

Crime Reduction SARA

J District

Weston-super-Mare

THE SOUTH WARD
CRIME AND DISORDER STRATEGY

A NEW BEGINNING

Summary

The South Ward Crime And Disorder Strategy 'A New Beginning'

What better time for a fresh start than the implementation of a new style of problem solving, in a run down area, crying out for help from the Police service and any other agency that will listen. This is exactly what this project, as its title suggests, is all about. A new beginning.

We have seized the opportunity to 'test the metal' of the problem oriented policing model in an area with high rates of crime and disorder, low income and high unemployment and associated social deprivation.

We set the 'goal posts' very wide and based on crime statistics and feedback from the community, formulated an action plan to address all of the problems being experienced in this area within one global SARA. We have tried to implement the measures adopted in the area in clearly defined phases in the true spirit of the SARA model. This process lead us to investigate the wider issues involved and work in partnership with all relevant agencies to resolve problems on a long-term basis.

Our long-term goals sought to provide a better quality of life for the community as a whole. To allow a better served public whose concerns would be addressed at the source of the problem. To enable stronger, more successful working relationships with other agencies and therefore make the demands on police resources more manageable.

We have taken steps to address all aspects of criminality and disorder within the community and this has had a very positive impact on the relationship between the police and members of the community and on the crime rates for the area. We have seen the number of burglaries in the area halved and a reduction in other types of crime across the board. The work that has been done has gone a long way to restore faith and confidence in the police service and other agencies.

The following document sets out the measures adopted by J District to implement Problem Oriented Policing in The South Ward of Weston-super-Mare. The project is very much in its infancy and it is clear that we still have much to do. However, the project shows the outstanding results that working in close partnership with the community and other agencies can really achieve.

In reality, this project really represents the end of the beginning. The framework is now in place and it is now up to us to build upon this and achieve the long term goals and objectives we have set for ourselves.

Contents

	Page No.
1. Summary	2
2. Contents	3
3. Historic Profile	4
O 4. Scanning	
5. Analysis	7
6. Response	10
7. Assessment	12
8. Conclusion	16

Historic Profile

The South Ward comprises three main residential estates, Bournville, Oldmixon and The Coronation. The area also encompasses several commercial and industrial estates.

There are six main state run schools in the two beat areas covering this part of the town with a combined pupil population of around 2107. There is also a medium sized hospital with a busy accident and emergency unit.

The majority of dwellings on these estates are council or housing association owned. There are 2375 council dwellings on the three main estates. This excludes former council owned premises now in private ownership which, based on national averages is estimated at around 10% of the total. The estimated population of the main residential estates is 12,500. (The overall population of the town has been recently assessed at 71,000.)

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Over the last few years there has been a typical, steady increase in social and economic deprivation in the area. This has led to an inevitable downward spiral of living standards, the overall effects of which can be summarised as follows:

- Marked reduction in the standard of living.
- A large increase in all types of crime, anti-social behaviour and misuse of drugs.
- Generally, an erosion of community relations, particularly between police, other local authorities and the public.

The Bournville Estate in particular, had become the hub of criminal activity in the town, its reputation for housing the area's criminals being well known across the district and further afield. As a result of rising crime levels and a perceived lack of action by police, relations with members of the community on The South Ward were becoming very strained.

This SARA encompasses collectively the extensive problems experienced within the community and the measures taken by the police, working hand in hand with other agencies, to overcome them by implementing the problem solving model.

Scanning For Problems

What Are The Apparent Problems?

By examining the crime statistics and intelligence for the beat areas concerned, and as a result of feedback from the community and other local agencies the main problems being experienced in the South Ward at the commencement of Geographic Policing could be summarised as follows:

Criminality

Burglary, Drugs, Theft and Criminal Damage

One area of criminality clearly standing out was **Burglary**. Despite Force levels of burglary having been reduced in recent years, the area experienced a gradual increase in dwelling burglaries. Examination of crime figures for this area of the town as a whole showed that the number of both dwelling and commercial/school burglaries in the Southward beat areas had reached high levels.

Misuse of Controlled Drugs generated a large volume of intelligence and accounted for many complaints from members of the community. This was in relation to the supply and use of controlled drugs of all classes.

In addition to burglary, **theft of and from Motor Vehicles** in the area was also prevalent, primarily from public car parks at locations such as the Hospital.

Theft by shoplifting on the three main estates from the respective shopping precincts accounted for a large number of calls and complaints. **Criminal damage** to vehicles and other property was rife on all three main residential estates, largely attributable to groups of bored adolescents.

Community Safety - Disorder, Anti-Social Behaviour and Other Community Issues

Reports of **community disorder, disturbances** and **domestic violence** accounted for a large volume of calls and complaints. Widespread **littering, graffiti** and other forms of public nuisance had become common place. The main problems experienced across all three main residential estates arose out of the large numbers of **youths congregating** at various points. Primarily this was the shopping precinct on each respective estate. Members of the public and shopkeepers were being **intimidated, threatened** and **assaulted**.

The Boumville estate in particular, also became a dumping ground for **stolen and abandoned vehicles**. These were frequently burnt out causing subsequent damage to surroundings and potentially lethal health hazards.

Frequent and dangerous riding of on and off road **motorcycles and mopeds** in identified areas within the beat not only caused danger to the public but damage to grounds/property.

Drunkenness at St Andrews Parade on the Bournville Estate became an ongoing problem as a result of groups of intoxicated people gathering outside the local off-license. This led to further general disorder and intimidation of local people and shopkeepers.

Summary

The problems being experienced, though not of unmanageable proportions in their own right, as a whole, had clearly become a major issue to members of the community.

The widespread extent of criminality and disorder within this community was having a significant overall effect on many, people and organisations. Public confidence and faith in the police had diminished. The cost, both in terms of financial implications to police and other agencies and, ultimately the general public, and the inevitable social decline were serious and, could potentially become worse.

The area was clearly a prime candidate for a comprehensive campaign of crime reduction and other high profile, positive measures. A detailed action plan was required.



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Analysing The Problems

Criminality -Burglary, Drugs, Theft Offences and Criminal Damage

Taking seasonal variations into account, the level of dwelling, non-dwelling **burglaries** and attempts across the main residential and industrial estates remained at consistently high levels.

From collation of intelligence from routine and directed patrolling and specific sources, it was clear that there was a key group of likely suspects for the majority of burglary and other theft related offences committed in the area as a whole. Once again, analysis showed that these criminals were largely resident on the Bournville Estate.

In certain respects the list of primary targets could even be narrowed to a specific family made up of prolific offenders.

Total recorded Crimes 4/99 to 3/00 = 364 (22.98% of Sector Total)

The high rate of **theft from motor vehicles** in the area was much in the same pattern as burglary, fluctuating seasonally, sporadic in nature but in the main staying at consistently high levels.

Total recorded Crimes 4/99 to 3/00 =367 (27% of Sector Total)

In respect of burglary, and other offences involving theft of property in the area, it could be argued that there was a causal link to **misuse of controlled drugs**. The predominant cause of these types of crime has been well documented and discussed in the past and it is widely accepted that a high proportion of offences are committed to support a drug habit of some description. We believe that crime of this nature accounted for a high number of offences within the community, predominantly on the Bournville Estate.

The widespread extent of **drug misuse** was evident from routine and directed patrolling of the area and from the number of calls and complaints relating to discarded needles and drugs paraphernalia. A steady flow of information was being received in relation to a number of known users of varying drug classes on the estate and the likely sources of the substances involved.

Theft of Motor Vehicles remained at consistently high levels. Analysis of figures revealed a large number of vehicles being stolen from within the Southward. The crime recorded was sporadic in nature and followed no set pattern. (Note 35% of those vehicles subsequently found within the Southward were originally stolen in other areas).

Total recorded Crimes 4/99 to 3/00 =147 (15% of Sector Total)

Theft by **shoplifting** had reached high levels at the respective shopping precincts on each main residential estate. The rate of offences was consistently high and, on the Bournville Estate, this had serious effects on local businesses and shopkeepers many of whom, were genuinely pressured to the point of considering closing their premises down. The offenders were predominantly youths aged between 10 to 16 years, from the relevant estates committing petty theft and disposing of stolen goods in the immediate vicinity.

Total recorded Crimes (includes Other Theft) 4/99 to 3/00 = 315 (18.85% of Sector Total)

AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

Criminal damage accounted for a large percentage of calls and complaints in the area. From the same sources of intelligence, it became clear that the offences were largely attributable to the same groups of offenders in relation to some of the other highlighted offences. I.e. groups of adolescent youths, wandering the streets at night with nothing to do. The extent of this problem was widespread and followed no distinct pattern.

Total recorded Crimes 4199 to 3/00 = 420 (30.86% of Sector Total)

Total recorded crimes (all classes) 4/99 to 3/00 = 2381 (26.17% of Sector Total). For the current year to date .1769 (24.45% of Sector Total)

Community Safety

Disorder, Anti-Social Behaviour and Other Community Issues

The Southward area, predominantly the Boumville and the other two main residential estates appeared to be subject to high levels of **anti-social behaviour**, public disorder and other similar community related problems.

Heading the list for most number of calls and complaints was **domestic violence**. The level of complaints in the area was consistently high and formed a large percentage of the district's total. This could be reasonably argued to be partly attributable to the social and economic difficulties and associated pressures on families in the community. I.e. unemployment, low income etc.

Community disorder was also at consistently high levels. This could be mainly attributed to the often large groups of youths, aged 10 to 16+ years, congregating on each respective estate. Local shopkeepers and customers were being repeatedly threatened, intimidated and assaulted by these groups of offenders. The majority of problems described largely involve groups of bored youths of varying ages on each of the three main residential estates. The underlying causes of their anti-social behaviour and unlawful activities are undoubtedly contributed to by a number of different factors. In the main, the stereotypical features of the problem are these:

- The absence of or **insufficient scope of local facilities**, such as sports facilities, purpose built skateboard/mountain cycling sites etc.
- Total absence of or **insufficient parental guidance**.
- Insufficient** relevant **input at schools**.
- Lack of self-motivation** and purpose in their lives.

Drunkenness in the vicinity of the local off license at the Boumville Estate seemed to centre around the public benches provided in the precinct. It was also possible that introduction of drinking bylaws in the town centre, but not yet applicable within the South Ward, contributed to an increase in the likelihood of persistent offenders staying in this area of the estate. The presence of such offenders inevitably led to disturbances and disorder and general intimidation of local shopkeepers and customers.

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A high number of calls and complaints were received in relation to the dangerous riding of **motorcycles' and mopeds** in the area. Once again this was predominantly on the Bournville Estate. Groups of youths were riding both on and off road type motorcycles down alleyways, footpaths and roads. There was no set pattern to the offences, however this was primarily at weekends and evenings after school. A near by refuse site was frequently being used, however the offences were in the main being committed en route to or from this location.

There were nearly 200 calls received in relation to riding of motorcycles alone last year.

A large number of **stolen and `community' type vehicles** were being driven and abandoned in the area. Frequently these were subsequently being burnt out which caused further damage to property and surroundings and a dangerous health risk. The pattern, number and location of offences was varied and sporadic in nature.

Responding

This SARA/ACTION PLAN encompasses collectively a broad range of ongoing problems experienced within a set area. A summary of proposed actions has been outlined below in relation to initiatives expected to have a direct impact on both the specific problems highlighted in the scanning phase and *the* wider issues within the community as a whole.

Overall Objectives and Desired Results

- 1. To achieve the long-term benefits of crime reduction and intervention in recurring incidents within the beat area.**
- 2. To improve the quality of life for the South Ward Community as a whole.**
- 3. To build stronger and more successful working relationships with other agencies and the South Ward Community itself.**
- 4. To reduce demand on police resources.**
- 5. To restore faith and confidence in the Police Service within the community.**

Summary of Actions to Achieve Our Objectives

1. In Partnership with the Community

We will work hand in hand with members of the community to establish and maintain effective neighbourhood watch/Store Watch schemes, resident associations and local action teams within the area.

We will initiate and maintain regular police surgeries on respective beat areas. In addition we will maintain high profile police exposure at any public meetings and events on the beat area and therefore give members of the community an opportunity to voice their views directly to the Beat Managers covering their neighbourhood and generally promote and encourage communication between police and the public.

We will take direct action to make aware and involve parents and guardians of youths involved in community disorder and anti-social behaviour to resolve these problems.

2. In Partnership with Other Agencies

We will initiate and maintain liaison with local council and other agencies *such* as the Housing Office, Youth Offender Teams, Social Services, Drug Action Teams, Schools and voluntary groups in the area.

Working *with* these agencies, we will initiate and maintain a program of diversionary schemes for young people.

We will endeavour to use to maximum potential SRB, Community Chest and other funding for initiatives planned by police and other agencies.

3. Policing Initiatives

Maximising the use of all available police resources, in addition to the essential measures outlined above, we will target specific offenders and 'hot spot' areas to address the problems established in the scanning phase.

We will make maximum use of Press Office resources and general media coverage in relation to planned initiatives and to publicise our achievements.

How Results Will Be Measured

The actions outlined above are a summary of the comprehensive range of police, multi-agency and community based initiatives aimed at targeting the widespread crime and disorder problems within the beat area, now and in the future. The results of this work will be measured mainly by analysis of crime statistics for the area and the difference in the number of complaints from local residents and businesses.

Assessment

Summary of Police and Multi-Agency Measures Undertaken and Effects on the Community

In 2000, the combined efforts of Beat Managers, Sector Support Unit/Bumblebee in a concentrated **burglary initiative** had dramatic effects in relation to the number of arrests, remands and an overall drop in the number of burglaries in the area. Burglary figures remained at a consistently high level until mid 2000 when as a result of the combined effect of the burglary initiative, high profile policing, and other measures outlined in this report the numbers started to fall.

The current **detection rate** for all classes of burglary on the beat areas of the South Ward is 12.2%. At the end of Last year the rate was **9.88%**.

The other highlighted crime problem areas of **theft, vehicle crime** and **criminal damage** were addressed through a combination of similar initiatives, which produced comparable results.

The Districts **Crime Reduction Unit** has committed much time and resources to the beat area. A total of 48 separate projects, amounting to around £25,000 of Community Chest funding, have been completed within the area as a whole. The projects have included purchase and renewal of equipment, the renovation and improvement of premises at various schools, clubs, churches and many other organisations.

Full security surveys have been conducted at all of the business premises at St Andrews Parade and Alexandra House (sheltered Accomodation.) on the Bournville. Further surveys were conducted at all of the schools in the area.

The CRU had direct input in the councils program of replacement of the vulnerable, original timber framed/panelled doors and windows to council homes right across the area. Although no exact figures could be produced, it is clear that the improved security of the modem UPVC replacement products has had an impact on the burglary numbers in the area.

A key initiative involving **diversionary activities** for youths in the area has been piloted. Beat Officers took four local youths on a course-fishing trip to Clevedon. This was a great success receiving much media exposure and leading the way for future projects.

Each School within the area has been allocated a Beat Manager for **liaison with head teachers** and staff. **The Wheels project** and other initiatives are being promoted to schools in the South Ward and it is expected that this, combined with the other diversionary schemes outlined above, will help address criminality at an early stage.

The districts **Youth Offender Team** has taken a very active role in addressing offending in the area. In addition to the diversionary measures outlined above, YOT has run a summer camp for groups of young people to steer them away from criminal activity.

There are now around 85 **neighbourhood watch schemes** across the area as a whole. 30% of these are within the Bournville, Coronation and Oldmixon Estates. The remainder in the surrounding area. Since September 2000 three new NHW schemes have been set up on the Bournville Estate, at Byron Road, Waverley Road and Conniston Crescent.

AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

The Bournville in particular is a difficult environment in which to try and promote such schemes and get them off the ground. However, high profile campaigning by Beat Managers has been effective and further NHW schemes are anticipated in the near future. Regular NHW meetings are held and these are the source of important information.

In addition, Beat Officers have actively sought out the opportunity to represent the service at a newly formed **Residents Associations** and associated public meetings. This positive exposure has also reaped dividends in terms of information received and improving the relationship between local police and the community.

We believe that the general approach of increasing the level of **high visibility policing** across the area has been largely responsible for a decrease in the previously widespread crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and nuisance. This conclusion has been supported by local people and businesses.

To further combat the groups of youths congregating on respective estates, a policy has been adopted whereby **pro-forma** letters are issued to parents and guardians, advising them of the involvement of their child/children in disorder, anti-social-behaviour and consumption of alcohol etc.

Local beat officers are also utilising digital **video camcorders** to evidence the activities of these groups of youths on the estates. This material is being retained to support any subsequent proceedings or Anti-Social behaviour orders which may arise in the future.

A firm approach has been adopted in relation to dealing with youths riding **motorcycles and scooters** in the area. Between October and December 2000, when this problem once again came to a head, 7 motorcycles (2 of which were confirmed stolen), the majority unroadworthy, were seized. This set a clear precedent to local offenders and there has been a marked drop in the number of incidents and related calls/complaints since these high profile seizures took place.

In a partnership approach the Beat Managers and Traffic Management Team were directly involved in **closure of 'Rat Runs'**, namely alleyways and paths inter-connecting parts of the Bournville residential estate. These were being used by offenders on motorcycles to evade mobile police units. Furthermore, they generally provided a means for groups of youths or individuals to move around and remain undetected or difficult to apprehend.

To date, three **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders** have been enforced in the town. All three related to persons residing on the Bournville Estate, two from the same family. The first was brought to prevent the individual concerned from approaching housing office staff at St Andrews Parade and was very effective. The others were applied to two youth offenders and were brought to prevent repeat offending in the town centre area. These measures were effective but the latter resulted in the individuals concerned transferring the criminal activities in question to the Bournville Estate. This may have been responsible for a rise in shoplifting and other incidents at St Andrews Parade in late 1999.

Close liaison has been initiated and maintained between police and the local housing Office at St Andrews Parade on the Bournville. This has been vital in relation to two important issues. Firstly, on a regular basis local beat officers accompanied by housing office staff patrol the area specifically in relation to **abandoned/untaxed vehicles**.

AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

A total of 42 vehicles have been removed since September 2000, either as a result of being in a dangerous condition or following the 7 day notice procedure.

The other area relates to premises involved in the **misuse of drugs**. Where evidence is available of the misuse of Class A drugs at council owned premises, Section 17 of The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 has been put into full effect. This has enabled the council to bring proceedings against relevant tenants and secure their eviction.

One key operation of mid 2000 was that concerning an individual on the Bournville Estate, suspected of the **commercial supply of drugs** of a variety of classes. Prior to the arrival of this individual, the scale of misuse of drugs in the area, in terms of alleged individual suppliers status, was not of real significance. However, this was a Gold nominal from another force area, removed to this estate by the relevant council. The reputation of this individual quickly became well known in the area and this person's presence, had an immediate negative effect on the local community as a whole.

The activities of this individual were closely watched and when sufficient intelligence had been gathered, positive action was taken in a **multi-agency approach**.

Following a joint Force Targeting Team and district operation, five persons were arrested and Class A and B drugs with a street value of over £30,000 seized. The main target was charged with serious Misuse of Drugs Act offences, and it is anticipated that a long prison sentence will follow.

Partnership work between police and the local housing authority has subsequently lead to an eviction notice being served on the occupants of the premises concerned. Undoubtedly this operation **sent out a clear signal** to those involved in misuse of drugs in the area and at present there is no real evidence of the supply of drugs on a similar commercial scale.

The Results

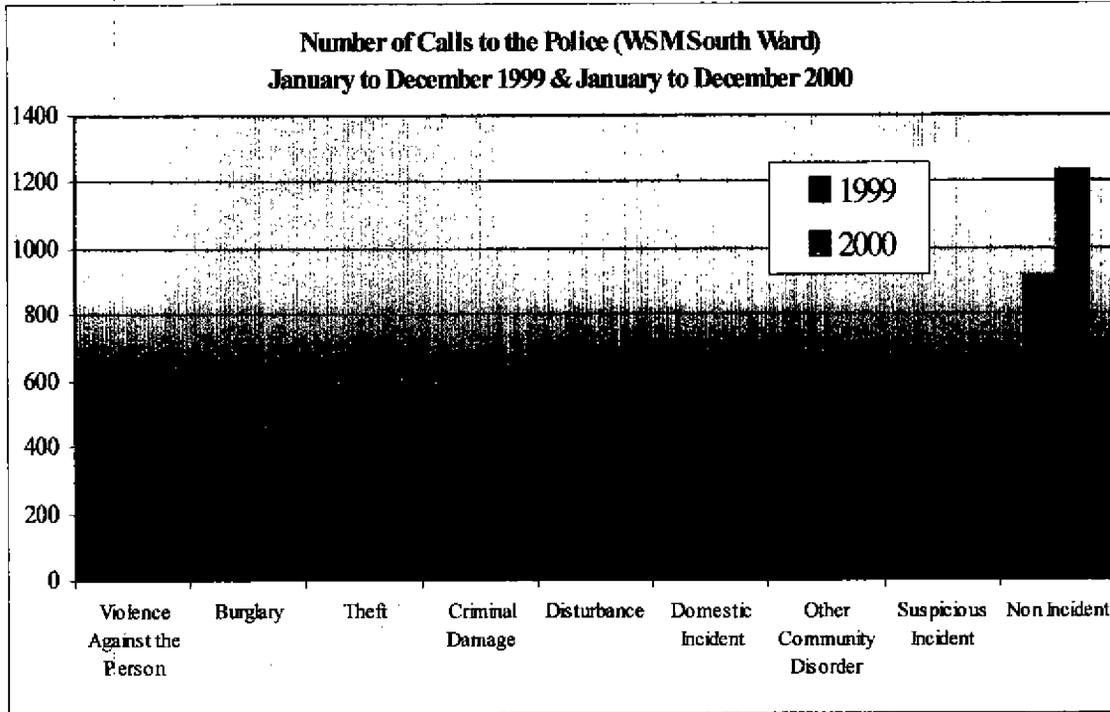
We believe that the effects of these concentrated police, community and multi-agency efforts across the South Ward have had a significant impact on the levels of crime in the area. Not only this, but the relationship between the community and police **has** vastly improved. The reactions and outlook of local people and businesses support this viewpoint.

What do the Statistics Say?

In relation to the total number of, calls received from the public, based on STORM system data, the level of calls for the ten main categories actually went up in 2000.

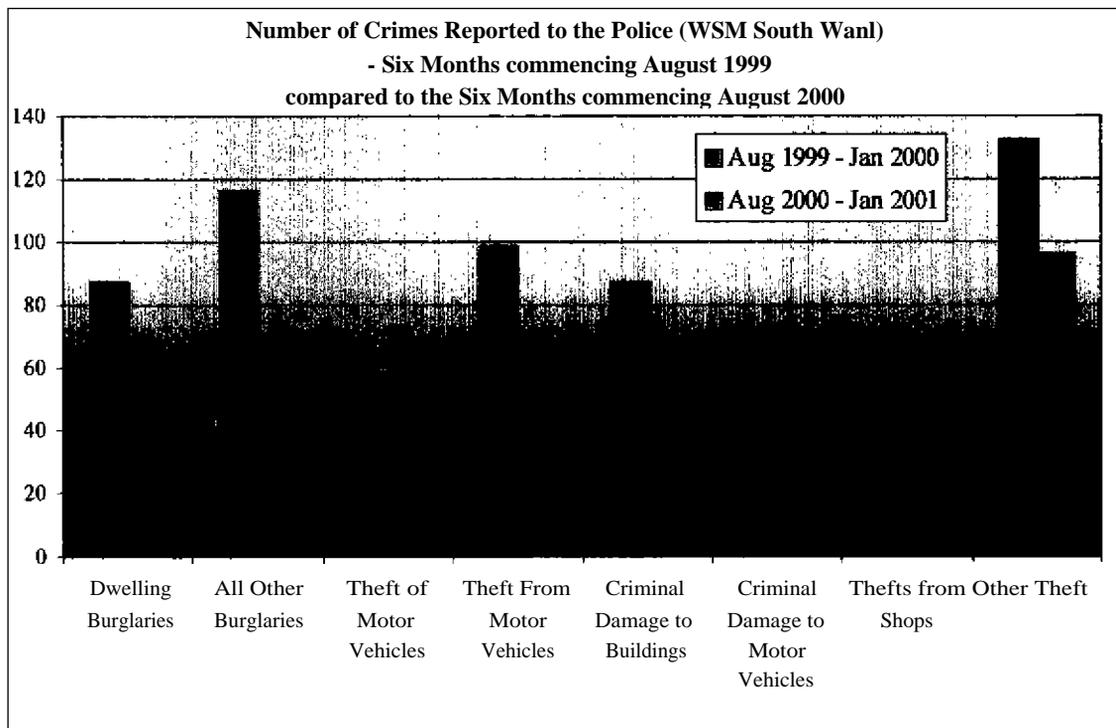
However, we believe this is a very positive sign and can genuinely be attributed to restored public confidence in the police service on the district and streamlining of methods of communication in general. We believe that the **quality of service** being provided in this area in particular has improved and the increase in the number of calls reflects this.

AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY



Crime Figures

Between mid 2000 and the present, during which time the effects of the measures taken have really started to become apparent, and a comparison of the same period the year before, we have seen a marked **reduction** in recorded crime figures in most of the main categories. These are illustrated in the following bar chart.



Summary

Burglary (including attempts) - an overall total reduction of		32%
Theft (Shop)	GL	16%
Other Theft	FF	34%
Criminal Damage (dwelling)	FL	23%
Criminal Damage (other building)	44	47%
Theft <u>from</u> Vehicle	LL	25%
Theft of Vehicle		4%
Criminal Damage to Motor Vehicle	44	28%

In this period total recorded crime for the area was down by 16%.

Conclusion and looking to the Future

Since the beginning of geographic policing much hard work has been put into the area as a whole, the Southward in particular. In many respects we have achieved and even surpassed the objectives outlined earlier in this report. It is fair to say in many ways that we have been surprised at the level of our success and this bodes well for the future.

What has become very clear, are the benefits of the partnership approach and examples of this have been shown in this report. We have started to work hand in hand with local council, probation, social services and other agencies, but perhaps most importantly of all, the people and businesses located within our community. It is overwhelmingly clear that Problem Oriented Policing is a key element in the approach to the fight against crime and resolving wider community issues. In the future, we look to maintain this simple but effective problem solving approach and, working together with our community to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves.