

Consultation Overview

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) draft Rural Crime Strategy went out for public consultation on 10th October 2019 and was open until 8th November 2019.

Consultation Responses

Respondents were asked to read the strategy document before completing a short online survey. This resulted in 38 online responses along with 6 further responses being submitted directly to the PCC's office via email.

An analysis of the online survey results has indicated:

- 24 of respondents were members of the public, 13 were responding on behalf of a local authority/ town or parish council and one on behalf of a voluntary or community organisation.
- Only 24 respondents confirmed which area of the West Mercia they were located in. Of these, 15 were in Worcestershire, 8 in Shropshire and 1 in Herefordshire.
- 37 out of 38 respondents agreed with the PCCs vision for tackling rural crime of *reducing crimes that most impact on our rural communities*.
- 37 out of 38 respondents agreed with the PCCs aspirations for reducing rural crime set out on page 9 of the strategy.
- When asked to highlight one key area of rural crime the respondent feel to be the most important to be addressed:
 - 12 respondents listed theft, with a number specifically referring to theft from farms or of agricultural vehicles and plant;
 - 8 listed road safety related issues
 - 5 listed fear of crime or vulnerability / isolation issues
 - 4 listed burglary
 - 3 listed drugs or violent crime
 - 2 listed wildlife crime
 - 2 listed vandalism or anti social behaviour
 - Other issues included fly tipping and agricultural crime

Twenty five respondents make specific comments on the draft strategy. These are shown at appendix 1, along with the six responses received directly into the PCC's office appendix 2 and 3.

Internal force stakeholders and the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel were also consulted as part of the draft strategy development

Appendix 1

No.	Online Comment	PCC's response	Changes to the Rural Crime Strategy
1	It is important that police are visible and approachable	The <i>Reassure</i> section of the strategy sets out my commitments to build confidence in policing in rural areas including ensuring the force is both accessible and proactively engaging with its rural communities	No change
2	To remedy the above, closer working with Highways Authority to make main "B" roads more suitable for increased volume and size of HGVS / Large Agricultural Vehicles etc.	The rural crime strategy acknowledges that road deaths and road safety are issues affecting rural areas. I am developing a separate road safety strategy to recognise the impact road safety issues have across all our communities.	No change – the PCC is to have a separate road safety strategy
3	lacks any objectives based on %age decreases. Too much aspiration no actual reduction targets	Page 10 of the document sets out the measures of success I intend to use to monitor this strategy. I acknowledge that more work is needed to develop a suite of measures that better reflect the rural crime and wildlife crime issues affecting our rural communities. This is why I have made a specific commitment in the <i>Intelligence</i> section of the strategy to work with the force on this.	No change
4	Again from that information from the NFU it is apparent that communication sits at the 'top of the tree'. In other	The Reassure section of the strategy sets out my commitments to build	No change

	words, when crimes, particularly when there is a spate, the community, as far as is operationally possible must be made aware of the actions of police in order that they feel both supported and protected	confidence in policing in rural areas including ensuring the force is both accessible and proactively engaging with its rural communities.	
5	KPIs are not measuring the right things, they are only measuring the quantum of the problem, not how effectively it is being addressed - e.g. Rather than measuring 'Increased Crime Reporting' you need to measure 'number, or percentage, of total number of crimes reported that are satisfactorily resolved.	Thank you for your suggestion. West Mercia Police measures the number of crimes it resolves using 22 Home Office outcomes codes. These have not been included in the proposed suite of measures on page 10, however I do have oversight of crime outcomes as part of my ongoing scrutiny of force performance.	No change
6	we are low crime so very lucky but anything to make Police presence felt in rural areas is good, crime comes out to villages as the criminals know they have more time to commit a crime	The Reassure section of the strategy sets out my commitments to build confidence in policing in rural areas including ensuring the force is both accessible and proactively engaging with its rural communities.	No change
7	It is great to see the importance of feedback being gained from communities. However it does not clarify how this will be done. Rural communities have a high rate of older people who are part of a generation of no technical advance skills in internet use to respond to online surveys such as this. They are a vulnerable group and often live in isolation. How will the new strategy address this, to ensure their voices are heard and that they feel safe and secure within their homes and rural area?	The <i>Reassure</i> section of the strategy sets out my commitment to seek the views of people living in rural communities, not just via online surveys but through public engagement events and attendance at meetings and community events etc. Separate to this I have commissioned a West Mercia wide public perception survey which only uses telephone and face to face interviews to capture the views of local residents.	No change

8	Clear and well presented	Thank you for your comments	No change
9	To give maximum publicity in the immediate local community when a crime committed in that area is cleared up and the perpetrators arrested and given a sentence that the COMMUNITY considers appropriate to the impact on that community's sense of well being	I have included in the <i>Reassurance</i> section of the strategy a commitment for both the forces and my own communications team to actively seek opportunities to promote rural crime and wildlife crime. For the force this should include the promoting the outcome of successful operations and prosecutions. Whether offences are dealt with by means of an out of court disposal, or through the courts criteria and guidelines have to be followed to determine any sentence given.	No change
10	Pleased that wildlife crime is being addressed	Thank you for your comments	No change
11	More resources for actual crime (eg burglary, assault) and less on perceived crime (eg hate crime)	The additional resources I have made available for rural crime will be used to prevent and address crime. I have set out in the <i>Prevention</i> section how I will hold the Chief Constable to account for the use of resources	No change
12	I support the focus on wildlife crime and road safety, which are my priorities in this sense. I am surprised about the lack of reference to fox hunting, which I hope is being addressed.	The strategy includes the NPCC and West Mercia Police priorities /aims for wildlife crime which do not specifically include fox hunting with dogs, however fox hunting with dogs that contravenes the Hunting Act 2004 is considered a wildlife /animal crime and should be reported to the police.	No change
13	Don't think that " Wildlife Crime" should be a high priority	Wildlife Crime is a national policing priority and a West Mercia Policing aim which is why it is included in the	No comment

		strategy.	
14	Strategy is good, but only on paper, it does not follow onto the ground	My office will be drafting a delivery plan to support the strategy and I will be using this to monitor and track progress against the strategy, ensuring that my aspirations do happen	
15	The draft strategy seems good. However, I am concerned about the number of police looking after rural areas. There needs to be more because response times can be significant in rural areas and criminals no doubt are aware of this and thus committing crime in rural areas is likely to go unsolved as the perpetrators have ample time to escape before any police arrive.	The resources I have directed into rural crime are in addition to the funding I have provided for an additional 215 extra officers, bringing West Mercia's officer numbers to the highest level since 2012. These officers have been posted across the force area including to rural areas and will help make all our communities safer and secure.	No change
16	Excellent; rural crime has been ignored for too long.	Thank you for your comments	No change
17	Ripple Parish has an active Community Speed Watch group operating on the Ryall Rd (a designated no through traffic zone) that would be far more effective if backed up by more frequent police presence during & outside of the Speed Watch sessions.	Thank you for your comments. Although my strategy acknowledges road safety as a problem in rural areas, its impact is much wider which is why I shall be publishing a separate road safety strategy.	No change
18	It all seems to hang on telling the Chief Constable what to do next	Thank you for your comments	No change
19	Engaging rural communities is more difficult so grants where engagement is used as a criteria for grants etc disadvantages rural communities more.	I have set out in the <i>Prevention</i> section of the strategy my commitments around commissioning and funding, including ensuring a rural location is not a disadvantage to accessing funding.	No change

20	Summary poster for rural noticeboards/parish magazines useful	Thank you for your suggestion on how to promote the strategy	No change
21	We're all just so fed up of everything being stolen.	Thank you for your comment. I hope my rural crime strategy will provide you with some reassurance that rural issues will be addressed.	No change
22	A very welcome initiative and good to see that rural crime is a specific focus. A good starting point, increasing resource from 5 to 10 FTE but given the geographical coverage much more than this is needed.	The resources I have directed into rural crime are in addition to the funding I have provided for an additional 215 extra officers, bringing officer numbers to the highest level since 2012. These officers have been posted across the force area including to rural areas.	No change
23	We have had great support and visibility from the RABO, the Ross SNT are also keen to provide visibility/reassurance but this is very limited due to their numbers/workload. Investment in non-frontline (RABO etc. should provide increased visibility, advice/reassurance. Speeding and road safety are a key concern for our village which is dissected by the A49. We have had good support from Safer Roads Partnership and have established a CSW and the PC have also funded a SID, both to 'educate' drivers however there is no enforcement activity to reinforce this. Perception is still that support/activity/funding will only come once deaths have occurred. 'Rural crime' for our community includes Heating oil thefts, garden/agricultural machinery thefts, vulnerability (isolated, elderly population), domestic abuse, SOC (potential for people exploitation/trafficking with large agricultural, seasonal workforce on local farms), rural road speeds and wildlife crime (poaching)	Thank you for your comments. I have committed to provide West Mercia Police with additional resources for rural crime and I have set out in the document my expectations for delivery by the force.	No change

24	There are no measurable targets to assess whether you have succeeded in achieving your objectives. Though there are statistics included it's all a bit subjective	Page 10 of the document sets out the measures of success I intend to use to monitor this strategy. I acknowledge that more work is needed to develop a suite of measures that better reflect the rural crime and wildlife crime issues affecting our rural communities. This is why I have made a specific commitment in the Intelligence section of the strategy to work with the force on this.	No change
25	Very important that Rural areas have a voice and confidence that their views are important	Thank you for your comments	No change
Email responses received			
1	Dodford with Grafton Parish Council have read the Rural Crime Strategy Review and they are pleased with it and have asked me to let you know that they welcome the proposed strategy.	Thank you for your comments	No change
2	Thank you for including Kempsey Parish Council in your consultation. We should like to congratulate Mr Campion and his team for recognising the impact that crime is having on rural communities and for taking the matter forward with this strategy. We have noted the 'measures of success' proposed in the policy and hope that the Commissioner will be able to obtain the resources necessary to meet these targets.	Thank you for your comments	No change
3	The PCC's Rural Crime Strategy was considered at a recent meeting of our Parish Council in Lyonshall, Herefordshire and we were broadly in agreement with the contents of the draft document. Having studied the document I am concerned that there is not any mention of	The strategy includes the NPCC and West Mercia Police priorities /aims for wildlife crime which do not specifically include fox hunting with dogs, however fox hunting with dogs that	No change

	<p>hunting with dogs other than hare coursing. Although this can be a very divisive subject it should fall within the definition of wildlife crime and so deserves at least a mention in both your document and that of the NPCC.</p> <p>The recent conviction of staff of the South Herefordshire Hunt for cruelty by putting live fox cubs in with foxhounds suggests that that particular hunt is still engaged in active hunting with dogs which is contrary to the law. Irrespective of the rights and wrongs of fox hunting, the activity attracts the attention of supporters, protesters and saboteurs so is likely to result in public disorder or other unlawful activity. Fox hunting is a uniquely rural pursuit which presents the police with particular problems in maintaining order and enforcing legislation so I believe it should be included in rural crime strategy.</p>	<p>contravenes the Hunting Act 2004 is considered a wildlife /animal crime and should be reported to the police.</p>	
4	<p>It does not include particular relevance to Domestic abuse nor does it mention the criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults, sexual exploitation(although fleetingly mentions sexual abuse), nor modern slavery – I am surprised that the Get Safe Initiative in Worcestershire has not been adopted for Herefordshire.</p> <p>In view of the current climate I believe this certainly needs to be explored further</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. It is important to recognise that all offences can occur in rural areas including serious crimes such as domestic abuse and modern slavery. I have deliberately chosen not to include such crimes in this strategy to retain a focus on the ‘rural centric’ issues I have identified, instead these issues are addressed in more detail in other documents and strategies. For example issues such as county lines and modern slavery are included in my Serious and Organised Crime Strategy and I will shortly be publishing a detailed and far reaching domestic abuse strategy.</p>	No change

5	<p>Many thanks for sending the strategy to the Town Council and for the opportunity to comment on it. The council discussed the strategy at its meeting last week and is happy to support the recommendations put forward in the document.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments</p>	<p>No change</p>
6	<p>Response from a Shropshire academic. This was submitted as an annotated version of the strategy and is attached as a separate document</p>	<p>Thank you for your detailed and helpful response to my draft rural crime strategy. I have considered all the comments and changes you have suggested. In particular I note your comments regarding the need to involve academia in this work and the strategy has been amended to reflect this.</p> <p>A number of minor changes to grammar and wording have also been made as a result of your feedback.</p>	<p>Additional aspiration added on page 9 and page 13 to strengthen links with academia.</p> <p>Changes to wording have also been made throughout the document</p>