

PRESS INFORMATION

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Crime Falls in Bedfordshire

Challenging crime reduction targets set by Bedfordshire Police Authority have helped to drive a reduction in overall crime across Bedfordshire and Luton of eight per cent in the year ending March 31st 2010. That means there were 3530 fewer crimes reported compared to the previous year.

As a result, over the last three years, crime has fallen by 27%, thereby significantly reducing the number of victims of crime in Bedfordshire and Luton.

The Authority's Performance Committee scrutinised the year's performance closely, welcoming the reductions in key areas such as burglary, vehicle crime, robbery and criminal damage. They were disappointed to note that violence against the person had increased and asked for a detailed briefing on the strategies and initiatives introduced to tackle all violent crime.

Key Figures include:

- Robbery – down 30%, meaning 300 fewer incidents
- Domestic Burglary – down 16%, equating to 632 fewer incidents
- Other Burglary – down 14%, with 488 fewer incidents
- Theft from a motor vehicle – down 19% with 966 fewer incidents
- Theft of a motor vehicle – down 26%, leading to 362 fewer incidents
- Criminal damage – down 8%, 691 less incidents
- Violence against the person – up by 6%, with 399 more incidents

Members noted that detection levels had fallen slightly, with an overall rate of 25.6%, just short of the target set for the year of 26%.

However, since the introduction of Restorative Justice in the last quarter, 230 incidents have been dealt with via that means, which is not included in the overall detection rates and without which the target would have been met. After discussion Members felt that if, as proven in other parts of the country, the use of Restorative Justice leaves victims more satisfied with the outcomes and reduces the re-offending rate, communities can expect further improvements next year. To drive this process the Police Authority has once again set challenging targets for the coming year.

However, members were disappointed to see that the number of detections in priority areas for the Authority, such as vehicle crime, robbery and criminal damage had not met the targets set and asked for urgent action to increase the number of crimes detected.

Martin Pantling, Chair of the Performance Committee, said: "We appreciate that these figures are, in terms of crime reduction, very good news for Bedfordshire residents. There is now less chance of them becoming a victim of crime and I hope that people feel safer as a result.

"However, we were concerned at particular detection rates for volume crimes such as vehicle crime, criminal damage and robbery. As the number of crimes being committed in these areas has reduced we expected to see a higher percentage being solved. We know this has a big impact on confidence and satisfaction, and we have asked the force to make every effort to prioritise these areas.

“This year’s performance has seen significant strides in the right direction and now we are asking the Chief Constable to focus on reducing violent crime and increasing detections.”

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Editor Note

Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice gives victims the chance to tell offenders the real impact of their crime, to get answers to their questions and to receive an apology. It gives the offenders the chance to understand the real impact of what they’ve done and to do something to repair the harm. Restorative Justice holds offenders to account for what they have done, personally and directly, and helps victims to get on with their lives.

Restorative Justice can take place when the offender has already been sentenced, in prison or in the community. It can take place when an offender has pleaded guilty in court, but before the judge passes sentence. It can be used as an alternative to prosecution for less serious crimes.