

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

23RD APRIL 2012

REPORT: BURGLARY AND VEHICLE CRIME IN BROMSGROVE – UPDATE REPORT FROM BROMSGROVE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Margaret Sherry – Portfolio Holder for Community Safety
Portfolio Holder Consulted	INFORMED
Relevant Head of Service	Angela Heighway – Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report provides members with an update on levels of burglary and vehicle crime in Bromsgrove district including volume of offences and detection rates. On 24th October 2011 members of the board received a summary report on burglary and vehicle crime based on data provided by West Mercia Police. Following this board meeting members requested an updated report in 6 months; this report provides that update.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 That members note the restrictions of the Police & Justice Act 2006 with regard to scrutiny of individual community safety partners and give consideration to alternative forums for raising concerns regarding specific police performance matters.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 places a duty on the local authority to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action

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taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions as outlined in section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

- 3.3 This legislation gives local authorities powers to scrutinise only the work of Community Safety Partnership rather than the functions and performance of individual partners and agencies within it.
- 3.4 The detection of burglary and vehicle crime is exclusively a policing matter with very little involvement from the Community Safety Partnership or any of its other partners. Therefore, the board is asked to consider whether any future performance issues raised in relation to the data presented in this report should be referred to the West Mercia Police Authority representative on the Overview and Scrutiny Board, who may be able to redirect any concerns to a more appropriate forum.

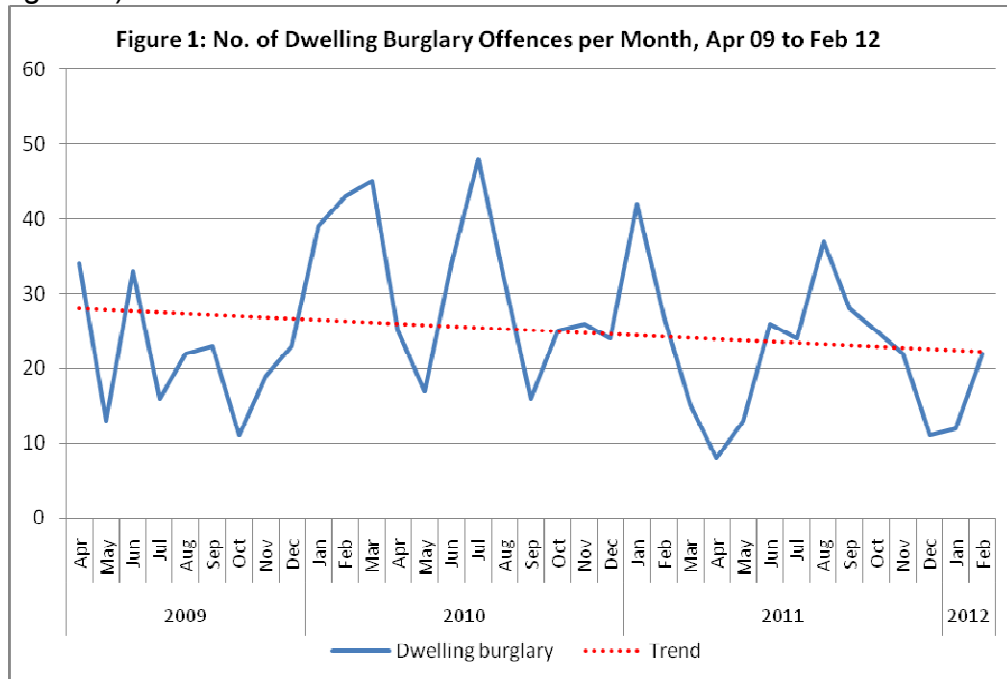
Service / Operational Implications

- 3.5 On 24th October the Overview and Scrutiny Board received a verbal report summarising figures provided by West Mercia Police which highlighted the current levels of burglary and vehicle crime offences. The report also looked at detection rates in relation to these offences.
- 3.6 Members noted this update and asked that an updated report be received in 6 months.
- 3.7 Dwelling burglary figures in the district continue to vary dramatically month by month. In the last three years, the volume per month has ranged from a peak at 48 offences in July 2010, to a low of just 8 offences in April 2011.
- 3.8 The sporadic nature of burglary offences is related in part to seasonality where historically burglary offences will increase between October and March with the longer nights. However, fluctuations in the volume of offences also have a significant correlation to periods when known burglary offenders are in the community or in custody.
- 3.9 As reported to the board in October 2011 Bromsgrove is vulnerable to cross border crime due to its proximity to major conurbations such as Birmingham and Sandwell and the existence of a vast motorway network within the district which aids the movement of offenders.
- 3.10 The average number of offences per month between April 2009 and February 2012 was 25. Despite peaks and troughs, the general level of offending in 2011 appears to have been much lower than that of 2010 and the general trend in offending is decreasing over time. (See

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figure 1).

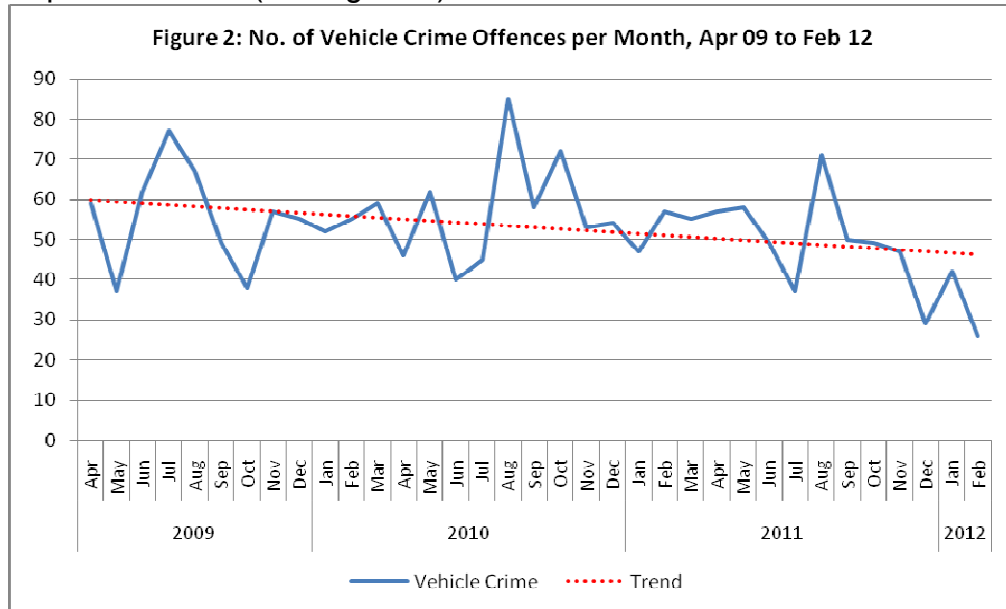


- 3.11 There was 244 burglary offences reported in Bromsgrove between 1st April 2011 and 27th March 2012; that is 84 fewer offences than the same period last year. This is a 25.5% decrease in reported dwelling burglary which is the greatest improvement in the county and means the volume of offences in Bromsgrove is no longer the highest in the county. This performance is very promising when compared to the 3.4% increase in offending that was seen between 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- 3.12 In 2011/12, 45 dwelling burglary offences have been detected out of 244 reported offences; that's a detection rate of 18.5%. This is slightly below average for North Worcestershire, the County and West Mercia. There is a difference of 16 offences between the Bromsgrove detection rate when compared to the district with the highest detection rate.
- 3.13 Dwelling Burglary is highlighted as a strategic priority in both the Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership Plan and in the current West Mercia Police Control Strategy. West Mercia Police are committed to reducing the number of dwelling burglaries and bringing to justice those individuals who commit such crimes.
- 3.14 West Mercia Police has ensured that each of the North Worcestershire Districts has a specialist burglary team so that an investigation into every reported burglary in Bromsgrove is carried out by a dedicated burglary detective and the appropriate support given to victims.

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- 3.15 Vehicle Crime which includes theft of a vehicle and theft from a vehicle is also reducing and is low compared to most other Worcestershire districts. The overall trend in vehicle crime over the last three years has been fairly static with notable increases in offending during the summer months each year. There were 560 vehicle crimes in Bromsgrove between 1st April 2011 and 27th March 2012; that's 113 fewer than the same period last year, a 17% reduction.
- 3.16 Offending peaked at 85 offences in August 2010, and was lowest in February 2012 when there were just 26 offences. The average number of offences per month from April 2009 to February 2012 was 53. The number of offences per month has been declining steadily since September 2011 (See figure 2).



- 3.17 The detection rate for vehicle crime in Bromsgrove for the period 1st April 2011 to 27th March 2012 is 7.5% as 42 out of 560 offences were detected. Whilst this looks a low value it is higher than all but one Worcestershire district and better than the County and West Mercia average.
- 3.18 80% of vehicle crime is theft from the motor vehicle as oppose to theft of a motor vehicle. This is predominantly due to motorists leaving valuables on show and/or leaving vehicles unlocked.
- 3.19 Vehicle crime is not currently in either the West Mercia Police Control Strategy or the Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership Plan. As such, responses to vehicle crime issues tend to be more reactive to emerging trends than strategically planned. When a specific need for action is identified, appropriate resource is allocated through tasking processes.

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- 3.20 An example of a recent initiative to tackle vehicle crime included joint patrols between the police and the Council's Community Safety Team during icy mornings to deter potential thieves who were looking for opportunities to offend whilst unattended cars were left to defrost by their owners.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.21 The impact of burglary on victims including the longer-term emotional and physiological effect will vary enormously between individuals. The impact on our older and more vulnerable residents can be severe and sometimes fatal.
- 3.22 It is in recognition of this impact that Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership has committed officer and financial resources towards a home security initiative which aims to provide residents with the know-how and support to secure their homes to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of burglary.
- 3.23 This home security initiative has already produced a comprehensive home security guide for residents which has been accessed by over 1500 households. The initiative is currently developing a scheme where officers will be able to carry out home security assessments on the most vulnerable properties within the district and offer some residents financial support to make essential improvements.
- 3.24 West Mercia Police and Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership will continue to monitor the levels of vehicle crime within the district and take action when necessary. They will also continue to provide advice and support to motorists to encourage them to secure their vehicles and remove their valuables.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Responsible authorities such as Bromsgrove District Council have a duty to work together through the Community Safety Partnership to tackle local crime and disorder as part of its obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and subsequent amendments. In terms of dwelling burglary and vehicle crime this duty is being met through the Council's Community Safety Team working with West Mercia Police and other agencies to deliver preventative initiatives that deter offenders and support victims.

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5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

7. KEY

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