



**Lancashire  
Constabulary**  
police and communities together

**REPORT TO: Strategic Scrutiny Meeting**

**DATE: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

**AUTHOR: Superintendent Julian Platt, HQ Operations.**

**SUBJECT: Rural Policing in Lancashire.**

## **1. Issue for Consideration**

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Commissioner in respect of rural policing.

## **2. Recommendation**

2.1. The Commissioner is asked to note the report and comment on items discussed.

## **3. Background**

Lancashire Constabulary is responsible for the policing of an area of approximately 2000 square miles, of which 74% is classed as rural. Although the rural communities only represent about 9% of the population of Lancashire they have diverse needs. In 2013 the Rural Crime Delivery Plan for 2013-2018 was agreed, within which the following key strands to delivery were outlined:

- Community engagement
- Intelligence cycle
- Prevention and reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour.

A Constabulary Implementation Plan was produced alongside divisional plans for delivery of these strands.

Lancashire Constabulary has its own rural branding for operational activity, social media, rural vehicles, rural trailer and show material, signs, posters, literature etc. The purpose behind this is to explicitly reassure rural communities of our rural policing offer in Lancashire. Examples are shown below:



In June 2018 the National NPCC Wildlife Crime & Rural Affairs Strategies 2018-2021 were agreed and supported by the Constabulary. Lancashire were involved in the discussion/formulation of both of the below documents therefore we replicate this focus for Lancashire:

NPCC Rural priorities are:

- **Farm machinery, plant and vehicle theft** - thieves are cloning the identities of large, expensive tractors to make them easier to sell and harder to detect. Small and older tractors are being targeted by organised gangs for export to developing countries. Since Land Rover ended production of its Defender, the iconic farm vehicle has become an even bigger target for thieves. Includes Land rover defenders, modern and vintage tractors, all-terrain vehicles, tools.
- **Livestock offences** – Ongoing livestock theft is raising concerns that stock is being stolen for slaughter and processing outside regulated abattoirs before illegally entering the food chain. This includes livestock theft, livestock worrying and attacks.
- **Fuel theft.** Includes heating oil, diesel, and petrol.
- **Equine crime.** Includes horse trailer and horse box theft, horse theft, tack theft, fly grazing.
- **Fly tipping.** Including household waste and commercial waste.

NPCC Wildlife crime priorities are:

- **Badger persecution**
- **Bat persecution**
- **CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)**
- **Freshwater Pearl Mussels**
- **Raptor persecution**

- **Poaching (deer poaching/coursing, fish poaching, hare coursing).**

In November 2018 we will be holding our Rural Crime Conference at Lancaster House Hotel (funded and supported by the Lancashire Partnership Against Crime:LANPAC). Workshops and discussion will be held during the Conference which will assist in determining Lancashire Constabulary's rural strategy and priorities for 2018-2023.

<b>Community engagement</b>
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Lancashire Constabulary goes to great lengths to engage with a range of rural communities to raise confidence in how the Constabulary responded to incidents. Through this work we gain an increase in knowledge and understanding of rural affairs within the officers who police these areas. In 2013 Lancashire Constabulary had one full-time wildlife crime officer in Lancashire and six trained officers who dealt with wildlife crime incidents as an addition to their everyday policing role.

In 2018 the approach is somewhat different with us having the following:

- Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Strategic Lead for Rural Matters.(ACC Terry Woods)
- Superintendent Operational lead for Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime (Supt Julian Platt).
- 1 full-time dedicated Rural, Wildlife & Heritage Crime Coordinator (Lorraine Ellwood).
- 3 nominated divisional Chief Inspector leads.
- 2 nominated divisional Inspector leads.
- 4 nominated divisional Sergeants.
- 84 trained officers – includes Police Constables, PCSO's, Special Constables, (although predominantly police officers trained in in both rural and wildlife crime).
- 3 joint police/National Farmers Union (NFU) volunteers.

### **Training**

Lancashire runs its own in-house National Rural Officers training course which is open to other Force areas. This course has been successfully run four times over the last three years and we have a list of officers waiting for training (both internally and externally). The course includes inputs on the following topics:

- Bats
- Firearms
- Badgers
- Fisheries
- National Wildlife crime Unit
- Birds and the law
- The Shooting World
- Environment Agency
- Dog fighting/badger baiting
- RSPCA
- Raptor Persecution
- Livestock theft and sheep worrying
- Theft of Plant and Agricultural Machinery
- Cattle/TB
- Hunting and Poaching

- Traps and Snares
- League Against Cruel Sports.

Additional training/CPD events have also taken place as follows:

- Inputs have been provided on the Incident Management Unit (IMU) course in relation to Rural and Wildlife crime.
- Inputs to all new Control Room Operators and Initial Investigation Unit (IIU) officers.
- Attendance at national/regional training events/conferences including Wildlife Crime Enforcers Conference, National Rural Affairs Conference, National Heritage Crime conference.

### Engagement/Intelligence gathering

A number of engagement initiatives/activities have taken place over the last few years which include:

- Annual Poaching Operations in Bowland and the Lune Valley. In 2016 approximately 40 members of the rural community turned out to assist police in reporting suspicious behaviour. This Operation was repeated in 2017 and was attended and observed by the PCC.
- Stop check operation in early autumn 2017 targeting livestock transportation; this was held in conjunction with NFU, NFU Mutual and Trading Standards.
- Farmer network sign up event at Stirk House Hotel in 2016. In partnership with the NFU (National Farmers Union) we have enlisted the assistance of a growing number of farmers/young farmers/other farming experts, who are willing to provide 'expert' assistance and advice as and when necessary.
- Attendance at rural country shows and fairs with the rural trailer/gazebo. This attendance started off with a table alongside a neighbourhood policing van; we now have a regular 30ft by 20ft space allocated at the major shows increasing our presence. The PCC has joined forces with the Rural Team at some of the larger events with a joint stand area.
- A large area was allocated to rural policing at the last Constabulary Open Day and was arranged with partners under the heading of 'Tackling Rural Crime Together'.
- Regular meetings take place with the following groups:
  - Angling clubs/societies
  - RSPB/United Utilities pre-season breeding meetings for birds of prey
  - Bowland deer management group
  - Environment agency
  - Young farmer
  - Agricolae (lady farmers/farmers wife's)
  - Lancashire Badger group
  - South Lancashire Bat Groups
  - NFU/NFU Mutual meetings
  - Gamekeepers
  - Farmers

Hunt groups  
Auction mart visits.

### Social Media

We have bespoke rural Facebook/Twitter/email account with good following and engagement.

## **Prevention and reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour**

The recording of crimes and incidents relating to rural communities remains a challenge nationally. It is difficult to identify the true impact of crime and disorder on rural communities due to the coding of rural and wildlife offences within our crime/incident management system i.e. poaching offence can be coded as firearms incident/suspicious circumstances /environmental. Lancashire Police ensure that the majority of rural intelligence reports are coded with a marker to separate Rural/Wildlife crime and incidents.

Lancashire Constabulary benefits from four liveried rural 4x4 pickup vehicles which were purchased in 2017. The purpose of these vehicles is to extend our reach for rural officers to some of the hard to some of the more hard to reach rural areas and include outlying farms/hamlets.

We continue to liaise with other force rural crime and wildlife officers to share intelligence and good practice. Through attendance at the North West and North East rural crime quarterly meetings we continue to maintain and build our relationships with our neighbouring forces. This work enhances communication networks in relation to rural and wildlife crime issues along with the capability to impact on travelling organised crime groups.

The following prevention schemes are worthy of note:

- Annual multi-agency meeting to prevent persecution of Hen Harriers at Bowland
- Poaching initiatives with fisheries group meetings with Young Farmers groups to raise awareness of rural crime and prevention initiatives.
- Crimestoppers/NFU Rural crime reporting line and attendance at National Anti-poaching conference.
- Rural emergency services binder produced in conjunction with Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service/NW Ambulance Service (NWAS) which is in the process of being delivered to 3,500 working farms within Lancashire.
- Annual farmer network meetings in conjunction with NFU.
- 2016 Lancashire Constabulary Livestock initiative, which attracted national recognition by then ACPO lead. Lancashire continues to be the lead force in this area.
- SelectaDNA sheep marking initiative – ongoing.
- Raptor persecution – multi-agency meetings.

- Operation Checkpoint – quarterly multi-force rural crime operation.
- Livestock Field to Fork initiative.
  
- Lock it or Lose it – tool theft initiative.

Lancashire Constabulary aim to ensure that rural and wildlife crimes are responded to by trained staff that liaise with key rural partners appropriately. An example of this work surrounds the theft of plant and agricultural machinery. This is an increasing threat for Lancashire. There are a number of agencies that can assist us with plant thefts such as NaVCIS, TER. Through better join up with key partners we can often increase the chances of locating stolen. We plan to further educate our officers and highlight opportunities through key lines of investigation. This replicates what happened with livestock three years ago and this has now reduced dramatically in Lancashire due to officers now being educated in the investigation process and possible lines of enquiry.

Rural Policing in Lancashire remains a challenge set against a backdrop of reducing police numbers and long open borders into several other force areas. However through working with key agencies, other force and the public this provides the best opportunity to protect the rural communities of Lancashire. We aim to keep our rural communities safe, make them feel safe and confident.