



PRESS INFORMATION

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More detections needed, says Police Authority

At a time when 'value for money' is uppermost in the minds of most people, members of Bedfordshire Police Authority's Performance and Planning Committee have asked the Force to identify the most effective ways of both reducing and detecting 'volume' crimes.

In terms of the number of crimes committed in these areas, members noted that compared to the same period last year overall 'serious acquisitive crime' which covers burglary, robbery and theft of and from a vehicle, had fallen by 5%. In order to see this improvement maintained they were keen to establish which of the initiatives used to drive down crime had provided the greatest return.

However, there was concern that between April-June 2010 the detection rate for the same crimes was just 9.1% - against a target of 14%. The detection rate for all recorded crime stands at 25%, slightly below the target of 27%. This figure includes crimes where the offender has been dealt with using Restorative Justice measures instead of a court appearance.

Acquisitive crimes are a priority for the Authority and while members accepted that the targets they had set were challenging, they were keen to see performance improve to meet these targets. In response to detailed questioning by the Committee, the Chief Constable reassured members that, in her opinion, the targets for the year could still feasibly be met over the full twelve months.

Members also heard from Assistant Chief Constable Kath Govier that the Offender Management System, whereby known offenders are effectively managed and encouraged to reform their habits, is delivering positive results.

The use of Smartwater, the property identification system, was discussed and members asked for an indication of return on investment for its use. They were informed that Smartwater is an excellent way to prove the ownership of property and can in some circumstances prove an offender has been in a specific location. It was less useful, though, as a tool to track down offenders.

Martin Pantling, Chair of the Performance Committee, said: "It is obviously important that all our resources are used to greatest effect and in this period

of austerity we need to get more from every pound we invest. That is why we want the Force to focus on those activities that deliver the best results.

“We are very disappointed at the detection rate, which we feel is too low, and particularly at the stubbornly high number of domestic burglaries still being committed. These are both priorities with a wide geographical spread across the County which contribute significantly to the number of overall crimes. The Chief Constable has however reconfirmed that the Force will still be working towards the stretching targets we have set for the year in these areas, so we hope the picture will change in the coming months. “

ENDS

Media Enquiries: Sallie Blair, Better Times 01283 821012