

THE NORTHERN IRELAND ORGANISED CRIME TASK FORCE
COMPRISES THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:

Northern Ireland Office
Police Service Of Northern Ireland
HM Customs & Excise
Inland Revenue
National Criminal Intelligence Service
Home Office
Other Government Agencies

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CONFRONTING THE THREAT STRATEGY 2002-2003

SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME IN NORTHERN IRELAND



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INTRODUCTION

I want to congratulate the Organised Crime Task Force under the leadership of Jane Kennedy on their first year's work. Much has been achieved - the figures in these documents speak for themselves - but we are under no illusions that there is much more to be done.

If Northern Ireland is to become a truly normal society, we must root out the malignant presence of organised crime. This means addressing not only the policing and security challenges through the multi-agency approach of the Task Force, but changing the culture of the communities in which this crime takes its grip. It is in this area that the recent appointment of Professor Ron Goldstock as International Adviser will make a significant difference.

In addition to the successful structures put in place by the Task Force, a new powerful weapon will soon be available. The Proceeds of Crime Bill currently passing through Parliament will allow us to seize the assets of those who have grown rich on the misery of others.

Fighting organised crime will be a long and hard struggle. But no-one should doubt that we have the resources and determination to pursue it to the end. The publication of these documents shows the agencies involved have made an impressive start.

Rt.Hon. Dr. John Reid MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

CONFRONTING THE THREAT

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STRATEGY OVERVIEW

OUR STRATEGY FOR YEAR TWO

The creation of the Northern Ireland Organised Crime Task Force is the manifestation of the Government's commitment to help make Northern Ireland a stable and peaceful society. A year on from the publication of the Task Force's first Threat Assessment and Strategy, we have seen some truly remarkable successes against organised criminals in Northern Ireland. Concerted law enforcement activity has clearly played a vital role in disrupting and fragmenting the illegal acts of the criminals.

FOR EXAMPLE

- since April 2001, PSNI has undertaken nearly 200 operations resulting in 81 arrests and the seizure of drugs to the value of £5.5 million
- enforcement activities have disrupted extensive fuel smuggling and fuel laundering activities
- Customs have seized around 48 million illicit cigarettes
- Customs have dismantled considerable facilities for producing and bottling illegal spirit drinks based on industrial ethanol
- PSNI have seized counterfeit goods to the value of approximately £4million and reported over 100 individuals to the Director of Public Prosecutions; and
- significant money laundering activities have been disrupted

The Task Force welcomes these results but we are not complacent. Organised crime ventures are fluid in their nature and allegiances, and the Task Force has concluded that it is

important that it focuses on the nature and scope of the criminal enterprise, rather than the numbers of groups or individuals involved. This year's Threat Assessment has identified that the level of organised criminal enterprise remains high. So while our success is encouraging, we cannot afford to relax our efforts or our search for improvements to our present ways of operating. We can - and have to - do more.

I am grateful for the enthusiasm and commitment of all the members of the Task Force. Law enforcement officers deserve our congratulations and our thanks.

Tackling organised crime requires a long-term investment of time, effort and resources. Organised criminals are becoming more inventive and sophisticated. Their energy must be, and is, matched by an equal commitment from Government and the law enforcement agencies.

A crucial role for the Task Force is to counter the very dangerous misconception that some types of crime are victimless. The perception is that no one suffers from buying smuggled cigarettes or counterfeit goods. But we are all affected by the loss of revenue which should fund our essential public services. As Chair of the Organised Crime Task Force, I will continue to do everything I can to support legitimate trade and to hammer away at the fallacy of victimless crime.

I want to highlight the less obvious problems associated with organised criminal activity. Adulterated fuel will damage your car. Illicit fuel movements are a hazard on our roads and to our environment. Counterfeit and smuggled goods, such as cigarettes, alcohol, oil and clothing have not been properly tested and can be a health risk. They are a drain on our economy too and, through the loss to the Exchequer, on our public services. We need to continue raising these issues up the public agenda.

It is now widely recognised that the multi-agency approach enables the Task Force members to share a common vision of the problem of organised crime and to agree priorities. This facilitates closer working, the sharing of information and the targeting of resources to a common end. The total law enforcement effort is greater than the sum of its parts.

But this approach does more than strengthen existing links - it forges new ones. The Task Force has brought the agencies together in a forum which respects their operational independence and their autonomy and which makes a positive virtue of their different targets and objectives.

Joint operations are proving their worth and it is equally significant that the police and Customs, at a time of significant change for both, have embraced this initiative and are co-operating closely at strategic and tactical levels. Sharing information to predict trends means that the agencies are well placed to stay ahead of an ever-changing threat.

The second annual Threat Assessment and Strategy identify the current scale and scope of the organised crime problem here and make it possible for the Task Force once again to agree common strategic priorities for the law enforcement agencies. They also establish a benchmark to monitor success.

I should like to thank the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Customs & Excise, the National Criminal Intelligence Service, the Inland Revenue - our new partner - and all other contributors, including my own staff, for their efforts. The Threat Assessment and Strategy are very important tools.

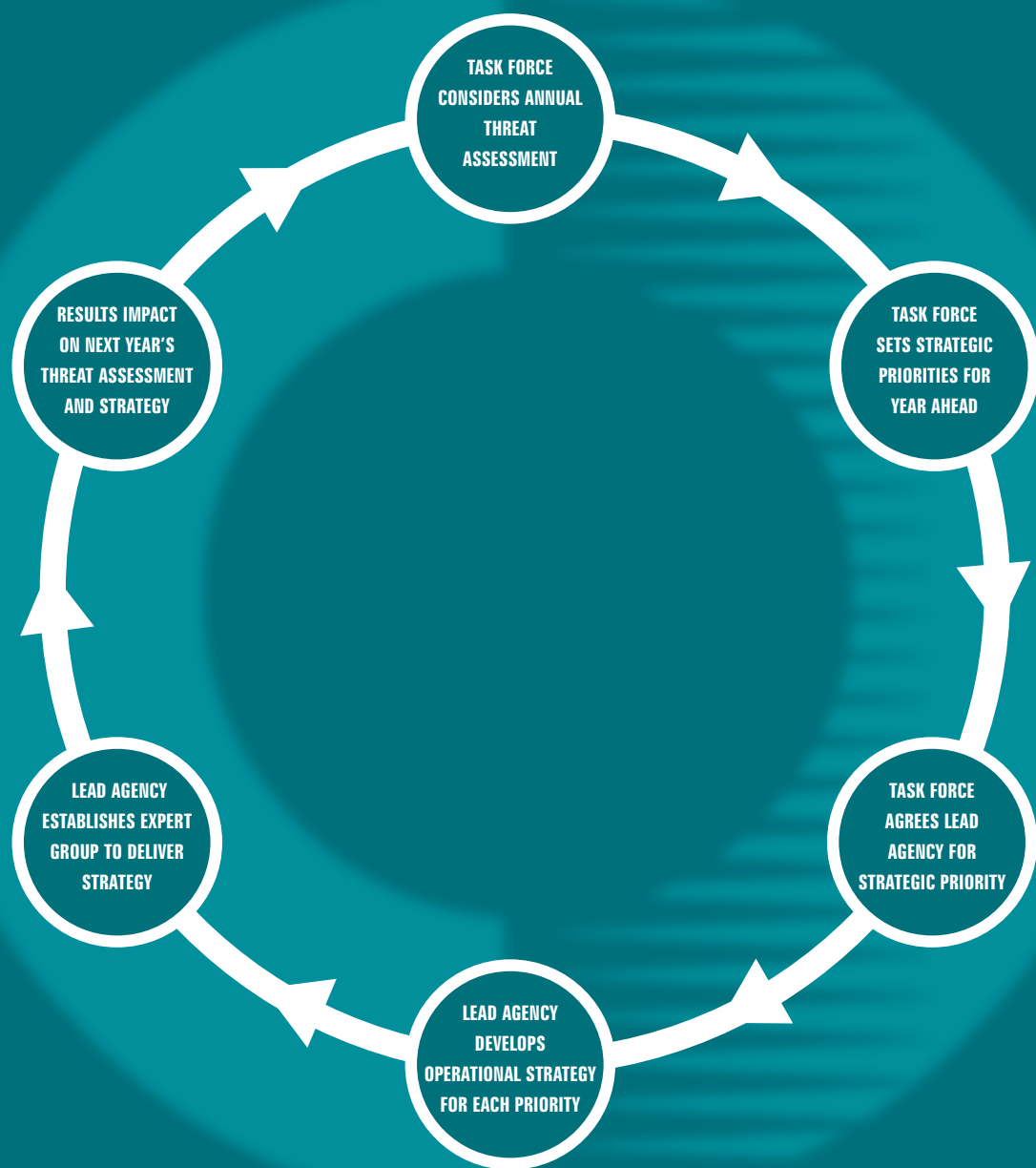
We shall continue to refine our understanding of the organised crime problem and we will continue to structure our response accordingly.

Defeating organised crime needs a long term, resource-intensive commitment. We in the Task Force are committed to this and whilst we recognise there are no quick or easy solutions, we are optimistic that we can meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Jane Kennedy MP
Minister of State and Chair of the
Organised Crime Task Force

STRATEGY DELIVERY

HOW WE SET AND DELIVER OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



STRUCTURAL OVERVIEW



On 25 September 2000, the Secretary of State announced a new multi-agency approach to tackling organised crime in Northern Ireland. The Organised Crime Task Force was established to provide the strategic direction for this. In March 2001 the Task Force published the first ever Threat Assessment for Northern Ireland and, alongside it, a Strategy for confronting the threat to our society from organised crime.

The Strategy for 2001/2002 set strategic priorities to tackle those activities which have an adverse impact on society greater than the sum of the individual criminal acts:

- Reduce extortion, intimidation and blackmail
- Develop operational drug priorities to inhibit the development of drug abuse in Northern Ireland, and to disrupt the supply of all illegal drugs
- Reduce the loss to the Exchequer from the smuggling of hydrocarbon oil, fuel laundering, mixing rebated fuel and dilution of road fuel
- Reduce the loss to the Exchequer from smuggling of tobacco and alcohol
- Target money-laundering activities and make fullest use of existing legislation on seizing proceeds of crime
- Develop and agree a methodology for identifying and prioritising organised criminals in Northern Ireland for concerted action by the agencies

Combating these anti-social criminal activities critically involves close co-operation between a wide range of agencies.

TASK FORCE STRUCTURES

The Task Force is supported by a number of sub groups, each tackling specific operational and policy issues. In year 1, this included:

- **Strategy sub group:** providing secretarial support to the Task Force and developing the Task Force's strategic direction
- **Public sector sub group:** providing a conduit for discussions with OFM/DFM on Task Force developments; and arranging joint events
- **Analysis and Assessment sub group:** providing a forum for developing intelligence flows between the agencies; and producing the annual Threat Assessment
- **Co-ordination sub group:** developing success measures; and assisting the agencies to draw other partners into their Expert Groups
- **Legal sub group:** producing quarterly updates for the agencies on relevant forthcoming legislation; and giving a presentation to the Judicial Studies Board
- **Publicity sub group:** ensuring the Task Force's twin themes - organised crime is never victimless, and everyone has a role to play - are promoted; and working with the agencies to promote operational success

STRUCTURAL OVERVIEW



STRUCTURAL CHANGES

2001/2002 saw massive organisational change for the police in Northern Ireland which provided them with an opportunity to restructure to tackle organised crime more effectively. They established a new post - that of the Organised Crime Co-ordinator - both to undertake internal co-ordination of the organised crime effort and to provide a point of contact for multi-agency operations with other Task Force partners.

This coincided with significant structural change within Customs. The department have established a distinct Law Enforcement function which has facilitated closer working with the police in Northern Ireland and enabled Customs to utilise even more effectively the 7,000 law enforcement officers at their disposal. The ability and willingness to deploy GB based Customs resources to Northern Ireland for specific operations is a most important development.

The Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act, which received Royal Assent in December 2001, now enables the exchange of information between the Inland Revenue and law enforcement agencies. Co-operation on tackling tax fraud was already good, particularly between Inland Revenue and Customs, but this new legislation will enable more effective and wide-ranging links to be developed. The Inland Revenue have now joined the Task Force.

Closer links were also forged with agencies in the devolved field and the Task Force welcomes, in particular, the links which are developing with the Social Security Agency and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, both of whom contributed significantly to the Year Two Threat Assessment.

DELIVERING THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

During the first year, the Task Force took a close interest in the development of operational strategies needed to deliver its strategic priorities.

For each commodity type - extortion, drugs, oils, alcohol and tobacco and money laundering - the Task Force agreed a lead agency and commissioned or discussed an operational strategy. The lead agency was tasked with the setting up of an Expert Group composed of all those agencies with a role to play in tackling the crime type.

This is a rolling programme of work. Strategies for tackling extortion, drugs and money laundering have been considered by the Task Force. The Northern Ireland aspects of Customs' UK-wide strategy for tackling tobacco smuggling, which was launched in March 2000 and is on track to deliver its key outcomes, were also discussed by the Task Force. Work has continued throughout the year on the development of a strategy, led by Customs, for tackling road-fuel non-compliance.

The results achieved in Year One are set out in the next chapter.

YEAR ONE RESULTS



Structural changes are important milestones in their own right - but results count. The Task Force recognised from the outset that it was here for the long haul - worldwide experience shows that there are no easy solutions to the problem of organised crime and it can take several years to dismantle organised criminal activities. The Task Force has therefore fully recognised the value of a range of operational strategies. These include frustration, disruption, seizing of assets, prosecutions and dismantling. They all play a crucial role in tackling the organised crime problem in Northern Ireland.

Sustained law enforcement action, in which all agencies participate, has clearly been important in driving down organised criminal activity. Of the 76 organised crime enterprises identified in the Year Two Threat Assessment, 57 have been subject to detailed law enforcement investigation, 43 have had members arrested and 24 have had members successfully prosecuted. Other prosecutions are in train. As a result of law enforcement activity during the first Task Force year, 42 organised crime groups have been disrupted.

Operational results in this first year are encouraging and demonstrate the worth of the multi-agency approach. Operational successes, and the Task Force's contribution, are given below against each of the Year One strategic priorities.

REDUCE EXTORTION, INTIMIDATION AND BLACKMAIL

The Task Force endorsed a PSNI-led strategy for tackling extortion. Racketeering is a little-talked about problem and the crime often goes unreported. Yet the effects on individuals,

families, communities and the business sector can be devastating. The new strategy takes a fresh look at the problem and includes measures to encourage more reporting, approaching the issue from the perspective of the victim. Successes include:

- On 22 January 2002, an individual was sentenced to ten years, nine of them custodial, for possession of an imitation firearm with intent to commit crime, false imprisonment, burglary, hijacking and four counts of blackmail. This individual was one of a group of armed and masked men who demanded £2,500 from a businessman on behalf of a proscribed organisation
- On the same day, in an unrelated case, another individual received a six-year jail term, four of them custodial, after pleading guilty to charges relating to demanding protection money of £10,000 from a building contractor on behalf of a proscribed organisation

DEVELOP OPERATIONAL DRUGS PRIORITIES TO INHIBIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF DRUGS ABUSE IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AND TO DISRUPT THE SUPPLY OF ALL ILLEGAL DRUGS

The first Threat Assessment identified cannabis and ecstasy as the leading drug problems in Northern Ireland. The prevalence of class A drugs such as heroin and cocaine was not a problem here to the same extent as elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The Task Force considers that to be the challenge - to prevent the growth in class A drugs and to tackle the drugs related problems we do face. Northern Ireland is in a unique position to prevent the growth of the drug trade and the Task Force and the agencies will seize this challenge. The PSNI-led strategy, endorsed by the Task

YEAR ONE RESULTS



Force, encourages even greater sharing of intelligence by the agencies in order to deliver the twin aims of the preventing growth of new problems and of making in-roads into the existing problems. Successes include:

- Since April 2001, PSNI has undertaken nearly 200 operations resulting in 81 arrests and the seizure of drugs to the value of £5.5 million
- October 2001 saw the largest seizure of cocaine to date in Northern Ireland when 2.13kgs were recovered in Hillsborough
- The largest single seizure of cannabis was 66kgs in February 2002 in Glengormley; the largest seizure of ecstasy was 45,000 tablets in October 2001 in Hillsborough
- Operation Galiot, the largest operation in Northern Ireland to combat heroin traffickers, was mounted on 28 February 2002 and centred in South Belfast and Ballymena. The operation led to 17 arrests - 15 people were subsequently charged. This has had a significant impact on heroin availability in Northern Ireland

REDUCE THE LOSS TO THE EXCHEQUER FROM THE SMUGGLING OF HYDROCARBON OIL, FUEL LAUNDERING, MIXING REBATED FUEL AND DILUTION OF ROAD FUEL

The land border makes fuel smuggling a particular problem but it is by no means the sole issue. Laundering is a problem too. Customs are developing a strategy, to be delivered through an Expert Group, to draw together all the agencies in Northern Ireland which can play a role in tackling non-compliance.

Since April 2000 Customs have increased their resources from 25 to over 160 personnel. These officers are engaged in disrupting and breaking up the supply and sale of illicit fuel in the Northern Ireland market at all levels of criminality. Customs' enhanced resources have resulted in an increase in enforcement activity, including:

- The sentencing of a man from County Armagh to two and a half years in prison for his role in a major fuel smuggling operation
- A multi-agency operation in December 2001, involving agencies from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, during which 31 premises were searched. Cash, computer hard drives, business records and assorted documentation were seized. Subsequently, nine people were charged in connection with the evasion of road fuel excise duty and money laundering offences
- Two laundering plants were broken up in South Armagh, each with the capacity to produce up to 5 million litres of laundered red diesel each year worth £2.5 million in lost duty. Large quantities of fuel and acid were seized along with vehicles and laundering equipment

Overall, there is evidence that operational activity has stabilised and, indeed, the position has slightly improved. Most importantly, the latest available figures show that deliveries of legal fuel products to Northern Ireland have risen for the first time in five years. The Government believes that evasion remains at unacceptably high levels, and is therefore considering options for further initiatives to counter road fuel evasion and its associated problems in Northern Ireland. More information can be found in the document "Tackling Indirect Tax Fraud" which

was published as part of the pre-budget reporting process, in November 2001.

REDUCE THE LOSS TO THE EXCHEQUER FROM SMUGGLING OF TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL

Action against the smuggling of these commodities is Customs-led and the Task Force has had an opportunity to discuss the strategy for combating revenue loss from tobacco smuggling. This encompasses all parts of the United Kingdom. Like other regional markets, the Northern Ireland illicit cigarette market is supplied through a variety of routes and smuggling methods, with illicit cigarettes coming, for example, directly or via other UK ports into Northern Ireland through freight smuggling and brought in by air passengers. The strategy has seen a significant increase in enforcement activity throughout the United Kingdom and Customs have been active in tackling the illicit cigarette market in Northern Ireland. Recent seizures in Northern Ireland include:

- 42 million cigarettes seized at Warrenpoint in November 2001, the largest ever United Kingdom seizure
- 4 million cigarettes were recovered near Dungannon and two people were arrested
- 350,000 cigarettes were seized at Belfast International Airport from passengers on a single flight in-bound from Gran Canaria
- On a single day in March 2001, at Belfast International Airport, Customs officers seized more than 620,000 cigarettes and 105kgs of hand rolling tobacco from passengers in-bound from Malaga and the Canary Islands

The Task Force will be considering Customs' strategy for tackling alcohol fraud. In this sector, Customs have detected evidence of spirits diversion fraud (this involves entire loads of bottled spirits being diverted to market before duty has been accounted for) and also the illegal production and bottling of synthetic (ethanol based) spirits for sale to the public, either as imitation or unbranded alcohol drinks in the Northern Ireland market. The discovery of two facilities for producing and bottling illegal spirit drinks based on industrial ethanol suggests that the production of unbranded or counterfeit products may be an area that criminals are seeking to exploit.

- Such a plant was found at Coalisland in September 2001. Officers located and dismantled an illicit bottling plant and seized equipment including a generator, compressors and a 30,000 litre tank. In addition, 26,300 litres of counterfeit 'vodka' and nearly 600,000 smuggled cigarettes were also seized. The discovery of 18 pallets of empty litre bottles indicated that the product seized was intended for distribution to the public

TARGET MONEY - LAUNDERING ACTIVITIES AND MAKE FULLEST USE OF EXISTING LEGISLATION ON SEIZING PROCEEDS OF CRIME

Tackling the profits from crime is now widely recognised as being the most effective way to act against organised crime. The Task Force has considered and endorsed the PSNI-led strategy for this which highlighted, in particular, the need to identify key individuals and to gear-up in readiness for the creation of the Assets Recovery Agency. Illegal profits, along with power, are the motivations for organised crime. However, the impact of ill-gotten wealth goes wider. Law-abiding members of society see criminals living beyond their lawful means and this has a corrosive effect on society and the community as a whole.

YEAR ONE RESULTS



In addition to the December operation mentioned above, other successes include:

- In February 2002, as part of a major money laundering investigation into an insurance broker fraud, PSNI Financial Investigation Unit carried out searches of three homes and one business in Jonesborough and Warrenpoint. Three people were arrested
- Also in February 2002 an individual pleaded guilty on fraud charges in relation to illegal dealings in the aircraft industry. He was sentenced to three years, suspended for three years. Although no confiscation order was made, police recovered illegal assets to the value of £400,000 which were made available to compensate victims
- An investigation was also conducted into three former employees of the Ulster Bank Cash Centre in Belfast. The gang is believed to have stolen approximately £700,000 in total and all three have been charged with theft and money laundering offences

DEVELOP AND AGREE A METHODOLOGY FOR IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITISING ORGANISED CRIMINALS IN NORTHERN IRELAND FOR CONCERTED ACTION BY THE AGENCIES

The Task Force had originally envisaged developing a specific methodology for identifying the top organised criminals to be tackled alongside the priority commodities. In year, the development of the Expert Groups initiative provided an alternative way forward - each Expert Group is to identify the key organised criminals to be tackled through the multi-agency approach in its area.

OTHER OPERATIONAL SUCCESSES

The agencies have not ignored the fact that, in addition to the strategic priorities discussed above, organised criminals are engaged in a wide range of other criminal activities.

- In June 2001, PSNI successfully brought charges against an organised crime group engaged in a major passport fraud involving significant links to international organised crime groups and with the potential to generate profits in excess of £1 million. Those convicted have subsequently been re-arrested and taken to England to face further related charges
- In July 2001, PSNI working with the Metropolitan Police successfully disrupted a West African letter fraud which had cost one Northern Ireland businessman in excess of £2 million. This was the biggest single fraud of its kind against a United Kingdom national
- PSNI have seized counterfeit goods to the value of approximately £4 million. Regular PSNI and Customs operations have had a significant impact on the trade in counterfeit goods, which is widely accepted to be far worse in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the United Kingdom. Over 100 individuals have been reported to the Director of Public Prosecutions. In one operation in October 2001, PSNI and Customs searched an address in South Armagh and recovered approximately £1 million worth of alcohol, cigarettes and counterfeit goods. It is assessed that the goods were intended for Jonesborough market

The Task Force welcomes these successes. Our overall impact and strategic priorities for Year Two are discussed in the next chapter.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Individual operational results count - but overall impact is what really matters. Organised crime gangs are fluid in their nature and allegiances, and the Task Force has concluded that it is important that it focuses on the nature and scope of the criminal enterprise rather than the numbers of groups or individuals involved.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR YEAR TWO

The Year Two Threat Assessment improves further our understanding of the problem. The priority areas for concerted multi-agency action remain extortion, drugs, oils-related fraud, tobacco and alcohol duty evasion and money-laundering. To this list of strategic priorities, we have added the trade in counterfeit goods, as this has an ongoing potential to affect investment in Northern Ireland and armed robbery which is on the increase here, while declining elsewhere in the United Kingdom. These are our key challenges for the coming year. The problems are discussed in detail in the Year Two Threat Assessment.

We remain mindful that organised crime gangs will chase high profit and low risk criminal activities to maximise their returns and to avoid the penalties. At each of its meetings, the Task Force has considered new and emerging crime trends - we do not want to lose sight of the potential need to change or create new priorities in-year. We have, for example, learnt from the National Criminal Intelligence Service - a Task Force partner - of potential problems arising from the switch to the Euro earlier this year. We also invited the National Crime Squad - which operates in England and Wales - to give a presentation on organised illegal people trafficking.

We note that in addition to the priority areas mentioned above, the Year Two Threat Assessment identifies vehicle crime and counterfeiting of currency as further problems faced by Northern Ireland society. The Task Force will monitor these crime types carefully during the coming year and, in particular, look forward to PSNI and the National Criminal Intelligence Service working closely together on improving our understanding of vehicle crime.

ASSESSING OUR IMPACT IN YEAR TWO

Individual operations are, of course, very important but the Task Force is taking a wider look at the organised crime problem - at the overall impact being made on the ground. During the year, as promised in the first strategy, more sophisticated measures have been developed for Year Two. These are set out in full at the end of this report.

The Task Force has agreed a mission statement and a set of accompanying objectives for its second year. Each will be measured at the end of Year Two using a range of impact and activity indicators which have been developed by the Task Force partners.

The impact and activity indicators are structured around the main organised crime types identified in the Year Two Threat Assessment and they aim to give, at the end of Year Two, a clearer picture of our overall success against organised crime.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



ENCOURAGING CROSS-COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND RAISING AWARENESS OF ORGANISED CRIME

As well as the operational, co-operation and intelligence objectives which fall to the agencies, the Task Force has set itself a Year Two objective of developing cross-community support for tackling organised crime. We recognise the fact that public support for the work of the law enforcement agencies is an essential ingredient for overall success against the organised crime gangs which subject businesses to extortion, sell drugs, profit from crime, affect public services by evading revenue duties, and smuggle other goods.

In particular, the Task Force aims to counter the misconception that organised crime is victimless and it has promoted the importance of every part of society playing its role in tackling the organised crime gangs. During Year One, the Task Force benchmarked public opinion, so that these aims can be measured at the end of Year Two. The results will be published in the summer but the initial findings make for interesting reading. Approximately one fifth of those surveyed had already heard of the Task Force and the overwhelming majority of those surveyed were supportive of the idea of tackling organised crime through a Task Force-type approach.

The findings also indicate that Northern Ireland society identifies drugs, protection and racketeering, and counterfeiting of goods as being the main work of organised criminals. Clearly, there is much more to do to raise awareness of the organised crime problem in Northern Ireland, and to expose the fact that organised crime which profits from revenue evasion - fuel,

alcohol and tobacco smuggling - is equally harmful to society. Further, the Task Force will highlight the fact that organised criminals engaged in revenue evasion are often involved in other criminal activities too.

During its first year, the Task Force placed a particular emphasis on working closely with the business community in Northern Ireland. We have particularly welcomed our links with Sir Reg Empey, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, who has joined Jane Kennedy, the Task Force Chair in a number of events. In December, Jane Kennedy and Sir Reg went on a city centre walk-about to highlight the problem of counterfeit goods. In January, they hosted jointly a dinner at Hillsborough Castle, attended by Northern Ireland business leaders, to highlight the corrosive effect of extortion.

In March, Jane Kennedy participated in a seminar aimed at raising awareness of high-tech crime, and in April, she chaired a further event for the finance sector at Hillsborough Castle on "Tackling the Profits of Crime". The Task Force ensured that each of these events received publicity to raise awareness of the organised crime problem still further.

Organised criminals are inventive - the Task Force must remain open to new ideas to stay ahead. New developments are discussed in the next chapter.



NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The Task Force remains committed to promoting new thinking on tackling organised crime. It welcomes in particular three new and important initiatives which will be progressed in Year Two.

THE NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE'S INTER-DEPARTMENTAL GROUP

On 20 March the Executive agreed to establish an inter-departmental group with the following terms of reference: *to co-ordinate the work being done in Departments on tackling fraud; to provide an effective forum for the exchange of information and sharing of experience for mutual benefit; and to report as appropriate to the Public Sector Sub Group.*

The Group will be chaired by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and will comprise a senior official from each of the ten Northern Ireland Departments. It may also set up sectoral sub groups to look at particularly vulnerable areas such as social security, agricultural grants and subsidies and vehicle licensing.

This will provide a highly effective means of exchanging information with the Public Sector Sub Group of the Organised Crime Task Force and of sharing mutually beneficial experience.

INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL EXPERT

The Task Force is keen to learn from the experience of others in tackling organised crime elsewhere in the world and is looking

forward to benefiting from the considerable expertise of Professor Ronald Goldstock, ex-Director of the New York State Organized Crime Task Force. Professor Goldstock has been appointed by the Secretary of State to act as his independent expert. He will provide an international perspective on the problem of organised crime in Northern Ireland, offer recommendations for tackling the problem and, in particular, formulate proposals for securing cross community support for action, drawing on international experience.

Professor Goldstock reports directly to the Secretary of State and has an advisory, non-operational role. Although he will not be joining the Task Force, he will come into close contact with the organisations represented on it and the Task Force looks forward to lending him its full support.

PROCEEDS OF CRIME BILL

The Proceeds of Crime Bill currently in Parliament includes provision for the creation of the Asset Recovery Agency (ARA). This will be established early next year, assuming Royal Assent this summer. Preparatory work for the creation of the Agency is already underway.

It is expected that the ARA will be a small specialist Agency, which may have some 100 staff by 2003-2004. It will have a physical presence in Northern Ireland and will operate here with powers very similar to those in England and Wales.

The Home Secretary will appoint the Director of the Agency. In turn, the Director is required by the Bill to appoint an Assistant Director, who will have responsibilities in relation to the exercise of the Director's functions in Northern Ireland. These include the

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

PROTECTING YOUR DUTY



provision of advice and assistance to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on relevant issues.

The Government has provided £39 million to fund the recovery of the proceeds of crime for the period 2002-2004. This will pay for the setting up, initial running and legal costs of the Agency, plus the provision of training for additional financial investigators. At the outset, the Agency will be staffed by a mixture of people from existing bodies, including the police, on secondment or attachment - together with some permanent staff of its own.

The reduction of crime and the fear of crime - including organised and international crime and drug-related crime - is a key Government aim. The Director of the ARA will have an important role to play in helping to achieve this aim because of his or her other role in attacking the proceeds of crime. He will use his powers in respect of criminal confiscation; civil recovery and taxation to remove illegally gained wealth from circulation. This will disrupt organised crime gangs by removing the money that fuels their enterprises and will also send out the clear message that people should not benefit from crime.

In addition to its operational functions, the Agency will also contain a Centre of Excellence for Financial Investigation. This will provide both specialist training and a central point of reference for officers in this field of work. The Agency, through the Centre, will accredit and train financial investigators employed by police forces, Customs and other agencies.

IMPACT INDICATORS



ILLEGAL EARNINGS

MISSION STATEMENT

To help secure a safe, just and prosperous society in Northern Ireland, by confronting organised crime through a multi-agency partnership between central and devolved government, law enforcement agencies and the community at large.

OBJECTIVES

1. To confront the activities of the organised crime networks in Northern Ireland, concentrating on serious illegal activities and the major criminal networks.
2. To develop co-operation between law enforcement and other operational agencies in the planning and conducting of operations.
3. To develop intelligence gathering capabilities against organised crime networks and improve understanding of the activities of those networks.
4. To develop cross-community support and work, where appropriate, with the private and public sector.

ONE

OBJECTIVE 1

To confront the activities of the organised crime networks in Northern Ireland, concentrating on serious illegal activities and the major criminal networks.

IMPACT INDICATORS

- Availability of counterfeit items in Northern Ireland
- Availability of illegal drugs in Northern Ireland
- Prevalence of extortion in Northern Ireland
- Contribution to limiting the size of road fuel fraud in the United Kingdom
- Contribution to a reduction in the share of illicit spirits market in the United Kingdom
- Contribution to a stabilisation of illicit market for tobacco in the United Kingdom
- Number of armed robberies in Northern Ireland attributed to organised criminal groups
- Number of organised crime networks frustrated, disrupted or dismantled
- Number of individuals involved in organised crime activities
- Amounts of assets realised from Compensation Orders

ACTIVITY INDICATORS

- Number of jointly planned, resourced and/or executed investigations against organised crime networks in Northern Ireland
- Number of arrests made of individuals involved in organised crime activities
- Amounts of criminal assets restrained or confiscated that are linked to organised criminals
- Number of restraint orders made
- Number of confiscation orders made
- Street value amounts of counterfeit goods seized
- Seizures of illicit oils and associated vehicles
- Fuel laundering plants dismantled
- Amounts of illegal tobacco seized
- Contribution to UK strategy to break up tobacco gangs
- Total street value and quantity by weight of Class A drugs seized
- Total street value and quantity by weight of Class B drugs seized

IMPACT INDICATORS

TWO

OBJECTIVE 2

To develop co-operation and co-ordination between law enforcement and other operational agencies in the planning and conducting of operations.

IMPACT INDICATORS

- Number of Expert Groups
- Number of agencies contributing to work of Expert Groups
- Systems of information-sharing agreed and improved upon, where necessary
- Operations planned and conducted jointly where appropriate through development of multi-agency Expert Groups

ACTIVITY INDICATORS

- Total number of joint operations within Northern Ireland
- Total number of joint operations within United Kingdom that impact on organised crime networks in Northern Ireland
- Total number of international joint operations that impact on organised crime networks in Northern Ireland

THREE

OBJECTIVE 3

To improve information sharing, develop intelligence gathering capabilities against organised crime networks and increase collective understanding of the activities of those networks.

IMPACT INDICATORS

- Enhancement of annual threat assessment on nature of organised crime in Northern Ireland to be published each financial year
- Refinement of annual strategy to confront threat to be published each financial year
- Enhancement of existing databases and development of analytical expertise
- Establishment and enhancement of systems for sharing intelligence

ACTIVITY INDICATORS

- Improvement in and widening of data collection
- Improvement in understanding of impact of organised crime on society in Northern Ireland
- Development in skills base, including expertise in analysis and financial investigation
- Improvement in information and intelligence flows

FOUR

OBJECTIVE 4

To develop cross-community support and work, where appropriate, with the private and public sector.

IMPACT INDICATORS

- Greater acceptance that organised crime is not victimless
- Greater acceptance that everyone has a role to play in confronting organised crime
- Greater acceptance of the role law enforcement must play in a responsible civic society
- Greater awareness of the role of Organised Crime Task Force

ACTIVITY INDICATORS

- Number of ongoing consultation exercises to gather information from private and public sector bodies and community at large about their experiences of organised crime
- Number of press bulletins or interviews to inform the public about developments in the fight against organised crime
- Number of speeches or special briefing sessions to interest groups and journalists given by Ministers or senior officials
- Number of Ministerial visits to promote work of Organised Crime Task Force and its agencies

COUNTING THE COST

ORGANISED CRIME AFFECTS US ALL

OUR SOCIETY LOSES OUT THROUGH

Abuse of social security payments... Illegal livestock trade...
Evasion of tax and VAT... Tobacco and alcohol smuggling and duty evasion...
Oils fraud... Insurance and compensation fraud...
Advance fee fraud... Investment and mortgage fraud...
Cheque and payment card fraud... Identity fraud...
Motor vehicle licensing fraud... Money laundering... Trade in illegal drugs...
Extortion... Counterfeit goods... Vehicle theft... Armed robbery and hijacking...
Hi-tech crime and counterfeit currency... Illegal immigration and prostitution...

WHAT THIS COSTS US

Fewer funds for our schools, hospitals and other public services...
Jobs lost... Health risks from untested tobacco and alcohol products...
Loss of livelihood for legitimate businesses...
Shoddy or dangerous counterfeit goods... Harm to our environment...
Dangerous goods and vehicles on our roads... Lives ruined by extortion...
Families and individuals devastated by drugs...

ORGANISED CRIME IS NEVER VICTIMLESS