

RURAL POLICING STRATEGY

2017-2020





Foreword from PCC TIM PASSMORE



We all know Suffolk is a safe place in which to live, work, travel and invest. It's a large and very attractive rural county covering 1500 square miles and has a stunning 60 mile coastline and some internationally renowned Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Along with its extraordinary architectural and agricultural heritage, this brings its own distinctive challenges for our Constabulary.

Rural areas typically tend to be safer, but I believe the impact of crime is often greater on victims in the countryside due to their remote and isolated locations, making them feel more vulnerable and concerned. As your Police and Crime Commissioner I'm fully committed to ensuring people and businesses in our market towns and villages receive their fair

share of our county's policing resources, so the Chief Constable must consider this when he decides on operational policing matters across Suffolk.

This new rural policing strategy helps deliver my Police and Crime Plan policies for rural Suffolk to continue to keeping us safe and I'm very pleased to fully support this fresh approach.

As vice chairman of the National Rural Crime Network, I work with Police and Crime Commissioners across England and Wales to highlight the unique challenges of rural crime and I will continue to do everything possible to ensure policing meets the needs of our rural communities.

Many crimes are common to both rural and urban areas such as domestic abuse, cyber crime and serious sexual offences, but the challenge of preventing and solving these crimes is often exacerbated by remoteness and isolation. Other crimes are specific to rural areas - livestock rustling, poaching and hare coursing, and this new strategy enables the Constabulary to confront this criminality in a more timely and effective manner.

I'm particularly pleased with the commitment to enhance the role of volunteering by building on the success of new schemes such as Volunteers on Horseback and the expansion of Suffolk's Special Constabulary.

In conclusion, I'm absolutely convinced it's only by working together across all communities we will be able to keep our unique and treasured Suffolk countryside safe, welcoming and secure.

Introduction from
**CHIEF CONSTABLE
GARETH WILSON**



Suffolk is one of the safest counties in England; however it is not immune to the problems facing our wider society. As a police service we recognise the need to work with local people and partner agencies to understand the issues affecting rural communities.

Policing a rural area such as Suffolk offers unique challenges and requires us to work with all sections of the rural community from residents to businesses, to farmers and those involved in the county's thriving tourist industry, to prevent and detect rural crime.

Many criminals feel the countryside provides easy pickings. This together with the increased sophistication of organised criminals profiting from crime such as lead theft from churches to agricultural plant and livestock theft from farms, can heighten the feelings of vulnerability and fear of crime in rural locations.

A great deal of progress has already been made. Investment in Automatic Number Plate Recognition means our teams can use this technology to challenge those who come to Suffolk to commit crime. Our rural crime and wildlife officers have specialist skills to respond to hare coursing, wildlife and heritage crime. Specialist rural crime reduction advice is shared with rural communities to keep people safe and protect property and is easily accessible through the Suffolk Police Website.

But there is still more that can be done and in this strategy we have identified the key challenges faced by rural communities and as a result, the demand on policing. The strategy details the prevention, intelligence, enforcement and reassurance measures we will take to reduce crime and feelings of vulnerability in Suffolk's rural communities.



THE CONTEXT

WHAT IS RURAL CRIME?

Suffolk Constabulary recognises 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:

- Protect vulnerable people
- Focus on prevention and early intervention
- Cut crime and anti-social behaviour
- Improve victim care
- Support the rural economy

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 often unreported and less visible.

Rural crime is different. Isolation and remote locations in which crime occurs and the associated vulnerability places 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 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 Suffolk 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

Suffolk is a popular destination for visitors and is a valuable part of the Suffolk economy. Crime committed along our coast, villages and rural "beauty spots" can impact on wider community and local businesses confidence.



Business and food crime

Crimes against rural businesses can impact greatly on people's livelihoods and economic opportunities of the County. This includes Food Crime where businesses and health are put at risk through interference or contamination of the food chain.



Road safety

Suffolk has a significant rural road network and ensuring our roads are safe for all users is a key priority.



Serious and organised crime

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



Game sports and wildlife crime

Hare coursing, illegal hunting, poaching, fishing and the trade of endangered animals or birds will be investigated whilst activity associated with game sports will be policed fairly.

OUR STRATEGY FOR POLICING RURAL AREAS:

- Prevention
- Enforcement
- Intelligence
- Reassurance



Prevention

In partnership with stakeholders we will seek early intervention opportunities to prevent rural crimes and incidents from occurring to prevent those in rural communities 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 protection of property from opportunist criminals using police messaging tools, Suffolk Constabulary's website, media releases and through public engagement events.
- Develop the specialist rural skills and knowledge of Suffolk Constabulary officers, staff and Special Constables through training and communications delivered by Community Safety Rural Crime staff who will provide advice and support to Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs).
- Work with businesses and partner organisations such as the national Food Crime Unit to raise awareness and prevent incidents of food crime in Suffolk.
- Increase Special Constable and volunteer working in rural communities through targeted recruitment in rural neighbourhoods to work within the Community Safety Department.
- Continue to work with the Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch Association to promote Watch schemes across the county.
- Identify repeat victims of crime and anti-social behaviour and manage our response to their needs.
- Educate road-users about road safety on rural roads, and take positive action to prevent collisions by working with partners including Suffolk Fire and Rescue, Community Speed Watch volunteers, the Suffolk Road Safety Partnership and the targeted use of safety camera vans.
- Encourage members of the public in rural communities to join police messaging systems including Police Connect, Suffolk Constabulary's community alert system, allowing members of the public to be dynamically informed of incidents occurring, request community intelligence and provide crime prevention advice.

Intelligence

It is important we listen to what people tell us and act upon it 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.
- We will work with partners to obtain and develop intelligence on hidden harm crimes including human trafficking and modern slavery.
- Use Community Safety Rural Crime and SNT staff 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. National Food Crime Unit, NFU, Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and Federation of Small Businesses.
- Continue to use Automatic Number Plate Recognition capability to disrupt travelling criminals by ensuring camera positioning reflects current intelligence ensuring most effective deployment.

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 anti-social behaviour.
- Work with rural communities, businesses, Watch Schemes and partners to increase reporting and detection of rural crimes.
- Make best use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition to provide effective detection and disruption to criminals using our roads
- Develop existing partnerships with neighbouring police forces and Eastern Region Special Operations Unit to combat and deter rural cross-border criminality and organised crime.
- Ensure Community Safety Rural Crime staff co-ordinate rural crime reduction initiatives and advise SNTs on wildlife and rural crime investigations and operations.
- Provide crime reduction advice and target hardening guidance to victims. For crime trends or series the Community Safety Department will create a tactical plan to support a reduction strategy.



**VOLUNTEERS
ON HORSEBACK**

SUPPORTING SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY
FIGHT RURAL CRIME

Reassurance

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

We will:

- Make sure we understand the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour on rural communities and provide an excellent service from the first point of contact.
- Ensure the Community Safety Department implements the Rural Policing Strategy and supporting Rural Policing Delivery Plan with partners, SNTs 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, linking in with existing schemes such as the rural coffee caravan, mobile libraries and other virtual opportunities.
- Use police messaging systems, Watch schemes and other networks to keep communities informed as well as make use of partner's communication networks such as Suffolk County Council, District and Borough and the voluntary sector.
- Seek feedback from the people living in our rural communities on the way we are working to deliver this Rural Policing Strategy.

RESOURCING THE STRATEGY

Community Safety Team

Suffolk Constabulary's Community Safety Department hosts two subject matter experts in rural, wildlife and heritage crime. They are supported by a team of crime reduction and partnership co-ordinators, with designated responsibility to each of the three policing commands, working together to reduce vulnerability and make our rural communities safer.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams

Our Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) are at the forefront of delivering a policing service to all communities across Suffolk. Each of the rural SNTs have a designated specialist able to respond to rural crime and wildlife matters. These officers are supported by the subject matter experts who provide guidance on complex and volume rural crime investigations.

Special Constables and Volunteers

The Community Safety Department and SNTs are supported by volunteers on initiatives such as Community Speedwatch to make our rural roads safer. We have a team of special constables experienced in rural crime matters who support our policing response to rural incidents such as hunts and hare coursing. They support our many engagement events across our county's rural locations to promote community safety and crime reduction initiatives.

Partnerships

Suffolk Constabulary works in partnership with businesses and organisations representing rural communities to recognise and respond to the impact of crime in rural areas. It also collaborates with neighbouring forces and organisations such as the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) to tackle cross border crime including human trafficking and modern slavery.

Operational Delivery

The rural policing strategy will be delivered through a series of actions for operational police officers and staff. These will focus on the Prevention, Intelligence, Enforcement and Reassurance strands and will be the responsibility of the Community Safety team in most cases to ensure delivery. The Head of Community Safety will attend the Victim Satisfaction and Confidence board, chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable (Local Policing), to be held to account for the delivery of the strategy.

We will:

- Improve the way we provide information to our communities and partners about those committing rural crime through local media, social media, website and engagement events.
- Encourage people to report crimes and incidents to the police and promote the use of Crimestoppers to enable anonymous reporting.

For further information on rural crime please visit Suffolk Constabulary's website www.suffolk.police.uk.

To make contact with someone from the Community Safety Department to talk about rural crime please send a general enquiry contact form from our website, found under Contact Us.



Making Suffolk a safer place to live, work, travel and invest



**SUFFOLK
CONSTABULARY**