

Date 27 May 2015

Your Ref:

Our Ref: ACCLPN/DR/0016/15

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c/o Justice Committee Clerks  
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Dear *Mrs Grahame*

**Agricultural / Rural Crime**

In furtherance of the Justice Committee round-table evidence gathering session on agricultural crime and your letter dated 28 April 2015, which sought additional information on the various initiatives being taken forward by Police Scotland, I can now update you in this regard.

I am pleased to advise you that I am the Police Scotland Executive Lead for Rural Crime (incorporating agricultural crime) and I am supported by Chief Superintendent Gavin Robertson and Ms Brenda Irons-Roberts as the business area lead and communications lead, respectively. It has also been agreed that an officer will be seconded to the Rural Crime work-stream for 3 to 6 months, to co-ordinate the ongoing work as well as review the approach and recommend future improvements.

I am in receipt of a copy of the joint response, dated 22 April 2015, from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment which explains the Police Scotland approach to local policing and crime investigation. I would also like to reassure you that Police Scotland treats all crimes seriously, irrespective of where it is committed and who it affects.

It is important to emphasise that throughout Scotland, there is already a great deal of very positive activity focused on preventing and tackling Rural Crime (including agricultural crime) involving Police Scotland, the National Farmers Union (Scotland) and partners. However, it is clear that further work is required in some areas and our approach to this is outlined in the attached information briefing paper.

In order to deliver a cohesive, preventative approach to Rural Crime across Scotland, the engagement of and uptake by the farming community and rural residents themselves, will be essential as will co-operation between a number of partner agencies.

Our proposed arrangements are specifically intended to address current partner concerns and to develop even stronger national and local partnerships targeting Rural Crime across all areas of Scotland.

The arrangements described in this letter and attached briefing paper are specifically intended to address current partner concerns and to develop more consistent and even stronger national and local partnership, targeting Rural Crime across all areas of Scotland.

The proposals have been received very positively by the NFU(S) and other partners who are very keen to work us to ensure that engagement leads to positive preventative measures being implemented.

Consequently, I am confident that these measures will deliver a shared and consistent understanding of Rural Crime, together with improved national and local partnership working in respect of intelligence gathering, prevention and enforcement.

I trust that this provides a suitable overview of the various initiatives being taken forward by Police Scotland and its partners in respect of Rural Crime. The information briefing paper accompanies this letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Derek Robertson', with a stylized, flowing script.

Derek Robertson  
Assistance Chief Constable  
Police Scotland North





## BRIEFING PAPER

### Police Scotland - Rural Crime Update

Immediately following the Justice Committee meeting on 24 February 2015, Chief Superintendent Gavin Robertson sought additional information from the National Farmers Union (Scotland) and NFU Mutual in respect of the range of issues raised at Justice Committee and any matters which required immediate attention.

Lanarkshire and the Lothian's and Scottish Borders were identified as the areas where NFU member issues were mainly concentrated. These areas are covered by two Police Scotland Divisions, each of which immediately identified a Superintendent to lead a range of activity and convene a local governance group in respect of Rural / Wildlife Crime. Both Divisions undertook additional engagement with the specific farmers and communities involved prior to implementing a variety of actions to address local needs. These local initiatives included:-

- Commissioning local research and analysis in respect of Rural Crime.
- Distribution of crime and fire prevention information to farmers and other rural residents.
- Planning a 'Walk and Talk' event at a farm near Pathhead – offering farmers advice on general farm security, firearm security, fire safety and wildlife crime.
- A 'tack marking' service offered to the equestrian community.
- Focus on prevention, intelligence gathering and enforcement in respect of Rural Crime.
- Work to maximise awareness and uptake in respect of crime prevention and property marking technology.
- Building on the work in North Lanarkshire in 2014, a Rural Crime task force was set up within South Lanarkshire comprising community, plain clothes and CID officers. Supported by intelligence, officers and local partners focusing on Rural Crime prevention, detection and community engagement.
- Improving communication links with NFU and rural partners and use of social media to better publicise Rural Crime issues and successes.

## Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service Review of Agricultural Crime Prosecution Policy

Police Scotland will take an active part in this review. On 29 May 2015, Chief Superintendent Gavin Robertson will represent Police Scotland at the first meeting of this group and he has been in discussion with Mrs Catriona Dalrymple, COPFS in this regard.

### Contact Issues

On 13 April 2015, NFU Regional Managers visited Police Scotland's Area Control Room and Service Centre at Bilston Glen where they were provided with a tour of the facilities and presentations in respect of the work undertaken in these key areas. This was followed by a meeting with the senior management of Contact, Command and Control Division to discuss contact and 101 service issues.

This visit was viewed very positively by all parties and will be followed up by an article in the NFU(S) monthly publication, Scottish Farming Leader, which will include helpful guidance to farmers and rural residents in respect of contact with the police. NFU(S) has also offered to provide a training input and materials to raise the awareness of service centre personnel in respect of Rural Crime and its impact. Further visits by NFU branch members are also planned and partnership work continues in this area.

### Watch Schemes

Safer Communities Division, Police Scotland, is undertaking a review of all 'Watch Schemes' across Scotland, including those focused on Rural Crime. This will include a review of the various alert mechanisms used to support such schemes. This work will not impede the planned extension of existing watch schemes.

Of note is the fact that on 30 April 2015, the successful Highland Perthshire Community Watch scheme was expanded to include Perth and Kinross. This was subject of a multi-agency launch including Perth and Kinross Council and NFU(S).

### Scottish Business Resilience Centre (SBRC)

The SBRC has undertaken to support Police Scotland, NFU(S) and their partners through involvement in national and local initiatives either through business to business communication or direct involvement in events. The SBRC is exploring the feasibility of work to enhance the security of farm buildings, agricultural vehicles and equipment.

Furthermore, the SBRC is attending the forthcoming Royal Highland Show in partnership with Scottish Power with the main theme being metal theft. They also intend running a series of crime prevention articles in future issues of the Scottish Farming Leader.



## National Rural Crime Partnership Arrangements

To support efficient and sustainable service delivery to the rural communities of Scotland by local policing divisions, Police Scotland is rolling out a nationally co-ordinated 'local partnership structure' which replicates the effective provisions already in place for Wildlife Crime. Clear governance arrangements have been agreed which consist of the following components:-

- National Rural Crime Action Plan

A national action plan has now been compiled encompassing all the issues raised at Justice Committee and subsequent discussions with NFU(S). This document seeks to capture work already ongoing in Police Scotland in respect of rural / agricultural crime with a view to engaging with partners, identifying best practise and developing a standardised approach to key issues. The action plan contains the following strategic aims:-

1. Develop prevention opportunities to mitigate the threat from Rural Crime.
2. Improve contact from rural communities and incident reporting.
3. Develop an internal and external communication strategy, maximising use of available technology.
4. Work in support of the COPFS review of Rural Crime prosecution strategy and adopt recommendations.
5. Improve the approach to the investigation of Rural Crime.
6. Review the national governance system in Police Scotland to ensure a coordinated and standardised procedure.
7. Support continuous learning of officers and staff using internal and external opportunities to allow the development of core skills.

This work will be taken forward through the work of the National Rural Crime Prevention Steering Group.

- National Rural Crime Prevention Steering Group

In order to deliver the cohesive and consistent partnership 'preventative' approach to Rural Crime across Scotland, interaction between a number of agencies will be essential. The proposed Steering Group will provide strategic direction and co-ordination in support of local delivery via the 14 Local Divisions and local partners. Initial confirmed membership of this group includes Police Scotland, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), the National Farmers Union (Scotland), NFU Mutual, Scottish Land and Estates, Scottish Government and the Scottish Business Crime Resilience Centre. Other partners may be added in future. The first meeting of this group will take place on Monday 29 June 2015.

- Divisional Rural / Wildlife Crime Governance Groups

Building on the pilot arrangements in Lanarkshire and the Lothian's and Scottish Borders, all Local Policing Divisions will convene their own combined Rural / Wildlife Crime Governance Group with an agenda and frequency of meetings tailored to local requirements. This will provide clear local leadership, governance and delivery in respect of Rural and Wildlife Crime.

- Divisional Rural Crime Action Plan

Each division will also compile its own Rural Crime action plan aligned to the national action plan. This work will generate a range of analytical products as well as prevention, intelligence and enforcement actions, enabling focused local activity and the majority of issues being addressed at source.

- Divisional Contact Officers

Police Scotland already has in place a network of officers, primarily at Inspector / Chief Inspector level who act as single points of contact for NFU(S) and other partners, to address local rural / agricultural issues. These officers will form an integral part of the Divisional Governance Groups.

#### Rural Crime Toolkit

To support the work of officers and staff across Scotland, a Rural Crime toolkit is being compiled. The contents will be informed by the expertise of our partners and will link into existing Police Scotland initiatives such as Operations RAC (acquisitive crime) and Quarterlight (vehicle crime).

The proposed Rural Crime toolkit will be available to all officers and staff, and will improve operational service delivery in respect of Rural Crime issues.

#### Attendance at Agricultural / Rural Shows

Police Scotland officers and staff will be in attendance at various agricultural and rural shows throughout Scotland in order to provide information, advice and guidance in respect of rural and wildlife crime.

#### Rural Crime Awareness Events

Rural Crime awareness events are generally supported by numerous partners including Police Scotland, NFU(S), staff from the relevant Local Authority and the manufacturers of security products and farm vehicles. Farmers are provided with security advice and updates in respect of local Community Policing action plans for tackling Rural Crime. Further events are being planned for 2015.

## Conclusion

The arrangements described in this briefing paper are intended to develop a more consistent and stronger partnership approach to tackling Rural Crime across all of Scotland on a national and local level.

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Derek Robertson  
Assistance Chief Constable  
Police Scotland North  
27/05/2015

