

PROJECT CENTURION



**Reducing Crime and Disorder on Douglas Promenade
Isle of Man, British Isles.**

Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing 2005

Submission by:

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INTRODUCTION



Project Centurion is a multi-agency project established in January 2003 in response to public concern at the high levels of alcohol related crimes occurring on Douglas Promenade. It aims to reduce crime and disorder on the Promenade through a Problem Oriented Policing approach.

The Scan was conducted in three phases of increasing detail through public meetings, focus groups, surveys and statistical research conducted by project partners including the police, local authority, Government departments, licensees, and young people.

Analysis of the data revealed conclusions under three main headings;

Crime & Disorder

Recorded crime data clearly demonstrated correlation between peaks of assault, criminal damage and disorder with the times of customers leaving nightclubs at weekends, particularly after “pay day”.

Transportation

Original anecdotal evidence had suggested a lack of late night public transport as being an important contributory factor. Public transport data revealed increased opportunity for incidents to occur as a result of factors such as poorly located taxi ranks, a shortage in taxi licences, the loss of taxis to remote destinations and the lack of a late night bus service all extending the waiting period of intoxicated customers on the Promenade.

Youth Issues

In contrast, analysis of crime data disproved the original public perception that young people were responsible for the majority of crime in the area. However, it did reveal a shortfall in provision of facilities and activities for young people which was leading to public intimidation caused by large gatherings of young people with little to do.

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Responses have included;

- an increase in intelligence led policing.
- improved co-operation between the police, licensees and the Youth Service.
- 5 new taxi ranks and improved taxi rank management.
- the issuing of 12 additional taxi licences.
- improved operating conditions for taxi drivers through a "Taxiwatch" initiative.
- A range of events, activities and facilities for young people.

Assessment has shown a 33.4% reduction in the target crimes of assault, criminal damage and public order offences. The project has also given rise to greatly improved working relationships between the project partners. A public meeting is to be held in July 2005 to report progress to the public and to launch a further phase of the project which will continue to tackle initial priorities but will widen its scope to deal with other problems affecting the image of the Promenade and the quality of life of local people.

BACKGROUND



Douglas is the capital of the Isle of Man, a self governing British Crown Dependency located in the Irish Sea between the UK and Ireland. The island is 32 miles long by 12 miles wide and has a population of around 76,000.

Offshore finance and associated industries are the largest contributors to the Manx economy having largely replaced tourism. The remaining tourism industry focuses on higher spending visitors attracted to the island for its sporting, heritage, cultural and environmental attractions. Both industries, which are based mainly in Douglas, rely heavily on a high quality environment and on the island's reputation as a well regulated and managed jurisdiction.

During 2002 it became apparent to businesses, politicians, residents and the police that the image of the island's premier location, Douglas Promenade, was being marred by high levels of alcohol fuelled crime and disorder occurring during weekend evenings. Whilst the town's seaside heritage has resulted in Douglas Promenade becoming the focus of the island's evening economy, recent redevelopment has seen a growth in residential development in the area and this has exacerbated the impact of crime and disorder on the wider community.

In January 2003, Project Centurion was established by Chief Constable Mike Culverhouse to employ a problem oriented policing approach to tackling the issues on Douglas Promenade. A constable was seconded to manage the project from within the community. This was reciprocated by the local authority, Douglas Corporation, who provided office, secretarial and IT support for the officer at the Town Hall.

SCAN



An open public meeting was held in the Hilton Hotel in January 2003 to carry out an initial scan of the public's view of the problems being experienced. The main perceived problems were divided into three categories;

- Crime & Disorder
- Transportation
- Youth Issues.

These headings became Project Centurion's three project areas. They also assisted in determining which organisations and individuals should be involved in steering the project.

The initial scan also included the collation of broad baseline statistical data such as crime figures for the three beats concerned.

In 2001/2;

28% of all recorded crime in the Isle of Man occurred on the Promenade in an area representing only 3% of the island's geographical area.

41% of all assaults committed on I.O.M. occur on Douglas Promenade.

46% of all public order offences committed on I.O.M. occur on Douglas Promenade.

19% of all criminal damage committed on I.O.M. occurs on Douglas Promenade.

Armed with this preliminary information the project manager, Constable Tony Paxton, convened a series of workshops under each of the three project headings to establish a plan for the detailed scan stage of the project. It was this process, involving all relevant stakeholders that established the parameters of Project Centurion and allowed the POP process to be planned in detail.

To assist with data collection, a system was established for the project manager to task project partners to provide him with scanning data. Data management was facilitated using a "problem

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database” with each specific contributing problem registered on a Problem Record Sheet so that an accurate and detailed picture of the nature and extent of the problems could be built up. As the problem database was compiled, it became apparent that each major issue was being caused or aggravated by a series of contributory problems and that finding and implementing solutions to these contributory problems would combine to resolve the major issues.

The complex nature of the situation on the Promenade meant that the SARA process was not carried out in four distinct stages, as analysis of initial scan data often demonstrated a need for a further level of scanning. It was through this repeated process of scanning, analysis and re-scanning that a full picture of the situation on the Promenade was built up.

ANALYSIS

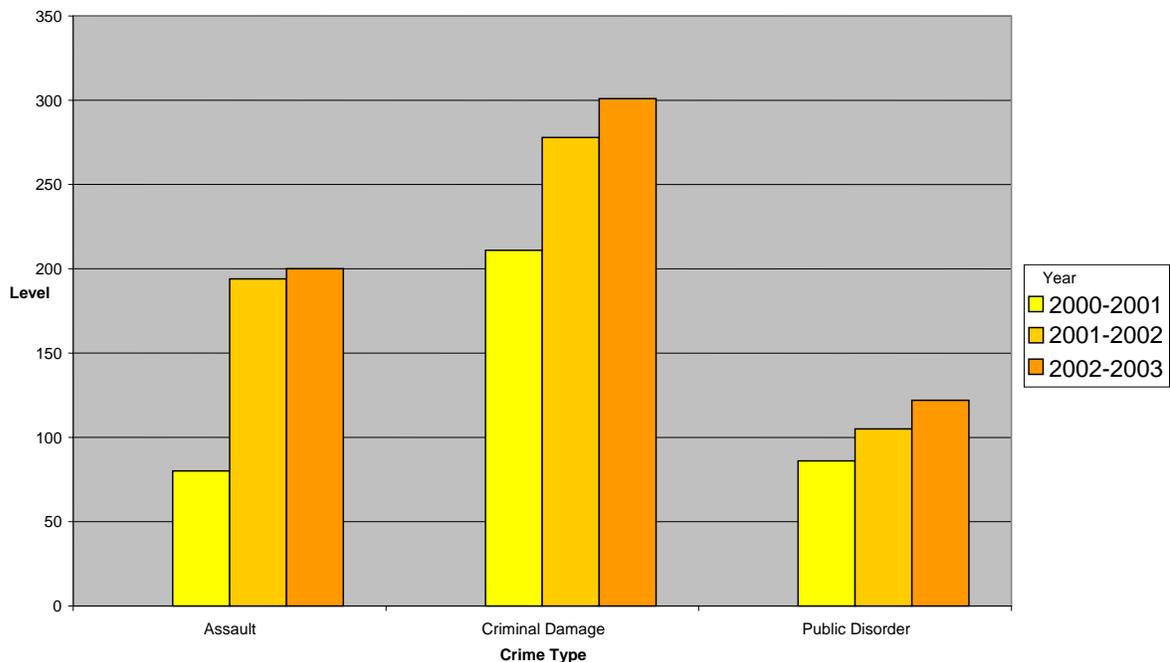


For the sake of clarity, the conclusions of the analysis stage will be discussed under the three main subject headings.

Crime & Disorder

A full crime analysis exercise was undertaken by the Police Analyst to establish crime patterns in the area over the previous three years. In addition to a sharp rise in assaults, criminal damage and public order offences, (Chart 1.) it also revealed a very clear peak of these offences occurring in the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings (Charts 2 & 3).

Chart 1. Total Number of Target Crimes 2000 to 2003.



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Chart 2. Average annual number of all target crimes by Hour.

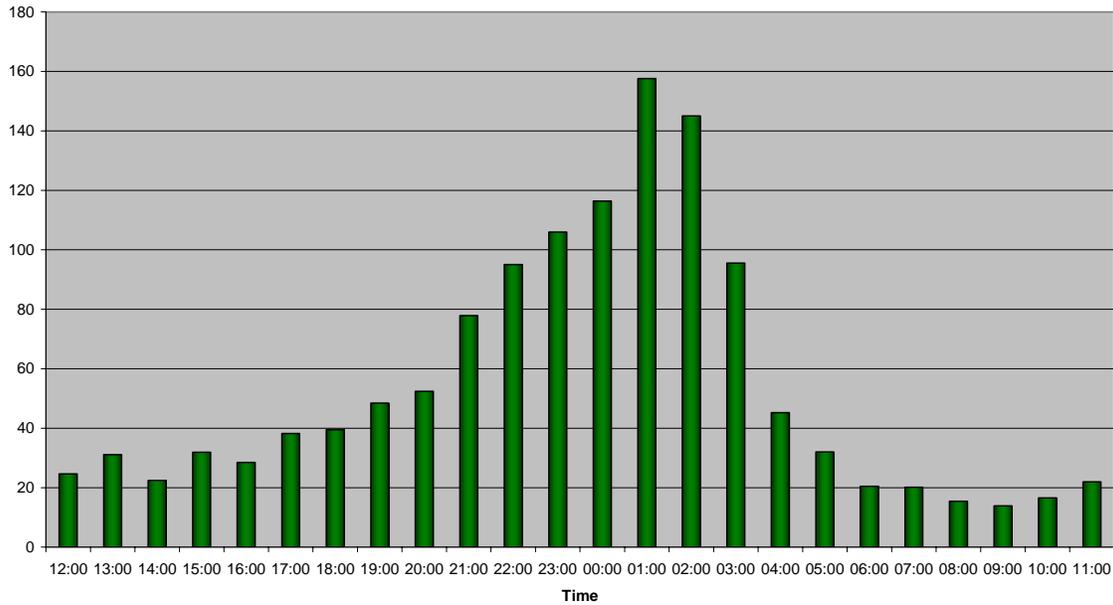
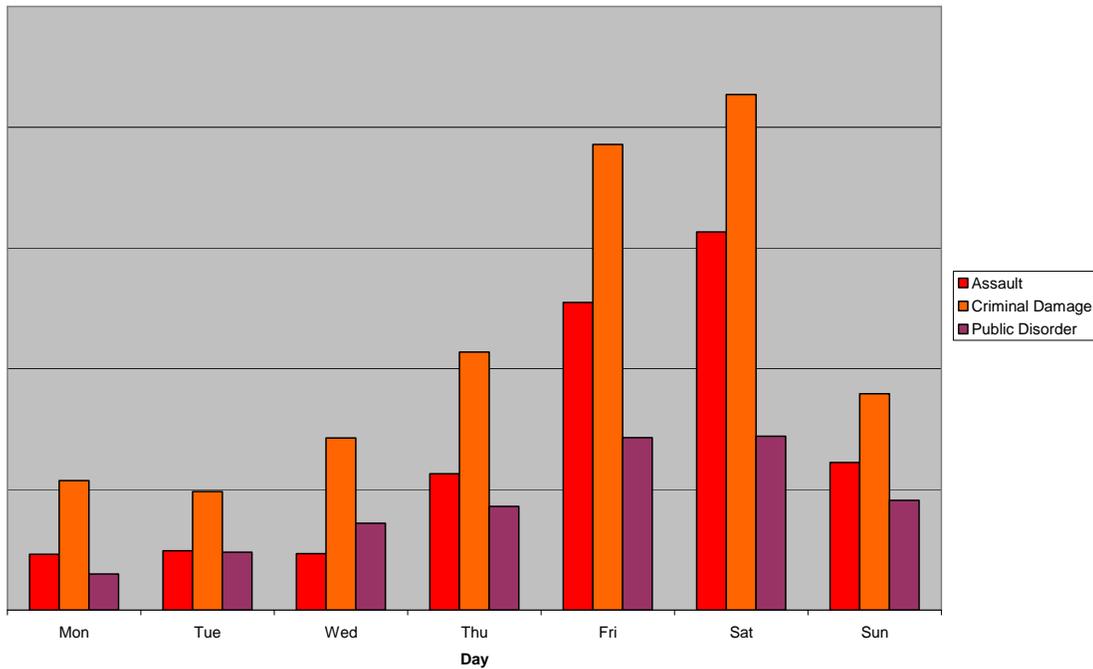


Chart 3 Relative levels of target crimes by day of the week

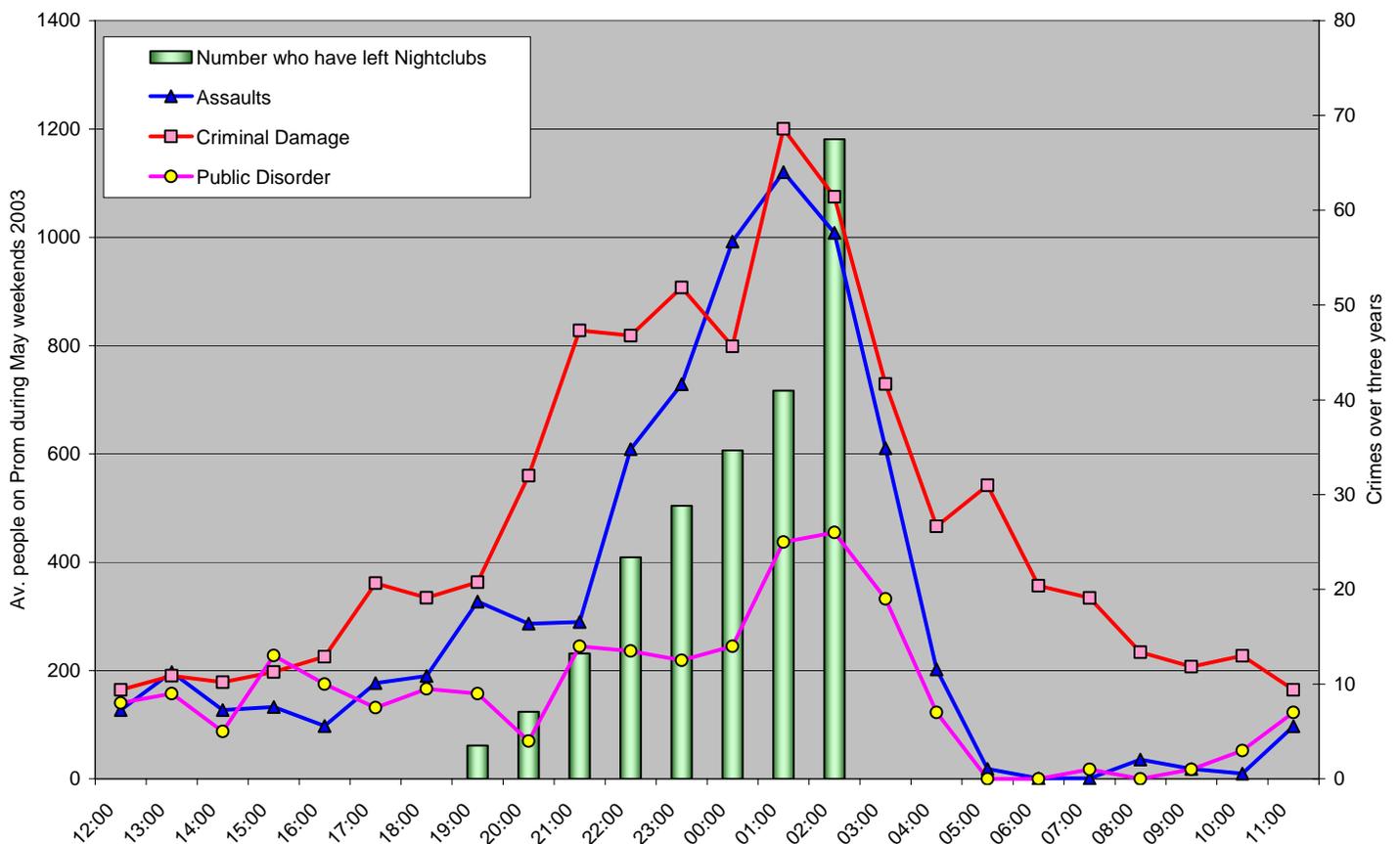


The data supported the public view that the situation was deteriorating. However, an analysis of the age of offenders disproved the perception that young people were responsible for much of the crime and this lead to an understanding that part of the project's response must involve correcting public misperception in this area.

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The nightclubs on the Promenade are enthusiastic supporters of Project Centurion and assisted by monitoring the times and numbers of customers leaving their premises on Friday and Saturday nights. This data demonstrated a very close correlation between the number of clubbers on the Promenade and the logged times of recorded crimes suggesting very strongly that many of the crimes were being committed by clubbers on their way to and from clubs. (Chart 4) The data also demonstrated a peak of clubbers and crimes coinciding with the first weekend of the month, following the end of month payday.

Chart 4 Correlation between night club exit numbers and crimes



The enthusiastic participation of licensees in Project Centurion is indicative of the work being done by the Isle of Man Constabulary's Alcohol Unit. Whilst this has involved the establishment

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of much tighter controls on licensed premises, it has also resulted in a greatly improved relationship between the police and responsible licensees.

Table1 Summary of Crime & Disorder Analysis

Data Sources	Public anecdotal evidence, Focus Group, Crime Analysis, Public Perception Survey.
Target Crimes	Assault, Criminal Damage, Public Disorder.
Main Offenders	Nightclub customers.
Main Victims	Nightclub customers, Promenade Property & Vehicle Owners.
Harm Caused	Injury, damage to property, fear of crime, negative image and reputation for Promenade.
Peak Times	Midnight to 03.00 hrs Saturday & Sunday, particularly 1st weekend of month following payday.
Location of incidents	Hotspots outside night clubs, taxi ranks, fast food outlets.
Response prior to Centurion	Alcohol Unit working with licensees to reduce drunkenness and improve premises management.
Contributory Problems	Resource intensive repetitive cycle of arrest & prosecution of offenders. Excessive alcohol consumption. Peak period of incidents over the length of Promenade requiring intensive deployment of police resources over a wide area. Insufficient provision of public transport to transport clubbers away from Promenade quickly. This causes frustration and creates opportunity for incidents to occur.

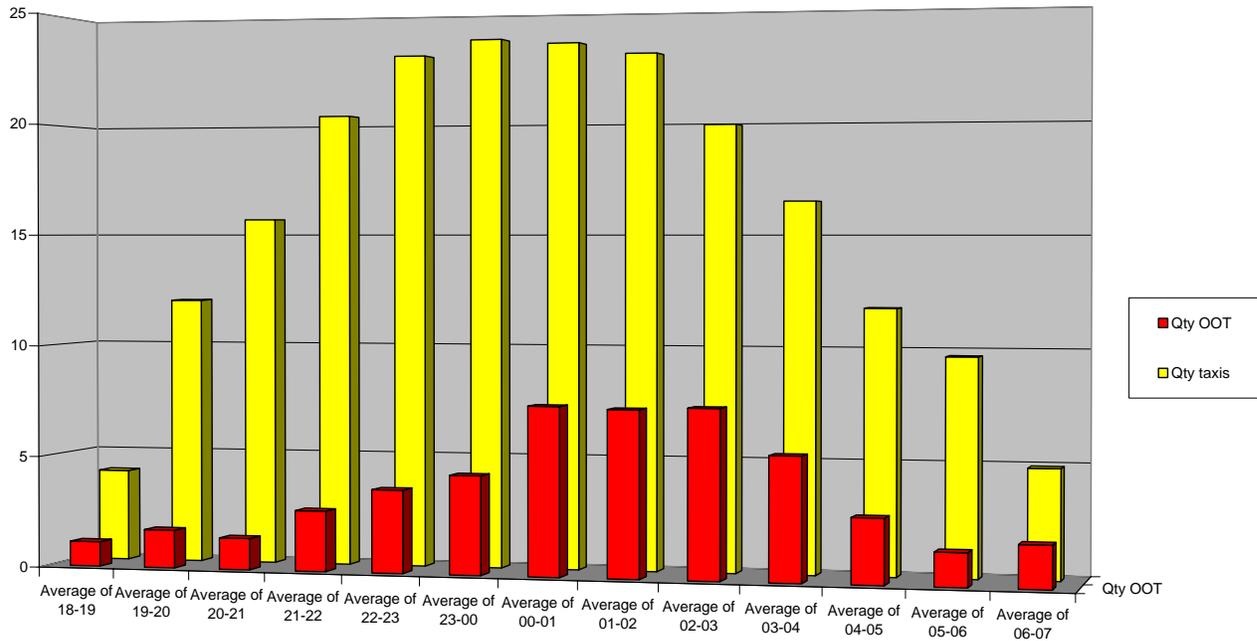
Transportation

Having analysed the initial anecdotal evidence collected from the public about the lack of availability of taxis, the project manager tasked local taxi operators to provide data about the number of taxis operating at peak periods and their destinations.

The study revealed that approximately 30% of journeys during peak periods were to out of town destinations which could remove a vehicle from service in Douglas for over an hour. In focus groups sessions, taxi drivers had stated their preference for the more profitable local journeys during peak periods and that a late night bus service to certain popular out of town destinations could release a considerable number of taxis to concentrate on local services.

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Chart 5 Hourly summary of the average total number of taxis on duty with each operator on Friday and Saturday nights (Yellow) and the average number of these taxis which are on out of town journeys (Red).



Anecdotal evidence from taxi drivers regarding other inefficiencies was also gathered through focus groups and meetings. Such inefficiencies included incorrectly located or obstructed taxi ranks, delays after incidents whilst being interviewed by police and an unwillingness on the part of some drivers to operate during peak periods due to the anti-social behaviour of some customers.

Data was also provided by Isle of Man Transport regarding current bus timetables, evening passenger figures and destinations. This demonstrated that the last bus to leave Douglas on Friday and Saturday evenings was at 22.50, just before the beginning of the peak period. It also demonstrated that this last bus was well used.

Table2 Summary of Transportation Analysis

Data Sources	Public anecdotal evidence, Focus Groups, Bus timetables, Survey of Taxi Operators, Public Perception Survey
Main Problem	Insufficient provision of public transport to transport clubbers away from Promenade quickly at peak times
Main partners	Taxi Operators, Isle of Man Transport, Private Coach Operators, Police, Nightclubs
Harm Caused	Frustration, increased opportunity for incidents to occur, negative image of poor management, disturbance to residents, disincentive to visit Promenade at peak periods.
Peak Times	Midnight to 03.00 hrs Saturday & Sunday, particularly 1st weekend of month following payday.
Location of Problem	Whole length of Promenade.(1.5 miles)
Contributory Problems	Insufficient taxi licences Non-operation of all taxis at peak periods due to fear of crime. Inefficient use of taxis to out of town destinations Temporary withdrawal of taxi operation whilst dealing with Police following incidents. Lack of late night bus service to outlying areas after 22.50hrs. Lack of communication and collaboration between public transport providers. Insufficient, poorly located and unmanaged taxi ranks Restrictions in taxi legislation preventing most efficient use of taxis at peak periods.

Youth Issues

Public perception placed young people as the main culprits for much of the antisocial behaviour and crime on the Promenade. Whilst data from Youth Service worker logs did reveal a background level of illegal alcohol and drug use by young people, there was little evidence from the crime data of their involvement in other crimes. However, it became apparent when reviewing the data that many of the complaints about young people from the public related to the noise and disturbance caused by large groups gathering in public places such as the Promenade and surrounding residential areas. It was also apparent that the location of these gatherings fluctuated as a result of the weather, police response, the presence of other attractions and other factors such as time of year.

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Project partners recognised that an understanding of the youth perspective would be vital in order to tackle the perceived problems arising from young people's use of the Promenade. It was clear that young people themselves must be represented on the Project Centurion Steering Group.

This role was fulfilled by the remarkable 19 year old Michael Taylor. Without Michael's involvement, enthusiasm, confidence and hard work, the project would not be able to claim many of the successes it has achieved in this field.

One of Michael's contributions was a candid survey of young people undertaken by their peers. In addition to establishing current behaviour patterns, it sought young people's views on improvements they would like to see in the project area. Leading responses related to the provision of activities such as concerts and dance events and facilities such as alcohol free venues for dancing, meeting and generally "Hanging out". Whilst a suitably located skate park was a fairly popular response, this highlighted to the adults the importance of providing a range of activities for the different social groups of young people. For example, "Goths" are not interested in skating or dance events and similarly, "Scallies" have no interest in rock concerts. Other groups included "Troggs", "Skaters" and those who classed themselves as a hybrid of two or more social groups. The survey also highlighted that the existing facilities offered by the Youth Service and others such as Church Groups were either not attractive to certain groups and ages or were heavily over-subscribed.

The new avenue of communication opened by the project also led to an appreciation that the adult agencies responsible for dealing with young people would benefit from an improved understanding of each other's work. In particular a need to improve communication between the police and Youth Service was recognised. Whilst the Youth Service approach is based upon developing trust and relationships with young people, particularly those at risk, the police response to complaints from the public about large gatherings of young people was often to split the group up and move the young people on. This response often resulted in displacement of the problem to another location, hampered the work of youth workers and damaged young people's

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trust in adults and authority. It also served to reinforce the complainant's initial perception that the young people had indeed been up to no good.

Table 3 Summary of Youth Issues Analysis

Data Sources	Public anecdotal evidence, Focus Groups, Youth Workers, Youth Outreach Worker Logs, Crime analysis, Complaints to Police, Survey of Young People, Public Perception Survey.
Main Problems	Intimidation caused by large groups of young people gathering on and near the Promenade.
Main partners	Background level of underage drinking and drug use. Youth Service, Young People, Police, Douglas Corporation, Church Groups.
Harm Caused	Intimidation and Fear of Crime. Disturbance of Residents.
Peak Times	Health issues arising from underage drinking, drug use and sexual activity. Mainly Friday and Saturday Evenings (variable throughout year).
Location of Problem	Centred on Promenade but easily displaced by the variety of factors including police intervention, weather, events and activities.
Contributory Problems	Public misperception that young people are the main perpetrators of crime and disorder. Mobile nature of young people's social habits. Shortage of social facilities, events and activities for young people. Conflicting approaches by Police and Youth Service arising from lack of communication and understanding. Lack of understanding of young people's social groupings and their different requirements. Lack of forum to represent young people's views. The importance of personality in developing a rapport between young people and the Police.

RESPONSE



Crime & Disorder

Following analysis of the data collated during the various scanning stages, the Isle of Man Constabulary produced an in house action plan containing 53 potential responses each of which was assessed against criteria including sustainability, resource implications and potential obstacles. It is not possible within the restrictions of this paper to report on all 53 of the proposed responses, however the following is a selected summary.

- Use of the detailed intelligence gathered by the project to target police resources, including special constables, as effectively as possible. A Project Centurion Task Force was deployed strategically at times, such as pay day weekends, and at geographical hotspots.
- Refusing to grant bail to offenders on Friday and Saturday when the force's resources are at their highest demand.
- Saturation of the Centurion area with Neighbourhood Watch initiatives.
- Using "Drunk & Disorderly" and "Provoking Behaviour" instead of "Section 3 Public Order" in order to gain stronger sentencing and to allow the issuing of banning orders by the "Pubwatch" initiative.
- Policing taxi ranks as trouble hotspots and to prevent illegal car parking from blocking ranks.
- Implementation by the force's Alcohol Unit of numerous initiatives in collaboration with licensees to improve the management of licensed premises and improve customer's behaviour.

Transportation

One of the main conclusions drawn from the analysis was that improving late night transportation away from the Promenade could have the following benefits;

- The types of crime and disorder being targeted by the project are either opportunist or incidental rather than pre-meditated. Therefore, the quicker clubbers are removed from the Promenade, the less opportunity or reason they have to commit crime in the first place.
- Reducing frustration about the lack of taxis and the difficulty experienced getting home after a night out was considered important in reducing incidents at taxi ranks.
- If more people are transported home by vehicle, fewer are left to walk home committing opportunistic and incidental crimes en route.

Responses that have been implemented include;

- **“Taxiwatch”**

“Taxiwatch” is a partnership set up between the taxi operators to develop a better relationship between each other and create policy for dealing with offenders and incidents. Membership also includes the Road Traffic Licensing Committee and the Police. A taxi ban scheme has also been introduced where individuals convicted of offences involving taxis are banned resulting in drivers being happier to work during peak periods.

- **Taxi rank review**

A complete review of taxi rank provision was undertaken during the scan stage. This was analysed by the police, licensees, the Department of Transport and taxi drivers with the conclusion that five new or relocated ranks were required, two of which would only need to operate during the evenings. All recommendations have been implemented and are currently operating with great effect. One of the main concepts behind the proposed changes was to locate ranks as close as possible to night clubs to reduce the number of customers walking along the Promenade.

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■ **Improved taxi rank management**

An additional benefit of locating taxi ranks immediately outside night clubs is that the door staff are able to supervise and manage the ranks. This includes informing the police when private cars are illegally parked on ranks during the hours of operation. The police have pursued a zero tolerance approach to illegal parking on ranks.

- Douglas Corporation has agreed to allow the Government's parking controllers to ride free of charge on the Promenade Horse drawn trams to enable them to patrol the 1.5mile Promenade more effectively.

■ **Police/Taxi protocol**

Prior to Centurion, whenever an incident occurred involving a taxi, drivers and police officers would be unavailable whilst dealing with the paperwork. A protocol has now been established whereby both the police and taxi drivers have agreed to undertake all administration relating to the incident the following day.

■ **Increase in taxi licences**

As a direct result of the research undertaken and the case made by Project Centurion, 12 additional licences have been awarded in the Douglas area.

■ **Late night bus services**

One of the key recommendations of Centurion is that a late night bus service should be established to the north, south and west of the island to release taxis to service local customers during peak periods. The preferred method of providing this service is as a sustainable commercial operation. Project Centurion has assisted local coach operators by providing data on peak travel periods and the numbers of customers wishing to travel to various out of town destinations. A regular service now runs to the south of the island on Friday and Saturday nights and this appears to be commercially viable. A prototype service to the North of the island has not yet proved viable. Negotiations are continuing with public and private operators.

Youth Issues

Although the data suggested that young people are not the main perpetrators of crime in the Centurion area, it was recognised that their presence in large groups could be intimidating. It was also clear that prior to the project, different Government agencies were applying a conflicting set of responses to such gatherings. In the survey undertaken by the project, young people complained that they were not sufficiently catered for in terms of events, facilities and venues. In addition, there was clearly a misperception on the part of the wider population about the behaviour of young people in the town and addressing that misperception became one of Centurion's main priorities with regard to young people.

A summary of the main responses in this area were as follows;

■ **The Douglas Youth Council**

Recognition that young people's behaviour, ambitions and requirements were widely misunderstood by many decision makers led to the establishment of Douglas Youth Council. 19 year old Michael Taylor became the facilitator of the Council of young people and has worked with them to develop a range of projects for young people in Douglas. The Youth Council also provides a consultation network for projects and events developed for young people in Douglas.

■ **Events & Venues**

In the survey of young people organised by Michael, two main wishes were registered by the young people surveyed. The first was for more events aimed at under 18s such as performances by bands and DJs. The second was for under 18 venues where they could meet with their friends, listen to music and generally "hang out"

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In response to these requests, project partners have collaborated to organise the following;

- The Youth Service, Youth Council and the Police have worked closely with a local young promoter to organise monthly dance events at two venues on the Promenade involving renowned DJs on which young people have provided constructive feedback through the Youth Council. The Police reported an almost total absence of complaints about young people on the nights the events are held. These events are run commercially without any subsidy.
- Partners have also organised outdoor events in the town square which provide an attraction for young people but also celebrate the creativity of young people and youth culture. This helps to improve the perception of young people by demonstrating that, given an opportunity, they can play a productive and valuable role in the community.
- Youth on the Move is a project initiated by the Youth Service in response to a greater understanding of the mobile nature of young people's social habits. Youth workers in a van have become a focus for a "friendly" adult presence on the streets. It is able to move quickly to the areas in which young people are congregating and carries with it hot drinks, information and most importantly, workers who are able to provide advice and information to young people.
- The Youth Service is also developing "Area 51" as a venue for music, dancing and general socialising. This project, which is adjacent to the Promenade and town square is currently at an early stage but the concept appears to have received strong support.

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■ Youth Text Line

With sponsorship from a local telecommunication company a text line is now operated by the Youth Council to publicise youth events and facilities, disseminate health education messages and collate feedback and information from young people on a variety of issues.

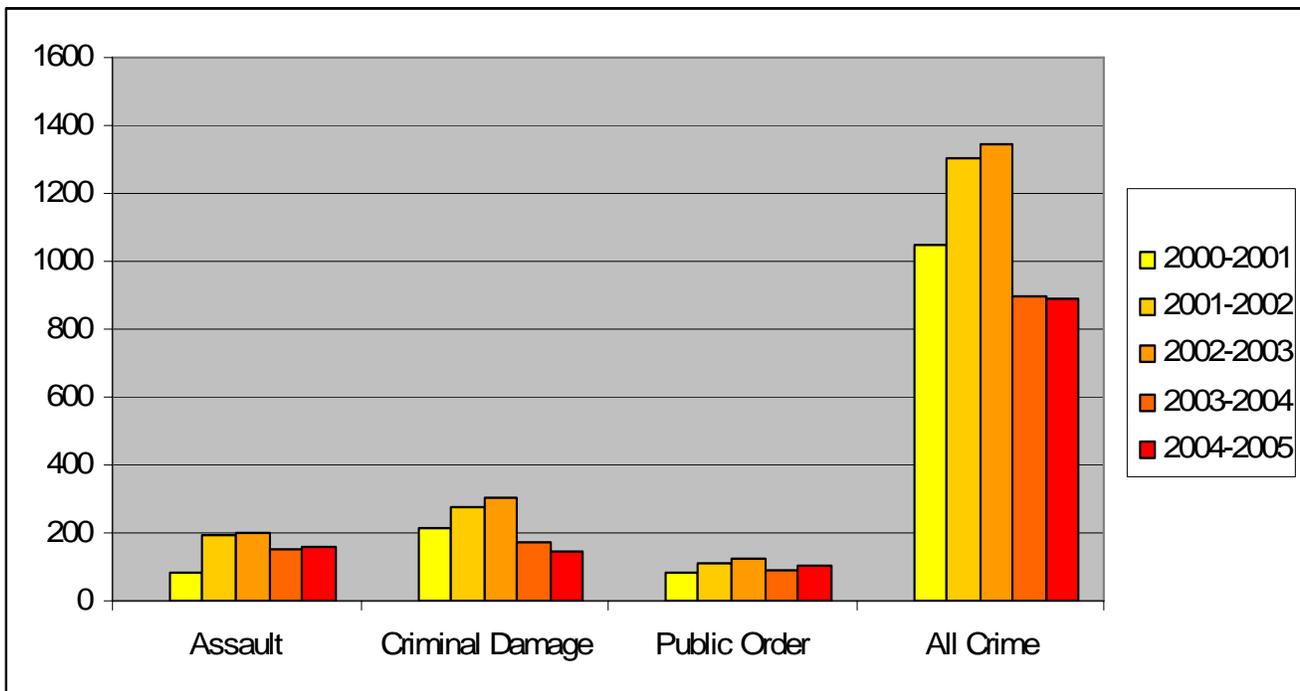
In addition to specific projects, one of the main responses with regard to youth issues has been a much greater level of collaboration between the Youth Service and the Police. They now meet regularly and each now understands the other's strategies and approach.

ASSESSMENT



In the two years since Project Centurion was launched, crime in the area has reduced by 33.4%. Although public order offences and assaults rose very slightly in year 2, the immediate impact of Project Centurion responses has been maintained. Although not a specific target offence, thefts have dropped by 28% over the period.

Chart 6 Reduction in target crimes following launch of Project Centurion



Because the project partners have implemented such a broad range of responses within such a short period, it has not yet been possible to determine the relative impact each response has contributed to the reduction in recorded crime. However, as the reduction was so rapid during year 1 it is suspected that the police action plan may have had a major impact. It is anticipated

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that the more recent transportation measures are more likely to result in a steady longer term reduction in crime.

The youth related responses are more likely to have an impact on public perception than on crime data. In order to measure this, a baseline perception survey was undertaken in November 2003. This is due to be repeated in November 2005.

Evidence from project partners suggests that one of the main benefits of the project has been the new and improved partnerships between the organisations and sectors involved in the project. In particular improved lines of communication now exist between the Police, the local authority, the Youth Service, the Manx Entertainment & Nightclub Association, the Manx Off Licence Initiative, the Licensed Victuallers Association, public transport providers, taxi operators and young people. These new relationships are already assisting in creating a considerably more joined up approach to delivering public services. For example, the Youth Council now provides regular feedback to organisers of youth events to ensure that future events are finely tuned to young people's requirements.

The project has made a successful start to improving the situation on the Promenade, however, there is still room for improvement and this is unlikely to happen without a continued effort. Also, it is clear from recent correspondence in the local press that the public are now focussing on wider issues such as fast food litter which are important quality of life issues that cannot necessarily be measured by crime data. Consequently, the Project Steering Group has recently resolved to hold a further public meeting to explain what has been achieved so far and to gather further information from the public (particularly residents) on the issues they would like to see tackled by the second phase of Project Centurion.

It is likely that the project and/or its offspring will continue to evolve by using the SARA process to tackle a wide range of problems in addition to crime and disorder.

AGENCY & OTHER INFORMATION



The Problem Oriented Policing approach has been adopted throughout the force from the Chief Constable, who initiated Project Centurion, to the constable who managed the project.

It has also been introduced to the other partner organisations that comprise the project Steering Group. The Project Manager, Constable Tony Paxton is fully conversant with the SARA model and has also received specific additional training in project management. Brian Gresty has also been engaged by the Police as an adviser to guide the project through the SARA process.

Whilst the SARA process was applied rigorously, the complexity of the situation also required it to be applied repetitively so that a detailed picture of the underlying problems could be built up by all partners. This has eased the delivery of responses by ensuring that the decision makers of all project partners are committed by their understanding of how each response contributes to the “big picture”.

It is difficult to accurately assess the resources that have been applied to the project as the expenditure has been in participant's time and commitment to improve communication and work collaboratively and this cannot be easily valued. Whilst inevitably additional police personnel resources have been applied, these have been justified by the results received. Where possible, responses have been delivered through more efficient working practices (e.g. better placed taxi ranks, tailoring police resources to peak periods) or by exploiting commercial opportunities for the private sector (e.g. late night bus service, youth events in nightclubs etc.)