Violent crime rises despite overall drop

SERIOUS violent crime in Ceredigion has risen by almost 20 per cent despite overall crime rates in the county dropping.

And the Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership has warned that one of the biggest challenges facing the county is drug gangs from outside the area targeting Ceredigion.

Statistics for the partnership from October 2009 to September 2010 show that while serious violent crime, including robbery, sex offences and road crashes, have risen, there has been a major reduction in burglary, criminal damage, car crime and anti-social behaviour across the county.

Overall crime levels dropped in 2009 by 8.1 per cent, a reduction of 3,753 offences. That has been helped with a reduction of almost 20 per cent in burglary rates, a drop of just over 12 per cent in auto crime, a 10 per cent fall in antisocial behaviour and 163 fewer criminal damage offences.

But despite these major reductions there has been an increase of 18 per cent in serious violent crime.

Assaults, which make up the largest section of violent crime, have dropped by almost five per cent from last year, but robbery and sexual offences have increased.

The assessment from the Community Safety Partnership said although there has been an increase in violent crime it was expected to stabilise. The report says: "Projections show that violent crime is on an upward trend in the short term, but will stabilise in the mid to long term."

Drugs violent crime has been identified as one of the key priorities agreed between the partnership and the Home Office.

One of the major challenges in reducing crime in Ceredigion is stopping drug gangs from targeting the county.

The report says: "There is increasing intelligence to indicate that our road networks are being utilised by drug traffickers travelling to and through the county to source and supply controlled drugs. Ceredigion remains a prime target for organised crime groups seeking to expand drug markets."

While crime levels have dropped, Ceredigion has seen an increase of 10 per cent in reported road crashes despite there being less people killed in accidents on the county's roads in the last year.

While 2009/10 saw less people killed in our roads than in a previous year, the number who perished rose by two, with 16 fatalities in 2009/10.

Alan Garrod, the Community Safety and Civil Contingencies manager, said: "The Strategic Assessment identifies the partnership with the ability to review its progress based on an Intelligence-led process and more importantly to identify any changes to priorities, trends and shifts."

It is therefore an ongoing process and clearly there will have been some changes since the assessment was actually conducted.