

86

Tilley Award 2003

Project

Corley Services, M6, Warwickshire

'Putting the brakes on motorway service crime'

Summary

'Welcome Break', Corley motorway services, M6, Warwickshire was typical of any service area catering to approximately 2.5 million travelling members of the public twenty four hours of the day every day of the year. And like other services crime and fear of crime issues hindered the business operation. The overriding concern was the scale of vehicle related offences, in particular theft of/from cars and seizure of high value HGV loads. The amenity building's presented a picture of shop theft and attacks on the games machines with some robbery related offences.

Crime pattern analysis was undertaken and reflected 60% of all crime on site was vehicle related, in fact such offences accounted for 10% of all auto-crime offences in the Borough. The most notable item stolen from vehicles was a laptop computer which out of 170 such offences over 12 months accounted for some 99 theft from unattended vehicles. The lorry parks were also given 'unwelcome attention' with 40 such offences out of the stated 170 offences HGV related. Foreign lorry drivers were particularly vulnerable as they were not aware of the risk in leaving loads unattended.

The principle partnership of Welcome Break and Warwickshire Police agreed to install access barriers to and from the minor road access off the services to reduce permeability. The car park benefited from 'Your car is valuable' advice signage as well as improved lighting and redefining of parking areas to improve natural surveillance. Laptop safes were also added to the north-bound to offer storage for such high value goods.

Funding from the County Council and Borough Council permitted funding of HGV multi-lingual advice signs warning drivers to guard against vehicle/load related offences. The amenity building benefited from an integrated CCTV system.

The initiative to date has over a 12 month comparison period reduced total crime by 30%, theft of vehicle offences has been reduced by 94% and theft from vehicles has been reduced by 45%. The number of laptop thefts was 28 which was a significant reduction on the previous year. There has been an increase in theft shops but is believed to be due to the CCTV aiding detections as opposed to a list of 'unknown losses'

The open and frank dialogue with 'Welcome Break' management continues to be fundamental to the success or otherwise of this initiative.

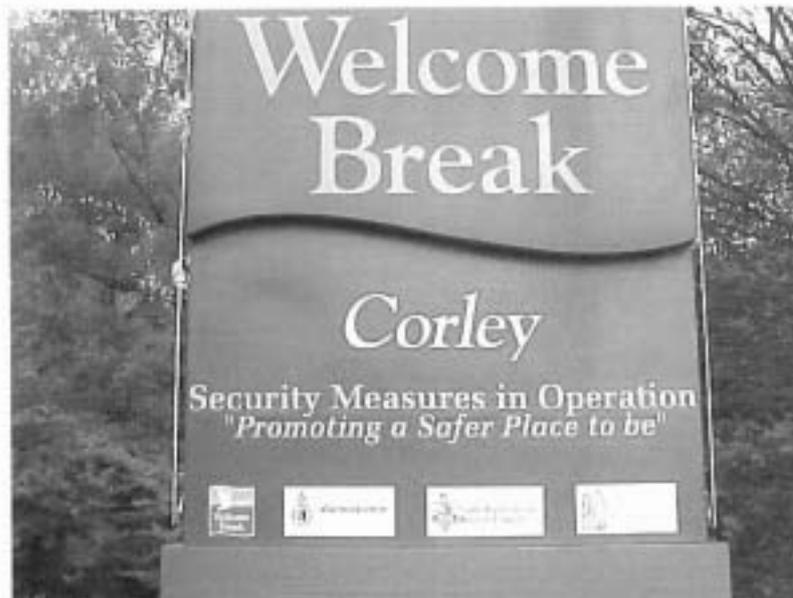
Detective Sergeant Martyn Stephens

Police Constable Wayne Cooke

Warwickshire Police Crime Reduction/Architectural Liaison Officers



Warwickshire



*Corley
Motorway Services*

*'Putting the brakes on motorway service area
crime'*

***'Crime & Disorder Reduction Initiative'
Tilley Award Submission 2003***

*Detective Sergeant Martyn Stephens
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Northern Area Community Safety Unit

Corley Motorway Services
M6, Warwickshire
Crime & Disorder Reduction Initiative

Introduction

Corley Motorway Service area is situated between Junction 3 and Junction 4 of the M6 motorway. The services were built at the same time as the motorway and it has a split location on either side of the motorway and linked with a footbridge. The service area is sited in a rural location and has a number of small B roads that link it to the existing village of Keresley in one direction and Bedworth Town in the other. Further on from Keresley is the City of Coventry a matter of 6 miles away. Keresley village has suffered high degrees of deprivation since the Miners strike of 1984 and has been supported with Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) monies and European funding there are still high levels of unemployment and social disorder.

The facility is split on both sides of the carriageway. Each side has building containing various amenities catering for the travelling public on a 24/7 basis every day of the year. They include car and HGV parks and fuel forecourts.

The service station sites can be accessed via service roads that join the small B road. When the site was built, lockable swing gates were located at the entrance to each side, limiting vehicular movements. These gates were put out of action on many occasions by HGV's forcing their way through from the surrounding industrial units, saving them valuable mileage and driving time. The nearest motorway junction is some 7/8 miles away.

On the southbound carriageway is a purpose built police post that originally was used as a traffic base for the Divisional area and motorway police. Over the years, as centralisation of specialist units has taken place, the post is no longer used on a daily basis.

It is estimated that the service station attracts around 2.5 million people who make use of the facilities in any one-year.

The Analysis of the Crime Problem

The Corley service area is part of the Fillongley police beat and covered by the Policing sector of Coleshill. The Coleshill area is mostly rural and has a number of high profile hotels and golf courses. Once the traffic department moved out of the service area in the mid 90's the services were then policed from the local town of Bedworth and more recently by Coleshill. During the latter part of the 90's the service station began to show its age, there was little redevelopment by the owners and the barriers were never repaired. Despite a number of visits by local police crime prevention officers and senior officers very little was done to improve conditions on the site and reduce crime.

In 2000 the North Warwickshire Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council and the Police under the Crime and Disorder Partnership came together and as part of the audit process highlighted Corley as a location requiring action in the three year strategy.

Analysis was made of the crime problem at the location in the years April 2000 to March 2001 and April 2001 to March 2002. Figure 1 (Appendix A refers), shows in graph form 8 types of offences committed in 2000/2001. The total number of reported crimes on the service area was 206. The major problem that was clear to see is that of vehicle crime, theft from vehicles, theft of vehicles and damage to vehicles. These three offences added up to 124 some 60% of all crime.

For the beat of Fillongley the crimes on the service represented 40% of the annual total. Of the vehicle crime committed on the service area, it was 10% of the North Warwickshire Borough area of total 1,165.

Figure 2 (Appendix A refers) shows the reported crime for the period of April 2001 to March 2002 at the service area. The total number of crime reported was 321 an increase of 115 on the previous 12 months. There had been an increase of Theft from vehicles from 104 to 170. Out of the 170 offences, 40 of them, were theft from Heavy Goods Vehicles. On researching the complainants it was found that many of them were foreign drivers from various European countries. The vehicles were being attacked overnight normally whilst the drivers were asleep in their tractor units. Items stolen included electrical good, alcohol and in one case 200 car tyres.

There was also an increase of damage to vehicles from 10 to 23 these are attempt theft from motor vehicles including Lorries, and in the main were the slashing of curtain sided HGV's to see what loads were being carried. Out of the 23, 11 were HGV's and 12 other vehicles. There were also 4 Robbery offences on the service area, of these 2 involved HGV's in one case the lorry driver was hi jacked at knife point and the other was an attempt with similar modus operandi. There were therefore 53 offences involving HGV's. Of the remaining 170 theft from vehicle offences, 99 of them involved the theft of Lap Top computers from cars parked unattended. This represented 58% of the theft from vehicle. Some were left on open display but in many cases the offenders had smashed a window and pulled down the rear seat giving access to the boot to steal the items.

There were 17 theft of vehicles from the site. Looking at the crime reports 9 offences occurred at the petrol pumps, with the victims leaving the keys in the ignition, 2 further offences do not give a location but again the keys were in the ignition. On 12 of the 17 thefts the northbound carriage was the scene of the crime.

There were also thefts from the machines in the games areas. On one occasion a member of staff had confronted youths and had been threatened with violence so they could make their escape. In the theft other this related mainly to opportunist thefts of handbags and purses from the public and private areas.

Response to the problem

Before tackling this project, research was done on a National basis looking for good practice on how to deal with Motorway Service Areas. At the time this was done in the autumn of 2001 there were no guidelines or case studies to follow. One thing that the research highlighted was that the problems suffered at Corley were not isolated and Motorway Service areas across the Country had the same crime patterns.

In January 2002 a meeting took place with the new National security Manager for Welcome Break group, the new site General Manager, the local Police Community Safety Officer and I representing the Crime and Disorder Partnership. The problems of the site were candidly discussed and there was general agreement to put a plan into place to reduce crime. The General Manager highlighted problems of intimidation by local offenders of staff who came from the same housing estates. The staff were reluctant to take action or report incidents. Moral was poor and there were unreported losses in the retail outlets and on the garage forecourt areas.

Access to the site was of concern to all present. The two service roads gave local criminals opportunity to enter and commit crime. Local criminals would drive onto the site fill up pool cars (common vehicles used by any number of criminals without a particular owner) with fuel and leave with out paying. It also allowed travelling criminals to leaving the motorway at this point and commit crimes in the more affluent areas.

The following Actions were agreed as a result of this meeting

- Partnership Mission statement signage
- Closure of access points to the service area
 - Press Strategy to deal with Closure
 - Involve Borough Council in road signage
- Public Awareness signage
 - Awareness raising Foreign Lorry Drivers
 - Customer care signage
- Action to tackle Drive offs
 - Involving BOSS British Oil Security Syndicate
 - Rule setting signage
- CCTV retail outlets
 - Staff training
- Police Crackdown
 - Use of target policing with action days using overt and covert units.
 - ANPR (automatic Number plate recognition) cameras

This would be phase one and would be assessed after 6 months.

Partnership mission statement

High Impact signage was designed and placed on the exit of the northbound and southbound carriageway as vehicles entered the site. It stated 'Security Measurers in Operation. Promoting a Safer Place to be', reflecting the partnership between the stakeholders, as per figure 3 (Appendix B refers). It gave a deterrent message to criminals, reassurance to the public and showed the commitment of the partnership to the staff to solve the problems.

Closure of access from the minor roads

Welcome Break agreed to spend around £40,000 to install barriers to the access roads. It was clear that any design would have to withstand wilful damage by HGV's and so rise and fall barriers were ordered as per figure 4 (Appendix B refers). They were capable of stopping a coach travelling at 30 miles an hour. The access to the service area was used by most of the local population as a short cut, to travel to the nearest junction would take time and money in extra mileage. Closure of the access roads would be unpopular, there was a need for a careful media strategy to gain public confidence. The use of local newspapers, parish magazines, local radio interviews and the Central Television were used to promote the safety to the local community. The thrust of the campaign was to protect the community from travelling criminals.

Meetings were made with the installers to ensure that provision was made for access to emergency service vehicles. In the event of a major incident the duty manager of the site was able to lower the barriers using a master key.

Installation of the barriers was planned for April 2002 and strict allocation of proximity readers was made to maintain the integrity of the system. Passes were distributed and in early May 2002 the barriers became fully operative.

Warwickshire County Council as part of the partnership agreed to produce and erect 'access closed' road signs on the approach to the barriers from the minor roads in the area. The signs would give information to the public but also act as rule setting to local criminals that the service access was closed. The Highways department was approached, to work in partnership, to update the current services station signs on the motorway to warn of 'no exit from the motorway at the service station' but due to lack of finance they were unable to do so.

Theft from lorry/HGV's

As mentioned in the analysis there was an increase in the attacks on Lorries parking overnight on both sides of the carriageway. There was a main parking area designated for Heavy Goods Vehicles but due to the volume of vehicles, once this was full, many parked along the access roads. There was a significant number of Foreign Lorries being attacked. The location of the service area was such that from the ports of Dover, Folkestone etc. Corley was the first stop up Country or the last before catching the

early ferry home. There was a need to raise the awareness amongst the drivers of the dangers of leaving loads unattended.

Research was made all over the Country to source good practice in dealing with this problem. The Home Office were about to release lorry security literature produced in Italian, Spanish, French and German. These were then used to hand to drivers by staff at the service area. In partnership with the local technical college, they were asked to produce a warning to drivers using the same four languages. The translations were then incorporated into large yellow signs, and placed at the entrances to the HGV parks and on the walking routes of the drivers heading towards the facilities. These signs were approx. four foot wide and three foot deep as per figure 5 (Appendix C refers)

Customer care

At the same time high impact signage was produced for car users as part of a customer care package. The signs educate customers to remove valuable items and secure their vehicles as per figure 6 (Appendix C refers). The design of the signs was similar to the lorry signs to give a standard message. These signs were placed at strategic locations on the car parks and thoroughfares. The car parks over the years were showing their age with the parking surface and white lines degrading due to heavy use.

Welcome break signed up to business watch and being part of the scheme they were able to receive data of relevant crime patterns in the area, suspicious vehicles etc and they were able to give early warning to other associated business of potential problems.

Public lighting covering the car parks was an issue and following an assessment of the Luminaries additional lighting columns were added and level of lamination upgraded where required.

Stock losses at the forecourts.

It was obvious when speaking with the management that the forecourts were very busy areas and weekly takings showed this. There was a constant problem of people driving off without paying for fuel. Records showing reported crimes 33 and 34 for the last two years. There was however concern that the full extent of the problem was not being shown. The forecourt was experiencing stock losses of around £2500 per month. There was a problem with staff not reporting incidents either due to the number taking place, the intimidation by local offenders or the fact that reporting to the police was becoming increasingly difficult. Police were not always available, it being policed by the local town and there were long delays reporting by phone.

Advice was sort from the British Oil Security Syndicate (B.O.S.S) who gave details of ways to reduce fuel forecourt crime to participating brands which included Corley with its 'shell' station, hence staff were given training on the recording and reporting of such crimes.

There was a need to deter offenders from committing the crimes, increase the chances of being caught, and rule setting removing the excuse. Safety notices were used to educate the public to remove ignition keys and secure their vehicles before paying. The notice highlighted that non-payments are reported to the police. Originally shell refused to allow these notices to be displayed on the actual pump but due to the partnership working with Welcome Break, they agreed to trail the notices being displayed next to the price display.

A fully marked police vehicle was deployed on the service area and placed on the respective forecourt entrances. The vehicle was used as a 'distraction' vehicle to increase the perceived risk to offenders of being caught. It was noticeable from figures supplied by the forecourt manager that the stock losses were reduced on the forecourt, which had the police vehicle.

To increase the moral of the staff and provide a means of communication between different locations on both sides of the carriageway a radio scheme was implemented. The radios would give confidence to staff to tackle problems and summon assistance if required in an effort to increase the risk to offenders of being caught.

Theft from retail outlets

As previously mentioned the full extent of this problem was unknown. Offences were not being reported to the management or police. Staff were unwilling to challenge people who they believed were committing offences. Stock losses were found to be very high. Staff training was to be carried out and the 'hot products' in the store relocated. Consideration was given to a new digital CCTV system being installed.

Police crackdown.

As part of a Force wide initiative to tackle auto crime Corley was used for a number of high profile action days. These involved uniformed officers patrolling the car parks at high crime times for instance 7a to 11a when there was a problem with the theft of Lap Top Computers from travelling salespersons vehicles. Officers were in high visibility jackets and issued 'Vulnerable Vehicle Tickets' to those vehicles that were openly displaying property that could be stolen. These tickets have the appearance of fixed penalty notices, but inside give advice to the driver, re the risks of leaving property on display. A carbon copy of the form was returned to the Community Safety Unit to provide data on the times of the patrols, the number of vehicles still leaving items on display and the sorts of property they were leaving.

The force ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) unit were placed on the services but on each occasion within a short period of time they had ran out of resources. A number of arrests were made but they related to travelling criminals who were wanted for offences elsewhere in the country.

Another tactic used was to have Officers in full uniform on one side of the service station and covert staff on the other side. It was hoped that offenders on seeing uniformed police would move to the other side of the carriageway commit crime and

be arrested in the act. A number of these operations were carried out, some arrests were made, but these were not for vehicle crime.

More long term measures

It was agreed at the initial meeting that an evaluation would take place in six months. There were a number of measures that would require investment by Welcome break, and any successes for the project would give valuable evidence to request funds from the Welcome Break board of directors.

The vehicle parks, both car and lorry, needed to be re-designed and white lined to give an order to the parking and better natural surveillance by customers using the facilities.

There was a need to update the CCTV monitoring on site. The cameras used in some public areas gave poor images and procedures were not being followed. The systems needed to achieve what they were installed for, increasing the risk to offenders of being caught and providing reassurance to the public. There was no CCTV on the forecourts or vehicle parks.

6 month evaluation.

All of the initial measures had been put in place. There had not been the anticipated problems with the closure of the access either in traffic congestion or public order/criminal damage attacks. In the first couple of weeks there had been verbal abuse given to staff regarding the closure but due to the increased police presence on site this soon stopped. Benefits to the access closure were felt across a number of issues. Staff reported a drop in suspicious persons wandering around the site and generally felt more secure. This was especially true in the retail shops, new digital CCTV had been installed, only two offences had been reported and the savings in 'unknown stock losses' were significant.

Figure 7 (Appendix D refers) gives the 6 month reported crime figures. It shows a large increase in reported forecourt theft of fuel. Staff were reporting more incidents to the police reflecting the true amount of offences being committed. The 'distraction' police vehicle was still being used and data from the forecourt manager showed that offences were committed on the carriageway that did not have the presence of the vehicle. There were problems with the vehicle in that it was not moved regularly and it was the same vehicle. Frequent visitors to the site would be aware of this and know that it was an unattended vehicle.

This chart also shows what appears to be a high level of theft from vehicle of 52, if the figures for the same period the previous year are then looked at there were 71. There was actually a decrease in those six months of 27%. There had been a reduction in the number of HGV's being attacked but the number of vehicles using the facilities had not reduced. There were no thefts of vehicle reported in the period. This was partly due to the access control, any theft of vehicle would mean the offenders would

have to use the motorway as the getaway route and stand an increase risk of being caught.

The foreign lorry signs remained in situ and are being used at other sites within the Welcome break group.

The police crackdown on the site was not sustainable. ANPR was useful but resource intensive and has only been used on two occasions. Officer's still visited the site to issue Vulnerable Vehicle Tickets but there was no regular targeting. The site was left to the crime reduction officers to maintain a presence. The motorway police CMPG (Central Motorway Patrol Group) were responsible for policing the site. However they could be anything up to 50 miles away and take along time to attend. The police building on site was rarely being used.

The partnership was encouraged with the results shown and agreed further funding and resources to the project. Welcome Break in particular, was willing to spend monies at the site and use some of the initiatives at other sites nationally as good practice. This lead to a national beat practice conference being hosted by Welcome Break.

12 months evaluation.

The crime figures for the period April 2002 to end of March 2003 are shown on figure 8 (Appendix D refers) year's figures.

It can be seen that there were reductions in 7 of the 9 crime types that were looked at. In particular the reduction in theft of vehicle from 17 to 1 is considerable and is almost certainly down to the closure of the access routes making the getaway more difficult. There was a reduction in the theft from vehicle from 170 to 93. Of those 93, 32 were from HGV's and loads that included electrical items, diesel and tyres were stolen. The number of Lap Top thefts was 28. This was a significant decrease on the previous year but was still the main target for thieves.

The reduction in theft from machines, damage to vehicles and others was small; the numbers of these crimes were also small compared to the total of offences. There was an increase in theft shops but this was due to the raised awareness of staff to the problem. The new CCTV system assisted in identifying such offences that had not been seen by staff.

The total crime reduction for the 12 months was 30%. Out of the 226 crimes reported only 33 were detected, of those 23 were theft from vehicle. The figure was still higher than the crimes for April 2000 to March 2001.

HGV crime remains significant and although there have been reductions in theft from vehicles the number of HGV crime remains about the same. Further measures are required to address this area of crime.

Improvements to the site

Welcome Break has continued to work with the Community Safety Unit to introduce further measures to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

The northbound car park has been resurfaced and white lined. Landscaping has taken place all over the site. This has improved the appearance of the site and increased the natural surveillance by those using the facilities. On the southbound site there has been the installation of a large decking area outside the café that over looks the car park again assisting with natural surveillance.

The CATCH radios piloted by staff were found to be very useful and as such there is now a site radio scheme with many more employees carrying radios.

Lap Top safes have been installed on a six-month trial on the northbound site as per figure 9 (Appendix E refers). A local company has provided a bank of 6 safes and they are being offered to customers on the Northbound as a free service in an attempt to get them to 'remove the target'. There are signs advertising the service.

Conclusion

Over the twelve month period there has been a 30% reduction of crime on the site. There has been a 94% reduction in theft of motor vehicle and 45% reduction in theft from vehicles. There is still a problem with HGV load theft and the theft of lap top computers. Further measures being introduced include the joint funding of Police Community Support Officer with the Welcome Break Group, Digital CCTV to the forecourts and the possible location of a 24hours business in the car parks to give natural surveillance.



Detective Sergeant Martyn Stephens



Police Constable Wayne Cooke

Crime Reduction/Architectural Liaison Officers
Northern Area Community Safety Unit
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Dated 22/05/2003

Appendix A

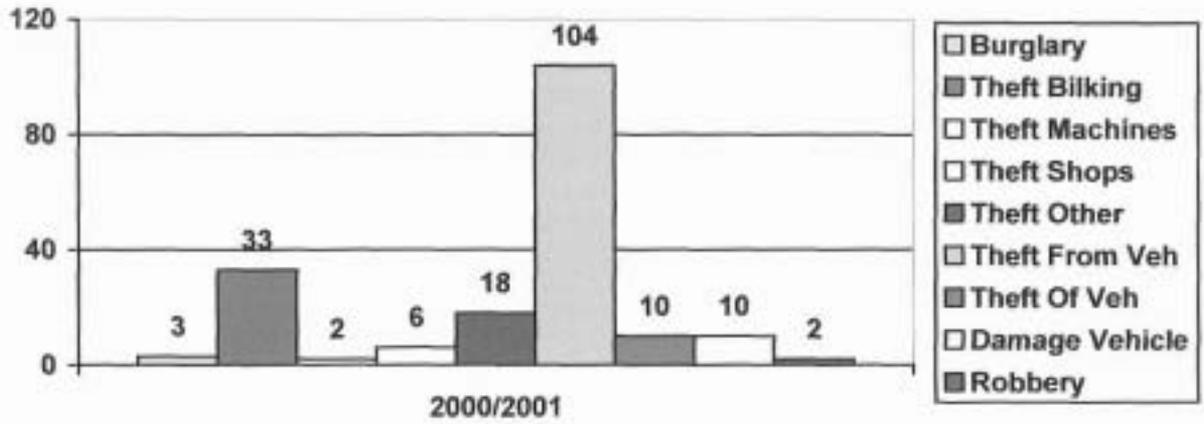


Figure 1

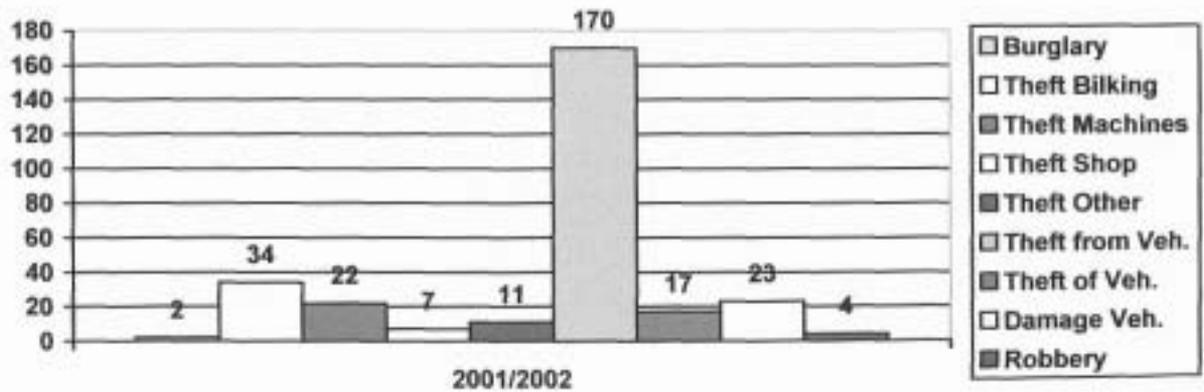


Figure 2

Appendix B

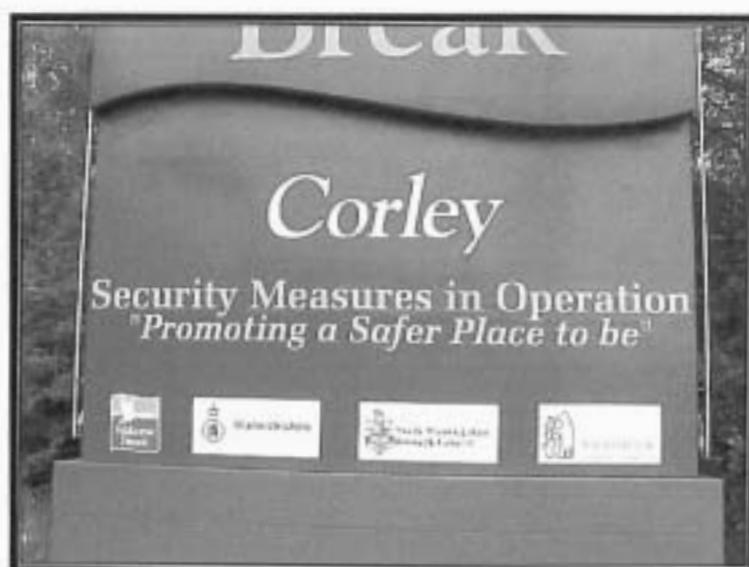


Figure 3

The benefit of 'partnership'/ Security statements at the entrance to the services should not be underestimated as a deterrent to the criminal element and just as importantly a reassurance to the travelling public.



Figure 4

Effective vehicular access control from the minor roads (rising bollards) restricts access and egress to the site for the criminal element.

Appendix C



Figure 5

In what is believed to be a national first advice signage has been funded by the partnership to warn British and foreign lorry drivers to beware of criminal activity with respect of their vehicles and load.

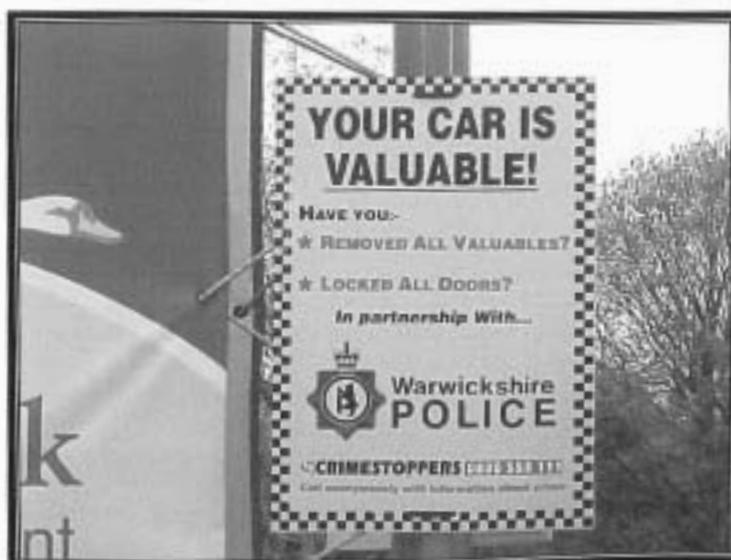


Figure 6

Crime reduction measures can be marketed as part of a 'customer' care package helping to encourage return visits through incident free stops.

Appendix D

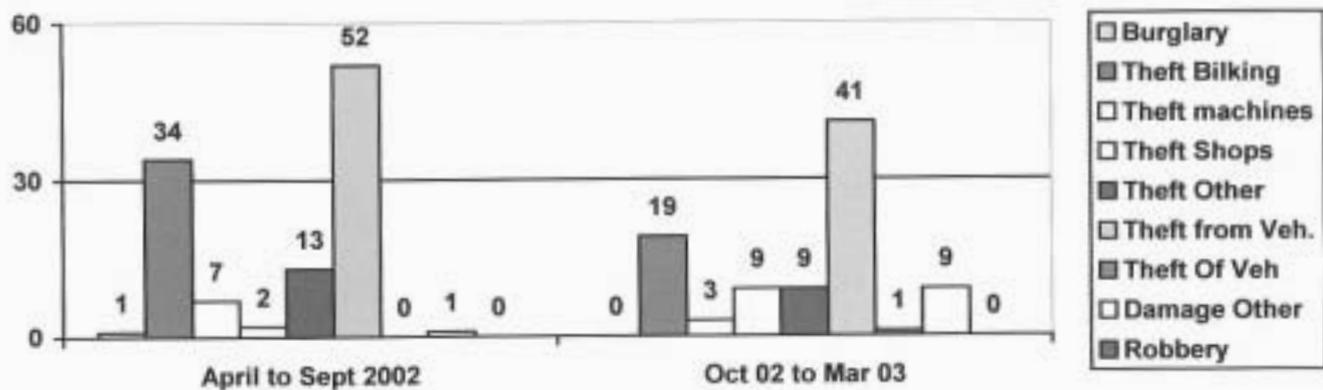


Figure 7

	2001/2002	2002/2003	Difference 2001/2002	%
Burglary	2	1	-1	-50%
Theft Bilking	34	53	+19	+56%
Theft machines	11	10	-1	-10%
Theft Shops	7	11	+4	+57%
Theft Other	22	22	0	0
Theft From Vehicle	170	93	-77	-45%
Theft of Veh	17	1	-16	-94%
Damage Veh	23	10	-13	-19%
Robbery	4	0	-4	-400%
Others	31	25	-6	-19%
Total	321	226	-95	-30%

Figure 8

Appendix E

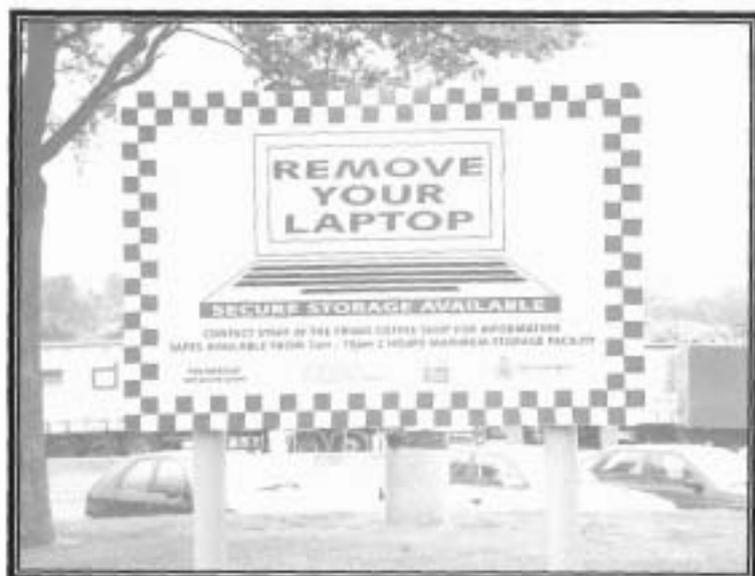


Figure 9

Secure laptop safes storage facility made available on the North-bound service area.