



# STRATEGY **ACTION PLAN**

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**Rural Voices, Real Impact**

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# 1 Executive Summary

The National Rural Crime Network (NRCN) has successfully revitalised its organisation since 2022, expanding its membership and influence across the UK. With 36 Police and Crime Commissioners and combined authority forces now part of the network, NRCN is a growing force in shaping rural crime policy and awareness.

Our strategic plan for

**2025–2028**

builds on this momentum focusing on targeted campaigns, deeper research, and stronger partnerships. This document outlines our priorities, delivery mechanisms, and communications strategy to ensure rural crime is addressed with the seriousness it demands.



# 2 Background & Achievements

NRCN has strengthened its presence in both traditional and digital media, increasingly contributing research insights and expert commentary to national media outlets. This increased visibility has helped elevate rural crime on the public and political agenda.

*A major milestone has been the establishment of the NRCN Annual Conference, now a key event that brings together stakeholders from politics, policing, and rural business.*

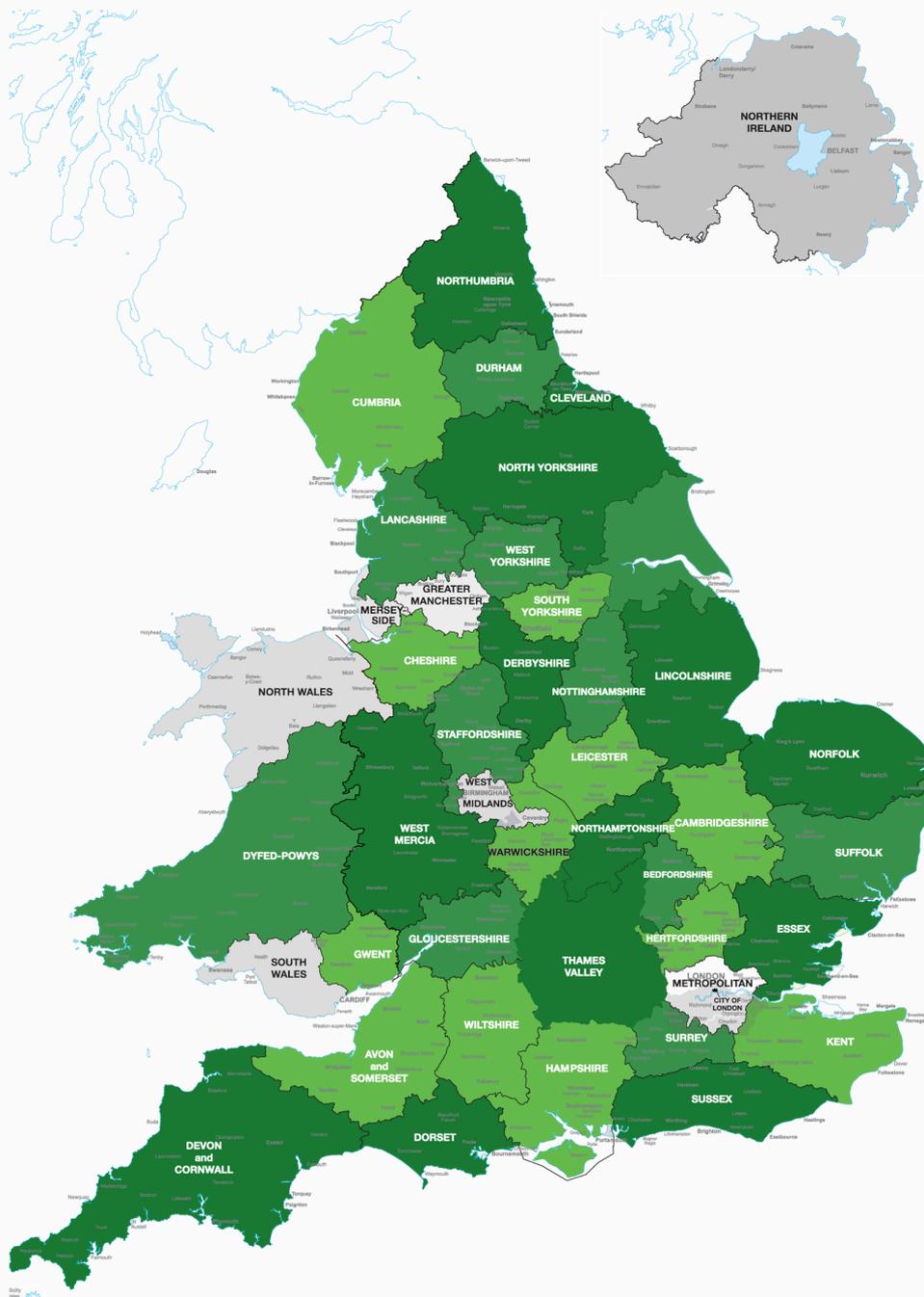
Over the past three years, NRCN has:

- 01** Grown its membership, partner and sponsorship base.
- 02** Increased media presence and political engagement.
- 03** Hosted successful annual conferences, most recently a key platform for government rural crime funding announcements.
- 04** Commissioned impactful research, notably *Rural Crime: Serious, Organised and International* by Dr Kate Tudor and a 10 point action plan for change.

In a notable achievement, the Government chose the NRCN Conference as the platform to announce new rural policing funding, underscoring the Network's growing influence.

This strategy document has been developed collaboratively with input from Police and Crime Commissioners, Deputy Mayors, Partners, and associate members.

It reflects a shared commitment to shaping the future of rural crime policy and action over the next three years.



*The NRCN is committed to growing our membership of the network further to include metropolitan areas and all parts of the United Kingdom.*

## 3 Strategic Priorities (2025–2028)

The NRCN's strategic priorities for the next three years are shaped by evidence-based research, member feedback, and emerging rural crime trends. **These priorities aim to drive impactful campaigns, influence policy, and foster collaboration across sectors.**



At the heart of our work over the last two years was research commissioned by the NRCN and carried out by Dr Kate Tudor.

***Rural Crime: Serious, Organised and International.***

This research gave us the evidence that rural crime is not a fringe issue, with rural crime often being used to fund drugs, human trafficking and serious violence in communities across the country.

*This research remains fundamental to our work over the next 3 years and combined with the feedback from our members and partners we have developed a new set of strategic priorities to guide our work over the coming years.*

### > Campaigns & Policy Goals

We will continue to lead and support partner campaigns addressing key rural crime issues, with a focus on achieving tangible legislative and policy outcomes.

We will continue to campaign until the following ongoing legislation and goals are delivered:

#### 01 Machinery and Equipment Theft:

Support the full implementation of the NRCN 10-Point Action Plan.

#### 02 Waste Crime and Fly-Tipping:

Advocate for DEFRA funding to support dedicated analysts and data release.



03 **Livestock Attacks by Dogs:**

Push for Royal Assent of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Bill 2025.

04 **Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2024:**

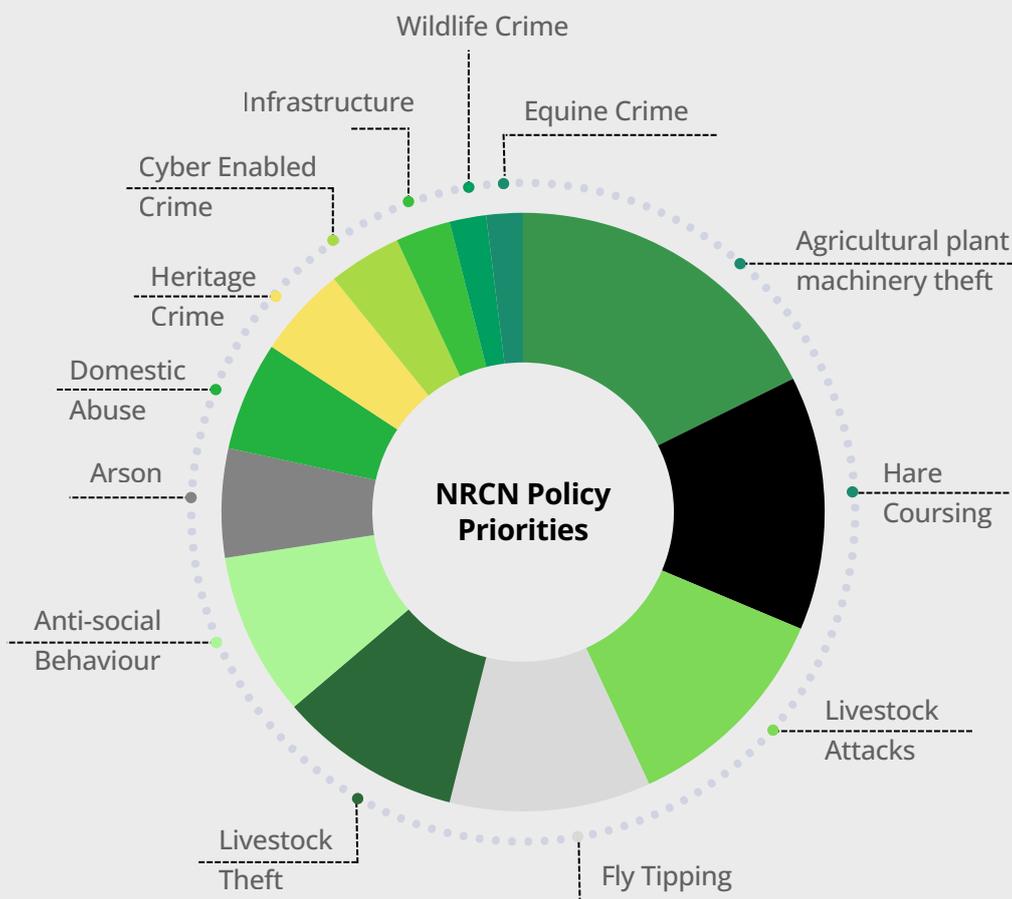
Ensure secondary legislation includes GPS systems and high-value power tools.

05 **Fair Police Funding**

Implementation of changes to the Police funding formula to deliver a fairer funding settlement for rural Police forces.

➤ **Member & Partner Priorities**

Feedback from NRCN members and partners has shaped our campaign and advocacy focus. We will tailor our campaigns to reflect the issues most important to our network, ensuring alignment with local and regional concerns.



> **Members and Partners  
Funding & Policy  
Recommendations**

- 1. **Most Supported Funding Proposal:** Changing the police funding formula to better reflect rural challenges.
- 2. **Top Legislative Recommendation:** New sentencing guidelines for rural offences.



Other notable policies which gained support:



Appointment of a government Rural Crime Tsar.



Heritage crime aggravation powers and parity with waste crime.



Countryside Code education in schools.



Carrying a catapults given same status as knives.



Historic England as a named body.

*The NRCN is committed to keeping an open dialogue with members and partners through roundtable policy events, conferences, surveys and regular meetings with PCCs.*

## 4 Emerging Focus Areas



> **Rural Domestic Abuse, Violence & Stalking**

The NRCN Board has identified rural domestic abuse, stalking and sexual violence as a key strategic priority. We will:

- Commission further research to understand rural-specific challenges.
- Raise awareness across the network and within government and the media.
- Partner with the Rural Initiatives to Tackle Abuse (RITA) to ensure government policy is “rural proofed” and responsive to victims' needs.



## > Infrastructure Crime

Emerging threats such as cable theft from railways, phone lines, and solar farms are increasingly affecting rural communities. NRCN will:

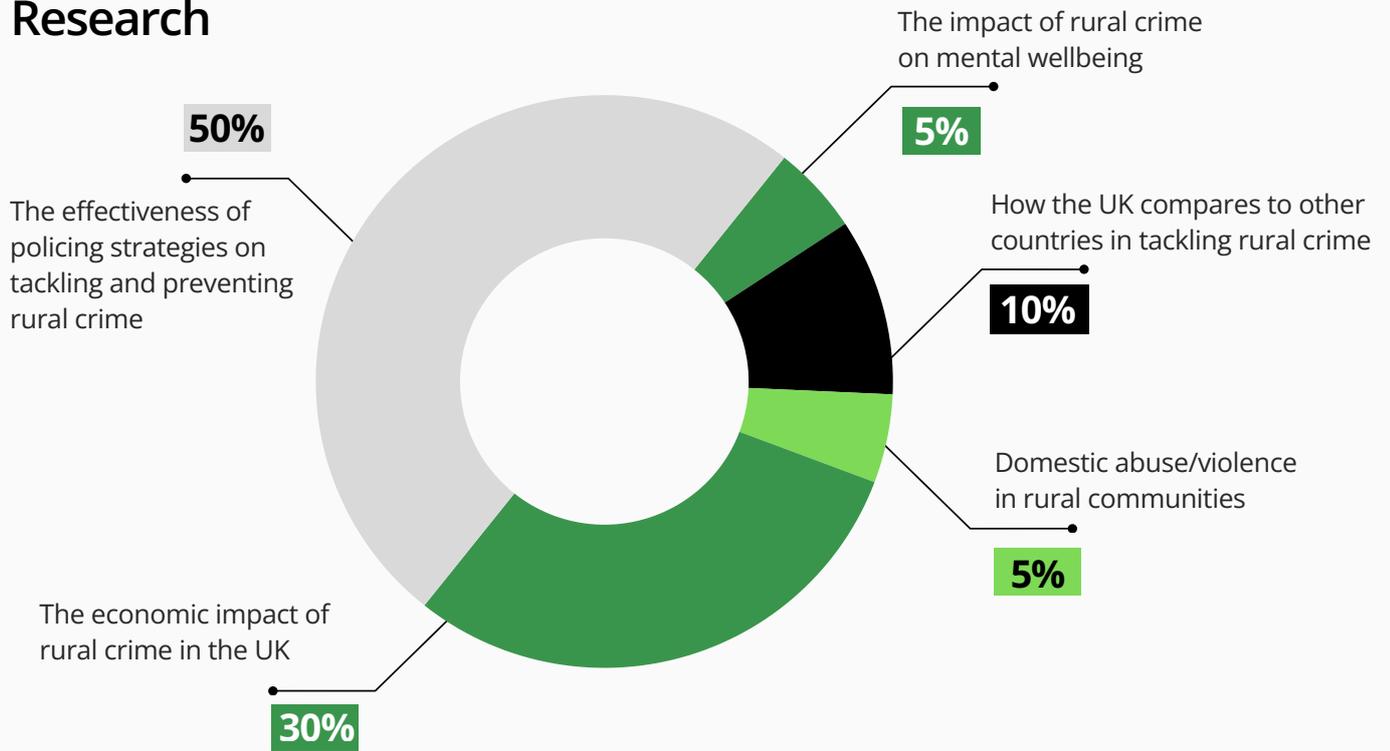
- Investigate the scale and impact of infrastructure crime.
- Work with partners to raise its profile among policymakers.
- Advocate for targeted interventions and improved security measures.

# 5 Research & Knowledge Sharing

Research remains central to NRCN’s strategy. We will:

- Commission new studies every 18 – 24 months. The NRCN will use the feedback from our members to guide the research priorities
- Launch a Best Practice website to share case studies and success stories.
- Collaborate internationally, including with the French Embassy and Irish farming organisations, to exchange insights and solutions and to develop a wider international rural crime best practice forum.

## NRCN Future Research



## 6 Project Delivery Groups (PDGs)

### Purpose and Structure

Each PDG will:

- 01** Be chaired by a member of the NRCN Board.
- 02** Include representatives from our partners, members, and associate members.
- 03** Operate collaboratively, with regular information sharing across groups to avoid duplication and maximise impact.



### Delivering Our Strategic Priorities: Project Delivery Groups (PDGs)

To meet the growing demands of our expanding network and to deliver greater impact, the NRCN will implement a new structure centred around Project Delivery Groups (PDGs). These groups will be the operational core of our strategy for 2025–2028, ensuring that our work is focused, collaborative, and aligned with our strategic goals.

*PDGs will not work in isolation. Cross-group collaboration will be essential to address overlapping issues and ensure a unified approach to rural crime.*

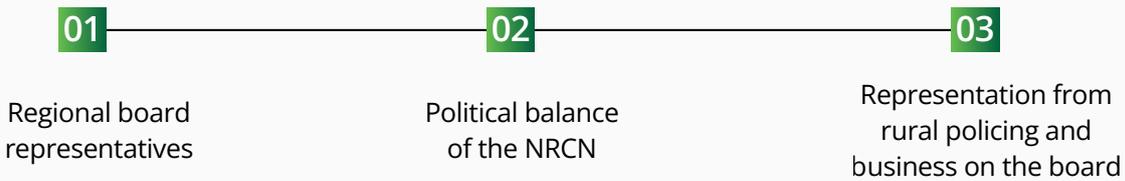
# The Six PDGs

<p><b>NRCN</b></p> <p>SORC*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information and best practice sharing between PCCs</li> <li>Fairer funding for rural forces</li> <li>Tougher sentences for rural crime gangs</li> </ul>	<p><b>NRCN</b></p> <p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new data</li> <li>Advocate technology</li> <li>Breakdown tech barriers in policing / govt</li> </ul>	<p><b>NRCN</b></p> <p>International</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International research &amp; best practice</li> <li>Information sharing</li> <li>Practical cross-border solutions</li> </ul>	<p><b>NRCN</b></p> <p>Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic abuse &amp; violence, stalking issues</li> <li>Mental wellbeing</li> <li>Isolation</li> </ul>	<p><b>NRCN</b></p> <p>Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer and community groups</li> <li>Support rural business</li> <li>Build grassroots support</li> </ul>	<p><b>NRCN</b></p> <p>Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School education programmes</li> <li>Preventative youth justice projects</li> <li>Social action for young people</li> </ul>
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## Next Steps

\*Serious Organised Rural Crime

- PDGs will be established immediately within the existing governance framework.
- A working group of board members will review NRCN's governance, staffing, and funding to ensure the organisation is equipped to support the PDGs effectively. The governance review group will take into account the feedback of members which included:



Recommendations from this review will be presented to the membership in early 2026.

*This structure ensures that NRCN remains agile, inclusive, and impactful in tackling rural crime across the UK.*

## 7 Governance & Structure Review

*As NRCN's influence grows, we must ensure our governance and structure align with future objectives.*



With the Government set to abolish Police and Crime Commissioners in 2028, NRCN will review its board composition, staffing needs, and consider whether to adopt a new organisational model.

## 8 NRCN Funding

The NRCN's core funding continues to come from Police and Crime Commissioners and Deputy Mayors. This foundational support has enabled the Network to grow its influence and deliver impactful work across the UK.

*Looking ahead to 2025–2028, our funding strategy will focus on diversifying income streams to ensure long-term sustainability. Key priorities include:*

### Expanding Associate Membership

We will actively grow our base of associate members, including rural businesses, academic institutions, and voluntary sector organisations that share our mission.

### Attracting Sponsorship

NRCN will seek strategic sponsorships aligned with our values and campaign goals, enabling us to deliver more projects without increasing membership fees.

### Project-Based Funding

Where appropriate, we will pursue funding for specific initiatives, particularly those led by our Project Delivery Groups (PDGs), to enhance delivery capacity and innovation.

### Demonstrating Value

We will continue to provide clear evidence of impact to our funders, ensuring transparency and reinforcing the value of their investment in tackling rural crime.

This approach will allow NRCN to remain agile, responsive, and ambitious in its work while maintaining affordability and fairness for our members.

## 9 Marketing and Communication

To support the delivery of our strategic priorities and the work of the new Project Delivery Groups (PDGs), the NRCN is undertaking a comprehensive refresh of its marketing and communications approach.

This will ensure our messaging is aligned, impactful, and tailored to the diverse audiences we serve.

## > Brand Identity



We will review and refine the NRCN brand to better reflect our mission and the interconnected work of our PDGs.

- **Brand Refresh**

Update the NRCN logo and visual identity to clearly communicate our purpose and values.

- **PDG Branding**

Develop distinct yet cohesive logos for each PDG, designed to resonate with their specific audiences while reinforcing the NRCN's overarching brand.

- **Brand Guidelines**

Create a comprehensive brand guide to ensure consistency across all communications and platforms.

## > Website Redevelopment

Our website will be redesigned to reflect the new PDG structure and improve user experience.



### User-Centric Navigation

Ensure visitors can access relevant content within one click from the homepage.



### Content Strategy

Highlight the NRCN's purpose, goals, and impact through engaging, accessible content.



### Visual Update

Expand the image library to include more people- and community-focused visuals alongside rural landscapes.



### VIP Area

Launch a secure member area featuring data dashboards, best practice case studies, blogs, and video content.

## > Social Media Strategy

We will enhance our social media presence to better engage with key audiences and amplify our campaigns.

### 01 Performance Review

Analyse current channel performance to understand which audiences are engaging with which platforms.

### 02 Targeted Growth

Identify gaps and explore the creation of new channels tailored to specific PDG audiences.

### 03 Brand Compliance

Ensure all social media content aligns with NRCN's updated brand identity and messaging.

# 10 NRCN Ambassador Programme

This initiative will bring together influential voices from across social media, academia, and rural communities to champion the Network's mission and extend its reach.

*To amplify the national conversation around rural crime, the NRCN is launching a dedicated Ambassador Programme.*

## > Purpose of the Programme

Ambassadors will serve as public advocates for the NRCN, helping to:



Raise awareness of rural crime and its impact.



Represent the NRCN at key events, conferences, and public forums.



Strengthen relationships with media, influencers, and community leaders.

## > Ambassador Responsibilities

Ambassadors will:

- Understand and communicate the NRCN's vision, mission, and strategic goals.
- Represent the Network at public engagements, including trade shows, conventions, and speaking events.
- Build relationships with journalists, bloggers, and social media influencers.
- Create and share content across platforms such as Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and LinkedIn.
- Promote NRCN campaigns through videos, blogs, and social media posts.
- Help build trust and engagement with the NRCN's audiences.



## > Recruitment Approach

The NRCN is actively identifying and approaching high-profile individuals, including television personalities and rural crime experts, to serve as ambassadors. These individuals will be selected based on their alignment with NRCN values and their ability to engage diverse audiences.

# 11 Summary

The NRCN Strategy for 2025–2028 sets out a bold and collaborative vision for tackling rural crime across the UK. Grounded in evidence, shaped by member feedback, and responsive to emerging threats, this strategy reflects our commitment to ensuring rural communities are safe, supported, and heard.

As we move forward, the NRCN remains dedicated to driving change, influencing policy, and delivering real impact for rural communities.

Through focused campaigns, innovative research, and the establishment of Project Delivery Groups, we are building a more agile and impactful organisation. Our refreshed communications, expanded partnerships, and new Ambassador Programme will amplify our voice and extend our reach.

***Together with our members, partners, and supporters, we will continue to champion the needs of rural areas and ensure that rural crime is never overlooked.***

# Thank you!

We appreciate your role in helping to make our rural communities safer.

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Visit Us

Follow our journey and initiatives



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