

Dedicated unit continues to tackle city housebreakings



Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill today met officers from one of Edinburgh's Operation RAC teams – a dedicated unit to tackle housebreakings in the Capital.

Operation RAC was launched in December 2013 to address the issue of housebreaking, which had been identified by many communities across Scotland, as a local priority.

The introduction of dedicated officers as part of Operation RAC has seen the year-to-date solvency rate for break-ins within the Capital increase by around seven per cent.

Mr MacAskill met with a victim of a recent acquisitive crime offence to hear first-hand the impact the crime had on him.

The 37-year-old contacted police on Saturday 18th January after his mountain bike worth £1,200 was stolen from his garage in Davidson Road.

The stolen mountain bike was also recovered and has been returned to the owner.

As part of the initiative Crime Prevention Officers have also visited over 150 victims to offer them security and personal safety advice.

£463,989.00 worth of stolen property has been recovered and returned to rightful owners, and the focussed efforts of Operation RAC officers have seen a reduction of almost 33% in housebreakings in the East Neighbourhood Area since RAC commenced.

However, reducing the number of break-ins to houses, garages,

sheds and other properties continues to be priority for Edinburgh, where there has been an increase in reported housebreaking offences from the previous year.

In February, Police Scotland launched a partnership initiative in the South of Edinburgh with SmartWater Technology Ltd to deter acquisitive crime and improve opportunities for detection and recovery of property.

Over 600 homes in the Grange and Greenbank areas issued with SmartWater home security packs to mark their personal possessions.

Of the ten streets covered by the SmartWater initiative there were 17 recorded housebreakings in the 6 months prior to the introduction of the scheme. Since the launch, there has been only one reported housebreaking, and in the last 4 weeks there have been none.

Chief Superintendent Mark Williams, Divisional Commander for the City of Edinburgh said: "Police Scotland will continue to use all resources at our disposal to tackle the scourge of housebreaking.

"We've had some excellent success stories since the Operation RAC launch in December and have traced and charged 242 housebreakers right across the city. My officers will relentlessly pursue those individuals who commit such a terribly personal and distressing crime.

"The public can play a vital part in preventing housebreaking by taking the necessary security measures to safeguard their homes, businesses and garages and I'd encourage everyone to seek advice through our website or via social media on how to keep your home safe."