



**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

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RESPONSE TO

Hampshire Police and Crime Panel's

Rural Crime

Recommendations

From

Mr Michael Lane

Police and Crime Commissioner

Enquiries To	Richard Andrews - Acting Head of Governance and Policy Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire, St. George's Chambers, St. George's Street, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8AJ - www.hampshire-pcc.gov.uk - Tel: 01962 871595
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Police and Crime Commissioner's response to Police and Crime Panel recommendations:

a. That the Commissioner should seek opportunities for greater engagement with rural communities both directly, and through consideration of how information can be disseminated through local town and parish councils. Consideration should be given to encouraging two-way conversation, to enable responses and concerns to be relayed back to the OPCC, and utilising innovative approaches to reach into the heart of rural communities. The Commissioner should also ensure that, as much is practicable, information is accessible to those without, or with limited access to online mediums, to encourage wider awareness and understanding of the Commissioner's efforts to keep rural communities safer.

The Commissioner recognises the excellent work done by town and parish councils across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton, and sees them as important partners in both helping to communicate his safer agenda to a wider audience, but also as a knowledgeable source of local information, primarily through their local Community Safety Partnerships. To support this, closer association will be sought with the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) and the Isle of Wight Association of Parish and Town Councils (IWALC) to utilise existing communication channels, responding to the feedback that came from the Rural Communities Matter conferences.

The Commissioner will continue to attend rural engagement events throughout the year, targeting events that enable him to reach the maximum number of residents as possible and for them to engage with him and his team.

Hampshire Constabulary also had a number of established communications channels that can be utilised, such as the Hampshire Alert system and Rural Times, the Constabulary magazine in which the Commissioner has a regular feature. A review of the effectiveness of these channels will be taking place to ensure the maximum impact from these opportunities is being utilised.

Of equal importance is the need to influence the technological barriers. This was a common complaint raised during the Rural Communities Matter conference, and although outside of the Commissioner's remit, further research will be done to understand the challenges. Where appropriate, he will lobby Central Government for additional funding to be released to local authorities for projects such as the Hampshire Superfast Broadband scheme, and assist in signposting residents to such schemes to improve their digital connectivity.

Reaching out to offline communities is a challenge for all public sector organisations, and there are a number of reasons for this. The Commissioner will work with partners to understand what further opportunities could be available.

b. That the Commissioner should, through his role in holding the Chief Constable to account, seek to enhance the perception of the policing response to crimes reported within rural communities, working with local residents to manage their expectations of outcomes and to ensure appropriate feedback following the report of crime. One of the intentions of this activity should be, through increasing confidence in policing outcomes, to increase the level of reporting of rural crimes.

The Commissioner is grateful for the recognition of the panel for Hampshire Constabulary's work to reassure residents of their dedication to address rural crime, including seeking to secure continuity of PSCO's placed within rural communities and through adapting their approach to crimes in rural areas which have a greater impact than those in urban conurbations, such as non-dwelling burglary.

Through his regular meetings with the Chief Constable, he will continue to challenge the Constabulary to provide support to officers so they can communicate with confidence with the public, such as why and how different crime types are responded to, and how the public can prevent themselves as much as possible from becoming a victim of crime in the first place.

The Commissioner will also encourage the Chief Constable and her team to continue the work being undertaken to improve the knowledge and understanding of officers and staff about crime in rural settings, and to explore solutions such as a knowledge bank of short articles and videos about specific topics, enabling officers to familiarise themselves with an issue before responding to a non-emergency incident.

c. That the Commissioner should review with the Constabulary the effectiveness of the 101 service in Hampshire and the IOW, ensuring that both qualitative and quantitative measures are in place. The new self-evident app and the customer management system, being introduced by Hampshire Constabulary later this year, should also be evaluated jointly in order to ensure that residents reporting non-emergency rural crime are receiving an effective and appropriate policing response.

As a service that receives more than one million calls a year, and is the first point of contact the public will have with the police in the vast majority of cases, the effectiveness of the 101 service is under constant review by the Commissioner.

A rolling programme of training and development is in place for force control room and force enquiry centre staff, including a specialist session on rural issues delivered by the force lead for rural policing.

Qualitative analysis of calls is a costly exercise because it is labour intensive. It is however recognised that, in order to maintain service standards, dip sampling is good practice to ensure calls are being dealt with as efficiently and effectively as possible, leading to the right outcome being provided at the first contact. Such dip sampling has been done in the past for calls classed as being from a rural area, and the Commissioner will encourage the Chief Constable to continue such practice in the future as part of business as usual.

In conjunction with his counterpart in Thames Valley, the Commissioner has agreed to fund a new Contact Management System for Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary that will be in place by early 2018. The system will contain a knowledge base which is configurable and controlled by the Constabulary. This will provide concise information to call handlers to ensure they have knowledge of rural crime and can relate to reports from and more specific to rural communities. There will also be a direct link with database of firearms licence holders.

Police officers and staff working in rural communities will have the ability to identify local crime patterns and other issues that are affecting their local area within the system. That information will be immediately available to call handlers when a new crime or incident is reported and will inform the decision on the most appropriate response.

Staff will have information presented on previous crime in any location so will immediately be able to recognise repeat victims or locations where crime is reoccurring. It will also include functionality to allow online crime reports to be made and prioritised equally with voice calls, making it possible for photos or other evidence to be attached by the person making the report.

There will be a formal benefits monitoring regime post implementation, and the work to review and confirm the baseline for the benefits, as well as the metrics to be measured, is in progress.

d. That the Commissioner works with the Constabulary to encourage them to develop innovative approaches in delivering a 'visible policing presence' and greater interaction with local communities, within budgetary constraints, which will both provide greater reassurance to residents and deter criminal activity within the rural communities of Hampshire and the IOW.

The Commissioner regularly hears from all sectors of the community that the visibility of policing is something they wish to see improved, as a uniformed presence provides reassurance and a deterrent. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are frequently cited as being an excellent links between communities and the police, helping to address low level community issues. It is however a reality of modern policing that the nature of crime is changing, and the way the majority of the public engage with the force and how police officers respond to crime has moved forward in the past decade.

Having said that, the Commissioner is keen to encourage the Constabulary to continue to develop innovative ways to remain connected with the communities it serves. To that end, he has requested the Chief Constable produces a rural crime engagement strategy, setting out how the Constabulary seeks to respond to issues raised by rural communities to ensure the service received is not detriment to that delivered in urban areas.

The Commissioner is also encouraging the Constabulary to work in partnership with local communities to develop community solutions, engaging other relevant stakeholders, leading to jointly owned actions that are of benefit to all residents and organisations.

e. That the Commissioner should continue to develop and lead partnership working with other organisations that have a shared interest in addressing rural crime. A focus for such partnerships should be delivering a holistic approach to help communities keep themselves safe from rural crime and to provide clear prevention advice.

No single agency or individual is responsible for making rural communities safer. As the only directly-elected official to cover Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton, the most effective use of the Commissioner's scope of influence is to bring together partners with a common interest at a Hampshire force area level. This can then be used as a mechanism to empower local partners to deliver objectives in the most appropriate way for their communities. To that end, the Commissioner will continue to engage in existing rural partnerships and offer support and input where he can use his influence to best effect.

f. Following the recent 'Rural Communities Matter' conferences, the Commissioner should ensure that any actions agreed are addressed in a timely manner, to provide reassurance to residents that their concerns are being listened to, and that agreed outcomes are transferred to the new rural crime strategy.

g. In developing the new rural crime strategy, the Panel would encourage the Commissioner to address the key concerns raised through the Panel's review, ensuring that the strategy outlines measurable outcomes. Once a new definition of rural crime is agreed nationally, the Panel would also suggest that the Commissioner reviews the new rural crime strategy to ensure that it is fit for purpose within the new definition, and makes any revisions as required.

Response to recommendations f & g

The Rural Communities Matters conferences were an excellent opportunity to collate the qualitative views of selected rural stakeholders from across the force area, and these have already been used to bring focus to the work of the Constabulary. There were areas of common feedback that not only relate to rural crime but are suggestions that would improve the self-sustainability of rural communities as a whole. The feedback has been captured in a single document, which is in the process of being reviewed and, if achievable, will be included as priorities in a new Communities Strategy. While there will be a specific section on rural communities, some of the conference feedback may also be applicable to other communities. Once published, the priorities in the strategy will be communicated to conference attendees and the wider rural community, utilising channels referred to elsewhere in this response.

The responsibility for producing a specific rural crime strategy will sit with Hampshire Constabulary and be a target for them in the Communities Strategy. The report of the Police and Crime Panel will be a source document when conducting the research phase of the strategy development.

Through the Chief Constable, the Commissioner will ask the Constabulary to remain engaged in the national debate about the definition of rural crime so that it is an early adopter of any changes that will be required to related processes.