



**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 steady performance for the period October – December 2011. This report presents the latest performance information covering the reporting period of Quarter 4 (January to March 2012) and for the Year to Date (April to March).

Quarter 4: January to March 2012

- All Crime shows an increase of 2.3% or an increase of 59 crimes.
- Serious Acquisitive Crime increased by 11.2% which equates to 39 additional crimes.
- Burglary has remained stable during this quarter with no increase. There was however an increase in vehicle crime which is reflected in the overall Serious Acquisitive Crime increase of 11.2%.
- All Violent Crime shows a welcome reduction of 10.5% or 67 fewer crimes.

Crime Type	Jan-Mar 2011	Jan-Mar 2012	Change
All Crime	2621	2680	+2.3%
SAC	230	270	+11.2%
Burglary in Dwelling	97	97	=
All Violent Crime	639	572	-10.5%
Damage	492	538	+9.3%

*Table 1: Summary of BwD Crime Performance – January to March 2012*

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

Year to Date: April 2011 – March 2012

- All Crime shows an increase of 0.8% or 90 crimes for the full year ending March 2012.
- Serious Acquisitive Crime and in particular Burglary and Vehicle Crime reduced significantly by 5.3% or 94 fewer crimes.
- The Violent Crime increase of 0.5% amounts to 13 crimes.

Crime Type	Apr 11-March 12	Apr 11-Mar 12	Change
All Crime	11574	11664	+0.8%
SAC	1771	1677	-5.3%
Burglary in Dwelling	503	458	-8.9%
All Violent Crime	2599	2612	+0.5%
Damage	2251	2355	+4.6%

*Table 2: Summary of BwD Crime Performance – April 2011 to March 2012*

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

Whilst the 'All Crime' category shows an increase of 0.8% this amounts to a total of 90 crimes over the full 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 desire to achieve a year on year, all crime reduction, has been challenging and whilst the Division was hopeful that a modest reduction would be achieved, in reality the 'All Crime' figure increased by less than 1 percentage point.

The 5.3% reduction in Serious Acquisitive Crime is 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. There were 45 fewer victims of domestic burglaries throughout the year in the Borough.

The area that presented the greatest challenge to performance during the year was that of Violent Crime. There were and continue to remain, 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 continues to implement plans to address the increase in this and other crime categories. The increase year to date of 4.9% reported at the last meeting was significantly reduced during a strong Quarter 4 and a slight increase of 0.5% or 13 crimes is now reported for the full year.

Whilst criminal damage offences show a 4.6% increase for the year it is important to understand the challenging performance environment created by 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 improvements are seen during the coming months.

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 April 2011 to March 2012 was 35.6% in comparison to 36.9% the previous year.

## 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 remain in the high 80 per cent bracket. Table 3 below uses the latest data available to show how confident people are in Lancashire Constabulary as a whole. The reduction of 1.4% is explained in the context provided for Table 4 below. Blackburn with Darwen is covered by Eastern Division:

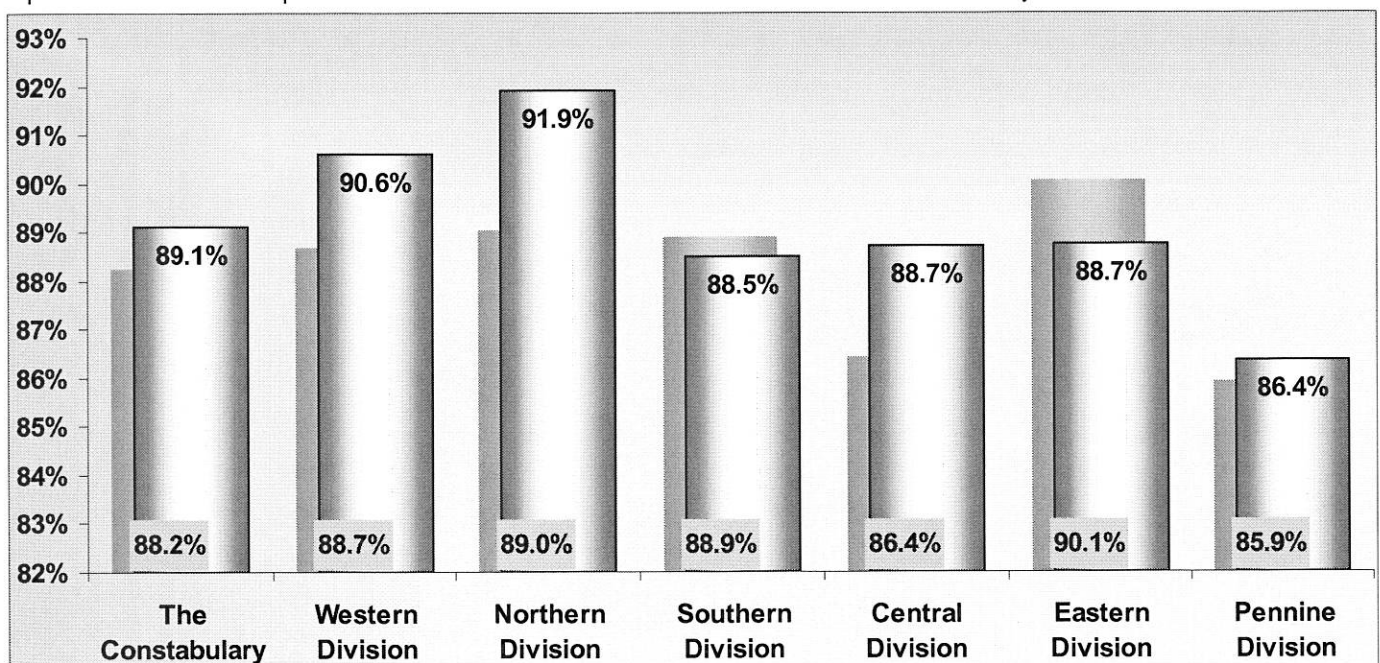
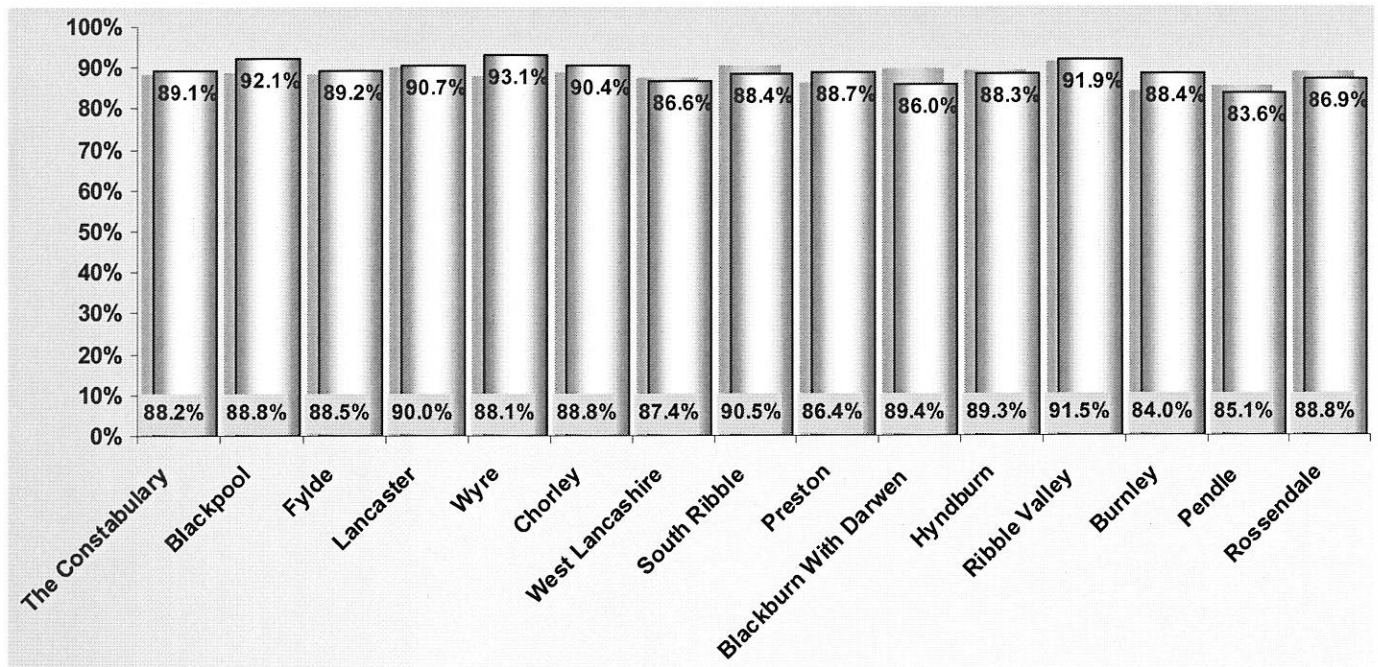


Table 3: Public Confidence in Lancashire Constabulary as a whole

The next table (Table 4) below shows how confident people are in different Boroughs across the county area: During the 12 month period to Feb 2012, the graph indicates a reduction of 3.4% in Blackburn with Darwen. This was at 6.3% for the 12 months ending Nov 2011 with a confidence percentage of 85.2%. It is therefore pleasing to note that the reduction shown last time has been stemmed and now shows small increase in the right direction for a 12 month rolling period. The Division examined the data and prevailing factors in respect of the reduction previously reported to understand this issues, and it is understood that the dip occurred between February and September 2011 with some recovery taking place in the last 3 months of 2011. 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 Feb 12)

Table 4: Public Confidence in Lancashire – breakdown by boroughs

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## 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.

## **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**

The Governments intent to introduce Police and Crime Commissioners continues a pace and is supported by a shadow strategic policing requirement. 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 in the 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. The Police Authority have started to work with the Constabulary to understand what resources the Constabulary needs to have to make sure it can be sure that Lancashire can meet these strategic requirements.

The Police Authority continues to contribute at a national level to the development of secondary legislation and guidance in support of the Act and is actively working with partners at a local level to ensure a smooth transition from the Authority to the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Authority is particularly aware of the impact that this Act will have on the wider community safety landscape and is working closely with Community Safety Partnerships to ensure that they are in the best possible position to work with the Commissioner. It is particularly important that we work across the whole of the Constabulary area and since my last report, the Home Office has decided that it will transfer responsibility to the Police Authority for allocation of the Home Office element of Youth Offending Team grants ahead of the original date of 2013. The Authority has met with representatives from the YOT's from Blackburn with Darwen as well as the County and Blackpool and are confident that they will be able to continue to operate as planned. We have started to work more closely with the Criminal Justice Partnership and have a series of planning events scheduled. We are very appreciative of the support given by the Graham Burgess, in his role as Police Area Returning Officer. That has enabled the authority to push ahead with plans to make sure that people in Lancashire are aware of the elections in November and we are agreeing a timetable of awareness raising to take place after the Local Council elections in May have been concluded.

As Joint Chair of the Transition Governance Board that has been established by the Police Authority and the Constabulary, I remain 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**