



**ORGANISED
CRIME
TASK FORCE**

ORGANISED CRIME STRATEGY

**Northern Ireland
2021-2024**

A multi-agency
strategy to protect
individuals, communities
and businesses in
Northern Ireland from
organised crime



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MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

Organised crime causes harm, misery and fear within our communities. As Justice Minister, tackling the scourge of organised crime is one of my key priorities.

Effective collaboration between governments and law enforcement agencies is key to successfully disrupting and preventing organised criminality. I am pleased to be publishing this three year Strategy which sets out a refreshed strategic vision for Northern Ireland, with the overarching aim of protecting individuals, communities and businesses in Northern Ireland from organised crime.



The Strategy has been developed to consolidate and enhance our response to existing organised crime threats and to enable us to identify and respond swiftly and effectively to new and emerging crime types. It recognises the cross jurisdictional nature of much organised crime and so is aligned, as appropriate, to strategic responses across neighbouring jurisdictions.

I am pleased that the outcome for justice, following the agreement reached between the UK and EU on 24 December 2020, means that most of the key justice measures previously available to us have been replicated within the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The impact of the new arrangements will continue to be monitored to ensure that any capability gaps are identified and addressed.

For my part, I want to ensure that organised crime is unprofitable and to bring criminals to justice. Later this year, the commencement of the NI provisions in the Criminal Finances Act 2017 will enhance powers for law enforcement agencies here, bringing Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK. The enhanced ability to seize criminal assets will strengthen our collective efforts to tackle organised crime. In addition, work will continue on proposals for new organised crime offences.

This Strategy has been developed by the Department of Justice (DOJ) following engagement with operational partners. The Strategy has also been informed and influenced by responses received during the consultation on the draft Strategy and I want to thank all those who have contributed to its development. I also want to acknowledge the work of all our Organised Crime Taskforce partners, who have the primary role in disrupting and dismantling organised crime groups and to thank them for their ongoing engagement and continued commitment to working collectively to combat organised crime.

We all need to work together to prevent criminals profiting from their illegal activities, and to bring to justice those who continue to wreak havoc across our communities. As Justice Minister, I will continue to do all I can to support the OCTF partners so that we can all live in a safer Northern Ireland where we respect the law and each other.

Saerin Rhoads

1. INTRODUCTION

A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ORGANISED CRIME

Tackling organised crime poses many challenges. In Northern Ireland we have a good record of working in partnership to respond to the threats, including through the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF), using both criminal and civil tools to disrupt the activities of organised crime groups and proactively advising the public about steps that they can take to protect themselves from the harm caused by organised crime and to be vigilant so as not to support organised crime.

The Strategy builds on the arrangements already in place, with the overarching aim of protecting individuals, communities and businesses in Northern Ireland from organised crime. It has been developed to consolidate and enhance our response to existing organised crime threats as well as to enable us to identify and respond swiftly and effectively to new and emerging crime types. It has been informed by the six priorities of the Department of Justice and as such will help to **embed a culture of lawfulness, support safe and resilient communities, address harm and vulnerability, challenge offending behaviour and support rehabilitation, deliver an effective justice system** and **secure confidence in the justice system**.

The Strategy also reflects synergies with wider Executive outcomes for society, where everyone feels safe and we respect the law and each other, as well as the strategic responses to tackling paramilitary activity, Northern Ireland related terrorism and organised crime. More than ever we must work together across Government, law enforcement, private sector and wider civic society to understand roles and make sure that our efforts are effective.

The Strategy recognises the cross jurisdictional nature of much organised crime and as such is aligned, as appropriate, to the UK Government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy and equivalent strategic responses across neighbouring jurisdictions, and to actions under the UK Economic Crime Plan, to ensure a consistent and effective joined up response to common threats that face us all. The Strategy acknowledges interdependencies and links with other work streams both at local and national level. The key linkages in the period ahead include work being taken forward by:

- **the Organised Crime Task Force:** multi-agency strategic response to organised crime in Northern Ireland
- **the Paramilitary Crime Task Force:** multi-agency operational response to criminality linked to paramilitaries and the **Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme**
- **the Joint Agency Task Force:** multi-agency cross-border operational response to criminality on the island of Ireland
- **the UK Serious and Organised Crime strategic response:** 'whole of government' approach to tackling the threat across the UK and beyond

This Strategy has been produced by the Department of Justice in partnership with members of the OCTF. The Strategy is, in part, a statement of what the OCTF partners set out to achieve in the next three years. The OCTF Strategy Group will lead on the governance and accountability for the delivery of the Strategy and measuring its achievements.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIM - to protect individuals, communities and businesses in Northern Ireland from organised crime, focusing on six strategic objectives under four key themes.

PURSUE offenders through investigation, disruption and prosecution.

PREPARE AND PROTECT individuals, communities, systems and businesses to mitigate vulnerability and impact.

PREVENT deter and divert people from engaging and re-engaging in organised crime.

Strategic Objective 1

Improve our understanding of existing and emerging threats, including the motivation and opportunities for modern slavery and human trafficking.

Strategic Objective 2

Ensure we have effective capability, tools and legislation to tackle organised crime affecting Northern Ireland.

Strategic Objective 3

Continuous pursuit of those involved in organised crime.

Strategic Objective 4

Work with individuals, communities and businesses to build resilience against organised crime, and to ensure a system response which is focussed on victim safety and wellbeing.

Strategic Objective 5

Effective work to deter and divert people from becoming involved or re-engaging in organised crime.

PARTNERSHIP - To create a sustainable, efficient, effective and collaborative system response

Strategic Objective 6

Provide an effective and efficient collaborative response to organised crime affecting Northern Ireland.

Strategic outcomes - by progressing work against the six strategic objectives under the four themes of the Strategy we will strive to achieve the following strategic outcomes:

- Reduced levels of organised crime affecting Northern Ireland.
- Reduction in the level of harm caused by organised crime affecting Northern Ireland.
- Northern Ireland is a better place to live and do business.
- A sustainable, efficient, effective and collaborative system for tackling organised crime in Northern Ireland.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER PREVIOUS STRATEGIES

Northern Ireland Organised Crime strategies in 2014¹ and 2016² have guided the work of the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF). Key strategic aims under these strategies were grouped under three headings:

ACTION – To make Northern Ireland a hostile environment for organised criminals:

ANALYSIS – To understand the threats and emerging organised crime trends to predict actions required and facilitate proactive responses

AWARENESS – To inform the public about organised crime trends and impacts and the work of OCTF.

Some of the key achievements are set out below:

ACTION

- Collectively OCTF delivered a significant reduction in cash-in-transit and tiger kidnap incidents since 2012, sustained at very low levels.
- Secured full range of powers for NCA in NI subject to police primacy and oversight by the Policing Board NI & Police Ombudsman NI.
- A new fuel marker to tackle fuel laundering.
- Unduly lenient sentencing classification for certain OC offences.
- Bespoke modern slavery legislation for Northern Ireland.
- New operational partnerships, PCTF and JATF.

ANALYSIS

- Established a dedicated OCTF analyst.
- Produced problem profiles on key threats.
- Collaboration with other jurisdictions.
- Bi-monthly Tactical Assessments.
- Annual Threat Assessments.
- Biannual Cross Border Threat Assessments.

AWARENESS

- Embedded a strategic communications approach.
- Delivered outreach events to reduce threat posed by OC.
- Coordinated modern slavery awareness campaigns.
- Delivered “Closer Than You Think” organised crime campaign.

¹ <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/organised-crime-strategy-2014>

² <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/crime-strategy-2016>

4. CONTEXT: ORGANISED CRIME IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Organised Crime has many forms but a common thread is the pursuit of financial gain through criminality at the expense of other people. The financial cost alone does not capture the true harm caused to those affected. In some cases organised crime may involve violence, or the threat of violence. In Northern Ireland some organised crime groups also have paramilitary connections.

Forms of organised crime include cyber crime, drug trafficking, modern slavery, counterfeiting, fuel laundering, tobacco smuggling, fraud or money laundering. Organised crime is planned and coordinated. It may involve people working together in groups, or as part of wider networks, with other countries or internationally.

The harm caused to individuals and businesses is extensive and again, like organised crime itself, can take many forms. Victims of fraud and cyber-attack can suffer severe financial consequences and reputational damage. The illegal sale of counterfeit goods can pose health and safety risks to consumers, and can help to finance other forms of organised crime, such as drugs trafficking. Fuel laundering and the illegal dumping of waste not only harms the environment but also poses health and safety concerns. The wider impact of organised crime groups is also felt by communities affected by coercive control and fear; or through excise and tax fraud that robs the wider public of money needed to sustain and enhance public services.

Organised Crime Groups in Northern Ireland

There are approximately 75-80 organised crime groups³ (OCGs) assessed to be operating in Northern Ireland, predominantly motivated by financial gain, although in cases of OCGs linked to paramilitary groups, community control is often a further driver. Many of Northern Ireland's OCGs are involved in multiple types of organised criminality, including crime types posing the most serious threat and harm to communities such as drug related criminality, paramilitary activity and firearms offences.

Criminality linked to both Republican and Loyalist paramilitary groups continues to affect Northern Ireland. Around 32%⁴ of OCGs in Northern Ireland have direct paramilitary links and were engaged in a wide range of criminal activity. This includes the importation and/or distribution of drugs and contraband goods (primarily cigarettes), extortion (of legitimate businesses and individuals involved in drug related crime), illegal lending and money laundering. These groups are also linked to violent activities including murder, attempted murder, paramilitary style shootings and beatings and other forms of intimidation and public disorder.

³ the number of OCGs fluctuates as groups are added or removed so the number is only accurate on any given day.

⁴ the number of OCGs fluctuates as groups are added or removed so the number is only accurate on any given day.

Cross Border Criminality

A number of organised crime groups operate in both Northern Ireland and Ireland, sometimes independently, but often cooperatively, in order to maximise market control and profits. Around 22%⁵ of all OCGs managed and investigated by the PSNI are known to have links and associations with OCGs based in Ireland.

The open border between Northern Ireland and Ireland is the only land border between the UK and an EU member state. OCGs utilise the Common Travel Area (CTA) to enable or enhance their criminality and to avoid detection by law enforcement agency partners. Criminality includes the smuggling of various illicit commodities including drugs, fuel, firearms, counterfeit and contraband cigarettes and alcohol.

Smuggling Case Study

In October 2019, Border Force identified and seized a suspect trailer at Belfast Port which had travelled from the Netherlands, through Immingham Port and across the Irish Sea from Liverpool. The trailer contained almost 5 million non-UK duty paid President cigarettes. Tax revenue evaded on the cigarettes was almost £2 million.

Impact of EU Exit

Covid has shown that a number of Northern Ireland based OCGs can quickly adapt and change, both to try and avoid detection by law enforcement partners and to exploit any changes to their advantage.

The OCTF is demonstrably taking action to manage and mitigate any threats that may emerge as a result of EU Exit, and has put in place arrangements, including an Analyst Forum and a dedicated EU Exit crime subgroup, to assist partners in strategically assessing and responding to emerging criminality.

The outcome for justice, following the agreement reached on 24 December 2020, means that most of the key justice measures have been replicated within the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

The justice and security provisions within the Trade and Cooperation Agreement provide for:

- fast track and warrant based arrangements for the surrender of requested persons (in line with the Norway/ Iceland surrender arrangements);
- the sharing of criminal records and biometric data on DNA, fingerprints and, in future, vehicle registration details;
- transfer of passenger information for inter EU flights;
- continued participation by the UK in both Europol and Eurojust;
- mutual legal assistance; and
- co-operation on assets freezing, money laundering and cybercrime.

The impact of the new arrangements will continue to be monitored to ensure that any capability gaps are identified and addressed.

⁵ the number of OCGs fluctuates as groups are added or removed so the number is only accurate on any given day.

Cyber Crime

Criminal activity facilitated by technology and globalisation continues to be a prominent feature of crime in Northern Ireland and is growing in sophistication and reach. Cyber-enabled fraud is a growth area in cyber offending and many individuals and businesses across Northern Ireland have suffered financial loss from online fraud and cyber-attacks. Many victims suffer negative impacts on their general well-being and businesses can be impacted by reputational damage and loss. The more common types of cyber crime in Northern Ireland include OCG activity in ransomware attacks and Business Email Compromise (BEC) or Business Email Spoofing (BES).

Criminal Finances

Money laundering remains a key enabler to organised crime and it is a significant element of crime for almost all OCGs and paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland. Extortion remains a significant crime type within Northern Ireland. It is assessed that paramilitary groups (both Loyalist and Republican), or individuals claiming to be from these groups, continue to be actively involved in extortion attempts, particularly the racketeering of small businesses and building sites in towns and cities across Northern Ireland. It is believed that significant underreporting continues due to an unwillingness of victims to come forward to police. Therefore confidence in policing is key to the response.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT)

Modern slavery offences and the number of potential victims identified in Northern Ireland have been on the rise over recent years. Northern Ireland has been impacted by various forms of exploitation including sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, domestic servitude and forced criminality, however traditionally the most common types of exploitation have been labour and sexual. Northern Ireland remains a transit route for illegal migrants seeking access to Great Britain and the CTA remains a focus of our work, including any change in criminal behaviour post EU Exit.

Human Trafficking Case Study

In February 2018 two members of a Romanian Organised Crime Group were convicted of Conspiracy to Human Trafficking five victims for Sexual Exploitation, Controlling Prostitution for Gain of six victims and Acquiring and Converting Criminal Property totalling over £165,000. One of the males convicted was sentenced to four years in custody and issued with a Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Order (STPO) for 10 years. A second male convicted was sentenced to three years in custody and an STPO for seven years. The UK Home Office Immigration also served one of the males with a Deportation Order (DO). **These were the first convictions under the 2015 Northern Ireland Human Trafficking legislation.** It was also the first proactive “victimless” prosecution for sexual exploitation in Northern Ireland where the victims did not have to provide any evidence as part of the investigation. In July 2019, in a related case, a 31 year old female, was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment, suspended for two years, for the offences of conspiring to traffic a person for sexual exploitation and converting property in relation to almost £3,000 as a result of criminal activity.

Drugs

It is difficult to ascertain the number of people in Northern Ireland using illicit drugs or misusing prescription drugs, however, there appears to be an upward trend in risk taking behaviour, as evidenced by increased seizure incidents, increased amounts seized, increased arrests and an increase in drug related deaths in recent years. Particularly concerning is the practice of poly drug use i.e. misusing more than one substance at the same time. Cannabis remains the most commonly seized drug in Northern Ireland while availability of heroin and cocaine is increasing. The abuse of prescription drugs continues to feature heavily as an issue within drugs misuse and drug deaths. The harm caused by drug misuse is cross cutting and impacts people's lives across Northern Ireland.

Drugs Case Study

A proactive police operation focussed on an OCG supplying Class A controlled drugs in West Belfast. In October 2018 police conducted premises searches and seized 1 Kg of cocaine, £50,000 cash and three vehicles which were suspected of being the proceeds of criminality. During linked searches police recovered a further 1.2 Kg of cocaine and seized a further 0.5 Kg of Benzocaine. The cocaine seized during this operation had much higher levels of purity than is normally seen in Northern Ireland. The total value of drugs seized in this operation was £110,000. Four people were subsequently charged with drug supply and money laundering offences.

Intellectual Property Crime

Buying counterfeit or fake products is often seen as a very minor crime with little impact. However, the reality is that proceeds are likely to finance other types of criminality and these products can cause harm to individuals, communities and legitimate businesses: physical harm in terms of cosmetics causing burns and skin reactions; counterfeit toys containing harmful toxins; and fake electrical goods posing the risk of electric shock or fire. The most common types of counterfeit goods being seized in Northern Ireland include clothing, alcohol, tobacco, digital TV "boxes", cosmetics, DVDs and electrical items.

Excise Fraud and Tax Evasion

Similar to Intellectual Property Crime, the importation and sale of non UK duty paid goods such as tobacco, alcohol and fuel is often regarded as "victimless crime". However, excise evasion on tobacco products, fuel and alcohol is estimated to cost the UK £3.5 billion per annum; funds which should be available for vital public services. Organised crime groups view price differentials in the UK as an opportunity to flood the market with smuggled goods, often using ports in the Republic of Ireland as a gateway into Northern Ireland and the UK. In recent years, it is believed that the smuggling of illicit goods has been supplemented by a number of illicit tobacco production facilities operating across the island of Ireland. Following the introduction of Accutrace marker to fuel in 2015, there has been a marked reduction in fuel laundering. However, reckless attempts by criminals to remove the marker using highly volatile methods involving intense levels of heat has resulted in buildings and vehicles sustaining severe damage as a result of uncontrolled fire, showing total disregard for public safety when these dangerous plants are located near local communities.

Excise Evasion Case Study

In November 2019 HMRC, supported by PSNI searched a unit in Co Armagh. Behind a false wall within an underground bunker they discovered a partly assembled industrial scale cigarette manufacturing facility. This was a significant disruption to organised crime as the factory was capable of producing up to 1.4 million counterfeit cigarettes a day, representing a daily loss to public funds of £375k.

Environmental Crime

Organised criminals also harm our environment and again jeopardise health and safety through illegal dumping of waste. Such criminal activity has significant impact on our environment by the release of pollutants which damage our natural land and water resources and can place significant financial burden on public resources through remediation and clean-up of illegal waste sites.

For more detail on organised crime impacting Northern Ireland and the operational response see the OCTF Annual Report and Threat Assessments –

www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/octf-annual-report-and-threat-assessment-2019-20

5. STRATEGIC VISION

WHAT WE WILL DO

This document sets out a refreshed Strategic vision for Northern Ireland, with the overarching aim **of protecting individuals, communities and businesses in Northern Ireland from organised crime**. It has been developed to consolidate and enhance our response to existing organised crime threats and to enable us to identify and respond swiftly and effectively to new and emerging crime types. It recognises the cross jurisdictional nature of much organised crime and so is aligned, as appropriate, to strategic responses across neighbouring jurisdictions. This will help to ensure a consistent and effective joined up response to common threats.

The Strategy also recognises the interdependencies that can exist between organised crime, paramilitarism and Northern Ireland related terrorism; and as such it is aligned to the strategic responses to those issues, including those set out by the Northern Ireland Executive and the UK and Irish Governments in the cross-Executive Action Plan for Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality, and Organised Crime in meeting some of its strategic objectives.

A flexible response

Our strategic response needs to be flexible enough to be able to identify and respond to new and emerging threats. The world we live in is changing, with fast-paced developments across our physical, social, geo political and technological environments that may help us to tackle organised crime or conversely create opportunities that organised criminals may exploit. We have witnessed the capacity of organised crime to adapt and flex to the changing world around us and therefore it is critical that our strategic vision can look forward and be agile to anticipate and identify emerging threats, vulnerabilities and crime types; that it incorporates sufficient capacity to flex, adapt and respond swiftly to such threats; and that our strategic response harnesses the breadth of skills, powers and tools available across law-enforcement, government and wider society to undermine and quash these threats effectively.

Outcomes – what impact will we have?

The Strategy takes an outcomes-based approach and will contribute to the broader outcomes of societal wellbeing and the specific outcome and priorities aimed at ensuring we live in safer communities where we respect the law and each other. It will also contribute to a range of other outcomes and priorities including those aimed at improving how we live and work sustainably, protecting the environment and ensuring that Northern Ireland is a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest.

Against these high level outcomes we have identified four strategic outcomes that will be achieved through delivery of this Strategy; these are:

1. Reduced levels of organised crime affecting Northern Ireland;
2. Reduction in the level of harm caused by organised crime affecting Northern Ireland);
3. Northern Ireland is a better place to live and do business; and
4. A sustainable, efficient, effective and collaborative system for tackling organised crime in Northern Ireland is in place.

Thematic pillars

The Strategy is structured across three broad thematic pillars - **PURSUE, PREPARE AND PROTECT** and **PREVENT**, supported by a cross-cutting theme of **PARTNERSHIP**. Together, these provide a holistic response to organised crime.

The Strategy acknowledges the important role of operational law enforcement agencies in **PURSUE** offenders and identifies a range of objectives to support delivery of this. However the Strategy also recognises that the pursuit of offenders alone is not sufficient to protect individuals, communities and businesses from the harm caused by organised crime. A holistic and whole-societal response is required to deliver improved outcomes and build safe communities that are resilient to organised crime through **PREPARING AND PROTECTING** individuals, communities, systems and businesses to mitigate vulnerability and impact. We also need an effective multi-agency response to **PREVENT** and deter people from engaging and re-engaging in organised crime, both by supporting those most vulnerable and by addressing criminal behaviour through effective offender management. Finally, enhancing our ability to work in **PARTNERSHIP** will underpin successful delivery of this Strategy through the development of a sustainable, collaborative system that draws on collective skills, capacity and capabilities across agencies in order to provide an efficient and effective tailored response.

Strategic objectives

We have identified six strategic objectives, mapped against the thematic pillars, designed to enhance our strategic response and help to end the harm caused by organised crime. The associated work streams will help deliver the strategic objectives and these are set out below:

AIM - to protect individuals, communities and businesses in Northern Ireland from organised crime, focusing on six strategic objectives under four key themes.

PURSUE offenders through investigation, disruption and prosecution.

PREPARE AND PROTECT individuals, communities, systems and businesses to mitigate vulnerability and impact.

PREVENT deter and divert people from engaging and re-engaging in organised crime.

Strategic Objective 1

Improve our understanding of existing and emerging threats, including the motivation and opportunities for modern slavery and human trafficking.

Strategic Objective 2

Ensure we have effective capability, tools and legislation to tackle organised crime affecting Northern Ireland.

Strategic Objective 3

Continuous pursuit of those involved in organised crime.

Strategic Objective 4

Work with individuals, communities and businesses to build resilience against organised crime, and to ensure a system response which is focussed on victim safety and wellbeing.

Strategic Objective 5

Effective work to deter and divert people from becoming involved or re-engaging in organised crime.

PARTNERSHIP - To create a sustainable, efficient, effective and collaborative system response

Strategic Objective 6

Provide an effective and efficient collaborative response to organised crime affecting Northern Ireland.

OBJECTIVES AND WORKSTREAMS

PURSUE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

Improve our understanding of existing and emerging threats, including the motivation and opportunities for modern slavery and human trafficking.

An improved understanding of existing and emerging threats will enhance our ability to respond swiftly to close potential gaps and vulnerabilities and will inform operational responses allowing law enforcement to anticipate and get ahead of the threat.

- i. In anticipation of new threats and emerging opportunities for criminality that may arise as a result of EU Exit, we have put in place a new multi-agency information-sharing network to identify, map and inform the strategic response to emerging criminality and new organised crime threats through regular multi-agency tactical assessments. This *Analytical Forum* is expanding our information networks to incorporate agencies and Departments with enforcement powers across the whole of Government, including the NI Environment Agency, Veterinary Services, the Food Standards Agency, Department for Communities and local Government. This Forum pools collective expertise from across law enforcement and wider agencies to assess, analyse and interpret emerging data so that issues, trends, concerns and opportunities can be highlighted to senior leaders in the OCTF. While initially focussed on mapping and responding to any new criminality arising from EU Exit, the benefits of this new knowledge network will allow us to identify and take steps to suppress any new threats facing Northern Ireland, regardless of the drivers that give rise to them. We will also flex this collective analytical capability to identify and deliver against research priorities in order to enhance our understanding of new trends, criminal methodologies and markets as well as innovations and technical developments that may help us in the fight against organised crime.
- ii. A new *EU Exit Crime Sub Group* has also been established to bring together law enforcement and other statutory agencies from Northern Ireland and Ireland with responsibility for tackling serious and organised crime associated with EU Exit. The Group will monitor and effectively respond to serious and organised crime resulting from EU Exit, informed by reactive and proactive operational activity and intelligence and analysis assessments. The group will also develop a strategic picture of the threat to the Common Travel Area (CTA) routings in and out of Northern Ireland to effectively respond to emergent criminal risk as a result of EU Exit.
- iii. We will also ensure that we align with and benefit from *access to national capabilities* hosted by the National Crime Agency, such as the National Assessment Centre (NAC); the National Data Exploitation Centre (NDEC); and the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC). This will not only enhance our own analytical capacity and understanding, but will allow us to learn from best practice; to benefit from seeing a wider national and trans-national picture of emerging organised crime trends; and will help to ensure that we are able to provide a consistent and effective cross-jurisdictional response to organised crime.

- iv. We will enhance and inform the multi-agency response in Northern Ireland by working towards the development of a *shared threat assessment* that will form the basis for agreed operational priorities and co-ordinated tactical tasking against threats.
- v. The Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Sub Group of the OCTF will work with other statutory and non-statutory partners to *deliver the Modern Slavery Strategy for Northern Ireland*⁶ and its work will be informed by a comprehensive assessment of the motivation and opportunities for modern slavery and human trafficking.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

Ensure we have effective capability, tools and legislation to tackle organised crime affecting Northern Ireland.

With organised criminality constantly evolving we need to ensure that law enforcement can keep pace with effective powers, niche skills, resources and technology, as well as the capacity to strategically deploy these tools and powers. There has already been investment in the development of specialist skills and capabilities to tackle the evolving threats such as those posed by modern slavery, cyber crime and economic crime.

With the rapid growth of cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled crimes, PSNI has invested heavily in technological capacity and capability to investigate and disrupt cyber criminals. This has included the establishment of PSNI's Cyber Crime Centre, which is at the cutting edge of law enforcement capability across Europe, as well as enhancing service-wide capability. PSNI has also enhanced its specialist capacity to tackle threats posed by modern slavery, with the establishment of a dedicated investigative team which is complemented by embedded multi-agency skills. There has been similar investment in developing multi-agency capability to tackle economic crime, which is enhancing law enforcement's capacity to not only investigate economic crime but to disrupt criminal activity by depriving criminals of the proceeds of their criminal lifestyle and thereby undermining the financial motivation that drives much organised criminality.

We want to consolidate and build on the good work and the strong skills and capabilities that already exist.

- i. We will ensure robust *professional development of our financial investigators* and forensic accountants, to access the support and training that is available nationally through the Proceeds of Crime Centre, in order to enhance specialist skills to investigate and disrupt organised criminals and to make it harder for criminals to benefit financially from their criminal lifestyles.
- ii. We will work with the UK Government and partners across the UK on the delivery of relevant actions under the *Economic Crime Plan, 2019 to 2022*. This includes accessing the capability and learning available through the National Economic Crime Centre and implementing reforms to the suspicious activity reporting (SARs) regime, in order to enhance the operational response to economic crime.

6 https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/modern-slavery-strategy-27-05-v2_0.pdf

- iii. The *relevant provisions of the Criminal Finances Act 2017 will be implemented within Northern Ireland* as soon as possible, in order to unlock the wider suite of powers to tackle criminal finance that are available to law enforcement under that Act and make it harder for criminals to benefit financially from crime.
- iv. Informed by a review of international legislative models, *we have developed and consulted upon policy proposals for new provisions to tackle organised crime in Northern Ireland*. The outcome of the consultation is being considered and the introduction of specific legislative provisions will be taken forward under this strategic framework, subject to the legislative process.
- v. We will conduct a review of *multi-agency capability* to tackle organised crime, including human resource, infrastructure, powers, niche skills and technology in order to identify and plug gaps and to identify opportunities to enhance the multiagency collaborative response.
- vi. We will maintain *close engagement with counterparts across the UK and neighbouring jurisdictions* at strategic, policy and operational levels to share best practice and to inform, and be informed by, national developments in order to harness all of the capabilities, resources, and experience to pursue organised criminals and reduce the harm from organised crime.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

Continuous pursuit of those involved in organised crime.

By improving our understanding of the organised crime threat and ensuring that we have effective tools and powers we will improve the operational response and enhance our capacity to provide continuous pursuit of those involved in organised crime. The development of a shared multi-agency threat assessment will enable the development of a shared understanding of the threat, risk and harm posed by organised crime groups and help to inform the prioritisation of operational activity across agencies.

The current operational priorities for OCTF partner agencies include:

- threats that exploit the vulnerable, such as modern slavery, organised immigration crime and fraud;
- threats that dominate communities, such as drug supply and misuse;
- tackling fraud and economic crime through a focus on those who facilitate and enable organised crime and through developing a better understanding of money laundering methodologies;
- excise fraud; and
- tackling cyber crime.

In support of the continuous pursuit of those involved in organised crime we will:

- i. Work to develop and enhance an effective *collaborative operational response*, through *co-ordinated joint tasking to reflect shared priorities*.
- ii. Work with partners to develop a *whole-of-government* response to organised crime, making strategic use of the full range of multi-agency and cross-government skills, tools, regulations, powers and sanctions to deter, disrupt and investigate organised crime. This will mean aligning our collective efforts through closer partnership work. Examples of this partnership work are included in the OCTF Annual Report and Threat Assessment⁷
- iii. Continue to access available resources and measures for *effective international and cross-border collaboration* to pursue organised criminals, including collaboration through the Joint Agency Task Force, Joint Investigation Teams (where appropriate) and Europol. The outcome for justice, following the agreement reached on 24 December 2020, means that most of the key justice measures have been replicated within the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). It provides for:
 - fast track and warrant based arrangements for the surrender of requested persons (in line with the Norway/ Iceland surrender arrangements);
 - the sharing of criminal records and biometric data on DNA, fingerprints and, in future, vehicle registration details;
 - transfer of passenger information for inter EU flights;
 - continued participation by the UK in both Europol and Eurojust;
 - mutual legal assistance; and
 - cooperation on assets freezing, money laundering and cybercrime.
- iv. Continue to work with Home Office colleagues to seek opportunities for bi-lateral arrangements with EU Member States to enhance the law enforcement provisions within the TCA.
- v. Continue to make effective use of the range of powers available to law enforcement under the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002* to disrupt and undermine criminal enterprise by depriving criminals of their assets, both through criminal confiscations and forfeitures aligned to criminal justice outcomes, and through the civil recovery process.
- vi. Align with *wider justice-system reforms* aimed at speeding up justice in Northern Ireland to increase public confidence in a fair and effective justice system.

⁷ www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/octf-annual-report-and-threat-assessment-2019-20

PREPARE AND PROTECT

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

Work with individuals, communities and businesses to build resilience against organised crime, and to ensure a system response which is focussed on victim safety and wellbeing.

An improved understanding of existing and emerging threats will enhance our ability to respond swiftly to close potential gaps and vulnerabilities and will inform operational responses allowing law enforcement to anticipate and get ahead of the threat.

However it is clear that tackling organised crime effectively cannot rely solely on the pursuit of offenders. A truly effective strategic response must take a holistic approach that also builds and supports our capacity to create safe and resilient communities; promotes public awareness and education to withstand organised crime threats; protects those most vulnerable to organised crime; and puts in place the conditions and supports to create a Northern Ireland where organised crime and paramilitarism have no place.

As such, this Strategy should be seen in the context of the wider outcomes framework and cross-Executive strategies and work to tackle poverty, promote social inclusion, build a strong Northern Ireland economy and develop a more cohesive society.

In particular it draws on existing work that it is currently underway through:

- the Executive Action Plan on Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime;
- the Northern Ireland Modern Slavery Strategy;
- the Northern Ireland Cyber Security Strategic Framework for Action;
- the development of a Community Safety Framework; and
- PSNI's strategic approach to crime prevention.

While focused on specific issues that overlap with aspects of organised crime, these programmes of work are delivering outcomes that collectively will reinforce our strategic aim of protecting individuals, communities and businesses in Northern Ireland from organised crime.

Our strategic response under this theme is also aligned with PSNI's draft Crime Prevention Strategy and recognises that crime can be prevented by removing the opportunity to commit it. This can be achieved in a number of ways, including:

- designing out opportunities for crime;
- enhancing resilience to withstand certain types of crime (e.g. cyber crime); and
- increasing public awareness of threat.

With this in mind, in order to equip individuals, communities and businesses to protect themselves against organised crime we will take the following steps:

- i. We will work with partners (including local government, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, communities, academia, the financial sector, businesses, industry and postal and courier services) to identify opportunities to design out vulnerabilities to organised crime and remove opportunities for organised criminals to offend offline and online. This may include potential changes to the physical environment (such as steps to secure items likely to be subject to organised crime, such as plant machinery or ATMs). Similarly we have seen how changes in policy, practice and training have significantly reduced industry vulnerabilities to the threat posed by tiger kidnaps. We will seek to identify and apply similar approaches to tackle other organised crime threats, where possible.
- ii. We will continue to use strategic communications, including through partnerships such as Scamwise and Get Safe Online to protect the public and the vulnerable by raising awareness of organised crime threats such as scams, fraud and cyber crime. We know that whilst fraud and cyber crime are two of the most commonly experienced types of organised crime, in many cases they rely on individuals being tricked into providing passwords, bank information, or access to computers or on poor maintenance and security of computers, devices and systems for effect, and as such, they can be prevented. We will use strategic communications to provide advice on the practical steps that individuals, communities and businesses can take to mitigate the threat from organised criminals and as such will reinforce community resilience in Northern Ireland.
- iii. We will also use strategic communications to heighten awareness of the harm caused to communities by all types of organised crime and to challenge public perceptions about crimes that are often tolerated by communities as lower harm ‘victimless crimes’ such as excise and tax fraud or intellectual property crime and to help embed a culture of lawfulness. We will use our strategic communications to demonstrate how revenue from such crime types can fund high harm criminal markets (such as for illicit drugs or modern slavery) and as such we will seek to reduce demand for goods and services associated with organised criminality.
- iv. We will use initiatives such as the Assets Recovery Community Scheme (ARCS) to fund programmes that tackle crime or reduce the fear of crime. In doing so we will not only support the creation of safe and resilient communities but will also use ARCS to send a message that crime does not pay and, as such, will seek to increase public confidence in the justice system.
- vi. We will work with statutory and voluntary agencies, including victim support organisations and other relevant partners to ensure a system response which is sensitive to the needs of those who have been affected by organised crime.

We will *establish an OCTF Stakeholder Engagement Sub Group* to provide an effective and efficient collaborative response to organised crime across a broad range of stakeholders, including business, community and voluntary sectors and young people. The aim of the sub group will be to promote a shared understanding of the threat posed by organised crime and the law enforcement activity to tackle organised criminality; and to work with individuals, communities and businesses to build resilience against organised crime.

PREVENT

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5

Effective work to deter and divert people from becoming involved or re-engaging in organised crime.

In taking a holistic approach to tackling organised crime we also need to prevent and deter people from engaging, and from re-engaging, in organised criminal activity. Our activity to deliver against this objective combines the need for strong deterrents against crime with effective offender management (including the delivery of programmes to address offending behaviour by the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Youth Justice Agency or the Probation Board for Northern Ireland) and early intervention to reduce individuals' vulnerability to involvement in organised crime.

Our delivery against this strategic objective will be supported by these elements:

- i. An *effective justice system* will underpin delivery against this objective. This includes wider work by the Department of Justice and its partners to speed up the justice system so that people involved in organised crime can be pursued swiftly and effectively through the courts. We recognise the role of the courts and judiciary, including by setting appropriate sentences and sanctions that will act as deterrents.
- ii. As already noted, we will continue to *undermine the financial drivers for organised crime*, making it harder for organised criminals to benefit financially from their criminal enterprise by making effective use of the range of powers for criminal confiscation or civil recovery under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.
- iii. We will also engage through the courts, where it is appropriate, to make best use of the powers available to us under legislation to *reduce the risk posed by those involved in organised crime* (such as Serious Crime Prevention Orders, Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders etc.).
- iv. We will align with work across the wider justice system to find more ways to *reduce vulnerability of individuals* progressing into organised crime, including *Problem Solving Justice pilots* and other relevant programmes *to address offending behaviour*.
 - We recognise the importance of work carried out by partners such as the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Youth Justice Agency and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland *to reduce the risk of reoffending through offending behaviour programmes, education, work experience, engagement with families and the development of life skills*.
 - We will use *initiatives like ARCS to support and fund programmes that seek to reduce reoffending or divert vulnerable individuals away from engagement in criminal behaviour*.
 - We will work with partners to deliver the *Executive Action Plan on Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime* to address issues that make individuals vulnerable to paramilitary and organised crime groups and to support communities in which these groups operate.

PARTNERSHIP

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6

Provide an effective and efficient collaborative response to organised crime affecting Northern Ireland.

Our strategic response to organised crime needs to be joined-up and incorporate a whole-system response across Government, law enforcement, business, academia and communities if it is going to be effective and comprehensive and protect people and businesses from harm. That includes working to enhance the operational partnerships that already exist across law enforcement agencies to deliver better outcomes for people in Northern Ireland, as well as exploring new partnerships with industry, the financial sector, local government, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships etc. to remove the opportunities for organised criminals to exploit vulnerabilities.

Within law enforcement the benefits of a collaborative response include improved operational results, enhanced understanding and shared knowledge; effective use of *shared resources, powers and niche capabilities* through strategic co-ordination and tasking; and financial efficiencies through the deployment of collective capability and realising economies of scale.

In order to deliver against this objective we will take the following steps:

- i. We will continue to work with multi-agency and cross-Government partners to *provide co-ordinated, strategic leadership in tackling organised crime* through the Organised Crime Task Force;
- ii. We will enhance multi-agency collaboration at an operational level, making effective use of existing co-located teams, such as the Paramilitary Crime Task Force, whilst also identifying *opportunities for closer collaboration* through the development of shared threat assessments, agreed prioritisation and joint tasking.
- iii. As noted, we will work with partners to further develop a partnership approach to the response to organised crime, engaging with local Government and Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, as well as across all relevant Departments, including Health, Education and Communities, to tackle and reduce organised crime. We will *make strategic use of the full range of multi-agency and cross-government skills, tools, regulations, powers and sanctions to deter, disrupt and investigate organised crime*.
- iv. We will continue our commitment to working in partnership with Irish authorities through effective use of mechanisms such as the Joint Agency Task Force, Joint Investigation Teams and the annual cross-border Organised Crime Conference.
- v. We will work with the UK government to ensure that there are *effective future relationships and arrangements with the EU* to support ongoing effective criminal justice co-operation post EU Exit to mitigate against any loss of EU measures.
- vi. We will seek to develop effective cross-sectoral partnerships with partners in academia, the financial sector, business and industry to *enhance our understanding of the nature of organised criminal activity* and the operational response and to help to design out vulnerabilities to organised crime.

6. INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

We are introducing some new ways of understanding the level of organised crime and the impact of our work in deterring, disrupting and stopping organised crime in Northern Ireland. In addition to measuring and reporting the **outputs** from partner and Law Enforcement (LE) agencies, we will focus on the **outcomes** of our strategic approach through assessing how far our work contributes to achieving the objectives of our Strategy and ending the harm caused by organised crime.

PURSUE

Strategic objective 1: Improve our understanding of existing and emerging threats, including the motivation and opportunities for modern slavery and human trafficking.

We will:

- Establish an integrated multi-agency Organised Crime Analytical Forum **[LE Partners]**
- Establish EU Exit Crime Sub Group **[LE Partners]**
- Develop a shared threat assessment **[LE Partners]**
- Engage with NAC, NDEC, NECC to share information & benefit from best practice **[DoJ, LE Partners]**
- Deliver Modern Slavery Strategy, informed by a comprehensive assessment of the motivations and opportunities for trafficking and modern slavery **[All Relevant Partners]**

What will tell us that we are successful:

- Arrests and successful prosecutions for those involved in organised crime
- Disruption and dismantling of Organised crime groups
- Confiscation of assets of those involved in organised crime
- Civil recovery of criminal assets

PURSUE

Strategic objective 2: Ensure we have effective capability, tools and legislation to tackle organised crime affecting Northern Ireland

We will:

- Deliver robust professional development to enhance capability of financial investigators & forensic accountants **[LE Partners]**
- Implement economic crime reforms **[All Relevant Partners]**
- Review and develop proposals based on the outcome of the consultation on proposals for the introduction of new specific NI organised crime offences **[DoJ]**
- Strive for full implementation of the Criminal Finances Act 2017 **[DoJ]**
- Review multi-agency capability to tackle organised crime **[DoJ, LE Partners]**
- Engage with neighbouring jurisdictions to share best practice and to inform and be informed by national developments **[DoJ, LE Partners]**

Strategic objective 3: Continuous pursuit of those involved in organised crime

We will:

- Enhance co-ordinated joint operational tasking to reflect shared priorities **[LE Partners]**
- Enhance co-ordinated multi-agency and cross-Government response to organised crime **[DoJ, All Partners]**
- Continue to access existing international and cross-border collaboration to pursue organised criminals **[LE Partners]**
- Make effective use of the range of powers to disrupt and undermine criminal enterprise by depriving criminals of their assets **[LE Partners]**
- Align our wider justice-systems reforms to speed up justice in Northern Ireland **[DoJ]**

What will tell us that we are successful:

- Arrests and successful prosecutions for those involved in organised crime
- Disruption and dismantling of Organised crime groups
- Confiscation of assets of those involved in organised crime
- Civil recovery of criminal assets

PREPARE & PROTECT

Strategic objective 4: Work with individuals, communities and businesses to build resilience against organised crime and to ensure a system response which is focussed on victim safety and wellbeing.

We will:

- Work with partners to identify and design out vulnerabilities to organised crime **[DoJ, LE Partners]**
- Use strategic communications to build resilience against organised crime threats **[DoJ, Relevant Partners]**
- Use strategic communications to challenge public perceptions of organised crime **[DoJ, Relevant Partners]**
- Use funding initiatives to support programmes that tackle crime or reduce the fear of crime. **[DoJ, Relevant Partners]**
- Work with statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure a system response which is sensitive to the needs of those who have been affected by organised crime. **[DoJ, Relevant Partners]**
- Establish a Stakeholder Engagement Sub Group as part of OCTF Strategy Group **[DOJ]**

What will tell us that we are successful:

- Community confidence to report organised crimes especially those associated with low reporting or not previously reported
- Resilience and stability of communities and of businesses operating in sectors traditionally impacted by organised crime
- Crime rates and trends showcase an effective law enforcement response to organised crime
- Evidence of physical and security measures adopted by individuals, communities and businesses to frustrate and prevent attack from those involved in organised crime.

PREVENT

Strategic objective 5: Effective joined-up working to deter and divert people from becoming involved or re-engaging in organised crime

We will:

- Deliver justice modernisation agenda **[DoJ, LE Partners]**
- Manage offenders more effectively through the use of available court mandatory orders **[DoJ, LE Partners]**
- Use Problem Solving Justice pilots to address offender behaviour **[DoJ]**
- Use funding initiatives to support offender behaviour programmes to reduce risk of reoffending **[DoJ]**

What will tell us that we are successful:

- Available sentences and sanctions deter offenders
- Convicted offenders are diverted away from further involvement in organised crime
- People with specialist skills are diverted away from becoming enablers or organised crime offenders
- Vulnerable individuals are diverted away from involvement in organised crime

PARTNERSHIP

Strategic objective 6: Provide an effective and efficient collaborative response to organised crime affecting Northern Ireland.

We will:

- Provide co-ordinated, strategic leadership in tackling organised crime through the Organised Crime Task Force **[OCTF Strategy Group]**
- Enhance multi-agency collaboration at an operational level **[LE Partners]**
- Develop a whole-government approach to organised crime **[All Relevant Partners]**
- Continue our commitment to working in partnership with Irish authorities to tackle organised crime **[LE Partners]**

What will tell us that we are successful:

- Reduced levels of organised crime affecting Northern Ireland
- Reduction in the level of harm caused by organised crime affecting Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland is a better place to live and do business
- A sustainable, efficient, effective and collaborative system for tackling organised crime in Northern Ireland

APPENDIX 1

Strategic and operational approaches to organised crime in Northern Ireland

INDIVIDUAL AGENCY ROLES

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has primacy for tackling organised crime in Northern Ireland. In pursuing its key objective of “Keeping People Safe”, the PSNI works in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies to confront the threat posed by organised crime groups.

HMRC has responsibility for tackling organised crime groups’ involvement in the most serious tax evasion and fraud. Priority targets for organised criminality are attacks on Value Added Tax (VAT), Income Tax Self-Assessment (ITSA) and Excise Duty evasion. HMRC can partner with the law enforcement community to provide teams with a wide range of skills and professional backgrounds including accountants, cybercrime specialists, tax professionals and criminal justice professionals to investigate the most harmful tax cheats, thus protecting funding for public services.

The National Crime Agency (NCA), is the lead agency to tackle serious organised crime across the UK. In Northern Ireland NCA leads on pursuing Civil Recovery and Tax interventions to target the proceeds of crime where the criminal process is unable to do so, as part of a collaborative law enforcement response to organised crime. Specific priorities of the NCA targets those individuals and organised crime groups involved in child sexual exploitation and abuse, organised immigration crime, cyber-crime, high end money laundering and modern slavery and human trafficking.

The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) brings together PSNI, HMRC, NCA, Department of Justice, Border Force, Home Office Immigration Enforcement, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Security Industry Authority and other key strategic partners. OCTF partner agencies are committed to the continued frustration, disruption and dismantling of organised crime groups in Northern Ireland.

CURRENT PARTNERSHIP APPROACHES

Organised Crime Task Force

The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) was established in 2000 to provide a multi-agency partnership approach to tackling organised crime in Northern Ireland. The OCTF provides strategic leadership and supports a collaborative, joined up response to the threat posed by organised crime through multi-agency partnership.

The OCTF Strategy Group and the underpinning thematic subgroups agree actions to confront organised crime in Northern Ireland to ensure that Government and law enforcement focus attention and operations on the issues that will have most impact on reducing harm and dismantling and disbanding organised criminal groups.

Over the next period the OCTF will work together to develop the strategic response to organised crime; to shape new legislative tools; to take account of regular threat assessments to develop priorities and to be alert to emerging issues; and to agree actions to help disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups in Northern Ireland.

Member organisations include relevant Government departments, law enforcement agencies, the Public Prosecution Service, the Northern Ireland Policing Board, and representatives from the business community. The members of the thematic sub groups in particular bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, strengths and powers to bear on reducing the harm. However, the OCTF and its partner agencies work within a wider context and are actively contributing to deliver against the Outcome Delivery Plan Outcomes 2, 7 and 10. The work of the OCTF and this Strategy will therefore take account of interdependencies with other relevant structures, organisations and programmes. This is particularly important under the Prevent strand of the strategic framework.

Joint Agency Task Force and the Paramilitary Crime Task Force

The establishment of the cross jurisdictional (Ireland - Northern Ireland) Joint Agency Task Force and the Paramilitary Crime Task Force (Northern Ireland only) evolved out of commitments in the Fresh Start Agreement to enhance efforts to tackle cross-jurisdictional organised crime, including that linked to paramilitaries, and to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of those involved in it.

The Joint Agency Task Force (JATF) was formed in 2015. It comprises a Strategic Oversight Group (chaired by senior representatives from PSNI and An Garda Síochána) to determine on an ongoing basis priority areas in cross border organised crime. The priority areas are then given to the Co-ordination and Operations Group chairs, who appoint leads in both jurisdictions. There are currently six priority thematic areas; rural crime, human trafficking, financial crime (including money laundering), illicit drugs, immigration crime (led by Home Office Immigration and Enforcement, HOIE, in NI) and excise and tax fraud (led by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, HMRC, in NI). JATF promotes collaborative identification and co-ordination of cross border investigations against OCGs. Progress against each priority area is reported every six months as part of the legislative requirement. This progress report is given by the Co-ordination and Operations Group, endorsed by the Strategic Oversight Group and presented to the respective Justice Ministers.

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF), formally launched in September 2017. It encompasses PSNI, HMRC and NCA personnel in co-located teams, and has successfully embraced the remit of joint collaborative investigation into those paramilitary OCGs that pose the greatest risk, harm and threat to communities in Northern Ireland. The PCTF is just one action within a much wider Executive programme to tackle paramilitarism, organised crime and criminality.

Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme

This Programme implements the Executive's response to the findings of the Fresh Start Panel Report on Disbanding Paramilitary Groups, published in July 2016. It focuses on tackling, and acknowledges the links between, paramilitary activity, organised crime and criminality.

The Programme seeks to balance law enforcement with the need for communities to develop their own responses and the capacity to transition. Long term prevention, and addressing the factors that can make people vulnerable to negative influences, are important elements of this work.

Collaborative working across the Executive and with local government, statutory agencies, law enforcement and the voluntary and community sector is crucial to delivery.

NI Executive and other strategies

This new Strategy builds on achievements and results under previous strategies but it also recognises new and emerging pressures and challenges from the ever increasing threat from organised criminality. More than ever before we must work together across Government, law enforcement, private sector and wider civic society to understand roles and make sure that our efforts are effective.

The Strategy acknowledges interdependencies and links with other work streams both at local and national level. The key linkages in the period ahead will be with the UK-wide programmes within the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2018 and the UK Economic Crime Plan, the Joint Agency Task Force (JATF) and the Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF). In Northern Ireland there will be synergy with the Programme for Government Outcomes Framework.

APPENDIX 2

Strategy Delivery Partners

OCTF STRATEGY GROUP

- **Department of Justice**
- **Police Service of Northern Ireland**
- **Border Force**
- **National Crime Agency**
- **HM Revenue and Customs**
- **Home Office Immigration Enforcement**
- **Public Prosecution Service**
- **NI Prison Service**
- **Security Industry Authority**
- **NI Environment Agency (DAERA)**

OTHER PARTNERS

- **NI Government Departments**
- **Government Departments in other jurisdictions**
- **Local Government**
- **Law enforcement bodies in NI**
- **Law enforcement agencies in other jurisdictions**
- **NI Courts and Tribunal Service**
- **NI Policing Board**
- **Financial sector**
- **Business sector representatives**
- **Non-Government Organisations**
- **Policing and Community Safety Partnerships**
- **Voluntary and community sector organisations**
- **Academic organisations**
- **Research bodies**
- **Wider Civic Society**
- **Young people and wider public**





**ORGANISED
CRIME**
TASK FORCE