

5th February 2010



PRESS INFORMATION

Police Authority Scrutiny on Police Performance

Crime across Bedfordshire has dropped by 2744 incidents (8%) in the nine months ending 31st December 2009 compared to the previous year.

Members of Bedfordshire Police Authority's Performance Committee met this week to scrutinise the latest performance figures for Bedfordshire Police and noted the significant progress being made in some categories before questioning the Chief Constable in detail on areas where there was considered to be an underperformance.

The delivery of the Policing Pledge was examined and it was agreed that further improvements have been made since the Force was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary last year. However, the Committee requested a report for its next meeting detailing the extent to which the force is meeting the standards set out by the Pledge in terms of their accessibility to local people.

Members also noted the drop in acquisitive crime which saw:

- A fall of 33% (269) in robbery offences
- A reduction of 15% (452) in domestic burglary offences
- A 20% (789) drop in theft from a vehicle
- A 21% (217) drop in theft of a vehicle.

The performance report also showed a 7% reduction in criminal damage (477 fewer incidents); a drop in sexual offences of 14% (59 fewer crimes) and a 26% (285) fall in fraud and forgery offences.

Members expressed their concern that there had been 322 incidents of serious violence against a 9 month pro-rata target of 205 despite a number of strategies put in place to tackle violent crime.

Although overall detections remained at 26%, Members were unhappy to see that detections relating to robbery, vehicle crime, violent crime and racially aggravated crime are below the target set.

The Committee wished to see further progress with detections, particularly in priority areas, in light of the significant investment made by the Authority over recent years, the Force having its highest ever number of officers and there being less recorded crime to investigate.

Members were disappointed that, despite the reduction in recorded crime, there was no evidence of a corresponding rise in public confidence, which is now the Government's key target measure for all police forces. The Committee therefore requested a report on the activities being undertaken by other forces which have seen increases in confidence.

Martin Pantling, Chair of the Authority's Performance Committee, said: "We obviously welcome the noticeable reductions in certain categories of crime, and the fall in crime overall, but we are concerned at the number of violent offences being recorded.

"The Chief Constable gave a comprehensive report on the work being carried out to address these types of offence and we have asked her to keep us informed of progress on an ongoing basis.

"We have also made clear that, given the increased resources now at the Force's disposal we would expect to see an increase in the number of crimes detected in priority areas.

"Finally, the Police Authority wants Bedfordshire residents to not just be safer, but to feel safer too, so we asked for a report on good practices in other forces to ensure that reductions in crime translate into public reassurance. We will consider this and the overall approach to increasing confidence, at our next meeting."

Ends

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