

From: Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Working with the business community
Item & Date: Item B3 22 September 2015

Executive summary: The Commissioner recognises the importance of the business community in the county and that many businesses have had enough on their plates during the economic downturn without having to cope with the impact of business crime. As a result, the Police and Crime Plan includes a commitment to businesses, as does the Commissioner and Chief Constable's joint vision for the county.

As well as meeting with business representatives, the Commissioner works with the Force to strengthen relationships through a number of work streams, including:

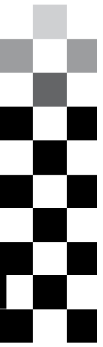
- The joint Business Crime Strategy which provides a vision for the achievement of priorities that have been identified by the local business community.
- The provision of 50% funding for a Business Crime Project Manager with responsibility for supporting the Business Crime Advisory Group and developing Business Crime Reduction Partnerships.
- The Business Crime Advisory Group which includes representation from across the business sector, is chaired by a member of the Chamber of Commerce and works to strengthen the coordination and delivery of crime reduction initiatives and promulgate best practice.
- Hosting a Business Crime Conference in November 2015 in conjunction with the Business Crime Advisory Group.
- The Crime Rural Advisory Group which is chaired by the former High Sheriff of Kent, Michael Bax, includes representation from across the rural spectrum and provides an engagement and critical friend function in respect of rural businesses.

The Commissioner and Chief Constable know how important a strong economy is in boosting employment and cutting crime. As such, they work with a range of partners to help create a thriving community and to make the county a safe place to live, work, travel and invest.

Introduction:

1. The Commissioner recognises that the business community, ranging from small village shops, to medium-sized enterprises, through to large factories or farms play an important role in the life of local communities. Not only do they provide jobs, pay taxes and create wealth through goods and services, but should the local economy suffer, there will be more crime, and where there is a problem with crime, it is more difficult to attract inward investment and new business.
2. The Commissioner also recognises that many businesses have had quite enough on their plates during the economic downturn without having to cope with the impact of business crime. As a result, the Police and Crime Plan includes a specific commitment to businesses under the priority 'Cut crime and catch criminals':

"Increase resources within the Business Crime Advisory Group and work together to recognise the specific concerns of the business community, reduce the volume and impact of business crime and identify emerging issues."



3. In addition, a commitment to businesses is also articulated through the Commissioner and Chief Constable's joint vision for policing in the county:

"Our vision is for Kent to be a safe place for people to live, work and visit and by protecting the public from crime and anti-social behaviour, we will allow our communities to flourish. We will work closely with our partners to ensure that a seamless service is provided and that opportunities for joint working are explored. By working with partners and listening to the public we will provide a first class policing service that places the victim first and is visible and accessible. We will ensure local visible community policing is at the heart of everything we do. We will be there when the public need us and we will act with integrity in all that we do."

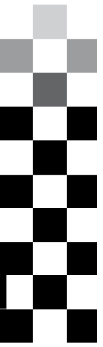
Working in partnership with the Force:

4. In addition to the Commissioner meeting regularly with a range of business representatives including the National Farmers Union and Road Haulage Association to discuss issues affecting the local economy, the Office of the Commissioner works in partnership with the Force to support the business community.

Kent Business Crime Strategy

5. This joint strategy was revised earlier in 2015 to reflect a number of social, demographic and technological changes affecting patterns of crime. To ensure the Office of the Commissioner and the Force remains responsive to the changing environment, a key focus of the strategy is to work even closer with businesses to help protect their assets from cyber-crime and counter the threat from organised crime groups.
6. The strategy provides a vision for the long-term achievement of priorities identified by the business community. The focus of the strategy includes:
 - enhancing the long standing relationship between the Force and local businesses;
 - reducing business crime in partnership with local businesses;
 - entering into strategic alliances with key institutions which represent businesses;
 - maximising the effectiveness of Business Crime Reduction Partnerships; and
 - being responsive to emerging threats including cyber-crime and organised criminal gangs.
7. To be successful, the strategy identifies that the Office of the Commissioner and the Force will seek to:
 - support an effective Business Crime Advisory Group model;
 - work closely with local authorities, partners and the public;
 - deliver a first class service to the business community, which meets their diverse needs;
 - ensure the highest standards of integrity and professionalism;
 - ensure effective liaison with the Crime Rural Advisory Group; and
 - ensure best use of digital channels and website functionality to increase engagement and enable the two-way flow of information.





8. The importance of business crime is now recognised nationally; it features in the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy and other forces are developing their own strategies. There is also a new definition of Business Crime agreed by the Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Business Crime Forum;

'Business Crime is any criminal offence that is committed against a person or property which is associated by the connection of that person or property to a business'.

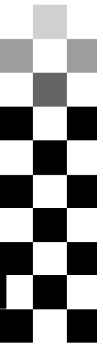
Business Crime Project Manager

9. Since 2001 Kent Police has had a Project Manager with responsibility for business crime (currently 50% funded by the Office of the Commissioner).
10. In addition to supporting the Business Crime Advisory Group (see below), he has been instrumental in developing a county wide network of Business Crime Reduction Partnerships and associated projects. All forces are now required to have a business crime SPOC and several have appointed officers dedicated to business crime.

Business Crime Advisory Group (BCAG)

11. The BCAG was formed in 2011. It is hosted by the Force and its purpose is to strengthen existing partnerships between police and businesses to improve the coordination and delivery of crime reduction initiatives, reduce the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour and promulgate best practice.
12. A recent development, and key to the partnership ethos, is that the Chair of the BCAG has passed from the police to a member of the local business community – Mr John Taylor from the Chamber of Commerce. In addition to a representative from the Office of the Commissioner and the Business Crime Project Manager, the BCAG includes representatives from Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Retail, Hotels and the fashion industry. Membership has also recently broadened to include manufacturing, banking and other industrial sectors which will widen its influence.
13. The BCAG meets around four times a year and its remit is to:
- identify the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) to businesses as well as retail and entertainment environments (within both the day and night time economy) as well as opportunities to reduce crime and ASB;
 - enhance partnership working between Kent Police and the business community;
 - assist Kent Police to drive forward business crime reduction measures;
 - identify and promote effective practices for businesses to adopt in working with police and local partnerships, to reduce crime and the underlying causes of crime – including training between police and businesses;
 - assess and improve local engagement between business and neighbourhood policing teams;
 - encourage the business sector to include crime prevention at the heart of its business policies and practices; and
 - identify voluntary sector support that contributes to safe working environments for businesses to operate within (e.g. street pastors, SOS bus).





14. Current work streams are:

- Reducing fraud and cyber-crime, helping to protect assets using crime prevention advice and cyber security standards.
- Introducing processes to counter the threat from organised crime groups.
- Ensuring effective identification of crimes against businesses through crime recording protocols to provide an overall picture of business crime and assist police/partners to tackle those responsible.
- Continued support for the Business Crime Reduction Partnerships which operate across trading centres in Kent and Medway.

15. Previous work streams include:

- Night-time Economy Good Practice Guide to help businesses achieve the Safer Socialising Award.
- Guidance to retailers on reporting shop theft.

16. Many of the work streams within the Business Crime Strategy are centred on the BCAG and will actually be progressed through subgroups. For example, a key focus is the impact that cyber-crime can have on businesses. The BCAG will be at the forefront of this work, ensuring that as more crime moves on-line, the business community is kept aware of new/emerging trends and provided with relevant knowledge to protect their interests.

17. The Office of the Commissioner and the Force regard the BCAG as a mainstay in working with businesses. Indeed, the group was consulted during drafting of the revised Business Crime Strategy, and also approved the final version.

18. In November 2015, the Commissioner will be hosting a Business Crime Conference in conjunction with the BCAG. The key themes will be:

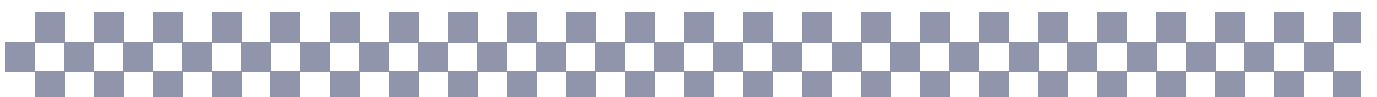
- cyber-crime;
- national fraud issues;
- partnership working; and
- organised crime gangs.

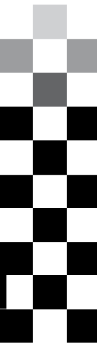
Crime Rural Advisory Group (CRAG)

19. Hosted by the Force and chaired by the former High Sheriff of Kent, Michael Bax, the CRAG is a collaborative initiative to co-ordinate the fight against rural crime.

20. In addition to a representative from the Office of the Commissioner, the CRAG brings together strategic stakeholders from across the rural spectrum, including the National Farmers Union, National Gamekeepers Association, Kent Wildlife Trust and Kent Association of Parish Councils. The group also has representation from Kent Fire and Rescue Service and English Heritage which broadens its remit to the wider issues of rural community safety and heritage crime.

21. The CRAG provides the Office of the Commissioner and the Force with access to stakeholder engagement and provides a critical friend function in respect of rural policing. Its vision is to provide more opportunities for partnership working and to facilitate communication across the rural community.





22. To support this engagement, a Rural Crime Conference was held in October 2014 hosted by the Commissioner, the Chief Constable and the chair of the CRAG. This saw the launch of the Rural Task Force, a team combining the Gypsy Liaison Team and the Rural Liaison Team, as well as the launch of Kent Police's Rural Strategy.

Mobile Police Stations

23. The evolution of the deployment criteria for Mobile Police Stations, one of the Commissioner's manifesto commitments, is also proving to be an asset in tackling business crime.

24. Each of the six vehicles visit three fixed venues and a crime hotspot location each weekday. Locations are frequently changed and their presence is often focussed on shops and business in both rural and urban areas of the county. Police Community Support Officers patrol the area on the lookout for known offenders and are always ready to give crime prevention advice.

Other work with partners:

Business Crime Reduction Partnerships

25. Since 2001, the Force has worked with business colleagues to create a network of Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRP's). The county now has 15 partnerships serving around 40 different trading locations including Maidstone, Rochester, Canterbury and Ashford town centres as well as Bluewater and Hempsted Valley. The county has the highest concentration of partnerships anywhere in the United Kingdom.

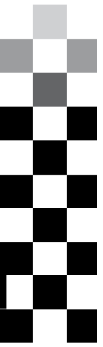
26. Experience in Kent shows that where BCRP's exist, there are reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour in both the day and night-time economies as known offenders are deterred before they enter retail or licensed premises. In addition, they also reduce the public's fear of crime and vastly increase the amount of information and intelligence shared between the police and other organisations.

27. BCRP's are genuine physical partnerships and far from virtual entities, they employ 18 Coordinators all of whom work with the police on a daily basis, sharing information and working together to tackle crime and disorder in our town centres. Development of the Kent Policing Model has also opened up opportunities, with some Coordinators being co-located within Community Safety Units - the hub of community intelligence and providing an ideal platform for targeted partnership activity.

28. There are a number of key elements to each partnership which include:

- a dedicated Coordinator/Crime Manager;
- maintaining an Incident Database;
- a radio system normally monitored by CCTV;
- a managed Exclusion Notice Scheme;
- a photograph sharing scheme; and
- regular member meetings.





29. A major strength is the two-way exchange of information and intelligence between members and the police which is essential to combat all forms of criminality, predominantly theft, fraud and anti-social behaviour. The radio system is particularly useful in the night-time economy allowing licensed premises to work together to ensure that potential troublemakers do not gain entry. Where possible police officers and PCSO's carry BCRP radios, enabling them to keep in touch, monitor tension, and intervene as appropriate.
30. To ensure good practice is maintained and a consistent approach, Kent Police hosts a Business Crime Seminar two or three times a year attended by BCRP Coordinators and police colleagues.

Community Alcohol Partnerships

31. The Force maintains a commitment to working closely with alcohol related businesses through its involvement with the Kent Community Alcohol Partnership. This is the largest community alcohol partnership in the country.
32. The partnership brings together Kent Police, Kent Trading Standards and a range of partners within the alcohol trade in a formal partnership. It is nationally recognised within the Home Office as best practice for partnership working in this environment.
33. Medway Unitary Authority has also created a Medway Community Alcohol Partnership.

Safer Socialising

34. Kent Police and the National Association of Business Crime Partnerships have developed the Safer Socialising Award (SSA) as an accreditation for licensed premises which are members of a BCRP; it covers all businesses within the night-time economy.
35. The purpose of the SSA is to encourage the full range of alcohol-related businesses to achieve higher standards of management and operation as a demonstration of their commitment to the reduction of alcohol-related crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour.
36. The SSA is managed by the local BCRP which awards certificates to successful premises following an inspection process involving the partnership, police, local authority licensing and the fire service. All awards are re-inspected annually by the partnership to ensure standards are maintained and further developed. Not all Kent BCRP's take advantage of the opportunity to accredit premises but several have done so including Canterbury, Maidstone and Gravesend.
37. In conclusion, the Commissioner and Chief Constable recognise the importance of a strong economy in boosting employment and helping to cut crime. As such, all partners have a part to play in helping to create a thriving community and to make Kent a safer place in which to live, work, travel and invest.

