

## **Crime down by a fifth – Bracknell Forest**

Crime in Bracknell Forest fell by more than a fifth last year: a drop that translates into 1,177 fewer victims across the local police area.

Bracknell Forest saw the Thames Valley's biggest percentage reduction in British Crime Survey (BCS) crimes, which account for over half of all crime and are those that matter most to the public.

BCS crimes, including domestic burglary, criminal damage, vehicle crime, robbery, wounding and common assault, were down by 20.4% overall between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008, compared with 2006/07.

There were reductions in every category of BCS crime, with the exception of domestic common assaults, which rose by 10.3%, or 15 offences. This increase is partly due to police and their partner agencies encouraging victims to come forward.

Amongst the most notable statistics were falls of 57.7% in robberies of personal property; 42.7% in vehicle interference; 41.2% in theft from vehicles; 21.5% in woundings (non-domestic); 17.6% in theft from the person; and 17.4% in criminal damage.

The 41.2% decrease in theft from motor vehicles goes far beyond a Local Public Service Agreement target reduction of 30%, agreed with the Government Office of the South East. By exceeding this target, Bracknell Forest will receive additional government funding for community safety initiatives.

Ch Insp Simon Bowden, commander of Bracknell Forest local police area, said: "Our reduction in crime is the best in the Force. This significant achievement reflects a tremendous amount of effort by police and our partner agencies, with the strong support of the community as a whole.

"Neighbourhood policing has been running in our borough for more than two years. The hard work put in by my officers and staff, together with neighbourhood action groups (NAGs) and members of the public, is really making a difference.

"I would like to emphasise that the police are not the only people responsible for reducing crime in Bracknell Forest. We also have an excellent Community Safety Partnership with the Borough Council, and the active support of town and parish councils.

"When you combine these with the NAGs, numerous Neighbourhood Watch schemes, as well as the efforts of many community organisations and dedicated individuals, it all adds up to a formidable crime-fighting force."

Ian Boswell, Bracknell Forest Borough Council Community Safety Manager said, 'The hard work that has resulted in the reduction in crime has been worthwhile when looking at these figures. The challenge will now be to maintain these reductions and to drive down crime further'.

Cllr Iain McCracken, Bracknell Forest Borough Council's Executive Member for Public Protection, said: "We are pleased our close working relationship with Thames Valley Police is helping to cut crime across Bracknell Forest.

"We will continue to support Neighbourhood Forums and Action Groups so we can help residents deal with the local issues which really matter to them. If the Council, police and residents carry on working together, we will see further cuts in crime in Bracknell Forest."