

OPERATION ASLAN- Summary

Scanning

Out of the 44 geographical areas within Western Division, Talbot ward was identified as having the highest number of incidents of Disorder and Anti-social behaviour. This area contains Blackpool town centre which has a capacity within the pubs and nightclubs of 50,000 persons.

After close liaison with officers and other agencies the true picture of the problems were revealed, resulting in the Asian team adopting four main incident classes which reflected not only policing issues but also the concerns of the people that live, work and visit the area.

- Assaults
- Disturbance
- Criminal Damage
- Drunken persons/ Community Problems

Analysis

Further analysis of the information enabled the team to identify hotspots within the area and a further breakdown highlighted the days of the week and time of the day that the incidents are most prevalent.

The underlying causes were then investigated and the following have been identified as the key problems to be solved to reduce Disorder.

- Licensed Premises
- Transportation
- Partnerships
- Street Cleanliness
- Restaurants/late night eating houses

Response

The identified town centre hotspots enabled the team to form policing zones where officers patrol in pairs wearing high visibility jackets. The officers adopt an early intervention approach, dealing with incidents before they escalate.

Assessment

The tactics employed by the officers who work on Aslan have resulted in a dramatic reduction in violent crime and incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Several long-term solutions involving partnerships are estimated to be in place for the summer season in the year 2000.

Introduction

This report will illustrate the methodology we have followed in producing a Problem Orientated Policing response to reduce incidents of Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour, within Western Division, of the Lancashire Constabulary.

The Blackpool and Fylde Crime and Disorder Audits highlighted these concerns. The Community Safety Strategy, together with the Annual Policing Plan, now makes this a priority issue for Policing activity, within the coming year.

In compiling the Crime and Disorder Audit, a significant amount of anecdotal evidence was offered which suggested that the current Police data capturing was inadequate and did not accurately reflect the true picture of Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour within the Division.

The Divisional Management Team appointed a small working group to fully investigate this problem in November 1998.

The terms of reference being;

"To devise a Generic Methodology to reduce the number of incidents of Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour within Western Division by 5% in 1999/2000."

Working Group

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Analytical Support

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Acknowledgements

- ◆ Blackpool Black Cab Association
- ◆ Blackpool Hotel and Guesthouse Association
- ◆ Blackpool Victoria Hospital
- ◆ British Transport Police
- DMT (Divisional Management Team)

- Lancashire Ambulance Authority
- Licence Victualers Association
- Local Street Cleaning Services
- Members of Blackpool Town Centre Forum
- Others of Blackpool and Fylde Borough Council

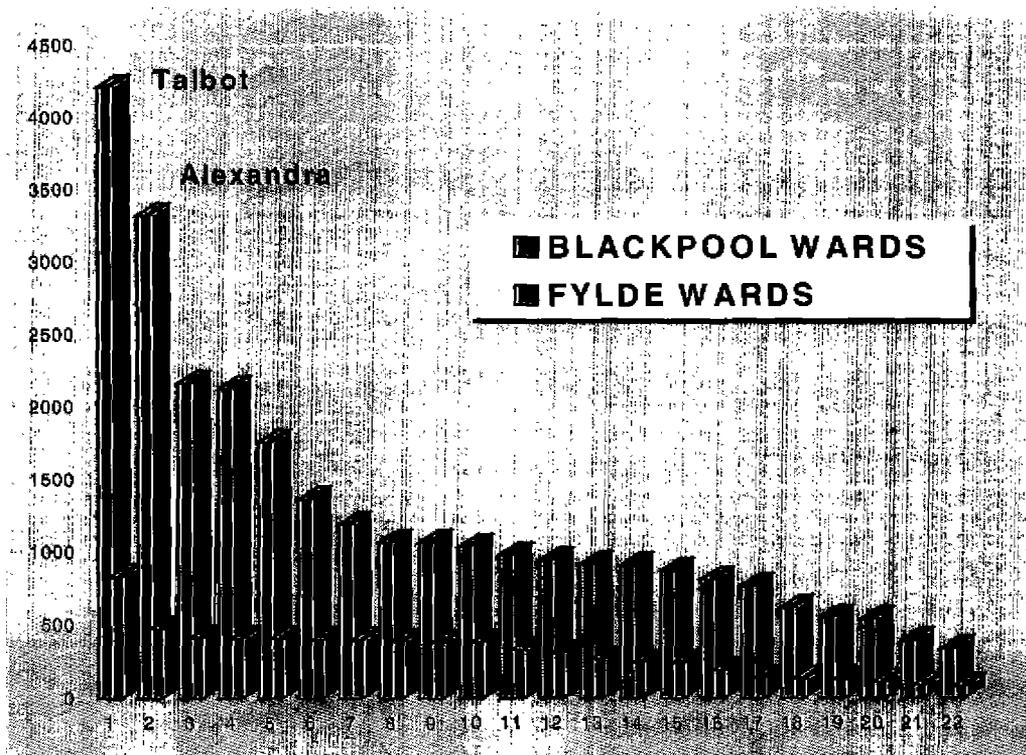
Scanning

By adopting the Lancashire Constabulary SARA model of problem solving the team scanned incidents of Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour as currently recognised by the force.

- Animals Straying or Cruelty to
- Annoying or Obscene Telephone Calls
- Assault
- Criminal Damage
- Disturbance (in street or Licensed Premises)
- Dog Nuisance
- Drunken Persons
- Juvenile Nuisance
- Motorcycle Nuisance
- Motorway Nuisance
- Other Unlisted Disturbance
- Suspicious Activity

This work was conducted alongside the Blackpool and Fylde Crime and Disorder Audits.

A perato chart was produced highlighting divisional hotspots by geographical ward-beat areas. This graph shows that Talbot is by far the hottest hotspot area within Western Division.



Having identified Talbot as a model on which to apply the methodology we wished to consult with as wide an audience as possible to ascertain a true picture of the problem of Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour within that area.

The scanning of the force data capture system highlighted discrepancies with both the quality and the quantity of the incidents classed as Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour.

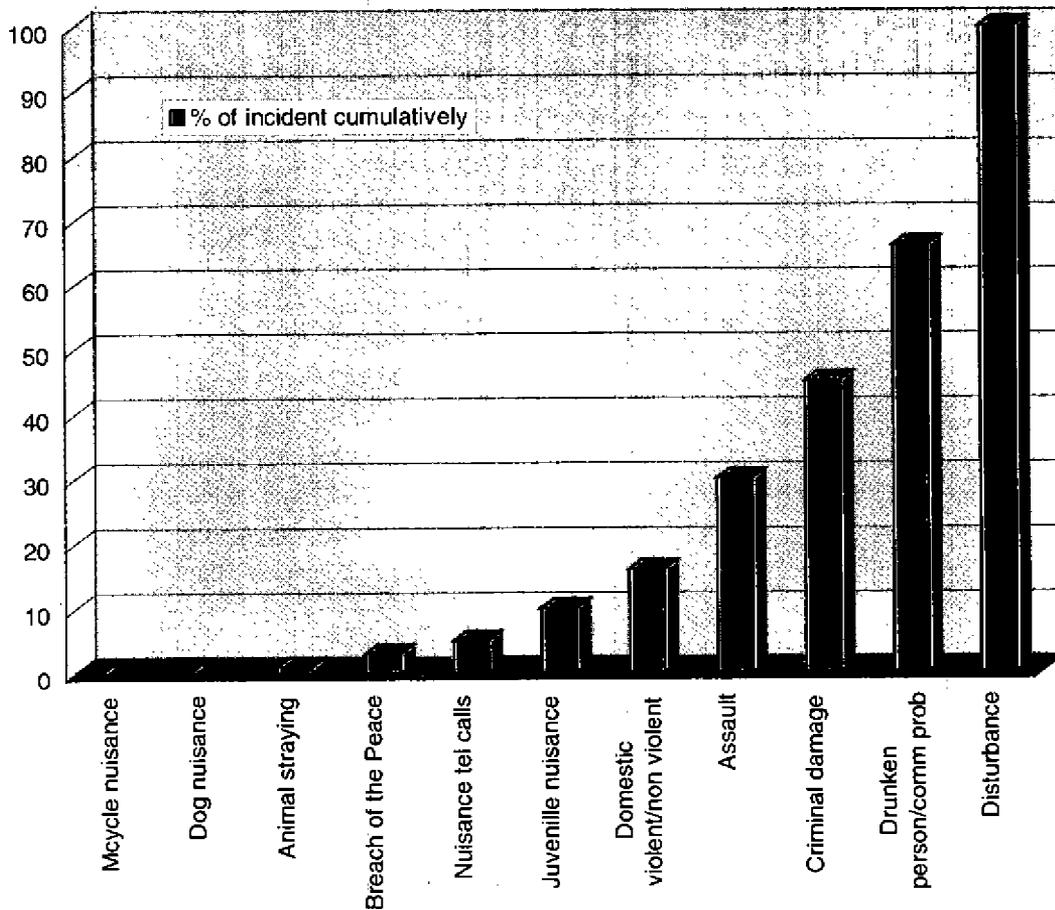
This view was shared by the Divisional Commander, Supt. Taylor, during the commander's conference and has resulted in a corporate project to address this problem.

The Aslan team then consulted with the following groups to build up a true picture of the problem within the Talbot ward;

- ◆ Blackpool Victoria Hospital (A & E Department)
- ◆ Blackpool Beachpatrol
- ◆ British Transport Police
- ◆ North Western Trains
- ◆ Lancashire Ambulance Service
- ◆ Blackpool Hotel and Guest House Association
- ◆ Blackpool Town Centre Forum
- ◆ Town Centre Eating Establishments
- ◆ Blackpool Black-cab Association
- ◆ Blackpool Transport (bus and tram)
- ◆ Blackpool Borough Council (Street Cleaning Department)
- ◆ Local Police Officers
- ◆ R.N.L.L/Coastguard,
- ◆ Representatives of the Gay Community
- ◆ Licence Victuallers
- ◆ Doorstaff
- ◆ Lancashire Fire Brigade
- ◆ CCTV Staff
- ◆ Reference made to sixth form survey

This allowed us to re-define the definition of Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour within the Division for the purposes of Aslan (this may further change dependant upon the outcome of the current corporate project).

% of incident cumulatively within Talbot ward beat Apr 97 to Mar 98



The revised definition to include the following incidents;

- Assault - Section 39 to 18
- Disturbance - In Licensed Premises
 - In the street
 - Other unlisted disturbance
- Criminal Damage
- Drunken Persons
- Community Problem - Begging
 - Vagrants
 - Urinating in a public place

These incident headings reflect the concerns of the people who live, work and visit Talbot ward.

When transferring the methodology to other geographic areas within the Division, other concerns may be reflected and should be addressed as prominent issues accordingly.

At the conclusion of the scanning phase it was apparent to the team that to base the analysis of the problem solely upon the data provided by the force system would be artificial and misleading. It is feared that the true picture of Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour is significantly worse than what can easily be measured.

McNamara's fallacy states;

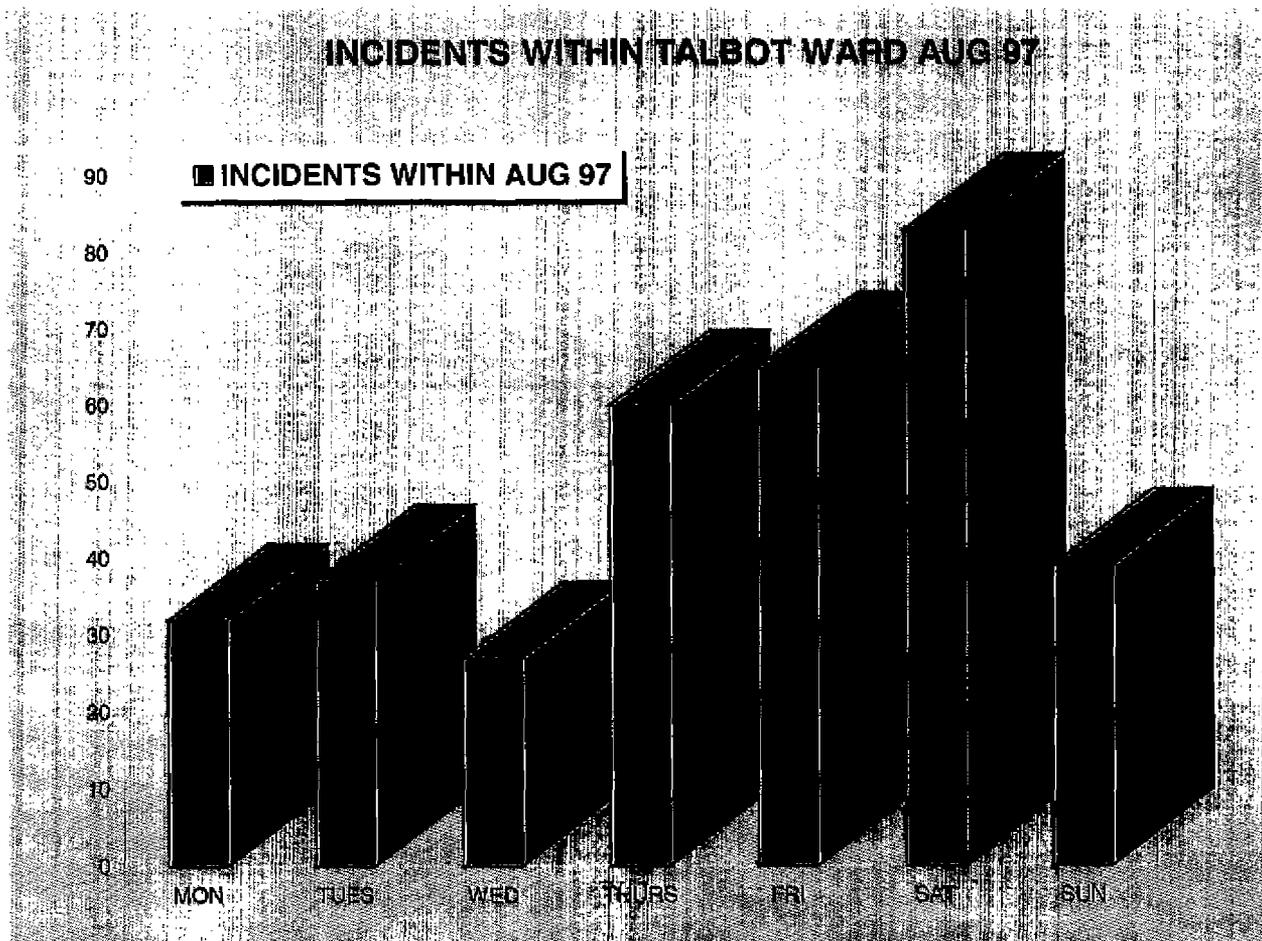
The first step is to measure whatever can easily be measured. This is OK as far as it goes. The second step is to disregard that which can't easily be measured or to give it an arbitrary quantitative value. This is artificial and misleading. The third step is to presume that what can't be measured easily really isn't important. This is blindness. The fourth step is to say that what can't easily be measured really doesn't exist. This is suicide.

Analysis of Information Obtained

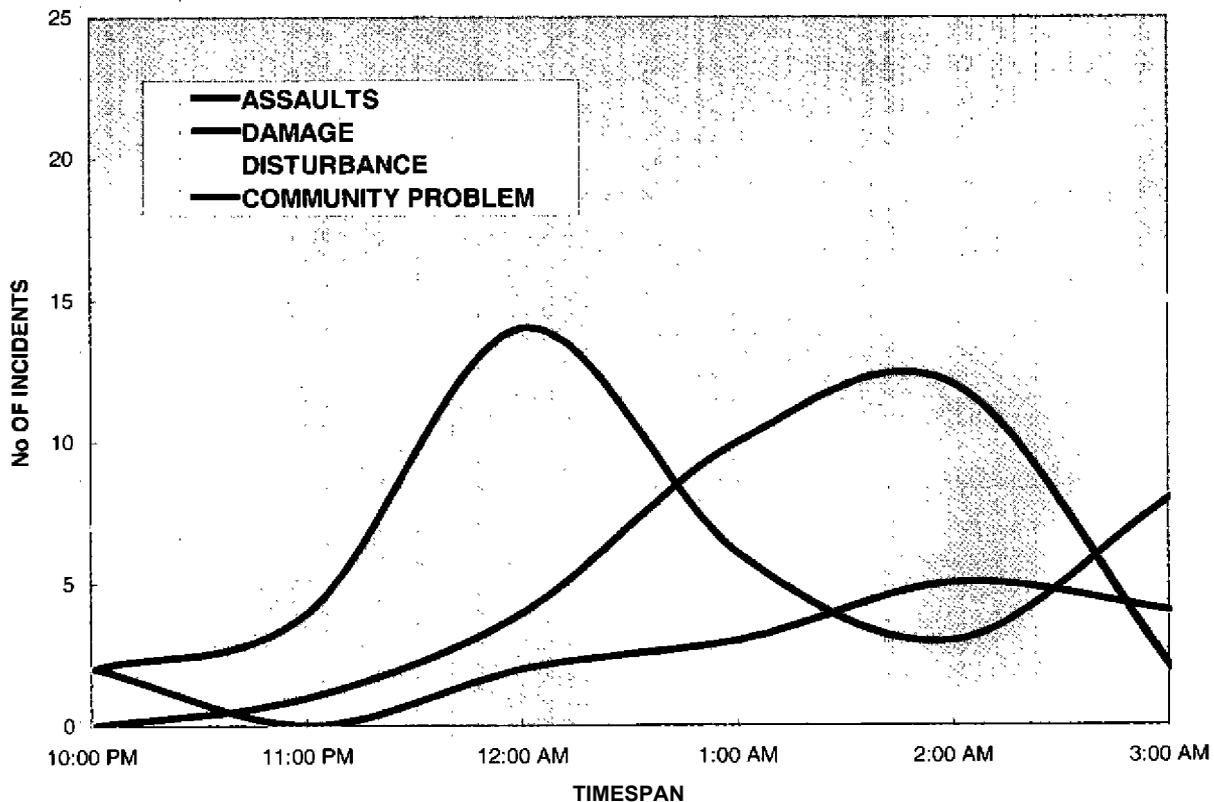
Further analysis of the information obtained enabled us to identify the hotspot within the Talbot ward by location.

Analysis of the incidents within these hotspots have been further broken down by month, day and hour of day.

This briefly has identified specific locations, where the incidents of Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour are most prevalent, on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening between the hours of 10pm and 4am.



ASLAN INCIDENTS WITHIN TALBOT AUG 97



We then looked at the underlying causes of these incidents and the following have been identified as the key problems to be solved to reduce Disorder.

Licensed Premises

The key theme running throughout the geographic area is the link between alcohol and disorderly behaviour. With reference to research carried out on the Blackpool Custody System 82% of offenders arrested for Asian related offences were drunk or had consumed drink.

The area of Blackpool, which is known as the town centre, which incorporates Talbot ward, has a capacity of 50,000 persons within the pubs and clubs. This capacity is often reached and does not take into account the people in that area that attend shows and restaurants etc.

The Western Division Licensing Unit has been tasked with the identification of problem premises within these hotspots.

They will concentrate on;

- a) Repeated incidents inside and outside the premises
- b) Underage drinking
- c) Doorstaff
- d) To establish a drugs/ disorder link

- e) the premises which encourage the contravention of the local street drinking bylaw
- f) Premises which contravene the conditions of their licence

Transportation

The following have been identified as areas of concern;

- a) The numbers, locations and management of taxi ranks within the hotspot areas
- b) The unavailability of late night public transport to assist with the dispersal of the potential 35,000 club goers
- c) The use and availability of a structured coach coach collection point
- d) The reduction of private car congestion within the hotspots

Partnership

Areas of concern;

- a) The credibility and deterrent value. of the current CCTV system in ensuring public safety within the town centre
- b) Effectiveness of partnerships

Street cleanliness

The impact street cleanliness could have on the reassurance and safety to members of the public within the town centre, and how would this affect the reduction of incidents of littering, urinating and vomiting in public places.

Restaurants/ late night refreshment houses

Areas of concern;

- a) identification of premises that have a high number of incidents of disorder inside and outside
- b) Premises which contravene the conditions of their licenses
- c) Encouragement of premises to assist in the maintenance of street cleanliness levels

Response

Throughout the various stages of the SARA model briefings were given to both operational officers and the Divisional Management team through various means including power point presentations.

Once the Aslan team had identified the town centre hotspots they were able to form policing zones. The zones are then patrolled by officers in pairs providing a high visibility foot patrol. Other operational resources are utilised including Support Unit, Mounted and Dog Patrols.

The tactics employed by the officers are of an early intervention approach, dealing with incidents at their source before they escalate. Once the scanning and analysis processes were completed a number of responses were required to address the areas of concern.

Licensed premises

A number of issues are to be addressed by Sergeant Hayley and his team within the Licensing Department.

Transportation

Taxi-ranks

Almost one third of all taxi drivers that work within Blackpool will not enter the town centre. This is due to a lack of management of the ranks leading to the cars being damaged and general disorder.

It is recommended that the Local Authority adopt a system to improve the ranks, therefore providing more taxis to safely disperse people from the hotspot areas

Public transport

The scanning/ analysis process identified that most of the incidents of disorder and anti-social behaviour occur between the hours of 10pm and 4am. As there are no trams or buses running after 11pm a decent transport framework would assist with the dispersal of crowds. It is recommended that the DMT approach the Local Authority at an executive level to raise these matters.

Coach parks/ collection points

Currently many of the coaches that bring visitors to Blackpool, unload their passengers within the town centre or its outskirts causing major

traffic problems. There are no guidelines for the coach firms to use a coach park for unloading and loading and so they are left to themselves. It is recommended that the Local Authority utilise one of the car parks near to Central Drive, so that visitors can easily find their way back to the coaches, which are parked off the roads.

Private car parking

To ease general traffic congestion and facilitate the correct use of the taxi ranks, we need to restrict the flow of private vehicles within the hotspot areas. This will then avoid the problems associated with private vehicles illegally parking within restrictions and the taxi ranks.

It is recommended that agreement is sought between the Police and the Local Authority to close off certain roads to private vehicles allowing access to taxis and emergency vehicles only. The worst two roads are Clifton Street and Queens Street.

Partnership

CCTV

A working party, chaired, by Chief Inspector Bartlett, has been tasked with evaluating and improving the current CCTV system.

Radio Link

The radio link for Licensed Premises will be introduced by May 1999 and is a facility for the Licensees to communicate with one another regarding potential trouble groups or individuals. It will be monitored by staff working on Operation Aslan as well as the CCTV office.

Town Centre Wardens

A town centre wardens initiative is to be introduced in Blackpool by the Local Authority sometime in 1999.

The Aslan team recommend that the wardens are used on a rota basis with staff in the CCTV room. This would enable them to become multi-skilled and have an excellent knowledge of the town not only through the lens of a camera but via their own experience.

Asian Forum

To enable the continued success and smooth running of the operation, there will be a forum created consisting of representatives from the Asian team, Licensees, local businesses and the local authority.

Assessment

The change to a highly visible policing style with officers on dedicated patrol of identified hotspots has resulted in a dramatic change in the town centre atmosphere. There has been a significant reduction in violent crime and incidents of anti-social behaviour.

The public reassurance and satisfaction is difficult to measure but the response to the policing initiative has been very complimentary. The number of homophobic incidents reported is also low.

The longer-term solutions, which require the co-operation of partners has been, incorporated into the community Safety Plans. The introduction of a policing style used successfully at football league grounds to a town centre is a novel but simple idea, which is showing considerable success at an early stage.

Incidents within Asian Zones

Incident Classes	Apr-98	Apr-99	% Difference	May-98	May-99	% Difference	Cumilitive difference
Assaults	23	20		21	17		
Disturbance	58	51		67	58		
Criminal Damage	12	10		10	7		
Drunken Persons	25	26		32	26		

OPERATION ASLAN

OPERATIONAL ORDER

INFORMATION

Western Division will adopt the tactics of Operation Aslan from Friday 26th March 1999 for a period of three years. The areas where these tactics will be concentrated are all situated in what is considered as the town centre.

The Operation has identified three hotspot areas, Talbot Square (zone 1), Bank Hey Street around the Palace and Heaven and Hell nightclubs (zone 2) and the area around Talbot Road bus station including Topping Street (zone 3).

The area considered as the town centre has a capacity for the public houses and night-clubs of 50,000 persons. This capacity is often reached, and considering other persons in Blackpool, who are there for shows or restaurants etc., we are dealing with a large population of people. The majority of these people will present no difficulties, however it cannot be discounted that there will be a number of persons who will commit public order offences.

Gold Commander - will be Superintendent McPherson who will be in overall command of the operation.

Silver Commander- will be the cover Inspector on the nights concerned. Although the Inspector will have their divisional responsibilities they will oversee many of the tactical decisions.

Bronze Commander 1- will be the duty Support Unit Sergeant.

Bronze Commander 2 - will be the Central Wards Sergeant who is working on the late float shift.

There will be some media interest in this operation and it is essential that all officers be reminded to act in a manner, which reflects the Lancashire Constabulary as a firm, fair and friendly organisation.

2. INTENTION

2.1 The aims of the Police operation will be:

- a) To maintain public order by reducing the following incidents;
Assaults
Disturbance
Criminal Damage
Drunken Persons/ Community Problems
- b) Address issues of anti-social behaviour.
- c) To target offenders and licensed premises who commit offences against the operation.
- d) To ensure the safety of the public and Police alike.

3. METHOD

- 3.1 There has been an extensive advertising campaign throughout Blackpool informing locals and visitors alike that there is certain behaviour that will no longer be tolerated. All officers need to be aware, that in order to reach the aims and objectives of the operation, then **positive action** needs to be taken against any persons found to be in breach of the code of conduct.
- 3.2 Although the disposal of prisoners will be at the discretion of the Custody Sergeant, we would encourage bail conditions be imposed on persons found to be committing Asian related offences.
- 3.3 The Support Unit team of 1 and 7 will work between the hours of 8pm and 4am. They will cover the area contained within zone 1. They will work in pairs on foot, providing a high profile presence in the designated areas at the discretion of the Silver and Bronze Commanders. The officers will provide their own refreshments and will take their break between 12pm and 12-45pm.
- 3.4 On Friday and Saturday evenings there will be a team of 1 and 12 officers available after 10pm to work on the Operation. Their sole responsibility will be for the area contained within zone 2. They will patrol in teams of two, on foot patrol providing a high profile Police presence. When sufficient numbers are available then they will patrol in threes, two regular officers to one Special Constable. This will

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allow two officers to deal with an offender with the remaining officer giving some protection from passers by., On Saturday evenings a team of 1 and 6 will work an extended tour of duty until 3am to provide the extra Police presence until the clubs close. Officers will provide their own refreshments and will take their break at the discretion of the Silver or Bronze Commanders.

- 3.5 The area contained within zone 3 will be patrolled by the duty AR90 team. They will park their vehicle in the bus station, and patrol the area on foot again providing a high visibility presence. The officers must remain on that area unless there is an incident requiring their attendance. They can then only leave their current duties with the authority of the Silver Commander. The officers will provide their own refreshments and they will take their break between 1am and 1-45am.
- 3.6 When available the Mounted Branch will provide two mounted officers to cover the area contained in zone 4. They will provide a high profile presence in a roving circuit of the area. The officers will provide their own refreshments and will take their break between 12-30am and 1-15am.
- 3.7 Additional officers will then be deployed along the route outlined for the mounted officers. They will be utilised in pairs on foot patrol.
- 3.8 All vehicles will be parked in areas of high visibility to assist with the deterrent value. Support Unit will park their carrier outside the town hall in Talbot Square. The late shift will park one of their vehicles on the pavement at the bottom of the steps of the Palace nightclub. The other vehicle(s) will be parked in prominent positions on Bank Hey Street.
- 3.9 Traffic patrols are to continue with their general duties and when required assist in enforcement measures to ensure the free flow of traffic through the town centre.
- 3.10 Additional Dog Handlers will work within the busiest areas at the appropriate times. They will be on foot on a roving commission with their dogs acting as a high visibility deterrent within zone 4.
- 3.11 The two main hotspot areas within zones 1 and 2 will each have a secure van to facilitate the removal of prisoners from their areas. The border between north and south will be Church Street.

- 3.12 The Licensing Unit is going to take a more pro-active role to target offending premises. To assist them it is essential that officers provide them with all information relating to any problem premises or doorstaff etc.
- 3.13 Patrols will **only** attend an incident outside their policing zone when required to do so by Silver or Bronze command.
- 3.14 CCTV are to be used to monitor any potential troublemakers or troublespots identified by the officers on the operation. The CCTV operators will also contact the officers to tell them of potential trouble groups etc. All officers need to be aware that all the areas that they will be working in are extensively covered by the CCTV cameras, which means that their behaviour and conduct may be recorded and can be used as evidence.
- 3.15 All officers will maintain their deployments unless directed by either the Silver or Bronze Commanders.
- 3.16 All officers will wear high visibility jackets whilst out on patrol.
- 3.17 All prisoners will be transported by the secure vans provided by the geographic patrols.

4. ADMINISTRATION

- 4.1 Officers will be in possession of their waterproof clothing and appointments.
- 4.2 All officers engaged on the operation will attend a briefing at 10pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings in the briefing room on the second floor.
- 4.3 Officers to be aware that many of the offences that they will come across are on the quick file system.
- 4.4 All officers employed on the operation will provide their own refreshments and take their breaks at the instruction of their relevant supervision

