

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Public Protection
<b>DATE</b>	29 January 2019
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Aberdeen City Serious Organised Crime
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	GOV/19/193
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	N/A
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	N/A
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Chief Superintendent Campbell Thomson North East Division, Police Scotland
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	5.7

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks to inform the Committee on Serious Organised Crime (SOC) in Aberdeen City, focussing on established partnership working protocols between Police Scotland, Aberdeen City Council and others to investigate and indeed prevent SOC.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Committee note the report.

### 3. BACKGROUND

3.1.1 There are currently 120 known Serious Organised Crime Groups (SOCGs) being investigated by Police and partners in Scotland. The greatest prevalence of SOCGs continues to be in the West of Scotland where 69% of groups are located, 19% in the East and 12% in the North of the country.

3.1.2 The North West of England, remains the primary source of supply for drugs into the North East, followed by London and the West Midlands.

3.1.3 "County Lines" is the term used by the Police and Law Enforcement Agencies to commonly describe the approach taken by SOCGs originating in urban areas, who travel to locations such as county or coastal towns to supply controlled drugs. The supply of controlled drugs is thereafter

facilitated through the use of a telephone line which remains located out with the location in which the drug are being dealt.

- 3.1.4 “Cuckooing” is one of the tactics used by SOCGs who operate a County Line. This is where an address of a vulnerable person is taken over by the Group as a base to facilitate the supply of controlled drugs. In many cases the vulnerable occupant is coerced into assisting the group and their involvement can exacerbate any pre-existing substance misuse issues.
- 3.1.5 Cocaine and Heroin remain the most popular drug commodities for SOCGs in Scotland, followed by Cannabis.
- 3.1.6 Police Scotland’s strategy for tackling SOC is not, however, solely based on recovering drugs. It defines any criminal activity which involves one or more person, is organised and involves a level of control or planning and has the potential to cause significant harm and involves benefit to the individuals concerned. This can range from crimes of violence to human trafficking to the sale of counterfeit goods.
- 3.1.7 Police Scotland through development of local partnerships with Local Authorities and others are committed to working together to deliver the Scottish Government Strategy for SOC.
- 3.1.8 The strategy is delivered via four clear strands:
- Divert – to divert people from becoming involved in SOC and using its products.
  - Deter – to deter SOCGs by supporting private, public and third sector organisations to themselves and each other.
  - Disrupt – to disrupt SOC.
  - Detect – to identify, detect and prosecute those involved in SOC.

## **3.2 STRUCTURES**

- 3.2.1 SOCGs in Scotland are investigated by both Divisional teams and Specialist Crime Division within Police Scotland. Within North East Division these Groups are investigated by North East Division and by Specialist Crime Division (SCD) support by Intelligence.
- 3.2.2 Identified SOCGs are given an assessment by means of a mapping process which provides a 'score' as to the risk of Threat and Harm the group poses to the community. A further assessment is thereafter made as to the most appropriate team to investigate the SOCG based on the score obtained.
- 3.2.3 Locally within North East Division, the Detective Chief Inspector (Reactive/Proactive CID) has tactical lead for Serious and Organised Crime.

- 3.2.4 Each strand of the '4 D's' is led operationally by a Detective Inspector or Inspector.
- 3.2.5 North East Division has a designated Organised Crime Unit to investigate serious and organised crime. Led by a Detective Inspector with the lead for the Detect strand.
- 3.2.6 The Divisional Intelligence Unit are a core function of daily business in North East Division, led by a Detective Inspector. This Unit is responsible for assessing, developing and disseminating intelligence, where appropriate, in relation to Serious Organised Crime.
- 3.2.7 This is supplemented by an Interventions Unit. This Unit engages closely with a number of partner organisations in order to identify opportunities by which the activities of Organised Crime Groups can be disrupted.
- 3.2.8 An Interventions Strategy is created for each SOCG identified and reviewed and updated until such time as the group has been sufficiently disrupted.
- 3.2.9 Within Partnerships and Events, an Inspector has operational lead for the Divert strand of Serious Organised Crime, with an Inspector also leading on Licensing matters.
- 3.2.10 Once a month, the Detective Chief Inspector (Reactive/Proactive CID) chairs a Serious and Organised Crime Governance Group, with Police representation from North East Division and Specialised Crime Division.

### **3.3 PARTNERSHIPS**

- 3.3.1 While not all organised crime activities relate to controlled drugs, drug supply and distribution remain the most accessible and lucrative activities for SOCG's throughout Scotland and also in North East Division.
- 3.3.2 Established partnerships are in place as part of the wider '4 Ds' strategy and are articulated in this report.

#### Meeting Structure

- 3.3.3 A Serious Organised Crime Partnership Group meets once a month, with representatives from North East Division Interventions Unit, and various departments from Aberdeen City Council, including the Communities and Housing Team, Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Corporate Investigation Team, Priority Families and Trading Standards.
- 3.3.4 This is a tasking and coordinating meeting and is a forum to share information and address the risk and harm caused by SOC in the communities and to coordinate a response.

### Landlord Registration

- 3.3.5 North East Division work closely with Aberdeen City Councils Private Sector Housing Team in terms of the vetting of private landlords. Private letting is seen as an area of risk in terms of SOC as individuals are known to purchase property to facilitate criminal activities and present the rent obtained from letting the property as legitimate enterprise. Partnership working between the Police and Aberdeen City Council creates an effective mechanism to share information and deny the individual/crime group access to legitimate enterprise resulting from their criminal activities.

### Housing

- 3.3.6 North East Division and Aberdeen City Council have forged strong links in relation to identifying individuals using Local Authority tenancies to supply drugs. Information sharing protocols are in place whereby the Police advise Aberdeen City Council when a person is convicted of drug supply charges in order that strict eviction policy can be applied.

### Antisocial Behaviour Orders

- 3.3.7 North East Division collaborate with Aberdeen City Council to obtain Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) in relation to SOC. ASBOs are orders on individuals which can restrict their movements, associations and behaviour. They also include Closure Orders on addresses which activity linked to SOC has affected the quality of life of residents.

### Trading Standards

- 3.3.8 North East Division work closely with Aberdeen City Council Trading Standards Department and Environmental Health Officers to share information and work together to disrupt serious and organised crime. Areas of recent partnership working includes enquiries into fraudulent car sales, bogus workmen, investment frauds and visits to the risk areas of adult entertainments and fast food premises.

### Procurement

- 3.3.9 North East Division Interventions Unit liaises closely with Aberdeen City Council's Commercial and Procurement Services and Risk Management to highlight high risk sectors of business both within the organisation and in relation to procurement activities and assist in providing resilience strategies.

### Licensing

- 3.3.10 In terms of Licensing, many of the general procedures involved in processing Licensing Applications guard against SOC's infiltrating the licensed trade. This scrutiny is further enhanced with the nation-wide InnKeeper system which contains details of all Liquor and Civic licences for every Division in

Scotland, and enhances information sharing in respect of premises and people in the Licensed Trade as they move about the country and work in multiple venues.

- 3.3.12 The North East Licensing Team and the Interventions Unit are aware of SOCG activity within the Division to ensure that applicants, for any form of licence, are not affiliated in any way to such groups, before responding to the Licensing Board. The consistent high profile approach and interaction with licensed premises in direct correlation with the aforementioned close scrutiny in the application process should in turn reduce opportunity.

#### Awareness Raising

- 3.3.15 North East Division organised a SOC engagement event with 120 frontline Aberdeen City Council employees attending. This included Housing Officers, tradespersons and other public facing staff. Presentations were provided by the Interventions Unit, the Divisional Intelligence unit and SCD on a variety of different topics including drug dealing, cuckooing, money laundering and counterfeit goods. The aim of the event was to increase the resilience of Aberdeen City Council's knowledge of SOC and assist in the development of intelligence.
- 3.3.16 North East Divisions' Partnership and Events team, along with the Interventions Unit have been working alongside Aberdeen City Council teams, including Communities and Housing, Adult Protection Services, Education and Children's Services, in conjunction with NHS Grampian to raise awareness of "cuckooing" with a view to introducing the initiative into Aberdeen City, based on the model operating in the Aberdeenshire towns of Peterhead and Fraserburgh. This initiative is designed to provide support to individuals exploited by Organised crime groups and to assist them "break the cycle" of their involvement with these criminal groups.
- 3.3.17 Led by the Police, working jointly with partners, it focusses on identifying those most vulnerable in communities and through engagement, signposting individuals to support services with the ultimate aim of breaking the cycle of drug misuse and other impact factors.
- 3.3.18 Under SOCG Governance structures, North East Division are committed to Media messaging and release a monthly feature via Social Media on SOC and drug recoveries. Quarterly 'Facebook' live chats involving a number of partner agencies on SOC are a regular feature

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

- 3.4.1 Over the last 12 months, North East Division, Specialist Crime Division and their partners have significantly disrupted the activities of SOCGs operating

within the Division, which had been assessed under the mapping process. Numerous other smaller groups have been disrupted by conventional policing under Operation Aspen. Almost all of these groups have had links to Aberdeen City.

3.4.2 We, along with partners will continue to robustly target the SOCGs who prey on the most vulnerable in our communities to make Aberdeen City and North East Division a hostile environment for them to operate and most importantly support those exploited by the activities of these groups.

3.4.3 We will continue to work as a partnership to develop “Best Practice” and promote our prevent agenda which is already having positive results.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### **6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Financial</b>	N/A		
<b>Legal</b>	N/A		
<b>Employee</b>	N/A		
<b>Customer</b>	N/A		
<b>Environment</b>	N/A		
<b>Technology</b>	N/A		
<b>Reputational</b>	N/A		

#### **7. OUTCOMES**

N/A

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	N/A
Privacy Impact Assessment	N/A
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	N/A

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

## 10. APPENDICES

N/A

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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