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Kirkley District Council

Serving the Community

KIRKLEY SHIELD Reducing Burglary Project

THE TILLEY AWARD 2001

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KIRKLEY SHIELD

Suffolk Constabulary

TILLEY AWARD 2001 – CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION CATEGORY

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Kirkley Shield is a multi-agency partnership project established by the Waveney Community Safety Strategy Group in 1999 and designed to tackle domestic burglary within a defined area of Kirkley ward in Lowestoft, Suffolk. It formed the basis of a successful Reducing Burglary Initiative bid in 2000.

The area experienced a burglary rate more than twice the national average. A large percentage of properties in the area are flats in Houses-in-Multiple-Occupation, with a highly transient, low income population.

Evidence

The Waveney community safety audit and strategy highlighted the problem. Socio-economic and health data confirmed high levels of deprivation. Problem-analysis-triangle used to focus on victim, offender and location information. Crime pattern analysis revealed low levels of security to be a key factor. Local knowledge within agencies and consultation with residents and private landlords supported the findings. Site visits were an essential tool in gathering information and sharing knowledge.

Responses

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The partnership followed an optional appraisal process, researching the various contributing factors and assessing the viability and cost-effectiveness of solutions. A detailed and costed implementation plan was developed.

- 1 **Home security awareness campaign:** Information pack delivered to every household. Free security survey offered. Extensive publicity campaign.
- 2 **Target hardening:** Subsidised home security improvements for properties at greatest risk.
- 3 **Area clearance:** Removing abandoned cars and furniture.
- 4 **Targeted work to reduce offending:** Police operations to disrupt the market in stolen goods, stop and search operations, high profile policing, post charge interviews, probation and youth offending service intervention plans.

- 5 **Private landlords and tenants accreditation scheme:** Security standards of rented property improved.
- 6 **Neighbourhood security improvement plan:** Long-term strategy to sustain overall reductions in crime and increase community identification and investment in area.

Impact

Comparing the first six months recorded crime **data** with similar period a year earlier shows.

- 40% reduction in burglary in Kirkley Shield area
- 35% reduction in burglary in ward
- 17% reduction in crime in general in ward
- No displacement to neighbouring wards
- 40% reduction in burglary across Lowestoft sector.

Consultation with residents in Kirkley shows high levels of satisfaction, improvements suggested have been incorporated into the project. Agencies' participation in project remains strong and lessons from Kirkley Shield have influenced development of Constabulary's "Pathway" approach to problem solving, launched earlier this year.

KIRKLEY SHIELD

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TILLEY AWARD 2001 — CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION CATEGORY

1 CONTEXT

- 1.1 Kirkley Shield's origins lie in the Waveney Communi Safe# Aud and Strategy, which i en i e igh levels of residential burglary in Lowestoft Constabulary and Sector Policing Plans also prioritized burglary. Crime rates in general are higher in Waveney than Suffolk as a whole. Burglary rates are particularly high in marked contrast to county levels, which are among the lowest in the country. The majority of crime inWav estoft, particularly in the town centre and immediate residential neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 In 1999, key members of the Waveney Community Safety Strategy Group identified the Reducing Burglary Initiative as a possible source of funds to tackle burglary in Lowestoft, resulting in a successful application being submitted.
- 1.3 Kirkley Shield is a multi-agency partnership_aRproach tackling burglary in south Lowestoft, involving a combination of short, medium and long-term interventions. The area targeted contains approximately 1,987 households and forms the majority of Kirkley Ward and police beat. The exact boundaries were drawn to ensure the area with the most concentrated burglary problem was targeted. (See attached maps)

2 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

- 2.1 Sector level crime records identified broad concentrations of burglary and local knowledge from all partner agencies confirmed Kirkley ward as the likely geographical focus for an initiative. Using the problem-analysis-triangle methodology, information about offenders, victims and locations began to be collated. In addition to the police, key partners included the county council's Community Safety Unit, Waveney District Council's Housing and Environmental Services Department, and Suffolk Probation Service.
- 2.2 Each agency collated, analysed and shared its own information, placing it within a wider context to ensure the partnership fully understood its significance. Agencies were able to question each other and further analysis was conducted to gain more detailed insight into emerging trends and fill gaps in knowledge. Analysis confirmed high levels of deprivation, poor levels of public health, high concentrations of known offenders living in the area, a large proportion of poorly maintained, privately rented flats/bedsits and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), and a transient population with few ties to the local community. Detailed research was conducted by the Crime Pattern Analyst into the most recent 12 months' worth of recorded crime data.

- 2.3 Offenders were predominantly single, unemployed, adult males, not originally from Waveney, and known to the police. Victims were predominantly adult males, employed and living in privately rented flats. Repeat victimisation analysis indicated a stronger association between addresses than individual victims, many flats or HMOs would be burgled more than once in a year but the high turnover of tenants meant different victims. Repeat victimisation was common because of poor external and internal door security and lack of security improvements following the first burglary. Knowledge of neighbours' daily routines was also believed to be a major contributing factor.

3 OPTION APPRAISAL PROCESS

- 3.1 In addition to detailed data analysis, lead officers consulted widely with colleagues to ensure local expertise and knowledge was incorporated. In parallel to the quantitative and qualitative information gathering and analysis, a partnership emerged and consultation began with key players. These included the local Residents' Association, Private Landlords' Association and the Fire Service.
- 3.2 A wide range of options was considered to tackle specific aspects of the emerging problem, some more viable than others. For example, an initial proposal, popular with some police officers and local politicians, was to "gate" many of the small alleyways at the rear of the properties. However, analysis of the burglaries showed that few entries were made through these alleyways. **0..1-6** more important, there were significant rights of way issues that would not allow many alleyways to be gated. Information was sought on other "gating" projects, and the successful ones all had very different physical and social characteristics.
- 3.3 Many of the options considered were long-term proposals, requiring detailed development and resourcing. It was important to balance these against some "quick wins" to gain public support and begin to turn the tide on the rising levels of burglary in the neighbourhood.
- 3.4 When appraising possible options, the partnership considered whether there was evidence that the approach would work, whether resources were available (either RBI or within local agencies), whether external conditions and internal organisational structures would enable the option to be implemented, and how cost-effective it would be in comparison to alternatives. The likelihood of displacement or dispersal of benefits was also considered.
- 3.5 A detailed project plan was developed with full costings for each of the six interventions proposed, including those sought from the Home Office, those provided by partner agencies, and those levered in as match funding from private landlords or residents. (Detailed breakdown of castings attached).

Excluded

4 SPECIFIC PROBLEM ANALYSIS. RESPONSE AND ASSESSMENT

4.1.1 **Problem**– *Low levels of confidence in the police, low levels of home security.*

4.1.2 **Objective** — (Sensitively) raise residents' awareness of the burglary problem, provide reassurance that police and other agencies were taking the matter seriously, emphasise that a "tough line" was being taken on offenders and there was an increase in police resources, simple security measures focused upon ("lights on timers", "no open windows", secure garden gates, property marking, etc.)

4.1.3 **Response** - Home Security Awareness Campaign

A branded, four-sided brochure (attached) was produced and delivered to every household in the area, along with a branded UV marker pen, property marking and other leaflets. Residents were encouraged to request a free home security survey using a simple booking form. Kirkley Shield posters were widely distributed throughout the area and roadshows staged in conjunction with the Crime Prevention Panel, Neighbourhood Watch and Residents' Association. A detailed media/communication strategy was planned to regularly reinforce the home security messages, ensure offenders were aware of the concentrated focus on them, and reassure the public that crime (in general) was being tackled.

4.1.4 **Assessment** — Community participation has been high and the public response very good. There continues to be regular (and positive) coverage of the project in the local papers and on radio. (See attached extracts). The identification in the implementation plan of "publicity" opportunities helped maintain continued media coverage. Attendance at the roadshows was low, and these are being restaged during better weather! Brochure delivery has been carefully staggered to manage demand for surveys.

4.2.1 **Problem** – *Varying and low levels of home security. Low incomes amongst most tenants and limited interest amongst landlords. Numerous site visits were conducted by the architectural liaison officer, local crime reduction officers and county community safety co-ordinator, identifying common problems within HMOs.*

4.2.2 **Objective** — To improve the security of over 100 properties, considered most at risk.

4.2.3 **Response** - Target hardening.

In conjunction with Waveney District Council's Planning and Environmental Health Officers and Fire Safety Officers, Suffolk Constabulary's Architectural Liaison Officer and Crime Reduction Officers established an agreed minimum standard of security.

A funding formula was agreed with Waveney Private Landlords' Association to enable properties identified as high risk (based on victimisation data and security survey analysis) to receive subsidised security improvements. Individual owner-occupiers would be encouraged to apply for a Home Improvement Grant (enabling additional, non-RBI funds to be accessed), those not qualifying would generally be entitled to a 66% grant. Criteria were established to prioritise properties at greatest risk, including current burglary victims.

4.2.4 **Assessment** - This has been the most complex of interventions. The ordering/job allocation process was seriously hampered in the early stages by the contractors' conflicting priorities and staff sickness. Good working relationships and close project management by Police and District Council Officers ensured early problems were rectified as soon as possible. To date, there have been 109 requests for surveys, 90 completed, 33 households secured, with 4 programmed. (Many households receive advice and timers, etc. and do not require additional physical security.)

4.3.1. **Problem** - *Site visits, local knowledge and community consultation revealed many abandoned cars and large household items such as sofas, fridges, etc. (Some of the public land is owned and managed by the Kirkley Poor Lands Trust Established at the turn of the century, the Trust now struggles to maintain its open spaces and the District Council has no responsibility, or right, to keep it clean.) The deteriorating environment contributes to rising public concern, discourages the more discerning tenants and sends negative messages to residents about agencies' commitment to the area.*

4.3.2 **Objective** — *To improve the appearance of the neighbourhood, demonstrate a change in agencies' commitment and increase public satisfaction.*

4.3.3 **Response** - Area clearance.

Discussions between Kirkley Poor Lands Trust and Waveney District Council led to a protocol being drawn up for the removal of abandoned cars, etc.

Offenders on Community Service Orders were used to remove abandoned household furniture and clear wasteland.

4.3.4 **Assessment** - The protocols between Kirkley Poor Lands Trust and Waveney District Council have been the most significant factor in improving the area. Implementing protocols and selection of sites for Community Service to operate has been difficult, however Waveney District Council is now undertaking the proposed landscaping improvement itself.

4.4.1 Problem. *High level of offenders living in the area. Many residents are reluctant to volunteer information for fear of reprisal. (Low levels of income mean a large market for second-hand goods that in turn can provide easy opportunities for selling stolen goods. Detailed analysis of goods stolen revealed a high proportion of domestic appliances which were easily portable and marketable but of low value.)*

4.4.2 Objective - To deter local burglars from committing offences in the area and to reduce the opportunities for the resale of stolen goods.

4.4.3 Response - Targeted work to reduce offending.

A high profile policing presence has been maintained in the area. Focused activity has disrupted the market for stolen goods. UV lamps have been provided to help second-hand dealers screen goods for security markings. Pro-active policing uses appropriate stop and search procedures to increase the risks of offenders being stopped in the area. Follow-up interviews are held with suspects following charging to help gather additional information about burglary locally. Additional follow-up contact with victims of burglary (along with contacts from Victim Support) helps encourage those who may be reluctant to volunteer further information. The Suffolk Probation Service and Youth Offending Service are running intervention programmes for all convicted burglary offenders associated with the area.

4.4.4 Assessment - During the first six months of Kirkley Shield over 650 additional foot and mobile patrol hours were recorded. Over 1,000 UV security marker pens have been delivered to local homes, increasing the chance of stolen goods being identified. To date, no convicted burglars have received a community punishment. However, a number of high profile offenders have received significant custodial sentences.

4.5.1 Problem. *The decline in the holiday industry over the last 30 years has led to a plethora of privately rented flats, many owned by a small number of commercial landlords. These include a large proportion of cheap rented flats and bedsits in poor repair. Renting property in Kirkley is easy for people with very low income, poor credit rating and no references. A significant number of transient tenants have alcohol and/or drug problems and live chaotic lifestyles. Many landlords have little incentive to improve or maintain their properties because of the treatment they receive and transient nature of their tenants.*

4.5.2 Objective - To improve the security standard of rented properties, to make them more attractive to a wider range of tenants.

4.5.3 **Response — Development of a Private Landlords and Tenant Accreditation Scheme.**

During the planning and option appraisal stages, these two approaches were believed to be key to improving the socio-economic characteristics of the area. However, it was recognised that both required considerable research, consultation, and development. Information from similar 'declining seaside resorts' was sought and best practice examined. Consultation with landlords indicated considerable willingness to participate in an accreditation scheme with minimum health, safety and security standards and strongly welcomed a means to vet tenants as well.

4.5.4 **Assessment —** During the latter part of 2000, the DETR announced that the current legislation relating to privately rented properties (the Housing Act 1985) was to be overhauled. It is anticipated that this Act will be repealed by a far, more comprehensive act — the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, which will increase the powers available to Environmental Health Officers concerning unfit housing.

In view of the legislative change it made sense, therefore, to slow any research into accreditation schemes until more information became available.

Since the start of the initiative, the Project Manager has also been organising a Private Sector Housing Condition Survey (on behalf of DETR). This survey will be one of the first to incorporate some of the requirements of the housing health and safety rating system. This survey will then form the basis for the council's housing and grants funding policy over the next five years.

It is intended, therefore, that the original research planned for the project's accreditation scheme will run parallel to the survey. The consultants currently engaged have been asked to identify a model for an accreditation system which will be most appropriate to the Waveney area.

4.6.1 **Problem – *There was limited social cohesion and a large divide between owner-occupiers and (transient) private tenants. The network of narrow residential roads and alleyways mitigate against a strong community identification and simple structural changes.***

4.6.2 **Objectives ---** Increase community identification and investment within area. Redesign particular problematic areas.

4.6.3 **Response — Development of Neighbourhood Security Improvement Plan.**

Site visits and consultation with agencies and the community identified considerable scope for structural improvements to the area. These were quickly identified as medium and long-term options. However, to ensure they were not forgotten a development plan was proposed. Links to new local community

support initiatives have helped strengthen social cohesion and develop agency commitment to the area (eg, provision of smoke detectors and health promotion work). Dutch research on playstreets is providing a useful alternative to the "gating" options which are impractical in most locations in Kirkley.

- 4.6.4 **Assessment** - Analysis of crime hotspots and site visits has identified key positions for enhanced lighting and mirrors. Kirkley Shield falls within a major SRB programme area in Lowestoft and funds are being sought to improve the street lights in the area. Mirrors will be installed shortly, following final consultation with residents.

5 **MEASURING SUCCESS**

During the planning stage, the partnership was conscious that reporting levels, particularly amongst private tenants, were likely to be low in Kirkley because of low levels of insurance, lack of confidence in the police and fear of reprisal. The high profile project was likely to increase reporting levels even if actual burglary levels fell. Subsidised home security improvements would be a significant incentive to report burglaries. Kirkley Shield's objectives were to reduce burglary (from 54 burglaries per 1,000 households) to equal or below the Lowestoft average (31 per 1,000 households) within 12 months of completion of the project and to increase the detection rate from 13.3% to the Suffolk average of 19.3%.

Kirkley Shield *has been in place for 7 months. Analysis of the first six months' data has proved extremely encouraging. Comparing October 1999- March 2000 and October 2000 - March 2001 data, burglary in the Kirkley Shield area has dropped by 20%.* Geographical displacement is always a considerable risk and a buffer zone was identified to ensure any adverse trends would be identified and appropriately tackled. Comparing similar data: the police beat to the immediate west has seen a reduction of 23% in burglary; the beat containing Kirkley Shield a reduction of 35%; and the beat to the south a 6% reduction. (The North Sea forms the eastern boundary and the river Waveney and harbour the northern boundary.) There is strong evidence that there is a wide dispersal of benefit as burglaries across the whole of Lowestoft have fallen by 4% over the last six months.

The high profile media communication strategy, and, in particular, the consistent, and simple, home security advice and publicity about the police focus on burglary (and burglars!) has covered the whole town.

Analysis indicates that there has been no significant displacement to other forms of crime. There has been a 17% reduction in overall crime in the beat containing Kirkley Shield. This includes a 26% reduction in criminal damage, a 9% reduction in other theft, a 13% reduction in shoplifting, and a 46% reduction in theft from motor vehicles.

Detailed consultation with residents and landlords who have received home security surveys and security improvement during the first six months has highlighted a number of improvements and these have been incorporated into the implementation process. (See attached questionnaire and responses).

6 PROJECT IMPACT ON CORPORATE APPROACH

6.1 Pathway.

Suffolk Constabulary has fully embraced the problem-solving approach. In January 2001, "Pathway" was launched, incorporating all the key aspects of problem solving. The experience gained from Kirkley Shield helped develop the philosophy underpinning "Pathway", and has been used as a useful case study during training. "Pathway" partnerships and initiatives are now being established by officers all over the county. Detailed guidance and specific recording forms have been produced to help encourage and support widespread use of the approach

For Suffolk Constabulary, Problem Oriented Policing is primarily about process. However, the successes of the solutions selected and implemented have helped gain acceptance of the importance of following a **systematic** approach.

6.2 Process Lessons from Kirkley Shield

- Importance of project planning — using the SARA model
- Importance of project management — resources, management support, multi-agency participation
- Media/communication strategy — in particular, the influence on "fear of crime" and on offending behaviour
- Need for identification of short, medium and long-term initiatives — value of "quick wins" and planning long-term sustainability.

6.3 Model Lessons from Kirkley Shield

- Product branding, logo and marketing important and easily replicable
- Kirkley Shield formed basis of a Reducing Burglary Initiative 3 bid for neighbouring ward, which is awaiting approval
- Value of focused, subsidised target hardening established.

Kirkley Shield has also had a major impact on the local community safety partnership in Waveney, establishing the importance of detailed analysis, resource identification, project management, multi-agency participation and community involvement.

The Problem Oriented Policing model is also used within the Kirkley Shield project management structure to assess the on-going viability of initiatives and "trouble shoot" any emerging implementation problems. This has helped create an honest, challenging and trusting multi-agency team and avoided a blame culture developing when there are delays, etc.

6.4 Critical Success Factors

- *Leadership*— From the beginning, two officers were identified to undertake day-to-day project management tasks (Police Officer and Waveney District Council Officers). Senior management support has been critical.
- *Partnership* — the multi-agency management group is closely linked to the community safety partnership and has strengthened its approach.
- *Implementation* — Kirkley Shield has stayed focused on a clearly defined problem, in a clearly defined area, with clearly defined resources, outputs and **outcomes**.

ATTACHMENTS,

1. Sector Map
2. Ward Map
3. Costings
4. Brochure
5. Press cuttings
6. Questionnaire/Responses