



North East Scotland Rural Crime & Safety Partnership

Rural Crime & Safety Strategy

2018 - 2020



FOREWORD



There are many benefits to living, visiting, working and investing in the North East of Scotland. We are justifiably proud of our rural and beautiful countryside and coastal areas which cover over 3370 square miles and

have many internationally renowned areas of outstanding natural beauty. Along with its extraordinary architectural, agricultural and cultural heritage, attractions, events and historical sites of considerable interest, this contributes significantly to the health of our economy and well-being of our communities.

It is important we collectively listen, understand and respond to what matters the most to our communities whether they are city, urban, rural or remote. The standard of service cannot and will not be defined by location but must be agile enough to adapt to different locations. The demand from those who need us most is growing and the partnership will help each organisation to maintain and build services for the benefit of users and communities, and do not recognise silos.

I am glad that the North East is one of the safest areas of the United Kingdom, but I recognise that we continue to face difficult challenges. As partner organisations, we need to work closely with rural communities to tackle issues such as agricultural and road safety; acquisitive crime, especially from rural locations; sheep worrying, hare coursing and other wildlife crimes. We need to work together to protect the most vulnerable from those who seek to cause them harm and work hard to help those who need additional support.

As local communities throughout the North East continue to diversify, organisations must adapt to remain relevant and legitimate. The needs of communities are changing. Demands on the emergency services remain on preventing and detecting crime and keeping people safe but increasingly resources are focused on addressing vulnerability.

This strategy reflects the needs and expectations of our communities. It reflects the Community Planning Partnerships across Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray and supports the Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIP) across the North East. It is designed to assist partner organisations with developing and delivering their own strategic plans for the North East.

It presents real opportunity to rethink our engagement, communication and network of effective partnerships and consider a series of collaborative possibilities at strategic and operational levels to enable the creation of truly innovative partnership working that is community and future focused.

The strategy sets out a framework for the North East Rural Crime and Safety Partnership to support rural community safety. The strategy identifies how we will seek to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour both as a partnership and with local people and how as a collective, we will respond effectively to incidents, risk and the potential for harm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Murray Main'. The signature is stylized with loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Murray Main
Chief Inspector
Chair of the North East Scotland
Rural Crime & Safety Partnership

THE CONTENT

The North East of Scotland is one of the safest parts of the United Kingdom. It is also a popular destination for many tourists throughout the year for our rich history, heritage, beautiful countryside, sport and leisure attractions.

The North East Rural Crime and Safety Partnership involves senior representatives from organisations and stakeholders involved in rural affairs and the rural economy, with the aim of building a co-operative approach to identifying and tackling rural crime and promoting safety.

A vital part of our role is ensuring our rural communities are protected and feel safe. Key to our success is ensuring residents have access to appropriate services and are able to influence what we do.

The strategy recognises rural communities can face unique issues, which is why we have strengthened our partnership relationships and arrangements.

This strategy is about protecting our rural communities through a focus on **prevention, intelligence, enforcement and reassurance**. It addresses hidden harm issues and vulnerability often unreported and less visible.

It provides coherence, direction and guidance and will deliver meaningful outcomes that benefit communities across the North East and elsewhere. The participating organisations will use the strategy to influence activities to keep communities safe.



UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

Understanding and effectively responding to the needs of our communities lies at the heart of what we each do every day. Effective engagement, local planning and partnership work enables national and local organisations to understand community needs and expectations.

Many risks, concerns and crimes are common to rural, city and urban areas such as vulnerability, domestic abuse, cybercrime, road collisions, theft and serious sexual offences, but the challenge of preventing and mitigating risk, helping others or solving crime is often exacerbated by remoteness and isolation. While the focus on preventing crime and improving safety will be maintained irrespective of geographical area, there are challenges specific to rural areas and this strategy enables the partnership to confront the threat, risk and harm in a more timely and effective manner.

Many criminals feel the countryside provides rich and easy pickings. This together with the increased sophistication of organised criminals profiting from crime such as theft of property, plant, equine and livestock, can heighten the feeling of vulnerability and fear of crime in rural locations.

A great deal of progress has already been made across the North East. Working across partners to maximise every opportunity of success and co-ordinating intelligence has already led to several interventions in respect of rural crime while collectively engaging with the wider community helps to ensure we respond to their needs.

This strategy supports the partnership approach to:

- Protect vulnerable people;
- Focus on prevention and early intervention;
- Cut crime and antisocial behaviour;
- Promote and ensure Animal Welfare;
- Improve community well-being;
- Support the rural economy and environment.



THE STRATEGY

Prevention

In partnership with stakeholders we will look for **early intervention** opportunities to prevent incidents that cause threat, risk and harm taking place, being **creative and innovative** in order to increase rural safety and well-being and prevent rural crimes and incidents from occurring

We will:

- Maintain a visible presence, and all organisations will be accessible and provide an effective response in rural communities;
- Enhance existing and new relationships, collaborative work streams and information sharing to deliver better outcomes for service users, communities and partners;
- Recruit and develop our community to self-help, working with key partners in the blue light services and public, private and third sectors;
- Provide safety and crime reduction advice to residents, businesses and visitors on how to stay safe and protect their property from opportunist criminals. We will work in partnership, maximising technology through the use of 'Rural Watch Scotland' and other messaging tools, Websites, media releases and through public engagement events;
- Support the work of other partners and third sector organisations to provide support, guidance and friendship to individuals and families, including those with increased risk due to isolation, mental or physical well-being;
- Continue to develop the specialist rural skills and knowledge of our staff and promote fire, safety and crime prevention advice;
- Safeguard Animal Health and Welfare, wildlife and fisheries for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy;
- Increase the number of eyes and ears in our rural communities and encourage local communities to join messaging systems including community alert systems and 'Rural Watch Scotland';
- Identify those most vulnerable within our rural community, particularly repeat victims of crime and ensure we respond to their needs;
- Support the North East Scotland Road Casualty Strategic Group on road safety and protect vulnerable road users.



Intelligence

It is important that we **listen to what people tell us and act upon it**. Through our organisations, we will work together and provide relevant information to help people take preventative action themselves.

We need to encourage more people living in rural communities to remain safe, report concerns, crime, and intelligence to inform our collective response. We will improve the way we use and share information to identify rural challenges and problems and through assessment of threat, risk and harm determine the options we can use to improve well-being and deter and disrupt criminality.

We will:

- Identify those individuals and groups who cause most harm to our rural communities;
- Encourage people to report crimes and incidents to the police so we can be better informed;
- Improve our understanding of criminality by sharing information with other agencies and develop intelligence on hidden harm crimes including human trafficking and modern slavery;
- Improve our understanding of victims and locations at risk or being targeted by criminals, enabling us to better prevent and protect;
- Continue to develop opportunities and infrastructures in order to disrupt travelling criminals;
- Improve the way we provide information to our rural communities about crime and safety issues;
- Ensure we have the processes and resources to gather information and react appropriately to incidents when they occur;
- Communicate back to people who have provided information or assistance.



Enforcement

We will enforce the law and target those areas of crime and those offenders who cause the most harm to our communities, animals, economy and environment.

We will:

- Work with rural communities, partners, businesses, 'Rural Watch Scotland', Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and CrimeStoppers to increase prevention, reporting and detection of crime and improvement in safety and well-being;
- Ensure partner organisations collectively employ an intelligence led approach to crime and concerns, improving our opportunity for positive outcomes;
- Continually work together to employ early intervention, not waiting until things have got so bad, but recognising the emerging issue and reducing risks;
- Ensure an effective partnership response to reports of rural crime and concerns;
- Work together with communities, partners and organisations to support local priorities and meet the Local Outcome Improvement Plans;
- Work with legal partners in Local Authorities to consider the use of legislation to manage offenders and those who cause antisocial behaviour in our communities;
- Be creative and innovative in respect of how we protect our community and hold those who offend to account;
- Ensure specialist staff co-ordinate rural crime reduction initiatives and advise on wildlife and rural crime investigations and operations;
- Provide fire safety, road safety and crime reduction advice and target hardening guidance to individuals or locations which are or may become vulnerable.

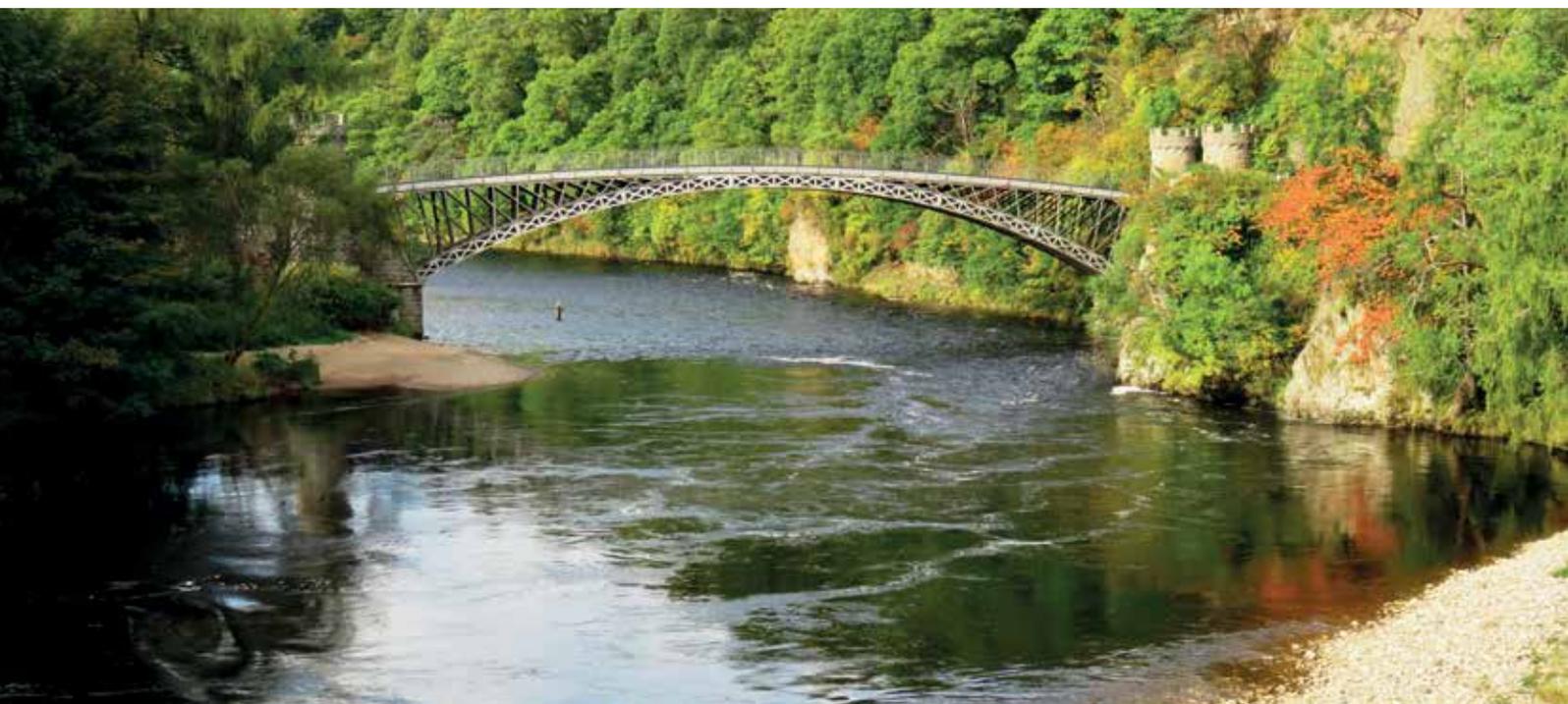


Reassurance

We want to **work with communities** to ensure that people working, visiting or living in our rural areas **feel safe and are safe**. Effective two-way communication, local engagement and reassurance all have a role to play in giving communities across the North East confidence in the partnership approach.

We will:

- Make sure we understand the impact of crime and antisocial behaviour on rural communities and work together to provide an excellent service at the first point of contact;
- Improve the way we communicate with our rural communities and encourage the use of 'Rural Watch Scotland';
- Support vulnerable members of the community, including older people living in rural areas, not only with the adverse actions of others but also to access information and help with finance, health and social care, loneliness and isolation;
- Keep communities updated on current trends, activity and outcomes of the partnership, including greater use of virtual opportunities and both the mainstream and social media;
- Make the partnership more visible and accessible in rural communities;
- Support the drive to increase the number of eyes and ears across rural communities;
- Conduct partnership meetings to listen to and act upon the concerns of rural communities;
- Seek feedback from people living in the North East rural communities on the way we are working together to deliver this strategy.



NORTH EAST SCOTLAND RURAL CRIME & SAFETY WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP



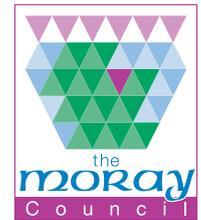
**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**
Working together for a safer Scotland



**Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL**



**ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL**



ARPF
RSABI
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Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba
nature.scot



SEPA
Scottish Environment
Protection Agency
Buidheann Dion
Àrainneachd na h-Alba



SCOTTISH SPCA
Scotland's Animal Welfare Charity

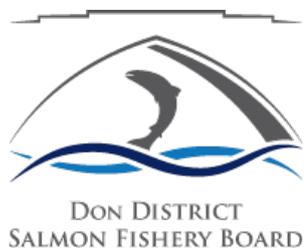


**Food
Standards
Agency**



**Animal &
Plant Health
Agency**

Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba



SPARC
SCOTTISH PARTNERSHIP
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**Driver & Vehicle
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