

Submission for The Tilley Award 2001
Crime and Disorder Reduction
By
PC 758 EDDIE LINCOLN
CENTRAL COMMUNITY POLICE TEAM
HARTLEPOOL

`PARK SAFE' PROJECT

The partnership response to the escalating problem of diesel thefts

1. Nature of the problem

In late 1999 criminal activity on the Longhill Industrial Estate in Hartlepool was increasing. However, it was identified that the majority of crime, particularly diesel theft, was not reported to the police. A lack of communication between the local business community and the police resulted in the absence of a unified approach to address the problem.

Evidence used to define the problem:

- Evidence obtained from local businesses.
- Evidence recorded in relation to victims of crime.
- Hartlepool Police District Analyst.

2. How we responded

In January 2000 a problem solving approach was adopted in an effort to identify the key elements in relation to diesel theft on a long-term basis, using the re-vitalised Longhill Business Association as a focal point.

A smaller sub-group was formed to deal specifically with diesel theft, consisting of members of the Business Association, the private sector and the police.

The problem was then analysed and defined in detail, and responses developed to address the underlying issues.

2.1 Three-phase response

It was decided that a three-phase response would be implemented:

Short-term - Targeted covert operations/high profile policing

- Joint operations between business personnel and the *police*.
- Installation of a covert camera.
- Increased *estate* patrols.
- + Use of disruption tactics.

Medium-term -- Crime prevention measures/positive policing

- Site-specific target hardening.
- + Street lighting addressed with Hartlepool Borough Council.
- Intelligence based operations.

Long-term - 'Park Safe' lorry park

£55,000 funding was secured (£25,000 from New Deal for Communities 'Early Wins' scheme, £15,000 from Hartlepool Borough Council's Community Safety Officer and £15,000 from Safe in Tees Valley) for the construction of a secure lorry park, which is to be made available for both local and visiting haulers.

Local companies have provided construction work and building materials. The lorry park is to be self-financing and overall ownership is to remain with the Longhill Business Association.

3. Impact and how measured

Our objective of an 80% reduction in recorded diesel crime in relation to thefts of diesel from vehicles has been achieved. Present figures depict a reduction of 100%.

Communication between the local business community and the police has increased as has their confidence and trust in the police service:

a

Aesthetic improvements have been made to the local area due to the partnership work.

The Longhill Business Association is now thriving and has over 100 members.

The lorry park is under construction and is due for completion by **mid** May. This will ensure that crime reduction levels are maintained on a long-term basis.

CONTENTS

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. SCANNING	3
3. ANALYSIS	5
3.1 Suspects	5
3.2 Victims and location	6
4. RESPONSE	8
4.1 Short term	8
4.1.1 <i>Targeted covert operations</i>	8
4.1.2 <i>High profile policing</i>	9
4.2 Medium term	9
4.2.1 <i>Crime prevention measures</i>	9
4.2.2 <i>Positive policing</i>	11
4.3 Long term	11
4.3.1 <i>Park Safe ' lorry park</i>	11
5. ASSESSMENT TO DATE	15
6. AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION	23

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1	Map of the area
APPENDIX 2	Letter of invitation to initial Business Watch meeting
APPENDIX 3	Copy of business survey
APPENDIX 4	Newsletter for Longhill Industrial Estate
APPENDIX 5	Copy of Hartlepool Mail article highlighting effect on local businesses
APPENDIX 6	Report submitted for Hartlepool's Court User Group
APPENDIX 7	Agreement for use of `Park Safe' lorry Park
APPENDIX 8	Hartlepool District's POP newsletter

1. INTRODUCTION

Cleveland Police is one of the smallest police forces in the United Kingdom, covering an area of 59,670 hectares in the North East of England. The force area is divided between four police districts whose boundaries are coterminous with the four local unitary authorities. Policing services are delivered by 1,434 police officers and 586 members of support staff.

Hartlepool is the most northerly town in the force area. It is situated on the North East coast on the northern banks of the River Tees estuary and has a population of 90,700. The town has suffered from the economic shifts of recent decades and seen a decline in traditional heavy industries such as shipbuilding and iron and steel. The town therefore has a number of social characteristics, which require enhanced levels of policing to combat crime and the fear of crime. These include:

- a high rate of unemployment; **10.3%** of people eligible for work are unemployed, compared with a national average of **4.1%**
- a high population density; **9.7** people per hectare compared with a national average of 3.5
- + a high proportion of low income households; **38.0%** compared with a national average of 24.0%

Despite the decline in heavy industry, Hartlepool has a number of industrial estates. The Longhill Industrial Estate is home to approximately 200 industrial and commercial businesses ranging from small family firms to large national companies. In September 1999, a new Community Beat officer was appointed to cover the area in which the estate is situated. He

soon became concerned about the increasing amount of crime on the estate, particularly the theft of diesel from haulage firms. Some firms were losing over 100 litres of fuel a night but much of this crime was not reported to the police in the belief that it was a waste of police time.

Articles in the local newspaper, the Hartlepool Mail, clearly indicated that companies in the town were considering relocating their business operations and a more positive approach to tackle the problem was needed.

2. SCANNING

The Longhill industrial Estate falls within the patrol remit of the Central Community Police Team, the peripheries of the estate being Burbank Street to the North, Mainsforth Terrace to the East, Windemere Road to the South and Bellevue to the west. The majority of the integral roads were poorly lit and appeared neglected. The area has no defined boundaries and is accessible from all sides. A map of the estate can be found at **Appendix 1**.

The estate is home to approximately 200 businesses, the majority of which service the town, with a lesser number servicing the United Kingdom and Europe. The businesses are predominantly private business premises but there are also several retail outlets.

Many businesses were subject to criminal activities, ranging from the theft of scrap metal to burglary. Due to the large number of haulage firms on the estate, the main targets for criminals were vehicles and in particular diesel theft.

It soon became apparent that communications and the relationship between the police and the businesses were poor, which resulted in a significant under-reporting of criminal offences. Businesses believed the thefts to be undetectable and a waste of police time.

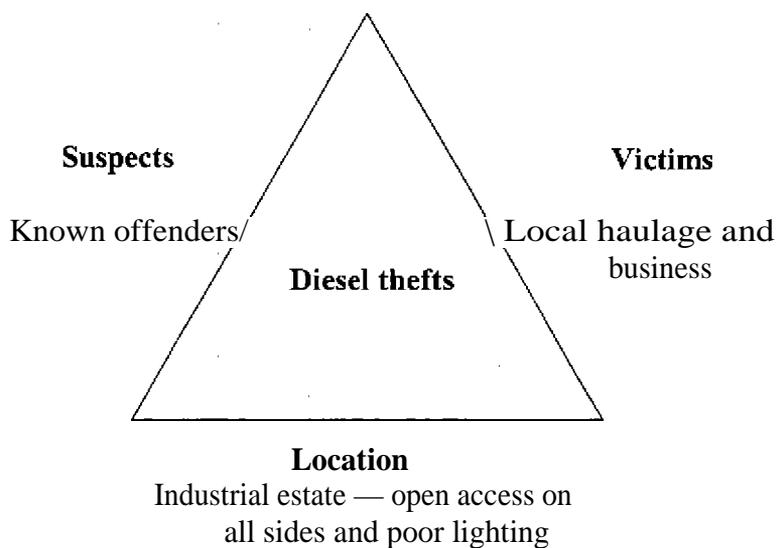
Between October 1999 and December 1999, only four thefts of diesel were reported to the police. However, after speaking to the complainants it was discovered that thefts were not being reported until the third or fourth occurrence, despite several vehicles being subject to criminal activities on each occasion. The true figure was therefore significantly higher.

The newly appointed Community Beat Officer for the area, P.C. 758 Lincoln, was aware that there were significant problems on the estate. As an experienced officer he realised that progression through a multi-agency approach was more likely to succeed than individual agency efforts.

Jill Brown of Business Security Initiative at Safe in Tees Valley was approached and a formidable partnership with the police developed. Safe in Tees Valley is multi agency partnership that was formed in response to widespread local concern about crime and the fear of crime. They work in partnership with other agencies to improve quality of life, reduce crime and the fear of crime and support the economic regeneration of Teesside. Business Security Initiative supports industrialists in their efforts to reduce businesses losses caused by crime. Both agencies worked together with the local business community and the Longhill Business Association was re vitalised after lying dormant for many years (see **Appendix 2**). This encouraged the development of community involvement and team spirit.

3. ANALYSIS

Information to analyse the problem was available from a number of sources, both within and outside the organisation. In order to analyse and focus on the specific elements of the problem, P.C. Lincoln utilised the Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT).



3.1 Suspects

A crime and incident analysis package was compiled, which revealed the following:

- the majority of crimes were committed during the hours of darkness and predominantly at weekends
- during the period October to December 1999, only six Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) stop checks were made within the area, with no resulting arrests.

- intelligence gathering revealed the names of five known offenders who were believed to be responsible for the majority of offences

3.2 Victims and location

In partnership with the Business Security Initiative a survey of businesses was conducted, a copy of which can be found at **Appendix 3**. The purpose of *the survey was* to gauge the general feeling of businesses and determine what they perceived the main problem on the estate to be.

Approximately 40% of businesses responded to the survey and the responses confirmed what had already been suspected:

- two companies appeared to be the main focus of attention for criminals, both of which were centrally situated on the estate
- the majority of companies admitted that they had not reported all of the crime committed on their property
- all companies had spent money on installing some form of security system
- companies were working as individuals and there were no examples of information sharing on an estate-wide basis.

The general appearance of the area was run down and the estate was accessible from all sides making it relatively simple for offenders to secrete themselves in nearby housing estates or

S
O
back alleyways after committing an offence. Poor and inadequate street lighting also helped offenders to cross the main thoroughfares, thus avoiding detection.

The problems encountered on the estate had existed for some years in Hartlepool. The traditional response in addressing the problem was of a typical 'Fire Brigade' approach, with officers reacting to alarms and obtaining details for crime reports. There had been no real attempt to understand the full extent of the problem or consideration of a partnership approach to tackle and alleviate it.

Communication between the police and the business community had therefore been minimal, resulting in the impression that the police had other priorities and needed to divert their resources elsewhere. Clearly the police needed to change this situation.

With the Longhill Business Association revitalised and meeting on a regular basis, it soon became clear that the main topic of conversation was that of diesel theft. This took over the meetings and as not all members were subject to the same problems, a sub-group was formed to deal with this specific issue (see **Appendix 4**).

S
It was decided that the sub-group should focus on achieving the following objectives:

- reducing diesel theft by 80%
- + forging closer links between the local businesses and the police
- increasing collaboration between businesses
- achieving a 'joined up' approach to estate security.

4. RESPONSE

A number of responses were considered and put into place. It was felt that it was essential at the outset to focus on the criminal activity and law enforcement. It was hoped that by doing this business community would be encouraged to offer the police more support and report more incidents. It was also hoped that this would generate more contact between the two parties and help to improve the channels of communication.

The monthly Longhill Business Association meeting was the ideal forum in which to encourage local businesses to report all incidents of crime. They were informed that once crimes and incidents were recorded, criminal activity on the estate could be measured and monitored. Extra resources could then be made available to target the problem and additional police patrols could be provided

It was decided that several methods should be utilised to tackle crime on the estate. P.C. Lincoln divided the response into three phases, short term, medium term and long term.

4.1 Short term

4.1.1 Targeted covert operations

In September 1999, officers carried out covert observations on selected premises. As Biffa Waste business premises had the highest recorded crime figures, the depot manager agreed to work closely with the police and crime prevention officers, who installed bleeper alarms.

Police officers and Biffa Waste employees worked together to conduct observations on the premises. This was followed up by the installation of a covert camera on 21⁵⁰ October 1999. On the 28th November 1999, three arrests were made and four crimes were detected. This was closely followed by a further two arrests. Although the camera remained in place until January 2000, no further offences were committed for over 6 months.

4.1.2 High profile policing

Although he had the responsibility for four beat areas, P.C. Lincoln focused his activity on the Longhill Estate, patrolling up to 80 hours a month, predominantly on foot. A conscious effort was made to visit as many businesses as possible, reinforcing the police presence. Other members of the Central Community Police Team and District relief personnel were directed to use their 'down time' to patrol the estate and maintain a high visible presence. During routine patrols or whilst en-route to incidents, patrol vehicles would 'drive through' the estate reinforcing the increased police activity for would be criminals and the business community alike. The Force Mounted Section and Motorcycle Section also assisted in patrolling the estate whenever possible.

4.2 Medium term

4.2.1 Crime prevention measures

Crime prevention measures were used in two areas. A local haulage company that had been subjected to particular attention from criminals, who were stealing diesel from vehicles on a

regular basis, was approached and advised on several methods to reduce the opportunity for crime on the premises.

Part funding was obtained from the Business Security Initiative to install a secure fuel pump to the fuel storage tank on the premises. The pump is not only used for re-fuelling vehicles but also has the capability of draining vehicle tanks on a daily basis. Although time consuming, this technique had the desired effect. After two unsuccessful visits to the premises where criminals were forced to leave empty handed, criminal activity for this particular company ceased. This method of crime prevention was considered best practice and other businesses adopted the same approach.

As certain areas on the estate had been identified as having insufficient or inadequate street lighting, Hartlepool Borough Council's Street Lighting Department was contacted. With the support of local businesses and the police, new improved lighting was erected and damaged lighting columns were repaired speedily.

Despite these successes, the business community was dealt a severe blow within a matter of weeks when several of the youths arrested during the earlier enforcement operations appeared at Hartlepool Magistrates' Court. The offenders received conditional discharges and were fined only £20. The compensation awarded by the courts was a mere £60.

This news incensed the business community who had suffered losses running into thousands of pounds. Furious with the court's decision one of the companies, Biffa Waste, contacted the local newspaper and threatened to relocate its business in another town (see **Appendix 5**).

This would have a devastating effect on the local community with the loss of at least 30 jobs in an area that was already suffering from high levels of unemployment and social deprivation. If Biffa Waste were to relocate there was also the potential that other companies would follow suit.

4.2.2 Positive policing

Support was enlisted from Hartlepool Police's Disruption Unit who focussed their attention on the estate. Known criminals moving in the area were targeted using foot and pedal cycle patrols and unmarked police vehicles. They also carried out covert observations based on intelligence and informants.

4.3 Long term

4.3.1 'Park Safe' lorry park.

The Longhill Business Association sub-group set up to tackle diesel theft knew that they had to quickly devise a way to encourage local businesses to remain on the estate. The solution that they all agreed upon was the construction of a secure lorry park. It was accepted that it would have to conform to the following criteria if it was to receive the support of the local business community:

- (i) It would be sited on the Longhill Industrial Estate

(ii) It would be made available to all the businesses situated on the Longhill Industrial Estate.

It would be available during the hours of darkness and at weekends.

(iv) It would be self-financing once all capital installation had taken place.

(v) It would include a comprehensive package of security measures including fencing, lighting and CCTV.

(vi) Ownership of the park would remain with the Longhill Business Association.

The proposals were put to the business community who instantly approved and supported the scheme and agreed on the title 'Park Safe'. All haulage companies with over 60 vehicles committed to using the lorry park on a nightly basis. Running costs were calculated and the fee was set at £1.00 per vehicle per night.

The first major step was to identify a suitable location for the park. All local businesses were canvassed for suggestions and on 5th October 2000 a suitable site was agreed on land belonging to a local scrap metal dealer, Chris Herring. The land is capable of securing 75 heavy goods vehicles and has been used for this purpose in the past. Not only was it a suitable location but the land was offered rent-free for the first 12 months of the lorry park's operation.

At the same time, a local businessman and member of the Business Association offered his services as project manager free of charge. The diesel theft sub-group believed him to be the ideal choice and he was elected as Chairperson.

A bid was submitted to New Deal for Communities Support Team to fund the project. This was a new source of Government funding, available to fund projects that created an improved and safer environment for communities. The initial application was no easy task as the New Deal Steering Group had to be convinced that the business people of Hartlepool were in fact a community. This was achieved by association members attending public consultations and members of the New Deal Support Team attending association meetings.

The bid was successful and the sub-group was awarded £25,000 through the New Deal 'Early Wins' scheme, an amount of cash available to develop key projects as an incentive to increase community involvement. The sub-group then approached Hartlepool Borough Council's Community Safety Officer who agreed to part fund the project and provide £15,000. The Business Security Initiative also provided £15,000 to fund the project.

The next step was to apply to the Local Authority for outlying planning permission and advertise for expressions of interest for tenders for the actual construction. On the 12th January 2001, tender documents were returned. The project had received a lot of attention and the standard of tenders was high. The diesel sub-group held a meeting to discuss the tender documents and select contractors. They enlisted the help of Cleveland Police's Crime Prevention Officer who was invited to analyse the documents and offer advice during the selection process. Planning permission for the lorry park was granted on 24th January.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Project Manager was forced to withdraw, due to re-location of his own business premises. However a haulage manager who was already renting

a unit on the land designated for the lorry park was approached, and he readily accepted the responsibility.

It was always intended that where possible, materials and works should be supplied by local companies, thus giving the businesses on the estate the opportunity to be involved in the project. A company operating on the Longhill Industrial Estate supplied the perimeter fencing and a security company based in Hartlepool installed the CCTV and perimeter security.

The criteria for Secured Car Park Schemes has been implemented and the project will hopefully achieve the ACPO award.

As there are no other facilities available in Hartlepool, the lorry park also has the capacity to provide secure parking for vehicles visiting the town. It has been decided that due to increasing interest by casual users that any profit made will be utilised to provide further crime prevention measures on the estate.

5. ASSESSMENT TO DATE

Although not entirely completed there have already been major successes resulting from this project.

In order to accurately assess the project, it was necessary to identify criteria that would enable the efforts of all those involved to be measured. It was decided that the following criteria would be used:

- 1) Number of calls made to the Central Community Policing Team office based in Church Street.
- 2) Number of reported crimes.
- 3) Number of stop/checks carried out on the estate.
- 4) Results of covert operations.
- 5) Results of crime prevention measures.
- 6) Perception of local businesses.
- 7) Success of Business Watch.
- 8) 'Park Safe' lorry park.

Evaluation consisted of assessing the situation during a three-month period prior to the project beginning, with further assessments both during the project and following its completion. Further detailed analysis will be carried out to evaluate its effectiveness once the lorry park is

fully occupied and operating for at least 6 months, this dip sampling will continue in the future, to monitor crime levels.

Using the assessment criteria outlined above, analysis revealed the following:

- 1) **Number of calls made to Central Community Policing Team office based in Church Street.**

During the months of October, November and December 1999, only nine calls were logged at the police office. In June, July and August of 2000 the number of calls rose to 46, as local businesses accepted the importance of reporting all crime committed on their premises. In January, February and March 2001, the number of calls logged for P.C. Lincoln decreased, but were still higher than prior to the project commencing. Closer examination showed that the majority of calls were enquiries, which demonstrated the improved communications between the business community and the police.

Figure 1 below shows the pattern of calls made to the police office.

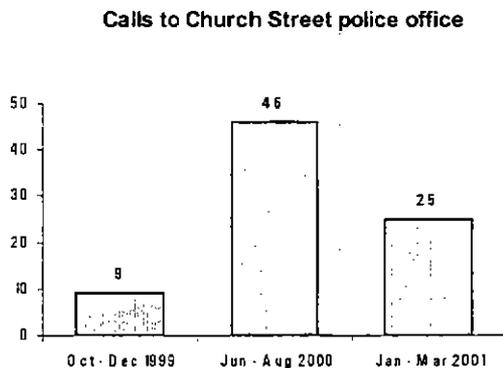


Figure 1

2) Number of reported crimes

The number of recorded crimes was an important factor in measuring the success of the project. During the three-month period October to December 1999, only four reports of diesel theft were recorded.

This figure rose dramatically after the initial Business Watch meeting in February 2000, when businesses were encouraged to report crime to the police. During the period March to May 2000, 18 diesel thefts were recorded. This upward trend continued through to August 2000, demonstrating the problems being experienced by local businesses on the estate.

The hard work, however, paid off and between September 2000 and March 2001 only two incidents of diesel theft were recorded, one in September and one in October.

The pattern of crimes reported on the estate is illustrated in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2

3) Number of stop/checks carried out on the estate

The trend of stop checks carried out it is in line with the rise in reported crime on the estate due to the police response to knowledge of criminal activity. Thus is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

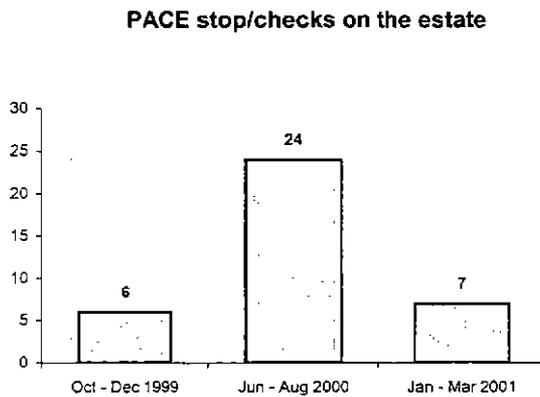


Figure 3

During the period October to December 1999, six persons were checked and no arrests were made. However between July and September 2000, 24 persons were checked and three arrests were made. Between October 2000 and March 2001 only seven persons were stop checked despite the level of police patrol on the estate remaining the same. This demonstrates the positive effect of an increased police presence.

4) Results of covert operations.

All covert operations conducted on the estate were intelligence or informant based. Although several were unsuccessful, 17 arrests were made and 11 crimes detected.

These results were paramount in achieving our aims. It also confirmed that the intelligence was accurate and that five known offenders were responsible for the offences.

The local magistrates sentencing policy in response to this problem was disappointing and outraged the local business community, who expressed their concerns via the media. A report was submitted and Hartlepool District's Crime Manager liaised with the Magistrates' Court on issues surrounding the sentencing of offenders via the Court User Group (see **Appendix 6**).

As a consequence the next appearance of two habitual offenders resulted in them each receiving a six-month custodial sentence.

5) Results of crime prevention measures.

Following the introduction of new lighting and improvements to existing lighting columns the area is now better lit, which is of major value in the fight against crime. Individual crime reduction measures proved effective and best practice was shared.

Other measures were offered to haulage companies, such as 'Weasel Diesel', an electronic device, which is placed in the fuel tank of a vehicle and activates an alarm if it is tampered with. The opportunity to use this device, however, was not considered an option by the haulage companies, due to cost implications.

6) Perception of local businesses.

Biffa Waste and other companies who had previously threatened to relocate their businesses have remained in Hartlepool, preventing the loss of valuable jobs and protecting the local economy. Local businesses are now confident in contacting the police and one individual has assisted the police on several occasions when a crime has been in progress.

High visibility patrols and regular contact with local police officers has renewed the faith that local businesses have in the police service as a whole. The fear of crime, though difficult to measure, appears to have reduced. Premises that were often locked during the day, even though staff were on the premises, are now left open for visitors and trade.

7) Success of Business Watch.

The working partnership between the police and the business community on the Longhill Industrial Estate is thriving and the partnership approach continues to develop. Communications between individual businesses continue to improve and many now share ideas on best practice through Business Watch and on an individual basis.

Business Watch now boasts in excess of 100 members and it has been necessary to divide the Estate into 12 areas, each with a co-ordinator that attends the monthly meeting and passes information to neighbouring businesses. This has encouraged businesses to talk to each other, and become good neighbours who now look out for each other.

8) **`Park Safe' lorry park.**

Work on the construction of the Lorry Park has now commenced and completion is scheduled for mid May 2001. Local companies have made a commitment to take up spaces in the park at £ 1.50 per vehicle per night (see **Appendix 7**). This is slightly higher than the anticipated fee of £1.00 per vehicle, due to revised running costs. Although not all haulage companies have reserved spaces at present, it is anticipated that once they can physically see the lorry park they will use it on a regular basis.

Local companies have been employed for the construction and supplied materials and security hardware such as C.C.T.V. and lighting. `Park Safe' will be marketed via the Longhill Business Association who has ownership of the project.

The lorry park, once established will serve two purposes, one to reduce the opportunities for crime and secondly to assist in police response. With the majority of vehicles in one location, targeted operations (if required) can be focused on one area rather than at present, where the problem is widespread.

A number of problems were encountered in implementing the response plan:

- some businesses felt that the funding was only available for the haulage companies on the estate
- the police had to respond to an initial increase in calls due to raised confidence levels
- a vast amount of time was involved initially to set things in motion

- the business community's faith in the police was restored but they then became possessive of their local officer.

On reflection the response and time to begin construction on the Lorry Park could have been improved if all businesses had given it their full support.

Despite these problems the project has already achieved success and even before the lorry park has been completed crime, the level of diesel theft on the estate has fallen and the target reduction of 80% has been achieved.

In the future responsibility for and ownership of the Lorry Park will lie with the Longhill Business Association and police involvement will be minimal. However due to the commitment of local officers, police monitoring will continue.

6. AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

The problem solving initiative was adopted at ground level by the local Community Police Officer, P.C. Eddie Lincoln, who requested the assistance of Jill Brown from the Business Security Initiative.

P.C. Lincoln had received training in the principals of Problem Oriented Policing (POP) and other officers involved had knowledge of this concept. Jill Brown received no formal training but was made aware of the model through her liaison with the police.

There were no extra incentives given to the officers in order to get their commitment. However, they appreciated the feedback supplied by a monthly Bulletin on all POP projects within Hartlepool District (see **Appendix 8**).

Jill Brown is now self-employed due to Business Security Initiative concluding its contract with Safe In Tees Valley. However, the Longhill Business Association has secured funding for Jill Brown to continue her involvement with the project on a part time basis.