

# **A Summary of the Preston Crime Audit 2004**

Every three years Preston City Council, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire Police Authority, Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service, Preston Primary Care Trust and other Partners, work together to research the level and patterns of crime, disorder and substance misuse across Preston, and publish the results in a Crime Audit. This is used to produce a Community Safety Strategy to cover the next 3 years. As the current Audit is over 250 pages long, this summary aims to show you the headline results. The full Audit document can be accessed online at [www.saferlancashire.gov.uk](http://www.saferlancashire.gov.uk) and at [www.preston.gov.uk](http://www.preston.gov.uk)

## ***Preston's Profile***

Preston is located at the heart of Lancashire, well-connected with the M6, M61, M65 and M55 motorways all close by and a railway station on the West Coast Mainline. Preston was awarded city status in 2002 and is covered by 2 local authorities, Preston City Council and Lancashire County Council, which are also significant as local employers, in addition to the University of Central Lancashire and BAe Systems.

Preston has a population of 129,633 people in 52,970 households in the 2001 census. A quarter of the population are under 18, a fifth over 65, 14.5% are from minority ethnic groups and 7.5% of households were headed by lone-parents. The district is 56<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of 354 in England and Wales and contains a number of particularly deprived areas where crime tends to concentrate.

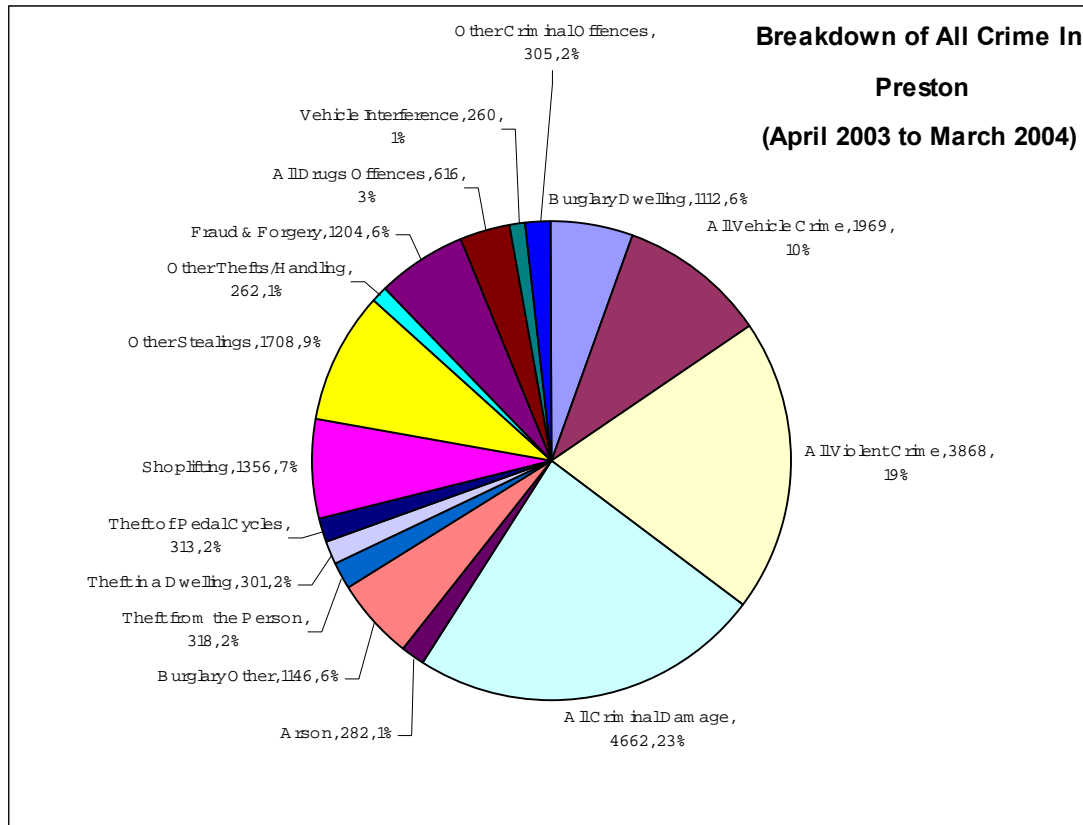
## ***What do the crime figures tell us?***

Overall crime in Preston has reduced since the last Audit. Reductions have been particularly impressive in the target crime types of Domestic Burglary and Vehicle Crime, but new National Crime Recording Standards have pushed recorded violent crime to new heights. The last Audit showed Preston as having above average crime for Lancashire across a whole range of crime types. The present audit shows some types of crimes and incidents where Preston is now below the Lancashire average.

It is not possible to estimate the cost of all crime in Preston, but for those crimes that can be estimated, the current value is £8,164,670, which represents a £3,233,950 annual saving since the last Audit.

Reductions in crime took Preston out of the Higher Crime Quartile in 2003/04. Preston was one of only 7 Partnerships nationally to leave this list, and was the highest placed member of the list to leave. As a City, Preston has a concentration of social and economic variables that tend towards higher crime, but it has improved its position on crime faster than many other areas.

The largest volume crimes are criminal damage (23%), Violent Crime (19%) and Vehicle Crime (10%).

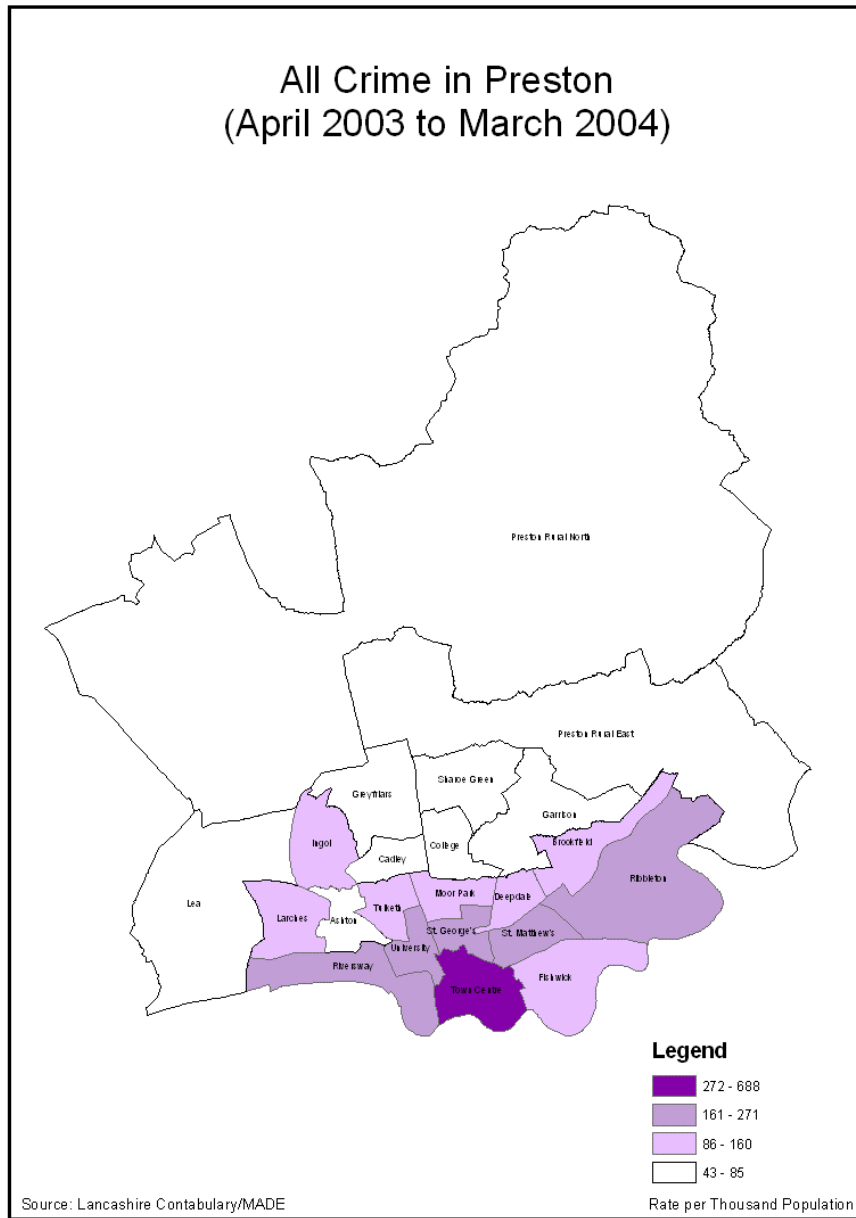


Broadly speaking:-

- A fifth of all crimes are violent crimes (including harassment)
- A quarter of crimes involve destruction of or damage to property.
- Half of crimes are acquisitive in nature, involving some form of theft, fraud or dishonesty.

Crime concentrates heavily in the Town Centre ward and St. Matthews, as well as University, Ribbleton, Riversway, St. Georges and Fishwick wards, which suggests that initiatives such as Street Wardens are concentrated in the right places.

## All Crime in Preston (April 2003 to March 2004)



Compared to the general population, younger people and men, and young men in particular, are far more likely to be victims of crime than any other group, and provide the main bulk of offenders. Older people and women, and older women in particular, are far less likely to be victims of crime or offenders. 28% of offenders lived outside Preston and travelled in to commit their crime. The top 11% most prolific offenders in Preston were found to be responsible for 39% of detected crimes.

## **Burglary**

- Over the past 2 years Domestic Burglary has fallen by 26% (407 offences). There are now around 91 burglaries each month, meaning 34 less victims of burglary every month. Theft in dwellings has increased, but the increase is a third of the size of the decrease in burglary.
- Domestic burglary is now 6% of the crime in Preston. Half of this occurs in the top 5 wards of Ribbleton, St Matthews, Town Centre, Ingol and St Georges. Ribbleton, at 53.4 burglaries per thousand population, is on the edge of 3 times the national average (18.2 x 3= 54.6), and St. Matthews and the Town Centre wards also need to be monitored.
- Only the Rural wards, Lea and University wards have not had reductions in Burglary. Student-related burglary has increased
- Burglary peaks over the summer holidays and Christmas
- Almost half of Burglars gain access through insecure doors and windows.
- The main types of property now being stolen during burglaries in Preston consist of jewellery, CD's, DVD's, mobile phones, cash and laptops. These are all highly portable items that are easily carried away from the scene, easily disposed of and easy to find in victims homes
- Only 2% of recorded burglaries are distraction burglaries (bogus officials, etc.) – but this offence is seriously under-reported and criminals are picking on vulnerable victims who may not be able to give evidence against them in court.

## **Criminal Damage**

- Criminal damage to dwellings in Preston over the last three years has remained less stable at 136 offences per month, and is just above the County average.
- Criminal damage to dwellings accounts for 8.4% of all crime in Preston and 35.2% of all criminal damage. Over half occurs in the top 5 wards of Ribbleton, Ingol, St Matthews, Brookfield and Larches.
- Criminal damage to vehicles accounts for 8.5% of all crime in Preston. 45.6% occurred in the top 5 wards of Town Centre, Ribbleton, St Matthews, Larches and Riversway.
- Over the last 2 years there has been a decrease of 4% in the number of criminal damage to vehicle offences in Preston.

## **Vehicle Crime**

- Over the past 2 years, vehicle-related theft has reduced by 45%. Theft from vehicles has reduced slightly more than theft of vehicles.
- This accounts for 10% of crime in Preston.
- Significant reductions in all vehicle crime have taken place in the Town Centre, University, St Matthews and Garrison wards (showing reductions of 65%, 57%, 33% and 70% respectively)

- Over half of all theft of vehicles occurs in the top 5 wards of St Matthews, Ribbleton, Brookfield, Town Centre and Riversway.
- Just under half of all theft from vehicles occurs in the top 5 wards of Town Centre, St Matthews, Riversway, Ribbleton and Fishwick.
- When considering the location of the vehicle, both national and local statistics show that vehicles are put at increased risk of theft if left on the street. (BCS 2003/04 results show that 40% of vehicle related incidents occurred on the street outside peoples home).
- Vehicle crime offenders are predominantly 15-19 year old males.
- As a number of projects to reduce vehicle crime have either already taken place or are planned in the near future, it is accepted that action involving offenders of vehicle crime through Operation Nimrod, the Tower Programme and the new Prolific & Other Priority Offender Scheme will account for the main focus of work to reduce vehicle crime over the next few years.

### **Violent Crime**

- Preston has improved its position on violent crime when compared to similar areas. All areas are now recording much more of the violent crime that takes place, but it is not clear that Preston is any more violent, and nationally there is less violent crime in recent years.
- However, on recorded crime figures, there are now more violent crimes than domestic burglaries and vehicle crimes combined.
- Around a third of violent crime takes place in the City Centre.
- Violent crime clusters around evenings and weekends.
- Victims are most likely to be young (16-24), single and male.
- The police in Preston currently record nearly over 2,500 incidents of Domestic Violence in a year
- Preston Women's Refuge currently house over 80 women in a year, are unable to accommodate a similar number, and their helpline currently deals with over 1,800 calls per year.
- Victims of domestic violence are less likely to report the crime, more likely to suffer injury, and less likely to seek medical attention than other victims of violent crime.

### **Youth issues**

- There are 30,583 young people in Preston aged 0-17, which represents 24% of the population.
- Young people were identified as victims in almost 1,000 offences, with assaults providing the largest categories.
- School children reported they felt less safe going to and from school than when they were in the playground.
- Young offenders represent a very small percentage of the youth population of Preston. However, research has shown that a far higher

percentage could potentially be at risk of involving themselves in either criminal activity or juvenile nuisance. Risk is influenced by a number of factors. The highest predictor of levels of youth offending in any local ward is the rate of lone-parent households in the area. Young people tend to be drawn to the attention of the Youth Offending Team for shoplifting, assaults and harassment.

- The Partnership seeks to reduce the numbers of young people offending, and the number who re-offend, and is currently meeting Public Service Agreement targets related to both.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

- Complaints of Juvenile Nuisance have continued to rise over recent years, but the system that records them is being replaced and standardised across the country. One result of this is that it will concentrate on recording the type of behaviour in more detail, but will not focus on the age of those responsible.
- Recorded juvenile nuisance is most heavily concentrated in St. Matthews, Ribbleton and Larches. This is reinforced by data on deliberate Secondary Fires, which concentrate in the same wards.
- There were almost 1,000 “secondary fires” dealt with by the Fire Service in Preston. Two-thirds of these were fires of refuse or a container, such as a wheelie-bin.
- Juvenile Nuisance begins to rise from school leaving time before peaking at 10pm and then tailing off.
- Complaints about prostitution fell significantly after Operation Kerb.
- The City Council now receives 1,083 Noise complaints each year, and 2,226 complaints of fly-tipping, littering, dog fouling and overflowing litter bins
- There are now over 350 vehicles abandoned in Preston each year.
- Complaints about begging have fallen since the introduction of the street drinking restriction,
- Preston now has 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders against individuals, and 2 Dispersal Authorisations in place, covering the Farringdon Park and Larches & Savick areas.

### **Substance Misuse**

#### ***Availability***

- Prestons drugs market consists of both open and closed markets
- Heroin and Crack Cocaine continue to be the drugs most clearly linked to other crimes, with offenders committing crime to fund their drug misuse.
- Police activity has increased the number of people arrested over the last three years for both supply and possession of drugs.

### ***Communities***

- Preston has a relatively large homeless population who often need to address drug and alcohol misuse.
- Prolific drug-using offenders on the Tower programme see drugs treatment as only part of the process to motivate them to make positive changes in their way of life. They require support with housing, welfare, training, employment and general health issues.

### ***Young People***

- Preston benefits from more services for young people with drug problems than many other areas.
- Most young people who use drugs are not involved with the Class A drugs that are most closely linked to criminality.
- Young people are more likely to misuse alcohol than hard drugs

### ***Treatment***

- Preston has some robust treatment services as a result of long years of dedicated service developments and partnership working.
- However it would seem that we need to engage with issues of diversity by making these services more attractive to people from the minority communities.

### ***Alcohol***

- Partnerships have had funding to tackle drugs misuse, but nothing for alcohol misuse.
- With the advent of the National Alcohol Strategy and changes to licensing laws the Substance Misuse Group needs a detailed analysis of local alcohol misuse.

### **Safer Travel**

- Progress is being made towards reduction in Collisions, but not as much as had been hoped.
- Community Safety Partnerships have been unable to access funds for Road Safety.
- The public are concerned about aggressive driving and speeding.
- Crime takes place on buses and trains, and this impacts on the public's willingness to use public transport.
- Many car parks are now significantly safer for vehicles.

### **Diversity**

- The Partnership has worked to increase reports of Racial Harassment
- Increasing proportions of these reports do not involve assault, suggested greater community confidence in reporting all types of racist behaviour.

- Numbers of reported homophobic crimes are small in number. There has been some work in this area, but more to do.

### **Business Crime**

- Shoplifting is above the County average but levels are stable.
- Business robberies have increased, but remain small in number.
- Local businesses suffered mostly from various types of theft, including burglary, vehicle theft, and theft both by employees and outsiders.
- Half of businesses had suffered verbal threats to staff from customers, and 18% had suffered violent attacks on staff.

### ***What do local people think?***

Preston City Council, Lancashire Police Authority and Lancashire County Council each conducted independent surveys of public opinion, allowing conclusions to be based on more than one source.

### **City Council Prestonian Survey**

Disorder problems were encountered more frequently than crime problems. Rated much less frequently were problems that are clearly defined as crime. Violence was rarer still.

Overall, those areas of crime which have had the most significant decreases in recorded crime (burglary and vehicle theft) are shown to be the ones most likely to be reported to police, but those which have shown the most increase due to statistical changes are also the most under-reported. This shows that there is still considerable room for expansion in police crime statistics without any real change on the streets, and that the police count is a significant under-count of what it is really like. Violent crime is rarely reported, and youth nuisance is experienced by a significant proportion of the population, without any of this being reported to the police.

Respondents were asked to rate 5 measures as to how helpful they would be in reducing crime and disorder. Results were as follows:

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>% rating “helpful” or “very helpful”</b>
Uniformed Wardens	80%
More Activities for Young People	80%
CCTV in the neighbourhood	68%
Improved Security in Car Parks	63%
Gating of Alleyways	59%

### **Police OPINION Survey**

- Public Confidence in local police is higher than for any previous survey
- 29% of respondents feel that their quality of life is negatively affected by crime
- 12% of respondents have been a victim of crime
- Respondents feel most safe in their own home, especially after dark and feel least safe in a town centre pub or club, whether during the day or after dark, but Preston residents felt safer in this environment than the average Lancashire resident.
- Groups of youths hanging around, dog fouling and rubbish and litter lying around are the 3 biggest issues locally
- 53% of Preston drivers feel that aggressive drivers have an impact on how safe they feel when out driving their car and 43% feel the same about speeding cars
- When considering the use of public transport, anti-social behaviour is considered far more of a threat to feelings of safety than any other issue (by 59% of respondents)
- Vandalism to property and bogus callers are the biggest threat for local people

### **Life in Lancashire Consultation**

- In Preston, 18% of residents reported they were victims in the last 12 months, mostly of vandalism and theft
- 58% reported all the crimes, but 21% reported none of them
- 10% of residents reported they witnessed a crime in the last 12 months. This was notably highest for vandalism, and then assault and driving offences
- Only 30% feel their Quality of Life is affected by crime – but this doubles if you have been a victim or a witness.
- The biggest problems reported were Dog fouling, litter and young people hanging around.
- People in Preston reported feeling unsafe because of “Young people hanging around”, “youths drinking” and “rowdy behaviour”. Lancashire-wide there was, if anything, more worry re. “homeless people hanging around”, “adults drinking on street corners”, and a number of other factors than in Preston
- Problems are seen as significantly worse by ethnic minorities, those living in social housing or social grades D and E

In addition, a survey of priorities for the Community Safety Partnership was taken at the City Council’s five Area Forum meetings. The respondents top priorities were as follows:-

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Aggregated response scores</b>
Youth Crime	63
Alcohol-Related Crime	62
Road Safety	62
Burglaries in the Home	62

The Police Authority focus group of local businesses reported that 28% of businesses mentioned impact on their business from groups of youths hanging around, and 18% from youths drinking on the street

Local businesses felt their area had medium crime levels, with 20% opting for “low” and only 14% opting for high or very high levels of crime.

Given the choice of relocating without costs, most businesses would remain at their current location, a few would move within Preston, but none would leave Preston.

Patterns of fear of crime tend to be based on risk factors, but sometimes represent the reverse of actual experience. Older women are less likely to be victims of crime than they perhaps fear. Young men, however, probably need to realise more of the risks they face, and to take action to manage them. Minority ethnic groups feel particularly vulnerable. This underlines the need for the Partnership to invest in communicating with the public, to address these concerns

### ***What has the Partnership been doing?***

The Partnership has now taken forward in excess of 100 initiatives to tackle local Crime and Disorder in Preston. Obviously they cannot all be covered in this summary, but the following examples provide a flavour of the activity:-

**Burglary** – The Partnership has delivered a multi-stranded Burglary Reduction Initiative, featuring target-hardening of vulnerable properties by Preston Care and Repair, mediation work between offenders and victims by Victim Support, diversionary activities for young people through the Youth and Community Service, together with a programme of alley-gating that now protects several hundred houses in burglary hot-spots.

**Fire Safety** - The Partnership has developed and run Operation Douse, to reduce nuisance related to fireworks and bonfires in the weeks leading up to November 5<sup>th</sup>. This has resulted in a considerable reduction in complaints of nuisance. The Partnership has supported this work with the production of videos, with the support of local company the ADI Group, to tackle fire-related nuisance and the danger of hoax calls. The Partnership has supported the employment of 2 Community Firefighters to work in partnership in local areas and has conducted

an extensive review of education initiatives to inform better co-ordination of inputs on community safety.

**Vehicle Crime** - The Partnership has improved security to City Centre car parks; established a Town-Centre Automated Vehicle Recognition System; developed a mobile CCTV trailer; delivered a scheme for rapid removal of abandoned vehicles; and delivered a number of awareness-raising initiatives to local car owners.

**Violent Crime** - The Partnership has implemented a City Centre Street Drinking Restriction, reducing casualties from glass related injury; delivered a Nightsafe/PROUD campaign against city centre violent crime; improved security on taxi-ranks in Church Street at weekends; improved security at Women's Refuge premises; promoted awareness of Domestic Violence; improved support for victims of Street Crime; used witness protection kits to protect vulnerable witnesses; and developed a Student Survival Guide to get crime prevention messages across to local students.

**Youth Issues and Anti-Social Behaviour**- The Partnership has supported the development of a Youth Referral Scheme and the Group Intervention Panel for local young people on the verge of getting into trouble; created a mobile Youth Centre to take resources to local young people; funded local Muslim, Hindu and Christian groups in support of their engagement of local young people; contributed to the development of the Urban Xchange one-stop-shop; assisted the police in taking forward the National Reassurance Policing Pilot at Ingol; delivered a CCTV scheme at Callon; increased use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders; and delivered 2 Dispersal Authorisations covering local areas.

**Substance Misuse** – The Partnership has funded the Operation Nimrod drug strikes; developed intensive rehabilitation efforts under the Tower Programme; delivered a nationally recognised Crack Cocaine pilot service; reduced local complaints about prostitution through Operation Kerb and support of Streetlink; supported the delivery of a Dance Drug Safety project; and helped to establish a local Drugs Intervention Programme.

**Safer Travel** - The Partnership has improved safety on local car parks and taken forward work with taxis; and has funded the Safer Travel Unit in purchasing CCTV systems to cover bus shelters.

**Diversity** - The Partnership has delivered a Racial Harassment Self-Referral Project, improved sharing of information on racist incidents, and delivered a project aiming to improve relationships with the local gay and lesbian community.

**Business Crime** – The Partnership has established a Street Crime Warden Scheme in the City Centre area, extended the City Centre CCTV scheme and

installed affordable CCTV schemes to a number of parades of shops in residential areas.

### ***Where do we go from here?***

The Audit recommends:-

- That the Partnership should refocus its efforts to deal more with violent crime and Anti-Social Behaviour, including Criminal Damage and youth nuisance. This will involve a shift from the emphasis on volume acquisitive crime. There will be a need to maintain existing work on drug misuse and prolific offenders related to burglary and vehicle crime, but there is a greater need for new developments to address violent crime and anti-social behaviour.
- That the following Task Groups should represent the starting position for the 2005 Strategy:-

Youth Issues  
Anti-Social Behaviour  
Violent Crime  
Substance Misuse  
Mainstreaming Group (s.17 Crime and Disorder Act)  
City Centre Crime  
Prolific and Priority Offenders Group(s)

- That the following existing Task Groups should consolidate their work, finalise any action plans, and maintain a monitoring role:-

Vehicle Crime  
Safer Homes  
Racial Harassment  
Road Safety

- That the Partnership and the Police and Communities Together Initiative should work together to populate a new Community Safety Forum composed of PACT panel chairs, to support the development of Ward Profiles, and to offer funding opportunities to local PACTs.
- That Task Groups should aim to produce Action Plans tackling their areas of work, and should then meet less frequently to monitor those plans, freeing resource for delivery of actions, and making the Partnership more flexible.

- That the Partnership commit funding to the development of a **Progressive Service Standard**, which will outline steps how each specialist function in each partner organisation can self-assess on an evidenced basis, and progressively improve its contribution to reducing crime and disorder.
- That the Partnership seek to develop a dedicated publicity budget, to enable it to keep the public informed as to what work the Partnership is taking forward, and to encourage the public to get involved in preventing crime, so that the publicity reduces crime and the fear of crime.
- That the Partnership direct a proportion of its resources to the recruitment of a Partnership Analyst position on a long-term basis.
- That the new Strategy should contain targets for Best Value Performance Indicators 126 (burglary) and 128 (vehicle crime), for crime reduction in line with the new BCS comparator, for relative improvement against those partnerships in Preston's Most Similar Group, and that those groups dealing with violent crime, domestic violence, youth nuisance, anti-social behaviour and racial harassment should be tasked with developing their own targets at a later date, based on their experience of implementing indicators locally.

**With regard to specific issues the Audit also recommends as follows:-**

**Racial Harassment** - all Task Groups should revisit racial equality and racial harassment to ensure that these issues are covered where appropriate in their action plans.

**Burglary** – The Safer Homes Group to continue to monitor Ribbleton and other wards with higher burglary rates, to address Student-related burglaries and Distraction Burglaries, and to continue to promote Secured by Design.

**Ward profiles** - The similarity of hotspot wards for burglary, theft in dwelling, criminal damage and deliberate fires all suggest the need for more analysis work to be completed with a view to the production of 'ward profiles'. The process of P.A.C.T. should be closely aligned with this work.

**Vehicle Crime** – The Group to monitor the levels of vehicle crime in St Matthews, Ribbleton, Town Centre and Riversway, and to continue to educate members of the public about the risk of vehicle crime when their car is parked on the street outside their home

**Violent Crime** – The Group to develop an Action Plan to tackle violence hot-spots, including the City Centre; to tackle Domestic Violence; and to address Hate Crime.

**Substance Misuse** – subject to funding...

- Availability** – Continued support for Nimrod, Tower, and the Drugs Intervention Programme, and the Crack Cocaine Project
- Communities** – Continued Support for Streetlink/Safelink and development of new initiatives
- Young People** – Support for better co-ordination of Key Performance Indicators surrounding Young People and Substance Misuse, and support for the principles in Every Child Matters
- Treatment** - To support the Drugs Intervention Programme in delivering not only treatment but through and aftercare services, and to support the NTA diversity agenda
- Alcohol** - Perform a detailed analysis of local alcohol misuse, and develop a local action plan for delivery of the national alcohol strategy. Develop closer links with the Violent Crime Group.

## ***Consultation***

If you would like to make comments on the Audit, please send them to [s.chapman@preston.gov.uk](mailto:s.chapman@preston.gov.uk) or to Samuel Chapman at Preston City Council, Premier House, Church Street, Preston, PR1 3BQ. Comments received before 31 January can be considered in writing the new Community Safety Strategy. The Audit results, and other comments received after this deadline, will be available to Partnership Groups as they consider how to implement the new Strategy.

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