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**To: Police, Fire & Rescue Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

**On: 22 August 2023**

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**Report by: Director of Environment, Housing and Infrastructure**

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**Heading: Scottish Partnership Against Acquisitive Crime (SPAACE):  
Acquisitive Crime Strategy 2023-2028**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 Acquisitive crime is defined as any type of crime whereby the perpetrator seeks to derive material gain from the crime. Anyone can be a victim of acquisitive crime, with examples of this including fraud, housebreaking, doorstep crime, fuel thefts and theft of plant machinery.
  - 1.2 Police Scotland, with their partners across industry, the regulatory landscape and third sector, have formed the Scottish Partnership against Acquisitive Crime (SPAACE) to provide strategic focus to preventative activities. The partners bring a range of expertise to tackle the problem, with the joint aim of reducing the risks our communities face from acquisitive crime, and the associated financial loss.
  - 1.3 SPAACE have now launched the first "Acquisitive Crime Strategy 2023 – 2028", attached at Appendix 1, which recognises that the key to success in tackling this greater focus to this growing area of criminality lies in a collaborative approach. This report sets out workstreams in which Public Protection are key partners.
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## **2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Police, Fire & Rescue Scrutiny Sub-Committee:

- 2.1 Note that Trading Standards and the Community Safety Partnership welcome and commit to supporting the Strategy in Renfrewshire as attached at Appendix 1.
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### **3. Background**

3.1 The Scottish Partnership against Acquisitive Crime (SPAACE) is a collaborative working initiative across regulators, industry and the third sector, including:

- Police Scotland,
- Scottish Government,
- Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland (SCOTSS),
- Trading Standards Scotland (TSS),
- HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC),
- Scottish Plant Owners Association Scotland (SPAOS),
- Retailers against Crime,
- Neighbourhood Watch Scotland,
- Secured by Design,
- Take 5 to Stop Fraud, and
- Crimestoppers.

3.2 Acquisitive crime accounts for a substantial number of all crimes reported in Scotland and is estimated to make up an even more significant proportion of unreported criminal activity. The financial landscape - such as the cost-of-living crisis, low economic growth and high rate of poverty - can all have a significant impact on intent to commit acquisitive crime. This type of crime can affect anyone at any time but will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable in our society.

3.3 SPAACE aim to minimise the opportunities to commit acquisitive crime, whilst maximising the impact of prevention campaigns across Scotland. Tackling acquisitive crime represents a challenge for all partners involved in the initiative. Resilient and robust outcomes will only be realised by working collaboratively - implementing best practice to evolve the approach to this form of criminality.

3.4 The Strategy contains key objectives to which services within Climate & Public Protection can add significant value. These include:

- Minimising opportunities for acquisitive crime, and reducing the harm it causes to our communities,
- Developing a nationwide approach to reduce doorstep crime and the harm it causes,
- Working with partners to tackle acquisitive crime, and to protect individuals and businesses from this threat,
- Delivering a clearer reporting mechanism for advice and guidance, and
- Building upon community and business resilience.

Locally, Trading Standards and the Community Safety Partnership have well-established relationships and a history of successful partnership working in these areas, through initiatives such as “Shut Out Scammers”, and contribution to relevant tactical groups, such as the National Acquisitive Crime Group (via SCOTSS Lead Officer) and the K Division SOC & Interventions Group.

3.5 Trading Standards will work with other internal partners to advise and support businesses, by promotion of initiative such as RenSafeOnline or by direction to the Scottish Business Resilience Centre for their extensive business safety advice.

3.6 In consultation with partners, SPAACE have set 7 main priorities within the acquisitive crime sphere. These are:

- Theft (e.g., bike theft, metal theft, fuel theft),
- Itinerant doorstep crime (e.g., bogus officials, rogue traders),
- Illicit trade (e.g., counterfeit goods, illicit trade),
- Vehicle Crime,
- Robbery,
- Housebreaking, and
- Fraud.

Trading Standards are noted as key local and national partners for activity around theft, itinerant doorstep crime and illicit trade. Locally, Trading Standards will promote the Renfrewshire Trusted Trader Scheme as a reputable place to secure a trader to work on your home. The Team continue to action intelligence received as part of Operation CECE (national initiative to tackle illicit tobacco). Recent activity saw over 600 tobacco products removed from two premises, with an estimated loss to legitimate business of over £10,000 had that been sold. Officers will continue to work with Police to undertake targeted interventions on premises holding licences, such as Scrap Metal dealers. The Community Partnership will be key local partners for activity around vehicle crime, robbery, housebreaking and fraud, in particular the utilisation of public space CCTV, and Community Support Officer patrols in key areas.

3.7 Renfrewshire Council welcomes the new Acquisitive Crime Strategy 2023-2028 which captures the issues and challenges faced locally. This collaborative approach builds on existing networks, relationships and successes, which will now attract greater strategic oversight and direction.

3.8 A rolling calendar of targeted enforcement initiatives and awareness campaigns in has been developed and scheduled to tie in existing national campaign activity. Priorities will be broadly aligned with seasonal problems and work will be subject to review to ensure the activity remains relevant and well targeted. Police Scotland will work alongside relevant partners in Trading Standards and the Community Safety Partnership, to carry out enforcement activity targeting those involved in acquisitive crime, as follows:

- Spring – doorstep crime, fraud, vehicle crime, commercial housebreaking
- Summer – bike theft, metal theft, plant theft
- Autumn – shoplifting, doorstep crime, domestic housebreaking
- Winter – fraud, illicit trade, fuel theft

3.9 Updates on activity around this Strategy will be reported to the Police, Fire & Rescue Sub-Committee for Governance purposes, and noted to the Chief Officers' Group for information only.

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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - not applicable.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - not applicable.
3. **Community/Council Planning** -
  - Our Renfrewshire is thriving - legitimate businesses will not be disadvantaged by competitors gaining an unfair advantage through criminality.
  - Our Renfrewshire is fair - our residents will be well informed, and safe from criminal loss or exploitation.
  - Our Renfrewshire is safe - our communities will have a reduced threat from this type of criminality.
  - Reshaping our place, our economy and our future - businesses will be attracted to Renfrewshire as a safe and well-regulated place to trade.
  - Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all - vulnerable residents will be informed and protected.
  - Working together to improve outcomes – collaborative working makes best use of partner resources, skills and tools.
4. **Legal** - This Strategy does not require Officers to undertake any new enforcement activity. Officers in Public Protection are already authorised and empowered to act in relation to relevant legislation through the Scheme of Delegated Functions.
5. **Property/Assets** - not applicable.
6. **Information Technology** - not applicable.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** -
  - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** - none.
9. **Procurement** - not applicable.
10. **Risk** - none.
11. **Privacy Impact** - none.

12. **COSLA Policy Position** – *enter details or not applicable.*

13. **Climate Risk** - not applicable.

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**List of Background Papers**

None.

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# Acquisitive Crime Strategy

2023 – 2028





## Our partners

**CrimeStoppers.**  
Speak up. Stay safe.





# Welcome :: Fàilte

Welcome to the first strategy to prevent and tackle acquisitive crime across Scotland. The Scottish Partnership Against Acquisitive Crime **SPAACE** recognises Scotland is a diverse mix of people and geography.

The partners bring a range of expertise to tackle acquisitive crime with the joint aim of reducing the risks our communities face from acquisitive crime and the associated financial loss.

**SPAACE** puts early prevention opportunities at the core of what we do, aiming to reduce the likelihood of harm for vulnerable people in our communities from the very outset. This goes hand in hand with positive action to mitigate the factors we know can cause long lasting harm.

**SPAACE** will adopt a whole system approach, working collaboratively and in partnership with each other to positively contribute to the lives and wellbeing of our communities.

**SPAACE** recognises that the true cost of acquisitive crime is felt emotionally as well as financially. There is also a wider environmental impact from crime and its carbon footprint. Every step we take to minimise the instances of acquisitive crime will have a positive effect on individuals, local communities and the environment.



**This strategy  
outlines how we will  
work in partnership  
to tackle acquisitive  
crime throughout  
Scotland**

**SPAACE** is a multi-agency partnership involving key organisations collectively working together to tackle acquisitive crime. Providing strategic focus, SPAACE co-ordinates a committed and sustained approach of crime prevention advice across Scotland's communities.

We will develop collaborative approaches with partners to raise awareness, share intelligence and information relating to emerging acquisitive crime trends.

We will use this collaborative approach to deliver best practice and reduce harm by raising public awareness through national campaigns.



## Vision

**Prevent acquisitive crime** having an impact on our communities



## Aim

**Work with our partners** to reduce the opportunities for acquisitive crime



## Objectives

- **Minimise opportunities for acquisitive crime** and reduce the harm it causes to our communities
- Develop our nationwide approach to **reduce doorstep crime** and the harm it causes
- Work with partners to tackle acquisitive crime and **protect individuals and businesses** from this threat
- Deliver a **clearer reporting mechanism** for advice and guidance
- Build upon **community and business resilience**

# What is Acquisitive crime?

Acquisitive crime is a high volume crime accounting for a substantial number of all crimes reported in Scotland often targeting the most vulnerable in our society.

**SPAACE** priorities aim to minimise the opportunities to commit acquisitive crime whilst maximising the impact of acquisitive crime prevention campaigns across Scotland. Tackling acquisitive crime represents a challenge for the police and partner agencies. Effective, long term reductions will only occur by working together sharing and implementing good practice to keep pace with this constantly evolving form of criminality.

**Building on work previously undertaken coupled with recent consultation involving partners, SPAACE has set 7 priorities:**





# The Strategy

Crime prevention is a broad and complex concept. Policing will only ever be one part of a successful prevention approach. Trading Standards Scotland, Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland, Local Authorities' and a host of other public and third sector services will be even more important than policing in achieving successful outcomes long-term. The responsibility for crime prevention needs to be shared across agencies with Police Scotland being an active and enthusiastic partner in a co-ordinated approach.

Crime prevention is about understanding and addressing both the cause and the crime. It is:

Any intervention which prevents or reduces a crime that would have occurred without that intervention;



Police and partners working together with communities, learning about shared problems, and jointly designing unique solutions;

When we initiate crime responses before there is a significant problem as opposed to reacting to crime matters on an incident by incident basis



# Prevention Intelligence Enforcement Reassurance

**SPAACE** seeks to provide a co-ordinated, focused and pro-active approach through effective partnerships coupled with increased visibility to reduce opportunities for those that commit crimes causing the greatest threat, risk or harm to our communities.

**SPAACE** aims to ensure that Scotland's communities are aware of the work being done on their behalf to improve their sense of wellbeing and safety and reduce the fear of crime.

**SPAACE** is committed to preventing crime and reducing the fear of crime through communication, education, innovation and partnership working to empower communities and individuals.



# Acquisitive Crime Prevention and Education

All activity and campaigns to address these priorities will have a supportive thread through them provided by Scottish Government, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and relevant partners. Activity will be subject to ongoing review and we will act upon any lessons learned as they develop keeping us agile and relevant.

## Theft



### **Bike theft • Metal Theft • Theft by Shoplifting • Plant Theft • Fuel Theft**

The lead partners addressing these areas will be Police Scotland, Trading Standards Scotland and Retailers against Crime. Scottish Plant Owners Association, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Local Authority Trading Standards, National Infrastructure Crime Reduction Forum (UK) and Police Crime Prevention Initiatives (UK).

## Itinerant Doorstep Crime



### **Bogus Worker • Cold Callers**

Activity will flex with the current trends supported by Trading Standards officers in Local Authorities', Trading Standards Scotland, Police Scotland and HM Revenue & Customs.

## Illicit Trade



### **Counterfeit Goods • Illicit Trade**

Activity will be driven by current trends highlighted through the Scottish Anti Illicit Trade Group supported by the Business Crime Prevention Unit in Police Scotland, Trading Standards Scotland, Local Authority Trading Standards Officers and COPFS.

## Vehicle Crime



### **Theft of Motor Vehicle • Theft From Motor Vehicle**

Activity will be intelligence led by Police Scotland and relevant partners additionally supported by prevention schemes such as ParkMark and Secured By Design.

## Robbery



Activity will be driven by current intelligence picture by Police Scotland and relevant partners in Cash Valuables in Transit, Retailers against Crime and the Business Crime Prevention Unit in Police Scotland.

## Housebreaking



### **Theft HB • Attempt Theft HB • Commercial and Domestic**

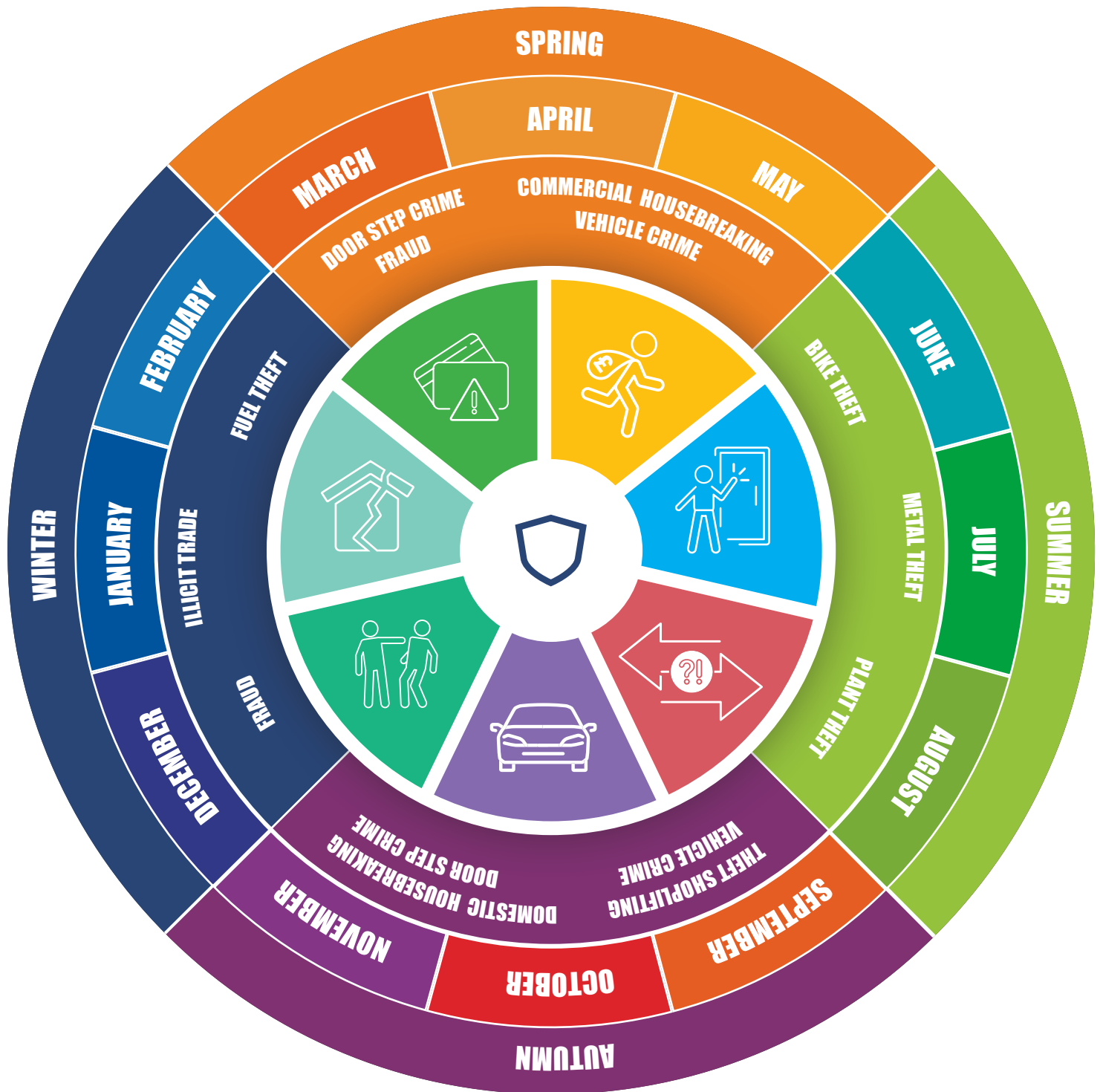
Prevention activity will be lead by Police Scotland supported by partners including Neighborhood Watch Scotland and Secured By Design.

## Fraud



Prevention activity will be delivered throughout Scotland, lead by the Cybercrime Harm Prevention and Business Crime Prevention Unit in Police Scotland. Supported by partners in OPAL and UK Finance - Take 5 to stop fraud.

# Acquisitive Crime Campaign Calendar





We need everyone to make a positive change such as signing up to [Construction Watch Scotland ALERTS \(Scan QR code below\)](#) , making that phone call when you observe a vehicle acting suspiciously or installing prevention measures no matter how small.

Together we will collectively prevent, reduce and tackle acquisitive crime in Scotland, protect our communities through strong partnerships and ultimately ensure regardless of geographical location, communities feel safe!

Always dial **999** in an emergency, dial **101** for non-emergencies or go online to report incidents of a non-serious nature via [www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/contact](http://www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/contact)

If you know or suspect someone who is involved in acquisitive crime contact the independent charity Crimestoppers - they are 100% anonymous on **0800 555 111**

If reporting an incident and not sure where you are, remember Police Scotland Area Control Rooms accept the terms used in location sharing app 'What3Words'

**Thank You Tapadh leat**



**Construction  
Watch** SCOTLAND

Delivered by Neighbourhood Watch Scotland

