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## THE TILLEY AWARD 2001

**Project Title:** GREENACRES  
THE TRANSFORMATION

**Category:** Crime Reduction

**Force** Cumbria Constabulary

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# Greenacres: the Transformation

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## Summary

# **Greenacres: The Transformation**

A project to address the problems of youths committing anti-social behaviour and crime on the Western bank estate (locally known as Greenacres) Wigton, Cumbria.

Greenacres is a housing estate in the market town of Wigton. The majority of houses are owned by a Housing association called Home Housing.

The estate had problems with anti-social behaviour, crime and vandalism that were identified by the amount of complaints that the police and Home Housing were receiving from the residents. These included some serious cases of intimidation. Some of these cases were on the brink of becoming violent attacks. There had been numerous reports of children acting in an unruly manner at all times of the day. Children were roaming the streets of Greenacres in the early hours of the morning. Cars having their paint work scratched and fencing being ripped down as fast as it was erected are just two examples of the damage being done by groups of young people.

In response to the problem a multi-agency approach was taken. This involved the police, the community itself together and other agencies including, Home Housing, Education Welfare, Local Schools, Youth Justice and local youth workers. The problem was analyzed and plans formalised and implemented by the police and agencies. This meant identifying the group of youths involved and creating and implementing a range of activities and work opportunities for them. Also speaking to them and their parents individually.

A strategy called 'Communities that Care' has been looked into which involves a long-term prevention program. "Building safer communities where children and young people are valued". Its aims are to support and strengthen families, promote school commitment and success, encourage responsible sexual behaviour and achieve a safer, more cohesive community.

The impact of the work carried out to date has been dramatic. It has been easy to measure as the reported incidents on the estate have been virtually eliminated. The feedback from residents is very positive. There is still a lot of work to be done to carry on improving the estate and to maintain the positive atmosphere that there is at the present time.

## Greenacres: The Transformation

Greenacres, western. bank estate, is a housing estate in the market town of Wigton in Cumbria. The dominant employer is U.C.B.Films employing some 900. Greenacres consists of approximately 500 properties. Like every housing estate it has its share of problems. The Police joined forces with Home Housing, the association that owns the majority of properties on the estate, Barnardos and the community. We in turn enlisted the support of a number of agencies and together worked hard greatly reducing some of the problems.

### Scanning: The problem.

Complaints to a range of agencies, including the police, indicated that residents were living in fear of intimidation and violence. An analysis of police logs showed that in April and May 2000 police attended on average 24 incidents a month, on the estate, to do with anti-social behaviour and crime. This accounted for 14% of all police incident logs for Wigton. Looking at an ACORN Profiles, the estate is Type 42 and this can be compared to Type 30 for a typical area in Wigton. ( Figure land appendix 1)

Gangs of youths constantly harassed the elderly, homosexual couples and also disabled people, specifically a deaf family. Residents were not reporting the majority of incidents to the police, as they were frightened of repercussions, reporting some to Home Housing. The level of crime on the estate was also a problem. This consisted of vehicle crime, theft, burglary and damage. The majority of which was being committed by a small number of youths, who were also responsible for the anti-social behaviour. It was also evident that there was a lack of parental control and youths were not taking responsibility for their behaviour.

Common phrases from residents were; "There is nothing for them to do. They're just bored" "They are nothing but a bunch of animals" "I blame the parents". All phrases that everybody has heard at one time or another. In an attempt to solve the problems the causes needed to be looked into further.

<b>Type 30:</b> Wigton	<b>Established Home Owning Areas, Skilled Workers</b> 4.5 per cent of the population							
Aged 0-14	Buying home with a mortgage	2+ Car Ownership	Unemployment	Ownership of stocks and shares	Heavy ITV viewing	Earn over £20,000	Microwave purchases	
Medium	High	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	
<b>Type 42:</b> Greenacres	<b>Council Areas, Young Families, Some New Home Owners</b> 3 per cent of the population							
Aged 0-14	Buying home with a mortgage	2+ Car Ownership	Unemployment	Ownership of stocks and shares	Heavy ITV viewing	Earn over £20,000	Microwave purchases	
High	Low	Low	High	Low	High	Low	Medium	

Figure 1

## Analysis: Cause

There is a lottery run youth club, 'The Youth Station', in the town; it is not enough for some of the youths. There is an immediate barrier as it is a ten-minute walk from the estate, too far for some of the younger children. It was also felt that there was not enough to occupy the youths during school breaks and out of school hours. The youth station only opened at limited times. Some youths were excluded full or part time, from school, often up half the night and in bed most of the day.

The overall look of the estate, being run down with more than 60 empty houses, was adding to the problem. The impression was that nobody seemed to care or had any pride or respect for the estate and therefore they were not going to care or maintain it. Some parents were struggling with external pressures that resulted in the children being left alone and did as they pleased for a large amount of time. Parents would not know what their children were up to whilst they were out. Parents being unemployed for any length of time does not help the children to have positive role models. Some parents struggle to control the children. There was also a large generation gap on the estate with no communication between the two generations. The elderly were intimidated by the youths, who in turn do not realize the implications of their actions on them and other residents. Overall this showed a breakdown in social control mechanisms.

This was all confirmed by three surveys conducted in the Wigton area, by Home Housing and the Wigton Regeneration Group, into housing problems and crime and disorder issues.

Analysis of the problems indicated that the key issues that needed to be addressed included:

- A need for someone to act as a catalyst and pull the relevant resources together
- Identifying ringleaders amongst problematic youths
- The poor appearance of the estate
- Poor data exchange between agencies
- Social empathy
- Social and economic problems
- Regeneration

These issues became the criteria amongst which results would be measured.

Other options considered and rejected for the first stage of work were:

- Mass target of police resources.  
Not feasible, there is no capacity or funding.
- Neighborhood Watch.  
The tenants association is working well and the chairwoman acts as a medium between residents and police. Neighborhood Watch will be a project for the future.

## Response and Assessment.

A need for someone to act as a catalyst and pull the relevant resources together.

On 1 day of November 1999 I, PC McClement, was appointed as the community police officer for Greenacres. One of my main roles was to act as a catalyst to pull all the relevant resources together with the aim to:

- + Re-establish social control.
- + Assist in medium and long-term regeneration of the community.

Identifying ringleaders amongst problematic youths.

The identified problem with anti-social behaviour and 'vandalism on the estate was causing some concern. I contacted several agencies and arranged a multi-agency meeting. This included housing officers, Nick Hardy, Damian Mums (both Community Development workers for Home Housing), representatives from the Youth Station, Social Services, Education Welfare, Youth Justice and Nelson Thomlinson High School, the secondary school for the area, Tenants Association and myself. 'We formed a 'Group' to look into the problems and possible solutions in line with the Allerdale District Community Safety Strategy.

We discussed the problems with youths on the estate, identifying the ringleaders. It was decided that myself and, Nick Hardy, community development officer for Home Housing, would together visit the parents of the problem youths and explain to them the implications of their children's behavior on not only other residents but also their tenancy. We also drew up 'Acceptable Behaviour Contracts' for the above children to sign agreeing to behave, in line with the Crime and Disorder Act. Should an Anti-Social Behaviour Order be applied for these contracts would be used as part of the evidence. See Appendix 2 for a copy of the form.

We adopted a dual agency approach looking to establish control by authority. I explained to the parents of these children what the youths were doing whilst outside their homes and which their parents were perhaps unaware. I explained what effect their behaviour was having on other residents and what would happen to their children if it carried on i.e. they could end up in the Criminal Justice system.

Nick, as a representative of Home Housing, their landlords, explained the long-term implications on the family's tenancy i.e. that if the behaviour carried on it would not be tolerated. Home Housing are spending a lot of time, money and resources on the estate, if they have to evict half a dozen families to make the quality of life for the other residents better then this was the course of action that they would take.

### Social Empathy.

The "Dream Scheme". Nick Hardy, the Community Development Worker for Home Housing, is running the Dream Scheme together with input from myself. The idea was taken from a similar scheme in Lancashire. It runs on the principle that the kids earn points for doing work in the community. The points convert to credit, which they can spend on activities that they choose. Nick has put in a lottery bid for money to fund the scheme. Until then some funds to run a pilot scheme involving 15-20 young people aged from 11-16 years, have come available from Home Housing. The 'Group' had a number of meetings and a training day to discuss what work and activities would benefit the young people the most.

Work has included; doing jobs for the elderly, such as cutting their grass, helping bridge some of the generation gap, general litter picking and tidying up of the estate to discourage future littering, painting the Youth Station, helping the caretaker in general property maintenance, carrying out leaflet drops for Home Housing.

The scheme has built up a team spirit, built bridges between the young and old, giving the kids a goal and something to do with their time. As a result there has been very few occasions where, the police, have been requested to move on unruly and noisy children.

I have been involved in the setting up the scheme and have close links with its progress. It operates with children and volunteers meeting on a weekly basis to allocate tasks and calculate points earned.

In return for the work the youngsters have been on a number of trips. A residential where the children who had earned enough points can go to an outdoor pursuit center in the Lake District is also planned. They are to do team building and outdoor activities including a drug and alcohol workshop. I have been given time to attend.

A previous residential addressed the hostility towards deaf people by holding deaf workshop. Children learnt about the difficulties of being deaf.

### Social and economic problem.

Projects under development are a community centre and community garden. My role has been to attend meetings to discuss possible venues, ideas and problems. These included the demolishing of a derelict building and the potential problem of youths vandalizing the construction site.

A local building firm has the contract for all the building work on the estate, with that contract they have agreed to take on a youth from the estate. Together we decided on a suitable youth that had been excluded from school. This youth was also a ringleader amongst the troublemakers. It is planned that he will have a different focus to his life and hopefully disperse the group of troublemakers, setting an example of improved self-image, fostering community awareness and providing a positive role model. Also if he has to keep putting back up the fences after people have pulled them down and repairing the mindless vandalism he might in turn discourage others from causing the damage:

If children from the estate are involved in the decorating of the community centre, including the designing and painting of a floor. This will give them a sense of ownership of the building and hopefully prevent a lot of mindless damage.

The community centre will be contact point for various people and have a desk for the community police officer. I will hold surgeries and it will serve as a point of contact for me. The tenants are forming a charitable trust to help fund the centre. It is hoped it will offer a lot of services to the community, what they want and what they need for example a library facility, function room, aerobics classes and a legal advice service. Offering adult/parent courses, which has a direct effect on the children. Some of the younger adults are requesting parenting skill classes, which should along with other things help them to deal with difficult children.

The community garden is being designed, with input from the entire group myself included, so that there will be something for every one. (It will not include a place for young people to drink and smoke!) There will be a vegetable patch where, under supervision, children can grow their own produce to sell. This will enable them to learn important skills and offer recreational opportunities and help overcome the "I'm bored I've got nothing to do". They will then appreciate that growing plants and keeping gardens neat and tidy enhances the appearance of the estate.

A part time youth worker is planned for the estate, part funded by Home Housing. The role of the youth worker is undefined as yet. They will start work shortly (no start date confirmed) and hold a full time position. I intend to work closely with the youth worker in an attempt to bring down a lot of the barriers between the younger element of the estate and the police.

The national organization Barnardos were approached by Home Housing to put some input into the families on the estate. Barnardos gained funding from the Henry Smith Trust, the Scott Trust, the Rural Development Agency and Barnardos Children's Promise. This funding will, help support a scheme for the next three years. The Barnardos family support scheme has converted two *houses* into a purpose built centre.

A Steering Group was set up with myself, representatives from the funding organisations, Home Housing, tenants and local Heath Visitors. Together we discussed the problems on the estate and how best Barnardos could offer services to support the residents of the estate and surrounding areas. It was important that these included a wider age range of children, than those causing problems. Giving them a sense of self-worth, usefulness and responsibility for their environment. My role is as member of the Steering Group and also a point of contact for any problems, such as vandalism. Also as part of an agency able to refer a family that requires support and taking part in events organized for the estate.

The following services will be offered initially, with room for expansion if needed or funding allows. Home support, pre-school classes, a creche, mother and toddler and women's groups, training classes for parents, a drop in service, anti-natal support with the local midwife and hold regular fun days, activities and courses for the 5-11 year olds. It will be open to referrals as well as people requesting to use the services. The building could be used by other agencies for meetings and other coursed by prior arrangement.

Throughout the year the scheme has run a series of fun days for young children up to the age of 11. These have been tied in with a school holiday play scheme. These have been a great success as can be seen with over 100 children, between 5-11 years old attended the fun days. Myself, Nick Hardy, housing officers, the caretaker, and parents have helped the scheme as volunteers and supervisors, helping the children with their activities such as painting, paper crafts, playing football and circus skills.

The children are settling down and learning to have disciplined but fun play. Education as well as fun is the aim. During the summer we had a day of African mask making, ran by a black woman from Africa. It was pre-planned and brought a multi-cultural theme to the day. This is teaching the younger children that play can be fun without vandalism and people aren't different they are fun. Hopefully the input into these children will be invaluable in preventing them being the next generation of unruly youths.

Bridges have been built between the police, children and parents. Initially when parents arrived to drop off their children and I led them into the play school they wondered what involvement I had and were intrigued. The parents and children now know me by name and are quite relaxed in the presence of the police uniform.

A planned initiative for later on in 2001 is a breakfast club for children. It was noted, at the play days, that many of the children were hungry when they arrived. Research shows that children who attend school following breakfast concentrate better and consequently achieve more and higher. We have discussed as a group the logistics of holding it on Greenacres. It was identified that there would be a problem in transporting the children to school, as we would have a duty of care.

To overcome this the local infant school has agreed to allow us the use of their premises if we would fund and staff it. Barnardos have agreed to help in the securing of the necessary funding. This should greatly benefit the under privileged children on Greenacres.

A multi-agency referral system has been set, enabling agencies such as Social Services, Health Visitors and Police to refer families in need of support. This can include anything from problems with childcare and difficult children, to home support, help with the shopping or housework. During the summer I made the first referral of the scheme, a young mother who's own mother was terminally ill, she was taking on the role of full time carer for her four siblings as well as her own child. Sheraton, the scheme manager, was keen to help and is offering her home support and also counseling services.

The pre-school and creche services are well attended. The home support scheme all ready has 5 families on their books. The first course is also running, Confident Carers-Confident Children. Others planned include Story Sacks, Rainy Days Play, Healthy Eating on a Budget, First Aid, Essential Food Hygiene and Computers for the Terrified.

The whole Barnardos scheme is having a major impact on the estate and the strength of the families who live there. At Christmas I attended the opening by Lord Bragg who officially called the scheme "The Family Place". Named by a thirteen year old girl from the estate following a competition to find the name.

### Regeneration.

Finally we looked at a long-term plan for the estate and the town. Wigton. Communities That Care (CTC) is a company that has produced a ten-year project. Its aim is to have a multi agency approach to building a safer community where children and young people are valued, respected and encouraged to achieve. Another aim is to reduce such problems as under age pregnancies and drug abuse in young people, first looking at the causes.

I am involved in the Wigton Regeneration Group, as a representative of the Police along with my front line Inspector, Inspector Downham and Sergeant Thompson, liaison officer for the Allerdale Community Safety Strategy Group. We in partnership with local strategic bodies encourage and drive forward the strategies that CTC have produced. Damien Morris, a Community Development Officer for Home Housing, currently chairs the Group.

Research, by CTC, has shown there are 'risk factors' and 'protective factors', (Appendix 3), which effect developing children. In turn it is possible for CTC to map factors which make it more or less likely that children will experience school failure and or school-age pregnancy, or become involved in drug abuse, violence and crime. Strategies can then be formulated and assessed.

The Wigton Regeneration Group and CTC are in the preliminary stages, with a progress meeting every four months. The intention is to highlight the problems, risk factors and perceived problems that most concern residents and to highlight what the community would want to improve life and conditions.

Results should give us up-to-date knowledge about the factors most likely to encourage self-efficacy, achievement and social commitment among people but primarily aimed at the youth. Leading to local action plans in which the principal goals are to support and strengthen families, promote school commitment and success; encourage responsible sexual behaviour and achieve a safer, more cohesive community.

CTC have produced a comprehensive model. The Wigton Regeneration Group has received a lecture from the head of the northern branch of CTC, on how to go about making a start on the project. The first hurdle is the funding, regeneration money is shortly to become available this maybe the answer. The project shows a great deal of promise and, it certainly has commitment from all involved.

## Result.

### Key performance.

There is now a lower level of incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime reported to the police than for a number of years. Between November 2000 and January 2001 there was an average of 6 reported incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime, a month, a 75% reduction. Accounting for only 4% of all police incident logs for Wigton. **Figure 2** (overleaf) shows the reduction in overall incident logs for the Greenacres estate. Home Housing also reports a marked reduction in numbers of complaints from residents

### Customer results.

A local paper has recently written an article Greenacres" in a follow up to one printed in October 1999. I enclose' these in Appendices 4 and 5. These articles show very clearly the impact of the work on the estate.

### Peoples results.

Home Housing have no empty properties on the estate and plan to use the one currently used for fun days as a show home for prospective tenants. It will be decorated and furnished with low cost furniture, that Home Housing will offer as part of the tenancy. This will not mean the end of the fun days as a portable cabin is planned for the park on the estate. This will mean games and toys can be left set out and children can make as much noise as they want.

### Society results.

Experience has shown the acceptable behavior contracts have never been used because the visits on problem families had an immediate effective result of a reduction in the anti-social behavior and crime on the estate.

Joyce Gatherer, chairwoman of Greenacres Tenants association said;

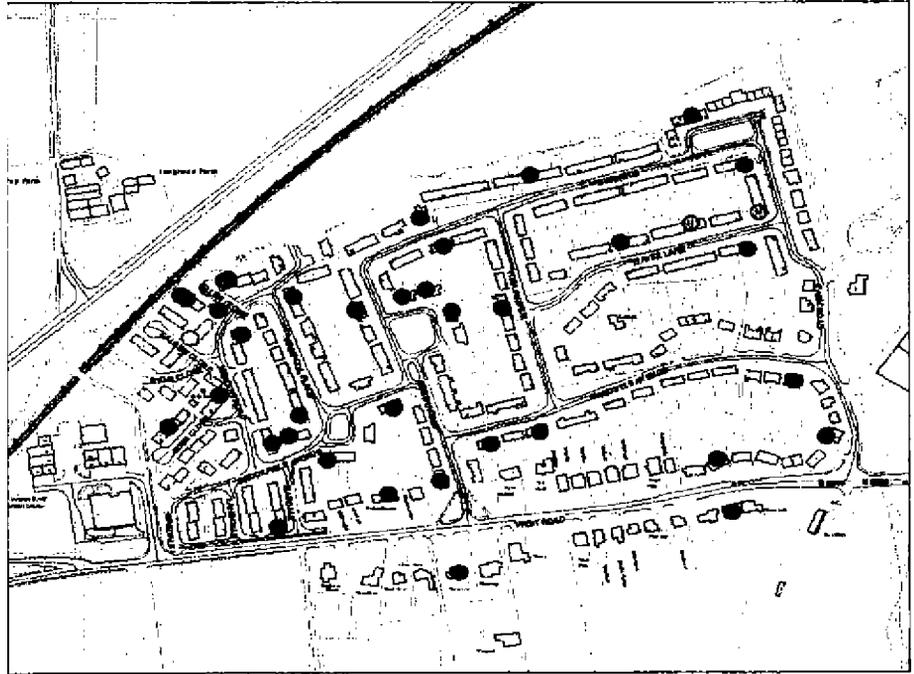
"You would not think that there are children On the estate any more because it is so quiet"

A list of people involved in the report can be found in Appendix 6.

FIGURE 2

**POLiS Incidents for Greenacres, Wigton for March/April 2000**

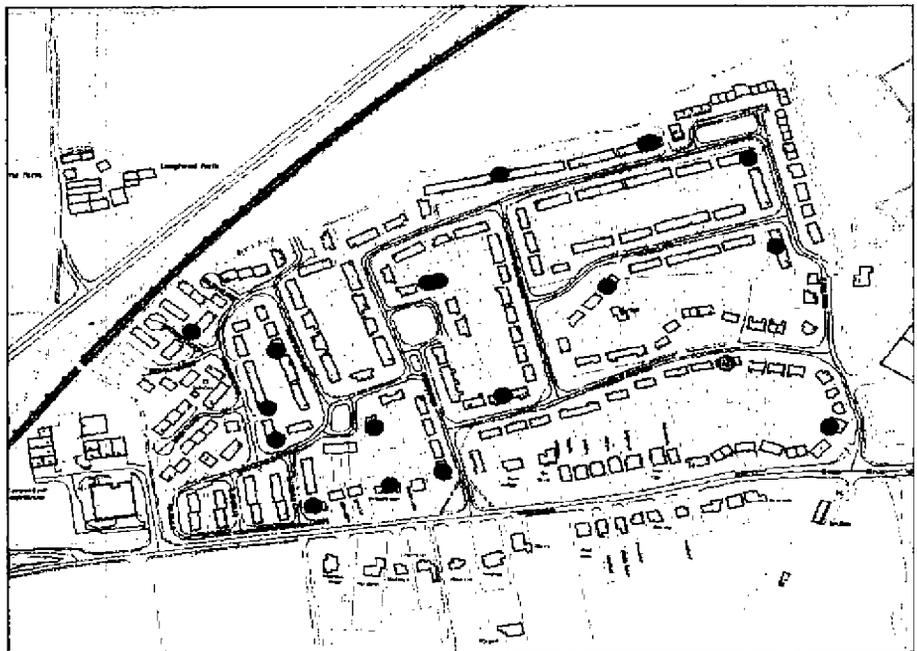
POLIS IntidEnts for NorDat 2000	
ALARM-INTRUDFFICOMMERTAL	(1)
ANIMALS	(7)
BEVOLARY C.AELLNO	(1)
CHHOEI & YOLNO PERSONS	(6)
COMAWT PR:OEENS	(3)
CRMILLA DamaGE	(10)
DSaROER N ST+PUR PLILIC PRA	(7)
eramO.A.sas.92t mare	(1)
nssma masons	(10)
OTHER - a6BLAA-Ous	(10)
OTHER DISORDERALSANCE	(2)
RJSP EKDuCRC.PQRSN0H	(3)
THEFT - OTIRIT	(4)
THEFT OF MOTOR YRECT.E	(2)
TNFEATIB(NOMOAN) PHONE CALLS	(3)
TRAFFIC OFFENCE NVOLYED	(2)



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**POLiS Incidents for Greenacres, Wigton for November/December 2000**

POLIS IntidEnts for NorDat 2000	
C-a.L a YouVO PERSONS	(6)
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	(3)
DOMESTIC DiSPUIE	(3)
OTHER - HASCELLNEROUS:	(5)
ROADSIOM NO DEFECT	(1)
WVA	(1)
G.-OBJSLI6PICHIOIAS DEATH	(1)
SUSP NCDRCRP SNEH	(5)
THEFT FROM MOTOR YEMCLE	(1)
=THEFT OF MOTOR VEHICLE	(1)
VIOLENCE AQAWT PERSON	(1)



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# Appendices