



**REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MALCOLM DOHERTY  
 CHAIR OF LANCASHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY**

**POLICING IN BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN**

The Police Authority is pleased to provide a report for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council with regard to Police performance in the Borough. The partnership approach in Blackburn with Darwen to tackling community safety issues is very strong and there are effective working relationships between the Local Authority and the Police. These are seen both at neighbourhood level in individual areas and in the relationships between the Divisional Commander and Senior officers within the Council.

**CRIME**

Blackburn with Darwen lies within the Lancashire Constabulary Eastern Division. Reduction and detection of crime is the foremost priority for the division and detailed performance information is available for an aggregated total of all crimes as well as individual crime categories such as burglary or violent crime.

Crime in the borough has reduced consistently in recent years and the size of the reduction together with the number of detected crimes puts the town in a very strong position when comparisons are made with crime performance in other areas both within Lancashire and nationally.

Crime in the borough has shown a downward trend for over 7 years and still shows signs of reducing even further. To give some idea of the advances that are still being made even after many years of continually improving performance, the table below shows the average number of crimes per month in 2007/08 compared to the most recent full reporting year of 2009/10:

	Crimes / Month	Detections	Ratio
2007/08	1185	398	33.6%
2009/10	1012	366	36.2%

Table 1: Average monthly crime & detected crime in Blackburn with Darwen

This means that on average there were 173 fewer victims of crime every month in Blackburn with Darwen in 2009 when compared to 2007. And a greater percentage of those crimes were solved – meaning that offenders were brought to justice and increased satisfaction for victims of crime.

Some categories of crime such as burglary are of particular concern to the public and the strong performance shown in all crime is reflected in these important areas. For example, there were 103 fewer burglaries in 2009/10 than there were in 2007/08. Overall burglary levels are so low that there is only just over 1 burglary in Blackburn with Darwen per day.

To help gauge performance, the Home Office compares police areas against a 'family' of their most similar peers comprised of police divisions from all England and Wales. When Eastern

Division is compared against its most similar group (MSG) it shows some outstanding performance against the other 14 areas. In the case of burglary, it is placed 2<sup>nd</sup> for reducing burglaries and 1<sup>st</sup> for detecting them. It has 6.9 burglaries per 1000 households and this compares to 6.6 for the best performing area and 21.4 for the worst.

Other individual categories of crime show similarly outstanding performance. The table below shows reductions and detections for a number of crime types in the most recent full reporting year (2009/10):

	Crimes	Detections	Detection Ratio	Change 2009/10 -v- 2008/09
All Crime	12,141	4,394	36.2%	-7.6%
Burglary	434	135	31.1%	-24.4%
Violent Crime	2,746	1,410	51.3%	-3.8%
Vehicle Crime	1,115	261	23.4%	-6%
Criminal Damage	2,916	508	17.4%	-15.8%
Robbery	74	38	51.4%	-50.7%

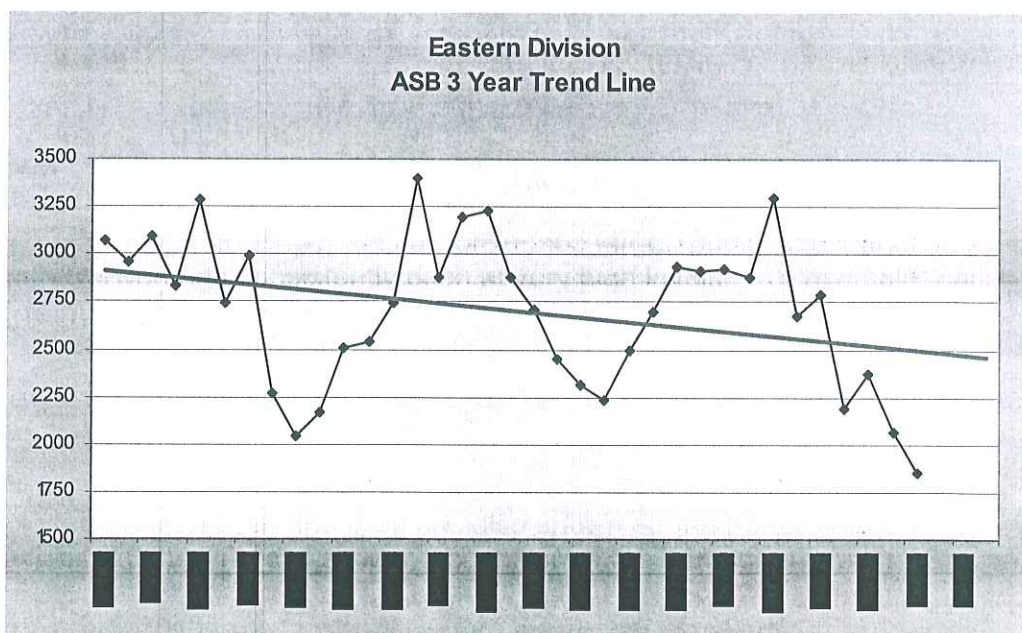
Table 2: Crime Performance in Blackburn with Darwen (2009/10)

## CONFIDENCE

Although the government no longer sets a Confidence target, public confidence in policing in Blackburn with Darwen has consistently been at very high levels. For example, earlier this year the Confidence measure for the police for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in the borough was 88%. The only area in Lancashire to do better was the Ribble Valley – also covered by Eastern Division.

## ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

In addition to core crime issues, the area has also shown strong performance in tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). There is a clear recognition of the damaging impact ASB can have on neighbourhoods and police in the borough have been at the forefront of implanting minimum standards for dealing with reports of ASB. The chart below shows the progress that is being made with a downward trend in the number of victims of ASB in the Eastern Division area:



In other areas of police work in the borough, there have been reductions over recent years in the number of road traffic collisions and work within the Shared Neighbourhood Teams has delivered many successes that have helped to improve the quality of life for residents in the town. A sample of some of the work undertaken by the Shared Neighbourhood Teams to protect local people is shown below:

- ASB Closure Orders
- Crack House Closure
- Anti Social Behaviour Orders
- Support to Operation Nimrod tackling drug supply

Some of the other key priority areas of work for policing in Blackburn with Darwen are:

- Protecting People – dealing with Domestic Abuse / Dangerous Offenders / Child Sexual Exploitation / Community Cohesion
- Organised Crime Groups – tackling serious, series, and complex crimes that are committed by organised groups of criminals.
- Integrated Offender Management – working in partnership to deal with prolific offenders

## **OTHER POLICING ISSUES**

In addition to the issues above, Blackburn with Darwen also deals with other significant policing issues such as Premiership football matches, large public events including marches, seasonal celebrations (Eid, bonfire night etc).

## **CHALLENGES AHEAD**

There will be challenges to come for policing in Blackburn with Darwen with probably the most significant being to maintain outstanding performance while dealing with shrinking resources and potential reductions in staff.

Crime tends to be closely correlated to wider social factors – particularly recession and economic hardship. The Authority understands that Eastern Division will have to manage difficult choices about what areas of work to prioritise and it will do this by working with partners in the borough including not just other organisations, but communities themselves. The type of successful partnerships that the police will seek to build on include the Revolution Project (Integrated Offender Management), Engage Team to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation, and Think Family (joined up working to help families in need).

The Council will be aware that the Constabulary, with the Authority's support following the Comprehensive Spending Review, has given notice of consultation on potential redundancies to the Trade Unions. This is in the light of uncertainty around the continuation of central government funding for PCSOs. The Authority would wish to make clear that no reductions in front line policing will be entered into lightly and that they will work with local partners to make sure that resources continue to be directed to areas of highest risk. The Authority and Constabulary are committed to maintaining PCSO posts wherever possible.

The Police Authority will continue to work closely with the Constabulary and its partners to address these challenges.

Cllr Malcolm Doherty