



To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Constable

Date: 08 May 2014

SLAVERY

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update the Business Co-ordination Board (the "Board") on the work undertaken by Cambridgeshire Constabulary to tackle slavery.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Board note the contents of this paper.

3. Operation Pheasant

3.1 Operation Pheasant is the multi-agency intelligence gathering initiative involving multi occupancy houses and the potential risks of exploitation. This is a joint partnership operation co-ordinated by the Constabulary through a monthly Task Force meeting.

3.2 Police activity in support of this operation has increased significantly in response to the seasonal fluctuation in the working population which results in both increased numbers living in overcrowded houses and a rise in Gangmaster activity.

3.3 It has become evidently clear that the success of the disruption tactics employed within the county has resulted in activities increasing in West Norfolk and South Lincolnshire. In recognition of this displacement of activity, Operation Pheasant officers have established an open exchange of intelligence with colleagues in the surrounding force areas.

3.4 Fenland District Council has been successful in gaining £176,000 funding for supporting operations to target rogue landlords. This has allowed them to employ extra staff to conduct multi-agency visits together with the Constabulary.

- 3.5 These additional staff are challenging poor practices, raising standards and taking positive action against those that do not comply with legislation.
- 3.6 Police continue to identify and tackle Organised Crime Groups (OCG's) including those associated with Human Trafficking in the area. These include some of the highest scoring OCG's in terms of the threat, risk and harm posed and as such, are current priorities for the Force.
- 3.7 Further work continues into an active investigation (one where a number of individuals have been charged) as a consequence of the anticipated trial date being put back until late autumn. This was in response to the volume of evidence presented to the defence and their successful argument stating that they did not have time to prepare their case. This decision has resulted in the offenders being released on court bail.

4. Joint Committee on Slavery

- 4.1 The Joint (House of Lords and House of Commons) Committee responsible for drafting the new Modern Day Slavery Bill recently invited Chief Inspector Mike Winters to give oral evidence at Parliament. The Committee are exploring issues around the legislative and practical sides of dealing with exploitation in modern Britain.
- 4.2 This provided an opportunity for Chief Inspector Winters to provide an insight into the work carried out by Cambridgeshire in tackling exploitation within the county. He was able to identify the difficulties created by the current legislation in achieving prosecutions and explained how the constabulary was making best use of alternative legislation such as the Fraud Act in order to secure successful prosecutions.
- 4.3 Chief Inspector Winters highlighted that some members of the public link problems within their local area to migrants but, the root cause of these problems is the way in which migrants are exploited. As the single biggest cause of anti-social behaviour, low level crime, street drinking, rough sleeping and sometimes more serious criminality, the evidence provided by Chief Inspector Winters demonstrated the commitment and success of Cambridgeshire Constabulary in tackling the issue robustly.

5. Partnership Working

- 5.1 The monthly taskforce meeting continues and all the agencies remain actively involved with Operation Pheasant. The Immigration Service has agreed to supply an officer full time to be split between Fenland and Peterborough (40:60) in support of the continuing activity.
- 5.2 A recent joint operation was conducted with Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire Constabulary working with the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) to target a premise in Spalding, Lincolnshire, where victims were found. The GLA are now progressing the prosecution of the Gangmaster involved.

5.3 The ECINS¹ partnership system is used to effectively co-ordinate and task activity.

6. Future Developments

6.1 To increase the intelligence sources, Inspector Robin Sissons is now briefing the joint Head Teachers Board (Fenland) so that they are fully aware of the issues and risks associated with exploitation. The intention is to raise awareness and it is hoped that when children talk about living in the same bedrooms as strangers or being left with others when parents are working they will think of exploitation as well as Social Services issues.

6.2 It is planned to duplicate this process with the health service and deliver similar messages to GP's.

6.3 The Constabulary is being supported by the Local MP (Stephen Barclay) who is providing assistance to Inspector Sissons in making contact with the relevant embassies. The communication strategy is being further extended by delivering messages to the home counties in order to prevent more potential victims arriving in Fenland.

6.4 To further increase the intelligence flow and to identify victims of exploitation at an early stage, a Multi Letting Agency meeting has been established, to allow these companies to pass intelligence directly to the Constabulary and Fenland District Council.

6.5 The future strategy is to continue with the disruption tactics and to target and prosecute offenders in order to make the area hostile for OCG's and sub-letters to operate within. The success of this approach is evident in the displacement already seen into other force areas.

6.6 Operation Pheasant continues to be a source of information for other constabularies and partnership agencies throughout the UK.

6.7 It is worthy of note that Fenland District Council and the Constabulary has been successful in getting to the finals of the MJ Achievement Awards 2014. These are a series of awards for local authorities and Operation Pheasant will be presented to the judging panel on the 30th April 2014.

¹ E-CINS is a secure, encrypted web-based neighbourhood management IT tool that provides a more integrated and consistent system for dealing with vulnerable people and communities, including victims and offenders. It brings together data in one place, allowing practitioners from various agencies to access it in real time and to carry out joint tasking over the internet¹.