



**C B NOBLE LL.B (Hons) M.St. (Cantab)  
T/ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE**

Alastair Ross, MLA  
Committee for Justice,  
Room 242,  
Parliament buildings,  
Stormont,  
BT4 3XX

Our Ref: 15/6735

11<sup>th</sup> November 2015

*Please quote our reference number on all correspondence*

Dear Mr Ross

**RE: Business Crime**

Further to your correspondence of the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015, please find response to the core themes raised at the Business Crime Stakeholder Event on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

The Police Service would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters further and consider how we along with statutory and business partners can sustain the successes we have had in tackling business crime in recent years.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chris Noble'.

**CHRIS NOBLE**  
**T/Assistant Chief Constable**  
**Service Improvement Department**

## **Business Crime Response**

### **1. Introduction**

PSNI welcome the opportunity to meet with the Committee and key partners to discuss the critical issue for Police and businesses.

1.1 Regardless of size or type, PSNI recognises that businesses are at the heart of prosperous communities. Crimes against business not only impact on the Northern Ireland Economy, but also damage perceptions of local areas and therefore communities.

1.2 This response will address the specific issues raised by the Committee for Justice, but also provide an over view of ongoing and planned work linked to business crime.

### **2. Development of a Business Crime Strategy/Business Crime Plan for Northern Ireland**

2.1 The PSNI deals with business crime on a daily basis and we aim to:

- *Prevent harm* by educating business owners and their staff on crime prevention techniques and on relevant powers and police procedures.
- *Keep People and Businesses Safe* by providing an effective service to the community in terms of identifying and dealing with business crimes, through a variety of policing techniques.
- *Detect offending* and implement an effective and efficient criminal justice strategy to bring offenders to justice.

2.2 At a local level, District Commanders prioritise resources to areas of high crime and emerging issues. Targeted interventions are placed in areas of need with regard to all crime types, including Business crime. For example Belfast City District Command Unit has been working collaboratively with Belfast City Centre Management and this has resulted in finance being secured to allow two dedicated officers to be assigned to deal with specific city centre issues. As PSNI discussed with the Committee, it is important that we have a locally appropriate response to business crime and we see real value in local councils and PCSPs developing bespoke plans for local areas.

2.3 Taking this into account The PSNI is considering how we would develop a Business Crime Strategy/Plan, but we have some concerns that a one-size-fits-all approach would become restrictive in terms of scope and the ability to effectively address emerging trends such as cyber-crime. In any event, the delivery of an effective Business Crime Strategy/plan will only be achieved through collaboration with government departments and key business crime groups. The PSNI are more than willing to be a partner in the development of both local and strategic plans, but feel it is important that this is seen as of a wider approach to ensuring businesses prosper. As such, engagement with other departments, such as DETI, may consider actions beyond pure crime prevention.

2.4 We have taken significant time to work with the local business community to identify and address a number of core themes. In particular 2 of these stand out, namely:

- **Improved communication** -enhanced two-way communication is required. It is anticipated that greater flows of information will result in improved reporting and greater integration of crime prevention measures.
- **Sustainability through partnership**: In an environment of austerity, sustainable collaborative structures which draw upon best practice and innovation are essential if collectively we are to support the wider business community to tackle criminality.

### 3. Improved strategic partnership working

#### 3.1 Partnership Forum –

Partnership and engagement is central to all policing activity and consultation with key stakeholders in relation to business crime will be essential in any collaborative decision making process that is outcome focused.

3.2 The PSNI has ongoing engagement with the business community at both local level and strategic level through a number of forums, such as the Organised Crime Taskforce (OCTF) and numerous retail forums which operate at both a local level and also in partnership with the Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Policing Board.

3.3 Internal working structures within the PSNI have also been realigned to focus on business crime, and to enhance information sharing.

3.4 Strategic partnership working is wider than the Police. Police can and currently do guide businesses on vulnerabilities however, overseeing and implementing preventative measures is something which every individual business owner has responsibility for.

PSNI welcome the opportunity to become part of any review and redesign of effective business crime fora.

#### 3.5 A dedicated Assistant Chief Constable for business crime to provide ongoing engagement.

ACC Chris Noble has recently taken on this role and has attended a range of meetings with NIPB and representatives from trade bodies to discuss the issue of retail crime and ongoing police activity in this area. He has also addressed the Retailers Against Crime Conference and attended meetings with local businesses and entrepreneurs.

3.6 ACC Noble has also put in place a business crime steering group, bringing together senior officers and staff with responsibility for crimes that impact on the business community. This group is assisted by PSNI analysts to target hotspot and emerging trends and it has already addressed issues raised through direct engagement with the business community .

3.7 A key piece of work from the Business crime steering group is the implementation of a communications plan. PSNI have put in place bespoke email addresses for the business community and also a text alert scheme. These channels will be used to inform the business community of ongoing work to prevent and detect crimes against businesses. This activity is further supplemented by ongoing face to face seminars with the business community and Safeshop training sessions with retailers.

### 4. The adoption and use of agreed definition of business crime to provide for improved and consistent data collection and analysis regarding scale and impact

4.1 In mid 2015, NPCC (National Police Chiefs' Council) agreed the definition for business crime. This has been adopted by all police services. The definition is ***'Any criminal offence that is committed against a person or property that is associated with the connection of that person or property to a business.'***

4.2 Information sharing is progressing with other UK police services in order to absorb best practice and facilitate ease of implementation.

## V2.2

4.3 Reservations have been expressed in other UK police services in relation to the scope of the business crime definition, as it will lend itself to areas not typically recognised as business crime by attending officers. This aspect is further compounded by reduced workforces and lack of crime screening oversight. This has the potential to allow a degree of uncertainty to creep into any analytical package produced. If the actual statistics cannot be relied upon, this will detract from the rationale for creating a definition.

PSNI is currently working on how best to consider taking this definition forwards.

### **5. Additional work being progressed by PSNI**

5.1 The need for collaborative working across all facets of business crime has been recognised. PSNI has initiated meetings with DOJ and NIPB to establish commonality of working practices and to map future working strategies in relation to business crime. Further work is being progressed with PCSP managers and a briefing has been scheduled for ACC Noble to brief PCSP managers on all aspects of business crime and the business crime good practice guide.

5.2 The PSNI has sought to minimise the impact of staff departures through the Voluntary Exit Scheme by establishing processes that use wider groupings of staff to engage and advance queries with the business community..

5.3 The activity above has been received well within the business community. At the recent Retailers Against Crime Northern Ireland (RACNI) conference, Aodhan Connelly, Director RACNI stated that partnership working with police has improved. It is envisaged that ongoing interaction and engagement with key business umbrella groupings coupled with active work at ground level will assist in developing confidence in police.

### **6. Conclusion**

6.1 The Police Service would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters further and consider how we along with statutory and business partners can sustain the successes we have had in tackling business crime in recent years. Also attached is an infographic which was presented at the RAC NI conference outlining the breadth of work PSNI has undertaken in direct response to the business community concerns.

# BUSINESS CRIME - 2015

## "YOU SAID" ... WE DID



RECENTLY INTRODUCED  
TEXT ALERT

### "MORE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT"



WE SIT ON A NUMBER OF CRIME FORUMS

WE HAVE ENHANCED THE SAFE SHOP SCHEME

WE NOW HAVE DEDICATED ENGAGEMENT CHANNELS

YOU SAID

WE DID

FRAUD WITH CYBER  
ELEMENT 70%

### "HELP & ASSISTANCE TO PREVENT CYBER CRIME & FRAUD"



WE HAVE A DEDICATED CYBER CRIME CENTRE

WE ARE PARTNERED WITH THE NATIONAL ACTION FRAUD SCHEME

WE HAVE DEDICATED INFO SHARING RESOURCES AIMED AT CYBER CRIME

YOU SAID

WE DID

AVERAGE COST OF EMPLOYEE  
THEFT £1,031

### "MORE FOCUSED APPROACH ON SHOP THEFTS"



WE HAVE A DEDICATED TEAM DEALING WITH PROLIFIC OFFENDERS

WE CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH RETAIL CONSORTIUM GROUPS

WE CONTINUE TO WORK WITH AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA REFERENCE CRIMINAL GROUPS

YOU SAID

WE DID

5 YEAR TREND  
DOWN 47%

### "ROBUST APPROACH TO VIOLENCE AGAINST STAFF"



WE ARE DEVELOPING A BRIEFING PACK FOR THE PROSECUTION SERVICE

WE ARE EDUCATING RETAIL STAFF IN RELATION TO THEIR OWN SAFETY

WE CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH RETAIL SECURITY

YOU SAID

WE DID

POLICE TIME INVESTIGATING  
THEFT 19,710 HOURS PER YEAR

### "BETTER ANALYSIS AND MEASUREMENT OF RETAIL CRIME"



WE HAVE CONDUCTED ANALYSIS AROUND KEY RETAIL CRIME TYPES

WE USE RETAIL CRIME DATA TO ALIGN OUR RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

WE CONTINUE TO PUBLISH OUR CRIME DATA

YOU SAID

WE DID

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP  
SAVED £3M

### "NEED DEDICATED BUSINESS CRIME PLANS"



WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH DOJ TO DEAL WITH BUSINESS CRIME

WE HAVE A DEDICATED BUSINESS CRIME LEAD

WE HAVE INTRODUCED A SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT WITHIN POLICING DISTRICTS

YOU SAID

WE DID