



Cumbria Constabulary

Rural Crime Strategy

2014 - 2016



Cumbria Constabulary
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Introduction

Cumbria is a predominantly rural county, and is considered one of the most beautiful regions of the United Kingdom, incorporating the Lake District, the Eden Valley, the North Pennines, the Furness Peninsula, and part of the Yorkshire Dales.

With an area covering 2,613 square miles and a population of around half a million people, 97% of Cumbria's geography is classed as rural with over 50% of its population living in rural communities.

Cumbria enjoys diverse and unique habitats from coastline to the only mountain range in England. There are over 150 miles of coastline including heritage coast, areas of outstanding natural beauty and salt marshes. Cumbria is home to 280 SSSI's as well as 21 species and 18 habitats that have been identified as a priority requiring enhanced protection and conservation. They include hen harriers, red squirrels, upland oaks and ash woodlands.

Tourism plays a major part in the county's economy, attracting over 40 million visitors a year to visit and enjoy the natural beauty of Cumbria. These visitors bring over £2.2 billion in revenue to the county (based on 2011 figures). It is therefore easy to see why there are such ample opportunities for criminals to exploit visitors to the countryside and take advantage of the isolation and sparse nature of Cumbria.

In such a predominantly rural county, Cumbria Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) recognise the need to tackle rural crime in all its forms and this strategic document has been commissioned as a result. Its purpose is to identify the key issues surrounding rural crime in the county, set out its aims and objectives and build upon the positive work that already exists within the constabulary and its partners.

Policing a rural area offers unique challenges. The huge geographic areas covered by many of the United Kingdom's rural forces and the vast array of road networks

weaving through the countryside means that many criminals feel that rural crime provides easier pickings.

Add to this the increasing sophistication of organised criminals profiting from crime such as theft of agricultural plant, livestock and farm vehicles and machinery means that some rural communities may feel a heightened sense of vulnerability and fear of crime.

For years now, policing teams within Cumbria have been highly creative and innovative in the way that they tackle crime in their rural communities. Neighbourhood policing is crucial to success. Having dedicated teams working in our communities with a good working knowledge of its people and problems is essential.

Significant effort has gone into both preventative and enforcement work and we have seen a wide array of watch schemes grow throughout the county and some highly successful police led operations which have involved not only partner agencies but also the rural communities themselves.

A strategic assessment of rural crime has been completed by Cumbria Constabulary to identify where our resources should be focused to effectively tackle the key priorities.

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the Cumbria Constabulary rural crime action plan at [appendix A](#), which sets out the tasks, action owners and delivery timescales.

Defining 'Rural' - Urban or non-urban?

The term rural is generally employed to describe non-urban or peripheral regions. Demographic definitions of rural emphasise population numbers, density and geographic isolation. Economists have argued that land use provides for distinctive forms of rural life. Rural areas can also be designated for political and governmental purposes.

When determining what is urban or rural, a number of definitions were considered.

The local authority classification was introduced in 2005. Many statistics are only available at local authority (LA) level. In order to differentiate between rural and urban for these statistics it was necessary to classify the LAs based on their rurality. It grades districts into 6 classifications from 'Major Urban' to 'Rural 80'. However, as this method only grades areas at district level it does not give an accurate reflection of individual rural communities.

Cumbria Constabulary has previously used 'beat codes' to determine whether or not a location is urban or non-urban and all past rural crime data published by the constabulary has been based on the beat code structure.

There are 155 beat codes within the county. Around a third of these are classed as urban and the remainder are rural. A single beat code area can include a combination of fields and open spaces as well as villages, market towns and areas of larger population such as the city of Carlisle. Therefore, the method of solely using beat codes to define 'rural' does not lend itself to the drilling down of data to smaller geographic areas which would in turn give a more accurate picture of rural areas in the county.

In 2004, a rural definition was introduced as a joint project between the Commission for Rural Communities, DEFRA, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Welsh Assembly and The Office for National Statistics. It uses 'output areas' to map geographic areas throughout England and Wales. This graded system sets out 8

urban/rural classifications and it enables each of the 175,433 output areas (OA's) to be classed on the basis of context i.e. whether the surrounding area of an OA is sparsely populated or less sparsely populated. It also enables the OA to be distinguished on a morphological basis – as predominantly urban or predominantly town and fringe etc.

The 8 classifications are as follows:

- | |
|--|
| 1 = Urban >10k - Sparse |
| 2 = Town and Fringe - Sparse |
| 3 = Village - Sparse |
| 4 = Hamlet & Isolated Dwellings - Sparse |
| 5 = Urban >10k - Less Sparse |
| 6 = Town and Fringe - Less Sparse |
| 7 = Village - Less Sparse |
| 8 = Hamlet & Isolated Dwellings - Less Sparse |

The county of Cumbria has 1,714 output areas.

A countywide breakdown of these output areas in the form of a map overlay is attached at [appendix B](#).

For the purpose of this strategy, the use of output areas has been applied in the definition of non-urban or rural areas. All data relating to rural crimes has been based on output areas that fall into village or hamlet classifications, highlighted in bold in the table above.

Our traditional market town centres such as Keswick and Brampton fall into categories 2 and 6 and have been omitted from the data for the purpose of this strategy. If we are to ask ourselves what makes rural crime different to urban crime then the type of crime that takes place in these market town centres is really no different to that which takes place in larger urban areas.

Defining 'Rural Crime'

In the absence of a nationally agreed definition, Temporary Chief Constable Bernard Lawson in his capacity as the national ACPO lead for rural crime chaired a number of workshops and seminars throughout 2012 and 2013 to try and define what is meant by rural crime.

Some commentators suggest that rural crime should be defined by specific crime types such as wildlife crime or farm and agricultural thefts which the general public and media often identify as offences that are unique to the countryside.

Many recent media articles referring to rural crime are based on figures produced by the NFU Mutual; the country's largest farming insurers. Their figures are based solely on crimes reported to the NFU Mutual by their members, predominantly those working in the agricultural industry and therefore exclude all other forms of crime that take place in the countryside. Whilst farm and agricultural crime is clearly an issue in rural communities it should not be the sole focus of police resources when tackling rural crime.

Others suggest that factors such as isolation, police response times and the impact of the crime on the victim should define what we mean by rural crime.

However, to fully understand the full extent of crime in a rural context, all crime and anti-social behaviour that takes place in our defined rural areas has been included in our strategic assessment. If we are to truly police by consent, it is important that we allow our communities to tell us when they feel they have been the victim of a rural crime so we have taken this into account within the definition.

For the purpose of this strategic document, rural crime in Cumbria is defined as:

- **Any crime and anti-social behaviour that takes place in a rural location or as identified as rural crime by the victim.**

Strategic Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this strategy is to:

“Ensure Cumbria Constabulary effectively tackles rural crime in all its forms”.

In order to deliver the strategy, the force rural crime champion will hold twice yearly rural crime meetings to report on progress made against the strategy. We will measure this progress by the publication of annual rural crime data and the completion of public satisfaction surveys for comparison.

Our key objectives are based around the principles of ***Prevention, Intelligence, Enforcement and Reassurance***:

1. Prevention - Maximise partnership opportunities to prevent and detect rural crime and anti-social behaviour, having particular regard to repeat and vulnerable victims.

2. Intelligence - Maximise the sharing of information flow both internally and externally.

3. Enforcement - Targeted enforcement operations around organised, prolific and opportunistic rural criminals.

4. Reassurance - Contribute towards the development of vibrant, cohesive, confident and safe rural communities.

Thematic rural crime areas

A three year strategic assessment was carried out in May 2013 to identify the key rural crime issues in the county and help inform this strategy to allow us to focus our resources accordingly.

This assessment can be found at appendix C.

The document compared data from January 2010 to December 2012 giving a 3 year picture of rural crime in the county. Key findings included:

- Rural crime accounts for 19% of all crime in Cumbria over the last 3 years. It mirrors urban crime types albeit at a lower level.
- The 4 main types of rural criminality are theft (other), burglary other than in a dwelling, theft from motor vehicles and criminal damage.
- Rural communities are affected by a perception of crime levels being higher than they actually are.
- Rural communities are affected by organised crime groups (OCG's) targeting high value property.
- The total value of burglaries (non-dwelling) in the 3 year period is £1.3 million.
- Approximately one quad bike and trailer is stolen from rural Cumbria every week.
- Livestock theft has increased.
- Theft from motor vehicles is a problem in the main tourist area car parks and campsites.
- Existing preventative initiatives have proven effective and partnership working is essential to success.

As a result of the findings of the assessment, 4 thematic rural crime types were identified:

Farm and agricultural crime

Farm and agricultural crime refers to all crime that affects directly or indirectly the farm and agricultural industry. Common offences are thefts of plant, vehicles and equipment from farm premises, damage to property and the theft of livestock. However, less reported offences such as the worrying of livestock would also be classified as farm crime and these types of incidents can have huge impact financially on farming businesses.

Wildlife and environmental crime

Wildlife crime involves people buying, selling, harming or disturbing wild animals or plants that are protected by law. Many wildlife crime offences are non-recordable.

It can take many forms including poaching, badger baiting, the persecution of birds of prey, disturbance or killings of wild birds, taking wild bird eggs and the trade of endangered species. Wildlife crime is closely linked to environmental crime which relates to damage of protected sites and habitats in which our wildlife is found. There are 6 national wildlife crime priorities and we will focus on those which are relevant to Cumbria.

Tourism crime

Crime that directly or indirectly relates to the tourism industry in our rural areas. The main crime types are thefts from tents and caravans at campsites and thefts from motor vehicles, although other offences such as damage, fraud and violence occur. Victims are generally visitors to the county making it harder to promote preventative messages.

Rural community crime

This relates to all other crime that occurs in rural areas that has not been captured in the other 3 thematic groups. It covers a whole host of different types of crime that affect not just our rural residential communities but also our rural businesses. The most common types of crimes are without doubt those of damage and acquisitive crime but rural community crime also encompasses offences such as violence, disorder, ASB and fraud.

Numerically, rural community crime (and ASB) accounts for more than the previous 3 categories as it captures everything that take place in day to day village life.

Its impact should not be underestimated. Offences such as domestic violence in isolated communities where support is limited and offences may go unnoticed can lead to victims having a much greater sense of vulnerability. It is therefore important that we understand our rural communities to develop and maintain regular contact with those at greatest risk of victimisation.

Tackling rural crime

FARM AND AGRICULTURAL CRIME



What we will do:

PREVENTION

- We will increase the engagement with the farming and agricultural community with a view to increasing participation in crime prevention initiatives.
- Identify key stakeholders such as NFU to develop preventative strategies.

INTELLIGENCE

- We will meet with key stakeholders including the NFU Mutual on a quarterly basis to ensure that the flow of information is maximised in relation to vulnerable and at risk communities.

- We will aim to increase the flow of intelligence from the farming communities.

ENFORCEMENT

- All policing teams will work together with key individuals and other stakeholders to stage intelligence led targeted enforcement operations.

REASSURANCE

- We will attend farming and agricultural events to offer prevention advice and reassurance and this will form part of the policing team's engagement plan.

WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME



What we will do:

PREVENTION

- We will maximise partnership opportunities to capture the range of skills and expertise to enhance prevention methods.

INTELLIGENCE

- We will adopt an intelligence led approach in order to maximise information flow around wildlife and environmental crime both internally and externally with our partners through formal information sharing agreements (ISA's) and memoranda of understanding (MOU's).

ENFORCEMENT

- Cumbria Constabulary will adopt the National Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) being developed by the NWCU on behalf of the ACPO lead on Wildlife crime and will liaise with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to enhance the quality of investigation.
- A force wide targeted enforcement approach will be adopted against those involved in wildlife crime.

REASSURANCE

- Links with members of the public will be further developed to provide long term reassurance to our rural communities and demonstrate our commitment to this type of criminality and understanding of how it impacts on residents feeling of safety, security and livelihoods.
- We will seek to identify and engage with new partners to maximise opportunities to engage with resident and visiting communities.

TOURISM CRIME



What we will do:

PREVENTION

- We will work with partners in the tourism industry, to agree how key crime prevention messages can be effectively communicated to visitors to the county.

INTELLIGENCE

- We will identify trends and hotspots to enable targeted use of resources.
- Work with key tourism stakeholders to increase the flow of intelligence.

ENFORCEMENT

- Targeted intelligence led enforcement operations with partners.

REASSURANCE

- We will adopt a communication strategy tailored to meet the needs of those affected by tourism crime.

RURAL COMMUNITY CRIME



What we will do:

PREVENTION

- We will hold a countywide stakeholder event in 2013/2014 with key stakeholders and partners to ensure we are maximising our efforts in tackling rural crime.
- We will develop the use of community messaging, SNS and social media in rural areas to maximise preventative opportunities.

INTELLIGENCE

- Rural crime to feature in force T & CG.
- Rural policing teams will adopt the rural crime policing strategy incorporating their own patrol plan.

- We will maximise the opportunities working with local communities to develop community intelligence.

ENFORCEMENT

- We will be proactive where necessary and where intelligence supports operational activity.
- We will work together with national organisations such as Crimestoppers to maximise the impact of suitable enforcement campaigns.

REASSURANCE

- We will produce and publish data on rural crime in Cumbria as defined on page 7 of this document.

Appendices

- A – Rural crime action plan
- B – Output areas map overlay
- C – Strategic assessment (restricted)

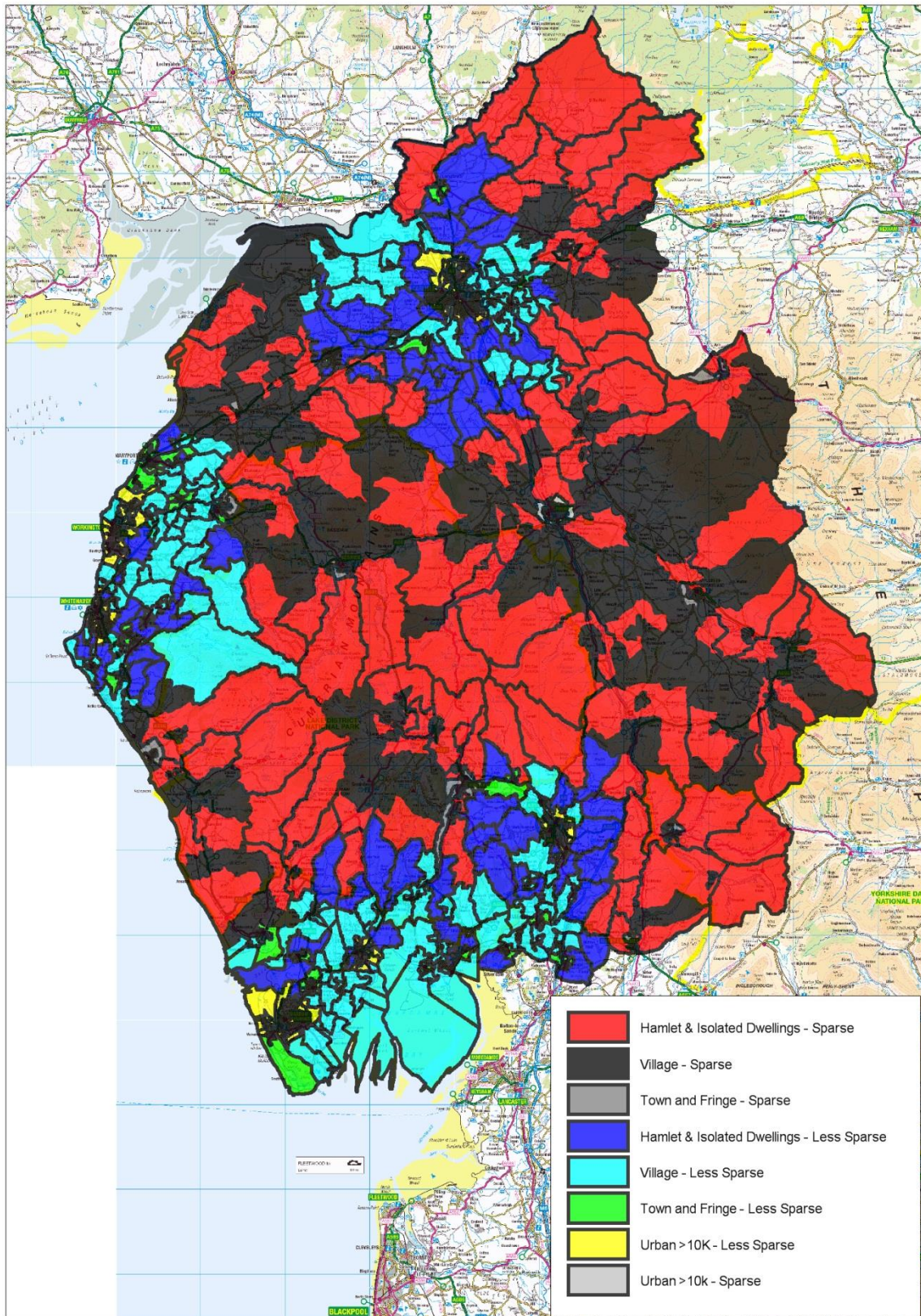
Glossary

- ACC – Assistant Chief Constable
- ACPO - Association of Chief Police Officers
- ASB – Anti-Social Behaviour
- CCM – Cumbria Community Messaging Service
- CJU – Criminal Justice Unit
- CPDA's – Crime Prevention Design Advisors
- CPS – Crown Prosecution Service
- ISA – Information sharing agreement
- LA – Local Authority
- MOU – Memo of understanding
- NPT – Neighbourhood Policing Team
- NFU – National Farmers Union
- NWCU – National Wildlife Crime Unit
- OA – Output area
- OCG – Organised Crime Groups
- POLKA – Police Online Knowledge Area
- SLEUTH – Cumbria Police data system
- SOP – Standard Operating Procedure
- SSSI – Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- T & CG – Tasking and coordination group
- TPA – Territorial Policing Area

Appendix A- Rural Crime Action Plan

Available from the launch date

Appendix B- Output Areas Map



Appendix C- Rural Crime Strategic Assessment

This assessment contains restricted material, including police intelligence, and is therefore restricted to officers and staff within Cumbria Constabulary.