

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

Agenda Item 6

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Crime trends and performance in Brighton & Hove: Position at 31st March 2010		
Date of Meeting:	5th July 2010		
Report of:	<i>Director of Environment</i>		
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report describes crime trends in Brighton & Hove up to March 2010 and reports against key crime targets relating to the Community Safety, Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy, 2008-11. The report is intended to keep members of the Community Safety Forum apprised of crime trends and of recent work which is going on in support of the various areas.
- 1.2 Graphs with monthly data are also provided going back to April 2006. This enables recent data to be interpreted in the context of both longer term trends and also seasonal crime cycles (where appropriate).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) The Community Safety Forum notes the information provided in this report and invited to:
 - i) comment on any developments they may be aware of from their own or their organisation's experience which may help to understand and interpret the police crime data contained in this report.
 - ii) consider the potential for supporting crime reduction and community safety when their organisations develop and take forward projects

3. INFORMATION:

Total Police Recorded Crime

- 3.2 In 2009/10 there was a reduction in overall crime of 3.1% compared to 2008/9 and this exceeds our 3% reduction target. This is a continuation of the long term downward trend experienced in the past ten years. The main crime areas contributing to this reduction are violent crime, criminal damage and theft.

Criminal Damage

- 3.3 Criminal damage offences during 2009/10 were 6.1% fewer than in 2008/9. This position has consistently improved over the course of the year. Damage against dwellings and other buildings has shown a consistent decline over the course of the year. Earlier in the year damage to vehicles had been showing an notable increase compared with 2008/9, but the position has consistently improved and at the end of the 2009/10 the number of these crimes is only slightly higher than 2008/9.
- 3.4 Work with local communities to improve environmental design have been taking place in a number of locations, for example, the Environment Improvement Team have input to the redesign of Richmond Parade to reduce crime and create a public space which is safe, attractive and meets the needs of local people. Other work has included community 'green up and clean up' days which encourage local ownership of areas and make them less conducive to criminal damage.

Violent Crime

- 3.5 The number violent offences involving injury (including both serious and other injury) have reduced in 2009/10 by 1.8%, although this is short of the 3% reduction target. Alcohol misuse is often behind violent offences. The 'Alcohol Brief Interventions' scheme, which involves the provision of information and advice to hazardous and harmful drinkers whose alcohol misuse has come to the attention of services has been in place since October. There were 1297 brief intervention delivered between Jan and Mar was 1297. An overarching Alcohol Strategy for the city is being developed to ensure that the work of the wide range of partner agencies, who have an interest in managing the use of alcohol in the city is co-ordinated.

Sexual Offences

- 3.6 There have been 331 sexual offences recorded in 2009/10, three more than in 2008/9. During 2009 there were 293 referrals from Brighton and Hove to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, of whom more than a quarter were under 18 years and a further percentage were identified as vulnerable adults with mental health needs also identified. Work is being undertaken to ensure that Safeguarding arrangements and Adult Social Care work is integrated with that of the SARC. There has also been a successful bid for an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor who will work with Survivor's Network to support victims. Further discussion of developing work in this areas is taking place under another agenda item of this Forum meeting.

Domestic Burglary

- 3.7 During 2009/10, numbers of domestic burglaries rose by 5% compared with 2008/9. The long term pattern over the last three years has oscillated and is often related to the presence or absence of individual prolific burglars. Partnership work between Sussex Police and Trading Standards has included stickers distributed to houses of elderly or vulnerable people for use on the front door if they do not want unsolicited traders. There is ongoing work to work with offenders whose motivation for offending is driven by drugs through sentencing which includes a requirement to undertake drug treatment. This work has been successful in meeting targets and drug users who have offended are assertively worked with to minimise the risk of reoffending.

Motor Vehicle and Cycle Theft

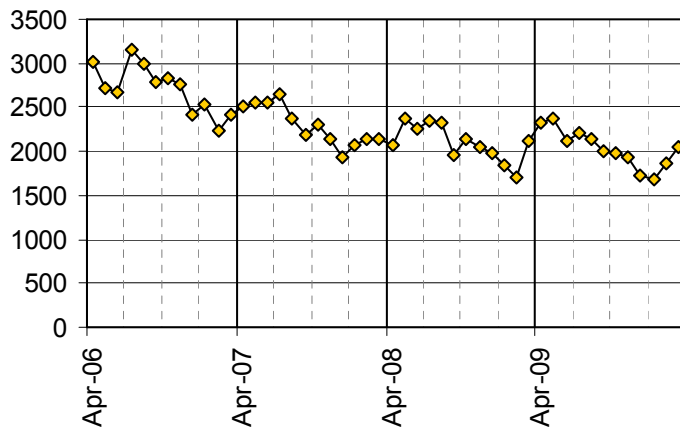
- 3.8 During 2009/10 there was a small decrease in the number of motor vehicle thefts as in 2008/9. While numbers dropped by 69 thefts in Hove and showed a smaller decrease in the police central district, they rose in the east district by 75. Thefts from motor vehicles (TFMV) were more numerous than thefts of motor vehicles (TOMV) (accounting for 66% of all vehicle crime), but (as in the previous report) TFMV are continuing to show a decreasing trend (down by 10%) whereas TOMV are showing a rising trend (up by 27%). The theft of two-wheeled motor vehicles continues to present a problem and is contributing to this rise – they made up 42% of all vehicle thefts during March. In addition to work with a trap scooter to assist detection of crimes, the possibility of providing securing points in motorcycle parking places is being explored.
- 3.9 Police recorded cycle thefts reduced by 6.3% compared with last year. As part of a European project, the summer will see targeted work in cycle theft hotspot areas to provide further cycle parking stands and increase awareness of secure bike locking methods. Lessons learned from this project will inform future cycle parking provision and education work.

Domestic Violence and Hate Incidents and Crimes

- 3.10 The number of domestic violence incidents reported to the police is 6% higher than last year. While seeking to decrease the incidence of DV, there is also ongoing work to increase reporting. By improving support to victims including the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service and other work, the percentage of finalised DV court cases which are successfully concluded is increasing year on year and reached 72% in 2009/10. The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference process which works to reduce risks to high risk victims is to increase the number of cases being seen at the MARAC.
- 3.11 The number of racist and religiously motivated incidents (RRMI) recorded by the police continues to decline, although the number recorded through the multi-agency Racist Incident Report Form remains stable. In the period leading up to the general election there were concerns within the BME and faith communities around media reporting on migration and Islam in particular. Much racist and Islamophobic graffiti was found and reported within the city particularly in East Brighton. Also during May, the Community Safety Partnership (CSP, formerly the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership/CDRP) took an active part in working to ensure that an offensive website which emerged was reported. Work was undertaken to provide reassurance using the framework that exists to respond to critical incidents, to reiterate the reporting channels and support which is available to victims and all tensions and incidents were closely monitored.
- 3.12 Police recorded LGBT-motivated hate crimes and incidents also continue to fall. Work is taking place to ensure victims are supported through the criminal justice system so that the outcomes at court are successful. Training to LGBT services to around the provision of support to victims has taken place.
- 3.13 Underreporting of disability hate incidents in the city is an issue which is being addressed with a launch of reporting forms and publicity material being planned.

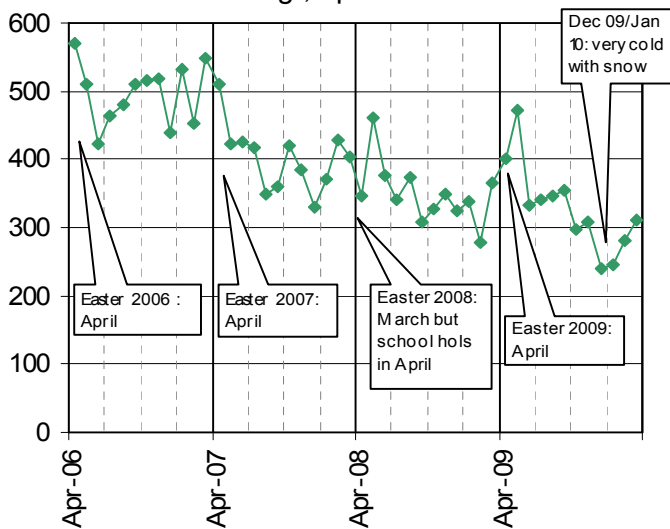
Crime trends up to March 2010

Total Crimes, April 2006 to March 2010



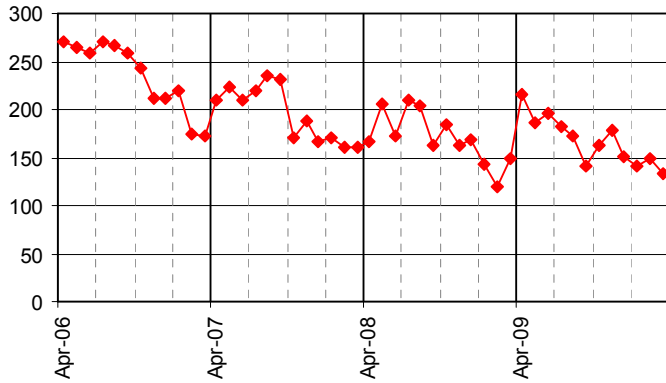
3.14 The typical seasonal pattern in crime levels has continued with lower levels over the winter months. Numbers in December and January were particularly low and number have increased again since then.

Criminal Damage, April 2006 to March 2010



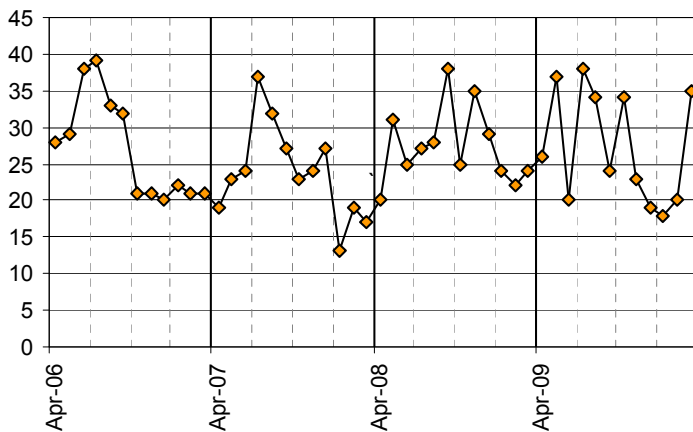
3.15 The performance year began with a steep increase in the number of criminal damage offence, but since then the trend has followed the same sort of seasonal trend experienced in the two previous years. Following the particularly low levels in Dec and Jan there has been a rise, but the numbers recorded in the last 6 months have remained consistently lower than the same period in 2008/9.

All Injury Violence
April 2006 to March 2010



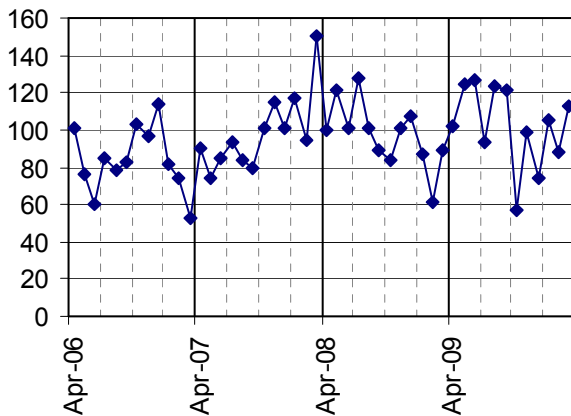
3.16 There is a clear seasonal pattern in injury violence and data up to Mar have continued to show a downward trend following a peak in Apr.

Sexual Offences
April 2006 - March 2010



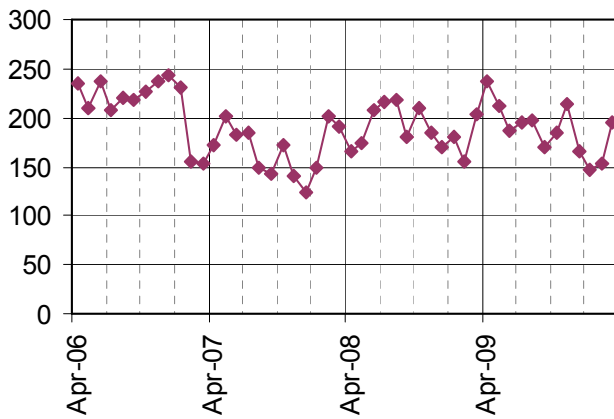
3.17 During the winter months numbers of sexual offences in the city were below 20 per month, although the number rose to 35 during the month of March. There have been recent developments in services which are aimed at increasing reporting and support to victims.

Domestic Burglary, Apr 2006 to March 2010



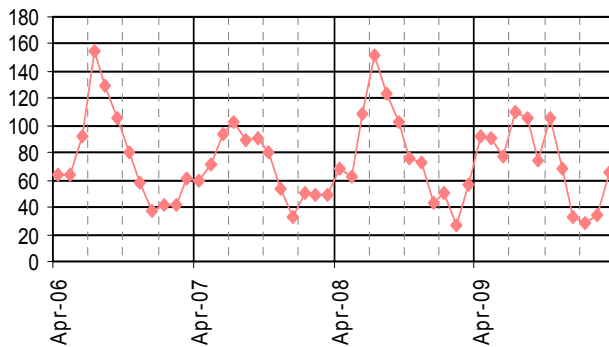
3.18 The number of domestic burglaries has fluctuated significantly during the last year between about 60 to over 120 per month.

Vehicle Crime, April 2006 to March 2010



3.19 Since a peak in April, the number of vehicles crimes broadly showed a declining trend until February, but numbers rose again to nearly 200 in the month of March. When examined separately, theft from vehicles is showing a 10% drop while thefts of vehicles (a smaller number than thefts from) is showing a 27% increase.

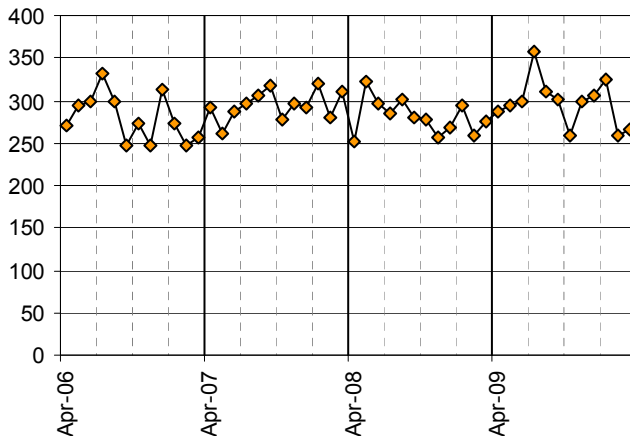
Theft of a Pedal Cycle, April 2006 to March 2010



3.20 Pedal cycle theft shows a strong seasonal effect related to the months when more people cycle. In particular, numbers of thefts were very low during Dec, Jan and Feb most likely to be influenced by reduced levels of cycling during to the cold/icy weather.

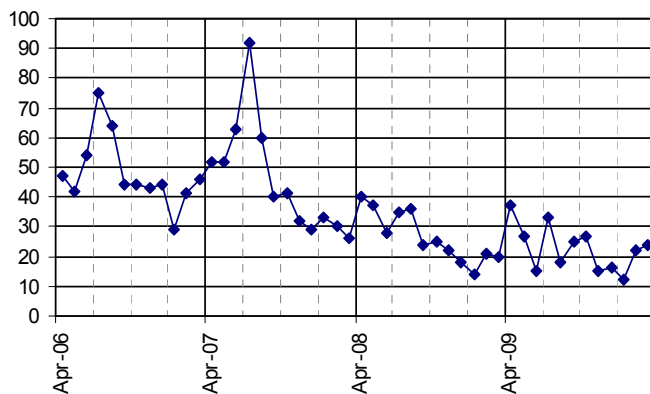
3.21 Police crime data presented in this report only reflect those crimes which are reported and recorded. There is likely to be a level of underreporting in many crime types. However, domestic violence and the hate crimes on this page are likely to be particularly liable to underreporting.

Domestic Violence Crimes and Incidents, April 2006 - March 2010



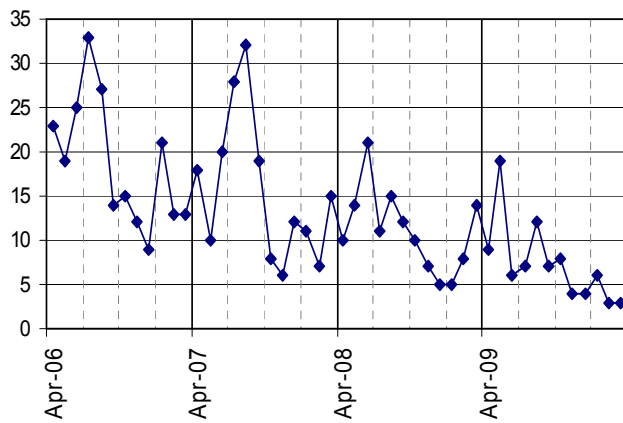
3.22 The number of domestic violence crimes during 2009/10 has shown some fluctuation over the course of the year, ranging between roughly 350 and 250 recorded crimes and incidents per month.

Racist and Religiously Motivated Crimes and Incidents, April 2006 to March 2010



3.23 The declining trend in racist and religiously motivated incidents and crimes appears to be continuing. Although over the last year numbers have shown some variability, the seasonal effect (more incidents in the summer months) is still present. Numbers recorded in January were at their lowest level since Apr 2006 but have risen again in subsequent months.

LGBT Hate Crimes and Incidents, April 2006 to March 2010



3.24 The declining long term trend appears to be continuing with only 3 cases recorded during the months of Feb and Mar. This is very low, even accounting for typical seasonal patterns.

Performance data for key crime types, 2009/10

Police recorded crimes, 2009/10	number of crimes 2008/9	number of crimes 2009/10	reduction target (from 2008/09 baseline)	performance against target to date	rank within 15 benchmarked CSPs ¹ (1=best; 15=worst)
Total Crimes	25,195	24,421	-3%	on target	5
Criminal Damage	4,189	3,932	-5%	on target	11
Injury Violence	2,050 ²	2,014	-3%	not on target	7 ³
Sexual Offences	328	328	no target	-	
Domestic Burglary	1,169	1,228	-3%	not on target	3
Theft from/of a Motor Vehicle	2,266	2,257	-3%	not on target	3
Pedal Cycle Theft	943	884	no target	-	6
Domestic Violence Crimes and Incidents	3,366	3,563	no target	-	
Racist/Rel. Crimes and Incidents	332	285	no target	-	
LGBT Hate Crimes and Incidents	132	88	no target	-	

¹ See Appendix for further information around the benchmarking arrangements

² As defined by Sussex Police

³ iQuanta category 'wounding (serious and other)'

Appendix.

A note on how Brighton & Hove's performance is compared with other Community Safety Partnerships

For the purposes of assessing the relative performance of the Brighton & Hove Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in reducing crime, our performance is compared (benchmarked) with the performance of 14 other 'Most Similar' CSPs. The Home Office have created these groupings to help provide information on how CSPs, police forces, etc. are performing.

CSPs within a 'Most Similar' grouping have been assessed as having similar characteristics in terms of 24 socio-demographic and geographic variables which are strongly linked to increased levels of crime, fear of crime, or incidents.

We are able to compare our crime trends and current performance with our Most Similar CSPs. The data presented on page 1 of this report (see right-most column of the table) shows our ranked position within this group of 15 CSPs. For example, a ranking of 1 indicates that a CSP is performing best within the group, and a ranking of 8 shows that the CSP is in the middle ranked position.

Other Members of Brighton & Hove's Most Similar CSP Group (from Apr 2009) area as follows:

LB Barnet

Bournemouth

Cheltenham

LB Croydon

LB Ealing

Eastbourne

LB Hackney

LB Hammersmith & Fulham

LB Kensington & Chelsea

LB Lambeth

Reading

LB Southwark

LB Wandsworth

Wycombe