

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY MEETING

AGENDA

DATE OF MEETING	6 OCTOBER 2022
TITLE OF MEETING	THE COMMISSIONER'S POLICE & CRIME PLAN 2021-2025 - PRIORITY 4: RURAL CRIME
TIME OF MEETING	2:30 PM
LOCATION	VIRTUAL
CONTACT	OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR DERBYSHIRE 0300 122 6000
DISTRIBUTION	POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER CHIEF CONSTABLE DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLES DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & BUSINESS SERVICES HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES OPCC CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OPCC HEADS OF DEPTS OPCC COMMUNICATIONS OPCC PERFORMANCE & DATA ANALYST

AGENDA ITEM	SUBJECT
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
3.	ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONER
4.	ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHIEF CONSTABLE
5.	THE COMMISSIONER'S POLICE & CRIME PLAN 2021-2025 - PRIORITY 4: RURAL CRIME REPORT FROM THE CHIEF CONSTABLE
6.	PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON RURAL CRIME
7.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS



Derbyshire
Police and Crime
Commissioner

Protecting Communities,
Fighting Crime



AGENDA ITEM

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PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY MEETING

REPORT TITLE	THE COMMISSIONER'S POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2021-2025 - PRIORITY 4: RURAL CRIME
REPORT BY	CHIEF CONSTABLE
DATE	6 OCTOBER 2022

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide assurance to the Police and Crime Commissioner that the Constabulary are making progress towards the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan Objective 4: Rural Crime.

ATTACHMENTS

None

RECOMMENDATIONS

To determine if the Commissioner can gain direct assurance that this area of business is being managed efficiently and effectively.

CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES

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1. OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC PRIORITY

- 1.1. It is recognised that the unique characteristics, and often-isolated nature of rural communities can have an aggravating effect on the impact of crime, and the fear of crime felt by those living in those communities. The high policing demands of urban areas can often draw police resources away from rural communities and some of the legislation and crime types relevant to rural crime can often require specialist knowledge. It is for these reasons Derbyshire Constabulary established a dedicated Rural Crime Team (RCT) to seek to address some of these issues.
- 1.2. 'Rural Crime' can have a very broad definition, arguably including any crime type that may occur in a rural community and can therefore be very difficult to quantify, particularly in absence of a consistently accepted definition of 'rural'. Work is ongoing to define 'rural' in Derbyshire, in a way that is compatible with crime/incident records and can be used to present a more informed analysis in future.
- 1.3. However, there are four categories which are clearly considered by Derbyshire Police to fall specifically within the area of 'rural crime' and considered areas of priority for the RCT.
- 1.4. These are: -
 - **Agricultural** – Operation Logrey - Agricultural crime covers working farms, farm machinery, farm buildings and smallholdings. Offences include theft of equipment or fuel, damage to property, theft of livestock and livestock worrying.
 - **Equine** – Operation Tilly - Equine crime covers working stables and equestrian centres and includes offences like tack theft.
 - **Wildlife** – Operation Whistler - Wildlife crime includes hare coursing, poaching, and interfering with protected species.

- **Heritage** – Operation Chronos - Heritage crime is defined as 'any offence which harms the value of England's heritage assets and their settings to this and future generations'. That can include offences like lead theft from churches, damage to ancient monuments and illegal metal detecting.
- 1.5. Rural crime is a key priority in the current Police and Crime Plan, and the specific policing priorities for the RCT are based on the current crime trends in Derbyshire and the surrounding county areas. In terms of rural crime, the focus has been and still is on plant/farm/agricultural machinery and tool theft. This includes quad bikes, All Terrain Vehicles, and trailers/livestock trailers. These offences are year-round with seasonal peaks associated with farming activity. We are also seeing a year-round trend on livestock worrying associated with irresponsible dog handling/ownership. These priorities are generally reflective of the national rural crime picture. In terms of wildlife crime priorities, the Team focus is on the priorities set by the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) strategic assessment and how they present in our county area. Our main wildlife crime areas are poaching, fish poaching and the illegal persecution of birds of prey, particularly the taking of wild peregrine falcons associated with the illegal falconry trade which extends to national and international criminality. In terms of Heritage Crime, whilst the numbers of reported incidents are low, we are seeing crime trends in other county areas which may result in an uplift of incidents here in Derbyshire. Church roof lead theft is one such crime trend. There are problem management plans in place aimed at tackling these identified local trends which again are to some extent seasonal.
- 1.6. There have been no major procedural or legislative changes over the past 12 months, nor are any foreseen, that will have any significant impact on the work of the RCT. We are however seeing an increase in anti-social behaviour being reported by partners across the Peak District and indeed the county. This is anti-social behaviour associated with an increased and different visitor profile to the county's national park and other rural areas. This has manifested itself in the form of drunkenness, barbecues and campfires and littering as well as some wild camping in areas where such activities are prohibited. In the case of barbecues

and campfires this is obviously a significant risk relating to wildfires, particularly given the hot dry weather over this summer. These incidents are currently being attended by National Park rangers, National Trust staff and various other estate staff. Where appropriate, such instances of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are adopted by the relevant local Safer Neighbourhood Team as local priorities and tackled with the support of the RCT.

- 1.7. Another crime trend that seems to be on the increase is fly tipping and whilst the enforcement responsibility for fly-tipping lies with the Local Authority, if offenders are found in the act of committing offences by patrolling police resources, then enforcement action will be taken.
- 1.8. Given the potentially broad definition of 'rural crime', recording and monitoring of rural crime figures can be challenging. Incidents and crimes affecting rural communities are reported under other general categories such as ASB, theft, burglary, criminal damage, wildlife related etc and are not easily identifiable from more general crime trends at a force level. Local crime trends affecting all communities, including rural, are identified, and reviewed at the relevant policing division however, where they are managed accordingly.
- 1.9. Seeking to improve on this position in terms of data quality new incident closure codes were introduced to identify rural crime priority related incidents. Presently, however, the data cannot be considered 100% accurate as the mechanism of identifying and labelling of relevant incidents is still evolving and improving. It does, however, give a broad representation of incidents with the identified priority areas, albeit comparison with past periods of time is problematic owing to the changes.
- 1.10. As identified above, the data quality issue means that it is not possible to accurately identify and compare historic 'rural crime'; however, specific 'rural crimes' in line with the specific rural crime priority areas in the previous 12 months have been recorded as follows: -

- There have been 144 records made under Operation Logrey (Occurrences relating to Agriculture) in the 12 months:

Theft of farm machinery/vehicles	35
Theft of Tools	22
Theft of livestock	7
Theft of fuel	6
Criminal damage	14
Livestock Worrying	37
Miscellaneous	23

- There have been 121 records made under Operation Whistler (Occurrences relating to Wildlife) in the 12 months.

Offences relating to badgers	18
Offences relating to birds	41
Offences relating to bats	1
Trade of endangered species offences	5
Poaching (fish/deer/hare coursing)	36

- There have been 16 records made under Operation Chronos (Occurrences relating to Heritage) in the last 12 months.

Criminal damage	6
Theft	7
Miscellaneous	3

- There have been 13 records made under Operation Tilly (Occurrences relating to Equine) in the last 12 months.

Theft/burglary offences	10
Offence relating to animal welfare	2
Livestock worrying	1

- 1.11. Work is ongoing to improve the quality of the available data and afford a complete and accurate picture of the levels of demand in terms of rural crime, and it is recognised that this lack of data is an issue for the Force.
- 1.12. An ongoing review into the operational functioning of the RCT is ongoing, examining a wide variety of factors such as shift pattern, staff experience and training, communication (both internal and external), links to force tasking processes, and improving performance data. The role of the RCT and its interaction and support both to and from the Safer Neighbourhood Teams in rural areas is also being considered to maximise the force's effectiveness and efficiency in this priority area. Best practice nationally will be factored into the review, as will benchmarking with the RCTs of other police areas.

2. SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

- 2.1. There have been a variety of successful, and high-profile investigations into rural crime in Derbyshire over the last year, a selection of which are as follows.
- 2.2. The Team investigated reports made by protestor groups in December 2021 and January 2022 regarding illegal fox hunting in the south of Derbyshire. Several suspects were identified and interviewed in a joint investigation with CID.
- 2.3. A joint agency search warrant executed in July 2021 at a Derbyshire farm during which illegal firearms were recovered and a suspect arrested. Currently awaiting charge decision from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).
- 2.4. A South Yorkshire based criminal arrested for theft of a John Deere Gator in September 2021 following forensic evidence. Following a protracted investigation he was charged and subsequently convicted at court in July this year for handling stolen goods.
- 2.5. Suspect arrested in May 2022 for shooting birds and firearms offences in residential location and remains under investigation whilst the rifle is tested.

- 2.6. On 28 March 2022 a prolific Derbyshire criminal, who was subject of a RCT investigation, was convicted and sentenced to 47 months for offences against the farming community between 2019 and 2021 such as theft of a mini digger, handling a stolen land rover, theft of a trailer, fraud offences and perverting the course of justice.
- 2.7. Joint operation with neighbouring forces into the handling of stolen farm equipment and plant led to the execution of a search warrant Derbyshire farm in January 2022. The RCT recovered thousands of pounds of farm and plant equipment such as an All-Terrain Vehicle, two quad bikes, a trailer, a stolen motor vehicle and various other power tools. A suspect was arrested for handling stolen goods and firearms offences. He remains under investigation by Nottinghamshire Police in relation to the stolen property but is to be charged to court for the firearms offences investigated by the Derbyshire RCT.
- 2.8. On 14 March, the RCT led a multi-agency raptor persecution operation in Chesterfield area following numerous reports of poisoned birds in the area.
- 2.9. A crime prevention initiative at peregrine nesting site than ran during the nesting period between February and June 2022.
- 2.10. Since March 2022 Derbyshire have worked closely with South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire Police to tackle a persistent illegal off-road bike issue on the North East border around Lightwood Lane, and Ridgeway.
- 2.11. Following a public meeting in May 2022, attended by around 50 local farmers and landowners to discuss this and other issues, a joint initiative with around local landowners was set up to track the groups of off-road bikes and provide regular up to date information to Police for enforcement activities. The operations were done in conjunction with social media appeals and reported on by ITV at the time.

- 2.12. During the operations, which became regular events throughout the summer, the South Yorkshire Police off-road bike team seized several off-road bikes and the area has since seen a significant reduction of the problem within Derbyshire itself.
- 2.13. On 22 August this year, a dog owner was convicted at court of 2 counts of having a dog dangerously out of control and 2 counts of livestock worrying following a particularly upsetting incident of livestock worrying at a farm in Dronfield where 2 prize sheep were killed.

3. SUB-OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF STAFF AND OFFICERS TRAINED TO TACKLE THE SPECIFIC ISSUES FACING THE RURAL COMMUNITIES OF DERBYSHIRE

- 3.1. The RCT does not function alone in policing the rural communities of Derbyshire. All areas are covered by dedicated Safer Neighbourhood Teams, supported by the response function, and all investigative and operational support departments in the force. The RCT itself provides specialist skills and support to this wider pool of resources.
- 3.2. The core RCT establishment currently stands at one full-time Sergeant and seven full-time constables. Presently six of the constable posts are filled, and a recruitment process to fill the vacancy is actively underway. All officers are specialist wildlife crime investigators and three are specialist investigators in relation to the control of endangered species. All officers have completed training with Historic England regarding the investigation of Heritage crime. There is also a part-time coordinator and a part-time administrator to support the Team and there will shortly be an addition to the RCT in the form of Derbyshire's first Rural Crime PCSO. The role profile for this post is currently being finalised after which recruitment into the role will take place, and the core duties will be:
- Support community and stakeholder engagement and participation in policing by aiding in the development of a range of approaches to support the identification of local issues, crime prevention, building social cohesion and increasing rural community confidence in policing.

- Develop effective relationships with individuals, including people who are vulnerable and at risk across rural communities, providing support and guidance to identify root causes, assess needs, prevent crime, respond to concerns, and build trust in policing.
 - Support the implementation of problem solving and evidenced based policing initiatives to develop targeted approaches to reduce the impact of crime and disorder on rural communities.
 - To promote Derbyshire Alert to the public, specifically rural communities such as farmers, by encouraging people to sign up and by creating and distributing relevant material via the system.
 - Make good use of existing social media profiles to communicate with rural communities as well as helping to develop new means of communication and promoting the good work of the RCT.
- 3.3. There are also 14 other officers in the force who have undergone the wildlife crime officer national training course, provided by the National Wildlife Crime Unit, and who function as points of contact on a variety of front-line response, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, CID, and Operations Division and are available to respond to any reports of wildlife crime should the RCT not be available in the first instance. Unfortunately, this training is currently under review by the National Wildlife Crime Unit, but once it becomes available again the Constabulary will seek to utilise it to maintain capability in this area.
- 3.4. The RCT raises awareness and deliver training to the wider force regarding issues faced by rural communities and how to deal with them. The Team also delivers a training input to all student officers as part of the core training and there is rural and wildlife crime input to all new call centre staff. Furthermore, on 17 June 2022, 26 officers and police staff working in different areas throughout the force attended the first Rural and Wildlife Crime Awareness training day. This event which was opened by the Police and Crime Commissioner was held at a working Derbyshire farm and had inputs from expert speakers from the National Farmers Union (NFU),

DATATAG, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and the Willow Project. It is intended that this training event will be held annually further increasing the capability and capacity of the wider force to support tackling rural crime issues.

- 3.5. A wider 'needs assessment' is to be carried out as part of the ongoing review on the current capability of the force with regards to the various elements of rural and wildlife crime training that have been delivered. This will be done with a view to formulate a consistent future training package to be delivered to identified officers in appropriate roles, to enable them to support this priority more effectively. For officers already trained, this will include a programme of continuous professional development and where need, refreshment of prior training. Policing rural communities is the responsibility of many officers and staff, not simply the RCT. Crime occurs in rural locations as it would in other areas. It is therefore important that all officers and staff understand the most effective way to police crime in these communities, giving reassurance and confidence.

4. SUB-OBJECTIVE 2: COMMISSIONING SERVICES THAT UNDERSTAND AND CAN RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THOSE LIVING IN A RURAL SETTING

- 4.1. Derbyshire has a large rural area with farming and land management activity across the whole county. A project completed by the force Geographical Information System (GIS) team has identified 4,800 farms across the county. There are also numerous privately owned upland and lowland estate areas as well as large areas of land managed by statutory partners, private companies and charities, examples being the National Trust, United Utilities, and the RSPB to name a few. We regularly engage with a wide array of partners through the various forums hosted by the Peak District National Park Authority as well as through other channels as required or dictated by emerging incidents or trends.
- 4.2. In terms of engagement with farmers and landowners the RCT undertakes farm visits which are aimed at providing visibility and reassurance as well as crime prevention advice where necessary. They are regular visitors to the local farmers

market where engagement takes place with other rural partners such as NFU as well as being available and visible to local farmers.

- 4.3. Weekly monitoring of situation reports from the Peak Park Ranger Service is completed and advice and support is provided when required.
- 4.4. The Team are also currently supporting several of our upland shooting estates following intelligence received about shoot disruption associated with animal welfare activists. We engage with these estates as a result of ongoing issues with damage and trespass which is again associated with certain types of activism. Neighbouring forces have experienced direct action against organised shoots in since the start of the new shooting season on 12 August and it is anticipated that shoot disruption will be an emerging trend.
- 4.5. The Team have regular engagement events at shows, markets, and other central community locations where they provide specialist crime prevention advice, supported by the Team's coordinators and volunteers. One such forthcoming event will be Chatsworth Country Fair where we will also be supported by the force Firearms Licensing department and the Willow Project.
- 4.6. The Team have an excellent relationship supporting the Willow Project who are a Police and Crime Commissioner funded project within Rural Action Derbyshire and provide training and awareness throughout Derbyshire. Their training helps people identify signs of domestic abuse and gives confidence to people to report it and challenge attitudes that perpetuate domestic abuse. They recognise that domestic abuse faced by victims who live in rural locations can be quite different to those living in busy towns or cities. The RCT are committed to enforcing this message and work with the Willow Project to raise the awareness of domestic abuse in rural communities to Derbyshire officers and staff. The Willow Project join the RCT at various engagement events and have delivered training to Derbyshire officers at the Rural Crime Awareness Training Day.

- 4.7. The RCT work closely with other regional forces and their RCTs to share good practice and intelligence. Weekly intelligence sharing meetings take place with rural crime specialists from Police forces throughout the region and this has led to several proactive operations targeting cross border criminality as well as a joint operation with neighbouring forces into the handling of stolen farm equipment and plant.
- 4.8. All areas of Derbyshire are covered by Safer Neighbourhood Teams with their own programmes of engagement and have documented relevant neighbourhood profiles. By also working towards sub-objective 6, improving communication and engagement, the Force can build a rich picture of the specific needs of the communities it serves.

5. SUB-OBJECTIVE 3: COMMISSIONING CRIME PREVENTION ACTIVITIES FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES TO REDUCE CRIME, TRESPASS AND THEFT

- 5.1. The RCT officers have all completed problem-solving training and are currently using an evidence-based problem-solving approach to tackle several issues including acquisitive agricultural crime, livestock worrying and raptor persecution. The problem management plans identify, record, and assess crimes and intelligence which helps the Team focus their response in terms of hot spot locations, repeat victims and suspect offenders focusing effective crime prevention initiatives, proactive operations, and targeted patrols.
- 5.2. The current active plans are:–
- Theft of plant and agricultural machinery 2021-22
 - Theft of plant and farming equipment 2022-23
 - Sheep/livestock worrying
 - Illegal persecution of peregrine falcons
 - Illegal fish poaching and theft of fishing rights

- 5.3. The problem management process has included analytical work using Control Works, Niche and Power BI as well as daily automated keyword searches from Business Objects. The process of identifying incident and crime trends for rural crime types has proved problematic previously; however, we have initiated the use of specific operation names and local qualifiers on both niche and control works aimed at making the data more searchable. Over time this will undoubtedly prove beneficial in evidencing the extent or otherwise of our various priority areas and crime trends. Power BI has also proved useful in identifying patterns and hotspots and this continues to be used.
- 5.4. We have also engaged with the Force GIS department who have created various data sets for mapping. One such overlay is all the heritage site locations in the county.
- 5.5. All the Problem Management Plans are currently still open and therefore have not yet been assessed and evaluated. When they are completed, the work will be shared with others internally via the online Connect library or externally on the national College of Policing Knowledge Hub.
- 5.6. In March this year Derbyshire Constabulary signed a memorandum of understanding with the Peak District National Park Authority, which was driven by the Peak Park Summit, chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Executive Officer of the Peak District National Park Authority. With this new agreement both organisations, along with community safety partnerships, come together to work on coordinated efforts to tackle rural and wildlife crime. The agreement recognises the distinct roles and responsibilities of the two bodies but also identifies how collaborative working can benefit both local communities and visitors to the area. There are regular meetings involving both organisations, along with other community partners, to share information, provide updates on ongoing work and identify emerging issues. The RCT and local Safer Neighbourhood officers work closely with Rangers and staff within the National Park Authority to ensure that joined up working is taking place and the Peak District remains a popular and safe place to live.

- 5.7. The recently passed Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduced a new offence, and strengthened some existing powers, relating to trespass. At the time of this report the Force has yet to have need to utilise these new powers, however, they are potentially useful additions to the legislative framework which may be called upon to deal with such incidents. Work is ongoing around the implications of the Act and how it will be implemented in Derbyshire. Primacy in the vast majority of incidents of trespass (where residence without permission is the intention) rests with the landowner or Local Authority, and this has not changed with the new legislation. The Force will continue to work with the relevant partners, and the Illegal Encampment Taskforce where such cases arise where and it will provide the appropriate level of support required in each case.
- 5.8. A case study of our community engagement work can be seen in our response to trap damage/trespass and harassment against upland estate game keepers/ shoot managers. This is a problem identified as occurring across a number of our upland estate areas. The background being activists targeting shooting estates. It manifests itself in targeting their methods of predator/pest control – through the use of snares, spring, and cage traps. These are being stolen and/or damaged at significant cost to the estate. There have also been instances of harassment and intimidation of estate workers.
- 5.9. The Team have worked with individual premises as well as partner organisations including the National Game Keepers Organisation and the Moorlands Association, who assist in coordinating ‘watch schemes’ within the various shooting communities, where we provide crime prevention advice and advice on incident reporting. The issue has also been briefed to the various partners of the ‘Peak Park Summit’ which is chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner, for cascade to the operational ranger teams of the Peak Park, National Trust, and other major landowners.

- 5.10. The Team have set up a specific Operation name to capture all incident data on this issue and have briefed relevant Safer Neighbourhood Team staff to raise awareness of the legislative detail and subject specifics. This will hopefully improve the policing response to incidents as they occur.
- 5.11. This approach is proven to be effective and replicates the approach taken to the current epidemic of fish poaching/theft of fishing rights in the Bakewell/Haddon areas where we are experiencing ASB and poaching by visiting groups.
- 5.12. The very nature of these offences makes them hard to police and to detect/prevent, as they are often committed miles from the nearest road in upland areas with the likelihood of any witnesses being minimal.
- 5.13. The Team have also worked on engagement with activist groups through the police protest liaison officer network to tackle potential problems. This is an ongoing issue which now seems to be spreading to shoot disruption as mentioned earlier in the report.
- 5.14. The RCT closely with DATATAG and have 24-hour access to their property system as well as two of the latest DATATAG scanners which have been used to identify and recover stolen equipment, including a John Deer Gator found during the search warrant in January and a quad bike stolen from Ashbourne in January 2022 which was recovered in June from an address in Worksop after it was seen advertised for sale and returned to the victim.
- 5.15. In September 2019, in partnership with DATATAG, the RCT secured £2,000 funding from Bolsover and North East Derbyshire District Councils that has led to the tagging of over £1 million worth of machinery in these areas.

6. SUB-OBJECTIVE 4: PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER SCHEMES SUCH AS NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH AND FARM WATCH

- 6.1. The RCT work closely with the local Safer Neighbourhood Teams in terms of engagement with local Neighbourhood Watch schemes and can support the teams in the setting of community priorities from a rural crime perspective. This is done in line with the recently launched force standards of neighbourhood engagement as summarised in the Community Charter.
- 6.2. Where possible the RCT will attend local parish council meetings when there are specific issues that fall within their priority areas.
- 6.3. The RCT are working to improve the awareness and use of Derbyshire Alert system within rural communities. We are working to improve the current Farm Watch with Rural Crime Volunteers attending the farmers' market at Bakewell on a Monday to promote Derbyshire Alert and register farmers with the scheme. There are now 500 members of the Farm Watch group within Derbyshire Alert.
- 6.4. We have contact with various Neighbourhood Watch groups, some of whom are active Police Support Volunteers. Within Derbyshire there are some 1,860 individual Neighbourhood Watch schemes with 79 of those in the High Peak, 81 in the Derbyshire Dales and 71 in Derby South, showing good representation in the more rural areas of the county.
- 6.5. The Team also engages with Watch schemes and the wider public via our Facebook site.
- 6.6. The RCT are also in talks with Heritage England to develop a Derbyshire Heritage Watch group.
- 6.7. Road Safety is a priority for rural communities. Community Speed Watch is an effective response by Derbyshire Constabulary to tackle this problem and improve the quality of for many communities throughout Derbyshire. There are 692 volunteers involved with Community Speed Watch with 93 groups conducted

speed check at hundreds of sites throughout the county, having increased from just 25 groups in 2019. When the volunteers identify speeding vehicles, an advice letter is generated. If the same vehicle is identified on a second occasion a further letter will be generated and on the third occasion drivers are visited by an officer. Since January 2,933 letters have been issued, with 90 second letters and 17 personal visits to repeat offenders.

- 6.8. The overwhelming majority of the Speed Watch schemes are outside of the city of Derby, some 91 of the current 93, many of which are located in rural areas.

7. SUB-OBJECTIVE 5: DOING EFFECTIVE, TARGETED WORK WITH PARTNERS TO PROTECT THE UNIQUE AND ENDANGERED WILDLIFE OF THE COUNTY

- 7.1. An important area of work for the RCT is the protection of the unique and endangered wildlife of the county with 276 wildlife related incidents and 121 occurrences recorded in the previous 12 months. Investigations into crimes committed against wildlife can be challenging and are a very emotive subject for the public. The Team are all specialist wildlife investigators and have been working hard to develop effective working relationships with the various wildlife partners such as the RSPB, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), the Wildlife Trust, and various Raptor Groups to name a few. These offences are seasonal, and the Team are busy this time of year with reports of bird nest disturbances, badger persecution and hare coursing in the south of the county. The RCT have representation at priority delivery groups for badger persecution, bat crime, poaching, raptor persecution, CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and cyber enabled wildlife crime. These areas of focus are set by the National Wildlife Crime Unit.
- 7.2. This year the RCT led a large-scale land search operation within the North East Derbyshire policing area relating to bird of prey persecution. Working with representatives from RSPB, NWCU and Natural England the search recovered a

buzzard carcass that has been sent for forensic testing, and separately recovered poisons from a suspect who was fined and required to professionally dispose of the poisons by Natural England.

- 7.3. A peregrine falcon nesting site that has failed to fledge their young for the last 4 years was brought to the attention of the RCT. Taking a proactive rather than reactive approach to this problem, the Team worked with Smart Water PID systems (suppliers of armoured and wireless video alarms) supported by the RSPB and placed their security units at strategic sites around the nest. This year the nest produced three young that all fledged.
- 7.4. The RCT recently dealt with two youths that had taken eggs from a bird's nest. The officer liaised with the college attended by the youths, interviewed both offenders and dealt with the incident by way of restorative justice. The offenders put up several bird boxes around the college as part of the reparations.
- 7.5. Where appropriate the work undertaken by the RCT is shared with the public via our Facebook platform. This includes public messaging, requests for information and general awareness raising about emerging issues. The Team also engages with the wider media via the Force media department in instances where it is deemed beneficial. This includes joint media statements with partners like the national park or the RSPB for example.

8. SUB-OBJECTIVE 6: IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT, USING A WIDE VARIETY OF METHODS, WITH RURAL COMMUNITIES

- 8.1. The RCT recognise that there is a need to engage and communicate with rural communities and take every opportunity to do so. The Team utilise all the most popular social media platforms to appeal for information and inform the public of ongoing work and positive outcomes and can be contacted in a variety of ways such as via social media or directly to the RCT email inbox as well as through more traditional calls for service. Call centre staff and members of the Crime Resolution Investigation and Management Team (a team based in the Force Control Room

and responsible for triaging and allocating reported crime) have been trained to identify rural crime incidents and crimes at the earliest point of contact in order that the enquiry can be allocated to the most appropriate team at the earliest possible opportunity, ensuring a prompt and effective response. This training was completed when the CRIM team was set up in January 2022, with further training to call centre staff planned for Wednesday 28 September 2022. The RCT is in regular contact with the management of the CRIM team to ensure correct tagging, and the identification of risk and vulnerability owing to potential isolation is maintained.

- 8.2. The RCT has an active social media presence, and its Facebook page currently has over 18,000 followers with some posts being viewed by over 28,000 people and an overall reach of over 114,000 contacts in a recent 90-day period. This creates numerous opportunities for contact and communication with rural communities and helps build familiarity and trust, key factors in increasing confidence in reporting. This is alongside the engagement events and mechanisms also employed by the Safer Neighbourhood Teams who also police the rural communities.
- 8.3. The RCT attend all major rural events throughout the county engaging with community contacts and members of the public to identify current issues, raise public awareness and promote crime prevention. This year the Team have had a stall at the Derbyshire County Show and have attended the Ashbourne Show, Ashover Show, Chatsworth Country Fair and the Brailsford Ploughing Match as well as a number of other smaller events. The Team attend the farmers' market at Bakewell every Monday and utilise rural crime volunteers to promote and sign farmers up to Derbyshire Alert.
- 8.4. The Team also run 'drop-in surgeries' at prominent rural locations that are advertised in advance on social media to ensure the Team are as accessible as possible for face-to-face communication. Earlier this year the Team held drop-in surgeries at Bakewell Farmers' Market, Thomas Irving Equestrian Superstore, Chatsworth Country Park, Rushup Edge Car Park in Castleton and are hoping to develop this moving forward with more locations throughout the county and

utilising volunteers on the Team of which there are currently three. They continue to support the Team in attendance at the weekly Bakewell Farmers' Market where they distribute literature, give crime prevention advice, and promote the use of Derbyshire Alert system. With the introduction of the Rural Crime PCSO there will be further opportunity to identify and utilise volunteers to support the Team in a similar capacity at other engagement events throughout the county.

- 8.5. The coordinators on the RCT have work ongoing within the organisation to improve online Rural and Wildlife crime reporting and have recently introduced a dedicated webpage on the Derbyshire Constabulary website covering a wide array of issues relating to rural crime.

9. SUB-OBJECTIVE 7: IMPROVING PARTNERSHIP WORK WITH PARISH COUNCILS AND LOCAL CHAMPIONS

- 9.1. The RCT work closely with local Safer Neighbourhood Teams to tackle ongoing issues and problems that fall under the more general heading of 'Rural Crime'. All Safer Neighbourhood Teams work closely with Town and Parish Councils who themselves attend meetings throughout rural communities where a particular policing need is identified. This gives direct lines of communication with community representatives and when required the RCT will also attend these meetings to discuss specific problems and they have been involved in supporting and policing events in rural communities, as well as tackling local crime trends in support of the local policing teams. The RCT has an extensive network of contacts across Derbyshire in a variety of locations and organisations with who it regularly communicates and works in partnership.
- 9.2. In all areas, relationships are forged by local officers with key organisations and individuals in communities. This is a continuous process and recognised as essential to delivering an effective service, especially as new challenges emerge.
- 9.3. By example, the recent surge in incidents of fish poaching/theft of fishing rights in various areas of the county is an issue that the Team have highlighted through the

priority setting process. Whilst instances of fish poaching occur throughout the year, it has been recognised that this is seasonal and tends to increase in the late springtime, with a particular issue identified in the Bakewell/Haddon catchments with numerous incidents of ASB/Threats associated with groups visiting the area to take fish from private waters. Some of these incidents have occurred in the centre of Bakewell at busy times. The initial response is from river bailiffs employed by either the Environment Agency or the relevant private fishing estate (for example Haddon/Chatsworth); however, the poaching offences are sometimes accompanied by general ASB and when approached there have been instances of threats of violence. This is an ongoing issue and local authority/parish council, and community feedback will be sought to further inform and direct activities. Presently, the RCT have opened a problem management plan to collate incidents and review/inform policing activity.

- 9.4. So far in response to the problem, the RCT has worked with the Environment Agency and have produced a briefing to assist local officers and improve their knowledge of the specific law/offences as it was noted from some closed incidents that a lack of familiarity with some of the offences hindered enforcement.
- 9.5. The Team also plans to utilise media and social media to promote more timely incident reporting from the public to better enrich the intelligence picture to target enforcement action.
- 9.6. Over the last 12 months the RCT have been developing effective working relationships with a number of partnership agencies. The Team meet with partners regularly and have conducted effective joint operations. For example, the RCT have supported the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) at search warrants, and the Environment Agency regarding a regional poaching and unlicensed fishing operation. The Team have worked with Natural England, supporting their investigations into poison misuse and offences committed on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) land. The Team have both supported and been supported by the RSPB and RSPCA in various matters. The RCT

regularly meet with partners to discuss emerging issues and keep up to date with ongoing projects.

10. SUB-OBJECTIVE 8: INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN REPORTING CRIME AND VULNERABILITY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

- 10.1. All officers and staff who serve in rural communities, including the RCT, are trained in recognising and dealing with vulnerability as all officers in the constabulary are. Rolling programmes of training and professional development run by the force in areas such as domestic abuse and county lines, are attended by these officers to ensure that they are up to date and competent in these core areas of policing. The work with the Willow Project detailed in para 4.6 also supports this objective. By including staff from the Willow Project in our presence at public events/country and agricultural shows we are hopefully having a positive awareness raising impact related to the issue of domestic abuse in rural/farming communities.
- 10.2. The work of the unit visiting and engaging directly with farms and estate staff as well as visiting farmers' markets also aims to promote incident reporting and engagement with the police through the various channels of communication including force online reporting tools and social media. Again, by working to achieve sub-objective 6, and by delivering the Neighbourhood Policing Charter signed by the Chief Constable, this will serve to boost confidence in reporting of crime by rural communities.

11. CONCLUSION

Derbyshire is the very definition of a rural county and has a responsibility to see that its rural communities receive the police service they deserve. This is delivered both through local policing teams and other force resources, alongside a dedicated specialist RCT. Using these resources, the Constabulary can identify the key priorities affecting these communities and put in place effective responses. This response is strengthened further by effective use of partnerships, problem orientated approaches and community engagement. By maintaining this approach, we seek to increase public confidence in the police and reduce the fear of crime in Derbyshire's rural communities.