



**WEST M ERCIA**  
**CONSTABULARY**  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

Application for the

*The Tilley Award*

**Sponsored by Police Review**

Submitted by

West Mercia Constabulary

*'The Four Tracks of Policing'*

July 1999

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**WEST MERCIA**  
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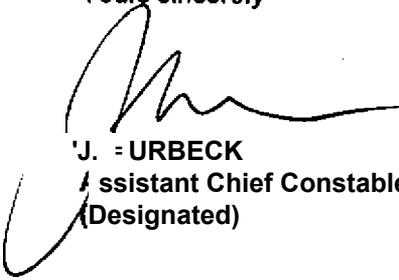
Dear Ms Gandelin

I am pleased to endorse this application, which outlines our own unique force-wide strategy for addressing policing.

The "Four Tracks" of policing is the approach through which we deliver our policing services. We serve our communities in four different, yet related ways of policing. None of the individual overlapping tracks is a new idea, but their relationship is. The structure has proved to be sufficiently flexible and rigorous to address any policing problem to date.

Since its launch in 1995 there have been many excellent examples of the Four Tracks in action, each policing solution being a unique mix of some or all of the different tracks as the situation demands. I am convinced that it also helps promote a corporate problem solving approach, as well as ensuring effectiveness at the operational level of policing.

Yours sincerely



**J. URBECK**  
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The Tilley Award at Police Review  
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**Abstract:**

### **Four Tracks of Policing**

In 1995, following a public survey, and several major impacts upon policing through Government initiatives and legislation, West Mercia Constabulary's then Chief Constable, David Blakey formulated the concept of the 'Four Tracks of Policing'. The 'Four tracks' of local, responsive, partnerships, and targeted policing can be simply used to describe police operational activities internally to staff and externally to members of the public and elected members. The four tracks of policing approach has been used in West Mercia Constabulary's annual policing plans for four years with great success. The strategy was recognised as good practice by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and is contained within the Force corporate strategy of '2000+'. The force strategy is intended, through operation of the four tracks of policing, to make the counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire better places to live and work. Whereas a great deal of good police work was going on within West Mercia, it had previously been uncoordinated and lacked a framework of service delivery. The four tracks of policing provided an easy to understand framework, and a means of delivering a good quality and consistent level of police services across the whole force.

The four tracks of policing, although formulated at corporate level, can readily be interpreted and delivered at Divisional and local levels. The concept can be used to explain the rationale of policing at each of the levels and, most importantly, is extremely useful as a model for problem oriented policing incorporating the SARA technique of problem solving.

Performance management has historically been an enigma in the police service. It has proved problematic to effectively quantify and thereby accurately allocate resources. Working towards objectives or performance indicators in a fast changing and dynamic environment such as law enforcement, it is difficult for individual officers and staff to take the time to reflect and consider longer-term aims and objectives in policing activities. However, performance management is an essential requirement of good management, economy, effectiveness, efficiency and best value. The four tracks approach set into the 2000+ strategy offers a method for individual police officers to readily understand how their day-to-day activities fit into the bigger picture. They can see how their individual tasks lead to the achievement of targets and performance indicators by steadily working towards the pre-set goals in Sectional, Divisional and Force Policing plans.

## **The Four Tracks of Policing Project**

### **West Mercia Constabulary**

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#### *Entry documents:*

- 1 Abstract
- 2 Description of project
- 3 Copy of presentation: '2000+ - A Better Place'
- 4 Copy of presentation: 'The Intelligence Path'

# The Four Tracks of Policing West Mercia Constabulary

## **2000+ - A Better Place**

There were several reasons for West Mercia Constabulary embarking on the '2000+' change programme in 1995. Firstly, the increased demand on police services required changes to be made. Over the years demands on the police service had continually increased but the provision of staff and resources had not risen in comparison to the increase in demand. This meant that West Mercia Constabulary and the police service in general, in order to meet increased demand, would need to become more effective and efficient - to produce more with less. Secondly, during the early 1990's the police service was subjected to continuous change. There was the Audit Commission work on effectiveness, efficiency and economy, the various public inquiries into the role and responsibilities of police officers and finally the changes brought about by the Police and Magistrates' Court. The police service reflected on all these changes and began to plan for the future.

West Mercia Constabulary concluded that before an organisation can know where it is going it needs to be sure why it exists. Thus, the force produced a Statement of Purpose entitled: "A Better Place" and developed some standards and aims. The plan defined the areas for police activity and which of those activities would receive focused attention to achieve the overall objective of making the counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire 'A Better Place'. The then Chief Constable, David Blakey, outlined his shared vision for the service in 1995 and that vision holds true today. In that document the Chief Constable detailed the Four Track policing model outlined in this description of the project with four different, yet related methods of policing. (Please see the attached presentation print-out on the implementation of 2000+)

## **Track 1 of the Four Tracks of policing - LOCAL POLICING**

All police forces in the UK, whether in an urban or rural location, are divided into areas of a basic command unit called a Division'. Divisions are then broken down into sections, usually based on towns or centres of population. Sections are further segmented into 'Beats' which are areas identified for police officers to patrol on foot or using transport.

In 1995, in line with other activities under the 2000+ strategy, the Beat Manager concept was introduced into West Mercia Constabulary. In simple terms, the concept developed the role of the existing Local Beat Officers towards a more global view of policing in a section or geographical area; this is a concept labeled 'problem oriented policing.' (Please see the following example of a practical policing response to youth crime and nuisance)

### **Role of Special Constabulary and Neighbourhood Watch**

The role of the Special Constabulary and Neighbourhood Watch schemes are vital in addressing identified long term community problems and the successful Beat Manager forms close links with these influential local groups. Many of the problems identified in the

community will also be revealed during the completion of Community Safety plans statutorily required under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

### **Track 2 of the Four Tracks of policing - *RESPONSIVE POLICING***

This second track of the Four Tracks of Policing is about balancing the competing demands for police services. The public have an entitlement to expect that police will always provide a speedy response to emergencies, but also the demand to attend a variety of less urgent incidents is continually increasing. The Responsive Policing track involves considering the incident reported and then deciding the most appropriate police response to it. It also includes the management of police deployment and the public's expectations of their police service.

#### **Graded police response**

The Audit Commission identified the need for a graded response to deal with the increasing number of calls from the public, in their report 'Calling all Forces'. They recommended that operational effectiveness could be improved by deploying police officers only when the caller cannot be satisfied over the phone. Also, where a police resource clearly needs to be despatched, further grading should take place to determine how urgently it should be provided, and which police resource would be the most appropriate, for example, an officer with particular local knowledge or a traffic specialist.

Graded response is therefore a balance between the caller's expectations, those resources demanded by the incident and the most appropriate resources available. Written managed response guidelines assist this process, by providing a policy statement that supports a managed response to all reports of incidents by the public. They also give guidance to staff who have the responsibility for making the decisions with regard to the level of response to those incidents.

### **Track 3 of the Four Tracks of policing - *POLICING PARTNERSHIPS***

Policing partnerships have been important to the police service for many years, but have been brought into much greater significance during recent times upon the commencement of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Prior to the Act, the idea of the police forming partnerships with other agencies to more effectively deal with crime and disorder was recommended as good practice, but was not a statutory duty. There always were informal working practices with agencies in the criminal justice field such as the Probation Service, Social Services, and the Court system, but for historical reasons, police were reluctant to move from an independent field of operation.

There was a slow realisation that the police service could not solve all problems of crime and disorder on their own and a growing acceptance that the objectives of policing could not be successfully achieved without a close relationship with the community it serves. This led to the conclusion that the police must work with other agencies and the community to deal effectively with the problems in society.

#### **Partnership Working**

These events set the scene for the fundamental review of working arrangements in the public sector and the renewed emphasis on multi-agency and inter-agency working introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The new phrases of 'community safety' and 'youth justice' permeated all of the Four Tracks of Policing but specifically impacted upon the track of Policing Partnerships. From the commencement of the Crime and Disorder Act it would be a statutory duty for police forces to create partnerships with other agencies and formulate community safety plans within their areas of operation.

## Track 4 of the **Four Tracks of policing - TARGETED POLICING**

Targeted policing is the fourth track of the Four Tracks of Policing. Targeted policing works on the principle that all problems have a cause and it is essential that there is a focus on tackling those root causes to ensure the effective and efficient use of limited police resources. The key word here is 'focus' which means the necessity to analyse all the information available to determine the precise nature of the problems faced. Police can then target resources directly at the problems, such as frequent traffic accidents at a particular location, noisy public houses or a high incidence of burglaries. (For example through 'Operation Bumblebee') It is important to understand that to deliver this track of policing effectively police officers need information from other organisations and the public. As the priorities set for subsequent police activity will be based on that assessment, it is also necessary to assess the information fully. (Please see the attached presentation print-out of intelligence-led policing and how it fits into the four tracks of policing.)

### **Random nature of criminal activity**

Having established that most volume crime is committed by a few criminals, the police service must then accept that their activities should not be restricted to crime and the criminal alone. There must be an holistic approach adopted, to include the nature of the problem, the place itself and the people involved. For example, road traffic accidents often occur time and again at specific locations resulting in numerous casualty rates.

## **Conclusion**

This report has outlined the 'Four Tracks of Policing' and many practitioners might say: "There is nothing new in that." They would be correct in their conclusion; but the difference with the Four Tracks approach is that it succinctly sets out an easy to understand formula for the successful policing of any location. The Four Tracks approach has a proven success record and its rationale can be explained to any person either within or outside the police service without recourse to jargon or complex explanation. What the Police Service should consider is the more difficult question of getting the balance right between provision of each of the four tracks.

A booklet, on the 'Four Tracks of Policing', was recently published for the information of police and support staff managers within West Mercia Constabulary, having been written by a project team comprising of operational police officers. The booklet, produced and sponsored by the computer software company Microsoft, includes many practical policing. The information on the four tracks of policing contained in the booklet was recognised as good practice by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and therefore it was placed on wider circulation to the police service. This document only includes the factual description of the Four Tracks of Policing; the original booklet additionally contains practical operational policing case studies for the use of practitioners at all levels in the police service.

## **YOUTH AWARENESS**

### **(A Strategy Aimed At Addressing Youth Crime & Nuisance)**

Historically police officers are often, called to incidents of young people hanging around on street corners and being responsible for criminal activity. Our action in responding to such calls is often based on whether or not a criminal act has taken place and if so whether or not the informant is willing to make a complaint. If no such complaint is forthcoming or the police officer is not a witness to a specific offence our options are limited. Police officers often move the groups on which in turn can cause confrontation and ill-feeling and very often after the officer has left the scene those young people regroup in that very same locality and the process starts again. This initiative aims to address such complaints and in turn offer advice and support not only to the victims but to those young people at most risk of offending and thereby appearing in court.

This initiative has been ongoing in the Droitwich Spa section of West Mercia Constabulary since July 1996. It is coordinated within the role of Beat Manager. Droitwich Spa is a section of the Worcester Division within West Mercia Constabulary. The area has an estimated rural and urban population of 26000. The section operates 24 hours a day with four shifts. There is a Criminal Investigation Department together with other specialist support staff.

The Beat Manager concept was originally introduced as part of our force change programme leading up to the Millennium and beyond. In 1995, the then Chief Constable Mr David Blakey introduced "Project 2000+ A Better Place" and within that programme the "Four Tracks of Policing" was developed to better enable us to deliver our policing services. The concept encourages every aspect of our daily role to be governed under the four tracks of

- + **LOCAL**
- **RESPONSIVE**
- **POLICING PARTNERSHIPS**
- **TARGETED**

policing, as a method of delivering our service to the community where we serve. A full explanation of this concept is included with this application which is in a folder entitled "Four Tracks of Policing. A Management Handbook".

The role of Beat Manager commenced in July 1996. In short the role is to "oversee" the policing of an area with a view to addressing long term problems and repeat calls. Those issues are identified and "packages" are devised to enable staff under the management of the Beat Manager within the four tracks to resolve them.

It was in addressing youth crime and nuisance complaints that this initiative was developed and is supported by this organisation to address these complaints where no specific criminal act has taken place and/or no independent witnesses are willing to come forward.

### **HOW DOES IT WORK**

Under the "Four Tracks" strategy, the Youth Awareness Initiative works as follows:

#### **"RESPONSIVE POLICING"**

On receipt of such a youth related nuisance call. If the individual or group are present in that location we as a service will address those persons in the normal way. If there are no witnesses and no specific offences apparent those young persons are invited to confirm their

full details, General advice will be given regarding the nature of our presence and the group will be moved on.

### **"LOCAL POLICING"**

Those details having been obtained are then passed to the Beat Manager who in turn will generate a log of information regarding that specific complaint. The Beat Manager will then send a letter to the appropriate adult of that individual advising them of the incident. The letter will offer the parent/guardian support should the recipient wish to discuss the issue.

Should that young person come to notice on a second occasion then the subsequent letter is hand delivered by the Beat Manager to the home address. This often gives the parent/guardian the opportunity to discuss problems within the household involving that child or teenager and together an action plan is discussed. The sole aim being to reduce the likelihood that such continued behaviour will eventually lead to an official complaint being received and that individual to be subject of arrest and/or court appearance.

### **"TARGETED POLICING"**

During the summer of 1998, the initiative was developed whereby police officers would patrol and visit the prime "hot spots" of disorder, equipped with a hand-held video camera. Incidents of public disorder were recorded and if no arrests were made, the recorded evidence was shown to the respective parents. It is envisaged that similar patrols will be conducted for this summer as it clearly had an effect in deterring such behaviour last year.

Areas identified which are subject of regular crime and complaints are written into a two weekly intelligence policing strategy called "menu policing" which seeks to provide officers with an updated log of issues so that covert and overt attention to that area can be given.

### **"PARTNERSHIP POLICING"**

Other agencies such as schools and social service 's departments are frequently in touch to discuss particular families whose children are at risk. Local young people residing in social housing, developments or those governed by Housing Associations may be in breach of tenancy agreements by acting in a disorderly manner. This information is readily shared between various agencies and clearly works within our locally based Community Safety Strategy.

### **AND FINALLY**

Between July 1996 and July 1998, there was an overall reduction of 28.96% in calls of children/juvenile antisocial behaviour within the section.

This initiative has proved to have many other advantages. Firstly, we are becoming aware of potential problem children much earlier and over the last three years I believe that by cooperating and educating parents we have significantly reduced the chances of that individual child/children coming to notice. This is particularly noticeable should that child be living within a family whereby older peers or parents are regularly offending.

The Droitwich Spa version educates the repeat complainant to the type of information required for officers to address the complaint effectively. Quite simply those persistent victims are informed that in general terms young people congregating on street corners is not a crime, neither are complaints of general ball games. Yet it is what the street corner congregation is doing that may lead to complaints being received. Complaints of disorder, criminal damage, under age drinking, drug issues etc. should be reported with the victim giving as much information as possible to include the numbers involved, descriptions of clothing etc. and precise details of the activity performed. By issuing this simple advice, the information received has proved to be far more detailed and we as a police service have been

able to respond far more efficiently. Quite simply reducing demand on our resources through education.

By the very nature, there is a likelihood that the individuals subject of the complaints in fact live in that locality and may be known to the victims. In these cases there may be general information which is commonly known in that area which may be useful to the police in addressing other issues. So regular contact with the Beat Manager is encouraged.

Statistics generated as a result of this initiative shows significant success in that far fewer complaints of disorder are being received. Those parents spoken to through this initiative generally welcome the initial letter and any subsequent second visit. It is clear that those parents seen are taking more of a responsibility for the actions of their child and by working together with other agencies responsible parents can identify problems with their children in the early stages thereby helping to reduce the risk of self harm and offending.

A.K. Jones

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Droitwich Spa Beat Manager