



PRESS INFORMATION

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POLICE PERFORMANCE IMPROVES

Bedfordshire Police Authority has revealed that there were 5749 fewer victims of crime in Bedfordshire and Luton in the twelve month period ending March 31st 2009 compared to the previous year.

The Authority's Performance Committee has now scrutinised the end of year (April 08-March 09) and considered the progress made by Bedfordshire Police in addressing crime. Home Office figures show Bedfordshire Police to be improving in 13 out of 16 key areas.

Overall crime figures show an 11% drop in 2008-09 compared to 2007-08 and illustrate that local issues are being addressed. This is particularly noticeable in areas such as criminal damage where there was a 14% decrease (1421 less recorded incidents) and a 21% drop (236 fewer victims) in 'theft from the person' which is in direct contrast to the national picture where there has been a 25% increase.

Other crime categories where the year has seen significant progress include:

- Robbery – 16% reduction, meaning 196 fewer victims
- Domestic burglary – 10% reduction, meaning 445 fewer victims
- Theft from motor vehicle – 21% reduction, meaning 1395 fewer victims
- Theft of a motor vehicle – 16% reduction, meaning 279 fewer victims

There was a recorded increase of 30% (130 recorded incidents) in sexual offences, which Authority members accepted was due to a proactive campaign to address problems such as kerb crawlers. Equally, there was an anticipated rise in the number of drug offences due to a force-wide focus on drug offenders. This focus has seen the detection rate for such offences rise to 94.2%.

The overall detection rate has risen to 26.3% in 2008-09 from 22% in 2007-08, which means that the Force has risen to thirtieth out of the forty three Police Forces in England and Wales.

Brian Spurr, Chair of the Performance Committee, said after the meeting:
"There is a lot to welcome in these figures and I'm pleased to see the overall progress that is being made. I'm particularly pleased to see that the proactive

campaigns to address sexual crime and drug crime are working. More incidents have been reported and there has been an increase in the number of crimes detected.

"I am, however, aware that the economic climate is likely to pose some serious challenges in the future if people turn to crime to try and beat the credit crunch. While we hope that this doesn't happen, past experience suggests that a recession usually brings with it an associated rise in crime in areas such as burglary, fraud and theft.

"That is why we will continue to scrutinise every area of performance, looking for fluctuations in performance and monitoring the effectiveness of the strategies in place to combat crime, which have proved successful over the last year, to ensure that any impact is minimised.

"We want the public to know that as an Authority, we are doing everything we can to support the Force to address local policing challenges and provide the best possible service."

The full performance report is available in the library section of the Police Authority's website www.bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk.

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