

## Press Release

# DPP TOLD THAT CRIME FIGURES HAVE FALLEN

District Commander Alan Caldwell reported to the District Policing Partnership Meeting in Public in Kilkeel that all categories of crime have fallen in the Newry and Mourne District area for the six month period covering the beginning of April until the end of September.

The crime statistics, which are contained in the District Commander's six-monthly report, divides crime into 6 separate categories. These include theft, offences against the person, vehicle crime, criminal damage, domestic burglary, and robbery. In all categories the numbers of incidents has fallen compared with the same period last year. Chief Superintendent Alan Caldwell reported crime in Newry & Mourne was down by 10.9% from 2,729 to 2,431 incidents.

Vehicle crime has seen the biggest fall with a decrease of 37.4% from the same period last year. Between April and September of this year, there have been 224 reported incidents of vehicle crime, whilst in the same period in 2002 the figure was 358.

Theft has dropped, compared with the same period last year from 874 to 692 reported instances. This shows a 20.8% drop.

Domestic burglary has fallen by 2.5% , (the target for 2003 to 2004 being a 5% reduction) - from 200 cases last year in this six month period to 195 this year. However the number of clearances for domestic burglaries has increased to 10.8% over the six month period.

The District Commander also responded to questions from the public on a range of issues of concern to people living in the Kilkeel area, including the numbers of people arrested for drugs offences, sectarian graffiti in the town, and concerns over the policing of parades. The meeting was informed that 20 drug related arrests have been made in the Kilkeel area since 1998. A total of 1.8 kilograms of cannabis resin along with 180 milligrams of amphetamine and 50 milligrams of cocaine has been recovered. In addition 463 ecstasy tablets and 62 diazepam tablets were seized.

Commenting on the methods used to try and take drugs out of the towns and villages in the Mourne area Chief Superintendent Caldwell said "Our Drugs Liaison Unit focuses on the gathering of drugs intelligence and in conjunction with the Forces Drug Squad conducts operations to seize drugs and arrest those possessing or dealing"

Members of the DPP expressed their concerns, about the number of arrests, and the extent of the present drugs problem in the Kilkeel area and this was echoed by local residents in attendance at the meeting.

The meeting was also informed that Kilkeel Police Station will remain open on a full time basis . The District Commander said “ There are currently no plans to designate Kilkeel Police Station limited opening. It is DCU Command’s intention to maintain the station on a 24 hour basis. There are longer term plans for the provision of a new station build following approval for same by the Policing Board”

Cllr Michael Carr , chair of the District Policing Partnership thanked all the members of the public for attending the first DPP Meeting in Public in Kilkeel and for sending in a range of questions. He said “ It is clear that we have heard from the public to-night about key issues of concern in the Kilkeel town and surrounding areas. I want to

thank everyone for their participation in the meeting, both for their comments and questions sent to the DPP in advance. I want to assure people that the DPP takes all these concerns seriously, and we will do everything we can to address the issues raised here to-night”