

Briefing for Police and Crime Commissioner

Topic: Rural Affairs

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Purpose of briefing

To brief the PCC on rural affairs policy issues which are specified in the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan.

Background

Main national policy drivers come from the NPCC Rural Affairs Strategy and policy documents/ initiatives from DEFRA. Overall national rural affair aims consist of:

- Safer rural communities
- Enhanced public engagement
- Increased public confidence in the police
- Empowered communities
- Strong partnership working
- Raised profile of rural affairs
- Embedded rural focus into policing culture

On a local level much policy is driven by cross-force working, particularly with Northumbria as well as the joint PCC-Chief Constable Rural Statement. The statement gives a commitment that ‘People living in the more rural parts of County Durham and Darlington will feel safe. They will know that their concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour will be understood and addressed by the police and partners’. The statement also provides a comprehensive picture of the PCC’s contributions to the rural communities of County Durham.

There is also a PCC owned cross-partnership Rural Affairs Strategic Group. Work is underway to make this group more effective and strategic in its discussions and outputs.

Victims and making communities feel safe

The OPCVC is currently carrying out work to map and address the provision of a “rural tailored” support for victims of DA. Additionally, there are bespoke projects to increase the voice of victims of crime in rural areas. For example, Ruralwatch which the OPCC has supported consistently as well as communicating with local stakeholders and those members of rural communities who contact the office. The OPCC has also supported several rural initiatives such as drones, ANPR technology (no longer financed by OPCC funds), bespoke rural Community Speedwatch vans (3 across Crook and the Dales) and working closely with rural Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

Current issues

The main rural affairs issues highlighted by partners and in the minds of the public in Durham Constabulary are agricultural plant and All-Terrain Vehicle theft and fly-tipping.

There are currently sensitivities nationally and locally surrounding the nature of farm insurance suppliers which creates a lack of incentive for vehicle manufacturers to improve security and potentially less reporting.

The rural community, and associated local officials, have a substantial presence when engaging in rural affairs business and issues resulting in a significant amount of correspondence with rural stakeholders and community members.

Decisions needed

No decisions to be taken at present.

Partnership involvement

There is significant partnership working with the NFU and NFU mutual as well as various other stakeholders in the rural communities. Additionally, the OPCVC have dedicated resources to aid the Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services, which provides a wide range of support services to Teesdale and the wider rural community.

Police involvement

The PCC has the opportunity to engage with the force in a number of activities from campaigning nationally to supporting local rural stakeholders. Similarly, the force are able to engage in many differing areas, and with a joined up approach both can create systemic change and improvement.

People to meet

OPCVC: James Atkinson, Pat Hancock

Durham Constabulary: Inspector Ed Turner, T/ Supt. Neal Bickford

<https://www.durham-pcc.gov.uk/pcvc-plan/rural-crime>