

TILLEY AWARD **SUBMISSION 2004**

Title of Project	OPERATION COBRA – TACKLING VEHICLE CRIME IN THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH
Name of force	HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY
Name of endorsing senior representative	SIMON COLE ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE TERRITORIAL OPERATIONS
Name of contact person	JULIE EARLE CHIEF INSPECTOR TERRITORIAL OPERATIONS, PORTSMOUTH
Address	PORTSMOUTH BCU BCU POLICE HEADQUARTERS KINGSTON CRESCENT NORTH END PORTSMOUTH PO2 8BU
Telephone	023 9289 1594
Fax	023 9289 1504
E-mail	portsmouth.management@hampshire.pnn.police.uk

SUMMARY

OPERATION COBRA – TACKLING VEHICLE CRIME IN THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

Portsmouth is one of the most densely populated cities in Europe with 187,000 residents, and over 5 million visitors a year.

During 2002/03 vehicle crime across Portsmouth increased by 16%, at a time when there was a downward trend nationally.

A Crime Reduction Officer and Analyst conducted a review of vehicle crime April – December 2002, to define the problem fully and establish the underlying causes to inform a tailored response.

A number of issues were identified, including:

- Cars registered between 1989 – 1998 were most at risk. They lacked adequate security, often because victims were unable to fund security products, or were unaware of the problem in their area.
- Valuable items were left on view, particularly in areas where victims had stopped for short periods and were otherwise distracted i.e. hospitals, entertainment areas.
- 'car stereo systems' lacked security marking.
- young offenders took older faster vehicles short distances.
- vehicle crime was concentrated in many repeat locations that had not been previously identified.

In response to the analysis, the Operation Cobra Vehicle Crime Strategy was developed with Crime and Disorder partners, to achieve long term problem resolution.

Key areas included:

- Maximising forensic potential and intelligence gathering.
- Focussing intelligence led action through Tasking and Co-ordinating Group to direct offender work and initiate localised Problem Resolution in Multi-agency Environment (PRIME) projects.
- Developing an extensive three tier Crime Reduction Strategy, placing a hitherto unprecedented emphasis on sustainable victim and location work (triggered by a data base monitoring vehicle crime levels in individual streets).
- Initiating a high profile Media Campaign.

In the first nine months of Operation COBRA there has been a significant reduction in the targeted vehicle crimes, compared with the same period in the preceding year:

- 25% reduction in the 'taking of' G – R registered vehicles.
- 33% reduction in thefts from vehicles.
- 37% reduction in vehicle crime in those streets that had experienced 19 or more vehicle crimes April – December 02.
- 58% reduction in vehicle crime in those streets that experienced between 5 and 18 vehicle crimes April – December 02.

Overall vehicle crime in Portsmouth has fallen by 31% from 3235 to 2235 vehicle crimes.

The principles of Operation COBRA are now being replicated within the BCU to tackle other crime issues and incorporated into the Force's Vehicle Crime Strategy.

OPERATION COBRA –

TACKLING VEHICLE CRIME IN THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

Portsmouth is one of the most densely populated cities in Europe. The population of 187,000 live in 80,000 households, 11,000 of which are owned by Portsmouth City Council. Two areas of the city are receiving additional government funding from the Single Regeneration Budget.

Portsmouth is home to the Royal Navy, it has numerous entertainment and tourist venues, a Premiership Football Club, an award winning shopping complex and a University. Approximately 5 million visitors are attracted to the area each year. On a typical weekend approximately 26,000 local people and visitors are drawn to the cities entertainment areas. Throughout the city there is relatively little off street car parking and vehicle crime is endemic.

Portsmouth vehicle crime overview

Year	Vehicle crime total	Taking of vehicle	Theft from vehicle	Rate per 1000 population
1999 / 2000	4012	1320	2692	21.42
2000 / 2001	3520	1174	2346	18.79
2001 / 2002	3631	1173	2458	19.41

In response to consultation with residents, and in pursuit of the National Vehicle Crime Reduction Target, the Crime and Disorder (CAD) Strategy for the city of Portsmouth (2002 – 2005) has reducing vehicle crime as one of its five priorities. Annual targets have been set to achieve a reduction in vehicle crime of 17% over three years.

Portsmouth Crime and Disorder Strategy vehicle crime reduction targets

Year	Reduction target
2002 / 2003	6%
2003 / 2004	6%
2004 / 2005	5%

The CAD Strategy identified the following as work that was already being undertaken to address the vehicle crime problem:

- Targeting known offenders.
- Supporting designing out crime principles through the planning process.
- Introduction of Neighbourhood Wardens in the Paulsgrove and Wymering areas of the city.
- Multi-agency co-operation through the “Communities Against Drugs” initiative.
- Arrest Referral System to break the cycle of offending and drug related crime.
- Use of CCTV system and development of Secured Car Parks.
- Extension of traffic wardens scheme and Abandoned Vehicle Unit.
- Crime Concern and Auto Glass prevention scheme.
- Youth crime prevention work.
- Fire Service education initiatives.

The additional activities that were identified as needing to be undertaken to meet the CAD Strategy targets were:

- Identify what works elsewhere
- Conduct analysis to identify areas requiring additional CCTV coverage
- Identify areas in the heart of Portsmouth in need of situational improvements
- Increase use of court orders to deter offenders
- Increase number of Secured Car Parks

After the first 9 months of the Strategy it was clear that vehicle crime was rising and the 6 % reduction target would not be met, in fact a 18.8% increase was projected for year end 02/03.

Portsmouth vehicle crime figures April – December 2002

Period (9 months)	Vehicle crime total	Taking of vehicle	Theft from vehicle	Extrapolated Rate per 1000 population (12 month period)
Apr – Dec 2002	3235	900	2335	23.02

A significant re-evaluation of the vehicle crime problem was required. A Crime Reduction Officer overseen by Crime Analysts therefore conducted a review of the April – December 2002 vehicle crime. Statistical data and other related information was gathered from a variety of sources to define the problem fully, and to establish the underlying causes to inform a more focused response. Sources of data included Hampshire Constabulary Performance data, Portsmouth Strategic Assessment reports 2001/ 2002, Crime and Disorder Audit, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Federal database, and data from Crime Stoppers, drugs intelligence and Portsmouth City Council (Engineering and Design, Leisure and Tourism, Trading Standards, CCTV Office, Housing Service, Marketing and Tourism). Informal scanning was conducted with Residents Association Consortium, Neighbourhood Watch, Age Concern, City Hoteliers, and Motor Trade representatives amongst others.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Vehicle crime information from April – December 02 was scanned, to define the problem as it relates to Victims/Targets, Locations and Offenders.

VICTIMS / TARGETS breakdown of the 2335 thefts from vehicle:

Number of crimes	Property stolen
742	Car stereo systems
761	Handbags, briefcases, luggage, purses
682	Car parts - wheel trims, wheels, other
336	Mobile phones
180	Valuables – cash and jewellery
170	Power tools, tools
128	Electrical items – lap tops, televisions

Golf clubs, shopping baskets, sunglasses and documents were also stolen. 938 of the victims were parked near their home addresses.

The primary methods of theft were:

Methods
Smashed window
Door bent
Lock breached (jiggler)
Insecure

VICTIMS / TARGETS Breakdown of the 900 vehicles taken without consent:

- 865 vehicles were registered between 1986 – 2000
- 453 of those were in 1989 – 1997 (G – R range) i.e. 50% of problem **(See Appendix 1)**
- 35 vehicles in recent age groups (virtually all of these being mopeds)
- Three types of car represented 25% of overall problem (226 vehicle crimes)

Total No	Vehicle
98	Ford Escort
60	Ford Fiesta
68	Vauxhall Astra

- 514 of the victims of stolen vehicles were in 20 – 39 age range (295 men / 119 women)
- Most vehicles were stolen from near the victim's address
- There was a pattern of stolen vehicle movement between the two SRB areas
- Stolen vehicles had not been immobilised

LOCATIONS breakdown of all 3235 vehicle crimes (**See Appendix 2**):

- 22% of crimes occurred in 712 streets (one crime per street)
- 29% of crimes occurred in 346 streets (two to four crimes per street)
- 39% of crimes occurred in 155 streets (five to eighteen crimes per street)
- 10% of crimes occurred in 12 streets (nineteen to thirty eight crimes per street)

As can be seen 49 % of vehicle crime was occurring in just 175 of Portsmouth's 1,600 streets, and vehicle crime within many of these streets could be focused down to hot dots.

1575 criminal damage and 384 vehicle interference offences were also scanned.

Seasonal risks:

- Portsmouth and Southsea Show (August)
- Tourist season (June – September)
- University Graduation (July)
- Great South Fun Run (variable)
- Firework display (November)
- Christmas (December)

High-risk locations – short stops:

- Hospitals
- Doctors surgery
- Cinemas
- Sports clubs
- Shops
- Theatre
- Cafes
- Tourist attractions

OFFENDERS breakdown:

- 236 offenders arrested.
- 436 vehicle crimes detected.
- Offenders predominantly aged between 17 – 23 years.
- "Taking of " offences were committed by 15 – 20 year olds, mostly 18 year olds.
- Repeat offenders travelled across Portsmouth, others committed crime local to their home.
- 44 of the offenders (18%) had a provable drug relationship. Empirical evidence suggests vehicle crime is drug related.
- Legitimate outlets used to dispose of stolen goods.

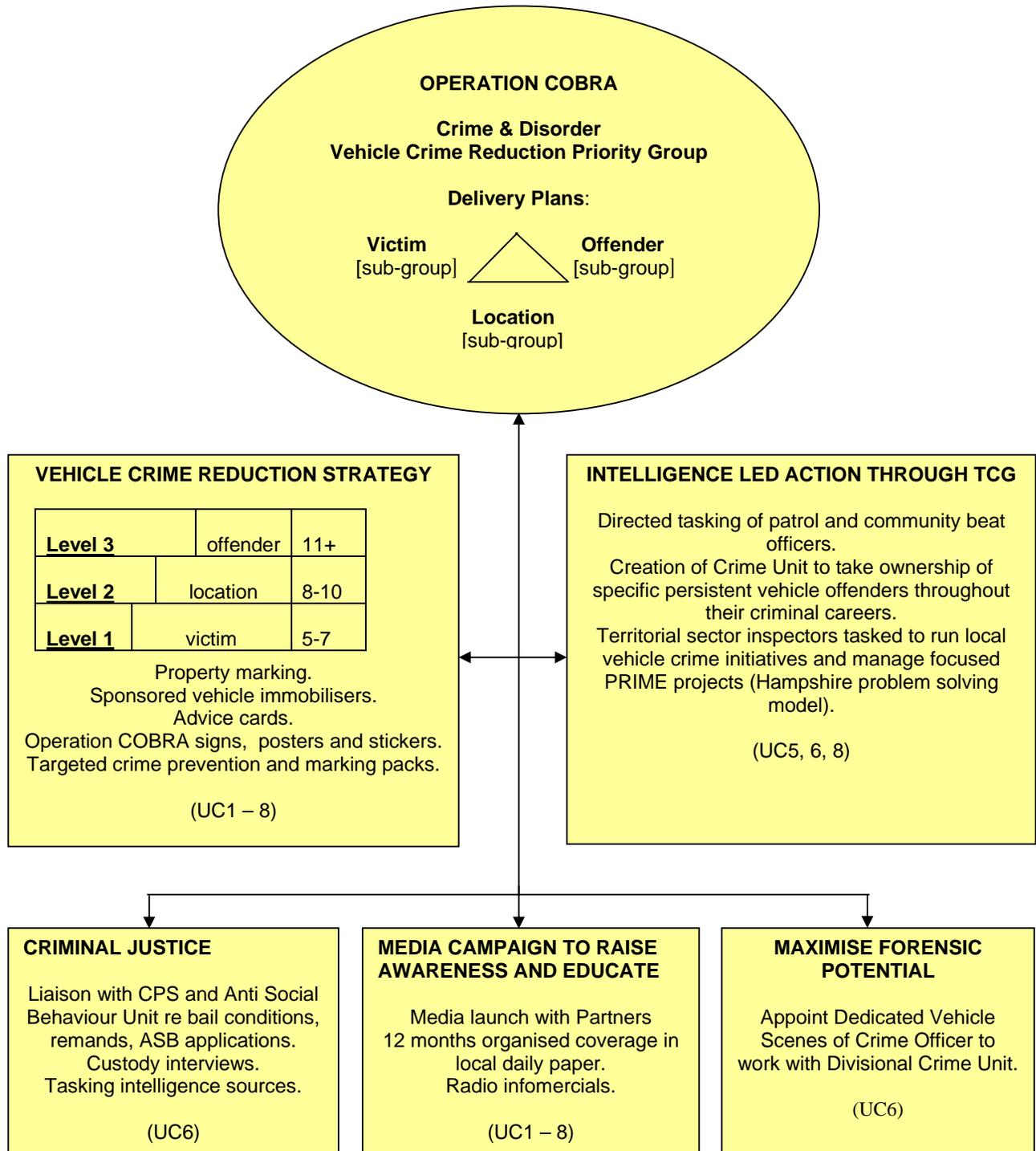
ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION

	TARGETS	Underlying Cause (UC)
UC1	<p>Taking of vehicles</p> <p>Cars manufactured in the G – R period not manufactured with emphasis on security. The cars most at risk were small, fast and easy to steal. In vehicles manufactured since 2000 the use of electric immobilisers has reduced unauthorised taking. Theft of these cars has been limited mainly to where the theft of the keys has occurred. People who cannot afford additional money for security own many of the stolen cars.</p>	<p>An absence of physical security, and in some areas the victims inability to fund security products.</p>
UC2	<p>Theft from vehicles</p> <p>The radios/ CD systems in older cars are more at risk as they are easily removed. Modern systems are integral features of the vehicle and incorporate security systems rendering them worthless once removed from the vehicle. No evidence of property marking.</p>	<p>Radios / CD systems not property marked either at the time of purchase, installation or subsequently are suitable targets.</p>
UC3	<p>Items left on public view in cars provide opportunity for thieves. Mobile phones are a major loss and these small items are often overlooked especially when stopping for short times.</p>	<p>Property is left on seats in cars, especially when victims leave the car in a hurry or are distracted.</p>
	VICTIMS	
UC4	<p>Victims are both residents and visitors to the city. The largest victim group are in the age ranges 20 – 30. This indicates a group of men and women who are in a hurry, both at work, home and at play. The absence of care and a hurried lifestyle are the main features evident. In some areas where risks are high, they are unaware of them.</p>	<p>The absence of care by victims with a busy lifestyle and lack of awareness of high risk, leaves victims vulnerable.</p>
	LOCATIONS	
UC5	<p>Some street locations experienced highly disproportionate levels of vehicle crime. This indicates that crime is concentrated and manageable and dispels the theory it is “all over the area”. Previously, hot spots were identified using only 3 months data.</p> <p>Within identified street (hot spots) it was possible to identify smaller hot dots where risk was concentrated even further. Identifying hot spots using longer-term data provides greater focus. Many of the locations experienced only one type of vehicle crime.</p> <p>Overgrown bushes and trees, poor lighting and access routes were a contributing factor in sample areas.</p> <p>Crime was found to be higher in the streets surrounding Secured Car Parks. There was no advertising for the Car Parks.</p>	<p>Lack of long-term analysis of hot spots.</p> <p>Victims are unaware of the risk at certain locations.</p> <p>Lack of knowledge of crime issues by those responsible for maintenance at locations.</p> <p>Poorly advertised Secured Car Parks</p>

OFFENDERS		
UC6	<p>Vehicles are taken for short journeys and abandoned, in particular in the SRB areas. Vehicles are burnt out in residential areas where there are children. A small group of prolific offenders are responsible for a large proportion of thefts from vehicles. 18 year olds are more involved with taking cars. Peer pressure, local crime culture and a small number of prolific offenders with a provable drug history are at the core of the problem.</p> <p>There has been no team responsible for targeting vehicle offenders or detecting offenders through forensic means.</p>	<p>Local culture, peer pressure, drug related.</p> <p>Vehicles taken for 'excitement' rather than gain.</p> <p>There has been a lack of targeted police response. and limited staffing made available to obtain forensic evidence.</p>
SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT		
UC7	<p>There has been public apathy. Neighbourhood Watch does not operate effectively. In the highest crime areas there is an atmosphere of fear and concern. The public fear of vehicle crime is high but the expectation of the police is low. There is a market for stolen goods in the area and a general view that goods are easily disposed of to the community generally.</p>	<p>Public apathy contributes to a lack of surveillance / guardianship and assists disposal of stolen goods</p>
ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES		
UC8	<p>A perception that vehicle crime was not a priority, that it occurred all over the city, and as it was opportunistic was totally unmanageable. Crime Reduction Officers had concentrated on general responsibilities. Crime reduction was mainly focused on detection effort and was based on weekly identification of hot spots (based on three months data).</p> <p>Vehicle crime had not been given priority in local news reports.</p>	<p>Apathy by the police and public, lack of focus on the real problem, poor media reporting, unfocused crime reduction activities.</p>

RESPONSE

In response to the analysis the Operation COBRA Vehicle Crime Strategy was developed to focus activity in the key areas, in order to achieve long term problem reduction. COBRA shifted the emphasis of work away from predominantly offender based activity, to address all aspects of the problem triangle resulting in much greater emphasis on targeted victim and location work.



A number of specific objectives were set to assess the performance of Operation COBRA:

Between April 2003 – March 2004.

- 1. To increase public awareness of commitment to car crime reduction and their part to play.**
- 2. To reduce the level of taking of vehicles in the G- R registered age range by 15% comparable to the previous year.**
- 3. To reduce the overall level of thefts from motor vehicles by 15% comparable to the previous year.**
- 4. To reduce the levels of vehicle crime at the locations having 19 or more vehicle crimes (between April – December 2002) in a comparable period, by 15%.**
- 5. To reduce the levels of vehicle crime at locations that reach 5 or more crimes per location, by 15% in a comparable period to the previous year.**

Prior to the launch in April 2003 a three month preparation phase was undertaken in which the following activities were undertaken;

- Corporate Operation name adopted and publicised.
- Chief Inspector appointed Vehicle Crime 'champion'.
- Crime Reduction Officer appointed Co-ordinator.
- Local daily newspaper Editor agreed full support for Operation over the entire 12 months that COBRA was intended to run.
- Victim Help line set up to the Co-ordinator.
- Portsmouth City Council and Police Magazine articles published.
- Road shows involving police and residents organised.
- Residents Group briefings undertaken.
- Radio / TV broadcasts.
- Poster campaign in police stations, residents groups, and Local Authority foyers.
- Promotional briefings to all operational staff by Chief Inspector and / or Co-ordinator.
- Sample Operation COBRA crime reduction packs distributed with an explanatory letter to all police and support staff. Same to 220 Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators.
- Ultra violet "key fob" readers supplied to all officers in support of property marking initiatives.

£30,000 funding was agreed to purchase goods and services in support of the strategy:

- COBRA packs – UV marker pen and labels, key ring, mobile phone and vehicle marking cards, warning notices – in car, window stickers.
- Customised street warning signs A4.
- Parking meter signs – picture style.
- Autolock "seconds" – immobilisers for distribution/sale to target groups.
- UV key fob readers.
- Infomercials on the local radio stations.

Operation COBRA was officially launched in April 03 by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth. The key elements of Operation COBRA were:

- Maximising forensic potential and intelligence gathering.
- Focussing intelligence led action through the Tasking and Co-ordinating Group to direct offender based work, and initiate localised Problem Resolution in Multi-agency Environment (PRIME) Projects.
- An extensive three tier Vehicle Crime Reduction Strategy placing a hitherto unprecedented degree of emphasis on sustainable victim and location work.
- Initiating a high profile Media Campaign.

The Vehicle Crime Reduction Strategy element of Operation COBRA warrants more detailed explanation:

A user friendly database of twelve months worth of vehicle crime information was built. The database was capable of identifying the key locations, enabling a mini problem solving analysis to be conducted to inform problem solving work at the individual street/car park level.

The incidents of vehicle crime in any given location were monitored and a tiered response planned:-

Level 1 – (5-7 vehicle crimes occurring in rolling 12 month period) Victim Response	Level 2 – (8-10 vehicle crimes occurring in rolling 12 month period) Location Response	Level 3 – (11+vehicle crimes occurring in rolling 12 month period) Offender/PRIME Response
<p>Identify target area and empower local residents to tackle problem. Beat Officer to provide Operation Cobra crime reduction packs, and support specific action to tackle issue.</p> <p>Display customised warning messages on laminated posters in premises within high risk area. (Shop windows, doctors surgeries, as appropriate).</p> <p>Distribute/sell physical immobilisers to target group.</p> <p>Display Partnership metal street signs warning ‘thieves take chances you give them – secure your vehicle and remove your valuables. Make Portsmouth safer’.</p>	<p>Continued Level 1 victim care/empowerment.</p> <p>Crime Reduction survey of location.</p> <p>Appropriate partnership inspection where crime generators identified for action.</p> <p>Environmental/situational changes agreed, implemented and monitored</p>	<p>Continued Level 1 and 2 action.</p> <p>Referral to TCG via crime analyst. Sector Inspector tasked to take ownership for comprehensive problem solving (PRIME) initiative.</p>

Complementary Partnership activities to promote vehicle crime reduction:

Activity	Partners
Property marking at point of sale (UC2)	Halfords, Sextons Security, Les Smith Accessories, Road Radio.
Security products discounted (UC1)	Trading Standards vetted businesses - Sextons, Autolock.
Focused Property Marking Road Shows (UC1, 7, 8)	Residents Association Consortium, ASDA, Sainsbury, Gunwharf Secured Car Park, Portsmouth City Council.
Picture warning signs (jointly designed to respond to the needs of foreign visitors) erected on 247 Council parking meters (UC3 –5)	Police, Portsmouth City Council Parking Office, Department of Leisure and Tourism.
Talking parking meters in development by Portsmouth City Council. (UC4, 7)	Police, Portsmouth City Council Parking Office.
COBRA crime reduction message (jointly designed) on all Resident's Parking Permits (UC1 – 4)	As above.
Rigorous name and shame policy on offenders (UC 6–8)	News Editor, Police.
Series of infomercials on local radio throughout year to coincide with identified seasonal risks.(UC1 – 4)	Radio Station, Police.
COBRA pedal cycles with liveried regular and Special Constabulary officers, providing crime reduction advice/materials at key events Mirroring successful project in Belgium. (UC1 –5)	Police, Special Constabulary, Event Organisers.
Second hand shops scanning all incoming property for ultra violet markings and mark all outgoing property (UC7)	Cash Converters.

The strategy in action

During the period April to December 2003, 250 streets were identified where 5 or more vehicle related crimes had occurred. These became the subject of focused problem solving activity at the appropriate level.

Specific examples:

The **Southsea Show** encourages visitors from all over the UK, many with vehicles. In previous years vehicle crime has risen around the location of the show. Local radio infomercials were broadcast to heighten awareness. A group of volunteers (Specials and regular officers) formed COBRA cycle patrols. These were liveried and carried Operation COBRA packs and worked in conjunction with event security to welcome visitors and give crime reduction advice. This idea originated in Belgium and was identified by Home Office Crime Reduction College as good practice. This initiative was well received by the public, organisers and the Tourism Manager. Vehicle crime halved compared to the preceding year.

Kensington Road, was identified as a Level 2 area. A mixture of damage to, and thefts from vehicles, was identified and once analysed was located to a very small area in a long road. Analysis showed that the underlying cause of the problem at this location was one of under age drinking by juveniles. The Community Beat Officer Worked with Trading Standards, residents, Licensees and the Anti Social Behaviour Team to cut off the supply of alcohol and achieve a significant reduction in vehicle crime.

Portsmouth City Council **Victory Car Park** had been subject to 26 crimes in a nine month period. Residents parked all day whilst they used a Hovercraft service to the Isle of Wight. Despite two CCTV cameras at the site crime continued. Warning notices were erected and COBRA packs issued at the Hover Station. Overgrown bushes were providing cover for thieves throughout the car park. The Council Parking Manager arranged for co-ordination of the total removal of bushes and replacement with decorative railings at cost of £12000. Vehicle crime has reduced by 75 %.

ASSESSMENT OF PROCESS

The outputs that were expected to achieve the objectives were constantly monitored, the outputs included:

- 70 newspaper articles published some on three pages of The News (**see Appendix 3**).
- 20 focused Property Marking Road Shows undertaken jointly with Residents association Members.
- 5500 crime reduction COBRA packs targeted to residents/ occupiers in hot spots.
- 1000 packs provided to the public generally.
- 650 mobile phones property marked by Neighbourhood Wardens.
- 10 immobilisers issued to target group.
- 247 picture signs put on parking meters.
- 350 street warning signs erected by Portsmouth City Council staff.
- 280 forty second infomercials broadcast on local radio at high risk times.
- 1 new Secured Car Park achieved in a hot spot area.
- 175 calls made to Crimestoppers (for Portsmouth), an increase of 52%.
- 297 offences 'cleared up' by 198 offenders. 34 specifically targeted for arrest by pro active team. 16 of the offenders definitely 'drug related'.

The process by which the outputs were achieved was also assessed, and modifications made as the project progressed. Examples being the need to reduce the additional workload that Community Beat Officers had undertaken in respect of Level 1 activity, this workload was then jointly completed by the COBRA co-ordinator and the Community Beat Officers in partnership.

OVERALL CRIME REDUCTION SUCCESS in the first nine months of Operation COBRA as compared with the same period in the preceding year

- **Objective 1 (to increase public awareness of commitment to car crime reduction and their part to play)**
A MORI survey in January 2004 shows 38% of those surveyed in Portsmouth had heard of the Operation, and 68% of this had heard about it from coverage in the local daily paper.
- **Objective 2 (target - 15% reduction in taking of vehicles of G- R registration)**
25% reduction achieved. (418 crimes reduced to 314) (see Appendix 1)
- **Objective 3 (target - 15% reduction in thefts from vehicles)**
33% reduction achieved. (2335 crimes reduced to 1550) (See Appendix 4)
- **Objective 4 (target - 15% vehicle crime reduction in those areas with 19 or more crimes during April – December 2002)**
37% reduction achieved. (325 crimes reduced to 202) (see Appendix 2)
- **Objective 5 (target - 15% reduction in vehicle crime at locations where there are 5 or more crimes)**
58% reduction achieved. (1598 crimes reduced to 937) (see Appendix 2)

At the end of the first year of the Portsmouth Crime and Disorder Strategy 02/05 the 6% vehicle crime reduction target had not been met, in fact a 16% rise had occurred. In the second year of the Strategy following extensive scanning and analysis Operation COBRA was launched, and after just nine months a 31% reduction in vehicle crime had been achieved compared to the previous year (see Appendix 4). This reduction was sufficient to more than recover the performance of the previous year and put Portsmouth Crime and Disorder Partnership squarely back on track to achieve the three year Strategy targets.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

- Performance champion to drive operation forward and be accountable.
- Dedicated Crime reduction Officer to co-ordinate.
- Adopting a problem solving approach.
- Commitment of partners.
- Establishing a user friendly and comprehensive database of vehicle crime information capable of informing problem solving work.
- Focusing activity where the greatest reduction opportunities exist.
- Developing crime reduction potential of victim and location focus.
- The development of a communications strategy which included local media at the planning stage, and achieved the Editor's commitment to support the operation throughout the 12 months.

- Developing a brand identity (all signs, newspaper articles, posters , etc. relating to operation COBRA had a common, distinctive and impactful logo which became synonymous with vehicle crime reduction to both potential victims and offenders).

IN CONCLUSION

Whilst COBRA itself was always intended to be a year long Operation, the principles of Operation COBRA are now firmly embedded into the long term strategy to tackle vehicle crime in Portsmouth, and in fact the principles used are now being replicated within Portsmouth to tackle Burglary Dwelling offences. The Portsmouth Crime and Disorder Partnership have allocated funds from the Safer Communities Budget, to continue the vehicle crime reduction work in 04/05. Portsmouth Council for Community Service has volunteered to manage a project of volunteer COBRA bike riders for Summer 2004. The Operation has also been incorporated into the Hampshire Police 'Safer Vehicles Strategy' that is to be launched across Hampshire Constabulary in Spring 2004.

The cost to society of each vehicle crime is estimated by the Home Office to be £1,000. In the first nine months of Operation COBRA, in comparison with the same nine month period in the previous year, the number of vehicle crimes in Portsmouth fell from 3235 to 2235, representing a cost saving of £1,000,000. The true worth of this problem solving approach, however, is in its value to the people of Portsmouth, where one thousand less people have experienced the misery and inconvenience of being victims of vehicle crime.

[It is worthy of note that the crime reduction success of Operation COBRA has continued beyond the nine month period examined in this report. As we near the end of March, 2004, the year end total is predicted to be 3,000 compared with last year's year end total of 4,228, representing a 29% reduction overall.]

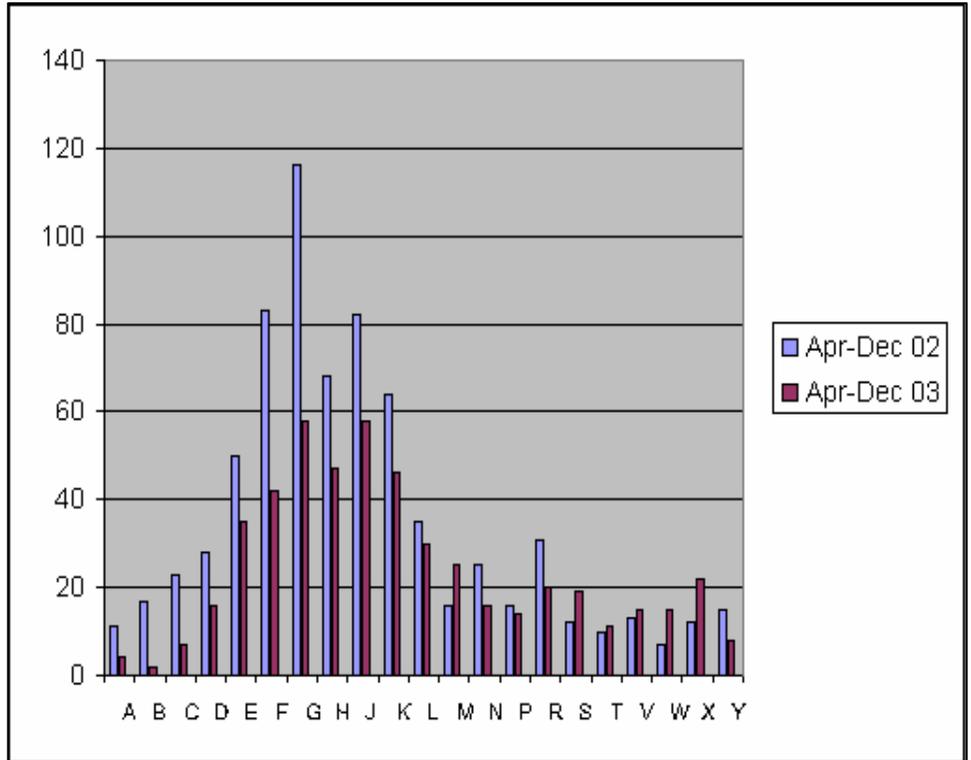
REPORT CO-AUTHORS:

Julie EARLE
Chief Inspector Territorial Operations
Portsmouth BCU

Alan EDMUNDS
Crime Reduction Officer
Portsmouth BCU

**COMPARISON OF VEHICLES TAKEN WITHOUT CONSENT
BY YEAR OF REGISTRATION 2002/2003**

	Apr-Dec 02	Apr-Dec 03
A	11	4
B	17	2
C	23	7
D	28	16
E	50	35
F	83	42
G	116	58
H	68	47
J	82	58
K	64	46
L	35	30
M	16	25
N	25	16
P	16	14
R	31	20
S	12	19
T	10	11
V	13	15
W	7	15
X	12	22
Y	15	8



Concentrations of vehicle crime April – December 2002

Crimes	No of Locations	Cumulative crime	% yield
38	1	38	
32	2	64	
28	2	56	
26	3	78	10%
25	2	50	
20	1	20	
19	1	19	
18	4	72	
17	5	85	
16	2	32	
15	2	30	
14	6	84	
13	5	65	
12	5	60	39%
11	5	55	
10	6	60	
9	16	144	
8	5	40	
7	23	161	
6	30	180	
5	41	205	
4	72	288	
3	89	267	29%
2	185	370	
1	712	712	22%
	Total 1225	Total 3235	100%

Concentrations of vehicle crime April – December 2003

Crimes	No of locations	Cumulative Crime	% yield
35	1	35	
28	1	28	
27	1	27	6%
21	2	42	
18	2	36	
17	2	34	
16	2	32	
15	2	30	
13	1	13	
12	4	48	
11	4	44	36%
10	3	30	
9	6	54	
8	9	72	
7	17	119	
6	28	168	
5	25	125	
4	41	164	
3	92	276	37%
2	188	376	
1	482	482	21%
	Total 913	Total 2235	100%

NEWS HEADLINES – April 2003 – December 2003 – All at least half a page in local newspaper

April

- Editors comment – We support crackdown on everyday car crime – but want to go further
- Every half hour there's another car crime victim. Will you be one of them? Find out how you can help stop thieves with Operation Cobra
- Hot spots targeted
- Key to car crime is close to home – (housebreakers may just be after your car keys)

May

- Cobra targets car crime reptiles
- No crime too small in the battle to beat the villains
- Police warn owners as thieves target soft-tops
- The car crime cracker (new vehicle scenes of crime officer)
- Robbers target tools left in company vans
- If you're involved in car crime, your face could be the next one we publish
- Cobra strikes again (full front page with photo of offender)
- Drivers warned 'Leave it and they'll steal it' – (introducing new street signs)

June

- Crackdown brings about huge drop in vehicle crime (3 month on)
- Shops join crime crusade (Cash Converters and second-hand shops marking and checking goods)
- Don't give the thieves a chance, drivers urged
- Youngsters could pedal the anti-crime message (promoting Cobra bikes)

July

- Three day car crime spree one of the worst ever

August

- Booze cut off halts vandals
- Crime initiative helps to crack down on nuisance teenagers by blocking their alcohol supply
- Police to get pro-active in car crackdown – summer road shows roll out
- Cobra cops to help tourists
- Cobra sting to target car criminals at show (Cobra bikes)
- Cobra team shows it can bite (Cobra bikes – Force newspaper)
- Yet another good result for police as car crimes fall
- High profile policy see fall in crime during show

September

- Big drop in car crimes
- Toys for thieving joy riders – police believe children behind a spate of moped thefts

October

- Car crime slashed as Cobra tightens coils on offenders (6 months on)
- Make your mark and help beat the thieves (property marking)

November

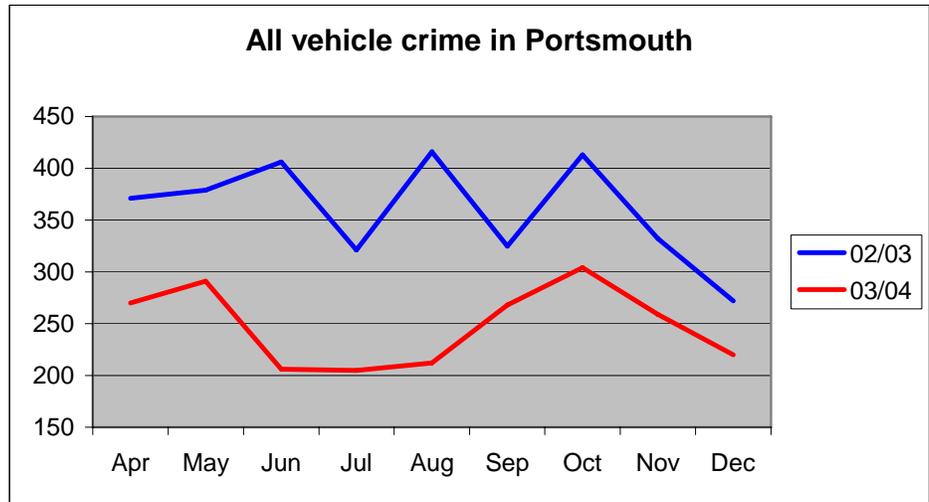
- The anatomy of a 'Minor' crime (2 pages) cost of crime
- Last chance to go straight (Prolific car thief, a key target of crackdown, avoids jail)

December

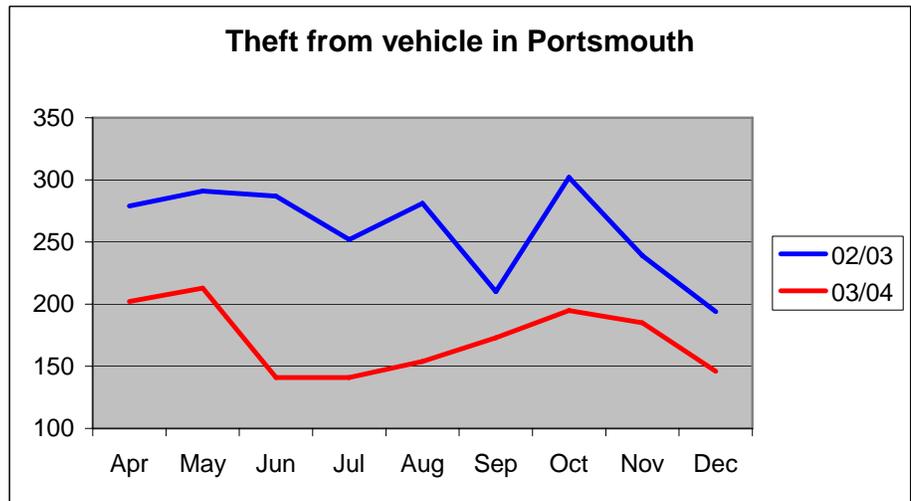
- Don't give the car thieves any early Christmas gifts

VEHICLE CRIME REDUCTION STATISTICS

	02/03	03/04
Apr	371	270
May	379	291
Jun	406	206
Jul	321	205
Aug	416	212
Sep	325	268
Oct	413	304
Nov	332	259
Dec	272	220
TOTAL	3235	2235



	02/03	03/04
Apr	279	202
May	291	213
Jun	287	141
Jul	252	141
Aug	281	154
Sep	210	173
Oct	302	195
Nov	239	185
Dec	194	146
TOTAL	2335	1550



The News, Portsmouth
The News Centre
Hilsea
Portsmouth
PO2 9SX

Chief Inspector Julie Earle,
Fratton Police Station,
Kingston Crescent,
PORTSMOUTH,
PO2 8BU

Dear Julie,

OPERATION COBRA – PARTNERSHIP ENDORSEMENT LETTER

I am editor of The News, Portsmouth, a daily newspaper which sells approximately 66,000 copies six nights a week and is the largest selling newspaper on the south coast.

Our circulation area covers Portsmouth, Gosport, Fareham, Havant, Waterlooville and parts of West Sussex.

Crime is an issue which is tremendously important to our readers. Their concerns on the subject are reflected almost daily in the stories and letters that fill our newspapers. With this in mind I was keen to find out more when Hampshire Police first approached us concerning a major initiative on car crime. Such crime is rarely headline news but it is the type that not only has a financial affect but also a "quality of life" impact on the individual victims and the communities where it is prevalent.

Fairly quickly I saw the potential for a strong partnership between the police and ourselves and a way in which we could empower our readers to make a difference.

I was also impressed with the way the police quickly took on board the need to adopt a high profile with this campaign. Access to officers and information (even that which did not always reflect well on the force) was never denied. In addition the "naming and shaming" element of the operation had real power. Stories without names and faces have very little lasting effect on the public conscience so the co-operation we received in ensuring persistent car thieves appeared in our columns helped send a very clear message to the criminals.

Also the stories of victims and the clear and simple information about the crime and how to combat it had, in my opinion, the gradual effect of forcing our readers to sit up and take notice and then do something to fight back.

The strength of the database information the police built up on the pattern of car crime was tremendously impressive and gave our readers a very clear picture of the scale of the problem and where it was taking place. Sometimes police forces can be loathe to part with such detail but here was a great example of how such information can have a positive impact on a crime fighting initiative, which, by the nature of the beast, must involve the public if it is to have any chance of succeeding.

In my view Operation Cobra is a textbook example of co-operation between media and police for the good of the community they both serve.

Yours sincerely

Mike Gilson

Chief Executive's Office

Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth, PO1 2AL

Telephone: 023 9284 4040

Fax: 023 9283 4571

Our Ref: JAW/vc/LL520

26 January, 2006

Chief Inspector Julie Earle,
Fratton Police Station,
Kingston Crescent,
PORTSMOUTH,
PO2 8BU

Dear Julie,

OPERATION COBRA – PARTNERSHIP ENDORSEMENT LETTER

As Head of the Chief Executive's Office, I am responsible for Portsmouth City Council's Crime and Disorder Unit including the strategy team responsible for developing the city Crime and Disorder Strategy and reporting to the Crime and Disorder Strategic Partnership.

The Crime and Disorder Strategy for Portsmouth (2002/2005) has 5 core principles including tackling vehicle crime. Our target is to reduce the Vehicle Crime rate by 17% from the 2001/02 baseline. Each priority is supported by a multi-agency "priority group" responsible for developing annual action / delivery plans that will achieve our targets.

Despite being a priority and focus for the Crime and Disorder Strategic Partnership, in the first year of the 2002 – 2005 strategy, vehicle crime continued to rise (increasing 16% in the first year) and we were not on line to meet our target reduction. The existing action plan needed to be reviewed and revised. Operation Cobra was launched in 2003 in response to this.

Operation Cobra is a police led multi-agency initiative that has driven forward the strategic response to vehicle crime. Since Operation Cobra was launched, there has been a substantial decrease in vehicle crime (and this has already reached beyond the target reduction for the strategy).

Operation Cobra is a strategically planned programme, based on crime pattern analysis and evidence based practice. The action / delivery plan combines "quick wins" with long term sustainable actions.

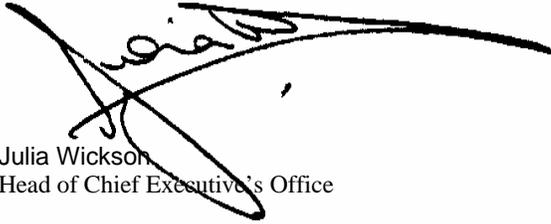
Portsmouth City Council has worked in partnership with the police to deliver parts of the plan including:

- City Engineers and Parking Services redesigning car park areas (for example cutting back shrubs and trees) and jointly developing an additional secured by design car park
- Enforcement officers across the authority increasing vigilance and reporting incidents
- Neighbourhood Wardens in the north of the city, working with the local community highlighting key campaigns and property marking
- Supporting specific PRIME initiatives in "hot spot" locations
- Working with the police press unit to support a proactive media campaign

Operation Cobra has been extremely effective and is directly responsible for the turnaround in vehicle crime. The combination of enforcement and prevention work has led to some dramatic "quick wins" but is underpinned by prevention work that will lead to sustainable results. It demonstrates the importance of effective partnership working based on informed analysis and evidenced based practice.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Wickson', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Julia Wickson
Head of Chief Executive's Office