

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing & Public Protection
DATE	27 May 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Thematic Report - Crime Prevention
REPORT NUMBER	POL/25/116
DIRECTOR	
CHIEF OFFICER	
REPORT AUTHOR	Inspector Martyn Thomson, North East Division, Police Scotland
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.20

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides the Committee with a strategic overview of ongoing crime prevention activity across North East Division.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 Discuss, comment on, and endorse the report.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 North East Division, in collaboration with stakeholders, delivers crime prevention through the implementation of strategies, policies, and measures designed to reduce crime, deter criminality, and enhance public safety through early intervention.
- 3.2 While crime prevention is a shared responsibility, the Division's dedicated workstreams are primarily led by Partnerships, Preventions and Interventions Unit (PPI) and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), under the oversight of departmental Chief Inspectors.
- 3.3 North East Division continues to deliver a broad suite of proactive crime prevention measures through multi-agency partnerships, intelligence-led operations and public engagement strategies. It employs a layered approach -

spanning digital platforms, community engagement, and strategic campaigns, to ensure impactful and sustainable crime outcomes.

3.4 DELIVERY METHODS

3.5 Community Engagement & Presentations

- On average, 20 in-person engagements are delivered monthly (approx. 240 annually).
- Target audiences include businesses, community groups, industry sectors, and schools (e.g. Men's Sheds, NFU members, Oil Sector & Young Farmers).
- Bespoke initiatives focus on emerging threats, including cyber safety and sextortion awareness in schools.

3.6 Social Media & Digital Campaigns

- Since April 2024, 287 posts have generated 5.5 million views and 5.9 million impressions.
- Engagement: 10.3k likes, 7.4k shares, and 1k comments.
- Delivered Neighbourhood Watch-related content to approx. 40,000 individuals.
- Topics included fraud, rural crime, and scams.

3.7 Crime Alerts and Newsletters

- The '*North East Crime Alert Newsletter*' is produced by the Crime Reduction Team and distributed bi-monthly through partner agencies.
- Recent editions have focused on artificial intelligence in criminality and trends in cyber and rural crime.

3.8 CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES

3.9 Crime Reduction Roadshows

- The *Crime Reduction Anti-Fraud Roadshow* (March 2024) showcased collaborative efforts involving Police Scotland, British Transport Police, Trading Standards, and Neighbourhood Watch.
- Future roadshows are planned for 2025 to engage vulnerable groups.

3.10 Awareness Weeks & Campaigns

- **Cybercrime Week (Feb 2025):** Educating the public on strong password hygiene, two-factor authentications, and phishing risks.
- **Financial Harm Week (Feb 2025):** Raising awareness of scams targeting older people.
- **Shut out Scammers Week (July 2024):** Van-based outreach raising awareness of fraud, rogue traders, and doorstep scams.

3.11 Rural & Agricultural Crime Prevention

- **Agricultural Shows (Shire & Moray):** Engagement with rural communities to promote crime prevention strategies.
- **Neighbourhood Watch & Rural Watch:** Supporting community-led efforts to reduce crime in rural areas.
- **Rural Crime Days:** Monthly engagements with businesses, farmers, and suppliers, to promote crime reduction through tailored security advice (e.g. DNA marking).

3.12 Property & Vehicle Crime Initiatives

- **After Dark Campaign (October 2025):** Focus on vehicle crime, home security, and general safety during darker months.
- **Cycling Events:** Collaboration with bike retailers and event organizers to improve bike security and deter theft.

3.13 INNOVATION IN CRIME PREVENTION

3.14 Financial Crime Triage Hub (FCTH)

3.15 Introduced in 2024, the Financial Crime Triage Hub is a key component of North East Division's response to cyber and financial crime. It monitors and reviews emerging crime types, identifying early trends and vulnerable demographics, enabling timely interventions and coordinated multi-agency responses.

3.16 Key achievements:

- Supported national media campaigns on issues such as counterfeit resale and gift card scams.
- Worked with Microsoft and the financial sector on online safeguarding and account security.

- Produced content for Adult Support and Protection Day, focusing on multi-agency safeguarding.
- Actively engaged in early prevention and evidence-based support for affected individuals.

3.17 A related unit, the Acquisitive Crime Triage Hub (ACTH) formally launched 1 April 2025, is also in early stages. It has already identified 14 distinct crime series (96 reports), spanning multiple divisions. ACTH works closely with Community Policing Teams to target repeat offenders and ensure early intervention.

3.18 PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

3.19 Effective crime prevention relies on strong partnerships. Key collaborative efforts include:

- **Businesses & Universities:** Promoting crime awareness through retail, health, and academic networks.
- **Local Authorities & Trading Standards:** Coordinating efforts against fraud and scams.
- **Neighbourhood Watch Scotland & NFU Scotland:** Supporting rural safety measures.
- **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS):** Joint initiatives on home and business security.

3.20 CASE STUDIES

- **Retail Crime** – Crime Reduction Officers engaged with a number retail stores and Shopping Centres/Complexes which featured as ‘High Targets’ in respect of Theft by Shoplifting and how to prevent crime through target hardening through design intervention, crime mapping of stores, looking at the protection of the most vulnerable and targeted stock, CCTV surveillance and safety advice. Initial results in respect of the advice were positive with a ‘Test of Change’ implemented with a national retailer with advice regarding layout being replicated across Grampian. Crime Reduction Officers also continue to review high profile offenders with consideration of ASBO legislation to restrict movement and reduce offending.
- **Selecta DNA – Vehicle Crime** – Selecta DNA Tagging Spray is used to deter and prevent personal attack and criminal behaviour such as motorcycle enabled crimes and theft of same. In Aberdeen City, Officers, including Road Policing Officers, were trained in the use of tagging spray, which can be aimed by Officers at those riding stolen motorbikes or in an anti-social manner which will mark the bike, clothing and skin of riders and passengers with a

uniquely coded but invisible DNA which can be seen under special handheld lights or within custody facilities. The launch of its use was supplemented with a Top 10 Tips to Prevent Theft and it will be utilised during Operation Armour this year.

- **Mobile phone theft** - Aberdeen City accounted for around 80% of all mobile phone thefts across NE Division with increases in with significant values stolen in the first quarter of 2024. Crime Prevention launched a Summer Smartphone Security Campaign with various tips on keeping the technology safe and tracking. As a result of the campaign, the value of handsets stolen reduced by over 30% with theft of devices remaining low until December where it spiked before refreshed advice resulting in a further reduction for the final quarter of the year with this trend continuing in April 2025.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 North East Division remains committed to a dynamic, intelligence-led approach to crime prevention. Key priorities include:
- **Enhancing digital outreach** to tackle cyber threats.
 - **Expanding fraud prevention roadshows** to support vulnerable groups.
 - **Strengthening partnerships** with businesses and statutory bodies to deliver sustained crime reduction.
- 4.2 The Division's layered approach has proven effective in targeting emerging threats, strengthening community trust, and supporting early intervention. This work remains aligned with national and local priorities, supporting safe, more resilient communities. Moving forward, efforts will focus on evaluating impact, strengthening rural and cyber initiatives, and further embedding collaborative prevention at every level - all to reduce crime across the North East.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no identified financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

8. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks			
Compliance	No significant risks			
Operational	No significant risks			
Financial	No significant risks			
Reputational	No significant risks			
Environment / Climate	No significant risks			

9. OUTCOMES

<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>

OFFICIAL

Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Police Scotland are key partners within Community Planning Aberdeen and help contribute to the shared vision for 2026 that ' <i>Aberdeen is a place where all people can prosper</i> ' and towards the achievement of the LOIP theme which aims to make people more resilient and protect them from harm; where every child, irrespective of their circumstances, is supported to grow, develop and reach their full potential; and where all people in Aberdeen are entitled to live within our community in a manner in which they feel safe and protected from harm, supported when necessary and fully included in the life of the city.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Police Scotland are key partners within Community Planning Aberdeen and help contribute to the shared vision for 2026 that ' <i>Aberdeen is a place where all people can prosper</i> ' and towards the achievement of the LOIP theme which aims to support individuals and communities to live in healthy, sustainable ways.

10. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 n/a

12. APPENDICES

12.1 n/a

13. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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