



# *The Invisible Menace*

**Operation Boswell  
Submission to The Tilley Award 2004.**

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# Operation Boswell

## SUMMARY

The coastal resort of Morecambe, Lancashire, (population 200,000) has suffered massive social decline over the past ten years with 70% of inhabitants residing in poor quality multiple occupancy accommodation, 37% are from deprived inner cities attracted to the area by unscrupulous landlords. From those, 31,000 working age inhabitants are unemployed claiming state benefits.

Crime patterns have emerged coinciding with the socio-economic problems of this declining area. In 2002/03 there were 42 vehicle crimes per 1000 inhabitants, compared to a force average of 16. Alexandra Ward has one of the highest crime rates in the county, and the area suffered 60% of the division's total auto-crime in 2002.

In-depth analysis highlighted 4000 untaxed and un-registered vehicles in the area, with 40% involved in criminal activity, statistically, one of the highest figures in the country. Most were bought cheaply through auctions and scrap yards, and once past their usefulness, they were abandoned.

A survey revealed 270 abandoned vehicles, 70% of which used as runabouts then dumped. It transpired it was not the crimes linked by the vehicle, but the vehicle itself, or rather the user, utilising its 'invisibility' to best advantage to avoid detection. We concluded runabout vehicles had become the '*invisible menace*', a transport of choice for local criminals.

Historic responses were ad-hoc and had little impact due to limited resources with limited analysis. A public satisfaction study showed 67% of residents were dissatisfied with rising crime levels, especially auto-crime.

In 2002, a partnership intervention was devised, named Operation Boswell, shifting emphasis from incident orientation to problem orientation to address use of the 'invisible menace', reduce auto-crime, untaxed and abandoned vehicles.

In 2003, an intelligence led approach saw 106 invisible and 270 abandoned vehicles permanently removed from local roads with £ 74,000 excise revenue refunded to HM Treasury. Auto-crime has been reduced for the first time in 3 years by 35%, far exceeding the projected 6% reduction, as well as achieving an 8% reduction in domestic burglaries and 42 local criminals successfully targeted and prosecuted.

Community reassurance has increased significantly, with a recent survey showing dissatisfaction with crime levels and fear of crime reducing significantly from 67% to 39% amongst local residents.

The figures are set against levels of unemployment deprivation placing Morecambe in the top 5% of most deprived areas in the Country, and the district council's projection the area's population will increase by 12% by 2006.



# SCANNING

## THE AREA

- Morecambe is suffering social and economic decline with 140,000 inhabitants residing in poor quality rented accommodation, 75,000 attracted from deprived inner cities, 31,000 of those are unemployed and claiming state benefits.

Over the past 10 years crime patterns have emerged coinciding with the socio-economic problems of this declining area. Alexandra ward has one of the highest crime rates in the county, and suffered 60% of the division's auto-crime in 2002.

## RUNABOUT & ABANDONED VEHICLES

- Prior to March 2003, we conducted checks revealing 68 un-roadworthy, un-taxed and un-insured vehicles, with users having criminal records. Most were bangers bought through auctions and scrap yards, and once past their usefulness, or became of interest to police they were abandoned.

We undertook a survey to identify numbers of abandoned vehicles in the area revealing 270 with 70% used in criminal activity then dumped.

## DRIVER & VEHICLE LICENSING AUTHORITY CONCERNS

- DVLA identified 4000 untaxed vehicles in the area, 40% of the total involved in criminal activity, highlighting one of the highest figures in the country.

The Statutory Off Road Notification, (SORN), places obligations on owners to notify untaxed vehicles are off road, or scrapped. DVLA follow up 20% failing to comply, leaving an 80% chance of avoiding detection.

## PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION

- A public satisfaction study with 319 residents revealed 67% were dissatisfied with unacceptable levels of crime, especially auto-crime, and their fear of crime exceeded the national average. (1)

1. Lancaster Community Safety Partnership Crime & Disorder Audit -2001



# PROBLEM DEFINED

## “INVISIBLE” RUNABOUTS USED IN CRIME

We scrutinised collated information, so the actual problem, rather than the presenting problem could be identified.

Scanning told us runabouts used in commission of crime is not a new problem, nor does it generate much concern amongst police officers, aware of difficulties when vehicle ownership trails ‘evaporate’, usually when a suspect vehicle is assessed from an incident perspective, and requires a response.

The most common response being an intelligence input, by which time it will have been disposed of and another acquired in its place. Enforcement action was perceived a minor irritation to runabout users, as the only police weapon utilised was a driving document request, with many not followed up.

It became apparent it was not the just crimes linked by the vehicle, but the vehicle itself, or rather the user, utilising its ‘invisibility’ to their best advantage to avoid detection.

We concluded runabout vehicles had become the ‘*invisible menace*’, a transport of choice for opportunist and several target criminals. This formed the seed-bed for our problem solving strategy.

## PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

After convincing our partners the problem solving model was the best way forward to craft a solution, it became evident our intended interventions would dovetail together perfectly as we had a policing body with the need and resources, but without statutory powers, and an administrative agency with legislative empowerment to enforce vehicle licensing, but limited resources.

Realisation of this principle motivated both ourselves and partners to make the strategy work.



# ANALYSIS

## Data Sources

- Lancashire Constabulary intelligence & Police National Computer (PNC).
- Police analysts & intelligence unit.
- Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- Community police officers.
- DVLA
- Department of Transport - Local Regions
- Local Councillors.
- Department Works & Pensions
- Customs & Excise.
- Vehicle Inspectorate
- Insurance Consultant
- Scrap yards and vehicle auctions

## Information Gaps

Fragmented information from DVLA, SORN's.

Limited value interrogating force intelligence system on invisible runabouts.

Limited help from scrap yards and auctions about invisible runabouts being obtained from them, an area fully exploited by the active criminal.



# ANALYSIS

In addition to the invisible runabout problem already alluded to, the problem was broken down into primary areas of concern, (location, victim, offender).

## LOCATION

Since the late-80's Morecambe, population 200,000, has experienced a chronic decline in its tourist industry with traditional seaside family accommodation becoming low quality rented houses of multiple occupation (HMO's), known locally as 'bed-sit land'. Unscrupulous landlords have enticed 37% of the population from disaffected families in deprived inner cities, with 31,000 working age inhabitants unemployed, claiming state benefits. (2)

1400 people reside in Morecambe's Alexandra ward with 70% living in HMO's. Levels of unemployment deprivation place the ward amongst the top 5% most-deprived areas in the country. (3)

In 2002/03 there were 42 vehicle crimes per 1000 inhabitants, compared to a force average of 16, between October 2002 and March 2003 the area suffered 60% of all auto-crime in the division.

## VICTIM

Victims are multi-faceted:

### a) *Local residents:*

Victims of auto-crime are local residents and visitors alike. Auto-crime affected most residents, either as a victim due to high numbers of dwellings without secure parking, or for those fortunate not to be victims, to be confronted daily by untaxed, un-roadworthy and abandoned cars. A public satisfaction study showed 67% of 317 residents consulted in the area were dissatisfied with unacceptable levels of crime, especially auto-crime, and their fear of crime exceeded the national average. (3)

Whilst conducting an abandoned car survey, we received 36 face to face complaints from residents and local businesses, it was clear feelings mirrored what our research confirmed. It was clearly felt, quite passionately, that un-taxed, un-roadworthy vehicles being driven around by the "Underclass" as quoted by one resident, was of greatest concern, and primary cause of the 270 abandoned vehicles identified in the survey, significantly higher in this area than the district average, and projected numbers would exceed 400 by 2005 if the situation remained unchecked. (4)

The Government are also concerned numbers abandoned will increase until 2007, when each car maker will then be responsible for disposing of its own brand. Until that date, last owners will be responsible for their own disposal, costing up to £150. (5)

Abandoned vehicles are highlighted in independent research as causing anxiety in the local population and by removal of same, public reassurance and confidence in enforcement agencies, like the police, is increased. (6)

In his speech to the party conference in October 2002, the Prime Minister said "*This is not only about crime, it is about hard-working families who play the rules seeing those who don't, getting away with it*" This mirrored our informal consultations with residents, which showed they were concerned with more than crime reduction, they wanted reassuring, and positive action taking against motoring offenders and abandoned vehicles.

2. Department of Works & Pensions Fraud Unit – Mitre House Lancaster.
3. Lancaster Community Safety Partnership Crime & Disorder Audit -2001
4. Lancashire County Council Highways Authority
5. European Communities EU End Of Life Directive -2004
6. Surrey University, Innes – 2002.



# ANALYSIS

## ***b) Government statutory agencies:***

DVLA identified 4000 untaxed vehicles in the area, with 40% involved in criminal activity, highlighting Alexandra ward as having one of the highest figures of untaxed vehicles in the country. With 5% of all UK registered vehicles evading excise duty, HM Treasury indicate if no action was taken against vehicle excise evasion it would cost £300 million annually. (7)

The Vehicle Inspectorate state 52% vehicles without valid test certificates are runabouts. In 2002, 32% of vehicles inspected were found with defects rendering them un-roadworthy. (8)

This contributes to the colossal number of collisions involving un-roadworthy and uninsured vehicles costing the insurance industry £400 million, adding £15-£30 to driver's premiums. It has been projected up to 1.25 million (6% of UK total) vehicles are uninsured. (9)

Every household in the country therefore becomes a victim, through increased insurance premiums, increased excise duty, and as victims of vehicle related crime.

## **OFFENDER**

Local offenders commit local crime with 34% of local criminals travelling less than 4 miles from their home to commit minor criminal offences. The area has the highest proportion of prolific offenders 18-24 years of age in Lancashire. (10)

A research study has shown offenders committing traffic and criminal offences are found to be predominantly male, with ages ranging between 18 to 32 years. (11)

Analysis identified 42 unemployed offenders aged 16-30 yrs, residing in HMO's in Alexandra ward with access to 68 invisible runabouts. 36 were minor offenders and 6 target criminals, with 11 originating from Liverpool and Manchester.

Vehicle crime analysis failed to produce any discernible time, day or date pattern. The perceivable link was invisible runabout usage. From a policing perspective this provided prime indicators to target invisible runabouts, and those using them to commit crime.

Further analysis established:-

- 39% were previous disqualified drivers with a criminal record.
- 38% were car thieves and convicted of a traffic offence.
- 22% held no, or incorrect licence.
- 74% had no insurance.

Independent research corroborates the analysis:

33% users of cars illegally parked in disabled bays have criminal records.  
20% of these are known to have been previously used in crime. (12)

The analysis is supported by other independent work on offender behaviour, referred to as social interactive theory, which means offenders will not be prescriptive how they abuse their position in society and will be seen to commit other types of sub-criminal behaviour as well as criminal. (13)

7. Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science- University College London

8. Vehicle Operating Services Agency Effectiveness report -2002

9. Motor Insurers database- Amendments to the M/Vehs 1972 consultation paper, DTLR 2001

10. Lancaster Community Safety Partnership Crime & Disorder Audit -2001

11. Home Office research paper – Socio demographic profile of serious traffic offenders, Gerry Rose 2000

12. Home Office Police & Reducing Crime Unit Briefing Note, Illegal Parking in Disabled Bays, Sylvia Chenery 1999

13. Social Interactive Theories, Surrey University – Canter 2001



# ANALYSIS

## LIMITED DETERRENT FACTORS

### 1. Criminal Justice System

The current system allows offenders to be convicted of numerous offences of varied severity without effective penalties being imposed. Offenders are generally bailed from court and return to their activities within hours of arrest.

We have compiled a profile of a typical example highlighting a costly, resource intensive system achieving limited deterrent which the active criminal exploits, contributing to rising crime in the area.

#### CASE STUDY

24 year old unemployed male receiving state benefits, resides in HMO, Alexandra ward.

Links to 21 invisible runabouts, 5 featuring on the abandoned vehicle survey.

Holds a provisional driving licence and currently disqualified by court order.

28 court appearances for auto-crime/ motoring offences.

21 convictions for 36 offences.

11 for theft from motor vehicles.

Prosecuted 6 times for no excise licence, 5 un- successfully.

In 2003, fined £69 costs / 12 month conditional discharge for latest crime, stealing from vehicles.

Two 'Fail to Appear' warrants executed for non payment fines.

Never served a custodial sentence.

Estimated police costs for processing / welfare (overnight custodies) in police cells:	£ 1500.
Costs exclude court sentencing / costs:	(estimated) £ 4000.

We have not included financial and hardship costs to victims, and to unseen costs in human emotion terms, which are priceless.

### 2. Statutory Off Road Notification, (SORN)

Places obligations on owners to notify untaxed vehicles are off road, or confirm they have been scrapped. DVLA follow up 20% failing to comply, leaving an 80% chance of avoiding detection.

#### Further Analysis

- Analysis of operation results
- Review of Alexandra ward hotspot
- Monitoring targets identified in analysis through analyst support.





# OBJECTIVES

It was agreed the strategy should impact on removing criminals access to invisible runabouts, reducing their opportunity to commit further crime.

For 2003/04, targets were set to achieve:

- 1. Removal of 68 invisible runabout vehicles.**
- 2. Removal of 270 abandoned vehicles.**
- 3. 6% autocrime reduction in vehicle crime. (14)**
- 4 (a) Targeting 7.5% (300) unlicensed vehicles.**  
**(b) Projected 10% (400) induced revenue.**

A number of other objectives were also set using the SMART principle, (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely):

- 5. Shared ownership through a partnership approach. (15)**
- 6. Disrupt criminal activity, specifically vehicle crime. (14)**
- 7. Enforcement of vehicle ownership documents.**
- 8. Provide reassurance to residents in terms of their fear of crime and increase confidence in general safety of the area. (14)**

14. In line with Lancaster District Crime & Disorder Strategy, 2002-2005

15. Supporting Government objectives for policing, & DVLA Partners Achieving Change (PACT) initiative.



# RESPONSE

Qualitative analysis ensured responses were balanced against core priorities, dictated by budgetary constraints already 'pound- stretching' other initiatives.

Scanning highlighted historic responses were reactionary, having limited impact due to limited resources with limited analysis, resulting in increased complaints and no discernible reduction in vehicle crime.

Analysis has taught us by using situational crime prevention theory to remove the means to commit the crime should reduce offenders further criminal opportunities, this determined our chosen responses. Also selected as they were achievable within our capability constraints, and those of our partners, were cost effective, directly geared to the analysis and encapsulated in:-

## **OPERATION BOSWELL**

Conceived to cause maximum disruption to criminals using invisible runabouts, by use of police, and robust powers of partner legislation. The cornerstone was a static check site with patrols targeting selected vehicles, for detailed inspection and interviewing occupants.

### **Site selection:**

- Strands of analysis highlighted the central promenade as a main corridor used by local criminals with 'rat runs' used to evade detection running in close proximity.
- Local offenders commit local crime with 34% travelling less than 4 miles from their home address to commit offences.
- Proximity to town centre afforded high visibility reassurance element to residents and businesses, maximising a deterrent effect to commit further crime to criminal fraternity.

### **Operational method:**

Targeted activity was facilitated through comprehensive briefings and tasking sheets we devised, (16) together with detailed operational orders and maps showing target offenders / vehicles. The packages contained proforma return sheets, (17) completed daily by all officers.

Following detailed de-briefs, this information was collated by analysts, providing fresh intelligence and target updates through Tasking & Co-ordinating Group, (TCG) for future targeted activity.

The operational method was flexible, with a site manager maintaining check site capability, teams were deployed:

1. Attending identified HMO's targeting offenders / runabouts.
2. Removing illegal runabouts, whose users were disinclined to move due to police activity.
3. Clamping / recovery teams targeting abandoned vehicles.
4. Hot spot foot patrolling by community officers.
5. Double crewed mobile patrol with a local community officer ensured accurate target contacts.

16. Appendix A - Boswell tasking proforma

17. Appendix B - Intelligence update proforma

# RESPONSE



## **PARTNERSHIP INTERVENTIONS**

DVLA worked with police officers targeting identified abandoned and untaxed vehicles. Those intercepted were clamped, impounded and transported to a secure compound, pending payment of an £80 release fee and production of a current tax disc. Every 24 hours the fee increased until 14 days elapsed, if still not claimed, the vehicle was crushed or auctioned by DVLA.

DVLA provided a mobile car crushing unit, used in the week long operation, positioned conspicuously on the promenade site with impounded cars going swiftly from compound to crusher.

ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) system had been trialed in force. We convinced senior management that integration of ANPR into the strategy increased risk of detection to criminals using invisible runabouts.

ANPR detects criminal activity and vehicle related offences, and works by capturing a digital image of a Vehicle Registration Mark (VRM) as it passes the camera, VRM's are checked against a series of databases identifying vehicles of interest. This equipment, together with provision of a technical support officer directing patrols, led to modifying the operating method to provide an intercept facility following ANPR activations.

## **SCRAP YARDS AND CAR AUCTIONS**

We devised a leaflet as a simple deterrent to users and potential users of invisible runabouts, distributed to three scrap yards, a car auction and snack bars on a trading estate frequented by local criminals. (18)

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

As a pro-active response to complaints we attended parish council meetings to discuss the strategy and deal with individual concerns and expectations about auto-crime and abandoned vehicles. We devised and distributed a leaflet, raising awareness about the strategy and our intended actions. (19)

## **IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

- Accuracy of police and DVLA intelligence systems.
- Limited analytical support structure from partner agency.
- Analysts in demand, with delays reviewing data becoming an inevitable feature.
- Availability of resources with differing skill levels. Inexperienced or unenthusiastic officers will process vehicles and offenders, but may not ask probing questions leading to targeted activity or arrests.

18. Appendix C – Offender information leaflet

19. Appendix D – Community information leaflet



# ASSESSMENT

Since March 2003, the strategy has been implemented on eight separate occasions equating to 12 full days, and a 5 day operation, resulting in 181 hours worked operationally. This activity forms the basis for the assessment.

## EVALUATION METHODS & DATA USED

- Evaluation of activity from operational proforma returns, and what triggered responses, (database or observation).
- Local crime statistics, in particular auto-crime, were evaluated on a monthly basis.
- Post activity, 'one to one' re-visits with local complainants and businesses.
- Scrap yard and auction re-visits.
- Press and media reports.
- Leaflet campaigns.

## MEETING SET OBJECTIVES

### 1. Removal of 68 invisible runabout vehicles.

*Selective targeting and continual analysis led to 106 not only being identified, but permanently removed from public roads, representing a 56% increase over our original objective.*

*Whilst effective removal was our primary objective, it was important to assess the other element of situational crime prevention theory that told us removal of the means to commit the crime should reduce offenders further criminal opportunities. The following evaluations demonstrate adherence to this principle has provided measured success in our other set objectives:-*

### 2. Removal of 270 abandoned vehicles.

*Removal and destruction of 5 long-term, and the remaining 265 abandoned vehicles, has improved cleanliness, and the environment in the area.*

### 3. 6% auto-crime reduction:-

*Auto-crime rates between April 2002 and January 2003 peaked at 666 recorded crimes for the area, the highest in the division for 3 years.*

*As a result of this initiative, figures between April 2003 and January 2004 decreased significantly by 35% to 436.*

### 4. From 4000 unlicensed vehicles in the area:-

#### (a) target 7.5% (300) unlicensed vehicles.

*Enforcement action targeting 7.5% was a realistic target, as only invisible runabouts and abandoned cars were prioritised. In conclusion, 337 were detected a 12% increase over projected figures, netting the Treasury £4,000 revenue from VEL evasion and fines.*

#### (b) Projected 10%, (400) induced revenue.

*The projected voluntarily re-licensing of vehicles was also exceeded by 12% with 500 vehicles in total re-taxed, netting an induced revenue of £70,000.*

# ASSESSMENT



## MEETING OTHER SET OBJECTIVES

### 5. Shared ownership through a partnership approach.

*The most productive element was the dialogue between partners and community our shared problem stimulated, indeed, realisation this wasn't just a police problem was very refreshing.*

Benefits for other partners:

Vehicle Inspectorate:

Un-roadworthy prohibition notice issue	104	- 30%	total number targeted.
Vehicle defect notification issue	106	- 30%	"

Customs and Excise:

£12,000 revenue and fines from 3 identified targets.

### 6. Disrupt criminal activity, specifically vehicle crime.

*42 offenders were identified in the analysis, (36 minor and 6 target criminals). We successfully targeted 31 minor and 5 of the six targets, all caught using invisible runabouts.*

Arrests.

*21 persons arrested, of these 17 were identified offenders (12 minor and 5 target criminals)*

#### Breakdown

Offence	Number of arrests	
Burglary	1	(1)
Theft - Motor Vehicle	3	(3)
Theft - Vehicle Excise License	1	(1)
Serious Assault	2	
Disqualified Driving	4	(4)
Possession of Controlled Drugs	2	(1)
Drink Driving	2	(2)
Failure to Appear Warrant	6	(5)
Totals	21	17 (targeted arrests)

*Domestic burglary rates for this area show an 8% reduction with 316 recorded crimes between April 2003 and January 2004, compared to 343 for the same period in 2002 / 3.*

### 7. Enforcement of vehicle ownership documents.

*572 vehicles were targeted, from this we identified 394 (69% of total) incorrectly registered. Abandoned and invisible runabouts accounted for 90% of the total.*

*367 vehicles (63% of total) had no valid insurance, the highest figure coming from abandoned vehicles with 234 of the 270 total, and 96 of 106 invisible runabouts not insured.*

*Successful prosecutions led to 2 being disqualified from driving, 77 for no insurance, an incorrect or no licence. 16 offenders have now accrued nine licence endorsement points, and pending disqualification on a next offence.*



# ASSESSMENT

## 8. Provide reassurance to residents in terms of their fear of crime and increase confidence regarding general safety of the area.

### Factual

*The pre-initiative door-step survey with 319 residents indicated 67% were dissatisfied. A recent survey with 317 residents shows dissatisfaction and fear of crime levels have reduced to 39%. (18)*

*Post activity, 'one to one' re-visits with 36 residents who complained in the survey, showed all but one were satisfied with outcomes of their complaints and had increased confidence in safety of the area.*

*Permanent removal and disposal of long term and other abandoned vehicles is also a contributory factor, leading to overall cleanliness and improved quality of life in the community.*

### Anecdotal

*Other business owners and residents were indirectly involved in further evaluation via 300 leaflets distributed in the ward, using their responses which were mostly positive.*

*Local media provided regular column inch space and positive coverage, with 'letters to the editor' in particular, providing evidence to further gauge public perceptions.*

## Scrap yards & car auctions

*500 leaflets were distributed to scrap yards, the car auction and snack bars frequented by criminals. Subsequent visits confirmed they had a positive deterrent effect and examination of relevant ledgers evidenced no vehicles were illegally put back on the road, and only 1 runabout had been purchased at auction by a target criminal, ( later targeted) since leaflet distribution in June 2003.*

## Resources & Cost

*Police officers were abstracted from normal operational strength with no overtime costs incurred. All partner agencies provided staff at no cost to the police.*

### Resources (averaged)

Co-ordinating officers	2
Check site	2
Community officers	3
Mobile patrol	3
DVLA officers	3
Recovery vehicle	1
Vehicle Inspectorate	2
Customs & Excise	2

(18) Lancaster District Community Safety Survey – Nov 2003



# ASSESSMENT

## Diffusion of Benefits

1. Comparative study of 2002/3 road collision data shows a 26% reduction in 2003/4 in slight and serious injury casualties in the area.
2. The marked improvement in quality of life forms part of a marketing campaign outlining the area's potential to attract business investors. (20)
3. Wholesale removal of abandoned vehicles led to disbanding a liaison officer post last January, saving the Constabulary £2300 over the next 12 months.  
(Abstraction summary in 2003:- 8 hours a month = 96 hours @ £18 an hour)
4. The project principles have been effectively used in other areas of the division, backed by senior management. For example, the recent tragic deaths of 20 Chinese immigrants in Morecambe Bay has attracted an international enquiry into exploitation of Chinese refugees, with the Boswell concept 'taken off the shelf' driving a multi-agency strategy targeting vehicles and task-masters still illegally picking cockle beds.

## Conclusion

We successfully addressed genuine public concerns over what was developing into a major issue. The results, and most importantly resident satisfaction far surpassed our expectations.

Intelligence and information flow was critical to the success of the strategy. The proformas we devised, coupled with comprehensive de-briefs, provided fresh intelligence and target updates, cascaded through TCG proved pivotal to achieving our objectives.

ANPR was integrated at a late stage, raising difficulties evaluating its effectiveness separately, although it is evident it forms an integral part of the project, and will continue to be fully utilised in future operations. The Boswell strategy is a transferable commodity, which will direct Lancashire's crime reduction and public reassurance tool-kit at local level in line with the National Intelligence Model.

Whilst the methodology behind implementation has provided a positive outcome, it may be described as a '*successful holding exercise*' as further analysis determines a missing element; greater control of vehicle ownership.

With this in mind, further changes in the law are required to increase our capability, making future interventions a more powerful deterrent to challenge use of the invisible menace, ultimately forcing lifestyle changes on habitual offenders that use them.

(20) Lancashire West Business Partnership – 2004

Authors: Constables Keith Collins and Ian Johnston.



## Operation Boswell

# ***Appendices***

Appendix A: Tasking Proforma

Appendix B: Intelligence Update Proforma

Appendix C: Warning Leaflet

Appendix D: Community Information Leaflet

Appendix E: Endorsement Letter

Appendix F: Endorsement Letter

Appendix G: Partners

Appendix H: Press cuttings



# OPERATION BOSWELL

## TASKING PROFORMA

DATE		OFFICER		
1. TARGET VEHICLE 2. TARGET OFFENDER 3. ABANDONED VEHICLE 4. OTHER INTEL				
TASKING INFORMATION				OUTCOMES RECORDED ON RETURN PROFORMA
1.		<i>Contains one target offender / vehicle data, or other target intelligence.</i>		YES / NO
2.		===== “ =====		YES / NO
3.		===== “ =====		YES / NO
<b>ACTION</b>	DATE	INTEL / SLEUTH INPUT	FURTHER ACTION	COMPLETED ACTION
Copy to: Analyst		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Copy to: Intel Unit		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
To TCG	Tasking date		Target date	Yes / No
Action notified to Co-ordinator		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Attached to INTEL UPDATE PROFORMA ?		Yes / No	COMPLETED ACTION Yes / No	FILED DATE .....

**TASKING PROFORMA**

Appendix **A**



**OPERATION BOSWELL**  
**INTEL UPDATE PROFORMA**

DATE / TIME	
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DELETE / CIRCLE EACH HEADING AND LIST IN INFORMATION SECTION

<b>1. TARGET VEHICLE</b>	<b>2. TARGET OFFENDER</b>	<b>3. OTHER INFORMATION</b>
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**INFORMATION** (free text field )

		Details recorded on Intel / Sleuth	Signature & date	
Copy to: Boswell Co-ordinator	<b>Yes / No</b>			
Copy to: Analyst	<b>Yes / No</b>			
Copy to: Intel Unit	<b>Yes / No</b>			
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>			
To TCG	<b>Yes / No</b>	Tasking Date	Target Date	
Completed proforma returned to Boswell Co-ordinator	<b>Yes / No</b>	Date returned	COMPLETED ACTION <b>Yes / No</b>	FILED DATE
				.....



## **POLICE WARNING NOTICE**

You may have noticed a lot of recent Police activity, the reason for this is the Police have been gathering intelligence for some time, and are aware of many untaxed, un-roadworthy and vehicles in this area.

We intend to carry out further Police operations targeting a number of offenders known to be regularly using un-roadworthy and illegal vehicles on the road and will be prosecuting those found in possession.

Those that are dangerous and un-roadworthy, or not taxed will be immediately seized and may be destroyed.

The Police are aware a number of these cars are obtained from local scrap yards and car auctions, and will be closely monitoring this over the coming months.

The number of abandoned vehicles in the area is also of concern to the Police and local residents.

As a result, we will be working closely with communities and local partners to permanently remove these dangerous and illegal cars. If you know who anyone responsible for any abandoned cars, it is asked that they are advised to remove them before we act to remove them, as this will cost those responsible for the recovery, storage and destruction.

It is our aim to make the community a safe and comfortable environment in which to live. Thank you for your help and co-operation.

If you have any information that may be of use please call **CRIMESTOPPERS** free and anonymously if you wish on **0800 555 111**.

## ***Operation Boswell***

*denying criminals use of the roads*

**WARNING LEAFLET**

Appendix **C**



Dear resident

You may have noticed a lot of police activity in your area over the last few days. This leaflet will explain what is going on, how you can help and hopefully answer some of your questions.

The Police are aware auto-crime affects most residents in the area, who are confronted by many untaxed, un-roadworthy and abandoned vehicles.

The Police have been gathering intelligence for some time and, as a result of working closely with communities and local partners have been able to carry out this activity called Operation Boswell to address these problems.

It is our aim to provide you, your family and your community a safe and comfortable environment in which to live. With your help and continued co-operation we intend to carry out similar operations targeting known offenders who have little respect for other people's quality of life, and permanently removing un-roadworthy, untaxed and abandoned cars which are of greatest concern to residents.

If you have any information that may be of use please call **CRIMESTOPPERS** free, and anonymously if you wish on **0800 555 111**.

Alternatively, you can call us locally if you would like pass on information to us personally, or if you would like to know more about this initiative ring Lancaster **596699** or **596649**.

Constable's Keith Collins & Ian Johnston

Appendix **D**

**COMMUNITY INFORMATION LEAFLET**



Vinci Park Services  
Knowsley Business Park  
Knowsley  
Merseyside  
L34 9EU

Chief Superintendent Walker  
Divisional Commander  
Northern Division  
Lancaster Police Station  
Thurnham Street  
Lancaster  
LA1 1YB

Tel 0151 548 9973  
Fax 0151 548 9945

Date 13 March 2004

Dear Chief Superintendent Walker

I am satisfied the Boswell strategy, devised and co-ordinated by Ian Johnston and Keith Collins is not just another crime reduction campaign, but more of a positive way of combining resources of different organisations in a pro-active and focused manner.

Keith and Ian have carefully thought about how we could make the greatest impact from our combined efforts. I am impressed with the problem solving approach applied in this project, which has afforded a logical connection to each element of the problem.

Whilst there were obvious benefits to the Treasury in terms of additional revenue, the problem solving method has brought about successful interventions targeting local offenders illegally using vehicles, and excessive numbers of abandoned vehicles that became a consequence of their activities.

The level of success achieved cannot be understated, indeed its scope is far wider, the Boswell scheme should be promoted as a best practice example of partnership working, tackling local problems with statutory and community stakeholders.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Lee  
Head of Enforcement Business Planning

**ENDORSEMENT LETTER**

Appendix **E**

**VOSN**

Vehicle & Operator Services Agency  
VI North West Division  
Enforcement Office  
Brunthill Road  
Carlisle  
CA3 0EH

Tel 01228 531751  
Fax 01228 592720

Chief Superintendent Walker  
Lancashire Constabulary  
Northern Division Headquarters  
Lancaster Police Station  
Thurnham Street  
Lancaster LA1 1YB

Date 16 March 2004

Dear Chief Superintendent,

**OPERATION BOSWELL**

In 2002, Keith Collins and Ian Johnston presented evidence that the surface issue of a vehicle problem in Morecambe was connected to a number of local offenders illegal use of those vehicles, ultimately leading to a high number abandoned in the area, causing serious concern to residents.

This was the first time I had seen several problems linked to be addressed collectively, and admit being sceptical as to how we could tackle this successfully as a partnership initiative, although it was clear both officers were genuinely committed to using their Police problem solving model to target the range of local problems. It is now clear the Boswell project has had a direct impact on the significant reduction in vehicle crime, permanent removal of un-roadworthy runabout cars, and successful prosecution of a number of offenders.

The Police Boswell project serves as an excellent example of a problem-oriented partnership in action for several reasons; Firstly, Keith and Ian, demonstrated a robust knowledge of the key elements, contributing factors and their effects on the community. Secondly, they displayed a keen understanding of the problems dynamics, which fostered an environment in which law and rule breaking in Morecambe had become the norm. Thirdly, they were able to establish and co-ordinate an effective partnership and good working relationship with many of those affected by the problem, ultimately forging a common interest in improving quality of life in the area.

In conclusion, I am aware of the submission for a Home Office award for excellence in problem oriented policing and crime reduction, and feel as the Boswell project has been very thoroughly researched with a great deal of initiative put into it with measurable community benefits, it should be seriously considered as a very strong contender.

Yours sincerely

Brian Hayhurst  
Senior Traffic Examiner  
Cumbria & North West Lancashire

**ENDORSEMENT LETTER**

Appendix **F**



Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency.



Enforcement & Recovery Agency.



Other Government Agencies.



Other assistance.



**PARTNERSHIPS**

Appendix **G**

# Crushed

## Police target dodgy cars and criminals

POLICE swooped into Morecambe this week with a special operation codenamed Boswell targeting uninsured and untaxed cars being driven by local criminals.

Police are on the lookout for wrecks and bangers, many of which are dangerous and not fit to be on the road.

When their usefulness has expired the criminals dump them in the streets and simply get another from a scrap yard or car auction for as little as fifty pounds.. This has led to over 260 abandoned cars littering the local streets, causing residents to be up in arms.

PC's Ian Johnston and Keith Collins are behind Operation Boswell and agreed there was a problem, adding,

“ We are working with DVLA officers seizing dangerous and untaxed cars and in the worst cases having them and any abandoned cars destroyed. It is an uphill battle, but we have already removed nearly 100 abandoned cars and making in-roads into targeting the dangerous vehicles and the criminals who drive them”

PC Johnston added, “Without a car these criminals cannot move around and commit further crimes, we ask to be judged on our results and are looking to have made an impact by the end of the year.”

## Abandoned bangers get the Boswell Boot

Morecambe has become a cleaner and healthier place to live thanks to the work of two local bobbies who have worked tirelessly for the last nine months ridding the local streets of the abandoned and un-roadworthy cars .

Constables Keith Collins and Ian Johnston are behind the successful scheme named Operation Boswell, that has seen 270 permanently removed and destroyed, whilst working in partnership with the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Unit and City Council.

The scheme has also been targeting un-taxed and un-insured cars being driven by local criminals..

The officer's philosophy is simple, removing criminals cars removes the means to commit further crime. Standing by this, has seen 106 cars taken off the roads together with more than 40 local criminals..

That in turn has led to a 35% reduction in auto crime offences, a reduction in household burglaries and £74,000 savings for the treasury in car tax revenue.

PC Keith Collins commented, “We asked at the start to be judged on our results, the best reward is the satisfaction of the residents of a job well done, it is pleasing to see we have made an impact and improved the quality of life in Morecambe ”

Appendix H

Press cuttings