

**Agenda Item No.8**

Report by the Clerk & Chief Executive.

**MONITORING RACE RELATED OFFENCES**

**Background**

This report is to make Members aware of Audit and Performance Committee's role in monitoring crimes related to race.

'Racially aggravated crimes' and 'crimes with a racial interest marker' are both monitored by Audit and Performance Committee.

**Decision**

That Community and Race Relations Committee consider whether they would like to regularly receive a copy of the Audit and Performance Committee's performance report on race-related crimes.

**Detail**

Racially aggravated offences were introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and came into force on 30 September 1998. The Act created new offences of racially aggravated assault, criminal damage, harassment and public order.

For each of these new offences, the maximum penalty is higher than the maximum for the basic offence without the element of racial aggravation. Where the maximum sentence is life imprisonment, there is no racially aggravated alternative.

DEFINITION:            Either at the time of committing the offence, or immediately before or after doing so, the offender demonstrates towards the victim hostility based on the victim's membership (or presumed membership) of a racial group;

Or                            if the offence is motivated (wholly or partly) by hostility towards members of a racial group based on their membership of that group.

A court is required, under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, that when dealing with any other offence where racial motivation or hostility is proved, to treat racial aggravation as a factor that increases the seriousness of the offence, which warrants a heavier sentence. It must also state openly that the offence was so aggravated.

The Audit and Performance Committee also monitor crimes with a 'racial interest marker'. Police officers, when completing crime reports have the option to tick boxes, which highlight certain factors relevant to the crime. Racial interest markers may be assigned to any type of crime where the officer believes there is a racial element to the crime.

The amount of racially aggravated crimes is small in Cumbria and the smallest increase or decrease can lead to dramatic looking spikes on the historical data graph. A copy of the report on race-related crime due to go to Audit and Performance Committee on 20 April is attached in Appendix 1.

As part of the constabulary's report on violent crime, again for Audit and Performance Committee 20 April they state:

*"Cumbria has average levels of racially aggravated crimes in comparison with its MSF peers. The profile of racially aggravated crimes focuses largely on town centre disorder hotspots linked with late night drinking."*

In November 2005 the performance on race-related offences merited an 'exception report' at Audit and Performance Committee because at that time Cumbria had higher than average levels within its Most Similar Force grouping.

Find attached also in Appendix 2 a copy of that exception report. This gives further information on the status of race related crime and action to reduce it at that time.

**C R Alcock**  
**Clerk and Chief Executive**

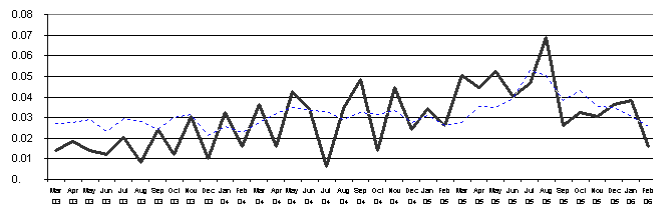
4 April 2006

# Racially aggravated offences

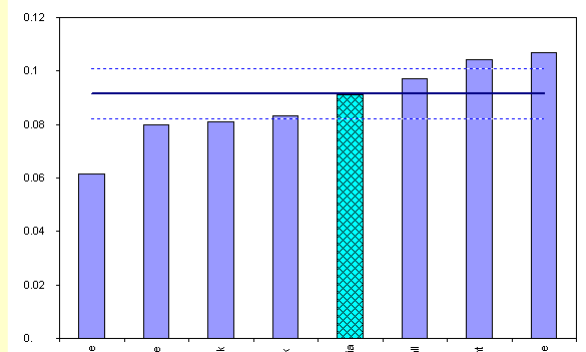
03/04	04/05	Year to date 04/05	Year to date 05/06	Policing plan target	YTD % variance	Target On/Off	North 0/15 (0/3)	South 0/15 (0/3)	West 0/15 (0/3)	Most Similar Forces ranking 0/8	Most Similar Forces status
117	171	97	132	No target set	+36%	Not applicable	15 (3)	6 (2)	1 (1)	5	Average

## Crimes with a racial interest marker

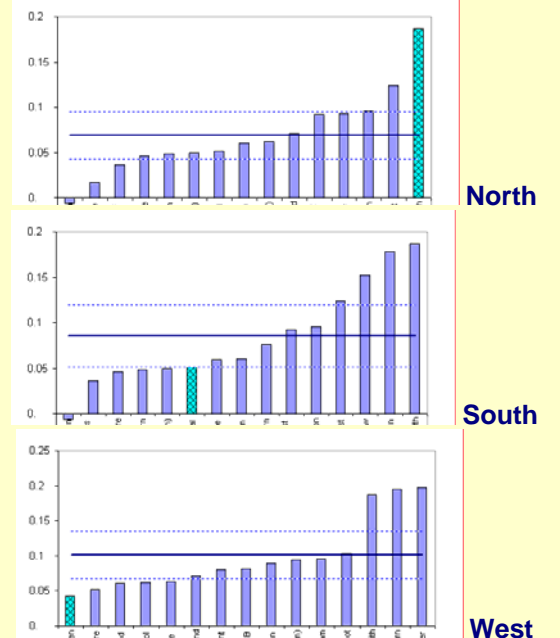
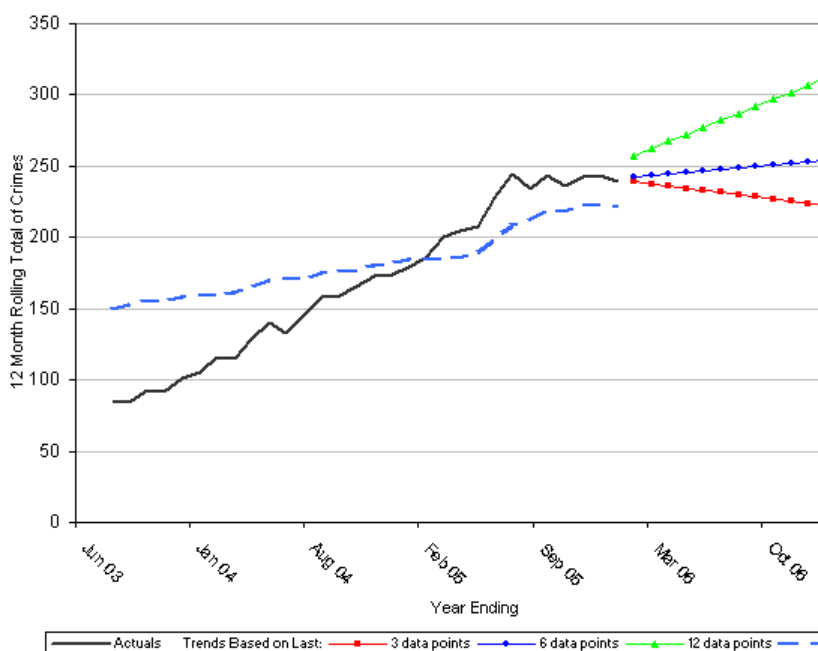
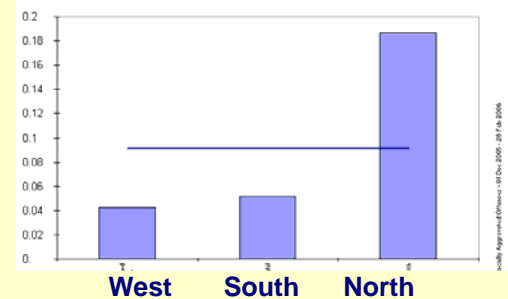
79	179	152	194	No target set	+27%	Not applicable
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Comparison Chart - Crimes per 1000 Residents: Cumbria Racially Aggravated Offences 01 Mar 2003 - 28 Feb 2006



Previous Quarter			Current Quarter		
01 Sep 05 - 30 Nov 05			01 Dec 05 - 28 Feb 06		
	0.089			0.091	
		Up 0.002 (2%)			
Sep 05	Oct 05	Nov 05	Dec 05	Jan 06	Feb 06
0.026	0.032	0.030	0.036	0.038	0.016





## Racially Aggravated Offences

### 1. Observations on performance

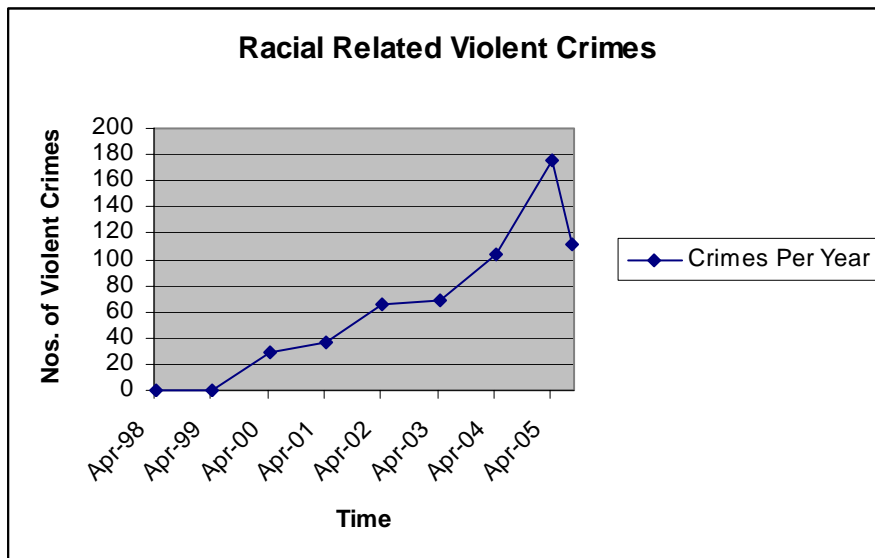
(Note on the status of the performance and any relevant contextual information)

At a Most Similar Force level, the Constabulary is within the control limits on iQuanta (6<sup>th</sup> in MSF). Increases in racially motivated offences have been experienced nationally since the tragic events of the summer.

In order to gain the confidence of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community, the Constabulary has set out to increase the reporting of racist incidents, which provides a natural tension to this debate. (The graph below underpins this argument).

### Increase in Racial / Hate Crime

In 1998 and 1999, there were no recordings of racially motivated crime. Since that period, the number of racially motivated crimes has risen each year. Between April 2000 and April 2001, there was an increase of 24%; April 2001 and April 2002 an 80% increase; April 2002 and April 2003 a 4% increase; April 2003 and April 2004 a 53% increase; and April 2004 and April 2005 a 68% increase in recordings. The biggest increases in recordings of racially- motivated crimes coincide with the introduction of the Hate Policy, which came into being in June 2004. (Source: Performance Consultant, Strategic Development)



## **2. Reasons and comments on the variance in performance**

There can be no doubt that a part of the increase in this offence type can be attributed to the backlash against the BME community following the summer bombings. Other factors that contribute to this increase can be attributed to the proactive drive to ensure that all racist incidents are accurately recorded. This has been highlighted through extensive training, strict supervision and the establishment of a Minorities Officer within each BCU. The role of the Minorities Officer is to build relationships with the BME community, maintain the focus on hate crime, monitor trends and provide a higher level of expertise to support our operational performance in relation to this issue.

## **3. Actions to address the variance**

(Proposed way of dealing with the performance issue)

Recognising that this crime type is under reported, the Constabulary will continue to encourage the reporting of racist incidents through the ongoing process of gaining the confidence of the BME community. These incidents are thoroughly investigated in accordance with our Hate Crime policy. The Constabulary will maintain the focus on reducing the number of repeat victims.

Cultural Audits conducted in BCUs are identifying to local officers the profile of their communities. This enables officers to police inclusively, developing contacts in order to provide reassurance to all members of the community.

ACC (ops) will include compliance with the Hate Crime Policy, against specific targets for BCU Interim Performance Development Meetings.

(Data taken from iQuanta, October PDC pack and Strategic Development research).