

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To update the Authority on operational matters within the Constabulary.

TYPE OF CRIME	RECORDED April - May 08	RECORDED April - May 09	DIFFERENCE
Criminal damage	2946	2845	-101
Violent crime	2762	2559	-203
Serious acquisitive crime	2296	2222	-205
Domestic burglary	532	553	+21
Anti Social Behaviour	10473	11691	+1218

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

- 2 The period April to May 2009 shows significant reductions in most crime groups when compared to the same period in 2008. Overall crime is down 8.6% compared to the same period last year. Notable reductions were evident in Criminal Damage (-3.4%), Violent Crime (-7.3%) and Serious acquisitive Crime (-8.9%). Increases however, have been reported in both Domestic Burglary (+3.9%) and Anti Social Behaviour (+11.6%).
- 3 The increase in Anti Social Behaviour is noteworthy; however, much of this increase is attributable to duplicate reports being created. This is sometimes the case where offenders have behaved in an anti social manner and section 27 notices have been issued. Duplicate reporting can also occur where offenders are under the influence of alcohol and have also been dealt with for their anti social behaviour. Work is currently underway with the Atlas system to remove this problem in the future.

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAMS EASTERN

Wilmslow

- 4 Operation Dragonfly on the Colshaw Farm estate is a long term approach to reducing anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and underage drinking. A variety of tactics, including high visibility policing and diversionary schemes with partners have been carried out.

- 5 Operation Intruder ran across Wilmslow and enhanced Operation Dragonfly's effectiveness in the Colshaw Farm area. The operation used a passive drugs dog and up to 25 officers, including Specials, targeting anti-social behaviour, underage drinking and drug users. As a direct result of the ongoing operations, residents have chosen to remove anti-social behaviour as a priority at the Community Action Meeting.
- 6 A series of 17 drugs warrants were also executed on the estate during March and April. These were pre-planned firearms operations involving Vector staff and resulted in controlled drugs and offensive weapons being recovered over a two week period. The warrants are part of the overall strategy on the estate. Additional tactics feed into the overall strategy of diverting young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour and this work includes the engagement of young people in activities such as moto cross, football, swimming and fishing competitions. Many of these activities are arranged in collaboration with partner agencies.

Knutsford

- 7 The support for the rural communities of Knutsford by Rural Watch officers is continuing to improve. The scheme is in essence an email alert system which currently has in excess of 180 members who receive daily bulletins advising them of crimes, intelligence or observations gleaned from within their community. The most recent success of the scheme was evident following the recovery of a valuable horse box stolen from Mere last month. Upon receipt of the theft report PC Dawber immediately cascaded the details out to all Rural Watch members and within 24 hours the box was spotted by a member and duly recovered in Sale.
- 8 PC Dawber who has responsibility for this initiative was also instrumental in the formation of Site Watch at Eon's gas storage plant in Byley. The regional manager had heard of the success of the scheme and purchased forty new Rural Watch signs for distribution across the area.
- 9 In March, following reports of a number of pupils being suspected of bringing drugs into schools, the team utilised the services of a passive drugs dog. During the school's morning assembly a neighbourhood policing officer delivered a drugs talk to the pupils. At the end of the talk the drugs dog was brought into the assembly hall. No drugs were found on the pupils but according to feedback from the teaching staff the impact of the event has been considerable.

Congleton

- 10 The project to make Congleton the first ArcAngel Protected Town in Cheshire took a significant step forward on May 1. The Congleton MP, Lady Winterton, accompanied by Councillor Brian Silvester, Congleton Neighbourhood Policing Team and the East Cheshire Council Licensing Team presented seven licensees with ArcAngel Approved Premises Certificates. The licensees have signed up to a code of conduct that aims to address public safety in the night time environment, reduce drink-fuelled anti-social behaviour and encourages

responsible drinking. All Congleton licensees are being encouraged to join the project and several additional premises are undergoing the inspection process to allow them to join the scheme.

- 11 In a response to requests from local people in a Streetsafe survey, a passive drugs dog joined Neighbourhood police officers at Alsager in an operation targeting anti social behaviour and alleged drugs misuse. Officers carried out drugs checks at five licensed premises, but no drugs were found. The team also patrolled in Alsager and neighbouring villages seizing alcohol from groups of under-age drinkers in Milton Park and Scholar Green. They also recovered drugs from two people during the operation.
- 12 Following a spate of drive-offs from local petrol stations around South Cheshire and North Staffordshire, PC Sandall and PCSO Claire Ford carried out some excellent investigative work to identify the driver of a blue mini seen at the sites. The driver was caught on CCTV at numerous garages filling up her car with fuel and leaving without paying. The vehicle was displaying false number plates on each occasion.
- 13 The CCTV images recovered showed that the offender was regularly wearing jodhpurs and after visiting numerous riding stables and farm feed outlets in the Congleton area, an identification was made of the offender. The newly created Rural Watch assisted PCSO Ford and PC Sandall greatly in providing information as to where best to visit.
- 14 The female offender was traced and interviewed and although initially very reluctant to admit any offences at first, she was charged with two drive offs in Congleton, had nine offences taken into consideration in Cheshire and a further seven on Staffordshire.

Crewe

- 15 Officers from Crewe executed a warrant in West Midlands as part of an investigation into high-value blackmail allegations. They seized mobile phones, sim cards and CS gas. A man was arrested and was later released on police bail while the investigation proceeds.
- 16 Two men have been arrested and charged in connection with three incidents of criminal damage at a motorcycle dealership in Crewe. On each occasion a vehicle was driven into the property, causing extensive damage to the building and motorcycles on display. One man has been charged with carrying out two of these attacks. The other man is charged with the third.

Macclesfield

- 17 As part of the ongoing ArcAngel approach to alcohol related crime and disorder, Macclesfield neighbourhood policing officers and members of the Special Constabulary visited licensed premises in Macclesfield and Poynton during Operation Iceman. The operation was specifically aimed at moderating

behaviour, providing support to local licensees and targeting drug misuse which was identified as an issue of concern to the local Pub Watch group. A passive drugs dog went into ten local premises to carry out a number of searches. The Operation resulted in the local community providing some additional local intelligence.

Nantwich

- 18 The Team is currently focusing on policing issues set as a priority at the last series of Town and Parish Cluster meetings. The majority of the issues raised by the rural community relate to speeding offences' - especially by motorbikes. Local enforcement activity has been linked into Operation Clatter and supported by serious crime operations (Operation Moscow).
- 19 The team is also carrying out Operation Crouch which aims to cut the drugs supply in Nantwich at night. There have been two significant arrests; one in connection with a continuing investigation into money laundering (£60,000 in transactions and £2,000 at time of arrest). The latter, dealt with by the Neighbourhood Policing Team, resulted in a man being charged with possession with intent to supply tablets in licensed premises in Nantwich. The man has been remanded in custody. More high visibility and covert operations are being planned.
- 20 The Nantwich Jazz Festival over the Easter weekend was a major event for the Neighbourhood Policing Team in terms of potential disorder. The team was fully committed in policing the event with cancelled rest days and Vector support. Over the weekend 29 Direction to Leave notices were issued and 11 people arrested, including three who failed to comply with Direction to Leave Notices. The event was extremely busy but passed without any major disorder. Prior to the weekend a joint drugs warrant was executed together with West Mercia Police regarding intelligence about a person intending to supply Cocaine during the event. Whilst no drugs were recovered during this warrant, valuable disruption was caused to the drug supply chain and a male circulated as wanted by West Mercia Police was arrested as a result of the operation.
- 21 During the same period the team was also involved in Operation Maldives, a cross border operation with Western area, North Wales Police and West Mercia Police to combat farm-related thefts. This Operation was designed to increase visibility, boost the confidence of rural communities and prevent crime. Positive feedback has been received as a result of the operation and no farm related thefts were recorded during the course of it.

EASTERN CRIME TEAMS UPDATE

Eastern Criminal Investigation Department

- 22 The department has been involved in an investigation into an alleged attempted rape which occurred during the early hours of Sunday 12th April. CCTV seized from a building close to where the offence took place provided evidence that led

to the arrest and charge of a 24-year-old man from Crewe. He has been remanded in custody awaiting his next court appearance.

Eastern Proactive Team

- 23 Operation Grit is a collaboration between officers on the proactive policing and neighbourhood teams who have been working together in Crewe to address a problem of 'sneak-in' offences during the night which include 12 car and key burglaries (or attempts) and four distraction offences.
- 24 The operation resulted in the arrest of a 35-year-old Crewe man for offences in Dorfold Street and Betley Street in Crewe. During the investigation officers were able to provide evidence that linked him to a burglary at a house in Nantwich. He was kept in custody, went to court the following day and received a 12-month community service order and curfew.
- 25 Operation Delhi in Macclesfield brought together officers and staff in the proactive policing, intelligence and neighbourhood units to address a variety of problems facing local communities in the Poynton area including domestic burglary. This operation resulted in numerous arrests.
- 26 A 35-year-old man from the Manchester area was charged with a domestic burglary committed at a house in Holmes Chapel in May 2008, at which a Toyota Rav 4 was stolen. He was charged with the burglary, taking the Toyota and another theft from a motor vehicle. He denies burglary but has admitted to theft, including a further 12 thefts from motor vehicles in the Middlewich and Holmes Chapel area, which have been taken into consideration. He is currently awaiting a date for his trial.
- 27 Following an armed robbery at Bridge House Farm, Barthomley on 20th April 2009, five men were arrested and later charged. The men, four from the Stockport area and one from the Levenshulme area, were remanded in custody and will appear at Chester Crown Court on 27th July 2009.

Eastern Financial Unit

- 28 In April 2009 the unit secured four confiscations with a total benefit figure of £537,870.11 and orders to the value of £26,321.00. Four cash seizure investigations have commenced, with an estimated value of £30,600.
- 29 The Eastern Area Financial Investigation Unit has secured three forfeitures of cash seized, to a total value of £16,648.97.

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAMS - WESTERN

Rural

- 30 In February 2009 a series of robbery offences took place in Frodsham and Helsby. The offender entered shops brandishing a knife and threatening staff

until access was gained to the contents of the till. The offences took place over a period of weeks and it became apparent that there were two unconnected offenders committing these robberies.

- 31 Officers from the Western Rural Neighbourhood Policing Unit were merged with a specialist team of officers and through close liaison with Merseyside Police one of the offenders was identified as a man who had recently escaped from prison. An operation took place to trace the man using specialist equipment and he was apprehended in Liverpool. He was later charged with a host of robbery and vehicle offences throughout Cheshire, Merseyside and Lancashire and is currently awaiting trial.
- 32 The remaining robbery offences were investigated and suspicion fell upon a recently released prisoner Daniel Hayes from Frodsham. Hayes was arrested while hiding in a garden and charged with robbery and offensive weapon offences. He was found guilty at Crown Court and sentenced to 3yrs 4 months in prison.

Winsford

- 33 At the beginning of March, Robert Bryning aged 50 from Cedar Grove, Winsford was sentenced to 66 months in custody for possession of cocaine with intent to supply. This offence goes back to March 2007 when officers conducted two search warrants at premises in Winsford. More than £5,000 worth of high purity cocaine was found in a cash box in a shed at one of the properties. At the other address, electric scales with traces of cocaine on them were recovered. A Proceeds of Crime hearing will now take place to recover profits made from crime.
- 34 Two officers who were off duty made an excellent arrest on the afternoon of 13 May. One of the officers spotted a male acting suspiciously, placing a mask over his head near to Threshers off license in Winsford. Believing he was about to commit a robbery, the officer challenged him and wrestled him to the ground. Another off duty officer saw the incident and went to assist. The 20 year old male from Liverpool was arrested and found to be in possession of a knife and an imitation handgun. He was later charged with possession of an imitation firearm with intent to commit robbery and possession of a bladed article. He was remanded in custody.

Chester Inner & Outer

- 35 During the past six months there has been a marked increase in the theft of pedal cycles in Chester Inner and Outer areas. As a result both Neighbourhood Policing Units have set up measures to tackle this problem.
- 36 The services of the Centralised Crime Recording Bureau have been vital in this operation. The quality of data regarding the description of pedal cycles has been vastly improved and this has allowed patrolling officers to go on patrol equipped with lists of recently stolen cycles. This practice has been very effective in aiding

both the recovery of stolen cycles and meeting the expectations of the local communities by concentrating on the types of crime the community have highlighted as being of concern to them.

Northwich

- 37 Northwich Neighbourhood Policing Unit has been working to reduce anti-social behaviour in the town centre. Prior to a serious assault which took place at licensed premises in the town, the NPU had, in conjunction with the licensing team, put the premises on an action plan. This included checks on the door staff and identification of registration issues.
- 38 The NPU ran Op Strata which is a town centre operation to tackle anti-social behaviour and violence, with the support of Vector. Following the serious assault we again ran Op Strata to reassure the public. Incidents of anti-social behaviour in Northwich have nearly halved in the last month following this operation.

Ellesmere Port

- 39 Officers from the Neighbourhood Policing Team have been targeting mini-motos and off road bikes at hotspots in the Ellesmere Port area. Off road police bikes, which were successfully used last year, are being used during the campaign. The areas being targeted by officers are public parks and open spaces within a number of housing estates which have been identified as problem areas by the public.
- 40 The specially trained officers patrol the problem areas to challenge any bike riders they find on land without permission and take action where appropriate. Warnings are issued first, but if they fail to be effective, or the vehicle is used in an anti-social manner again, it is seized under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act. Vehicles are also seized if the rider is not insured or has no road tax. Once seized, the bikes are crushed.
- 41 All reports of bikes being ridden illegally have been followed up and addresses believed to be being used to store bikes have been visited and owners warned.

WESTERN CRIME TEAMS UPDATE

- 42 Following a series of burglaries in the Blacon area of Chester, a pro-active operation was carried out to identify and arrest the offender. Chester and District Housing Trust agreed to supply a flat for use in this operation. Property marked with SmartWater was placed inside the flat, including a tool box which was set up to spray the offender with SmartWater if it was moved. Hidden cameras were also installed in the flat.
- 43 The decoy house, which was also installed with hidden cameras, was broken into and property, including the toolbox was stolen. The CCTV was viewed from the premises and a local 43-year-old man was identified and arrested. A warrant was executed at his home and property including the toolbox stolen was found.

Examination of his footwear showed traces of SmartWater from the premises. He later appeared in court and was sentenced to 15 weeks in prison, suspended for 12 months.

- 44 Following a series of distraction burglaries and robberies in the rural area of Helsby and Frodsham, a Mazda car stolen days earlier was picked up on the Automatic Number Plate Recognition system in Oswestry. Seven distraction burglaries and robberies then took place in the Powys area. At each offence the Mazda was sighted nearby on ANPR.
- 45 The victims were all elderly and were threatened with violence. Powys officers spotted the vehicle in their force area and chased it before it was abandoned and the four occupants fled. They were arrested near by and were picked up by the Western area Proactive Policing Team for interview in relation to the Cheshire crimes. Three stolen cars were later recovered parked in the Helsby and Frodsham. The four are due to appear in Chester Crown Court.

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAMS – NORTHERN

Warrington East

- 46 Operation Barrow has been running since the start of March. This is the Neighbourhood Policing Team's response to anti-social behaviour and alcohol related disorder. Visibility has been maximised at key times and efforts have gone into dealing proactively with issues to prevent an escalation of problems at a later time. A large amount of alcohol has been seized from young people as a result. Young people, where necessary, were returned to their home and/or letters were issued by the partnership unit to advise parents about the type of behaviour their children were involved in.
- 47 In April a man went on the rampage following an argument with his girlfriend causing a large disturbance in the early hours of the morning. This resulted in, several cars and premises being damaged in the Padgate area. Thanks to the co-operation of the local community an offender was quickly identified. Officers traced the offender and as a result of the evidence obtained the man was placed before the next available court and received a custodial sentence.

Warrington Town Centre

- 48 Police and partners are continuing to crack down on alcohol related violent crime and disorder across Warrington. Officers from Warrington Town Centre Neighbourhood Policing Unit arrested 880 people and issued 554 Section 27 Notices during 2008/09. The number of incidents of anti-social behaviour in Bridge Street and Academy Way fell by 60% whilst violent crime reduced by 30%.
- 49 Officers and representatives from various agencies are working in partnership to ensure that licensed premises across Warrington are reaching ArcAngel's acceptable standards. Officers, supported by licensing officials, are regularly

carrying out routine visits to premises in the town centre to ensure licensees are adhering to the conditions of their licence and to ensure they have any advice or support if needed. A number of licensed premises have been taken to licensing review hearings following problems in and around the premises.

Warrington West

- 50 Five warrants were recently executed across the area as part of Operation Flank with each one providing a positive result in terms of drug related offences. The most successful of these warrants was on 13 May 2009 at Tavlin Avenue. Officers forced entry to the premises and carried out a full search and a large quantity of cash (more than £20,000) and a large quantity of cocaine (estimated value of more than £50,000) was seized. The two occupants, a man and a woman, were arrested on suspicion of money laundering and possession with intent to supply drugs. The man has been remanded in custody and the woman is due to answer bail pending further enquiries.

Warrington South

- 51 Police uncovered a cannabis factory at a house in Thelwall Lane, Latchford, after they executed a warrant. Inside an upstairs room they found more than 60 mature cannabis plants. Equipment and material used to grow the plants were seized and taken away for forensic examinations. A 41-year-old man, from Warrington was arrested at the scene and later received a caution for cultivating cannabis. The warrant was executed as a result of intelligence received from the community. It is one of a number of warrants that have been executed in the Warrington South area over the past few months.
- 52 On 29 April 2009 officers from Warrington South neighbourhood team closed down a brothel in Latchford. Following allegations that rented premises were being used for illegal purposes, enquiries were made and the address was traced. On arrival police discovered three Chinese women working in the sex trade. The women were interviewed by UK Borders Agency staff on suspicion of being illegal immigrants. Enquiries are ongoing to establish whether any human trafficking offences have been committed.

Warrington Central NPU

- 53 Police arrested a man and a woman after early morning raids on two houses in the Warrington Central area. More than 10 officers were involved in the pre-planned operation. Items which are believed to be stolen were seized from both properties. A 45-year-old Warrington man and a 37-year-old Warrington woman were arrested at the scene. The man was later charged with handling stolen goods.

Widnes NPU

- 54 Police uncovered a substantial quantity of drugs after they executed a warrant at a business premises in Everite Road. Inside a room on the second floor, they

found almost 200 cannabis plants which were more than three metres in height. The plants and the equipment to grow them were seized and taken away for forensic examination. Four men were arrested at the scene and were bailed pending further enquiries. The warrant is part of ongoing efforts to tackle the issue of drugs in the local community.

- 55 Police found hundreds of rare bird's eggs inside two chests of drawers after visiting a house in Somerford Walk on the Weates Close estate. The eggs are still being examined by an ornithologist to establish the exact species. They appear to be from different species ranging from barn owls to swans. A 45-year-old Widnes man was interviewed under caution and officers are awaiting expert evidence to determine whether he will be charged.

Runcorn NPU

- 56 Tackling anti-social behaviour is a priority for police and partners. Officers from Runcorn NPU are aware of several locations where anti-social behaviour is linked to alcohol consumption. During April officers confiscated 100 bottles and cans of alcohol from young people. Officers have issued letters to the parents of youths involved in anti-social behaviour at these locations and some young people have been taken home to their parents. All were referred to the Youth Offending Team for additional support/action.

NORTHERN CRIME TEAMS UPDATE

Operation Strikeout - Halton

- 57 A series of dawn raids targeted the use and supply of Class A drugs in the Halton and Merseyside areas resulted in eleven people receiving sentences totalling more than 25 years behind bars as part of Operation Strikeout. Jail terms ranging from 18 months to almost four years were handed down to the defendants during a hearing at Chester Crown Court on 22 May 2009. They had all pleaded guilty to separate charges of supplying Class A drugs (Heroin and Crack Cocaine) at an earlier hearing. Operation Strikeout was the result of months of intelligence gathering by police and partner agencies.
- 58 Local officers spent many hours working on this operation – gathering vital evidence. The operation was organised by officers from the Northern Area Dedicated Drugs Unit - supported by officers from Widnes Neighbourhood Policing Unit, Runcorn Neighbourhood Policing Unit and the Vector unit. Outside agencies also supported the operation.

Convictions

- 59 On 28 February 2009 a gang of four masked men carried out an armed robbery at Baker's Jewellers in Warrington. Having forced entry with sledgehammers they terrified the staff and smashed displays stealing a quantity of jewellery. The men made off at high speed in a stolen vehicle and drove to Manchester where officers from GMP stopped the vehicle and following a foot pursuit arrested four

men. All four men have now pleaded guilty to the offence and will be sentenced on 11 June 2009.

Special Constabulary - National Ferrers award winners

- 60 The Ferrers Trophy was initiated by former Home Office Minister Lord Ferrers. The awards have been presented annually since 1993 for outstanding achievement and commitment shown by members of the special constabulary. Cheshire Special Constabulary has a good history of winning this national award, holding onto the trophy over the last three years.
- 61 In June 2009, the award will be presented to Specials Inspector Kevin McHardy from the Eastern division for his contribution to neighbourhood policing. Kevin identified a significant issue with underage drinking, drug use and antisocial behaviour. He devised and implemented an operation targeting the source of the problem. This involved test purchasing at convenience stores and off licenses, using plain clothes officers at known hot spots and a passive drugs dog inside the pubs and clubs. The operation was so successful that it was rolled out throughout the county.
- 62 Cheshire's success started in 2007 when Special Sergeant Richard Hankins won the award for his efforts in Chester town centre and last year Jacqueline Starkey won the award before going on to join the Constabulary full time as a PC in the Northern division.
- 63 Cheshire Specials are committed to working within the neighbourhood policing teams and this has developed a strong sense of purpose. The Specials continually strive to improve public perception of what a volunteer can contribute and achieve. The above is testimony to the good work and development of the Cheshire Special Constabulary.

RECOMMENDED:

That the report be noted.

DAVID WHATTON
CHIEF CONSTABLE