



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

Working together for a safer London

Kingswood Revisited

Young People, Gangs and Knives.



2009 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem Oriented Policing

Submission Document.

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Summary

Scanning

Kingswood Estate is a large isolated council estate with high levels of deprivation compared with the surrounding area. It has been a priority estate since 2007 following residents concerns about increasing crime and anti-social behaviour. Fears of knife and gang culture emerged in 2008 following the high profile murder of a teenager from the estate. Police and partners resolved to work with the community to tackle these serious issues.

Analysis

Problems identified;

- Gangs from other areas used the estate as a base for crime including robbery and drug dealing.
- Young people living on the estate were victims of crime and vulnerable to gang recruitment.
- Young people congregated on the estate committing anti-social behaviour such as noise and graffiti, which intimidated residents.
- A lack of youth facilities meant young people were not provided with leisure activities to divert them from loitering.
- Under reporting of crime due to a lack of community cohesion and mistrust of the police.

Response

A multi-agency problem solving partnership was set up to tackle the complex issues. Regular meetings were held to decide and coordinate interventions. A triple track approach of tough enforcement, non-negotiable support and prevention was taken. Including;

- Criminal prosecutions, crack house closures, drug warrants, evictions, increased patrols.
- ASBO's prohibited known gang members from entering the estate or associating together.
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts agreed with young people to reduce anti-social behaviour and gang activity.
- Multi-agency environmental action days tidied up the estate and reassured residents.

- Intensive victim and witness support encouraged victims to give evidence leading to successful convictions.
- A youth club was set up on the estate.
- Visits made to the families of young people involved in/on the periphery of gangs.
- Youth Services provided advice on avoiding knife crime, leaving gangs and personal safety.
- Targeting of parenting support to families where children were at risk of offending.
- Young people were engaged and their views sought, placing them in the centre of the problem solving process.

Assessment

Key objectives were met.

- 50% reduction in violent crime against young people.
- 77% of young people now feel safe on the estate.
- 72% of residents thought police and partners had done a very good job in tackling ASB.

Residents are pleased with these outcomes and 84% now consider Kingswood estate to be a good place to live.

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Description of the project.

Scanning.

The Kingswood Estate has seven hundred households and its residents are classified by the Police Performance Directorate as “people living in social housing with uncertain employment, yet surrounded by those that live in urban prosperity.” The estate is situated within the leafy environs of Dulwich village and its public schools, close to the Lambeth border in South London, England. It is isolated and quite self-contained with its own shops, housing office, primary school and secondary school.

The project began in 2007 after anti-social behaviour on the estate became the College Ward Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) ward priority. Residents requested police intervention to deal with gangs of youths from the adjacent borough of Lambeth coming onto the estate intimidating, assaulting, and robbing their children. Evidence was obtained that some young people on the estate had been recruited into gangs committing robberies and dealing drugs. Although the crime rate on the estate was relatively low compared to the rest of Southwark, intelligence indicated that there was significant under reporting of crime. The victims were young people and unwilling to report incidents due to fears of retribution from gang members. Another major concern raised by the community was anti-social behaviour (ASB) committed by young people living on the estate. This included graffiti, criminal damage, noise nuisance and the loitering of youths smoking cannabis in the communal areas of blocks. There was a lack of facilities to support and divert young people.

Another problem was youth disorder from students of the secondary (high) school, which adjoins the estate. There were disturbances and fights during school dispersal times, which negatively impacted on residents, local shops and Sydenham Hill Station. Truanting students would be found lurking on stairwells due to poor perimeter security around the school. The management of the school were less than cooperative in dealing with these issues and would not allow the designated school police officer onto school premises.

In an attempt to understand the problems, investigation of council maintenance and cleaning records was

undertaken to provide detailed information of the repeat venues and dates of incidents of littering, graffiti and damage to council property. This enabled the smart targeting of patrols to those areas of the estate most affected by anti-social behaviour.

During an angry public meeting, residents made it very clear they had lost faith in the ability of the police and the local authority to deal with the issues.

Analysis.

It was clear that no agency working alone could deal with such complex social issues on Kingswood estate and that multi-agency problem solving was required. Another challenge was the under reporting of crime and the perception and fear of crime.

College Ward Police SNT adopted a proactive approach by engaging with partners in a problem-solving forum to effectively respond to the situation. In May 2007, the first multi-agency meeting was held to coordinate action. Monthly meetings were held to share information and organise enforcement activity. Partners included;

- Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (SASBU)
- College Ward Police SNT
- British Transport Police
- Youth Offending Team
- Southwark Youth Services
- Education (Kingsdale School)
- Kingswood Tenants & Residents Assoc.
- Housing Dept.
- Community Wardens

It was difficult to clearly define the nature of the problem as it was based on residents' perceptions and there were a low level of reported incidents. To overcome this it was decided that all agencies should be involved in trying to ascertain the underlying factors including addressing the fear of crime.

One major area of concern amongst the community was violent crime against young people. Analysis of reported incidents of violent crime where the victim was under 18 years old was undertaken. Between January and June 2007 there were 15 reported cases, which can be broken down as follows;

- Common Assaults 6
- Personal Robbery 5
- Actual Bodily Harm 2
- Grievous Bodily Harm 1
- Harassment 1

This demonstrates that there was a real basis to residents' concerns about youth crime. In addition to this, our initial engagement with young people and youth services suggested, that there was also a significant amount of unreported crime. It would therefore be reasonable to expect the true figures to be even higher.

Tension on the estate heightened in July 2007 when a Lambeth gang entered the estate and attacked a sixteen-year-old resident. The victim had no connection with gangs or crime and was merely in the wrong place at the wrong time. He had been stabbed repeatedly and was found by his father lying in a pool of blood. He was lucky to survive his injuries and his family although distressed, cooperated fully with the police. Young people on the estate were terrified that the gang would return and parents kept their children at home.

Information received from the Lambeth and Southwark police intelligence units detailed the names and structures of the Lambeth gangs. This enabled targeting of gang members and monitoring of gang activity.

It was decided at the problem-solving forum, that the greatest priority was engagement with young people and their families. More information was required regarding gang activity and problems encountered by youths on the estate. There was a clear requirement to work together with young people, to assist us in keeping them safe and to provide reassurance.

Another concern was that some young people were mistrustful and hostile towards the police. Steps needed to be

taken to break down these barriers. The fear of crime and personal safety was of equal concern to young people as it was to adult residents.

The individual encounters between young people and police officers play a crucial role in how the police are perceived and the cooperation they receive in return.

College Ward Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team in consultation with residents set the following targets:

- **Reduce the number of young people on Kingswood Estate who are victims of violent crime by July 2008.**
- **To achieve a reduction in concerns about youth anti-social behaviour and fear of crime amongst residents of Kingswood Estate by July 2008.**
- **To increase residents' confidence in the ability of the police and Southwark Council to effectively tackle issues of concern thereby reducing the reassurance gap by July 2008.**

The issues were defined as complex and wide ranging. It was important that the problem solving process was flexible and responsive, utilising the powers and skills of all agencies to provide a multi faceted solution.

Response.

Public meetings were held on the estate following the stabbing. A commitment was given to residents that a triple track approach of tough enforcement, non-negotiable support and prevention would be taken when dealing with young people who perpetrated crime and ASB. The police (SNT) and community wardens increased patrols. Detached youth workers and ASB officers were assigned to the estate. Enhanced support was given to the young victim and a witness to the stabbing, which empowered them to give evidence. This led to successful prosecutions and imprisonment of the perpetrator.

A youth club was set up on the estate, which provided a safe haven and meeting place for young people. The club is open three evenings per week providing a wide range of activities. There was a focus on personal safety, drug awareness and strategies to leave gangs. The club was well received by parents, who felt strongly that the

youth club was needed for all children.

Agencies focused on how to deal with those young people engaged in ASB and gang activity. Police and ASB officers visited those young people and their families where intelligence suggested that a young person may become a victim of serious crime or involved in criminal behaviour. These visits often highlighted serious family problems, which required support from caring agencies.

- Parents were often desperate for support as they were aware that their children were at risk of offending.
- Some families were chaotic and lacked the required parenting skills to deal with their children's behaviour.
- Children were often permanently excluded from school and had too much time to loiter and become at risk of offending.

Families were offered parenting support and young people were encouraged to sign Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's) to give a commitment to improved behaviour. The Youth Offending Team offered early intervention. Alternative educational schemes were offered to children whom had been permanently excluded from mainstream schooling such as manual trades, vehicle maintenance and the "boyhood to manhood" project. Residents were made aware that they were in real danger of losing their homes if they continued to breach their tenancy / lease obligations.

The following case studies give practical demonstrations of how effective, strong enforcement action, combined with youth diversion and parenting support can be. Particularly in resolving entrenched patterns of offending and anti-social behaviour. Great care was taken in assessing which interventions were required for each individual and which agencies were best placed to deliver them. A monthly partnership and information-sharing meeting was used to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions.

Case Study 1.

A cause for concern was a fifteen-year-old boy who persistently daubed graffiti throughout the estate and was generally viewed as 'out of control'. He had been excluded from school and had been offered a range of interventions designed to divert or prevent him from offending. Nothing had worked and his mother, (a drug user)

was under threat of eviction. We obtained an anti-social behaviour order, which provided him with clear boundaries of behaviour. He received an individual support order from the court with a focus on education. His mother and grandmother were required to attend parenting classes. The family intervention programme provided wrap around support to this household and eviction was avoided. The family are still living on the estate and no further offending has occurred.

Case Study 2.

A seventeen-year-old youth known to be a prominent gang member caused continual nuisance to residents. Complaints were received that he encouraged other gang members to congregate in stairwells, smoke drugs, cause noise and intimidate passers by. He was unemployed and his mother was an alcoholic. The individual was targeted due to his popularity and influence amongst his peer group. Considerable time was invested in persuading the youth to change his behaviour and sign an acceptable behaviour contract (ABC). He agreed not to loiter on the estate or to engage in any gang activity. The youth was monitored closely over a period of three months and he had kept to all the terms of his 'ABC'. A local building contractor was approached and agreed to offer him work experience if he would give a commitment to learning a building trade. It was pleasing to learn that this had been successful and the youth is now in full time employment.

Case Study 3.

Residents on the estate were frightened of a nineteen-year-old gang nominal from Lambeth who had assaulted a young person on the estate with a brick. The suspect was known to carry knives and to be a prolific robber. Supported by his family and the SNT, the victim gave evidence in two criminal prosecutions. This resulted in a five-month prison sentence and a three-year post conviction 'ASBO'. This order prohibits the offender from approaching the victim and has excluded him from the estate. The order also prevents the youth from associating with other gang members.

Case Study 4.

In July 2008 a fifteen-year-old gang member who frequented the estate was murdered. He had been lured from the estate and stabbed. The case attracted extensive media coverage and the funeral was held on Kingswood estate. A number of young residents from the estate acted as coffin bearers. The horrific loss of this young life had a devastating effect on residents. Agencies worked hard in the aftermath to deal with the resulting fear and

tension on the estate.

For some young people, this was a real wake up call, but to others he was a 'fallen soldier' whose death was to be 'avenged'.

On the day of the funeral a young gang member signed an acceptable behaviour contract (ABC) agreeing to stop gang activity. The Housing Department assisted the youth and his family to move away from the area.

This tactic of targeting key individuals for a combination of enforcement and support had a positive effect. Fewer complaints of youth disorder were received and the Tenants Association reported an improvement. It was noticeable that more young people were willing to engage with the police and to share information.

There were also issues involving the secondary school, which adjoins the estate,

- School arrival and dispersal times were problematic, leading to fights and disturbances on the estate.
- Complaints were received from intimidated shopkeepers.
- Continuous 'ASB' on local buses and trains.
- Truanting students loitered on the estate.

The school agreed to take part in the problem solving process. The head teacher attended the multi-agency forum and a strategy was developed in conjunction with the school to deal with the issues. This included teachers jointly patrolling key areas during arrival and dispersal. This resolved the disorder around the railway stations, bus stops and the shopping centre. The head teacher was persuaded to take part in the Safer Schools Project and agreed to have a police officer based in the school. Perimeter security was improved and CCTV installed covering the school gates. The head teacher agreed to hold monthly open meetings to consult with local residents and to take on board their concerns. An example of this is allowing residents to have direct phone lines to school security staff to report truanting. Police and Southwark council also organise regular truancy patrols. These measures have eliminated problems with truancy on the estate.

An important part of the response was to organise regular 'clean sweeps' of the estate to send out a clear and

visible demonstration of the commitment of the police and council, to the Kingswood community. This consisted of;

- Removal of fly tipping and bulk refuse.
- Deep cleaning of communal areas.
- Litter removal and tidying of gardens.
- Dog fouling patrols.
- Graffiti removal.
- Removal of abandoned vehicles
- Completion of communal repairs.
- Fixed penalty notices issued where appropriate.
- Police weapon sweeps and truancy patrols.
- Gangs workshops providing community safety advice for young people.

The 'sweeps' usually lasted a complete day and provided an opportunity for residents to talk to the police and local authority about any concerns affecting them on the estate. Surveys were carried out during these events to ensure problems were being addressed. Residents became used to talking to police and council officers, a by product of which was an increase in reporting of incidents and criminal intelligence. This led to the execution of a number of successful drugs warrants, an increase in drug detections and a crack down on drug dealing on the estate.

The SNT and council wardens assisted the Tenants Association in organising community events. This was considered essential to bring the community together, improve community cohesion and reduce mistrust of the police. During the summer of 2008 a series of successful events took place including;

- Summer Fete
- Music and Talent Contest
- Children's Fun Day
- Cycle Safety Event
- Dog Show
- '999' days at estate primary school
- 'Kingswood Carnival'

These events were popular and attended by many residents. Community spirit improved as a result of young and elderly residents enjoying the activities together.

The response outlined above was wide-ranging and complex in order to address the identified problems. The multi-agency problem solving process was well employed in coordinating the most appropriate interventions.

Assessment.

The behaviour and well being of young people on Kingswood estate has been the main focus of this project. Clear boundaries of acceptable behaviour have been set. Young people have been made aware of the consequences of overstepping, for example 'zero tolerance' for carrying weapons. Key individuals and the most extreme offenders have been dealt with through the courts. However, most young people are well behaved and this was recognised. Measures are now in place on the estate, to intervene at an early stage, to prevent and divert young people away from offending. Families with young people most at risk of offending have been given parenting support.

Comparisons of police data between 2007 and 2008 indicate significant reductions in criminal activity.

- ✓ **The first key project objective was to reduce the number of young people on Kingswood Estate becoming victims of violent crime. In 2007 there were fifteen young victims of violent crime. This had reduced to seven in 2008.**

Positive outcomes included a 66% reduction in common assaults and a 50% reduction in violent crime where the victim was under eighteen. There was a 40% reduction in the recorded incidents of criminal damage. (*see graph appendix 1a*)

The actual decrease in crime on young people is likely to be even greater as prior to 2008 there had been a culture of 'non reporting'.

Crime statistics show a notable increase in cases of drug crime. There was one recorded case in 2007 compared to seventeen in 2008. The increase in drug related arrest / detections, was directly linked to intelligence gathered as a result of enhanced communication with the community.

- ✓ **The remaining key objectives were to achieve a reduction in concerns about youth anti-social behaviour and fear of crime by July 2008.**

- ✓ **To increase residents confidence in the ability of police and Southwark council to effectively tackle issues of concern thereby reducing the reassurance gap.**

A comprehensive 'citizen impact' survey was undertaken to evaluate the impact of the multi agency interventions. All 700 dwellings on the estate received a survey form, devised to assess if key objectives had been met and 97 completed surveys were returned. Residents were surveyed regarding youth related crime and anti-social behaviour (*see graph appendix 1b*). 59% of residents noticed an improvement in the behaviour of young people on Kingswood Estate.

In order to evaluate if there had been a reduction in the fear of crime, residents were asked if they felt safe when alone on the estate (*see graph appendix 2a*). 69% of residents indicated that they felt safe whilst alone on the estate.

The data shows a reduction in concerns about youth anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime has clearly reduced.

In order to ascertain if confidence in the police and Southwark council had increased, residents were asked to rate the efforts by police and the council to deal with other forms of environmental crime and anti-social behaviour, such as, abandoned vehicles, graffiti, dog fouling, litter, noise etc (*see graph appendix 2b*).

72% of residents thought the police and council had done a 'good' or 'very good' job with regard to these matters. These issues are often classified as 'low level' anti-social behaviour and can be ignored or overlooked. However, they impact seriously on resident's quality of life. In 2008 Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit had noted a 70%

reduction in calls to their 24 hour ASB Hotline compared with the previous year.

The crime statistics and survey results show that the three project objectives have been met and long-term sustainable solutions have been put in place. A cost benefit analysis is difficult to achieve, as costs incurred by the agencies involved are not readily calculable. There are further implications not detailed, such as court costs. The purpose of the safer neighbourhood team is to deal with problems affecting the community. Once dealt with the expense to the public purse is justified. The successful conclusion of this project has allowed resources to be allocated elsewhere.

The undertaking of the problem solving process has demonstrated that partnership working and enforcement can have a positive result on entrenched anti-social behaviour and the problem solving process was well employed in finding resolution.

The Kingswood estate problem solving initiative has been recognised within the borough as an example of good practice and has been adopted across the Safer Southwark Partnership. A positive outcome from this project has been increased community cohesion amongst residents. The 'can do' approach taken by all agencies and the ongoing commitment that was shown, overcame the initial negativity felt by residents. Residents were kept informed and updated on all interventions by phone calls, emails, leaflet drops, public meetings, street briefings and home visits.

'The youth club at Kingswood is engaging with my child, the activities seem to keep him interested'

'Noticed a lot less trouble'

'The estate is well looked after'

'The police have worked hard to make this a safe estate to live on. Well done to them'

'There are not so many gangs on the estate'

'There is a good police presence on the estate'

'There's less crime and you see less people hanging around and doing no good'

'It's getting a lot better than it was'

'It's really quiet and safe'

'Don't see many kids nowadays, they go to the youth club instead'

'Children are safe'

Quotes from citizen impact survey.

The biggest challenge encountered had been to win the trust of young people and open up lines of communication. It is easy for relations to break down due to misunderstandings and poor communication. On the day following the murder of the youth referred to above, there was a heavy police presence on the estate due to fear of gang related reprisal attacks. Youths residing on the estate had congregated to mourn the loss of their friend and tension was high. As a result of the increased police presence, a large number of youths were stopped and searched. This led to resentment, as youths believed the police displayed a lack of understanding and sensitivity.

In order to be responsive and accountable to the young people, it was decided to ensure that they were involved in tackling youth crime. Young people were invited to take part in a survey to ensure their views were represented, to assess whether young people felt safe on the estate and to include their opinions on estate policing (see graph appendix 3a).

It was pleasing to note that following the project, 77% of young people on the estate felt either 'safe' or 'very safe'.

Young people are less likely than adults to report crime to the police, generally due to the fear of reprisals. 53% of young people surveyed indicated that if they would feel comfortable reporting being a victim of crime. This is far above the national average recorded in the British Crime Survey.

50% of young people surveyed considered that the amount of 'stop and search' used on the estate was 'about right' and 17% thought there should be more (*see graph appendix 3b*). These powers have been shown to be a powerful tool when used correctly, to combat knife crime. Part of the strategy employed on the estate placed a high emphasis on being polite and respectful when interacting with young people. This is reflected in the results. Ten young people have volunteered to work with the police to represent young people on the estate and to take part in ward panel meetings.

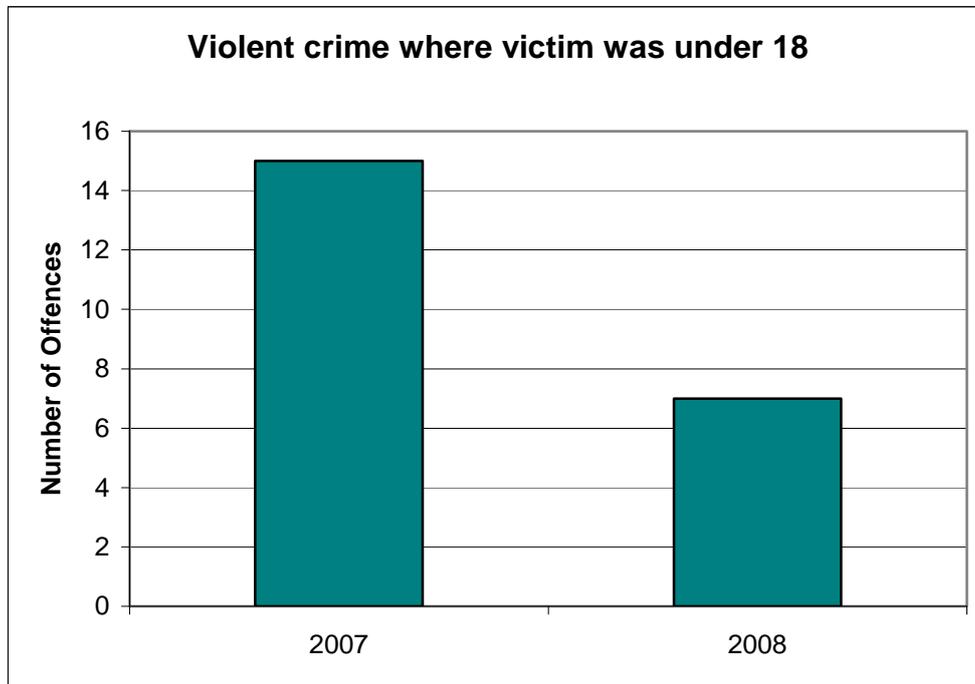
The overwhelming majority (84%) of residents believe that the Kingswood Estate is now a good place to live (*see graph appendix 4a*). This shows how the estate has been turned around and how successful the interventions have been. The work with the local secondary school, the promotion of community events and the intergenerational work have all played a role in improved community cohesion.

This has been a very successful problem solving initiative and all identified objectives have been met. The most positive outcome has been the engagement of young people and making them an integral part of the solution.

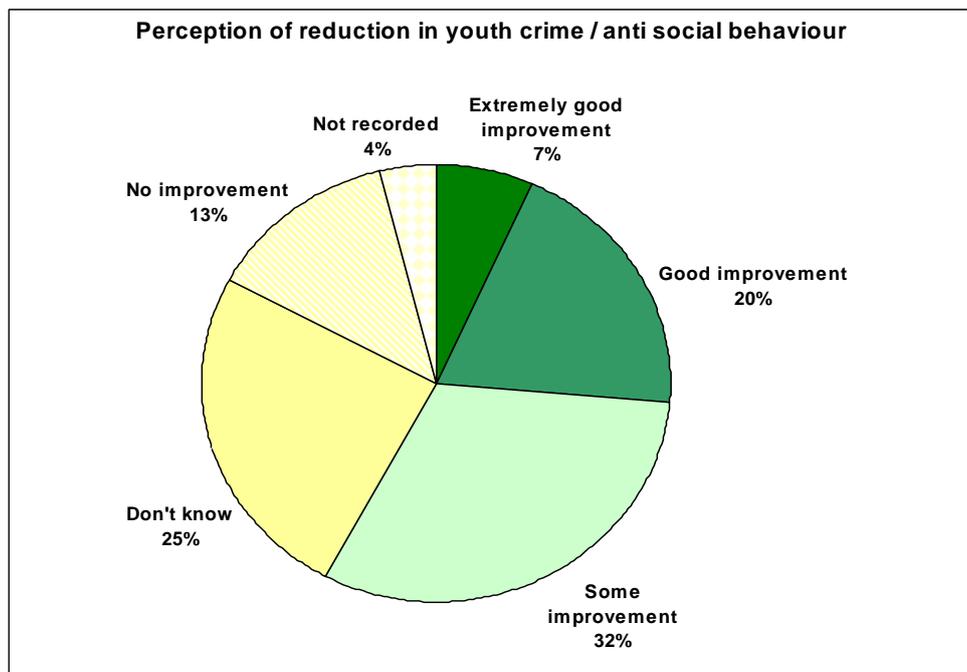


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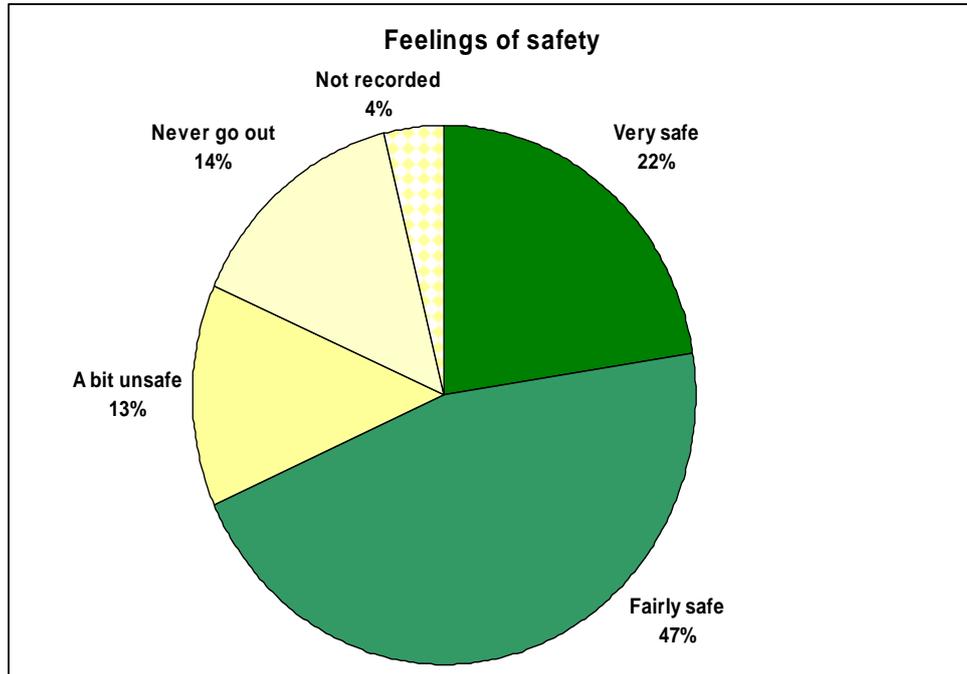
Appendices



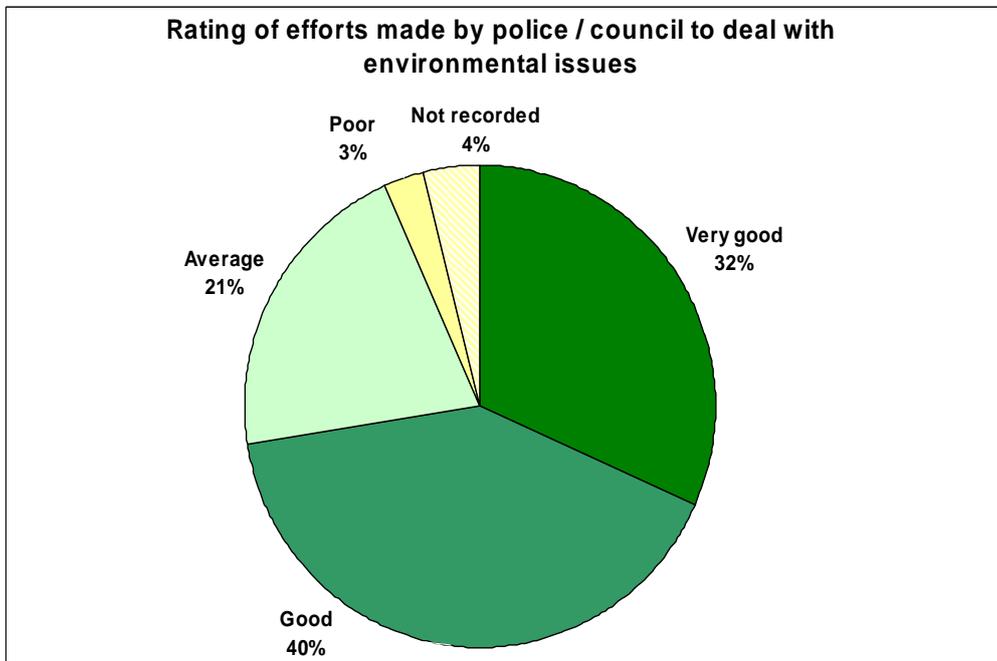
Appendix 1a.



Appendix 1b.



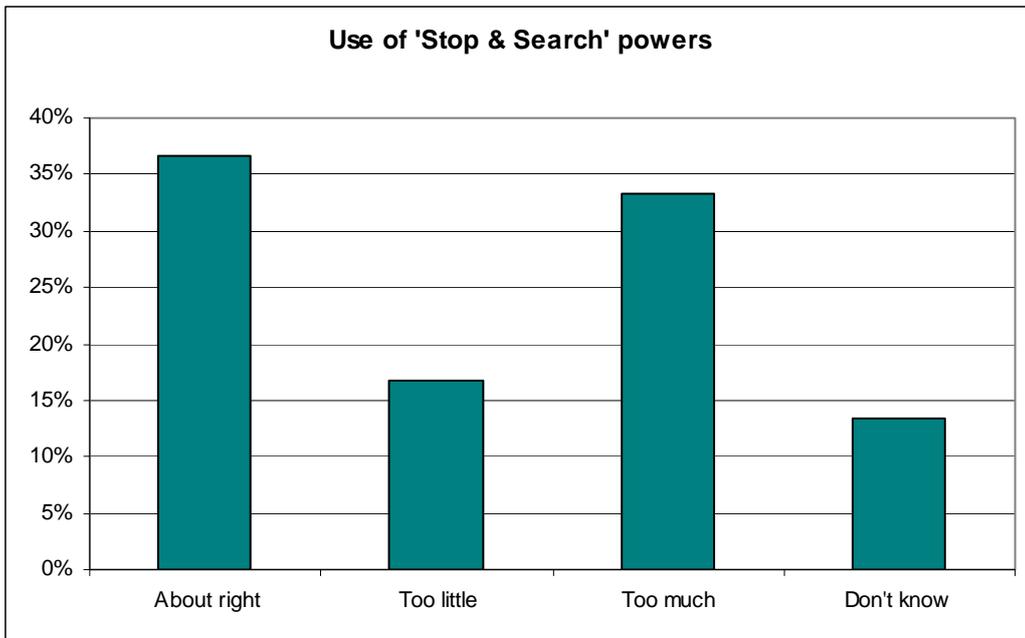
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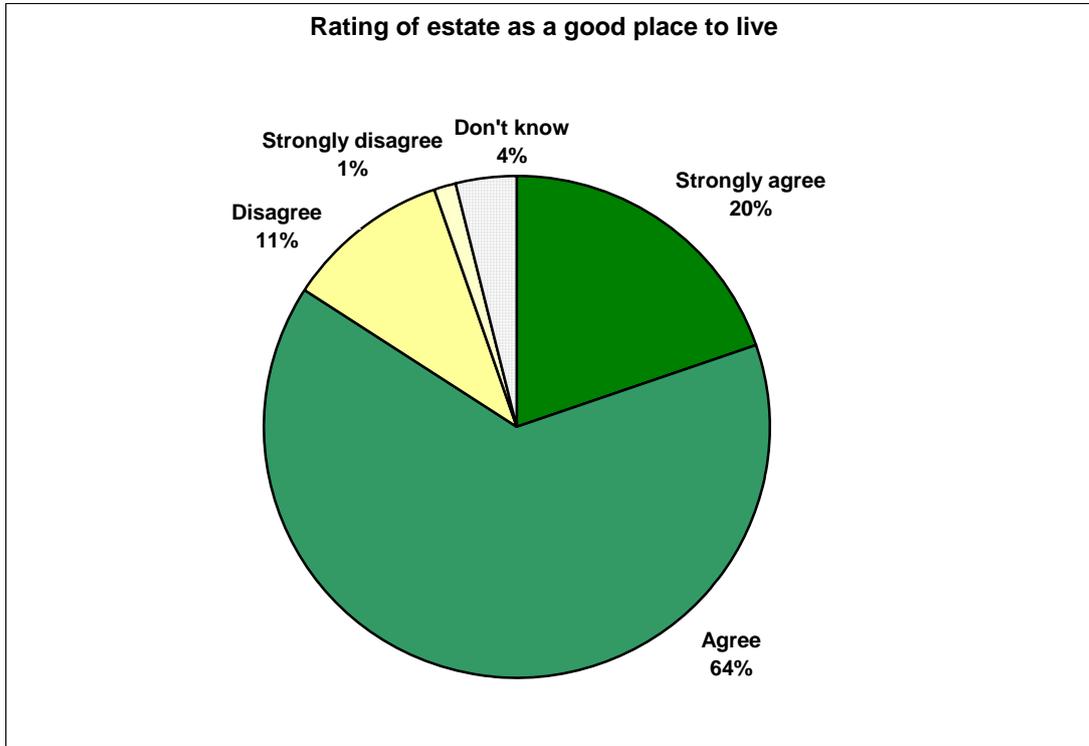
Appendix 2b.



Appendix 3a.



Appendix 3b.



Appendix 4a

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Glossary of Terms

Public Schools - Fee paying schools.

Secondary School - High School (ages 11-18).

Detached Youth Worker - Community worker with main remit to engage youths and encourage them away from crime.

Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) - Voluntary agreement between local authority and perpetrator of anti-social behaviour. Perpetrator commits to cease negative activity. Contract is monitored by local authority for 6-12 months.

Anti-Social Behaviour Order - A civil court order lasting minimum of 2 years. Containing prohibitions forcing the holder to refrain from causing harassment alarm and distress to other citizens. Prohibitions are individually drafted to address the perpetrators offending profile. Breaches can lead to up to five years imprisonment.

Excluded children - Removed from school due to poor discipline and / or challenging behaviour.

Council Tenancy - Low cost state provided housing.

Community Warden - Uniformed local authority (civilian) patrol officer. Dealing with low level 'nuisance crime' such as dog fouling, littering and confiscation of alcohol / tobacco. May issue fixed penalty notices. Not police.

Tenant & Resident Association - Voluntary group run by local tenants to protect and advance their collective interests including, housing, crime, environmental issues etc.

Southwark Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (SASBU) - Police and local authority agency set up to reduce anti-social behaviour and support victims.

Family Intervention Project - Innovative local authority project to support chaotic families at risk of eviction. Families receive intensive practical support from social services and other local authority departments.

Safer Schools Project - Met Police lead scheme implanting a police officer in participating secondary schools to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Officers may become involved in discipline, welfare, arrival and dispersal issues.

Safer Southwark Partnership - Strategic body under The Crime and Disorder ACT 1998, obligating local authorities and other agencies to work together with police agencies to address crime and disorder. Having a legal duty to publish a rolling crime reduction plan and to report back on its performance in achieving central government targets.

Project Contact Person;

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**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

Working together for a safer London

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Your ref:

Our ref: Kingswood Revisited Goldstein
POP Conference Bid

29 May 2009

Re; 2009 Herman Goldstein Awards for Excellence in Problem Oriented Policing.
Submission Document.

Dear Sir / Madam

Re; Kingswood Revisited Young People, Gangs and Knives.

Please find attached submission to the 2009 awards. Southwark Borough Commander Chief Superintendent Wayne Chance has written an endorsement, which is reproduced below in italics.

*"As Borough Commander and chair of the CDRP, I am happy to endorse this document as it represents an excellent example of problem solving work being carried out within the Safer Southwark Partnership. Particularly the focus on gangs, youth crime and youth engagement which represent some of the biggest challenges currently facing London. I consider that it is very important for the organisation to disseminate good practice and I consider this document suitable for publication". **Chief Superintendent Wayne Chance.***

Should you have any enquiries regarding the application, please do not hesitate to contact my office on ++44208 721 2442 or my mobile ++447949 594607.

Yours sincerely,

**PC Mark Deacon 856MD
Metropolitan Police.**

