

Agenda Item: 7

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR SOUTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND PUBLIC PROTECTION.

UPDATE ON THE NATIONAL RURAL CRIME SURVEY AND STRATEGY FOR NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Community Safety Committee on the findings of the National Rural Crime Survey, and the development of the Crime in Rural Areas strategy and associated action plan.

Information and Advice

The National Rural Crime Survey 2015.

2. The initial findings of the first survey on behalf of the National Rural Crime Network were announced on the BBC Countryfile programme on 19th June 2015.
3. The full report of the findings of the survey was subsequently published on the 11th September. The purpose of the survey is to understand both the financial and the emotional cost on rural communities of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour, with a focus particularly on livestock theft, as well as considering the wider range of criminal activities that take place within the countryside.
4. Approximately 17,000 respondents took part in the survey, which was accessed via the National Rural Crime website. The full report can be found at

<http://www.nationalruralcrimenetwork.net/content/uploads/2015/09/NRCN-National-Rural-Crime-Sur...pdf>

5. Headline survey results taken from the report show:
 - The financial impact of crime on rural economy is significant – the cost of crime to rural communities is estimated to be £800 million in a one year period, equivalent to £200 for every household in the countryside. The average cost to rural households who are victims of crime is £2,500, and £4,100 for rural businesses.
 - Fear of crime is increasing – 39% of rural people are very or fairly worried about becoming a victim of crime, compared to 19% nationally. Of even more concern, 32% of respondents are more fearful of becoming victims of crime than five years ago,

compared to only 3% who are less fearful. Rural businesses are the most fearful of becoming victims of crime, with 51% very or fairly fearful, closely followed by younger families.

- Low satisfaction rates of police performance in rural areas – just 39% of rural people rate the police as good (32.4%) or excellent (6.3%). Among rural businesses this figure was just 32%. Those figures compare to 63% nationally who think the police are doing a good job (53% Good and 10% Excellent), showing rural communities have a significantly lower satisfaction rate than their urban counterparts.
 - Crime is under reported in rural areas – more than one in four (27%) did not report the last crime of which they were a victim. This means Home Office figures of 294,000 rural crimes between April 2014 and May 2015 could be incorrect, and the actual number of crimes could be as high as 403,000.
 - Rural communities are resilient – community spirit is clearly evidenced in our rural communities. The vast majority feel they very or fairly strongly belong in their community, with 27% feeling that sense of belonging has increased in the last five years. 25% of people also felt that their community pulled together to improve their neighbourhood.
 - Lessons for Local Authorities and other partners – two issues of the greatest concern to the rural community were road safety (63%) – in which the police play a crucial part but which they cannot resolve without working with partners – and fly-tipping, which is now a civil offence (61%).
6. The results of the Rural Crime Survey will form a key part of the local scoping exercise currently being undertaken in exploring priority issues and actions required for Nottinghamshire.

The development of the Nottinghamshire Crime in Rural Areas strategy and action plan

7. Nottinghamshire does not currently have a finalised strategy and action plan for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour that takes place in rural locations. Committee Members will recall approving a £5,000 contribution at the July Committee meeting to assist in developing a strategy and partnership action plan.
8. Engagement with our rural communities will take place as part of the development work, in order to enable more effective prevention of crime in rural areas. Work will also be undertaken to develop successful relationships with national and local partner agencies to reduce the threat and harm to our rural communities.
9. The Community Safety team is currently undertaking an initial scoping exercise to help partners understand the capability of delivery within existing resources and structures on the issue, in particular within Neighbourhood Policing Teams and also Community Safety Partnerships.
10. The definition of rural crime to be used for the work is the one used by the Police and Crime Commissioner, namely crime within DEFRA defined rural geographies. Specific rural crimes will also be studied as part of developing the strategy and action plan, such as theft of tractors, diesel, and livestock, plus other rural offences for example hare coursing.

11. Crime and social demographic mapping will be undertaken to identify key issues that need to be addressed. Particular areas of focus for this further exploration include:
 - Identifying and links between rural enterprises and local criminal networks;
 - Understanding whether younger people are more likely to be disadvantaged by service delivery challenges in rural areas;
 - Identifying and analysing the types and volumes of crime in rural locations. Following a high level study of the data, the Strategic Analytical Unit advises that there is range of reported crime in rural areas, including domestic violence, anti-social behaviour etc.
12. Progress so far includes:
 - Agreement reached with Nottinghamshire Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding key action areas, these being awareness raising, target hardening and focussed project work.
 - Discussions with representatives from the National Ramblers Association in promoting 'stay safe' tips whilst enjoying the countryside.
 - Links developed with the National Rural Crime Network, an excellent source of insight into the issues, and of good practice ideas.
 - Development with partners of a protocol to resolve the problem of horses* (* this also applies to other similar animals such as donkeys, ponies, their hybrids and other farmed animals), illegally grazing across the County.
 - Strategic Analytical Unit support has been agreed, to undertake the analytical work inform actions needed by identifying prevalent geographies, themes and patterns regarding rural crime.
13. It is anticipated an initial draft Rural Crime strategy will be circulated for comment and input by all Members and partners. A wider engagement programme will then follow with regards to the development of the action plan.
14. The Community Safety Team would welcome and encourage input from Members on both the strategy and the action plan ahead of that.

Other Options Considered

15. This is primarily an update report following a decision made at a previous Committee Meeting.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

16. To update Members on this issue and to seek their input into the development of the Rural Crime Strategy.

Statutory and Policy Implications

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been

undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

19. This report contains no additional financial implications, with activity reported or that proposed being contained within existing service budget and previously made Committee decisions.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that:-

1. The Community Safety Committee notes the updates from the report.
2. Members who wish to provide feedback in developing the Rural Crime Strategy and action plan contact Yvette Armstrong to input views.

PAUL MCKAY

Service Director, South Nottinghamshire and Public Protection

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Yvette Armstrong, Community Safety Officer, Trading Standards & Community Safety x 73058.

Constitutional Comments (SMG 21/09/2015)

20. The proposals in this report fall within the remit of this Committee.

Financial Comments (KAS 18/09/15)

21. The financial implications are contained within paragraph 18 of the report

Background Papers and Published Documents

22. Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

- National Rural Crime Network Survey 2015

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

23. All those with rural communities.