

Clear, Hold, Build

Purpose of Report

For direction.

Summary

The Home Office developed Clear, Hold, Build as a framework for tackling serious and organised crime at a neighbourhood level. Having been tested in eight forces the Home Office is now rolling out the approach in all police forces in England and Wales. Councils are seen as a key partner in the success of Clear, Hold, Build. This report sets out the background to Clear, Hold, Build ahead of a presentation to the Board by Rod McClean, Deputy Director at the Home Office, on the role local authorities can play in the delivery of Clear, Hold, Build.

LGA Plan Theme: Championing climate change and local environments

Recommendation(s)

That the Board:

- (a) Note the rollout of Clear, Hold, Build to all police forces in England and Wales by 2024; and**
- (b) Agrees the actions set out in paragraph 10 to raise awareness of Clear, Hold, Build among local authorities.**

Contact details

Contact officer: Mark Norris

Position: Principal Policy Adviser

Phone no: 020 7664 3241

Email: mark.norris@local.gov.uk

Clear, Hold, Build

Background

1. The Serious and Organised Crime Strategy published in 2018 highlighted the impact that organised criminal groups (OCGs) have on individuals and communities. It pointed out that serious and organised crime costs the UK at least £37 billion annually, and its victims are often the most vulnerable in society, including young children. The strategy also highlighted the often international nature of serious and organised crime with offenders often operating as part of large networks spanning several countries.
2. As serious and organised crime spans such a wide range of issues, the Strategy also set out an ambition for a whole system approach to tackling it, with a wide range of agencies needed to tackle OCGs. Clear, Hold, Build was designed as a multi-agency partnership tactic by the Home Office to address those areas most blighted by organised crime.

Clear, Hold, Build

3. Clear, Hold, Build (CHB) provides a framework to reduce the number of OCGs, crime levels, serious violence and homicides in high-harm areas, in a sustainable way. It brings together multi-agency disruption tactics and local policing approaches with the objective of reclaiming and rebuilding communities persistently affected by OCGs, and restoring relations between the police and residents as well as other agencies.
4. The framework uses a three phase operating model:
 - 4.1. **Clear** - ruthlessly pursue OCG members through intensive enforcement activity.
 - 4.2. **Hold** - immediately address the “vacuum” this leaves as part of the **Hold** phase, by preventing other OCGs from taking over the location including by offering support services and safeguarding referrals.
 - 4.3. **Build** - strengthen communities’ resilience and resistance to criminality in a way that prevents SOC/crime from reoccurring.

CHB Pilots

5. CHB was first piloted in Bradford Moor in West Yorkshire for eight months from May 2021 with encouraging results (see below). During 2022, CHB was expanded to a further seven forces – Bedfordshire, Hampshire, Merseyside, North Wales, Northumbria, South Yorkshire, Suffolk. This initial work has demonstrated that CHB can be applied dynamically to respond to changes in priorities across a number SOC threats. This includes drugs; county lines; modern slavery and human trafficking; and serious violence.
6. The results of the Bradford Moor pilot included:
 - 6.1. The police, local authorities, charity, and private sector reported improved partnership working and intelligence collation which resulted in a better collective understanding of the threat posed by OCGs in the area.

- 6.2. The police reported improvements in community confidence and an increase in the number of controlled drugs seized.
- 6.3. There were also several crime reductions within the pilot site including a 57 per cent reduction in burglary, 27 per cent reduction in drug offences and 38 per cent reduction in antisocial behaviour.
- 6.4. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) recently assessed that West Yorkshire police's response to serious and organised crime was 'outstanding.' Within this assessment, CHB was reported as good practice by the inspectorate with potential to deliver '*long-term positive impacts within communities*'.
- 6.5. HMICFRS also identified CHB as innovative practice in their recent spotlight report (August 2022) looking at '*The police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime-finding time for crime*'.

Expansion of CHB

7. The Home Secretary announced in January 2023 that CHB would be rolled out to every force by March 2024. As at end of September 2023, 16 forces and 25 sites are operational with a further 10 forces expected to have introduced CHB by the end of the calendar year. The national roll out is being assisted by the use of regional serious and organised crime community coordinators and refreshed guidance from the Home Office.
8. Forces involved in the CHB pilots have not received any additional funding. They have however been supported with comprehensive advice on using the approach as well as through independent evaluation and sharing best practice. In the Home Office's view this means that CHB offers a sustainable model for forces and their local partners to use within their existing resources in the long term.

Role of local authorities

9. The Home Office is looking for councils to promote and support the implementation of CHB in their areas as it is introduced in every police force. Rod McLean, Deputy Director at the Serious and Organised Crime Law Enforcement Unit in the Home Office will be attending the Board meeting to explain in more detail how councils can support CHB.
10. The Home Office is keen to raise awareness of CHB among councils as it rolled out in police forces. Members are asked to:
 - 10.1. Agree that the LGA supports the Home Office in raising awareness of CHB among member authorities and the importance of supporting activity to tackle serious and organised crime by:
 - 10.1.1. Working with the Home Office and other stakeholders to identify the key benefits for communities of local authorities playing a role in CHB, as well how addressing serious and organised crime assists councils in a range of responsibilities and functions ranging from safeguarding vulnerable children and adults to licensing.

10.1.2. Developing a series of joint communications from the Home Office and the LGA to local authorities (including to leaders and chief executives).

10.1.3. Contributing to refreshed guidance for local partners on how they can work effectively and efficiently with the police to tackle serious and organised crime, building on the previous LGA guide from 2015:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/tackling-serious-and-orga-44a.pdf>

10.2. Consider what additional support councils will need to assist police forces as they roll out CHB. Members may think it helpful for the LGA to check the Home Office's assumption that CHB can be delivered without the need for additional resources by checking with councils in the eight pilot areas.

Implications for Wales

11. Policing is not a devolved matter with the Home Office retaining responsibility for policing in Wales. One of the CHB pilots was in Wales, and CHB will be rolled out in the remaining Welsh police forces alongside those in England. The Home Office have been discussing the implementation of CHB with the Welsh Government and are keen to engage the WLGA.

Financial Implications

12. The Home Office assumption is that CHB can be introduced within existing resources by police forces and councils.

Equalities implications

13. Serious and organised crime activity can affect any resident, but can often see the more vulnerable targeted by OCGs including those with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act. The public sector equality duty will mean councils will have to consider how working alongside the police to implement CHB may benefit those with protected characteristics under equalities legislation.

Next steps

14. Subject to members' agreement, officers will take forward the actions proposed in paragraph 10.