

Tilley Awards 2002



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Crime & Disorder Reduction Category

"A Safer Greets Green"

Targeting Street Crime

Prepared By
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**West Midlands Police
Greets Green Neighbourhood Police Team,
Sandwell MBC
&
The local Community
Working in Partnership**

Tilley Awards 2002

High Street, West Bromwich

Targeting Street Crime

West Bromwich High Street has historically been associated with high levels of crime due in part to the presence of a college campus, the local registry office (Memorial Gardens), a YMCA hostel and the headquarters of a large building society.

Following the development of a strategy to tackle these problems, using the POP principles, there has been a 50 % Reduction in reported robberies (65 fewer victims), and a 52 % Reduction in reported thefts from the person (48 fewer victims), during the year 2001/2.

This downward trend has continued during April 2002 (3 offences).

Scanning

- Crime data was obtained for a twelve month period for robberies and thefts from person ('11P) offences (130 Robberies and 92 'DP' offences 2000/1).
- Location data was unobtainable due to problems with police systems, creating a gap in the scanning process.
 - a Spatial movement report.
 - a Anecdotal evidence from staff working within the local registry offices and Sandwell college.
- Anecdotal evidence from police officers who identified street crime 'Hotspots' along the High Street in the vicinity of the college, memorial gardens and YMCA. Previous policing operations examined.

Analysis

- Problems with overgrown shrubbery and trees leading to lack of 'Natural Surveillance' in the Memorial gardens.
- Robberies were predominantly involving young persons.
- Clear evidence of drug misuse including dealing in the Memorial gardens
- Vulnerable college users targeted.
- Majority of offences were being committed 12 midday— 2pm and 3.30pm — 4.30pm. on Monday and Thursday.
- High visibility policing operations had shown no sustained success.
- High fear of crime in locality.
- Linkages with local Schools/YMCA/College required to develop solutions.
- Environmental survey required.

Response

- Targeted patrols.
- ☐ Offenders targeted.
- Arrests for drugs offences within the gardens
- Meetings arranged with council planning staff to address environmental issues in Memorial gardens.
- 3-year Action Plans for Robberies developed (Appendix B)
- Meeting with College, YMCA and Drugs Action Team re: drugs and policy.
- + £70K funding obtained for the re-development of Memorial gardens.
- 9 Anti-Bullying campaign in local school.
- ® Safe Zone established
- Police Base established in area
- Whistling Project- targeting fear of crime.
- Environmental survey conducted.

Assessment

- 50 % Reduction in reported robberies (65 fewer victims).
- ☐ 52 % Reduction in reported TPP (48 fewer victims).
- Visible physical improvements in area.

Tilley Awards- - 2002

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History of Greets Green area

The Greets Green area lies in the heart of West Bromwich to the south and west of the town centre. It is a mixed residential and industrial area. Much of the living accommodation is pre 1919. The area is also more reliant on traditional heavy industry, such as manufacturing, than other parts of the country.

The area has significant central area uses as it lies immediately adjacent to and includes a part of West Bromwich town centre. These central uses include civic buildings, a college campus, the magistrates court, a bus garage and numerous banks/building societies and offices.

There are over 12,000 residents living in 4,600 households. There are approximately 400 businesses in the area, with 26% of them working within the wholesale and retail sector, which was centred predominantly on the High Street corridor.

During work undertaken by Sandwell MBC in 1998 it was found that the community in the area was diverse, proud and resourceful, but that it was also characterised by high levels of social exclusion and social and economic deprivation.

The crime levels in the Greets Green area has been identified as one of the worst in the Sandwell Borough, which itself has been identified nationally as one of the most deprived areas in the country.

(* All information taken from the Greets Green Delivery Plan November 1999). '

Policing the Greets Green area

The Greets Green community, through consultation undertaken by Sandwell MBC during completion of the delivery plan, highlighted that dealing with crime and community safety was one of the key strategic outcomes of the project.

The delivery plan strategic objective is "to reduce crime levels and fear of crime within the community and create a safe, secure environment by promoting active citizenship and effective social integration".

In response to overarching needs of the area a policing team was set up on the 3rd July 2000. It consisted of a Sergeant and seven Constables, one of which was a Crime Reduction Officer.

The officers were funded through the New Deal for Communities project (the Sergeant and the Crime Reduction Officer) and the Governments Crime Fighting Fund monies, which the West Midlands Police senior management had utilised in the areas most deprived neighbourhoods (six Constables),

The Project was led by Sergeant Chris Downen. The location of the project was initially based at West Bromwich Police Station, which is not on the Greets Green area.

The police team was dedicated to the area and the remit given to them by Sergeant Downen was to reduce crime, the fear of crime and to deal effectively with all other associated problems related to areas such as anti social behaviour. Their role was to work in close harmony with residents and other agencies such as Crime Concern, The New Deal executive team and Sandwell MBC and voluntary organisations to ensure that the concerns and needs of the community are met.

This was to be achieved through the development and implementation of short, medium and long-term crime strategies for the area in line with the needs of the community as expressed through community consultation.

The officers benefited from a support structure of experts within West Bromwich Police Station who were able to assist them in the development of both effective intelligence led and community based policing initiatives.

Their work was in support of the police officers that are already allocated to the West Bromwich area that provided the traditional "response" policing.

The Project Objective

The High Street area of West Bromwich was associated with high levels of crime and disorder. This was illustrated in the large number of Robberies and Theft from the Person offences reported.

The Greets Green police team was set as one of its priorities to reduce these offences by 10%. This was the starting position for the project.

The following is evidence of the journey taken and the problems encountered by the partners involved to achieve what was ultimately a **50% reduction in Robberies and a 52% reduction in Theft From the Person offences.**

The development of the project will be illustrated through the use of the SARA problem-solving model, which was used by Sergeant Downen to underpin the strategic work undertaken in the area.

Scanning the Problem

In order to identify any possible solutions or activities to combat problems a good understanding of the area needs to be gained. This can be done through a variety of sources from computer systems right through to personal knowledge and perceptions of individuals.

The scanning of the problem was the most crucial part of this process and it identified a number of problems that needed to be overcome.

The first route that most police officers take in relation to defining a problem is to obtain crime data in relation to the area. This however was problematic as the area was part of three

separate policing beats, which is the traditional way to measure and record crime for particular areas. Also, the High Street area is demonstrated on the West Midlands Police mapping systems as coming under three fixed grid reference points. This meant that any maps would illustrate three points along the High Street as high crime locations even though the crime may not have taken place within that section of the High Street.

As a result of this problem measures had to be put in place to allow crime trends to be identified. The result was the redefining of the crime beat boundaries from November 2000. The data for the following five months was then used as "benchmarking data" for the area. This was then manually checked to identify locations and victims, including times, days and dates.

Further information was gained through the spatial movement report that was commissioned by New Deal at the outset of the project, which identified key locations in the area where people congregated and moved through.

Anecdotal evidence from Police officers and from staff at the registry office (Memorial Gardens), Sandwell College and the headquarters of the West Bromwich Building Society was obtained to gauge the perception of the level of crime and the fear of crime in the area.

The information and data from previous policing operations in relation to street crime in the area was collated.

Analysing the Problem

The scanning led to a number of factors being identified that needed to be addressed. It also identified gaps in the partnership provisions in the area. Detailed below are results from the analysis.

A review of the area found that the High Street within the Greets Green area could be separated into three distinct sections. The central section housed the memorial gardens and the local college campus. It was this location that street crime centred around. The reasons for this were that the Memorial Gardens were screened from the main road by dense shrubbery. This obscured the view from the main road, which stopped any "natural surveillance" taking place. It also lent itself to large gangs congregating and using/dealing in drugs (anecdotal and intelligence information). This led to the lack of use of the area by local residents and workers because of a perception that crime will be committed. The college campus, which is situated immediately opposite the gardens, is the main college in the area and it provides a ready-made group of potential "customers" for the dealers. It also had a number of pupils on different government based schemes and projects which encouraged groups of young people to attend the college who would not have traditionally gone. In return for their attendance on these courses some of these pupils were being paid to attend the college. These groups of pupils were identified as vulnerable groups in relation to being victims of street crime because of their individual needs and the fact that they were being paid to attend college (paid on Thursdays).

The initial work undertaken by Sergeant Downen in relation to the analysis of the crime data was time consuming as it was completed manually. The analysis was not detailed and reports were not completed as a result. It was used as a process to identify any major patterns of street crime. The data established that the majority of offences were being committed in two time periods, midday until 2pm and 3.30pm until 4.30pm on Mondays and Thursdays. It also identified that the victims were predominantly young people. Whilst this was not the only pattern, this was the most striking. This information was then used along with the analysis of the other information gained from the scanning process to draw some conclusions.

The analysis of the data identified that if the crime for that area was monitored it would be easier to establish the impact responses were having in the area.

The previous policing operations had used high visibility patrols as their main tactic. The officers used on the area were officers, predominantly on overtime, who traditionally covered other beat areas. The result was that although the officers who were on the operation enjoyed the work and the way they were allowed to target the area, it had no long-term impact on street crime levels in the area. This led Sergeant Downen attempting to look at alternative ways of "policing" the area, the details of which are included in the response section below.

The analysis also identified that there was a lack of close working relationships with key members of staff from the Registry Office (Memorial Gardens), Sandwell College, local businesses, the YMCA and the local senior school. The last two were identified as key partners even though they were not situated in the location because they were situated nearby and they had the potential to provide both victims and offenders for these crimes due to their close proximity to the area and the types of victims identified.

Responding to the Problem

The response to the problem had to have a number of components in order for it to be successful. The response had to have an immediate impact whilst work was undertaken on the medium to long term priorities such as developing good working relationships with the key partners.

Initially the response was police led to provide the initial impetus. This was done in three ways, targeted patrols, targeting the drug dealing in the Memorial Gardens and the development of an action plan identifying the priorities. The following three paragraphs are a summary of the work undertaken in these three areas.

The targeted patrols were seen by Sergeant Downen as an opportunity to try alternative approaches to the traditional high visibility policing of an area. He set himself guidelines that all the patrols will be done in duty time and would be done in short targeted periods by the local community beat officers. This would allow the response to be sustained. The officers were then initially given the periods of times that they were required to cover the area. This meant that they were highly motivated to tackle the street crime problem during the specified periods, but could also be utilised to target other issues during each day. The fact that only the local officers were used had the added impact that the message given to local people and potential offenders could be controlled and co-ordinated. It also had the other benefit of giving ownership of the problem to the local officers, which they relished and which led to a desire to assist in the reduction of the street crime levels. These officers then worked closely with a team of officers who had been set up centrally to look at street crime offenders across the north Sandwell area. The close relationship they developed led to 15 arrests in the first three months, which was well above the figures for the other areas.

The drug dealing in the Memorial Gardens was targeted through an operation run by the local officers in conjunction with other departments. It led to the arrest of the target offenders. It had an additional positive impact as it allowed the key partners to see that the local police officers were committed to resolving problems they had identified.

Sergeant Downen following the scanning and analysis process developed the action plans. They were intended as a starting point for the key partners as he felt that to wait for the partnerships to develop would cause a long delay and the impact of the short-term police interventions would be lost. They were set out with timescales and details of the agencies that

he believed would need to be involved for it to be successful. They were for internal use as a way of ensuring that the impetus would continue.

The other responses that were put in place centred on the development of working relationships with key partners. They were as follows

Meetings were arranged involving Registry Office staff and Chris Jones from Sandwell MBC to look at the environmental issues. As a result an environmental survey was completed and New Deal for Communities funded the initial work in relation to the clearance of the Memorial Gardens (see pictures attached). This was radical work as it meant complete clearance of the ground level shrubbery and removal of some of the lower tree branches.

PC Sarah Hall took on the responsibility for the development of contacts with the college and the YMCA (along with PC Craig Smith). They arranged for talks on drug awareness to be given by the Drug Action Team (DAT) to the vulnerable groups identified by scanning and analysis processes. They also began work, in conjunction with Sergeant Downen, on the development of a complimentary drug policy for the college, the YMCA and the local secondary school. This work is still in the process of being completed.

An anti bullying campaign was launched in the local schools in an attempt to reduce incidents of bullying, but also to target the street crime involving the thefts of mobile phones.

A "Safe Zone" was completed by PC Craig Smith in conjunction with the local senior school (George Salters), the Neighbourhood Safety Project (Crime Concern) and local businesses situated along the High Street. The aim of the scheme was to identify key business locations where anyone can enter if they feel threatened or feel that they are about to become a victim of crime. The employees from that business then either report the incident to the Police, or contact the person's parents or family. It was set up in March 2002 and it is aimed at reducing not only the incidents of crime but also the fear of crime.

One of the key responses was the creation of a Police base at the headquarters of the West Bromwich Building Society (WBBS), which is situated opposite the Memorial Gardens. The society, following negotiations involving Sergeant Downen, PC Mick Wilkinson, Steve Brown (WBBS) and Dave Carrott (WBBS) built a small base on the ground floor of their building which allowed the officers a central point from where to complete their patrols/work.

One of the more alternative approaches to the problem was the development of the "Whistling Project". This was work undertaken by Sergeant Downen and two community artists Melanie Jordan and Andrew Hewitt. They had been given a small grant by Public Arts West Midlands (PAWM) to look at alternative ways of using art in the community (see letter attached). As a result of the meetings a project was developed which used audio art to target street crime and peoples fear of crime. The scheme involved members of the local community (and three of the community Police officers!!) whistling theme tunes from famous police related television programmes. These were then played through a speaker system, which was set up in and around the college and Memorial Gardens. The whistling was then played on a continuous basis for approximately five weeks.

Assessment of the Problem

The assessment of the problem is in itself the start of the whole process again. The details below identify how some of the projects have been, or will be assessed. However, none of the schemes can be looked at in isolation as they have all had an impact on the overall reduction of crime.

As a result of the work undertaken in the area there has been a 45.1% **Reduction** in the number of Robberies reported (65 fewer victims). There has also been a reduction of 52% in the number of Theft from the Person offences reported (48 fewer victims). These figures have been evidenced against the data provided from the Management Information Services department at the West Midlands Police headquarters. They provided data for a two-year period whereby they set up searches by inputting all the streets in the area. This provided initial historic data and from November 2000 the figures are based upon actual figures produced by the West Midlands Police on a beat basis. These figures are supported by the fact that in this policing year there have been 3 Robberies in April 2002 and 1 in May 2002 (up to the 1415).

In relation to the fear of crime New Deal for Communities have agreed to undertake a survey in relation to this subject. This will be used to evidence the work undertaken and develop the strategies for the years ahead.

The physical appearance of the area has been improved and this can be shown in the pictures attached.

In relation to the whistling project the artists had agreed to complete a survey during the period it was running to speak to people using the area to see what impact the project had on them in relation to their fear and perception of crime.

This collation of information and data including its subsequent assessment is an area that can be improved by all the key partners. Although there is a hard crime data available, more work can be undertaken to establish the impact upon the fear of crime and the use of the area by local people.

Overall the project, through partnership work with key partner agencies has led to a 50% reduction in street crime in the area, which has been sustained.

Acton Plan - Robberies/Theft From Person

Appendix

Objective ^o To reduce the incidents of Robberies/Theft From Person ^m Target 10% Reduction

Objective	Action	Input Target	Output Target	Outcome Target	Responsibility	Timescale
1) To target Known/Likely offenders re Robberies/Theft From Person offences through targeted patrols	Foot Patrols	Police Officers time to conduct patrols	Conduct at least two preidentified operations each month in relation to targeted patrol	Reduce Levels of Robbery by 10%	Greets Green Police Team British Transport Police West Midlands Passenger Transport	To be implemented by June 2001
	Vehicle Patrols					
	Mountain Bike Patrols					
	Mobile Marked CCTV Van					
	Metro Route Patrols					
	Bus Route Patrols					
2) To conduct High visibility patrols in Hot Spot locations to reduce the incidents of Robberies/Theft From Person	Foot Patrols	Police Officers time to conduct patrols	Conduct at least two preidentified operations each month in relation to targeted patrol	Reduce Levels of Robbery by 10%	Greets Green Police Team British Transport Police West Midlands Passenger Transport	To be implemented by June 2001
	Vehicle Patrols					
	Mountain Bike Patrols					
	Mobile Marked CCTV Van					
	Metro Route Patrols					
	Bus Route Patrols					
3) To identify and target harden Hot Spot locations to reduce the likelihood of repeat victimisation	Property Marking Scheme in Identified Hot Spot locations	Implement Phone Property Marking Scheme	Offer to property mark all phones of pupils at George Salters School	Property Mark 50% of phones of pupils from George Salters School	PC Gutteridge PS Downen PC Hall	Completed by April 2002
	High Quality Safe Environment Programme	Assist With The Development of the Year 2 Projects	Identify and Evaluate relevant Year 2 Prcects	Implement projects to the value of £380,000	Sandwell MBC PS Downen PC Keyte	Completed end of March 2002

3) To identify and target harden "Hot Spot" locations to reduce the likelihood of repeat victimisation Cont'd	"Safe Haven" Initiative	Implement a "Safe Haven" Shop Scheme	Set up the "Safe Haven" Scheme in 10 shops in the Greets Green area	Reduce the fear of crime of Greets Green residents	Local Businesses PC C Smith PS Downen PC Keyte	Completed by November 2001
	School Lunch Time Pass Scheme in identified Hot Spot locations	Implement a School Lunchtime Pass Scheme	Develop pass scheme for George Salter school pupils for lunchtime periods	All of pupils leaving school grounds have relevant pass	George Salters School PS Downen PC Hall	Completed by February 2002
4) Reduce vulnerability of residents through training	Anti Bullying Campaign	Develop Schools Campaign with Victim Support	Training to be delivered to senior school pupils	75% of relevant group of pupils to have had training input	Victim Support PC Hall PS Dowens	Completed by July 2002
	Anti Bullying Helpline	Develop existing Helpline in conjunction with Victim Support	To improve helpline service offered to young people	Increase calls to helpline by 25%	Victim Support PS Downen	Increase reached by April 2002
	Property Protection Inputs	Create a training package to be delivered to Schools and employers within High Street Area	Training packages completed and individuals identified to provide the input	10% of Greets Green residents/visitors given input	PS Downen PC Birtwisle PC Keyte NS! - Mark Spriggs	Training Package completed by September 2001. Suitable trainers identified and training commenced by January 2002.
	Personal Protection Inputs					
"Point of Sale" Leaflets	Create a leaflet to be given with purchases of new mobile hones	Leaflet to be designed outlining relevant property protection advice	100% of people purchasing mobile phones in the Greets Green area receive leaflet	PC Keyte PC C Smith PS Downen	Leaflet designed by October 2001. System in place by Beginning December 2001	

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Public Satisfaction	Increase public satisfaction through a positive press strategy	Police Officers Time	Press strategy to be completed and one item of positive policing identified each week and put in local newspapers	Reduce fear of Crime within Greets Green area	PS Downen PC Birtwisle PC Keyte Press Office	Press Strategy to be agreed by June 2001 Press releases commenced by July 2001
	Reduce the fear of Crime	Police Officers Time	To identify victims of Robbery and provide them with crime reduction advice	Reduce fear of Crime within Greets Green area	PC Keyte Victim Support	Protocol set up to identify victims of Robbery by June 2001 Provide crime reduction advice to all victims of Robbery from July 2001 onwards

Memorial Gardens - Before the Improvement Scheme.



1. Dense vegetation made viewing the Grade II Listed Highfields Building from the high street virtually impossible.



2. Dense vegetation and thick tree canopies made the gardens shady, dark and dangerous. Crime was commonplace within the Gardens.

Memorial Gardens - After the Garden Improvement Scheme.



1. Pathways have been relayed and new high quality turf put down. The openness and safety of the site has been dramatically improved.



2. An area was designed specifically as a backdrop for wedding photographs.



3. Spring and summer bulbs have been planted to make the gardens more attractive and to encourage local residents to use the Gardens as a public open space.

People are now using the gardens as a local facility. Indeed, people who previously were wary of walking across the gardens now use them as a pedestrian route to work and to the town centre.

Police have reported substantially lower crime figures for the area.



4. The listed Highfields building can now be seen from High Street.

Andrew Hewitt & Melanie Jordan

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Chief inspector Ellie Bird
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Tel: 0121 6266000

7 July 2001

Dear Chief Inspector Ellie Bird

RE: 'People, Place and Identity'

We are two artists who work in a Public Art context. We are particularly interested in working with the community and have completed a number of projects in which we have made new work as a result of our contact and engagement with a specific community of people.

We have been invited to participate in a new project in West Bromwich entitled 'People, Place and Identity' funded by PAWM (Public Arts West Midlands). The project will enable three sets of artists to work with the idea of 'Action - Research', the artists are encouraged to research their area of interest and make a modest temporary work in order to discuss and communicate this research. The project has limited funding therefore it is not a grand scheme, simply a beginning of developing new approaches to Public and Community Art.

The time allocated is 10 - 20 days to research and produce a new work. We envisage an October 2001 start date.

We are very interested in working with the West Midlands Police. We see the Police Service as central to the well being of the community. We propose an 'Action - Resarch' project which aims to explore this relationship.

Specific proposals of work will be defined after initial research - visits and a meeting with officers. We have identified the areas of initial research as :

Infrastructures of the institution - Where do the Police work?
What are the structures for action/ decision-making?

Community Policing - How do the Police engage with the community?

Police Identity - Now are the Police perceived within specific communitites?

Please find enclosed information of recent projects and our resume. We hope you are interested in the project and would like to aid us with our research. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Jordan & Andrew Hewitt