

# Coventry Community Safety Partnership

## Strategic Assessment 2009/10

### Executive Summary: Key findings and recommendations

The Strategic Assessment has been classified as **Restricted** in line with the Government Protective Marking System. It may be used by police, partner agencies and community safety practitioners to inform local documents (including, for example local action plans, tactical and strategic documents). Any further dissemination requirements however must be processed through the Community Safety Team or Partnership Analyst ([r.howe@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk](mailto:r.howe@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk))

# Executive Summary

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# Introduction

Significant reductions have been achieved across most crime and disorder areas in recent years. However, the effects of the current economic climate present additional pressures on the Community Safety Partnership's ability to sustain current lower crime levels and the opportunity to reduce them further.

The Partnership Strategic Assessment has highlighted four key areas as priorities for Coventry:

- Violence (including Domestic Violence and Abuse)
- Serious Acquisitive Crime – Burglary and Vehicle Crime
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Criminal Damage

**Violence (including DVA):** presents the biggest threat to Coventry in terms of risk and volume. This area has seen least improvement compared to other crime areas. Significant links to alcohol and drugs are identified, as is the impact on the family and wider community. Particularly crucial as an area of focus is the involvement of young people as both victims and offenders.

**Serious Acquisitive Crime:** has shown dramatic reductions over recent years, particularly around Burglary and Theft of Vehicles. However, the volume and impact of these offences remains comparatively high, making the issues a retained priority in Coventry. Key approaches lie in strong, joined-up offender management, incorporating the full range of enforcement and support options available to a wider range of offenders. This should be coupled with a renewed focus on prevention activity, targeted towards the most vulnerable victims and locations.

**Criminal Damage:** represents a significant proportion of Total Recorded Crime, whilst survey data indicates that Anti-Social related behaviour and damage represent two of the key concerns within our communities. Involvement in such offences is largely the remit of young offenders and young adults and in terms of detecting offences, presents a considerable challenge. However, this is an area that provides the greatest opportunity for effective partnership intervention utilising a range of approaches including prevention, education, enforcement and targeted support.

Addressing the causes of crime is also a key priority for the Community Safety Partnership. Two key drivers include Drugs and Alcohol.

**Alcohol misuse** has a significant impact on a range of crime and disorder issues in the City. Results from the Alcohol Prevalence Research completed during 2008 show that a significant proportion of the population drink to harmful levels.

In the 2007/08 Coventry Partnership Household Survey, nearly half (47%) of all respondents reported drinking above the safe recommended limits of alcohol at least once a week and 24% at least twice a week. Alcohol consumption peaks in the 35-54 age brackets.

This data shows that Coventry is significantly worse than national averages on a number of alcohol related health areas. In particular, alcohol-related crime, alcohol related violence and alcohol-related sexual offences all show Coventry to be significantly worse than the national picture.

**The Drugs** Intervention Programme (DIP) shows a rising number of poly-drug users who offend in the City, alongside increasing use of powder Cocaine in a social drinking context.

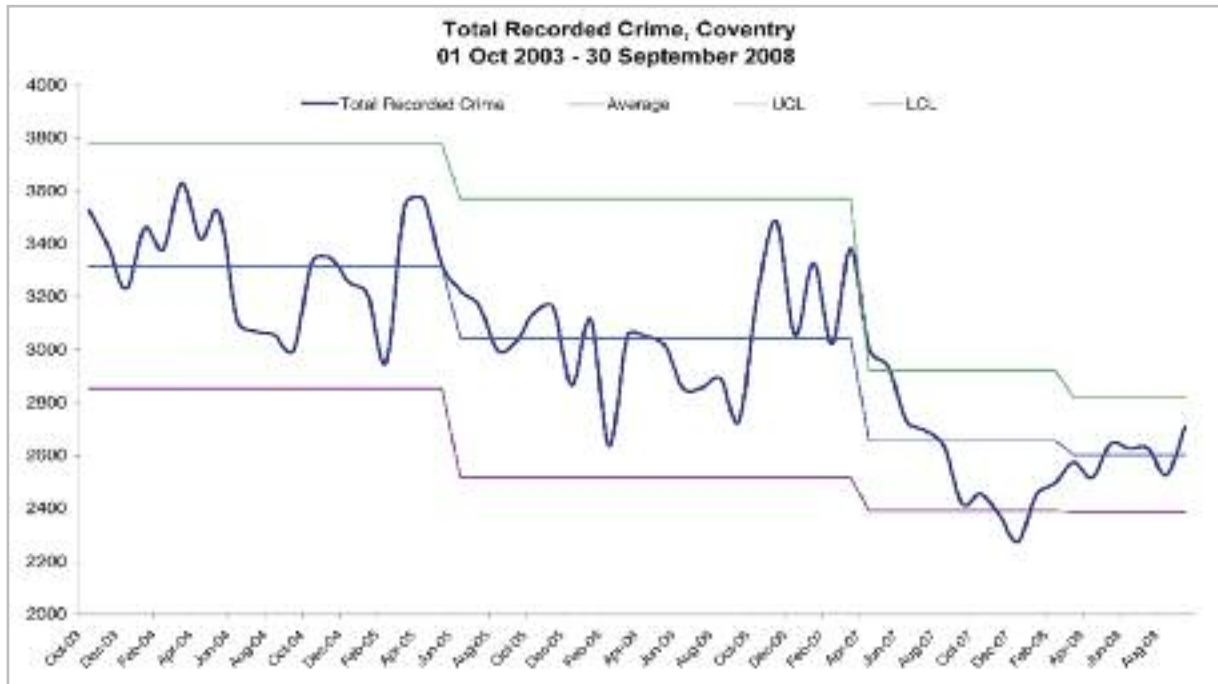
The Adult Drugs Needs assessment estimates a Problematic Drug User (PDU – those using heroin and crack) population at 2061, of which 1150 – 1180 PDU's have been in treatment in 2008/09. This relates to 56% of all heroin and crack users. Clearly, there is a 'hidden' population of Class A drug users of approximately 500-800 individuals, not yet identified but believed to be treatable. Work is on-going by the Community Safety Partnership to identify this population.

The majority of Problem Drug Users are male, with a rising trend around the early to mid-adult range. Ethnic diversity in treatment reflects the overall population and the sex profile is comparable to national and regional averages. The average age of Problem Drug Users presenting to treatment is 32 years - this may indicate that a significant proportion of the hidden population are in the younger age groups. Links between younger adult patterns of drug misuse and offending may offer opportunities to impact on Crime and Disorder levels.

Little is known about the Non Problem Drug User (Cocaine and other drugs) population in Coventry. In 2007, there were 500 individuals arrested for Non Problem Drug User drug offences (possession or supply) who did not enter treatment. There are significant numbers in contact with Probation, but the number of referrals into treatment is low and the use of conditional cautions, legal compulsion to enter treatment, is limited.

# Overall Crime Profile

Total recorded crime is stable at present and at its lowest since the mid 80's. Over the past year a total of 30,264 crimes took place, a rate of 98.7 per 1,000 of population.



## Crime Performance (April - February)

Category	2007/08	2008/09	Difference	% Change
Total recorded Crime	28,439	26,715	-1,724	-6.1%
Most Serious Violence	343	417	74	21.6%
Serious Acquisitive Crime	5,778	5,934	156	2.7%
Serious Sexual Offences	325	284	-41	-12.6%
Burglary Dwelling	1,981	1,976	-5	-0.3%
Robbery	597	652	55	9.2%
Vehicle Crime	3,200	3,306	106	3.3%
Business Crime	5,264	5,132	-132	-2.5%
Criminal Damage	6,021	5,422	-599	-9.9%
Hate Crime	464	417	-47	-10.1%

Between April 2008 and February 2009, the overall picture has been positive. This is in the context of a particularly successful year in 2007/08. The pace of reduction has slowed, with Total Crime down 6.1% and Damage by almost 10%.

# Feeling the Difference

In qualitative terms, Crime and Disorder are key priorities for the people of Coventry. Under the West Midlands Police 'Feeling the Difference Survey', the following social factors were considered most important:.

Area	Coventry	Bham	Solihull	Dudley	Sandwell	Walsall	Wolverhampton
Crime	26	38	41	33	34	35	27
Lack of facilities for young people	25	36	49	37	37	35	26
Drug Misuse	13	27	33	18	20	16	17
Lack of local Amenities	8	12	21	8	13	10	6
Unemployment	6	12	9	8	13	7	7
Other	5	5	3	9	5	9	4
Standard of Housing	4	10	16	3	5	4	3
Standard of Public Transport	3	4	10	3	4	1	2
Standard of Health Services	3	3	5	1	2	2	1
Standard of Education Services	2	2	2	1	2	1	1
Poverty	2	5	4	2	4	1	2
Racial attacks racial abuse	1	3	1	1	2	1	1

Coventry residents rank crime and a lack of facilities for young people as two of the main social concerns for the neighbourhoods they live in; the third and other main area of concern is drug misuse. Within the Crime category, offences deemed most important (traffic aside) were Criminal Damage (14%), Drug Dealing (13%), Burglary (13%), Graffiti (11%) and Theft from Vehicles (9%). When questioned further about Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) issues, Coventry residents cite "teenagers hanging around" (54%), Traffic Offences (37%); people being rowdy/drunken in public places (22%), Rubbish & Litter (16%).

Despite this Coventry has the lowest fear of crime rate in the West Midlands Force area at 10% (WM Police Feeling the Difference Survey). Most Coventry people feel safe in their neighbourhood during the day (98%) and think that the area they live in is one where people from different backgrounds can live together harmoniously (94%). These figures are improving and compare favourably with the six other West Midlands Local Authorities. The former figure drops back to 70% when the same question is asked of feelings of safety at night; this compares relatively favourably in the wider locality (3rd of 7).

78% of residents feel that the Police and local council are dealing with ASB & Crime that affect the community in an area – Coventry has improved in this area over the past six months and is comparable with other local authorities.

# Summary of Priority Themes:

## Violent Crime:

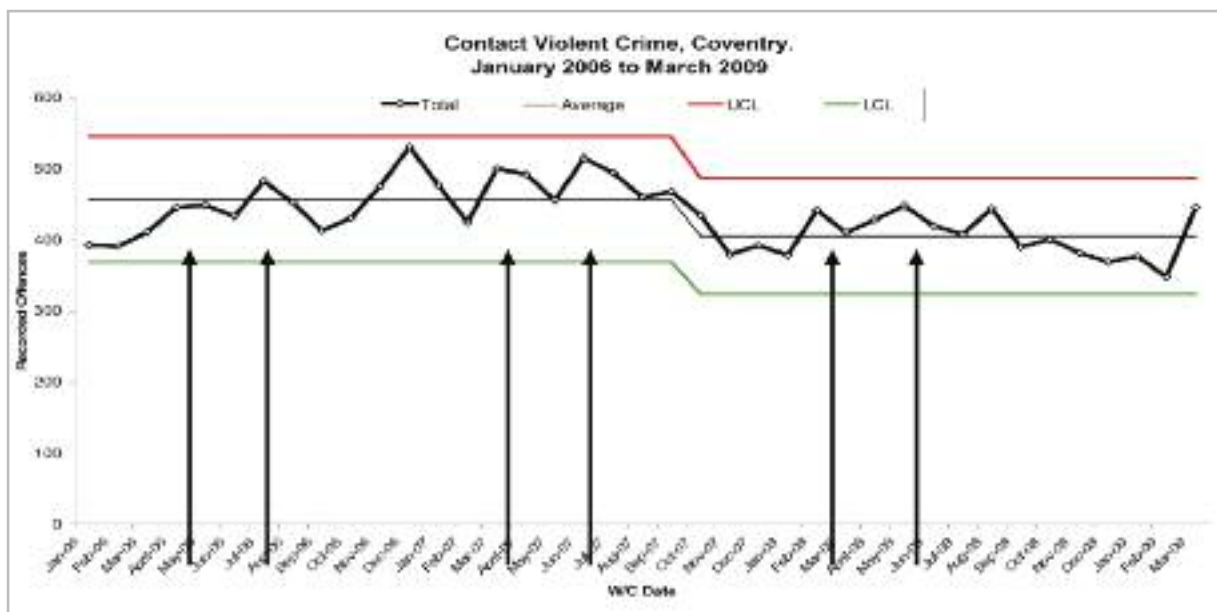
### National comparison:

Coventry's violent crime rate per 1000 population has been 34% higher than the England & Wales average. The rate of offending per 1000 population in Coventry remains higher than all of our West Midlands counterparts, though it is only fractionally higher than Birmingham.

Coventry has a higher proportion of alcohol-related violent crimes when compared both regionally & nationally; however alcohol attributable admissions to hospital tend to be around the national average and with respect to NI 39 (hospital admissions for alcohol-related harm) Coventry is significantly better than the regional and national picture.

Home Office estimates show Coventry as the West Midlands local authority with the highest rate of binge drinking (more than 6 units in a day for females and 8 units for males in the previous week) - at 20% of the population. This compares against Walsall's 16.9%, Birmingham's 17.8% and Wolverhampton's 17.9%.

### Background to Violent Crime in Coventry



The above chart displays all contact violent offences and shows that despite a rise in crime levels until the summer of 2007 that offences have dropped back markedly since that time.

- Coventry is in the top 15% of Community Safety Partnerships in England & Wales for BCS Violence ( ); with a rate 34% higher than the England & Wales average.
- However, a reduction of 8.6% (618 offences) was achieved last year which marks the first significant reduction in years.
- There were 5,206 contact violence offences in 2007/08 - 18% of Total Recorded Crime.
- The City Centre accounts for over 10% of the City's contact violence.

The main factor that affects violence is alcohol; figures taken from police markers place the amount of violent crime where alcohol is a factor at around a quarter of offences; the Home Office considers the true figure to be closer to 45% - rising to almost 60% where the victim does not know the assailant. Tackling street drinking and working with on and off-licences where repeated incidents are taking place presents one of the key strands of work for tackling violence.

Data from the hospital A&E department to improve understanding around violent crime in the city is now being used to supplement police data. The database has been running now for just over 11 months (end April 08 – early April 09). In total, the database indicates that at least 30% of A&E admissions are directly connected to licensed premises.

## Hate Crime:

A subsection of violence is Hate Crime which also peaks over the summer months; the number of offences is not especially high; though this is an area where under-reporting is likely. Furthermore, the current socio-economic situation may exacerbate the situation.

## Domestic Violence & Abuse

Overall the trend for Domestic Violence & Abuse is relatively stable; however, this is in the context of a reduction of 15% in 2007/08 in combined Most and Less Serious Violence and Malicious Wounding. In 2006/07 Domestic Violence & Abuse accounted for 30% of total violent crime. This rose to 34% in 2007/08. Despite the relative stability of domestic abuse, its prevalence (an average of 110 offences are reported each month), coupled with the score generated by the Strati threat assessment (the highest score of any of all the thematic areas), makes this a serious area of concern. This is in the context that less than half of domestic violence crime is reported to the police.

The rate of Domestic Abuse (LSV, MW & MSV) per 1000 residents is 4.45 (2005 mid term population estimate).

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1. The BCS violent crime definition includes Murder / Homicide, Most Serious Violence, Less Serious Violence (also including GBH without intent), common assault, harassment, possession of offensive weapons, more serious sexual offences and robbery

# Serious Acquisitive Crime

## National picture:

Of the 372 Community Safety Partnerships across England and Wales (1 being best), Coventry was:

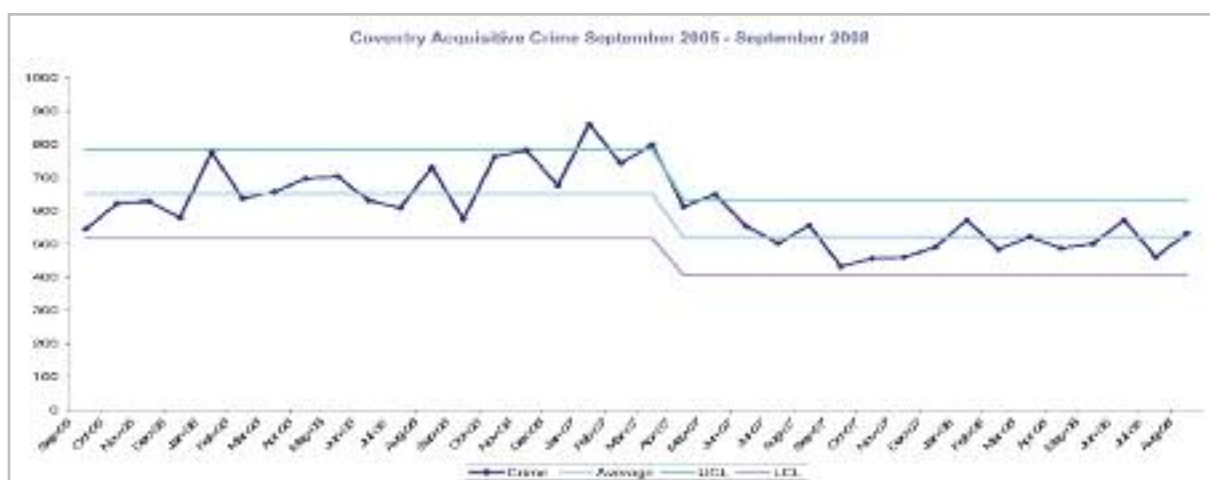
- 131st in terms of reducing dwelling burglary.
- 89th for reducing robberies.
- 44th for reducing theft from motor vehicles.
- 20th for the reduction of theft from motor vehicle offences in 2007/8.

iQuanta data covering the last financial quarter placed Coventry as an area recording a comparatively low level of vehicle crime and an average level of dwelling burglaries; when compared to other similar sized partnerships in its 'family group'. Coventry was rated as:

- 7th out of 15 similar partnership areas for vehicle crime, recording 3.2 offences per 1,000 residents, well below the family group average of 3.5.
- 7th out of 15 similar partnership areas for dwelling burglary, recording 4.2 offences per 1,000 households, slightly below the family group average of 4.3 offences.

## Local picture:

### Changes to Serious Acquisitive Crime 2006/07-2007/08



Serious acquisitive crime remained relatively constant between September 2005 and March 2007.

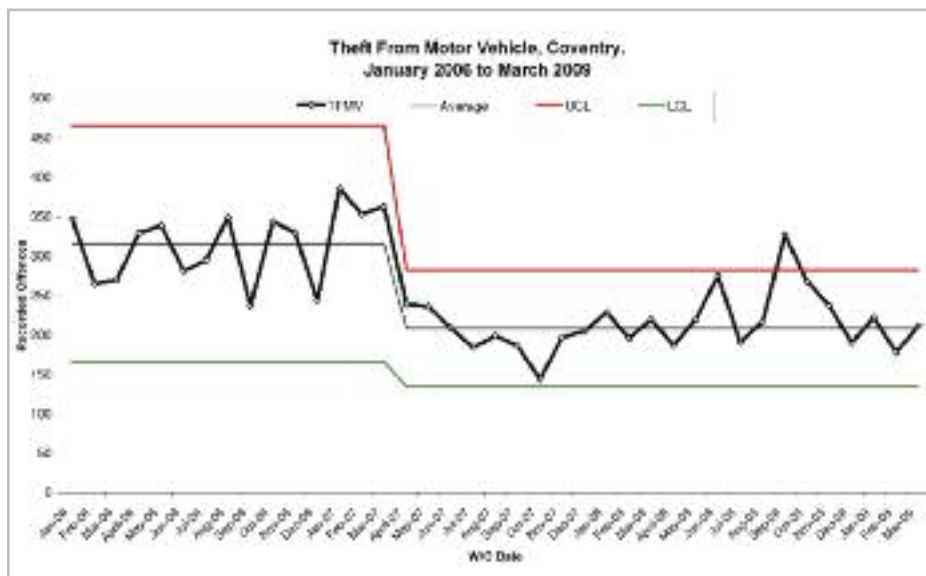
The onset of financial year 2007/08 brought with it a sustained reduction that corresponds with a decrease in overall recorded crime. However, as at 13th January 2009, this group of offences was displaying a 3.98% increase on last year's reported levels that has been occurring since autumn of 2008. Property to the value of £7,940,103 was stolen in serious acquisitive crimes over the period analysed, property totalling 16% of this value (£1,257,615) was subsequently recovered. The biggest category of serious acquisitive crime is Vehicle Crime, which accounted for 56% of Total Serious Acquisitive Crime in 2006/07 and 55% in 2007/08. Of this:

- Theft from motor vehicle accounted for 80% of vehicle offences.
- Theft of motor vehicle accounted for 18% of vehicle offences.
- Aggravated vehicle taking for the remaining 2%.

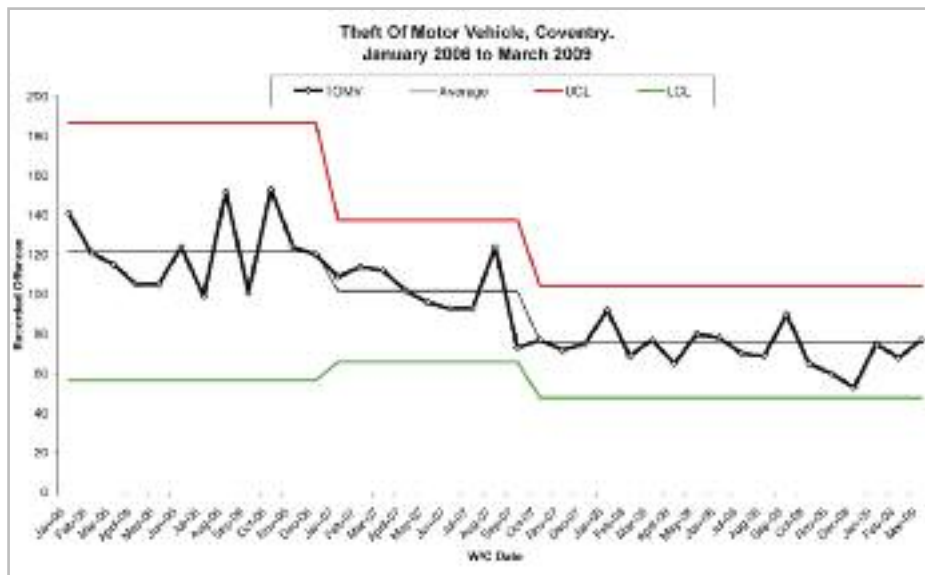
Dwelling Burglary accounts for 35% of Total Serious Acquisitive Crime and despite an 18% reduction over 2006-2008, it is proportionally still a significant crime type.

Despite a low crime year in 2007/08, these crime groupings have the greatest potential to increase in the current economic climate as increased poverty and shifts in drugs markets can increase the propensity to offend.

## Vehicle Crime



As the chart above clearly shows, significant achievements have been made with regards to theft from motor vehicle; however, at present it is notable that offences appear more likely to show spikes in offending rather than reductions. It is also true that this particular offence at present appears to be embedded in certain hotspot areas of the city.



Theft of a motor vehicle is an offence that is on a natural decline though it would appear that the rate at which offences are falling is levelling off somewhat over more recent times. Potentially there is a case for theft of a motor vehicle to stop falling and rise slightly as older cars are kept on the roads longer; however, it is likely that a more gradual fall in offending levels will be noted.

# Anti-social behaviour & criminal damage

## National Picture:

iQuanta data covering the last financial quarter placed Coventry as an area recording a comparatively low level of criminal damage when compared to other similar sized Community Safety Partnerships in its 'family group' (Coventry was rated as 14th out of 15 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP) areas, recording 4.5 offences of damage per 1,000 residents, well below the family average of 5.9).

There is no corresponding National/Regional perspective available for this area via the British Crime Survey.

## Local picture:

Reported criminal damage remained stable between September 2005 and March 2007. As with acquisitive crime, the onset of financial year 2007/08 brought with it a reduction that corresponds with a decrease in overall recorded crime.

The control chart below displays all ASB logs received by the police since January 2006; and shows the strong links with seasonality over the summer months with a correlation to the school holidays. ASB has been falling; over the past 12 months, ASB levels were 28% lower (8,300 less calls) than the corresponding period in 03 / 04.



## Survey data

When questioned about ASB in their neighbourhood during the Household Survey, most residents (53%) quoted the main problem as teenagers hanging around; littering (45%) was the next most prevalent issue.

A similar picture is reflected in the Police "Feeling the Difference Survey" where 54% cite teenagers hanging around as the key issue, followed by traffic offences (37%).

# It's your call – Anti-Social Behaviour Reporting Line

Anti Social Behaviour	Total	Street Cleansing	Total	Abandoned Vehicles	Total
Neighbours Noise	3,826	Flytipping	5,043	ABV Logging	1,424
Gangs Minor Nuisance	169	Graffiti Removal	1,805		
Vandalism	114	Litter	606		
Gangs Major Nuisance	103	Dog Fouling on Public Land	236		
Rowdy Nuisance Behaviour	86	Graffiti Racist	175		
Street Drinking	37				
Hate Incident	32				
Drug Dealing in Street	25				
Vehicle Misuse - Pee Wee Bikes	25				
Drug Dealing From Home	9				
Vehicle Nuisance Misuse Other	9				
Neglected Property	8				
Prostitution	7				
Environmental Damage	6				
Animal Problems	5				
Begging Vagrancy	4				
Alcohol Sale to Minors	3				
Truants	3				
Vehicle Misuse - Joy Riding	3				
Misuse of Fireworks	2				
Selling Cars On The Highway	1				
<b>Total</b>	<b>4477</b>		<b>7865</b>		<b>1424</b>

A total of 13,766 calls were received through "It's Your Call" between 1st October and 30th September 2008; over the same period the police recorded a total of 18,858 calls through its own ASB logging system – however, the nature of calls received through the two systems is markedly different. Whilst 64% of police ASB calls related to youth nuisance, only 2.6% (358) of those received via It's Your Call refer to similar issues. Noise nuisance, fly tipping/littering, graffiti and abandoned vehicles make up 93.5% of all "It's Your Call" calls.

This hard data reflects priorities within the qualitative Household Survey, which also highlighted the fact that communities cite street cleanliness as the second most important issue around area improvement (38.9%).

**Environmental Services** data provides information on a limited number of ASB and damage issues. The most significant issue is fly-tipping.

**Graffiti** is the next most commonly reported making up 22% of incidents; this type of incident is reported across the city; though volumes are concentrated in certain areas. 216 incidents of Racist Graffiti were reported over the year.

**Abandoned vehicles** accounted for 14% of frontline reported incidents; these are more widespread than other incidents though the South West and North West of the city are relatively unaffected.

# Overall summary of recommendations:

## Violent Crime:

### Key Actions to Reduce Violent Crime During 2009/10 include:

Action	Outcome
Implement partnership seasonal planning processes	Timely and targeted multi-agency interventions resulting in the reduction of violent crime
Continue to develop wider data collection around the effects of violence, i.e. A&E database, police staff in hospitals, better links around reporting in medical facilities, etc	The Partnership will have a comprehensive understanding of the causes and effects of violence in the City which will enable resources to be deployed more efficiently and effectively
Develop the local licensing enforcement process ensuring that all Responsible Licensing Authorities are working together and supporting licensees, to effectively manage their premises	Robust multi-agency approach to offender management resulting in reductions in repeat offending by priority offenders
Develop and deliver teaching resources for children & young people in a range of settings and ensure that Youth Offending Service have suitable programmes in place for violent crime offenders	Reductions in violence associated with the night-time economy
Work with Crown Prosecution Service to ensure successful criminal justice outcomes for victims of domestic violence and abuse and hate crime	Increased awareness amongst young people of the consequences of getting involved in violent crime Increased confidence in the criminal justice system Better services for victims and witnesses
Encourage reporting of hate crime in particular working with young people and disabled people	Communities confident to report crime and increased partnership understanding of the level and type of hate crime and domestic violence and abuse

Action	Outcome
Develop work locally in relation to sexual violence in particular, explore the viability of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)	A partnership understanding of the extent of sexual violence problems in the city which will lead to a more effective, multi-agency approach to dealing with it
Design and deliver a wide range of training programmes relating to hate crime and domestic violence and abuse	Staff within agencies will be more equipped to identify and deal with victims of violent crime

## Serious Acquisitive Crime:

### Key Actions to Reduce Serious Acquisitive Crime During 2009/10 include:

Action	Outcome
Implement partnership seasonal planning processes	Timely and targeted multi-agency interventions resulting in the reduction of serious acquisitive crime
Develop local offender management processes so that they are flexible and responsive to Partnership priority crimes in particular serious acquisitive crime	Robust multi-agency approach to offender management resulting in reductions in repeat offending by priority offenders
Deploy street based resources through the AIMS process on a fortnightly basis	Targeted patrols by a range of uniformed based personnel to prevent serious acquisitive crime and promote public reassurance
Develop communication campaigns to raise awareness of seasonal variations, insecure burglaries, home security, leaving goods on display in vehicles, etc	Increased awareness and knowledge amongst residents of how to reduce their chances of becoming a victim of serious acquisitive crime
Police decoy operations targeting vehicle crime hotspots	Reductions in serious acquisitive crime Reductions in theft from vehicle and increased detections
Increase use of Drug Rehabilitation Requirements for offenders of serious acquisitive crime	Increased numbers of offenders receiving substance misuse treatment to reduce their offending Reductions in serious acquisitive crime
Develop systems for sharing information on active criminals across wider partners to ensure 'wanted' or prolific offenders are monitored more routinely by partner agencies	Increased 'eyes and ears' leading to reductions in serious acquisitive crime

Action	Outcome
Locally implement the tackling knife crime Programme	Reductions in numbers of knives being carried Reductions in numbers of knives being used Reductions in robberies involving knives
Ensure planning and development projects take into account of factors that contribute to vulnerability around locations	Reductions in the opportunity for crime to be committed leading to reductions in crime

# Anti-Social Behaviour and Criminal Damage:

**Key Actions to Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour & Criminal Damage During 2009/10 include:**

Action	Outcome
Implement partnership seasonal planning processes	Timely and targeted multi-agency interventions resulting in the reduction of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage
Further develop and implement the Think Family Approach in Coventry	Support for families who are experiencing a range of complex issues
Training and subsequent implementation of challenge and support process for managing offenders of anti-social behaviour and problematic families	Intensive Support for families who are experiencing a range of complex issues including drug/alcohol use, poor parenting, etc leading to reductions in anti-social behaviour
Deliver positive activities for young people in areas experiencing anti-social behaviour	Targeted deployment of a range of activities for children and young people leading to reductions in anti-social behaviour
Deliver youth crime action plan including Youth Offending Workers in custody suites, Operation Staysafe, Family Intervention Programmes, etc	Intensive work with problematic families leading to reductions in anti-social behaviour and other unacceptable behaviours
Develop and deliver teaching resources for children & young people in a range of settings and ensure that Youth Offending Service have suitable programmes in place for dealing with young people involved in anti-social behaviour/criminal damage	Increased awareness amongst young people of the consequences of getting involved in violent crime

Action	Outcome
Working with businesses to ensure that they are aware of activity to tackle fly tipping	Fly-tipping dealt with more swiftly Reduction in fly-tipping
Extend community involvement schemes to get people involved locally, particularly clean ups, Neighbourhood Watch and community walkabouts with local representatives and agencies	Community empowerment Community engagement leading to local people playing a part in the solutions that are agreed
Continually review the It's Your Call Anti-Social Behaviour Reporting Line	Increased confidence in It's Your Call as a way of reporting anti-social behaviour Increased use of It's Your Call which will provide a better understanding of the levels of anti-social behaviour in the city and lead to more effective targeting of resources

## Conclusion

Crime and disorder has been reducing in Coventry over the last 10 years and are at their lowest levels since 1985. The strategic priorities must be seen in this context. The focus for 2009/10 will be to build on the success of existing work, whilst recognising the local social and economic challenges in the current economic climate.

The priorities identified within this Strategic Assessment will form the 2009/10 work programme for the Coventry Community Safety Partnership.

Strategic Delivery Groups will be responsible for the development of action plans to deliver reductions in Violence, Serious Acquisitive Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour and Criminal Damage.

The Community Safety Partnership will receive quarterly performance reports which will allow agencies the opportunity to challenge existing work areas if under performance is identified and to identify and continue with good practice in response to good performance.

