the force who are trained and can be deployed and respond to local need.

#### **4.2.2 Engagement**

Since taking over the lead in October 2019 Chief Inspector Rogers has developed links with key stakeholders from the National Farmers Union, Country Landowners and National Game Keepers Associations as well as some of the larger landowning estates Welbeck, Thoresby and Clumber Park.

Chief Inspector Rogers has also undertaken a series of 'farmhouse kitchen' meetings in both the North and South of Nottinghamshire. Farmers and landowners have talked about what matters to them, and explained directly about the detrimental financial but also emotional impact of rural crime and how this is affecting their lives.

The Rural Crime Partnership Delivery group continues to meet quarterly and has done so virtually throughout the COVID pandemic. Virtual meetings have been effective and enabled wider attendance from across Nottinghamshire. The group consists of partners, rural stakeholders and local landowners. Matters discussed include updates on the Neighbourhood Policing Plan, Operation Uplift, and how the introduction of Reacher teams to neighbourhood policing has enabled proactive targeting of the crime that matters locally. The

group also had a presentation on the new Police & Fire Drone, explaining how deployments would be managed and how we would use the tactic to support the combatting of crime in rural areas. From this group it is acknowledged that there remain frustrations with the use of 101 to report crimes, and anecdotal evidence that crime is going unreported for this reason. The opportunity was taken to explain and demonstrate the online reporting tool.

In addition to the Rural Crime Partnership delivery group, Chief Inspector Rogers has continued to meet with key stakeholders from the NFU and attended surgeries, met with the Country Landowners Association and engaged with Nottinghamshire Hunts and opposing groups. When normality resumes there will be further engagement events which will take place jointly with NFRS as part of the rural intervention programme.

Local officers continue to attend parish council and community meetings whenever possible, and provide updates through social media, Neighbourhood Policing Inspector blogs, vlogs and stakeholder updates.

#### **4.2.3 Operational 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).

Fuel theft on the A1 corridor through Nottinghamshire accounts for a large proportion of the vehicle crime reported in that locality. Whilst on the surface a low harm crime, the associated damage to land and trespass continues to be a huge issue for landowners and is not underestimated. Local officers are applying problem solving methodology in an effort to resolve the issue long term, but have had some excellent results recently through targeted and proactive policing. Since February 2020 we have worked closely with the Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood CSP to deploy a capture HGV at hot spot locations for this crime under Operation Magna. Following great success with the HGV capture lorry which was reported on in the last report, the local NPT and Reacher teams have regularly deployed on the A1 corridor on a Wednesday evening which is the peak offending time. There is a marked correlation between these high visibility patrols and reduction in offences at those times.

The Nottinghamshire Police Horse-watch Facebook page has around 3000 followers with more liveries and stables signing up across Nottinghamshire. This continues to be a very active group and a good opportunity for engagement.

Throughout 2020 and the pandemic lock down Nottinghamshire saw a rise in the anti-social behaviour associated with off road bikes. The warm dry weather during the summer months contributed to the issue. PS Christian Hurley and PS Simon Whitehouse have continued to run Operation Jericho

with some impressive results. The Newark and Sherwood NPT worked successfully with local landowners and National Rail to problem solve an issue where quads and off road bikes were able to access land from Newark by crossing the railway lines and River Trent when river levels were low. There has been on-going success across Nottinghamshire with Operation Jericho, including the seizure of motorbikes and motor vehicles, issuing of section 59 warnings and Covid fines. This has been supported through the greater resilience within the off road bike team and a dedicated rural patrol vehicle. Results are well publicised through social media and stakeholder updates.

A team of rural special constables also work closely with Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood NPT and receive weekly tasking enabling them to be deployed where they can make a valuable contribution and impact.

In more general terms the use of the Police/Fire Drone has been invaluable for rural policing, such as monitoring activity, enabling aerial assessment of large areas for operational planning and of course rural land searches. Drone technology does present some policing challenges and we are continuing to learn about the evolving use of drones across racecourses for gambling purposes. Rural communities are also concerned about the criminal use of drones to scope properties and facilitation of crime.

Performance highlights can be found as an appendix to this report.

#### **4.2.4 Future Plans**

Identified areas of work for the future are summarised below:

- Continue to build and increase awareness of rural crime across the organisation.
- Develop a performance monitoring framework to gain an accurate understanding of the scale and scope of rural crime. Working with regional forces to use Niche effectively to flag and report on rural crime.
- Scope potential for a small rural crime team to coordinate force-wide activity.
- Build trust through transparent and wide reaching communication, as some communities do not feel that rural crime is appropriately prioritised or enough resource allocated.
- Encourage the use of 101 and online crime reporting.
- Set up internal Rural and Wildlife tactical group with the specially trained officers and rural NPT's. This will formalise the governance and assist in coordinating and evaluating activity.
- Input to NFU and CLA by Cyber Protect Officers.
- Deliver a joint Rural Intervention Programme with Nottinghamshire FRS.
- Undertake rural community engagement events on the engage to recruit agenda.

## **5. Financial Implications and Budget Provision**

5.1 No budget allocated through 20/21

## **6. Human Resources Implications**

6.1 None

## **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 Appendix 1 – Rural Crime performance

## Appendix - Rural Crime - Performance Highlights

### DRONES

Between 06/01/2020 – 28/04/2021

- Operationally the team have amassed over 370 hours of flight time.
- The Drone has assisted in locating 13 missing people
- Involved in over 41 incidents where the drone has assisted directly in arrests made.
- With a further 80 other positive outcomes tagged for deployments (this could be anything from vehicles located, evidential imagery/videography captured supporting investigations).

**Spontaneous Deployments – 674** This is figures from our dedicated 24/7 capability.

Incident Type	No. Deployments	%
Misper/Suicide	230	34.1
RTC/ Road related	101	14.9
Other	97	14.3
Violence	48	7.1
Burglary	46	6.8
Arrest Attempts	41	6
Firearms (OS)	30	4.4
Training	20	2.9
Fire incidents (NFRS)	19	2.8
Intelligence / Drugs	18	2.6
Warrants	10	1.5
Ops Planning	5	0.7
Engagement	1	0.1
Pre-Planned	1	0.1

<b>NPIA</b>	<b>No. Deployments</b>	<b>%</b>
Ashfield	90	13.3
Bassetlaw	75	11.1
Broxtowe	63	9.3
City Central	21	3.1
City Centre	16	2.4
City North	57	8.4
City South	35	5.2
City West	22	3.2
Gedling	48	7.1
Mansfield	88	13
Newark & Sherwood	107	15.8
Rushcliffe	48	7.1

## **Pre-Planned Deployments – 369**

This is a separate function to our Spontaneous Cover which is manned by officers on NPT.

<b>Incident Type</b>	<b>No. Deployments</b>	<b>%</b>
Football	1	0.2
RTC/ Road related	8	2.1
Other	23	6.2
Violence	4	1
Burglary	1	0.2
Arrest Attempts	4	1
Firearms (OS)	1	0.2
Training	103	27.9
Event	1	0.2
Intelligence / Drugs	107	28.9
Warrants	18	4.8
Ops Planning	12	3.2
Engagement	3	0.8
Pre-Planned	77	20.8

<b>NPIA</b>	<b>No. Deployments</b>	<b>%</b>
Ashfield	66	17.8
Bassetlaw	32	8.6
Broxtowe	64	17.3
City Central	8	2.1
City Centre	5	1.3
City North	23	6.2

City South	16	4.3
City West	13	3.5
Gedling	43	11.6
Mansfield	17	4.6
Newark & Sherwood	37	10
Rushcliffe	29	7.8

The Pre-Planned function allows the drone to be used to assist in tackling local issues, for example we've supported in a number of issues such as (to list a few!):

- Hare Coursing operation (Rushcliffe)
- Off Road Bike Operations (Broxtowe, Ashfield, Newark & Sherwood, Bassetlaw, City North and City South)
- Junction 27 – Car Cruising (Ashfield)
- East Midlands Parkway – Car Cruising (Rushcliffe)
- Op Magna (Newark & Sherwood) – Fuel Theft

### **Operation Jericho**

Takes place through the calendar year. Its aim is to tackle anti-social behaviour and criminal damage caused by off road motor vehicles which is affecting local landowners, farmers and members of the community.

Just one example that highlights the activity are the results of the operation that took place over the weekends on the 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and was focussed on areas in and around the A614 that border Mansfield and the 'Desert', Rainworth, Kirton and Walesby villages.

4x motorbikes were stopped and their riders issued with Section 59 warnings.

3x vehicles were stopped and seized for no tax and no insurance.

2x motor vehicles were stopped for driving offences which consist of mobile phone use, no tax, and were reported for summons.

There is a marked reduction in calls following activity of this type indicating the preventative element of having targeted and high visibility presence. Working with partners we are also applying problem solving approaches, such as the use of Public Space Protection Orders to deter individuals from engaging in the anti-social and illegal activity.