



To: **Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board**

On: **2 September 2015**

Report by:
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SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME (SOC) STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND – REFRESH

1. Summary

- 1.1 The previous strategy for Serious Organised Crime (SOC), “Letting Our Communities Flourish” was published in 2009. The attached strategy was launched by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice on 18 June 2015. Additional copies are available online at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/3426>.
- 1.2 A number of key messages come out from the updated strategy that will require to be addressed by the Community Safety Partnership as it takes forward its SOC and Integrity agenda – and that also have implications for our Prevent approach, which has up to now been focused on Counter Terrorism. It is clear from the strategy that the nature of serious organised crime is changing and will require a broader involvement from a range of services and partners to address. 60% of SOC groups are involved in the use of seemingly legitimate businesses, and we need to be aware of this in our own business dealings, but also in the work of our regulatory services teams. The issue is local – 70% of SOC groups are located in the West of Scotland and there is evidence that the impact disproportionately affects poorer communities and contributes to social and economic inequalities. The impact is also felt by an elderly population – the average age of victims of bogus workmen and doorstep crime is 81 and this has an impact on our adult care services and Health services – as victims suffer a more rapid decline in health than their non-victim peers.
- 1.3 Up to now the core workload of managing our response to SOC has been on improving organisational resilience and this has been taken forward through the Integrity strategy and group. This work will continue to be driven and managed on an ongoing basis by the Integrity Group.
- 1.4 However, the revised SOC Strategy also makes clear that there are a number of areas where partners need to take clear action to support and inform the wider community and that other organisations, including the third sector also have a role to play. It is proposed that information be brought back to future meetings of this



group from other service areas and organisations, to raise awareness and share knowledge at a strategic level of how these community issues are being tackled and to identify any strategic issues or interventions that could support better practice. Many of these actions will be similar to those being taken forward by the Prevent group as it seeks to strengthen community resilience and capacity to prevent the radicalisation of vulnerable people. It is important that at a strategic level these connections are made and that actions are appropriately assigned to each group to avoid duplication of effort.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the board note the issues highlighted in the updated national strategy and note that the Integrity Group and Prevent Group is being tasked with their self assessment analysis and action plans.
- 2.2** Add relevant messages and actions relating to the work arising from the spotlight sessions to the Prevent Action plan as it is developed
- 2.3** Prioritise employees from Regulatory Services for WRAP training to support their work on this agenda.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Serious Organised Crime Strategy attached as Appendix 1, provides an update of current progress including a range of useful case studies that serve to illustrate the range and nature of criminal activities that need to be planned for and mitigated against. In particular it highlights the changing nature of threats and crime types since 2009, with increasing levels of cyber crime and human trafficking and reducing levels of armed robberies and organised crime related homicides. There have also been changes in the nature of the legitimate businesses that serious organised crime groups have tried to infiltrate, such as the waste industry and there remains uncertainty around the levels of crime groups in a number of activities including child sexual exploitation and the distribution and sale of new psychoactive substances.
- 3.2** The case studies included within the strategy usefully serve to illustrate the changing pattern and nature of the risks that are faced by vulnerable individuals and organisations. These case studies also make it very clear that the public sector – and local authorities in particular are in the frontline in tackling these threats and in supporting vulnerable people and organisations in avoiding being caught up in criminal activities of this type and assisting them when they are.
- 3.3** The strategy provides a number of clear recommendations for how individuals, communities, businesses, the third sector, local authorities and elected representatives can protect themselves and their work.
- 3.4** These recommendations (together with the other information contained in the strategy) will be used by the Council's Integrity Group to update and improve upon



its current action plan and ensure that the Council is as resilient as possible in responding to the threats posed by organised crime and by the Prevent Group to put in place the necessary actions to support the wider Renfrewshire community, in particular our most vulnerable residents.

4. Resources

The Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Action Plan identifies the resources requirements for each individual action.

5. Prevention

The work undertaken through the Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board helps to plan resources and direct investment towards prevention and early intervention.

6. Community Involvement/Engagement

The Action Plan has been developed through the Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Board and sub groups whereby the third sector is widely represented.

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