

Tilley Awards 2003

Project Title - **Operation Zoom**

Category - **Crime and Disorder Reduction**

Name of Police Force - **Surrey Police**

Endorsing Chief Officer - **Assistant Chief Constable Vic Towell**

Contact Details:

Name – **Chief Supt. Jerry Kirkby**

Position – **Divisional Commander West Surrey**

Address – **Guildford Police Station, Margaret Road, Guildford, Surrey**

Telephone – **01483 653000**

E-mail – 958@surrey.pnn.police.uk

Our Ref: VT/lb/jp
Your Ref:



SURREY
POLICE

Ms. Tricia Perkins
Crime & Policing Group, Room 246a
Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON SW1H 9AT

Vic Towell MBA Dip Crim (Cantab)
Assistant Chief Constable
(Territorial Operations)

29th May 2003

Dear Ms. Perkins

TILLEY AWARDS
'OPERATION ZOOM

Please find enclosed the hard copy of the Tilley Award nomination 2003 from Surrey Police. A copy has been simultaneously e-mailed to you, as requested.

All the criteria you require is attached:-

- ◆ Front sheet
- ◆ Thirteen copies of the completed application package

I have no hesitation in recommending Op Zoom for consideration for a Tilley Award. Whilst, on the face of it, this is a standard police 'Buy and Bust' drugs operation, the operation differs in that it went beyond the point of arrest and charge and sought to deal with the issues of supply to addicts and their treatment during the hiatus following the operation. Often, in neglecting these issues, a simple drugs raid can actually exacerbate crime problems in an area, rather than ameliorate quality of life in the community.

/continued

I therefore strongly support this application.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vic Towell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "V".

Vic Towell

Description of project – Operation Zoom

Objectives

The Safer Guildford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership's second Community Safety Strategy 2002-2005 was launched in April 2002 in line with the statutory requirements. A lengthy process had been undertaken towards the end of 2001/beginning of 2002 to collect and collate a variety of data and information that would form the basis of the Community Safety Strategy. This data collection included information from a residential fear of crime survey, a crime audit, local authority data around environmental issues such as abandoned vehicles, graffiti and nuisance neighbours, and data from a variety of other agencies.

When the data was collated and analysed by the CDRP it became clear through a mapping system which overlay fear of crime data over actual crime data and local authority data that several key issues were emerging as clear indicators of issues held within the borough of Guildford. These issues formed the basis of 14 project groups listed in the Community Safety Strategy 200-2005 as the main objectives over the next 3 years. Each project group had several clear targets as identified through the audit process and, where appropriate, taking into account pre-set government targets. Each project group was subsequently formed with a relevant multi-agency membership list and each group started to form an action plan outlining how they intended to achieve their targets.

One of these project groups was the Communities Against Drugs group. Their targets were clear:

- To arrest at least 15 suppliers of Class A Drugs each year
- To reduce substantially the number of drug related deaths

The membership of this group is wide and varied and includes the Police, the local authority, Surrey Alcohol and Drugs Advisory Service, ACORN drug treatment services and arrest referral worker, Surrey Probation Substance Misuse worker and the local Primary Care Trust substance misuse worker.

Since April 2002 this group has been involved in identifying projects to help them achieve those above targets. These projects include the following:

- An awareness leaflet based on the legal status of cannabis for young people
- A pilot for crack and heroin users based on holistic/alternatives approaches to stress management
- Obtaining the funding and drawing up the paperwork allowing for the appointment of an assertive drugs outreach worker to work between several agencies with street homeless and other chaotic users to ensure that all appointments are met etc

A clear issue began arising very early on in this process around the lack of local services for crack users and also the increase in crack usage that was being seen locally amongst the worker. Based on previous national research and also local information available from workers dealing with the clients it was becoming increasingly apparent to all agencies that crack use within the borough was increasing rapidly. The group was clear that the effects of increased crack usage both for the individual user and also the community would be devastating and that all efforts needed to prioritise this issue. This was communicated back to the CDRP Executive group.

Around the same time, in August 2002, the Police became aware of the first 'crack house' opening in the borough. By utilising the knowledge of drugs specialist officers it was recognised that this needed to be dealt with effectively and efficiently in order to have a lasting effect. Operation Zoom was formed with the following clear objectives:

1. To close down the identified "crack house" and to disrupt the supply of Class A drugs in the West Surrey area by the execution of search warrants, arrest of identified offenders and the expeditious investigation of offences disclosed.
2. To reduce crime and the fear of crime by making a public statement via Operation Zoom that Surrey Police, and its partner agencies, had the will and capacity to effectively counter the threat of Class A drugs.
3. To be able to offer more long term treatment benefits to identified users and dealers with the intention of trying to sustain long term withdrawal from illegal drug usage.

How did we define the problem

Information was available from several different sources to assist in the full definition of the problem:

The ACORN arrest referral worker reported that 25% of her clients were stating that they were using both crack and heroin. She also stated the following:

Just Heroin users make up 21% of total seen.

Clients using only Crack make up just 2% of the total seen for the year.

The average expenditure on drugs for each client group was as follows:

Crack £187.50 per week, or £9,750 per annum

Heroin £270.89 per week or £14,086.28 per annum

Heroin and Crack £589.39 per week or £30,648.28 per annum

She also noted that her local observations were confirmed by national research that was reporting that most crack users do not use the drug in isolation but also use heroin and also, that the problems caused by this combined use in terms of crime and health are greater than those caused by single use of either drug.

For just the 24 clients that she had seen for a crack and heroin usage this amounted to a total annual expenditure for them of in excess of £735,000. It was also recognised that this amount needed to be funded from one source or another. The majority of these clients were unemployed and it is expected that a large proportion of this amount would be funded through crime, particularly acquisitive crime.

There was also some additional information received from the local prescribing G.P.s as they were also seeing their historical heroin clients now also taking crack in addition to the heroin.

A rise in complaints received by the local authority housing department concerning drug taking/dealing particularly from the area where the 'crack house' was situated was also seen. Residents complained about noise, comings and goings at various times of the night and other such incidents.

Many of the original targets had gone through the Community Incident Action Group process. This group is a monthly multi-agency group which looks at the following:

A significant risk to public safety or public order; or to his or her own safety and/or causes a significant amount of public distress or concern to the community

And

There is reason to believe that referral to the CIAG can reduce the risk or concern

Suitable cases might include people who comply with the above and

- a: Have known psychiatric problems
- b: Are known to misuse alcohol and drugs
- c: Are subject to statutory supervision and are missing
- d: Persist in criminal or anti-social behaviour.

Please note: Demands and difficulty experienced by any particular agency are not, in themselves, sufficient reason to refer. Neither is the CIAG intended to replace normal inter-agency liaison including case conferences between agencies most involved but may lead to them.

Other forms of engagement had been tried with some of the targets and it was recognised that for some of them this type of operational enforcement engagement represented the only thing left.

All of this information was collated and added to the data and information available from the Police. Data available from the Police included crime figures for acquisitive crime. This was showing a significant rise in autocrime and burglaries. Further analysis of these crimes were raising the same names as suspects as was appearing on further data available as shown below.

In September 2002 a test purchasing operation commenced based around initially the 'crack house'. The information from this operation was matched with other source information, covert operations and the suspect names from the acquisitive crime. Many of the names were the same. An analytical association chart was drawn up, by a police crime analyst, in order to log and map all of the relevant associations between individuals, addresses, intelligence received and vehicles. This produced a very useful and easy to view chart with all of the relevant information contained upon it.

This chart and the other available information/intelligence were utilised on a daily basis with daily briefings for a small group of individuals directly concerned with the operational side of Operation Zoom. It revealed that the problem of crack usage was increasing and more known nominals were being drawn in to the process.

How did you deal with the problem

Phase One – The collation of intelligence and evidence via sources, test purchasers and covert operations.

An initial action was to send test purchasers into the community. This was initially geographically linked to the location of the 'crack house' which was situated in a rural part of a busy borough, in the middle of a local authority housing estate. Assistance was sought and obtained from the local authority who provided accommodation for the test purchasers in the nearby town centre. This gave the test purchasers more credibility. Money for the operation was obtained from the Communities Against Drugs money through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Surrey Police also contributed heavily towards the cost of the operation in staff time and some overtime payments. Source information was also utilised and collated together with covert operations around the crack house location. Over several weeks the intelligence grew and more people were offering the test purchasers drugs and stolen property as they became more established within the circle of nominals. Daily briefings and debriefings were held in order to ensure that all relevant information was submitted and subsequently analysed in order that the full picture could be ascertained and that all necessary evidence was assimilated correctly to assist with the final prosecution stage.

Phase Two – The arrest and prosecution stage linking in with CPS and Surrey Probation

Prior to the culmination of Operation Zoom when the main offenders were targeted and arrested pre-meetings were held with both the crown Prosecution Service and Surrey Probation Service. This was to ensure that the evidence was presented to the highest possible standard and to ensure good liaison between the main interested parties. Good advice was issued by the CPS at this stage concerning the charges to be brought on all of the main offenders. They advised that instead of charging the offence of supplying a class A drug that we offer a charge of conspiracy to supply a class A drug where appropriate. This has saved an immense amount of court time.

The operation culminated on 21st January 2003. The following is an extract from the operational order completed for the arrest stage:

- 1.1 Following numerous successful deployments a number of persons have been identified as being suppliers of Class A drugs and being concerned in the same.
- 1.2 Today is the culmination of Operation Zoom with the execution of a series of warrants with the identified persons being arrested for the offences disclosed.

2. Intention

- 2.1 To close down the identified "crack house" and to disrupt the supply of Class A drugs in the West Surrey area by the execution of search warrants, arrest of identified offenders and the expeditious investigation of offences disclosed.
- 2.2 To reduce crime and the fear of crime by making a public statement via Operation Zoom that Surrey Police has the will and capacity to effectively counter the threat of Class A drugs.

- 2.3 To ensure the safety of police officers and members of the public during the course of this operation.
- 2.4 To ensure the police operation is conducted in a manner that complies with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

3. Method

- 3.1 As a result of the ongoing investigation & intelligence operation a number of persons have been identified as being concerned in the supply of class A drugs and will be arrested today. A full intelligence package has been prepared for each target and will be passed to each team leader.
- 3.2 Briefing will be in 2 phases at Aldershot. The Command Team will deliver the strategic briefing to supervisors & team leaders, which will be followed by operational briefings to the various teams.
- 3.3 All arrest teams will attend the Royal Military Police Station at Aldershot for briefing at 0445hrs on Tuesday 21st January 2003. Supervisors & team leaders will attend the strategic briefing where they will be allocated their targets and intelligence packs.
- 3.4 These officers will then cascade the briefing to their teams & will deliver a tactical briefing for their individual targets based on the intelligence packages.
- 3.5 Each arrest team will have resources appropriate to their particular target drawn from Method of Entry & PSU officers along with a CID officer & other non-PSU officers where required.
- 3.6 Due to the nature of the offences being investigated; the nature of evidence sought & the potential threat from persons within the premises due to the likely penalties a rapid entry will be made wherever practical. This will be carried out by the trained & equipped PSU staff. However, each target must be assessed individually with due regard to any factors that may alter that intention & a decision made by the team leader.
- 3.7 Where any of the targets are tasked to the Tactical Support Team, they will operate in accordance with their SOPs and will have their own operational order to cover any deployment.
- 3.8 All designated premises will be entered simultaneously at 0600hrs or as close to that time as possible. If the target individual is present they will be arrested by a PSU officer. Once the premises and any persons within have been secured any non-PSU team members will enter the premises & will be tasked by the team leader. This tasking will include any searching that does not require a full search team & the seizure of exhibits. A list of property is included in the intelligence package. The CID officer at each address will oversee the investigative process, including any searching & intelligence gathering.

Of the original 18 targets 15 were arrested that morning and the other 3 were subsequently arrested. Items of stolen property and amounts of class A and B drugs were located at various addresses and additional people not targeted through Operation Zoom were arrested in target premises after being found in possession of Class a and/or Class B drugs.

Phase Three – Diversion and treatment of offenders and local users left without dealers.

This stage utilised the abilities of local drugs outreach workers, and additional arrest referral workers. The CDRP were also able to provide extra resources for detoxification and rehabilitation places. Good relationships have existed for some time before the operation with the drug service workers, both the treatment service providers and also the outreach workers. However, on the morning of the operation described below it was ensured that extra staff were on duty. This involved additional workers being drafted in from across the county. Arrest Referral workers spoke to everyone coming into custody. The offenders who were subsequently remanded in custody were linked immediately to the CARAT team in prison ensuring quick assessment and work could be carried out where it had been requested. The offenders who were given bail also had the opportunity to seek assistance with any addiction as well. This was carried out on site and then at subsequent agreed meeting times with anyone who took this offer up.

The local drugs outreach workers were also increased out on the streets to assess the immediate impact upon users that had been left without their dealers and therefore access to their chosen drugs.

Additional resources had also been obtained from the CDRP to provide fast access into detox. and rehabilitation centre for anyone requiring it, where funding could not be readily accessed. Prescribing G.P.s were also notified as a courtesy as it may have had an impact on their clients.

Phase Four – The establishment of a Shared Care Drug Specialist forum.

This meets regularly which includes the prescribing G.P.s, the Police, the outreach drugs services and the arrest referral provider. This group meets regularly and ensures that any early indicators of similar problems are raised, discussed, monitored and actioned, if appropriate. Informal weekly meetings are also held between the drugs intelligence officer and the arrest referral worker.

How successful was our approach

- The 18 original targets were all arrested. Of those all were charged with conspiracy to supply Class A Drugs. 12 entered guilty pleas at court due to the high standard of evidence against them. 4 have already been given custodial sentences, 4 are awaiting sentence, 3 have been given DTTOs, 1 has been given a community sentence, and 6 are still awaiting trial.
- Crime figures - Significant reduction in burglaries and autocrime after the arrest phase. Total number of burglaries and autocrime show an initial 30% reduction on West Surrey Division. Comparisons up to 6th April were still showing a 26% reduction in autocrime and a 23% reduction in burglaries.
- Residents have reported significant improvements in their lives since the dealers have been removed. The number of complaints to the local authority decreased significantly.
- A prescribing G.P. states clients are still 'complaining' about the lack of heroin and crack in Guildford. These clients also stated that they were intending to stay on their treatment medication rather than use other drugs at this stage.

Costs of Operation Zoom

The cost of the operation totalled £44,414.90. This included sub-totals for overtime, cash required for operational reasons and expenses. On the 26 people currently arrested this equates to a cost of £1,708.27 per dealer. Of that total £30,000 was funded by the Guildford and Waverley Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships from their Communities Against Drugs funds. It is also believed that a significant saving in subsequent court proceedings have been made due to two factors:

- The level of evidence was of such a high standard that the majority of targets entered guilty pleas and therefore savings have been made on not needing to enter long and expensive court cases.
- Also, due to excellent liaison with both the Magistrates Courts and CPS the decision was taken to charge the majority of offenders with Conspiracy to Supply Class A drugs. By using this particular charge instead of traditional charges like Supplying and offering to supply this enabled us to avoid the old style committal proceedings which are both lengthy drawn out affairs and expensive. Instead they were able to attend Magistrates Court in the first instance and then fast tracked into Crown Court within 14 days.

All of the targets had previous convictions, some as many as 50+. May of these previous convictions are for burglaries and autocrime. The costs of these crimes are shown as average prices below:

| Category of cost | Best estimate per incident (£) – (Brand and Price 2000) | | |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Burglary Dwelling | Theft of motor vehicle | Theft from motor vehicle |
| In anticipation of crime | 430 | 690 | 70 |
| As consequence of crime | 1400 | 4000 | 480 |
| In response to crime | 490 | 70 | 30 |
| TOTAL | 2320 | 4760 | 580 |

Availability of crack and heroin since Op. Zoom

As can be seen from the anecdotal evidence as well as from source information there has been a significant decrease in the availability of both crack and heroin in both Guildford and Waverley. The prices of the drugs do not appear to have been affected much because it is just not available. There is recent information that some users are travelling to places like Merton, and other South London boroughs and Woking to pick up some Class A drugs for their own use, but not for dealing purposes. There is also recent intelligence that one or two dealers have started to offer crack and heroin again in Guildford. Intelligence gathering is being done at this time with a view to executing warrants as soon as the evidence is available.

How does this project fit into an overall approach to problem solving

As can be seen from the introduction section to the objectives above this clearly formed part of an overall strategy. The partners involved in the Safer Guildford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership all recognise the importance of being in a good position to identify the problems before responding. Approximately 12 months ago the CDRP invested in a partnership analyst, the first in Surrey. This analyst is employed by Surrey Police on behalf of the Safer Guildford CDRP. This role has a responsibility to the CDRP for identifying issues that are becoming a problem. He produces the analysis for the relevant project group which is then able to work with the partner agencies represented and, the community where relevant, to choose the most appropriate solution.

The Community Safety Strategy has become the Policing Plan, the community safety chapter of the Local Strategic Partnership and the way that the borough of Guildford is made an even safer place for all participating agencies. All partners have recognised the need to be sure of what we are doing and why we are doing it and to then look at how it benefits the borough of Guildford, or not.

Crack raids: 19 charged

activity at an early stage." Det Insp Steve Rothhouse, who is involved in organising and running Operation Zoom, added that it had gone smoothly.

"This is not the end of our efforts to combat drug supply - indeed, you could say it is the start," he said.

It is hoped that by cracking down on illegal suppliers, the rate of crimes like burglaries and theft from cars will fall. Last week, this newspaper reported that addicts using a combination of crack and heroin needed to find an estimated £589 a week to fund their habit.

Two drug referral workers were present for the raids, and a fast-track drug treatment programme will be offered to all offenders brought into custody.

Surry Police is appealing to members of the public to contact them if they have informa-

tion on illegal dealers.

searched. Officers attended a 5am briefing before going out in teams of around 10 to raid the suspects' houses.

By 8am all teams were in place, poised for simultaneous strikes.

Clipped in protective head and body armour, the officers broke down the doors with battering rams and secured the premises.

Those arrested, and any other individuals in the properties, were handcuffed as a precaution while full searches were carried out.

Search teams uncovered drug paraphernalia, suspected stolen property and a number of weapons.

West Surry divisional commander, Ch Supt Jerry Kirby, said it was a significant breakthrough into Guildford's growing class A drug problem - and warned dealers they will not be tolerated.

He said: "This operation has shown that we are taking our

int and dsmore

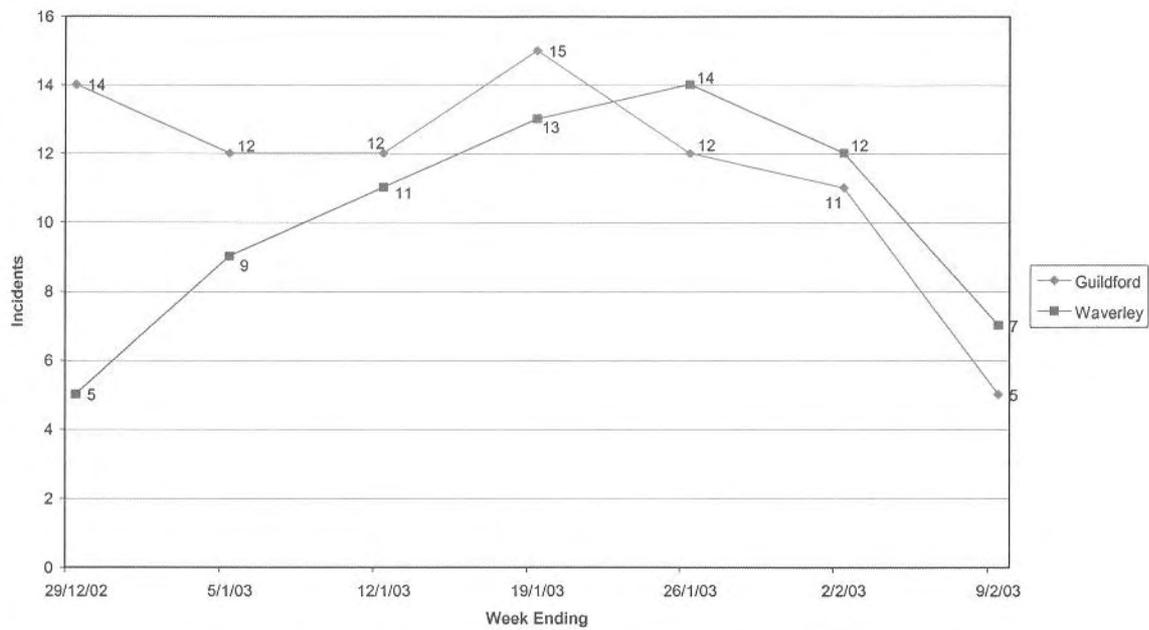
people have class A drug a series of throughout

a number of an one oper- and one of toy.

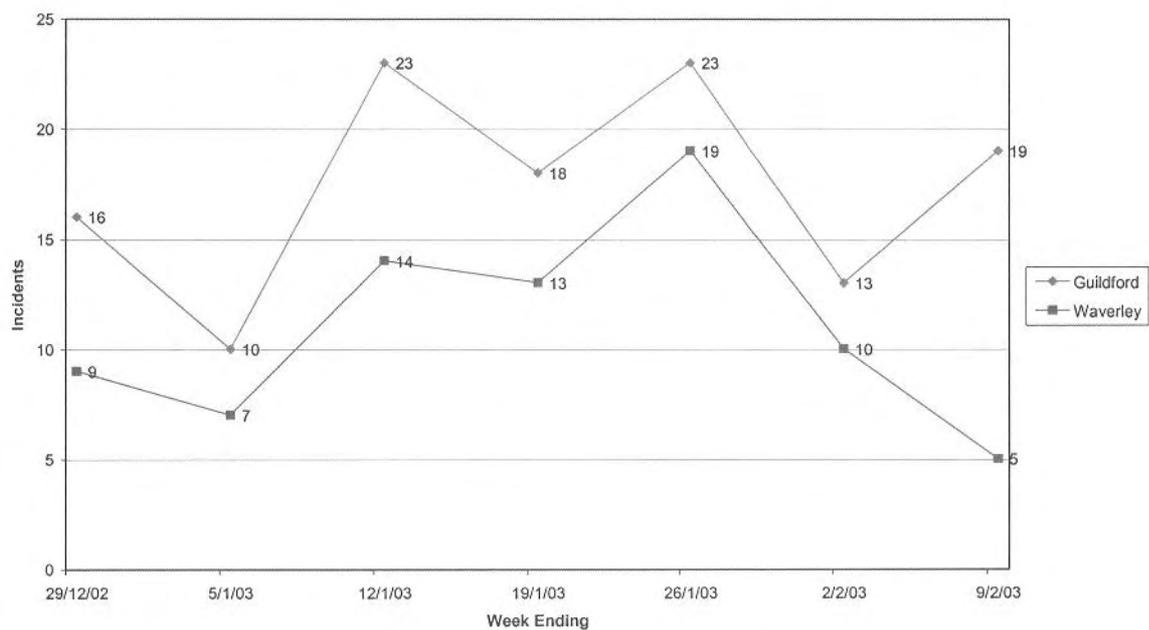
are part of a drug crack i in October

million in the tesday when de 25 arrests, 50 officers, ives, search ers and rapid ded houses wavelet, and alleged deal ights operate ertes raided





Burglary Other in C Division, by week and borough, since 25th December 2002



Burglaries in C Division, by week and type, since 25th December 2002

