



Broxtowe
Borough
COUNCIL

Serious and Organised Crime Strategy

Community Safety Committee
September 2019

Overall aim

To contribute to the targeting and disruption of serious and organised crime in Broxtowe.

What is serious and organised crime?

Serious and organised crime:

- takes places within local communities, across local borders, nationally and internationally
- is dynamic and opportunistic
- is perpetrated by groups of networks of individuals that collaborate to establish criminal networks and build resilient and profitable organisations
- involves violence, corruption and intimidation to protect and sustain criminal activity
- develops access to a diverse set of capabilities across a wide network of individuals, including professionals such as lawyers and accountants, often targeted for their expert knowledge.

The UK Government defines serious and organised crime in its 2018 Serious and Organised Crime Strategy as:

“Individuals planning, coordinating and committing serious offences, whether individually, in groups and/or as part of transnational networks”.

The strategy goes on to state that *“the main categories of serious offences covered by the term are child sexual exploitation and abuse; illegal drugs; illegal firearms; fraud; money laundering and other economic crime; bribery and corruption; organised immigration crime; modern slavery and human trafficking; and cyber crime.”*

Who are the victims of serious and organised crime?

The harm caused by serious and organised crime is far reaching and can be very different for the victims who can be individuals, communities and businesses alike.

- it can include the loss of money or other assets, or harm to business or personal reputation
- victims can suffer from anxiety and stress, particularly if they are vulnerable
- occasionally victims can be physically injured, subjected to psychological trauma, or killed as a direct or intended consequence of criminal action
- entire communities can also be victims; for example prevalent drug supply and distribution across a local area can have substantial impact on the health and wellbeing of residents and the overall environment, generating a sense of fear or disquiet. Money laundering, loan sharks, illicit businesses and the exploitation of workers can also harm local communities.

What are the extent and costs of serious and organised crime?

According to the latest Government strategy, *“serious and organised crime affects more UK citizens, more often, than any other national security threat and leads to more deaths in the UK each year than all other national security threats combined. It costs the UK at least £37 billion annually. It has a corrosive impact on our public services, communities, reputation and way of life.”*

Figures from the National Crime Agency National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2019 indicate there were 4,542 organised crime groups (OCGs) mapped in the UK at the end of June 2018, which includes over 37,000 individuals.

The Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Needs Assessment (PCNA) 2018 states that *“around 35 known organised crime groups and 7 ‘Evolving Crime Networks’ (ECNs) are being actively monitored and targeted by enforcement agencies across Nottinghamshire, which collectively involve over 223 individuals. Many of these individuals are directly involved in drug supply and have active links to offenders serving time in prison. The vast majority of organised crime groups in Nottinghamshire are, by the nature of their criminality, involved in or linked to the use of violence, firearms and knives, and use the threat of violence to intimidate, coerce and exert control over other, often vulnerable, individuals.”*

It is known that organised crime groups are also responsible for much of the activity around County Lines, which is the term used to describe a form of organised crime where criminals based in urban areas pressurise vulnerable people and children to transport, store and sell drugs in smaller county towns.

Government policy

In 2018, the Government launched a new Serious and Organised Crime Strategy to better coordinate a national approach to reduce the level of serious and organised crime affecting the UK and local communities. The National Crime Agency (NCA) is the national law enforcement agency against serious and organised crime and works globally across multi-agency partnerships that include the police, law enforcement, local public sector agencies and private industry.

The aim of the Government’s strategy is *“to protect our citizens and our prosperity by leaving no safe space for serious and organised criminals to operate against us within the UK and overseas, online and offline.”*

The national strategy has four overarching objectives to achieve its aim: These are:

- Relentless disruption and targeted action against the highest harm serious and organised criminals and networks.
- Building the highest levels of defence and resilience in vulnerable people, communities, businesses and systems.

- Stopping the problem at source, identifying and supporting those at risk of engaging in criminality
- Establishing a single, whole-system approach

The national strategy uses the framework that has been developed for national counter-terrorist work and has four thematic pillars, often referred to as the 4Ps:

- Prosecuting and disrupting people engaged in serious and organised crime (**Pursue**)
- Preventing people from engaging in this activity (**Prevent**)
- Increasing protection against serious and organised crime (**Protect**)
- Reducing the impact of this criminality where it takes place (**Prepare**)

The national strategy sees councils and a range of partners playing an important role alongside the police to tackle serious and organised crime and organised criminal groups.

From a local perspective Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare means:

Pursue: prosecuting and disrupting the criminal activity of organised criminal groups. Locally this means establishing strong, effective and collaborative partnerships to gather and share intelligence on organised criminal groups that operating in local area and across county borders.

Prevent: deterring individuals from getting drawn into serious and organised crime and previous offenders returning to crime. Prevent involves a wide range of local approaches and interventions and can include developing new interventions, making use of existing services and raising local awareness of the reality and consequences of being involved with organised criminal groups to dispel associated myths of wealth and glamour.

Protect: protecting individuals, families, businesses and communities against serious and organised crime. Protect involves ensuring the right controls and practices are in place to safeguard communities and ensure these groups have the information to help them to protect themselves.

Prepare: being prepared to manage the impact or consequence of serious and organised crime. This includes the ability to immediately respond to major serious and organised crime incidents and ensure a rapid and effective resolution and recovery for affected communities, victims and witnesses.

Who is responsible for tackling serious and organised crime?

Everyone. Public sector organisations and law enforcement agencies, including: councils, police, health, social care, education services and immigration enforcement, have a duty to protect the wellbeing of their local communities. Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, councils have a responsibility to do all that they reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in their area.

Action by local authorities

Local Government Association guidance on Serious and Organised Crime (*Tackling Serious and Organised Crime – a local response LGA 2015*) states:

“Disruption activity relies on good, appropriate information sharing between local partner agencies. Local multi-agency partnership arrangements such as community safety partnerships (CSPs), serious and organised crime partnerships (SOCPs), multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) and multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) are likely to hold valuable intelligence that can aid law enforcement agencies to pursue organised crime groups and individual perpetrators.

Councils should work with partners to further understand the pathways and vulnerability factors that may result in individuals participating in organised crime and put interventions in place.

Public sector organisations should be aware of their own vulnerabilities too. In particular, the change of emphasis from local government being a provider to a commissioner of services changes the risk profile of fraud, as well as the control environment in which such risk is managed.

Controls and safeguards that deter, detect and investigate both internal and external fraud must remain resilient with more frequent or substantial procurement of services.”

The Council’s role in dealing with serious and organised crime is likely to be concentrated within certain services. The LGA guidance states that certain trades may be more likely to be infiltrated by serious and organised crime, particularly those where transactions are often by cash. These trades can be attractive vehicles for money laundering and can include the liquor licensing trade, taxi licensing, tanning parlours and even childcare or nursing homes. Local authority officers can encounter serious and organised crime when dealing with planning or licensing applications or letting premises to businesses.

The letting of contracts, such as security contracts, can also present a risk of exposure to serious and organised crime. In respect of Council housing, there can be a risk that properties are used for purposes linked to drug dealing and manufacture. In not all such cases will the Council be able to refuse permission or not let a contract. However, the opportunity can be taken to try and deter or disrupt organised crime.

Action by elected members

The key leadership roles councillors have on community safety partnerships, child and adult safeguarding partnerships, health and wellbeing boards and local enterprise partnerships provide a means to highlight the threat posed by organised crime groups. Councillors also have an assurance and scrutiny role checking that multi-agency approaches to tackle serious and organised crime are established and effective.

Action by Broxtowe Borough Council

The following actions will be taken by the Council in order to work towards achieving the aim of this strategy.

- Appoint the Chief Communities Officer as the Single Point of Contact in the Council for issues relating to Serious and Organised Crime.
- Continue as an active member of the Nottinghamshire Serious and Organised Crime Board.
- Work with local victims' services to ensure that there are adequate pathways of support for those who may take some time to seek, engage and accept help.
- Share information with the police and other partners. Often an awareness of the risks from organised crime can result in a heightened awareness and better intelligence.
- Educate young people about drugs and educate consumers about counterfeit goods.
- Continue as active members of the South Nottinghamshire Community Safety Partnership, and ensure the issue of serious and organised crime is a key part of the work of that group.
- Ensure relevant training on safeguarding is given to taxi drivers as a condition of their licence.
- Ensure regular and thorough audits of the Council's systems and procedures are undertaken using the templates provided in "*The impact of organised crime in local communities*" – *The Police Foundation 2017*.
- Work with all relevant partners, including police, neighbouring councils, commissioned services, education, health, voluntary sector, community rehabilitation companies (CRCs), to prevent individuals from engaging in serious and organised crime.
- Continue to work closely with partners to safeguard vulnerable individuals. This includes safeguarding both children and adults who may be vulnerable for many different reasons.
- Provide training for staff and elected members on relevant aspects of identifying and reporting concerns of serious and organised crime.

Action by Broxtowe Borough Council elected members

- 'Eyes and ears' of local communities – councillors are well connected with their local communities and can listen to the concerns of local residents and share community intelligence with officers.
- As decision-makers, where necessary, councillors should understand their local serious and organised crime profile and give a high profile to policy interventions and make the issue a political priority for action
- Promote the importance of partnerships, multi-agency working and information sharing to solving the problem of serious and organised crime
- As scrutineers, investigate the work that the council and its partners are doing and reduce its vulnerability to serious and organised crime, encouraging continuous improvement.

Reporting concerns and further information

Anyone with a concern about any activity they think may be linked to serious and organised crime should report it to Nottinghamshire Police on 101.

Further information on any aspect of this strategy can be obtained from the Head of Public Protection or the Chief Communities Officer.

Review of policy

This policy shall be reviewed after a three year period, or sooner if changes to legislation and / or national policy require. The responsible officer shall be the Head of Public Protection.