

Committee: Economic and Cyber Crime Committee	Dated: 8 September 2023
Subject: National Lead Force and Cyber Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,10, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	NA
What is the source of Funding?	NA
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	NA
Report of: Commissioner of Police Pol 87-23	For Information
Report author: Kevin Ives, Staff Officer to AC O'Doherty	

SUMMARY

This report provides information on key activities delivered as part of the National Lead Force Plan. These activities include:

- Some cross border work from the operational units
- One of the largest and most complex Fraud Investigations to take place and outcomes achieved
- Effective communications campaigns

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that members note the contents of this report.

MAIN REPORT

Outcome 1: Supporting and Safeguarding Victims.

NLF Role: We provide a service for victims that is accessible, user-friendly and easy to engage with, and we successfully support and safeguard victims.

Action Fraud (AF/) National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) Action Fraud published an alert on the 18th August via social media and the messaging service after receiving 468 reports in two weeks relating to fake emails purporting to be from ASDA. The emails claim that the recipient has won a 'free' air fryer and provides a link the recipient should follow to claim their prize. The links in the emails lead to malicious websites designed to steal personal and financial information. This is an excellent example of a very fast response to an emerging problem.

National Economic Crime Victim Care Unit (NECVCU)

In this period there has been national media coverage of the completion of NECVCU's expansion programme; the unit now provides a service to all forces in England and Wales. The media story was headed up by AC O'Doherty and received further promotion from the Home Office's Economic Crime Policy team.

Fraud and Cyber Crime Reporting and Analysis System (FCCRAS)

The outline plan for system interoperability has been agreed. This will see the new system connected to PND(Police National Database for intelligence) benefitting UK policing and partner Law Enforcement Agencies. There will also be new connections with public and private sector counter-fraud databases in order to STOP and BLOCK fraud and cybercrime.

Outcome 2: Disrupt Fraudsters.

NLF Role: We disrupt fraudsters that operate domestically and from overseas in order to make it harder for them to commit crime here in the UK.

Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU)

Italian authorities requested PIPCU attendance at EuroPol to discuss Operation Cassandra. This ongoing operation involves a Senegalese OCG based in Bristol, who are at the centre of importing counterfeit clothing / watches / handbags into the UK from China, which are then exported to Italy and Spain. The meeting covered links between the two cases and the best way of sharing information and evidence and sharing information on connected cases in the future via Siena to prevent / disrupt this activity on an international scale with disruptive seizures and also some pursue activity. A separate report on more PIPCU activity is on the agenda.

Insurance Fraud Investigation Department (IFED)

On 19 July 2023, DCI IFED presented National Tactical Guidance on the use of Cease & Desist for Fraud and Economic Crime to the Economic Crime Partnership Board, chaired by the North West Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU). In one week in July alone IFED officers served 6 cease and desist notices across the UK. This is a tactic initially designed by PIPCU which is now slowly being picked up across the UK as a major disruption tool for lower level crime.

Dedicated Cheque and Payment Crime Unit (DCPCU)

Officers attended The Hague to develop a joint investigation team with the authorities from Finland and Switzerland in relation to a UK based global threat actor who is mass producing 'Phish kits' to fraudulently purport to be from various national / international financial organisations. The planned work will not only disrupt cross border crime but also help prevent further schemes from taking place by building and sharing knowledge.

Outcome 3: Investigate and Prosecute.

NLF Role: We successfully lead the local to national policing response in investigating and prosecuting fraudsters, ensuring better criminal justice outcomes for victims.

National Lead Force (NLF)

In June Operation Vanbrugh, one of the largest ever investigations into a 'ponzi' style fraud reached a successful conclusion after five years of investigation, the lead suspect was convicted of seven counts of fraud offences and on the 9 June 2023 he was sentenced to 14 years in prison, which reflects the huge harm caused to the hundreds of victims who lost life savings, houses and pensions whilst the suspect spent their money, on one occasion £2.5 million on his own wedding day. The total value of the fraud was £70million. The suspect fled court before the verdict and a live manhunt operation is now underway.

Asset recovery continues and the Force has participated in the recording of a podcast for a UK broadcaster.

Lead Force Operations Room (LFOR)

Great national co-ordination work on the 24 May LFOR assisted Northeast Regional Special Operations Unit with executing a warrant and arresting a suspect in relation to a courier style postal fraud. Op Duper, a National Courier Fraud intensification concluded on 19 May, but LFOR has continued to assist forces and regions this week with ongoing courier fraud investigations which had begun during the intensification.

Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU)

Operation Matthaus utilised resources from across the Force including Mounted, Tactical Support Group, COLP Cadets, MPS Police Neighbourhood team, Camden Trading Standards and stakeholders from the Anti-counterfeiting group in the search of two counterfeit shops; three arrests and seizure of £5 million in counterfeit goods. This area is very likely to see further major features in the future as counterfeiting has grown there, potentially in response to the PIPCU inspired shutdown of Cheetham Hill which has seen counterfeiters begin to be driven from that area.

Fraud Ops

Op Curry -Over the course of three years, offenders ran 'Digi Ex' – a company that cold-called potential investors to part with their cash in exchange for a fictitious cryptocurrency called Telecoin. From 2015 to 2017, a total of £509,599 was credited into Digi Ex accounts. The trial was very complex, with the defence attempting to discredit the investigation. The two defendants were found guilty and sentenced to 6 years and 6 ½ years, respectively. Both were disqualified as Directors for 8 years. This case is a great indication of how the teams are dealing with high-tec and modern fraud types.

Outcome 4: Raise Awareness and Prevent Crime.

NLF Role: We raise awareness of the threat and prevent fraud impacting people and businesses.

National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB)

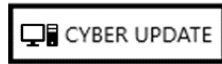
June saw the conclusion of the 6 month NLF romance fraud campaign, in partnership with CRIMESTOPPERS. Designed to deliver Protect messaging to a variety of communities and organisations. Messaging was sent to 74 individual agencies including Neighbourhood Watch, adult safeguarding services and safer community partnerships. The campaign received 6.7 million impressions and received media interest from various sources as well as communications promoted by the Online Dating Association (ODA).

Action Fraud

Action Fraud's annual holiday fraud campaign attracted positive coverage across local and national media outlets. There was also widespread coverage of Action Fraud's alert on ticket scams linked to the forthcoming European football finals.

On 7 July 2023, the Action Fraud / NECVCU / NFIB team hosted Anthony Browne MP, the government's new anti-fraud champion. This 'meet-the-team' input enabled Mr Browne to better understand the breadth of the three team's nationally significant work – and how this supports the government's National Fraud Strategy. Mr Browne showed a particular interest in efforts to prevent fraud and cybercrime, specifically the work CoLP delivers to STOP and BLOCK fraud through jointing working with banks,

TELCOs and social media platforms. After the event, Mr Browne tweeted a photograph of the visit (his time spent with the NECVCU team).



National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB)

There has been positive media coverage of the joint NFIB / National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS). Since April 2020, the service received 21 million reports and led to the removal of more than 235,000 malicious websites, 54,000 text message scams, and 7,726 suspicious texts, providing a huge victim service impact.

Outcome 5: Building Capacity and Capability.

NLF Role: As National Lead Force we work creatively and with partners to improve capacity and capability committed to fighting fraud, both across policing and the wider system.

Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU)

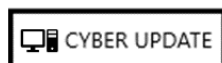
The unit hosted delegates from the International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition (IACC) who are based in Washington, and Senior Officers from Homeland Security Investigations. The visit was designed to finalise plans for an international conference to be held in London between the 5 and 7 December this year. The Conference will be for 350 delegates from around the world and jointly hosted by IACC, US Homeland Security and CoLP (PIPCU). Formal plans are now being drafted.

National Co-Ordinator's office

In July the force engagement reviews were conducted with Cheshire Police, with reviews for Humberside, West Midlands and Yorkshire Police due on 08/08/23. This shows the continuous improvement work taking place led by City Police.

Economic and Cyber Crime Academy

The Home Office has made further contact with regards to the ECCA providing training to Mauritius Law Enforcement. The Australian Federal Police are scoping the viability of replicating the ECCA within Australia, and to explore potential joint working. It is likely an Australian delegate(s) will attend our Fraud Investigation Foundation Course, Specialist Fraud Investigator Programme and Accredited Counter Fraud Manager.



NPCC Cyber

On 3 July 2023, a presentation was given on Cybercrime and the future challenges especially around competing demands and the metaverse to the Judges at the Old Bailey at the request of the Sheriff Andrew Marsden.

On 4 July 2023, D/Supt Cyber presented to the Public Technology annual Cyber Security Conference on Cybercrime and the policing response and challenges.

In June the NPCC cyber team gathered all senior regional leads to present updates and have a two day workshop of the new operating model amongst other changes.