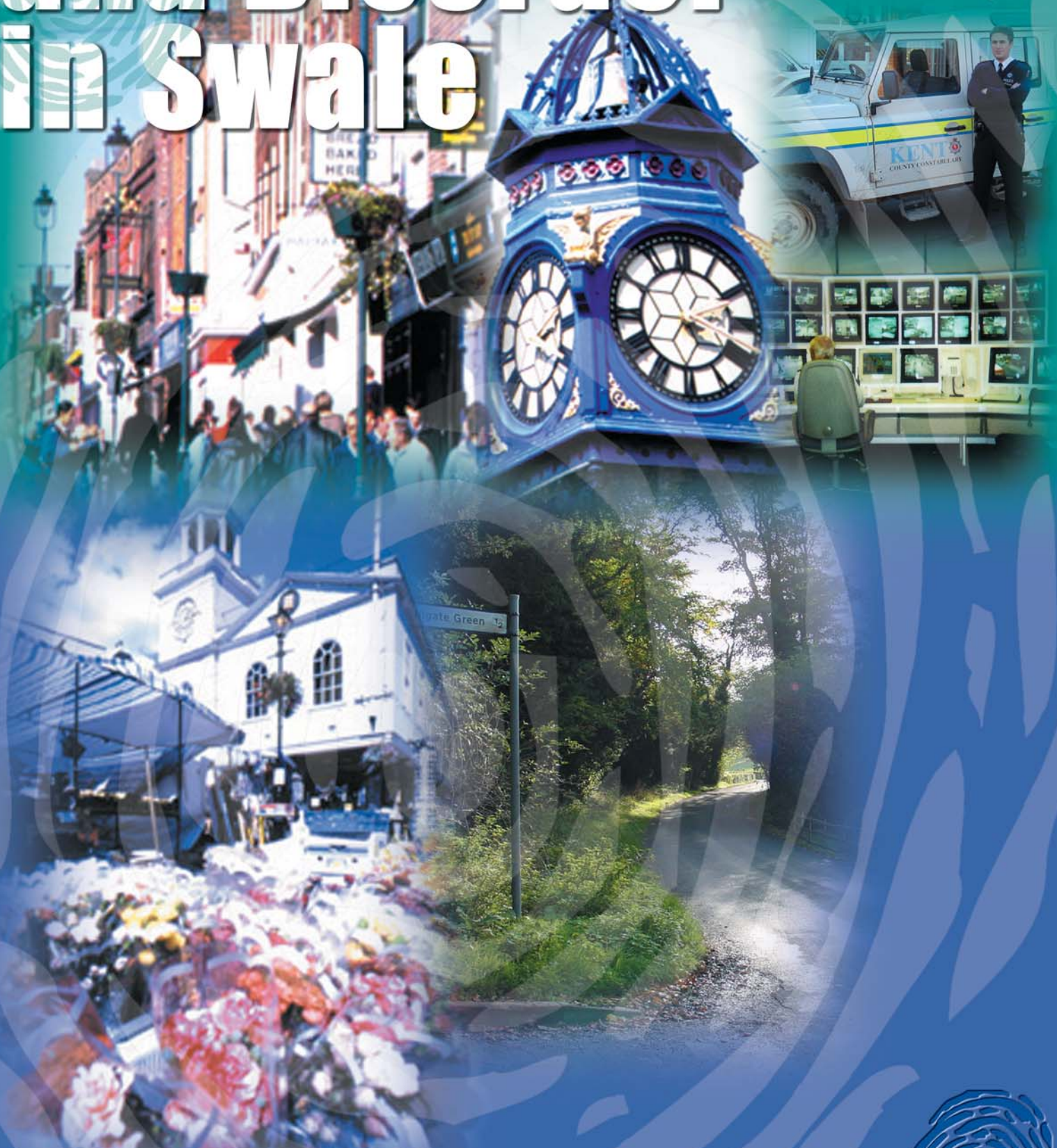


# Tackling Crime and Disorder in Swale



Produced in Partnership by the  
Swale Crime and Disorder Group



## Foreword

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory responsibility upon Swale Borough Council, Kent Police, Kent County Council and other key partners to co-operate in the development and implementation of a strategy for tackling local crime and disorder.

To achieve this, Swale Borough Council established a Crime and Disorder Group the 'Local Responsible Authority' or 'LRA'. This group provided a forum for the council and the other partners (see back cover) to discuss local Crime and Disorder issues and agree and implement the Crime and Disorder strategy.

The strategy and resulting plan covered a period of three years ending March 31st 2002. This audit provides the background and rationale for the second Swale Community Safety Plan that will take effect from April 2002.

The purpose of the audit is to review progress to date and assist partners to set the priorities that will enable them to devise a joint approach to reducing crime and disorder in Swale over the next three years.

This document provides a summary of progress to date and an audit of information that will help focus the strategy of the next Community Safety Plan.

## Introduction

To be able to agree joint agency priorities to tackle crime and disorder it is essential to have an accurate picture of the extent of crime, disorder and social problems in the borough.

In addition agencies need to understand which tactics are working within local communities both from a local perspective and nationally when tackling problems of crime and disorder.

This audit concentrates on providing the statistical information, drawing some conclusions regarding trends; the locations where problems arise most frequently and particular social issues that are likely to be linked to crime and disorder.

As part of the audit process the residents of Swale have been consulted. 1500 questionnaires were sent out at random to residents within the Borough of Swale. We received 607 completed replies.

You gave us five clear responses as to what our priorities should be:-

- House Burglary
- Drugs
- Youth Issues
- Criminal Damage
- Speeding vehicles

A youth survey carried out by the Safer Schools Project Officer, which included all the senior schools in the borough, identified the following issues based on 3,535 responses.

- Not enough facilities in rural areas
- Present facilities need upgrading, cleaning and advertising
- Current programmes need revising to meet the needs of older teenagers
- Public / community areas need teenage facilities.

## Background to the statistical information (the 'Common Data Sets for Swale')

In 1998, there was a lengthy process undertaken to collate the data from all partner agencies. This was the case not just for Swale, but also for all Local Responsible Authorities in Kent.

One of the many successes of the current plan (1999 / 2002) was to streamline the process for collecting the information.

Jointly with other Kent Districts and the Kent County Council, it was agreed that, 'Common Data Sets' would be compiled (for each district) with the production being co-ordinated by the Strategic Planning Unit of K.C.C.

This audit contains the product of that co-operation which has proven to be a valuable source of information for Swale and the other Kent districts.

## Review of the Community Safety Plan (1999 / 2001)

At the inception of the Community Safety Plan Swale Borough Council and its partners faced an enormous challenge. However as a result of hard work and the co-operation of all participating agencies (including the voluntary sector) much has been achieved. Having started this joint approach to tackling Crime and Disorder, and its causes, it is now difficult to imagine how the community could be served without the processes and forums that have been put in place. Of course much still needs to be done to build on our successes to date and to continue to develop new ideas and initiatives as we learn more about the needs of Swale.

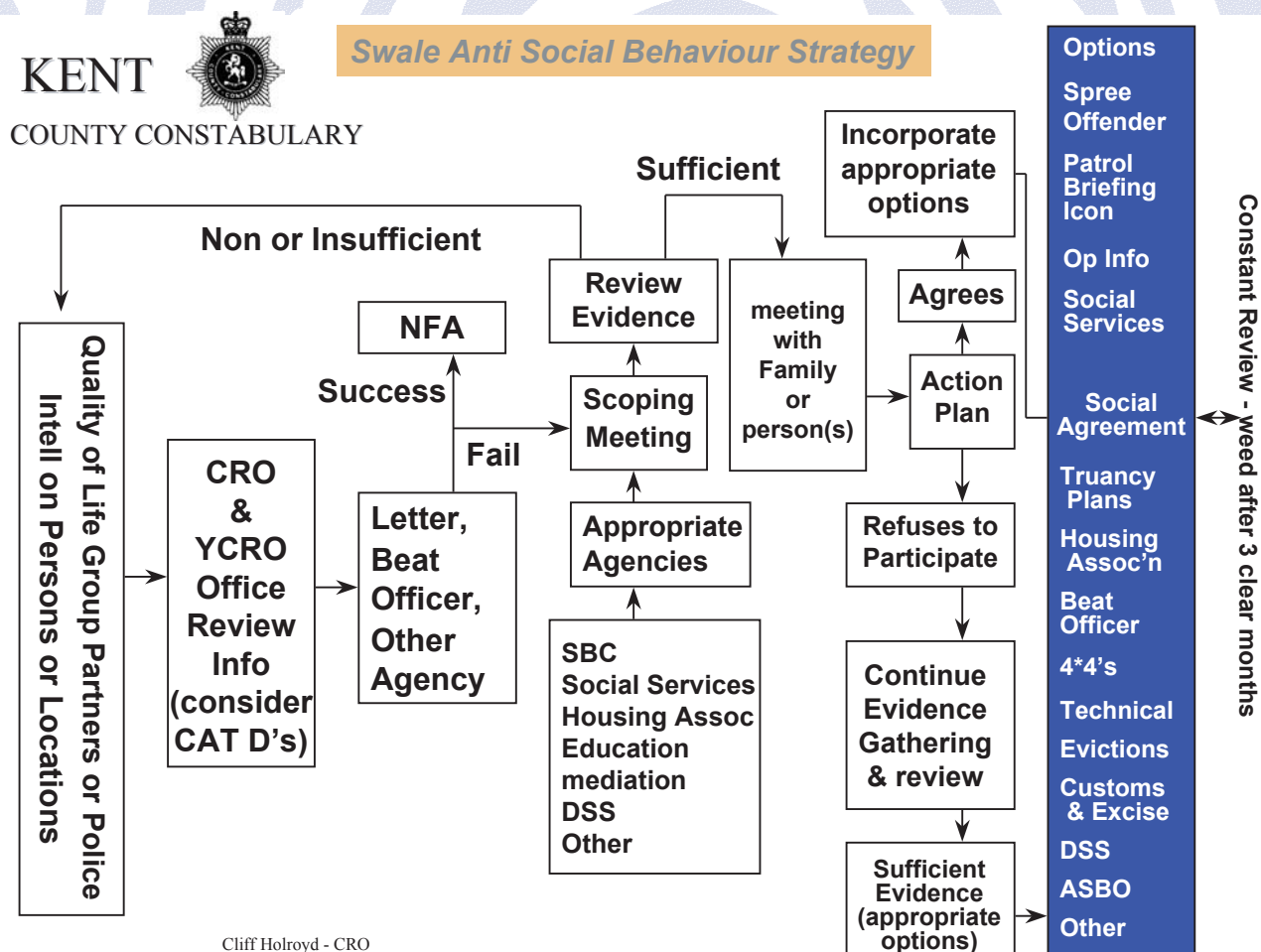
The major achievements of the group include:

### Partnerships

Arguably the most important objective of the Crime & Disorder Group is to develop (and continue to develop) an effective working relationship between the agencies that service the community. This enables the right priorities to be set and ensures that problems are resolved using the most effective approach (for example, avoiding duplication, unnecessary cost etc.) whilst also protecting the rights of individuals and the community. The following gives examples of where this objective is being achieved:

### Quality of Life Group

This has provided a forum for practitioners from the different agencies to meet regularly to review local issues and problems, assess them, and agree how the partnership can work together to resolve them. This included the establishment of Data exchange protocols to enable the group to develop a multi-agency Swale Anti Social Behaviour Strategy to effectively deal with problem families and individuals.



The above diagram summarises how the various agencies are working together to resolve the problems of anti social behaviour in Swale. The emphasis is to seek co-operation and avoid the need to take punitive measures until all the other options have been considered.

## **C.I.C. - Community Information Centre**

Swale Borough Council and Swale Police are the first local authority and Police force in England & Wales to open a joint "Community Information Centre" the centre is jointly staffed to deal with A range of enquiries dealt with by the Police and the Local Council.

The centre received special project funding from the government and is currently operating as a pilot scheme. The main objective of the C.I.C. is to make it easier for the public to have an issue dealt with that involves, or could involve, both Police and Council Officers.

## **Swale Addiction Partnership**

The addiction partnership was set up in response to the Borough's high percentage of offenders reported to have a substance misuse problem. The Partnership consists of the Kent Council on Addiction, East and West Kent health authorities, Thames Gateway N.H.S. Trust, Swale Police, Kent Probation Service and Swale Borough Council. Predominantly the funding of the partnership has been secured through the Single Regeneration Partnership, S.R.B.(single regeneration budget) and a National Lottery grant which has helped to establish addiction services at dedicated premises in Sittingbourne and Sheerness. Advice and counselling is offered and the partnership also provides a cell intervention scheme, as well as a Drug Treatment & Testing Program, which is a scheme that forms part of a court order requiring drug driven offenders to address their addiction problems.

## **Information and Administration**

The implementation of the last community safety plan highlighted the need to have a dedicated team to co-ordinate both the plan's delivery by the partners and the monitoring and collating of all relevant data.

To this end a Community Safety Office is being set up, which will consist of a Community Safety Co-ordinator who for the next three years will be a serving police officer seconded to the partnership and working out of Swale House; A Crime and Disorder Analyst funded by Home Office partnership money; clerical support provided by Swale Borough Council.

## ***Examples of successful initiatives***

### **"Alleygator"**

Within the Borough of Swale there are areas of housing that are served by a network of rear alleyways. Free access to these alleyways has historically assisted criminals in gaining unlawful access to residential dwellings to commit burglaries to homes and garden sheds. The existence of alleyways has also made these residential areas more susceptible to anti-social behaviour and criminal acts.

Following a successful scheme in 'Marine Town' Sheerness to gate a number of alleyways, allowing access only for residents, the scheme was extended to Murston, Sittingbourne. Surveys of the Sheerness scheme have shown residents to be very pleased with the gates and a greater feeling of safety and security has been expressed. The number of burglaries in both of these areas has seen a reduction.

Swale Borough Council, Swale Police, The Swale Regeneration Partnership and Kent County Council have funded the installation of 45 gates to date.

## **Healthy Living**

Sheppey Matters is a voluntary organisation dedicated to helping to improve the health of the Swale residents. It has with the help of partners; Swale Council, West Kent Health Authority, Swale Primary Care Group, K.C.C. Social Services and Swale Housing Association secured nearly £1 million to create a 'Healthy Living Centre' at Sheerness. The centre's construction will begin before the end of 2001 and is attached to the Leisure complex. The centre will offer a range of services including a

conventional a G.P. practice as well as other innovative services designed to address the physical and mental health of residents. Personal mental health is regarded as a serious community safety issue, which can lead, or be connected with problems such as domestic violence, suicide, drug addiction and alcoholism.

## **Youth Forum and Events**

The Youth Forum whose meetings regularly take place in the Council Chamber at Swale House involves most of the senior schools in Swale and is always attended by more than fifty pupils.

The public often perceives youths as the biggest perpetrators of crime. This includes Anti Social behaviour and criminal damage, which is often linked to the consumption of alcohol. 33% of arrests in Swale are of people aged between 10 and 17 years which highlights the need for us to concentrate our efforts into diverting them from becoming involved in criminal and anti-social activities

The Youth Forum has been regarded as an effective way of engaging with young people and raising awareness of youth issues, such as learning, employment, recreation, entertainment and responding to mutual needs. The Forum has for example shared good practice on dealing with bullying in schools and resisting drugs. It has also managed several events including an annual 'Battle of the Bands' contest held in the Swallows Leisure Centre.

Other youth driven projects have been the Kemsley Youth House, which provides a meeting place for young people and the installation of 'Teenage Shelters' (Kick walls/goalposts/shelters etc) in Rectory Road, Murston, Warden Bay, Westminster school playing fields, Sheerness and Millfield Faversham.

## **Family Support Projects**

A great deal of effort and importance has been placed upon early intervention, diverting young people away from crime. Much of this has involved the provision of early learning, play facilities and supporting the unity of families.

Among the family support projects set up with the help of Single Regeneration Budget (S.R.B) funding and the significant input of the voluntary sector, KCC, Education and Social Services have been the Poppyfields Centre, Murston, Rushenden C.A.R.E house, Breakthrough, (Rose street Community Centre), Regis Manor Milton Regis, Weenie Westminster (Westminster Primary School) and Green porch adolescent service.

The projects are expected to have a long-term impact on crime reduction, by encouraging greater social inclusion.

## **CCTV & Hawkeye Mobile CCTV Surveillance**

Hawkeye was originally funded by S.R.B., Council and Housing association money and has on average 10 deployments per year into high crime and quality of life issue locations. The deployment of these cameras has the effect of reducing reported incidents by an average of 30%.

New cameras on railway station platforms - Teynham etc. Adding to existing Town Centre scheme.

Because of the success of the current Hawkeye we have been successful in obtaining £83,700 from the Home Office to purchase new state of the art cameras and equipment, which will enable us to have many more deployments and provide extra cover to the rural areas and villages.

## **Secure Car Parks**

One target in the current Community Safety Plan was to reduce thefts of and from motor vehicles in public car parks. Swale has achieved Home Office 'Secured Car Park' status for seven of the borough's car parks. This has contributed to the reduction of vehicle related crime particularly in Town Centres.

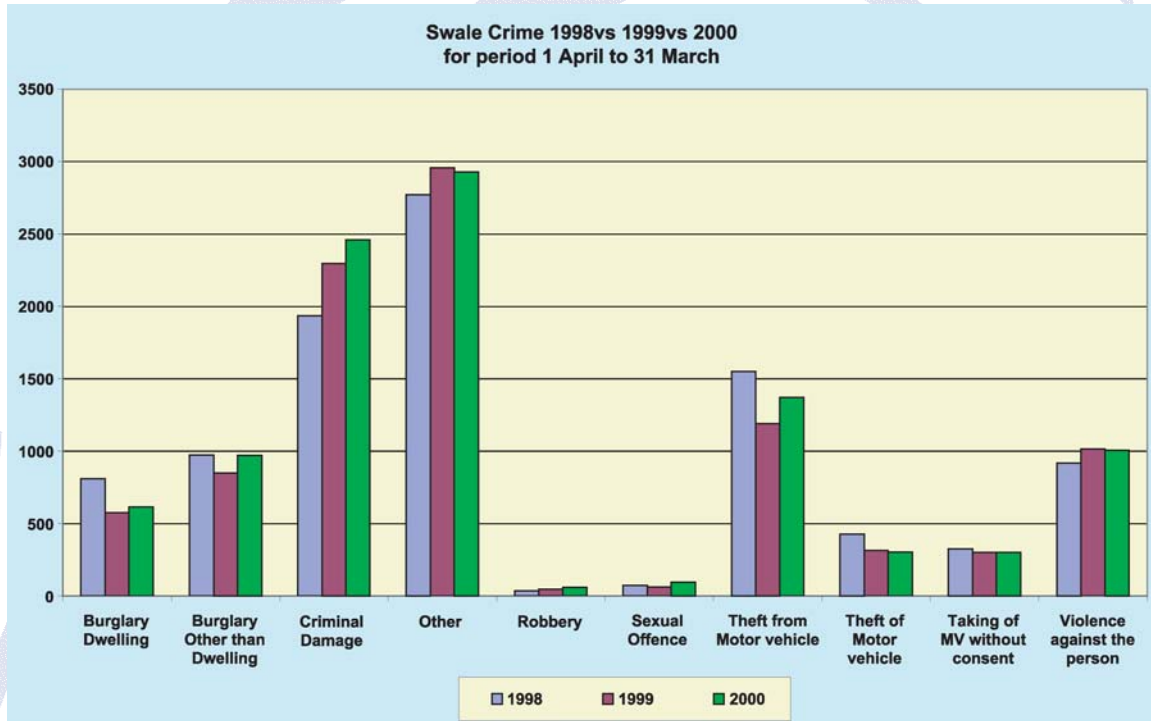
# Review of Crime and Disorder in Swale

## Crime trends in Swale

A review of the period between 1 April 1998 to 31 March 2001 (fiscal years 1998/1999/2000) shows that:-

- Overall crime has increased by 3.14% since April 1998
- Criminal Damage (including arson) is a major factor in this increase (up by 27.07%)
- Burglary in a Dwelling, Burglary of sheds, garages etc. and vehicle related offences (Theft of and Theft from Motor vehicle) have all reduced
- There has been an increase in violent crime (violence against the person)

The following graph and table summarise the position in Swale:



Crime Description	1998	1999	2000	Proportion In 2000	2000 vs. 1998	% Change
Burglary Dwelling	810	575	614	6.07%	-196	-24.20%
Burglary Other than Dwellings	974	849	972	9.61%	-2	-0.21%
Criminal Damage	1936	2296	2460	24.32%	524	27.07%
Other	2772	2958	2929	28.95%	157	5.66%
Robbery	37	47	61	0.60%	24	64.86%
Sexual Offence	73	62	96	0.95%	23	31.51%
Theft From Motor vehicle	1549	1190	1372	13.56%	-177	-11.43%
Theft of Motor vehicle	427	316	304	3.01%	-123	-28.81%
Taking of MV without consent	326	301	301	2.98%	-25	-7.67%
Violence against the Person	920	1016	1007	9.95%	87	9.46%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9824</b>	<b>9610</b>	<b>10116</b>		<b>308</b>	<b>3.14%</b>

It should be noted that in Swale the victim experienced intimidation, threat or violence in only 5 out of the 614 Burglary Dwellings in business year 2000. There are approximately 50,000 dwellings in Swale.

Whilst violence has increased in Swale it is at a rate ( 9.46% ) that is less than the national average (21.1%).

## Public Disorder in Swale

The following tables summarise the position regarding Public Disorder in Swale. They highlight the fact that disorder has :-

- Reduced in the whole of Swale by 7.5%
- Reduced in the Town Centres by 18.4%

As the method of categorising incidents changed in December 1998 the period used for comparison is April to October ( 1999 to 2001 ).

The reduction of all forms of disorder is a prime objective of the Swale Community Safety Plan.

**Swale Public Disorder 1999 vs 2000 vs 2001 for period April to September**

	1999	2000	2001
CIVIL DISPUTE		77	104
DISTURBANCE IN LICENSED PREMISES		77	77
DISTURBANCE IN PUBLIC PLACE		988	292
DISTURBANCE ON PRIVATE PROPERTY		317	186
DOMESTIC INCIDENT		447	421
DRUNKENNESS		102	117
HOMOPHOBIC		1	
HUNT SABOTEURS		1	
MARCH/DEMONSTRATION			1
NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES		146	177
OTHER UNLISTED DISORDER/NUISANCE		510	846
PUBLIC/SPORTS EVENT		1	
RACIAL/ETHNIC		16	17
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>2426</b>	<b>2683</b>	<b>2238</b>

**Swale Town Centres Public Disorder 1999 vs 2000 vs 2001 for period April to September**

	1999	2000	2001
CIVIL DISPUTE		18	17
DISTURBANCE IN LICENSED PREMISES		38	44
DISTURBANCE IN PUBLIC PLACE		318	104
DISTURBANCE ON PRIVATE PROPERTY		78	53
DOMESTIC INCIDENT		107	98
DRUNKENNESS		46	45
HOMOPHOBIC		1	
HUNT SABOTEURS		1	
NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES		25	15
OTHER UNLISTED DISORDER/NUISANCE		133	233
RACIAL/ETHNIC		4	11
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>620</b>

**THE CURRENT COMMUNITY SAFETY PROGRAMME (1999 TO 2002)**

The current Community Safety Programme (initiated in April 1999) identified the locations in Swale that experienced a higher proportion of crime and disorder than was usual for the borough. Having identified these 'Focus Areas' a wide range of activities were agreed many requiring the participating agencies to share information and implement a joint approach to problems.

The introduction of the Quality of Life Group to enable problems to be identified at an early stage and agree the most effective 'joint' approach has been a key factor in tackling Crime and Disorder in Swale. The group plays an important role by pro-actively tackling the causes of Crime and Disorder.

The tactics employed, included:

- A dedicated police presence in Focus Areas (Beat Management)
- The deployment of mobile CCTV systems

- An inter agency approach to Anti Social Behaviour
- A co-ordinated approach to drug and alcohol issues
- Support to problem families

The following is a summary of Crime and Disorder in the Focus Areas :

Focus Area	98/99/00	Summary
Sittingbourne Town Centre	Up 93 offences (862 to 955)	Criminal Damage and Violent Crime up A reduction in Vehicle related crime
Marine Town	Up 18 offences (904 to 922)	Significant Criminal Damage and Vehicle related crime (highest rate of taking without consent (TWOC) in Swale)
Sheerness Town West	Up 92 offences (460 to 552)	Main problem Criminal Damage
Faversham Town Centre	Down 42 offences (615 to 573)	Small increase in Criminal Damage & Burglary Reduction in Vehicle related crime
Lower/Bysingwood Roads	Down 13 offences (394 to 381)	Small increase in Criminal Damage Reduction in Theft from Motor Vehicles
Kemsley	Up 187 offences (321 to 508)	Increase in Burglary, Criminal Damage and Vehicle related crime
Milton Regis	Down 12 offences (729 to 717)	Increase in Theft from Motor Vehicles Small increase in Criminal Damage
Murston	Up 47 offences (550 to 597)	Increase in Burglary of sheds and garages etc. Significant increase in Criminal damage

In summary the rise in Criminal Damage offences has resulted in an overall increase in reported crime. However Community Safety Plan activities have contributed to a reduction of Burglaries and Vehicle Related Crime particularly in Faversham and Sittingbourne Town Centres, Lower / Bysingwood Roads and Milton Regis.

The significant rise in offences in Kemsley may be related to an increasing local population.

## **Analysis of current levels of Crime and Disorder in Swale**

The availability of the Crime and Disorder data sets has enabled the LRA to establish the current position in Swale and identify the locations that require primary attention based on both incidents of Crime and Disorder and the environments that influence anti social and criminal activity.

A three stage approach was used to ensure the inclusion of all available information and feedback:

- Analysis of Police Crime and Disorder Data for the period 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001
- Analysis of the Education, Social Services, Unemployment, Deprivation, District Council, Kent Fire Brigade, Probation Service and Health Authority data sets
- Integration of the findings to identify the areas of Swale in greatest need of support

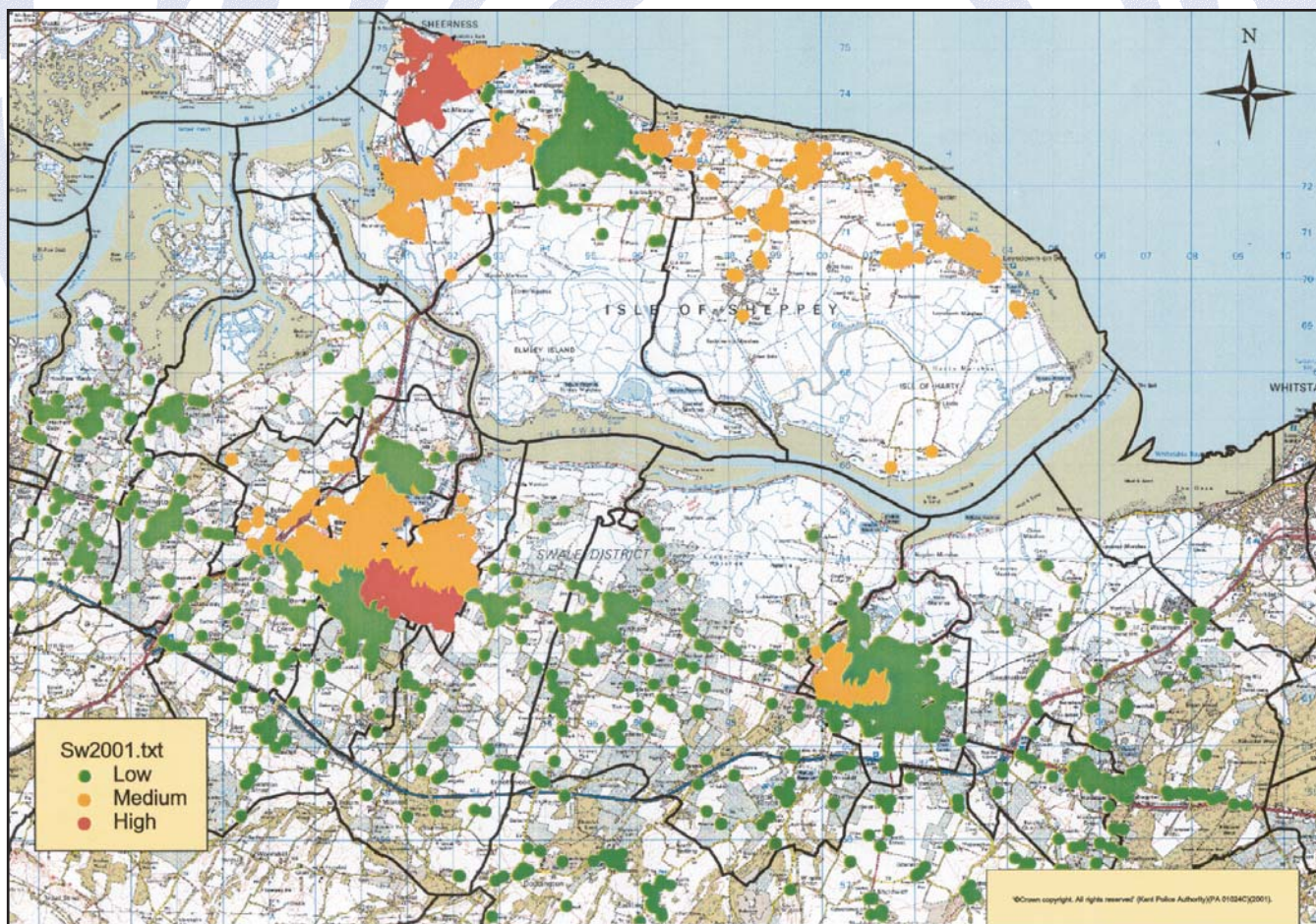
The next Community Safety Programme and plan will be driven by the results of the three stages of analysis.

### Analysis of Police Data Set

Based on the Police data, Swale Wards were ranked in order of level of Crime and Disorder and demands on inter-agency resources. Where appropriate, adjoining Wards with related problems and / or issues were considered collectively. The ranking were based on a score of three where Crime or Disorder problems were identified as being significantly above the average for Swale and one where the level of Crime and / or Disorder was within 5% of being significant. Finally for each road that experienced more than 20 offences over the review period the Ward score was increased by one.

**Swale – Ward Rankings based on all CSP' Data Sets**

Ward	Type	Roads	Crime	Disorder	Partner Ranking*	Total
Sheerness East/West		14	4	3	95	116
Milton/Kemsley		5	1	2	38	46
Eastern/Minster Cliffs		5	1	4	31	39
Davington		1	0	1	27	29
Murston		6	0	1	19	28
Roman		9	3	3	9	24
St Ann's (Abbey)		6	0	0	13	19
Queenborough & H'Way		5	0	0	4	9
Grove		6	1	0	1	8
Watling		2	0	1	0	3



The above map summarises where offences have occurred in Swale between April 2000 and March 2001. The level of crime is also indicated along with the ward boundaries.

## Analysis of Partner Data Sets

The Police Data set whilst indicating the locations in Swale most affected by Crime and Disorder does not establish which areas need the most support to help reduce the causes of crime. To identify the underlying factors that may impact on crime and disorder and the locations in Swale where it is best to concentrate resources the Data Sets of the other LRA agencies have been reviewed.

The approach taken was to establish the level of activity in each Swale Ward and select the top six in each Category. This provided a ranking that reflected the needs of each location.

	Kent Social Services	Kent Social Services	Kent Social Services	KCC Strategic Planning	KCC Strategic Planning	Kent Fire Brigade	Kent Probation Service	Kent Probation Service	Kent Probation Service	Kent Probation Service	East/West Kent Health Services	East/West Kent Health Services	Rank/Score
Ward	Young Offenders	Child Prot'n Register	Children in Care	Unemployment	Deprivation	Hoax calls /Deliberate Fires	Offenders using drugs/alc	Reoffenders on Bail	Community Punishment Orders	Breach of Previous Sentence	Drug / Alcohol Adm'ns	Assault Admissions	
Sheerness West	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	53
Sheerness East	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*		*	42
Eastern	*		*	*	*				*	*	*	*	29
Davington		*	*	*	*		*	*			*		27
Milton Regis	*	*		*	*	*			*				20
Murston			*	*	*	*	*		*	*		*	19
Kemsley			*					*	*	*		*	18
Roman	*	*				*							9
Boughton									*	*			8
St Ann's							*				*		7
Abbey		*									*		6
Queenborough						*	*						4
Teynham	*							*					2
Minster Cliffs						*							2
Newington								*					2
Sheppey Central											*		2
East Downs		*											1
Grove												*	1

Notes \* Indicates that a Ward is in the top 6 Wards in Swale for a category.

The Ranking score is based on the position in the top 6 ( 1st = 6 points, 2nd = 5 points etc.)

## Swale - Ward Rankings based on all Data Sets

The following table summarises the position when the Police Data and Other Agency Data Set rankings are combined. This identifies the areas of Swale that are in most need of inter agency support and will be used as one of the drivers for the next Community Safety Programme and Plan.

## Swale - Ward Rankings based on all CSP' Data Sets

Ward	Type	Roads	Crime	Disorder	Partner Ranking*	Total
Sheerness East/West		14	4	3	95	116
Milton/Kemsley		5	1	2	38	46
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Murston		6	0	1	19	28
Roman		9	3	3	9	24
St Ann's (Abbey)		6	0	0	13	19
Queenborough & H'Way		5	0	0	4	9
Grove		6	1	0	1	8
Watling		2	0	1	0	3

The following map indicates the locations of the highest ranked Wards



## CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PLANS

During the life of the current plan and in line with Central Government policy a 24 hour Help Line was set up for the reporting of racial incidents. Swale Police have appointed a full time community liaison officer to monitor all reported racial and homophobic incidents. These issues will be included in the next community safety plan.

The increase in criminal damage, violence and problems associated with the 'night time economy' in town centres is something that should also be addressed by working with pubs and night clubs to reduce the number of alcohol related incidents.

**The dramatic rise in criminal damage is a major problem for Swale and initiatives will be started to reverse this trend. Feedback has already been received through a pilot Survey conducted at a Swale school regarding the causes of criminal damage which identified the lack of facilities for young people as a major factor.**

Domestic violence also needs resources and targets to be included within the next plan.

It is hoped that the voluntary sector will play a more active role and be given targets and support to be included in the new plan.

One area of concern is the anticipated growth in population and commercial expansion of certain areas of Swale. The need for involvement of the relevant agencies at the planning stage of these changes along with a positive approach by developers is essential if the environmental conditions that contribute to crime are to be avoided. For example recreational areas on new estates must cater for all age groups and roads must be planned to remove the risk of speeding vehicles. To this end the LRA will maintain a comprehensive dialogue with planners and developers at a local and national level.

In future plans we will have to take into account other performance indicators such as "Best Value" and "Public Service Agreements"

## CONCLUSIONS

The information contained within this audit will be a guide to helping the partners formulate their ideas and targets for the next community safety plan which is due to be published in March 2002. Partners will need to have their objectives ready for inclusion into the plan by the end of December 2001.

