



**Lancashire
Constabulary**

police and communities together

REPORT TO: STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING

DATE: Monday 23 December 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 5B Frontline Policing

SUBJECT: Operation Firecrest

BACKGROUND

Operation Firecrest ran from 14th October until 19th October 2013. The operation covered three main strands:

1. Community engagement
2. Target hardening and prevention
3. Wildlife crime

The briefing below highlights just some of the activity undertaken as part of this innovative operation.

1. Community Engagement

Numerous events were set up across the county with the objectives of highlighting our current activity against rural crime, to obtain feedback from the rural community and to continue to sign people up to social media. Community engagement ran throughout each of the strands as a central theme.

Events were held at:

- Beacon Fell Visitors Centre (accompanied by the P.C.C)
- Brockholes Nature Reserve
- Myerscough College
- Gisburn Auction Mart
- Clitheroe Auction Mart
- Bamber Bridge B&Q. (Over 200 people and 100 ITK leaflets were handed out at this one event alone).

Other activity included a litter pick in Clifton, as a result of on-going ASB in the village, and rural pubs which were visited in order to engage with their customers about Firecrest activity. As a result of these site specific events, the Constabulary managed to engage with hundreds of people from the rural community.

Social Media Engagement Highlights

Southern Division hosted a FACEBOOK CHAT which was opened for members of the public, to promote Operation Firecrest and to increase visibility. **764** people viewed the updates and this generated **6** questions from the community. Updates were also posted regarding "In the Know" (ITK), which were viewed by **267** people. In addition, a separate post regarding rural crime generated a further **202** hits.

Firecrest tweets were sent out in all divisions, with many being re-tweeted by users across the Twitter platform. An on-line web chat was hosted by the rural crime lead, Supt Webster, to promote Operation Firecrest and answer questions relating to rural crime.

Target Hardening and Prevention

Vulnerable premises across the county were visited with the aim of making them more secure against crime. This was also a further opportunity for community engagement.

Highlights included:

A back to basics event took place in Grimsargh village, where officers went on the hunt for insecure premises and vehicles. A mixture of over 50 vehicles, dwellings, sheds and garages were found insecure and residents of those properties spoken to, offering advice and education about protection of property. The PCC also joined Insp Herbert and officers on patrol.

Crime prevention patrols took place in Northern Division, with the villages of Overton and Middleton, Nether Kellet and Hest Bank being patrolled. Stables, farms and rural businesses were visited with advice being offered on premises security and the ITK system being promoted.

Throughout the county, officers visited farms, rural estates, fisheries, businesses and private dwellings to offer security advice and to hand out information regarding ITK. All of the work undertaken above also offered further community engagement opportunities, as officers visited and spoke to residents.

Wildlife Crime

The main tactic replicated throughout the constabulary was poacher patrols throughout the night. These were done with partner agencies, game keepers, farmers and other local residents. The Operation was run specifically during the run up to a full moon when poaching is most prevalent.

Highlights include-

Three males reported for summons, for poaching offences in the Briercliffe area.

A Poacher Patrol in Northern Division, which ran in conjunction with North Yorkshire Police and Cumbria Constabulary, involved members of the community going out and about, acting as eyes and ears for the police.

A PC in Leyland caught three males out lamping with dogs. One of the males, a High Impact Acquisitive Crime target, was arrested for breach of bail. The operation saw vehicles, dogs and equipment seized and poaching activity disrupted.

Over 20 individuals known to be involved in poaching were visited by police and letters were sent out to others residing out of the force area.

Very positive feedback was received from volunteers who took part in patrols and witnessed the Constabulary focusing on the issues that matter to them, empowering them to be part of the solution to reducing rural crime and offering a true insight into how the police are tackling rural crime.