Heddlu Police

DYFED-POWYS

RURAL CRIME STRATEGY

2017
The area served by Dyfed-Powys Police is geographically the largest police force area in England and Wales, covering over half of the landmass of Wales.

The area is predominantly rural with long stretches of coastline, large mountainous areas, weaving road networks and many remote rural communities. This in itself presents a challenging environment to efficiently deploy resources and respond to crime and incidents.

Rural crime can have a significant impact on the victim, their livelihood and the surrounding community. Criminals are profiting from the theft of livestock, farm vehicles, machinery and agricultural plant. This can give our rural communities an increased sense of vulnerability. We must ensure that the Counties that make up Dyfed-Powys are an inhospitable environment for criminals and organised crime groups to operate in. Early intervention, responsive policing and partnership working is crucial. At the heart of understanding the full impact that rural crime carries, will be open and honest dialogue with victims such as residents, farmers and agricultural businesses.

Our dispersed rural population can experience barriers in accessing policing services. I will work with the Chief Constable to overcome these. We are committed to ensuring that the residents of Dyfed-Powys feel safe in their homes and have confidence in policing services across our geography. Working with partners, we will take a joined up approach in dealing with rural crime. The Chief Constable and I will continue to strengthen relationships with neighbouring forces, partners, regional and national agencies to respond to any threat posed by serious and organised crime groups to ensure the safeguarding of those who reside in and visit Dyfed-Powys.

I have made a commitment within my Police and Crime Plan to working with rural communities. This strategy, supported by dedicated resources is a welcomed step forward. I look forward to seeing the positive impact that this will have for the communities within the Dyfed-Powys area.
Dyfed-Powys Police is the largest police force in England and Wales, and by its very nature has a substantial rural population.

With over 350 miles of coastline, a landmass covering two thirds of Wales, and a population of over 488,000 which is boosted by tourists coming to enjoy all that we have to offer, the area presents a unique policing challenge.

From urban centres of population and seaside towns to remote villages, the force area is incredibly diverse in its make-up. It would be impossible, and indeed naïve, to think we can target crime in all areas in the same way.

Rural areas typically tend to be safer, but remote and isolated locations in the countryside can make residents feel more vulnerable and concerned. Crimes against the vulnerable are often more easily hidden by the remoteness of their location.

I also believe the impact of crime can be higher in rural areas, where the livelihoods of farmers and small holders, as well as economic opportunities presented by tourism, can be seriously affected.

A responsibility is placed on policing to respond to these challenges.

A great deal of progress has already been made, with high profile success stories to prove it. In 2017, for example, our officers used DNA evidence to secure a conviction against a man for handling stolen sheep – the first time evidence of its kind has been used in a conviction in Wales. The case took two years to come to a conclusion, from the initial theft of 50 sheep to a suspended jail sentence handed to a man found guilty of handling the animals. This work is evidence of the commitment Dyfed-Powys Police invests in victims of crime.

But we know that more can be done to prevent rural crime from being committed, and to protect our residents from becoming victims.

With this in mind, we have formed a rural crime strategy specifically tailored to our remote communities, who we want to ensure can feel safe and be safe.

In the following pages, we have identified the main challenges our officers and staff face when policing rural areas – and the measures we will put in place to tackle this through prevention, enforcement, intelligence and reassurance.

Perhaps most importantly to our public, we have also outlined the resources we will put in place to positively implement the rural crime strategy.

I have committed to providing enhanced training to officers, PCSOs and their supervisors, as well as our contact centre and control room staff on rural crime matters. I believe this better understanding of the impact of crime will improve confidence in reporting to police.

We will give a face to rural policing, with names of points of contact assigned to each area, and we will create a community of county-based rural crime forums which will be key in encouraging engagement, problem-solving solutions and the exchange of information and intelligence to enable focused targeting of criminals and criminality.

Above all, I hope to instil confidence in the people we serve to report all rural crimes to police. If we don’t know about it, we can’t act on it.
Dyfed-Powys Police recognises that the impact of crime can be higher in rural communities, and people may feel particularly vulnerable because of their isolation.

This strategy supports the Police and Crime Plan priorities to:

- Keep our communities safe
- Safeguard the vulnerable
- Protect our communities from serious threats
- Connect with communities

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

Rural crime is different. Isolation and remote locations in which crime occurs and the associated vulnerability place a responsibility on policing to respond to these challenges.
THE MAIN CHALLENGES INCLUDE

**Protecting vulnerable people**
Crimes against the vulnerable in society are often hidden by isolation and the remoteness of our rural landscape.

**Farm and agricultural crime**
Opportunist and acquisitive crimes present a significant threat to our farmers and small holders, which negatively impact on livelihoods.

**Heritage crime**
The damage to or theft from our heritage sites across Dyfed-Powys has a negative impact on the environment.

**Rural isolation**
Domestic violence, serious sexual offences, child sexual exploitation, illegal immigration including human trafficking, modern day slavery, forced labour and cyber-crime can be under-reported by victims through rural isolation.

**Tourism**
Dyfed-Powys is a popular destination for visitors, and tourism is a valuable part of the economy of the four counties in our force area. Crime committed along our coast, villages and rural beauty spots can impact on the confidence of local businesses and the wider community.

**Business and food crime**
Crimes against rural businesses can impact greatly on people’s livelihoods and economic opportunities of the four counties. This includes food crime, where businesses and health are put at risk through interference or contamination of the food chain.

**Road safety**
Dyfed-Powys, although lacking in motorways, has a road network that impacts our rural areas. Ensuring our roads are safe for all users is always important.

**Serious and organised crime**
Organised crime is not just an urban phenomenon. Our remote and isolated locations can be attractive for organised crime groups.

**Wildlife crime**
Hare coursing, poaching, fishing, illegal hunting and the persecution of protected species (e.g. birds of prey) will be investigated thoroughly.
Prevention

In partnership with stakeholders we will seek early intervention opportunities to prevent rural crimes and incidents from taking place to safeguard those in rural communities from becoming the victims of crime.

We will:

- Maintain a visible presence and provide an effective response in rural communities.
- Provide crime reduction advice and signposting to residents, businesses and visitors on staying safe and the protection of property from opportunist criminals. We will do this using our website, media releases, community messaging, social media and through public engagement events.
- Develop the specialist rural skills and knowledge of police officers, staff and Special Constables.
- Work with businesses and partner organisations (e.g. Wales Food Fraud Unit) to raise awareness and prevent incidents of food crime in Dyfed-Powys.
- Increase the number of Special Constables and volunteers working in rural communities through targeted recruitment in those areas.
- Promote residents to sign up to the Community Messaging System www.dpcm.co.uk, which will also incorporate watch schemes (Farmwatch, Caravanwatch etc.).
- Identify repeat victims of crime and antisocial behaviour and manage our response to their needs.

- Educate road-users about safety on rural roads, and take positive action to prevent collisions by working with partners including Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Community Speed Watch volunteers and GoSafe Wales.
Intelligence

It is important we listen to and act upon what people tell us, and that we provide relevant information to rural communities to help people take preventative action themselves.

We will improve the way we use and share information to identify rural crime problems, and through assessment of threat, risk and harm determine the options we can use to deter and disrupt criminality.

We will:

- Identify individuals and groups who cause the most harm to rural communities by intelligence-gathering.
- Work with partners to obtain and develop intelligence on hidden harm crimes including human trafficking and modern slavery.
- Use NPT police officers and PCSOs to act as a point of contact for the rural community to share intelligence.
- Work closely with neighbouring forces to improve our understanding of cross border criminality by sharing information with them and other organisations e.g. Wales Food Fraud Unit, NFU, FUW, Country Land and Business Association and Federation of Small Businesses.
- Continue to use Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) capability to disrupt travelling criminals.

Enforcement

We will enforce the law, and target crime and offenders according to the threat, harm or risk presented.

We will:

- Ensure an effective police response to reports of rural crime and antisocial behaviour.
- Work with rural communities, businesses, watch schemes and partners to increase reporting and detection of rural crimes.
- Make best use of ANPR to provide effective detection and disruption to criminals using our roads.
- Continue to develop existing partnerships with neighbouring police forces to combat and deter rural cross-border criminality and organised crime.
- Develop rural crime reduction initiatives.
- Provide crime reduction advice and target hardening guidance to victims.

Reassurance

We want to work with communities to ensure people living in rural areas can feel safe and be safe. Two-way communication, local engagement and reassurance all have a role to play in giving communities confidence in the police service across rural areas.

We will:

- Make sure we understand the impact of crime and antisocial behaviour on rural communities, and provide an excellent service from the first point of contact.
- Ensure the Community Safety Support Team implements the Rural Policing Strategy and supporting Rural Policing Delivery Plan with partners, community safety partnerships and community stakeholders to respond to the needs of rural communities.
- Continue to improve the way we communicate with our rural communities by keeping people updated on current trends, activity and performance.
- Make the police more visible and accessible in rural areas by letting people know when and where we will meet them in their communities.
- Use the Community Messaging System, social media, Watch Schemes and other networks to keep communities informed.
- Seek feedback from the people living in our rural communities on the way we are working to deliver this Rural Policing Strategy.
In 2016/17 Dyfed-Powys Police recorded approximately 500 crimes that had been committed on farms. The offences included burglaries targeting agricultural buildings and fields resulting in theft of livestock, quad bikes, trailers, machinery, gates, tools and scrap metal, along with criminal damage to crops, land, buildings, fences, machinery and other property. Although the figure equates to less than 1.4 crimes per day anywhere in the Dyfed-Powys Police area, it is believed that farm related crime is under reported for the following reason:

- Perceived poor response and outcomes, which leads to
- Anger, frustration and worry, which leads to
- Low expectation, resulting in
- An increasing fear of crime

The development and implementation of the Rural Policing Strategy is aimed at breaking the above cycle through successful police engagement and communication with our communities.

Police officers and PCSOs will be identified for each area and will be named points of contact for rural crime matters. They will work with local NPTs to provide regular contact with the community, agencies representing the community and partner agencies. They will receive enhanced levels of training to ensure they have the correct expertise to deal with rural crime; this is necessary due to the complex nature of certain rural crimes.

All officers, PCSOs and their supervisors will receive enhanced training on rural crime matters so they understand and appreciate the challenges facing our rural communities. Supporting these officers will be a Rural Crime Coordinator.

In addition to the above, our contact centre and control room staff will also receive enhanced training to raise awareness of rural and farm-related crime, its impact on communities and the need to task the right resource.

To ensure we are responding to the needs and expectations of our rural farming communities, we will create county-based Rural Crime Forums, which will bring together farming union representatives, Farmwatch coordinators, rural based community groups and local authorities. These forums will be key in encouraging engagement, confidence in reporting crime, problem-solving solutions and the exchange of information and intelligence to enable focused targeting of criminals and criminality.