



CRIME

Blackburn with Darwen forms part of Lancashire Constabulary's Eastern Division. The reduction and detection of crime and the protection of people are the foremost priorities for the Division. Detailed performance information is available for an aggregated total of all crimes as well as individual crime categories.

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 strong position when comparisons are made with crime performance in other areas both within Lancashire and nationally.

In my last report to the Council forum I highlighted good performance for the period July – Sept 2011. This report presents the latest performance information covering the reporting period of Quarter 3 (October to December) and for the Year to Date (April to December).

Quarter 3: October to December 2011

- All Crime shows an increase of 4.8% or an increase of 176 crimes.
- Serious Acquisitive Crime reduced by 7.2%. This equates to 43 less victims of crime.
- Burglary has remained stable over time however vehicle crime has reduced by 11.6% equating to 46 less victims of crime.
- All Violent Crime shows an increase of 17.2% or 130 crimes.

Crime Type	Oct-Dec 2010	Oct-Dec 2011	Change
All Crime	3658	3834	+4.8%
SAC	596	553	-7.2%
Burglary in Dwelling	171	171	=
All Violent Crime	754	884	+17.2%
Damage	708	757	+6.9%

Table 1: Summary of BwD Crime Performance – October to December 2011

NB: SAC stands for Serious Acquisitive Crime which is Burglary, Robbery, and Vehicle Crime

Year to Date: April – December 2011

- All Crime shows an increase of 1% or 86 crimes.
- Serious Acquisitive Crime and in particular Burglary and Vehicle Crime are showing significant reductions
- The Violent Crime increase amounts to 96 crimes.

Crime Type	Apr-Dec 2010	Apr-Dec 2011	Change
All Crime	8953	9039	+1%
SAC	1423	1284	-9.8%
Burglary in Dwelling	406	358	-11.8%
All Violent Crime	1960	2056	+4.9%
Damage	1771	1831	+3.4%

Table 2: Summary of BwD Crime Performance – April to December 2011

NB: SAC stands for Serious Acquisitive Crime which is Burglary, Robbery, and Vehicle Crime

Whilst the All Crime category shows an increase of 1% this amounts to a total of 86 crimes over the first 9 months of the fiscal year, and whilst an increase in any crime is unwelcome, the increase must be read in the context of significant pressures both for the Police, Council and other partners alike. The Division is hopeful that although modest, the Borough will see a reduction in the all crime category by year end.

The continued reductions in Serious Acquisitive crime are a significant achievement for the Borough particularly in light of the challenging austere climate that is being experienced. Historically during such times, acquisitive crime offences show increases, and some areas nationally have indeed seen increases in iconic crimes such as Burglary in domestic dwellings.

The area that is providing the greatest challenge to performance, as identified in my last report to the forum, is that of Violent Crime. There are significant pressures in targeting these offences. The profile of violent crime in the Borough is such that much of it is committed indoors (approx. 50%) and is linked to alcohol consumption. These are factors that require multi-faceted partnership solutions more so than is the case for violence in public spaces linked to the night-time economy. The Borough is committed to making its communities safe and has in place plans to address the increase in this and other crime categories. The increase year to date of 4.9% should be read in the context of year on year reductions of 4.7% and 5.4% respectively.

Whilst criminal damage offences show a 6.9% increase for Quarter 3 and a 3.4% rise year to date, this is an improved position from that reported at the last forum. It is important to understand the challenging performance environment created by such significant reductions achieved year on year and again, this should be read in the context of a substantial 22.8% reduction last year and 11.2% in 2009/10. The on-going plans to target criminal damage offenders, led by the Shared Neighbourhood Teams will seek to ensure that a continued improvement is seen during the remainder of the year.

A key measure of how effective the police are in tackling crime is how many offences are detected – or the proportion of crimes that result in an offender being brought to justice. In Blackburn with Darwen the detection rate for all crime for the year to date is 35.8% which is a 0.2% increase on that reported at the last forum.

CONFIDENCE & SATISFACTION

Levels of public confidence in the police and the satisfaction of people who interact with police are important measures of the quality of policing service Lancashire Constabulary provides. Eastern Division has a particularly proud record and public confidence in policing in the Division continues to be amongst the best in the county. Table 3 below uses the latest data available to show how confident people are in Lancashire Constabulary as a whole. Blackburn with Darwen is covered by Eastern Division:

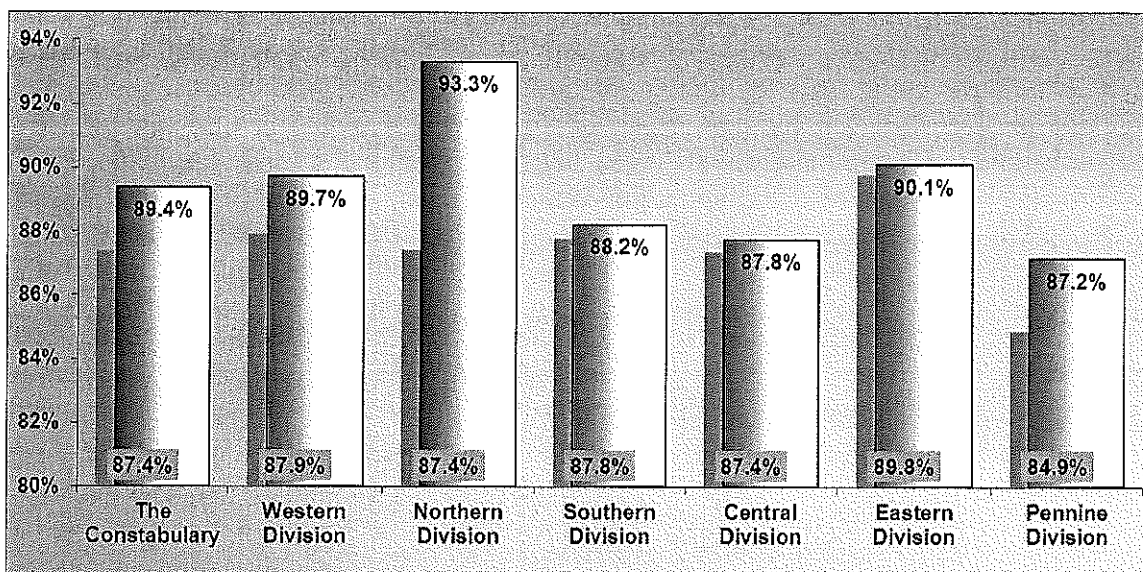
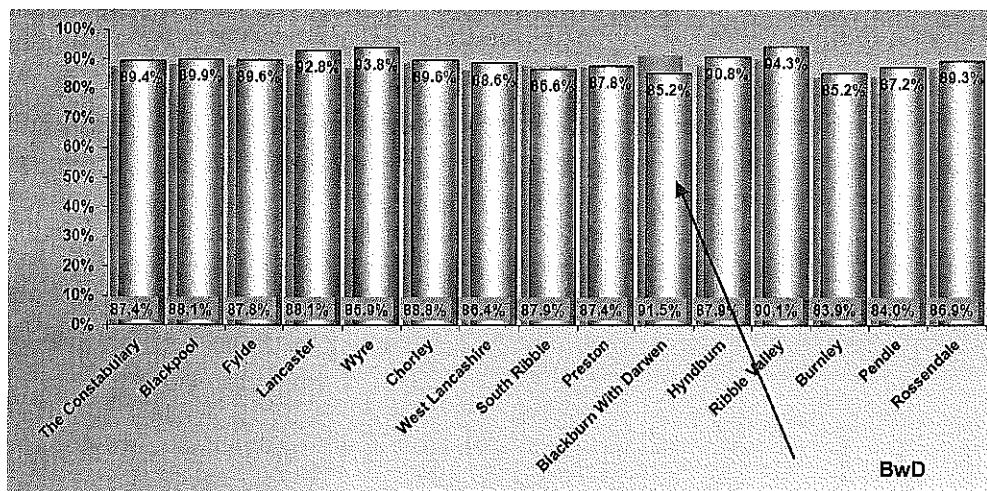


Table 3: Public Confidence in Lancashire Constabulary as a whole

The next table (table 4) below shows how confident people are in different Boroughs across the county area: During this 12 month period to Nov 2011, the graph indicates a reduction of 6.3% in Blackburn with Darwen. The Division has examined this data and the prevailing factors to understand this issue and it is understood that the dip occurred between February and September with some recovery taking place in the last 3 months. Diagnostic data demonstrates that police 'visibility' and 'understanding' were the main issues at that time and work continues by the Division with partners to ensure the recent improvement continues.



(Confidence File - Confidence Measures - Period Comparisons – CDRPs Nov 11)

Table 4: Public Confidence in Lancashire – breakdown by boroughs

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Borough continues to show strong performance in tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). Eastern Division recognises the damaging impact ASB can have on neighbourhoods and police have been at the forefront of developing minimum standards for dealing with reports of ASB. Processes are well established within the Community Safety Partnership to identify appropriate partnership interventions in the most problematic cases.

For the past 5 years the police have been using the 14 categories of ASB as defined by National Standards for Incident Recording (NSIR) for dealing with incidents that fall short of being notifiable crimes. Whilst these categories provided a suitable data set for recording ASB they did not encourage call-handlers to consider the risk involved for the caller, other individuals or the community as a whole if the ASB continued.

In April 2011 the 14 categories were therefore streamlined to 3 categories. These are Personal, Nuisance and Environmental. The change to using 3 categories has provided an increased focus on the need to risk assess ASB incidents so that timely and appropriate interventions are made. This is particularly significant where repeat and/or vulnerable victims are involved.

As a result of the change, it is not possible to provide a comparative figure for ASB incidents during this fiscal year.

OTHER POLICING ISSUES

In addition to the issues above, Blackburn with Darwen also continues to deal with other significant issues such as Premiership football matches and other large events.

Most recently the Division has experienced high demand during the Christmas and New Year period, which included a shooting incident in Accrington, impacting on the Borough, together with a number of other serious incidents. The Division has the appropriate resources allocated to deal with each of the incidents.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

There will be challenges to come for policing in Blackburn with Darwen and in common with the main issues presented in the last report, the most significant being to maintain outstanding performance while dealing with contracting resources at a time of potentially increasing demand.

Crime trends will be closely correlated to wider social factors – particularly recession and economic hardship. Eastern Division will have to manage difficult choices about areas of work to prioritise. It will do this by using the experience of its staff and by continuing to work with partners in the Borough to provide a policing service that is responsive and meets the needs of local people.

The summer of 2012 will also see a number of significant national and international events. The most notable of these will be the Olympic Games, the European Championships and the Queens Diamond Jubilee.

CHANGES TO POLICE GOVERNANCE

Whilst the update below I presented to the last forum still applies, the Home Secretary has now circulated a Shadow Strategic Policing Requirement in support of the move to introduce Police and Crime Commissioners. The Shadow SPR is a statement of the collective capabilities that police forces across England and Wales will be expected to have in place in order to protect the public from cross-boundary threats such as terrorism, civil emergencies, public disorder and organised crime. The 'Shadow SPR' does not, at this stage, have statutory effect, but policing partners are strongly encouraged to have regard to it when exercising their responsibilities and to use this as an opportunity to test and learn from it before the statutory SPR is issued next summer. Both police and crime commissioners and chief constables will be required to have regard to the 'Strategic Policing Requirement' from November 2012 in their planning and resource allocation.

Representation on the Police Authority & Police and Crime Panel

The Police Authority will continue to operate and fulfil all its functions and requirements up to 21 November 2012 and Blackburn with Darwen will continue to have one place on the Authority. I will not be standing for re-election as a Blackburn with Darwen Councillor and the Council need to consider a suitable representative from Blackburn with Darwen.

As Members are aware, there will also be a Police and Crime Panel comprising a member from each of the Local Authorities in the Lancashire Force area, including Blackburn with Darwen and a minimum of two co-opted members to support the Police and Crime Commissioner in the effective exercise of his/her functions. Discussions are progressing and it is hoped that a Shadow Police and Crime Panel can be established early in the new municipal year. Discussions are underway to agree processes for decision making for the new commissioner and call in to the Police and Crime Panel.

Partnership Working

The Police Authority is working with the Constabulary to actively support the Community Safety Partnerships in preparing for transition to the Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure a smooth transition and ensure that the CSP continues to have a key role in delivering local community safety initiatives to tackle issues of concern in their area.

Home Office

The Home Office are running a series of events around the country supporting the transition process with workshops covering Scrutiny and the Police and Crime Panel, and Partnership Working with a specific session for Police and Local Authority Leaders. The Lancashire event will take place on Tuesday 24 January in Lancaster and I understand that invites will be sent direct from the Home Office to all Local Authorities and Responsible Authorities.

As Joint Chair of the Transition Governance Board that has been established by the Police Authority and the Constabulary, I am confident that we are working towards a safe transition and ensuring the best possible outcome for the residents of Blackburn with Darwen and the rest of the Lancashire Police Force area.

Cllr Malcolm T Doherty
Chairman
Lancashire Police Authority