

TILLEY AWARD 2000

Organisational Infrastructure Project Category

Executive Summary: Sussex Police

This entry in the organisational Infrastructure Project Category identifies the changes undertaken within Sussex Police over at least the last three years to introduce, refine, and sustain problem oriented policing within a changing political and operational environment where crime reduction is the imperative.

It describes the Force's multifaceted approach, which includes an initial Force-wide working group, the integration of changes introduced through the Crime and Disorder Act, the creation of an ongoing Problem Solving Steering Group, and the restructuring of an existing Department (renamed Community Safety Department) to provide drive and co-ordination to the process.

The adoption of a Force-wide Policing Strategy, firmly based on the principles of partnership, problem solving approaches, and the theoretical perspective of the problem analysis triangle, and fundamentally designed towards crime reduction, was of pivotal importance. The Policing Strategy determines the Force's practical approach to operational policing.

But, this was only one result of the change process. It was crucially informed by three principles: testing and refining the approach, delivering change messages "bottom up" rather than "top down", and sustainability. Thus, for example, pilot projects (and especially the ideas emanating from those directly delivering policing services involve in these projects) generated re-evaluation. Change was not driven by hierarchical or theoretical views. Similarly, these principles determined the Force's approach to the Crime and Disorder Act, and these changes were integrated within the principles of the Policing Strategy rather than being seen as remote from or in some way parallel to other aspects of operational policing.

All of this determined the way in which Sussex Police sold partnership working within its own organisation, and encouraged other organisations towards partnership working. Thus, in the broader partnership sense, working relationships were developed through a series of high profile training seminars and conferences. Internally, a range of training needs were met by a centrally designed but locally delivered training course for Community Beat Officers, awareness raising sessions run for other operational officers, regular conferences and seminars for Sector Commanders, and Crime Prevention Officers and others.

Considerable use has been made of information technology not only in problem identification and analysis, but also in raising awareness and providing back up and reference material.

Examples of the value of the problem solving approach are provided, including Operation Columbus, the Linden Park Project in Littlehampton, design advice, and work with asylum seekers.

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Problem Solving Policing: Creating the Environment

This paper identifies the way in which Sussex Police, through their Community Safety Department and their Problem Solving Working Group, have introduced, and more importantly supported, the concept of problem oriented policing.

1.1 Sectorisation

Sussex Police restructured on a Sector basis in **1994**. A few subsequent minor changes have not altered the basic concept. There are 28 Sectors — basic police units encompassing a geographical area, the boundaries of which are defined by recognisable communities, each commanded by an Inspector including a number of Beats, commonly based' on Wards and Parishes or groups of Wards and Parishes. Each Police Beat is staffed by a Community Beat Officer. Each Police Division (BCU) commanded by a Superintendent comprises between two and five Sectors, dependant on local geography.

The Local Policing Plan for Sussex sets out the commitment to **allow Community Beat** Officers to spend all their operational duty time preventing and resolving problems on their Sector — in short a problem solving or problem oriented approach.

1.2 Force Working Group on Problem Solving

In 1997 a Forcewide team was charged with developing the problem solving approach to policing in Sussex. The team's report and recommendations were integrated into the Force Policing Strategy with the overall objective 'to reduce the number of incidents that

require an intervention by Sussex Police and/or other social agencies". Crime reduction was the fundamental aim, and subsequent work which developed the problem solving approach within Sussex was designed towards this.

In 1998, with the adoption of the Sussex Policing Strategy, which in itself was fundamentally based on a problem oriented policing approach, a Forcewide Problem Solving Working Group was formed, chaired by a senior Divisional Commander. All Divisions and key Departments are represented on this Working Group by practitioners usually of Constable, Sergeant, or Inspector rank.

The arrival of the Crime and Disorder Act and its new statutory partnership requirements was crucially entirely in accord with, and supportive of, problem oriented policing approaches and not as a threat or a potential set of parallel structures. The new partnerships could and should be seen to be focused on reducing crime. We believed that success could best be achieved through the modification and strengthening of existing structures rather than putting the Force organisation through the tension of a fundamental restructuring process. Whilst Divisional boundaries may not be contiguous with local authority areas, for instance, this was not the case for the great majority of Sector structures within Divisional boundaries.

1.3 Community Safety Department

In order to create an influential Department within the Force structure to lead and support problem oriented policing, in 1997 the former Community Crime Prevention Department realigned its internal structure towards the broad principles of the problem analysis triangle. At the same time, recognising the relevance of the forthcoming Crime and Disorder Act, it was renamed the Community Safety Department (CSD). Importantly, CSD was given considerable scope by Chief Officers on the Force Command Team to

determine policy and cut through any organisational blockages necessary to introduce, maintain and sustain partnership working and problem solving approaches. These approaches were not to be ends in themselves, but instead had to lead to sustainable reductions in crime and disorder.

1.4 Divisional Support

Following the recommendations of the 1997 Problem Solving Task Team each Division created a support unit comprising Crime Prevention Officers, Neighbourhood Watch Administrators, Schools Liaison Officers and (optionally) the Licensing Officer; each Unit headed by a Sergeant and/or Inspector. This was to support the problem solving process within the Division with locally based expertise, knowledge and local agency contacts as a resource for Sector Commanders and Community Beat Officers. These Units have now developed into the "engine room" within each Division for Crime and Disorder Act processes.

A further recommendation of the Task Group was that each Division should have analytical support for problem solving. Consequently Divisions now have Incident Analysts, specialising in crime pattern analysis, etc, working alongside Divisional Intelligence Analysts.

1.5 Policing Strategy

The adoption of the Policing Strategy as the fundamental basis for operational policing within Sussex, and as an important aspect of the Police Authority's Policing Plan, assisted in these processes. Its position as a core policy was crucial.

Three further aspects of the Force's, and indeed the Community Safety Department's, approach to partnership and joint agency working were also important. The first of these was that, especially with any new approach, there is a constant need for testing the validity of these approaches, and evaluating their effectiveness.

Secondly, a "bottom-up" approach was adopted towards the selling in particular of problem oriented policing principles to those at the sharp end of service delivery. This is in direct contrast to many policing organisations which have adopted the top-down or "cascade" approach.

Finally, it was the view of the Chief Officer team that, whatever the short term benefits might be, there were long term and strategic benefits to be gained by pursuing partnership working and problem oriented policing in a way which would be sustainable. This is especially necessary in an environment of increasing constraints on resourcing. An example of this latter point has been the introduction, via an Intranet system of the "Insight" incident analysis package (originally developed by Leicestershire Police) which enables any patrol officer to analyse incident patterns, within 24 hours of their occurrence, by way of a range of incident types, location and at Force, Divisional, Sector, or even Beat level. .

2. Problem Solving in the Wider Sense: Crime and Disorder Act

2.1 Selling Partnership Working

The involvement of other agencies and the creation therefrom of a real sense of ownership was felt to be fundamental if partnership working and problem oriented policing were to be sustainable.

Whilst it may sometimes be easier for agencies to undertake a fairly strong lead in some aspects of partnership working, and notwithstanding the requirement within the Crime and Disorder Act for equality of approach, Sussex Police very firmly took the view that, even if apparently slower in the first instance, the notion of equal partnership was infinitely preferable in the longer term, not least in the interests of sustainability.

Evaluation of training need for partnership working and problem oriented policing tactics within Sussex Police identified differing training needs at different levels, and also importantly the fact that economies of scale and greater training quality would result from a joint agency approach to the training.

Bearing in mind the tight time constraints during middle and late **1998**, Community Safety Department prepared briefing notes, several months in advance of Home Office Guidance, on forming partnerships and also on the first stages of the Crime and Disorder Audit process. These briefing notes were deliberately designed so that they could be adopted by other agencies if required, and in fact this was the case. They were also carefully written so that they would be a useful tool for strategic decision makers in the newly forming partnerships, and yet wholly relevant to those at the point of service delivery or in junior management. Other training materials were also developed on formats which would allow other agencies to use them, and include their own corporate identity if they so wished, to further the joint training ethos.

2.2 Partnership Development

Over 1998 and 1999, a series of training conferences and seminars were constructed to mirror the partnership forming process, followed by audits and consultation, and then the process of writing local Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies. Following these other

events were held to consolidate learning and improve partnership working. Apart from one seminar run solely for Sussex Police middle managers, all of these conferences were designed for, and attracted delegates from a wide range of actual and potential partners in the Crime and Disorder Act process. Whilst they were sponsored and administered by Sussex Police Community Safety Department, around 80% of delegates were from agencies outside the police service. Delegates were invited usually on a pro rata basis to reflect representation on Responsible Authority Partnership, but concern about lack of engagement from colleagues within the Health Service led to a greater proportion of health representatives being invited.

Similarly, it was felt that if the training events were to have the necessary credibility, the right level of input had to be provided. Therefore, speakers and facilitators were chosen for their expertise in their particular field with a view to matching the quality of other seminars being promoted nationally. The timing of conferences and seminars was adjusted to meet the current needs of those involved in Responsible Authority Partnerships so that the required training inputs were delivered at just the right time.

All delegates were routinely surveyed after each training input, and the comments raised used to determine training needs to be addressed on the next occasion. Throughout this process over two years, a consistent satisfaction rate exceeding 85% of delegates was obtained.

3. Selling Problem Solving Policing within Sussex Police

3.1 Internal Training Needs

Apart from the training needs at a joint agency level, further training opportunities were created within the Sussex Police organisation, and representatives of other agencies invited to these either as speakers or as delegates. These included a quarterly programme of conferences for Sector Commanders and Patrol Sergeants at which issues of problem oriented policing and the Policing Strategy formed the core, the agenda itself being mainly driven by the needs of delegates as problem oriented policing was rolled out across the Force area.

In addition to these arrangements, Community Safety Department also convenes quarterly meetings of Divisional Community Safety Unit Supervisors and (separately) Crime Prevention Officers. The focus of these meetings is to promulgate good practice in problem solving approaches to partnership crime and disorder reduction.

Community Safety Department personnel are the common factors within these series of meetings and the Force Problem Solving Working Group. These complementary processes enable wider ownership and also a consistent message across both "operational" and "support" functions within Divisions and Departments.

This is evidenced by the reviews of problem solving carried out over the past two years: two reviews of how effectively problem solving was working, carried out by a member of Community Safety Department (see later); and a review of what types of crimes and incidents had been subject of a problem solving approach within the Force, carved out by a Divisional Crime Prevention Officer on behalf of the Problem Solving Working Group.

3.2 "Sham end" Training

In 1998 the Force Training Department, in conjunction with Community Safety Department, designed a training package on problem solving for delivery on Division by

local Training Officers. One of the purposes of the training package was to launch the newly designed Problem Solving Record, a file system designed for operational use which reminds practitioners about the problem oriented approach and enables data about good practice to be captured. The Problem Solving Record files can also be used as a performance measurement tool by recording the nature of problems, the quality of response, and time spent by police and other agencies.

However the practical and operational value of these locally delivered training inputs should not be underestimated. The creation of a centrally-designed training package has enabled core corporate messages to be highlighted has been given credibility through its inclusion of lessons learned on those two operational Divisions which piloted problem solving approaches, and enables local emphasis (eg reflecting the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy) to be included.

Both Probationer training and Initial CID training have specific sessions on problem solving, delivered by Force Training and supplemented by inputs from Community Safety Department (the Problem Solving Adviser Constable and the Force Senior Crime Prevention Officer).

But, arguably the most important decision to support selling problem solving policing within the Force was undertaken through the attachment of an experienced long serving Community Beat Officer to the Community Safety Department as a means of communicating effectively to Community Beat Officers and other Patrol Officers. This reflected our belief in the viability of the "bottom up" approach. In 1998 and **1999**, at the request of the Chief Officer Team, this officer carried out two separate reviews of how problem solving policing was working across the Force area. Both these reviews were formally reported back by that officer to the Chief Officer Team and to all Divisional Commanders.

The reviews followed a series of focus groups run by this officer on each Sector, enabling messages to be fed up from practitioners to the top, but also enabling good practice to be fed down. The value of these focus groups, especially as perceived by Patrol Officers, is reflected in the fact that this particular officer was asked to return to Sectors for more input by means of seminars and to present on problem solving policing to audiences of Detective and Traffic Patrol Officers as well. This officer is constantly being used directly by Community **Beat** Officers as a resource for advice and suggestions.

3.3 Information Technology

In addition to the provision of the Insight package Forcewide, Community Safety Department has developed a database for the problem solving record, in which each problem will be recorded at source and through which good practice will be identified and searchable at Sector level. An analyst employed within the same Department is tasked with developing GIS applications using a Pafec system and working with other agencies in Sussex to overcome the technical and organisational problems attached to information exchange.

4. Bringing the Problem Solving Approach to a Wider Audience

Sussex Police felt that it was essential, if the problem oriented policing approach was to be properly adopted, that the message should be clear, consistent, and repeated wherever necessary.

The Force Command Team required regular reports not only on the progress of Responsible Authority Partnerships, but also on the results obtained through the work of the Problem Solving Working Group.

As a result of the regular ad hoc evaluations that were **undertaken**, it **quickly became clear** that the impact of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act was being largely underestimated and therefore misunderstood. Community Safety Department instituted a programme of conferences at a County level, and smaller seminars within interested local authorities to highlight their role in reducing crime and disorder, especially through environmental design. It is believed that Sussex Police are still the only Force in the country where every Planning Authority within the Force area voluntarily submits all planning applications above a certain size or above a certain value, to Community Safety Department for crime prevention and reduction advice. Examples of this include not only the most obvious, like "superpubs" with their potential for disorder, but also new housing estates (where "defensible" space can be designed in), sports centres (where "natural surveillance" can be designed in to reduce thefts and damage), and advice on landscaping children's play areas to try to ensure that they retain their intended function and use.

At a more strategic level, with the planning for the millennium policing operation in mind, and the multiplicity of largely unknown (at that time) threats that this might pose, a Millennium Crime Prevention Action Plan, utilising the principles of the problem solving triangle, was prepared by July 1999. This contained actions and considerations not only for the police service, but also for a wide number of other agencies within the Force area. It served as the basis for local Police Divisional and indeed local authority Emergency Plans for the Millennium period, and whilst not actively publicised outside Sussex, word of mouth publicity led to copies of this document being supplied to most other Forces in England and Wales.

A further document on reducing vehicle crime, titled "Getting into Gear", using the same format and indeed the problem analysis triangle approach, has recently been produced. On this occasion, the workshop creating the ideas for the document contained substantial

representation from partner agencies, in addition to people from our own divisions and departments. Other documents dealing with domestic violence and domestic burglary, using the same principles, are in preparation.

5. Results of the Problem Solving Approach

- 5.1 However partnership and **problem** solving is sold, either within an organisation, or to partner agencies, it is crucial, if the change is to be sustained that some positive benefit can be identified, preferably even at an early stage.

Even though these are essentially outputs, a certain measure of success can be attributed to the fact that:-

On average 70 to 80 people attended each of the seven joint agency conferences on crime and disorder reduction; delegate satisfaction has been consistently high and the results have been recognised during the recent (March 2000) joint national thematic Inspector of partnership working;

Over 300 Community Beat Officers have attended formal in-Force problem solving training;

Over 600 Patrol and other officers (including detectives and traffic patrol) have attended problem solving appreciation seminars.

5.2 Operation Columbus

Operation Columbus is a Forcewide initiative designed to reduce an increasing number of incidents where international students are victims, and occasionally perpetrators, of crime.

Although Operation Columbus followed a number of individual Divisional initiatives which had in some cases been running for three or four years, in order to maximise the problem solving aspects of a Forcewide approach, a number of steps were taken. Within Community Safety Department the benefits and disbenefits of existing approaches, including those undertaken by other agencies, were analysed using the problem analysis triangle. Once this information was available, a Forcewide seminar of operational practitioners with a few representatives from other agencies, was held in late 1998.

This seminar was conducted using a workshop style approach, **and** the results from this were further analysed and used as the basis for a joint-agency seminar held in March 1999. Importantly, this seminar included representatives from the business community (ie language schools and the like) as well as those from statutory agencies including local authorities and the police. Draft plans for a Forcewide initiative had been prepared by this time, and this particular seminar was used to test these, and modify them before the start of the student 'season' in May 1999.

If Operation Columbus was to be at all successful, it needed to address not only the more obvious publicity and awareness raising issues, but also the arguably less obvious but nonetheless impactful issues like advice to host families, facilitating the speedy investigation of crime using information sheets and pro forma multi-lingual statements, and standards of service which students and others should expect from different agencies.

During the 1999 season the number of robberies committed against international students fell from 132 to 76. The number of thefts where international students were victims fell

from 381 to 240, and the number of assaults on students (including sexual assaults) fell from 376 to 325.

Over all, bearing in mind that one of the thrusts of the Columbus policy was to increase awareness, and therefore reduce the propensity for under-reporting, **1999** recorded crime figures showed a probable reduction of 500 victims of crime. Whilst it is impossible to exactly gauge the number of international students who visit Sussex each year, language schools estimate that over 100,000 do so, and that 1999 numbers exceeded those for 1998.

External interest in Operation Columbus is exemplified by the fact that 14 Police Forces attended a seminar in Sussex in late 1999 with a view to adopting it in their own Force areas.: To the best **of our** knowledge, **5 or 6** Forces have already **done** so. **Operation** Columbus has also now been included as practical advice within the Home Office and EC sponsored "Child Safe" project being overseen by Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

5.3 Linden Park. Littlehampton

This problem solving policing initiative is the subject of Sussex Police's submission for the Tilley Award 2000 as an individual local initiative. This initiative was enabled as a direct result of restructuring of police resource on that Division in 1997 in support of the problem solving approach.

Over a period of time a group of youths had persistently disrupted community activities taking place in communal building in a local park and recreational area. So dispirited had local people had become with their behaviour and the lack of a coherent police response to calls for help, that they no longer reported incidents. The establishment of a community beat officer network for the area brought about a realisation of the extent of the problem.

Good contacts were made, people were encouraged to report incidents and police responded effectively. A locally based partnership group was set up to examine the problems, agree responses, resource them and put them in place. The dramatic reduction in incidents and improvement in local morale is testimony not only to the problem solving policing approach, but also to the divisional restructuring that underpinned it.

5.4 Desion Advice

Design Advisers from the Community Safety Department, working in conjunction with local planners, have had considerable impact in problem solving by environmental redesign, most notably in the Whitehawk area of Brighton and Maidenbower area of Crawley. Both were developments or redevelopments of public housing stock and by agreement on layout and minimum standards of house security met the "Secured by Design" requirements. Significantly low burglary rates compare with nearby areas are evidence of the effectiveness of this approach. Most recently the problem solving approach to vehicle crime in the Crawley area has resulted in agreement for a major redesign of a particular "hotspot" area with both Planning and Highways Authorities.

5.5 Asylum Seekers

A rapid growth in the number of asylum seekers and refugees being placed by other local authorities in Hastings and Eastbourne by early 1999, coupled with the likelihood of potential disorder arising from these placements, suggested that a problem solving approach might minimise some of the potential impact. As a result, close working relationships were formed between Community Safety Department and the two relevant Operational Divisions and the local authorities and other relevant agencies in those areas.

In both Hastings and Eastbourne Community Beat Officers were diverted into priority tasks connected with asylum seekers and refugees with a view to building linkages with those communities. Advice was sought from our colleagues in Kent, and as a direct result of this, the Force and the Police Authority sponsored the publication of a booklet in eight different languages designed to reduce underlying tension.

These moves have served to reassure those working most directly with asylum seekers and refugees that Sussex Police are prepared to work with them, and one practical benefit of these arrangements occurred in March 2000 when it was alleged that two or three asylum seekers had raped a local woman in St Leonards and there was a very real chance that media interest and local right wing political reaction might result in serious disorder. In the event, the media campaign, though relatively widespread, "blew out" fairly quickly, and the expected disorder arising from this did not materialise.