

Economic Note	Number: HO EN 1021		
Title of regulatory proposal	Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023		
Lead Department/Agency	Home Office		
Expected date of implementation	TBC – requires SI before implementation		
Origin	Domestic		
Date	13/01/2025		
Lead Departmental Contact			
Departmental Assessment	GREEN		
Rationale for intervention, objectives and intended effects			
<p>Thefts of All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and Utility Task Vehicles (UTVs) in the agricultural sector have become more prevalent in recent years. These vehicles generally lack security features, making them an easy target for thieves. Their low cost (relative to more expensive farming equipment) means that insurance companies often pay out even where ATVs/UTVs are left insecure. This reduces the immediate incentive for owners to protect their vehicles and so drives up their insurance premia in the long run to cover this cycle of theft. The government has introduced regulation to help reduce such thefts. The Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023 will help prevent defined equipment being stolen, make it harder for criminals to sell on stolen quad bikes, ATVs and removable GPS systems, and assist the police with recovering and identifying owners of stolen equipment. The Act requires immobilisers to be fitted before sale to all new ATVs and quad bikes and to be property marked along with removable GPS systems. They need to also be registered on an appropriate database.</p>			
Policy options (including alternatives to regulation)			
Option 0 – ‘Do nothing’			
Option 1 - The Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023 makes provision to prevent the theft and re-sale of equipment used by tradespeople and agricultural and other businesses. It requires sellers to ensure that: (a) immobilisers are fitted to all new ATVs before being sold to the customer and (b) property marking is added to all new ATVs before being sold to the customer, and the details are registered on an appropriate property marking database. This is the government’s preferred option.			
Costs and benefit summary			
<p>Costs and benefits are currently non-monetised. Costs will likely include costs to manufacturers and/or retailers to include the new protective measures in their processes. There would also be increased costs for the police and CJS if these measures allow more crimes to be investigated further and brought to justice. These protective measures have some evidence for reducing property crimes, which may result in benefits for victims in ‘at-risk’ sectors, such as agriculture and construction.</p>			
Risks			
<p>There is the potential risk of displacement of crime to older products that are not protected or alternative items not covered by the legislation.</p>			
Total Cost (£m PV)	Transition Cost (£m Constant)	Cost to Business (£m PV)	
N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total Benefit (£m PV)	NPSV (£m PV)	BNPV (£m PV)	EANDCB (£m PV)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Price Base Year	PV Base Year	Appraisal period (Years)	Transition period (Years)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Departmental sign-off (SCS):			Date: 24/02/26
Chief Economist sign-off:			Date: 25/02/26
Better Regulation Unit sign-off:			Date: 25/02/26

Evidence Base

A. Policy objectives and intended effects

1. The government supported the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Bill, a Private Members Bill, introduced to Parliament by Greg Smith MP on 16 June 2022. The purpose of the Bill was to prevent the theft of agricultural machinery and equipment; Plant theft, of which the agricultural sector is a significant component, has been estimated to cost society substantially at £625 million per year in current prices.¹ The Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act has since gained Royal Assent in July 2023. This legislation, however, will not fully take effect until secondary legislation defines its precise scope and detail.
2. The broad policy objectives are:
 - To reduce theft of ATVs by ensuring that the right measures are in place for the agricultural sector to protect their vehicles.
 - To deter thieves from stealing agricultural equipment, including ATVs.
 - To reduce the impact of agricultural theft on policing resources.
 - To reduce the impact of ATV shortages on the agricultural sector, by reducing demand for replacement ATVs following a theft.
3. The extent of agricultural equipment theft will be monitored via NFU Mutual claims statistics, as published in their annual 'Rural Crime Report'². There are no plans for a specific evaluation of this legislation.
4. Install immobiliser and apply property marking on all ATVs sold from the point at which regulation is implemented. The government is introducing regulation to help reduce thefts, contributing to the Home Office's Outcome Delivery Plan to Reduce Crime. This is the government's preferred option.

B. Policy options considered, including alternatives to regulation

5. Two options were considered:

Option 0 – 'Do nothing'

8. This would have no impact on theft levels as security measures won't be installed on all new ATVs sold. The most recent data from the NFU Mutual Rural Crime Report 2025 shows that whilst the total cost of quad bike and ATV theft was estimated at £2.7 million, down 16 per cent from the previous year, quad bikes and ATVs remain top targets for rural thieves due to their high value and utility on farms³.
9. Failure to act and legislate will likely incur further criticism from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), and the National Farmers' Union (NFU) are in favour of the legislation as it is largely aimed at protecting farmers.

¹ Understanding organised crime 2015/16 second edition: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c780c25e5274a0ecbe9a231/understanding-organised-crime-mar16-horr103-2nd.pdf>). Adjusted for inflation using latest GDP deflators: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp-september-2025-quarterly-national-accounts>

² NFU Rural Crime Report: <https://www.nfumutual.co.uk/farming/rural-crime/>

³ NFU Mutual, Rural Crime Report 2025: <https://www.nfumutual.co.uk/globalassets/farming/rural-crime/2025/rural-crime-report-2025.pdf>

Option 1 - Preferred option

10. The Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023 (ETP 2023) legislation makes provision to prevent theft and re-sale of high-value equipment, particularly for use in an agricultural setting. The ETP 2023 requires:
 - Immobilisers to be fitted to all new ATVs before being sold to the customer. Secondary legislation to specify the minimum standard required.
 - Property marking to be added to all new ATVs and to be registered on an appropriate property database, before being sold to the customer. Secondary legislation to specify the minimum standards required.
11. The legislation will apply to England and Wales. It will be for new ATVs only, not those already in existence or sold second-hand.
12. Security features on stolen goods lead to a reduction in thefts and they are most effective when installed by manufacturers. Despite this, ultimately responsibility will fall on the retailer to ensure any ATVs sold meet minimum standards through applying marking or immobilisers themselves or otherwise ensuring their suppliers already meet requirements.

Non-regulatory options

13. Encourage industry to fit immobilisers and to property mark ATVs on a voluntary basis. However, most manufacturers are based outside of England and Wales (the territory to which the Act extends) and serve global markets for which UK sales make up a small proportion. As a result, Home Office did not anticipate manufacturers taking these measures voluntarily, so this option was discounted.

C. Past evaluations and rationale for government intervention

14. The theft of agricultural machinery, and in particular ATVs, is of great concern for social welfare. The theft of agricultural machinery has a significant impact on businesses and those who rely on this equipment for their livelihood. Thefts of vehicles from farmers can cause severe disruption to essential cultivation work and risk to animal welfare and have a significant impact on livelihoods.
15. Previous Home Office estimates from 2016 put the economic and social cost of organised plant theft (theft of construction and agricultural equipment) at £675 million in 2025/26 prices.⁴
16. ATVs in particular are desirable to thieves and are vulnerable largely due to a lack of security features. This is exacerbated by the fact that insurance policies that replace equipment on a 'like-for-like' basis with 'no questions asked' which encourages a cycle of theft, while discouraging owners to protect their property. Thefts are driving sales – those working within agriculture have brand loyalty and once the equipment is stolen, insurers will replace these.
17. An estimated 900 to 1,200 quad bikes and ATVs are stolen in England and Wales each year. Latest data published by NFU Mutual in the Rural Crime Report 2025⁵ shows thefts of quad bikes and ATVs cost their customers £2.7 million. However, there is currently no

⁴ Understanding organised crime 2015/16 second edition: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c780c25e5274a0ecbe9a231/understanding-organised-crime-mar16-horr103-2nd.pdf>). Adjusted for inflation using latest GDP deflators: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp-september-2025-quarterly-national-accounts>

⁵ NFU Mutual, Rural Crime Report 2025: <https://www.nfumutual.co.uk/globalassets/farming/rural-crime/2025/rural-crime-report-2025.pdf>

legal requirement to fit immobilisers or forensic marking to quad bikes, ATVs or any other agricultural vehicles/machinery used predominantly off-road, although some manufacturers choose to take this action voluntarily for some machinery.

D. Appraisal

General assumptions and data

18. Due to the broad, enabling nature of the ETP 2023 the costs and benefits of the legislation are not monetised. Costs may vary greatly depending on the extent to which manufacturing is affected and how complex the machines covered by the legislation are. Thus, only once the specifics of the ETP 2023 become clearer within the secondary legislation will more detailed analysis of costs and benefits be undertaken.

Costs

19. Most of the anticipated costs will be placed on the private sector – particularly those businesses manufacturing and/or selling agricultural vehicles and potentially tools. This will include:
- Initial familiarisation costs to understand the requirements of the legislation;
 - Costs to make potential changes to manufacturing processes to include requirements such as forensic marking and/or immobilisers on relevant products;
 - Cost on retailers in terms of staff time to ensure products have the relevant protective measures applied and explaining these to customers.
20. There may also be costs to the police and the criminal justice system (CJS). This is because the introduction of forensic marking on agricultural machinery and tools could increase the opportunities for investigation and recovery of stolen property and result in more offenders brought to justice. There would then be downstream impacts for the CJS in terms of increased costs for court, legal aid and potentially prison places.

Benefits

21. Crime prevention measures such as the installation of immobilisers and forensic marking have been found to be effective at reducing property crime.
- Immobilisers: a previous Home Office research report in 2016 found that at least a quarter and possibly as much as half of the drop in thefts of vehicles in England and Wales in the 2000s could be attributed to electronic immobilisers.⁶
 - Property marking: most of the evidence in relation to property marking relates to its impact on burglary. A quasi-experimental evaluation of the impact of forensic property marking in decreasing burglaries in an English city found that domestic burglary decreased by 82 per cent in treatment areas where property marking kits were handed out, compared to control areas. However, the benefits were short-lived.⁷
 - Reduced crime will result in benefits for potential victims, particularly those working in relevant sectors, for example, agriculture, construction and other relevant tradespeople. If crime is reduced, there will be fewer insurance claims for stolen items, which could ultimately result in lower insurance premiums for customers.

⁶ Reducing criminal opportunity: vehicle security and vehicle crime: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/489097/horr87.pdf

⁷ Chainey, S. A quasi-experimental evaluation of the impact of forensic property marking in decreasing burglaries. *Security Journal* 35, 966–985 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41284-021-00308-z>

NPSV, BNPV and EANDCB

22. Costs and benefits are currently non-monetised, pending the details around implementation being confirmed in secondary legislation.

E. Wider impacts

23. These measures will mostly benefit the agricultural sector. Thefts of vehicles from farmers can cause severe disruption to their business and have a significant impact on their livelihood. Measures which reduce incidences of this will not only reduce the immediate costs, mostly to insurers, of replacing vehicles, but will reduce the risk of other losses due to lack of productivity.

F. Sensitivity

24. Under the Better Regulation Framework (BRF) Impact Assessments are deemed necessary for policy measures which have Estimated Annualised Net Direct Costs to Business of +/- £10 million. There is no cost to business until implementation is confirmed through secondary legislation. An economic note will be produced alongside secondary legislation.

G. Risks

25. Protecting certain types of machinery or equipment via new measures risks displacement of theft to older models of the same product that do not have the protective measures or other products not covered by the legislation. It is not clear to what extent the existing stock of relevant products may already have relevant protective measures.
26. The evidence base for the benefits of the protective measures has been seen in relation to personal/household vehicle theft and domestic burglary, so may not be transferable to plant theft.

H. Annex

Mandatory specific impact test - Statutory Equalities Duties	Complete
<p data-bbox="204 304 1190 506"><i>The public sector equality duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in the course of developing policies and delivering services. This legislation will apply equally to all sellers of ATVs, regardless of protected characteristics. [1. Equality Duty Toolkit and 3. Equality Duty Resources]</i></p> <p data-bbox="204 573 1190 674">An Equality Impact Assessment will be provided for the forthcoming secondary legislation, as impacts will only be estimable once Statutory Instruments provide the precise scope.</p> <p data-bbox="204 741 703 775">The SRO has agreed these findings</p>	<p data-bbox="1318 517 1374 551">Yes</p>