

TILLEY AWARD 2004

Project Title: Safe and Secure - Twenty Four Seven

Police Force: Staffordshire Police (Chase Basic Command Unit [Lead Agency])

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Nightowl Services
Safe and Secure: Twenty - Four Seven

Supporting Statement

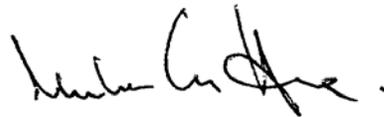
Lorry load theft is a National Problem and regionally Staffordshire in 2001 recorded the 3rd. highest number of lorry load offences amounting to 9% of the forces overall vehicle crime. The M6 provides a direct corridor through the Force area, which includes several large service areas.

Nightowl, regularly catered for 180 plus parked vehicles each night and subsequently suffered theft from and theft of lorry and load. The site suffered from prostitution, anti- social behaviour and personal thefts.

Given the historical burden on policing resources, it was apparent that a new problem solving approach was required. Following discussions with local authorities and agencies, the problems were highlighted to the new site management team, which allowed the crime reduction unit to offer cost effective solutions to reduce site crime and produce long-term sustainable reductions.

Project plans and action worksheets were devised to ensure delivery of actions to agreed time-scales. Quarterly police statistics were made available to monitor plan effectiveness. **The site achieved the Secure Car Park Award in April 2003.** Using baseline figures from 2000, we have been able to reduce overall crime and incidents by **62%** with a continuing trend for further reductions year on year.

The application evidences the success of a methodical problem solving approach to the increasing policing demands at Nightowl. It has produced a framework for long- term sustainability and has been identified by Nightowl as Best Practice with the problem solving package adopted at sites across the UK including Carlisle, Alconbury and Rugby.



Chase BCU Commander

Chief Superintendent Nick Howe

Project Summary

Lorry load theft is a National Problem. Staffordshire recorded the 3rd highest number of lorry load offences in the U.K. during 2001, 9% of Force vehicle crime. The M6 provides a direct corridor through our Force area, which includes a large service area, Nightowl (formerly BP Truckstop), providing an excellent target for potential offenders. The rural nature of Southern Staffordshire adds to the attractiveness of the area for these types of crime, as farm buildings etc provide excellent 'slaughter points' serviced by a good arterial road system.

Nightowl regularly caters for 180+ parked goods vehicles each night. Associated with this came the inevitable lorry crime problems. The site suffered a variety of crimes: thefts from and of vehicles, drive off offences, prostitution, anti- social behaviour, and personal thefts from drivers utilising the services. It operated on a large site, which was devoid of any natural surveillance and had few security measures.

The site was an almost continuous drain on policing resources and a new approach was required. Following discussions with the local authority, the problems were highlighted to the new management. A combination of traditional policing methods with 'quick wins' for the short term approach and in-depth research analysis with long-term problem solving solutions were required and delivered.

Full site surveys, and meetings with company architects and management, allowed the crime reduction team to impart their knowledge and experience of solutions available to reduce site crime. This was important to the company, and the police, as it ensured the correct interventions were chosen for maximum impact.

A project plan commenced in April 2002, and action worksheets were devised to ensure delivery of actions to agreed time-scales. Quarterly police statistics were made available to measure plan effectiveness. Against baseline figures for 2001, crime/incidents for 2003 have fallen by **62%** despite reduction work not being fully completed until February 2003. The site gained recognition for its achievements with a Secure Car Park Award in April 2003, the first paying lorry-park to achieve the award.

Although the ideal aim of the project is to eradicate all incidents of crime and disorder, reality tells us this is not always realistic. However, the reduction in both crime and disorder incidents since the intervention methods were implemented has, and continues to be significant. The partnership has worked well thus far, as the results will testify, but we will not be complacent and improvements will continue.

Project Aims & Objectives

The most effective crime reduction strategies use a problem solving approach. This project utilises the model of the preventative process: Scanning and Analysis of Data; an effective strategy (Preventative Measures); Implementation of chosen solutions; and Monitoring and Evaluation.

Within the Crime Reduction Unit, it required a site-specific project, campaign strategy and action plans to enable us to fulfil our aims and SMART objectives. Monitoring and evaluation processes were to become an integral part of the project.

The overall aim of the Nightowl project was to reduce priority and volume crime/incidents and promote community and site safety. *Unqualified aims to reduce crime...are laudable but probably not deliverable (Tilley and Laycock) [2002].*

As specific targets we would therefore:

- Reduce priority/ volume incidents by 25%
- Reduce theft from and theft of motor vehicles by 25%

A realistic delivery time scale of April 2002 – April 2003 was agreed with all partners and reduction targets were set against baseline data from April 2001 - April 2002.

¹ Slaughter point is a location used to breakdown and distribute the lorry load.

The Nature of the Problem

The premises are located on an elevated site adjacent to junction 1 of the M54 motorway and a disused quarry. The topography in this instance impedes natural surveillance. Access to the site is good, however the general condition of the site was poor. The overall physical security and management status of this 10.5 acre site was extremely inadequate, with no focus towards customer and staff safety and security.

Historically this site has been a persistent problem and subject to regular police overt and covert action for close on twenty years. As already stated, but a fact which should not be overlooked, Staffordshire recorded the 3rd highest number of lorry load offences in the U.K. during 2001, equating to 9% of the total Force vehicle crime. Between April 2001 and March 2002 there were a total of **167** recorded offences at this single location. Although the major crime problems revolved around lorry thefts, personal thefts and prostitution, in all **19** different offence types were recorded in that one year alone.

All Incidents Recorded - Nightowl Site April 2001 – March 2002 Inclusive			
Incident Type	Count	Incident Type	Count
Suspicious Person	34	Theft From Motor vehicle	15
Theft other	12	Suspicious Vehicle	11
Other Unlisted	9	Disturbance-Other Place	9
Itinerants	7	Prostitute	6
Other Non Incident	5	RTC (Damage)	4
Damage To Motor Vehicle	4	Theft (Shoplifting)	4
Alarm Activation	4	Theft Of Goods Vehicle	3
Theft Of Motor Vehicle	3	Abandoned Stolen Vehicle	2
Abandoned Vehicle	2	Nuisance	4
Criminal Damage	2	Traffic Offence	1
RTC (Injury)	1	Illegal Immigrant	1
Fire	1	Drunkenness	1
Drugs (Other)	1	Fraud	1
Robbery	1	Sexual Offence	1
Violence Against Person	1		

Due to the perception of many police officers, of the management and company as a whole, respect for the company was limited. Officers had attended the location over many years to deal with the same problems year in year out, and witnessed no improvements. On the other hand, staff and management from the business, but more importantly 'Victims' of the offences, returned little respect for the officers of Staffordshire Police as any successes had been once again limited and always short lived.

The exchange of information mainly consisted of mouth to mouth communication and 'skimmed' information gathering, achieved on an 'ad hoc' basis. A new approach was required, embracing problem-orientated policing, forging strong Crime and Disorder Partnerships, with the sole aim of producing long-term positive outcomes for the business and the community.

Following the creation of the Incident Reduction Unit it rapidly became clear at divisional briefings that the location was a persistent repeat location. Consultation with the locally based Crime Reduction Officer confirmed this fact.

With the introduction of a computerised geographical crime/incident analysis package into the Crime Reduction Department it became possible to identify long term activity trends. In addition we were able to provide an accurate breakdown of all on site activities that elicited a police response. With the information available we were able consult with local police officers, site managers, parish councillors and members of the local district council planning and licensing departments, to access their information systems as part of the scanning process. Data which became available provided information as to the following:

- ◆ **Classification of crime / incident type.**
- ◆ **Date of incident.**
- ◆ **Time bands relating to occurrence.**

A thorough analysis of the crimes and location indicated there were three main crime victims:

- ◆ **Lorry Drivers/Truckers – Wallets, mobile phones, credit cards etc**
- ◆ **Haulage Companies – Vehicle and load thefts**
- ◆ **Nightowl & Staff – Revenue loss, Stock loss, staff morale, fear of crime**

Who are the offenders?

Information from local CID Officers and from representatives from 'Operation Coppergold' (Regional West Midlands Truck Crime Unit) linked in with valuable intelligence, identifying that the location was being targeted by criminal teams from outside of the regional area.

Analysis identified that many of the personal theft incidents were as a result of prostitutes stealing from lorry cabs. Intelligence showed persons from both the West Midlands and Stoke-on-Trent areas specifically targeted the location for prostitution. This was attributable to easy access to the site, along with a distinct lack of security management.

In this project it was essential to bring in the knowledge and experience of all, not just specialists, to find effective solutions.

- CID were able to update the team continuously on target criminals and M.O.
- Local patrol officers assisted in ensuring that an effective patrol strategy, which had been absent previously, was in place.
- Our core team provided the knowledge for target hardening activities.
- Architectural Liaison brought together the principles of Crime Reduction through Environmental Design.

It was important to now engage partners and agencies in the project.

The Response to the Problem

Establishing effective arrangements for partnership work can be hard (Hough and Tilley) [1997].

Following ongoing consultation, a co-ordinated approach to all identified **crimes** and **Incidents** was formulated, initiated and subjected to ongoing evaluation. South Staffordshire District Council was invited to participate in discussions, along with the police's divisional Licensing Department, to discuss ways of tackling the problems and bringing Nightowl to the table.

The company's requirement to hold a Late Night Refreshment licence, to operate between the hours of 11pm and 7am was issued by Environmental Health annually. This presented an obvious opportunity to help influence company thinking relating to problems concerning security and incidents on site.

The council and the core police team considered the impact of the site to crime and disorder in the local area, utilising the police data and anecdotal evidence from the community and local councillors, and acted upon it. Guided by the ethos of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, and the partnership expertise around licensing matters, a plan of action was formulated.

The Police licensing department sent a letter of objection to the council over the impending issue of the new Late Night Refreshment licence to Nightowl. The council's response was immediate. They in turn sent a strongly worded letter, with a 21-day deadline, to Nightowl with a request for them to meet with Crime Reduction practitioners.

Despite the difficulties with somewhat 'ancient' licensing legislation, under which these licences are issued, the proactive response and support from the council was immediate. They were totally committed to their responsibilities under Section 17. The new approach of the partnership became the lever that opened up discussions with Nightowl management to address these crime and disorder issues.

The months that followed brought in many other council departments who applied their skills to the ongoing revitalisation of the site including Environmental Health, Planning and Health and Safety. The police crime reduction team could not accomplish their aims or objectives on their own. Without the support of the local council it is doubtful that the achievements of the partnership at this site would have been accomplished.

Routine Activity Theory (Felson) states that three elements have to be present for a crime to occur:

- A suitable target; this can be a person, an object or a place.
- The absence of a capable guardian; this is anything that discourages a crime from taking place.
- A motivated offender; offenders have many different reason for committing crime.

Therefore one can presume that for a crime not to occur one needs to alter one of the elements. The analysis of the available crime data directed solutions towards changes to the first and second elements by making the site/targets less attractive and establishing guardianship.

The Principles of Crime Prevention enable practitioners to solve a particular problem, or reduce the likelihood of it occurring, by ensuring the right preventative measures are put into place. Not all principles will apply to all problems. It is vital to tailor any interventions to the site-specific problem. Interventions that are chosen 'off the shelf' without any real thought tend not to work. . *Standard, broad brush, blockbuster approaches to problems tend to produce disappointing results.* (Hough and Tilley)[1997].

Police practitioners must understand that there is a major implication for any company providing secure parking for the haulage industry, and as the security budgets for such companies are very low this is ultimately passed onto the lorry driver. Any increased security and subsequent increase in cost to the driver may result in them being even more reluctant to use 'secure' sites therefore increasing the risk of parking in high risk, low or zero cost areas. It is vitally important that practitioners understand this fine balance and work in close co operation with companies to minimise these factors.

Nightowl understood the implications of a failure to address the issues on site. Their trading licence, and operating practises, were being challenged. Through the combined positivity of the partners involved the company made a strategic decision to re-position their offering and bring it to secure car park standard. This re-positioning offered:

- Enhanced facilities
- Security and Safety
- New Technology
- Re-branding/Marketing
- Staff Recruitment
- Staff Training
- Signage

The Architectural Liaison Officer was tasked with providing appropriate, realistic interventions to the company ensuring maximum reductive effects at acceptable costs to Nightowl. This involved the A.L.O. and Crime Reduction Team producing full site surveys and project/action plans. Many interventions were based on knowledge from research studies, national practitioner databases (www.crimereduction.gov.uk) and experience from our own departmental projects guided by the 'principles' test. Others such as Automatic Number Plate Reader systems were a innovative regional 'first'.

A list of interventions were drawn up with the full backing of the senior company management. These detailed a series of rolling positive crime reducing effects designed to produce on going improvements. A small section is as follows:

- Define & protect perimeter - Electrified fencing.
- Single pedestrian access - (Turnstile).
- Controlled single entry/egress - (Hydraulic Rams).
- CCTV of lorry park, shop and fuel area. - (ANPR).
- Improved lighting to all areas.
- Introduction of one way gyratory system.
- Parking bays relined.
- Landscaping addressed with 'sterile zone'.
- Site map and charter.

Measures were implemented in a particular order. The location provided an excellent opportunity for offenders to attack vehicles, especially curtain sided, and offered a choice of escape routes to 'slaughter points'. Securing the site was therefore a priority along with the control of traffic and persons entering and leaving the site. Security patrols were increased, along with a rigorous patrol strategy from the local officers, as priority tactics were agreed for the fencing of the site, along with the CCTV and ANPR systems, and the necessary access control measures.

A 12-month plan of action was agreed upon. All parties felt that the aims and objectives for the site were attainable given a flexible timeframe. The plan drilled down into several action worksheets, which enabled practitioners to be aware of roles and time-scales for completion of their specific actions. Any difficulties were therefore quickly evidenced allowing the team to investigate and adapt the plan where necessary.

Regular team meetings were held to ensure the project was on track to deliver, with quarterly crime statistics made available to Nightowl and senior police/partnership managers, to further encourage commitment and support. Monthly monitoring and evaluation by the police continued throughout the period 2002 –2003, with information being freely made available to the site owners and other partnership organisations.

In addition, a repeat location electronic search engine was developed to automatically identify developing hot spot locations. This tool was used to provide structured monitoring, ensuring that any emerging problems were rapidly identified and resolved.

Quarterly statistics gave a picture of crime levels as work commenced. These highlighted the impact of the interventions that were being developed along with the patrol strategy at the site from the local officers within the Local Policing Unit.

The company was originally guarded as to the availability of funds for on site improvements. It is a testament to the personalities involved within this project that the company team not only agreed to the recommendations of the crime reduction officers but also surpassed them, and included interventions they believed enhanced their new 'secure' business approach.

Evaluation of the intervention

The project through the use CPTED Principles had an overarching operational plan to reduce priority and volume incidents and to promote community and site safety.

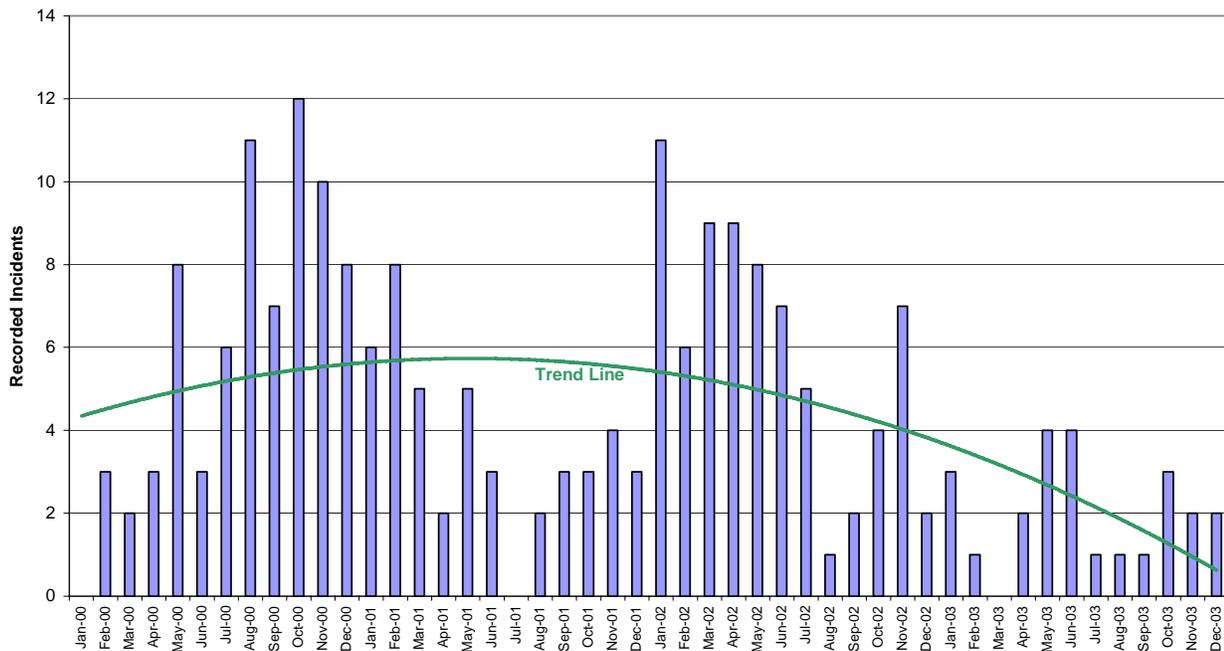
- ❖ Baseline figures for 2000 - 172
- ❖ Baseline figures for 2001 – 167 Down 3%
- ❖ Intervention Year 2002 – 129 Down 23%
- ❖ Post intervention 2003 – 64 Down 50%

Overall reduction of crime and incidents for the first post year intervention as compared to the pre intervention 2001 = down 62%. (Appendices detail further breakdowns re priority crime and vehicle crime)

Featherstone became a proving ground for a number of the innovative interventions, allowing operational and technical difficulties to be resolved. It also gave the company greater bargaining power as a 'bulk' purchaser of 'hi tech' security systems.

The positive crime reduction impact enabled the company to take a pro-active step and the approaches adopted were transferred to their other company locations at Alconbury, Rugby, Carlisle, Newcastle upon Tyne and Penrith.

Nightowl - Priority Crime / Incidents 2000 - 2003 Inclusive



Since the project partners implemented the improvements, both local residents and the police have noticed a marked improvement in the quality of life for the surrounding community evidenced by continuing actual reductions in recorded crime.

Crime data for the general area, including data for M6 Hilton Services, indicated no detrimental effect having removed the crime generating factors from Nightowl. Indeed, there is good evidence to demonstrate a positive diffusement of benefits has occurred to the immediate vicinity e.g. a number of crime hotspot lay-bys in close proximity to Nightowl have been redesigned to further reduce the opportunity for crime to take place.

Working with Highways and the Probation service, over night stopping within the lay-bys has been discouraged through environmental improvements reducing crime still further. The benefit to Nightowl, more truckers use the facility, which is safe and welcoming. This has increased revenue and plans have been submitted to the local authority to extend the Nightowl Park to cater for an additional forty vehicles. This will add further benefit to the local community, both by reducing crime and the fear of crime within their locality, and providing much needed local employment.

The company has seen tangible benefits since the inception of the project:

- Reduced crime
- Improved staff morale/ less staff abuse
- An increased customer base
- Increased net income
- Reduced overall running costs

These are vitally important results that offset some of the initial £400,000 cost to bring the site up to their new standard. Projected pay back for the security systems and enhanced facilities is two years.

Theft of lorries and their loads affects us all, the costs of this sort of crime is ultimately passed on to the consumers with higher prices at the shops. The partners in this project have been working to take every step to reduce crime in and around the service area. The Midlands region sees ten's of thousands of commercial vehicle journeys each day and measures like these will reduce crime and play a key part in creating a safer environment.

This project has never been viewed as a quick fix. The problem, as documented, has been a long-standing affair desperately requiring long term solutions with built in sustainability. Monitoring and evaluation is an integral element of the project, monitoring continues on a quarterly basis and evaluation will continue on at least a twelve monthly basis.

The Crime Reduction team and Nightowl management have presented this stakeholder project to other forces through TruckPol highlighting its potential to work across Force and national boundaries. Enquiries have already been received from Leicestershire and Thames Valley police forces. The initiative has become

an integral part of the West Midlands regional strategy to combat the lorry load problem and produce long lasting permanent incident reductions.

The working and learning process of the Nightowl project is being utilised by the team on previously the busiest motorway service area in Europe, Hilton Park services M6, and at Stafford Services M6. This problem solving approach and documented project/action planning has recently seen Roadchef gain the first regional secure car park award for the M6 Toll road Services at Norton Canes. (Only the second such award for a motorway service area in the UK.)

Their M6 Toll site is now a benchmark for all their UK sites, one of which is Stafford South, and their intention is to bring all UK sites upto this new standard including SCP status. The project plan and action worksheets are now integral to our major crime reduction work across all divisional projects.

They are now utilised across the whole crime reduction spectrum both within the team and within the local policing units. A small selection is as follows:

- Trentham Gardens - Re generation of a run down leisure and retail facility over the next two years with a prospect of attracting 3 million visitors per annum by 2005.
- Highfields - Local Authority estate within Stafford being provided with a crime reduction alleygating scheme.
- Featherstone - Community centre beset by vandalism and anti social behaviour.
- Newport Road - Increasing Alcohol and Violence problems within Stafford town centre. Largest repeat location within the local policing unit.
- Cannock - Working with Chamber of Commerce and British Business Parks on re-generation of commercial/industrial parks.

Cutting crime in the haulage industry requires partnership. The police, the community, the service providers and hauliers all have a part to play in driving crime away. The regeneration of Nightowl services is an excellent example of just what can be achieved when key stakeholders work together to tackle crime

NB - For the purposes of this report it was decided to provide general background information, but to concentrate our research around vehicle related thefts. Consequently the Crime Reduction Team has retained considerable background information that does not feature within this report.

Appendix A - Nightowl All Incidents 2000-2003 Inclusive containing initiative time scales

Appendix B - Nightowl vehicle crime comparison of identical 18 month period.

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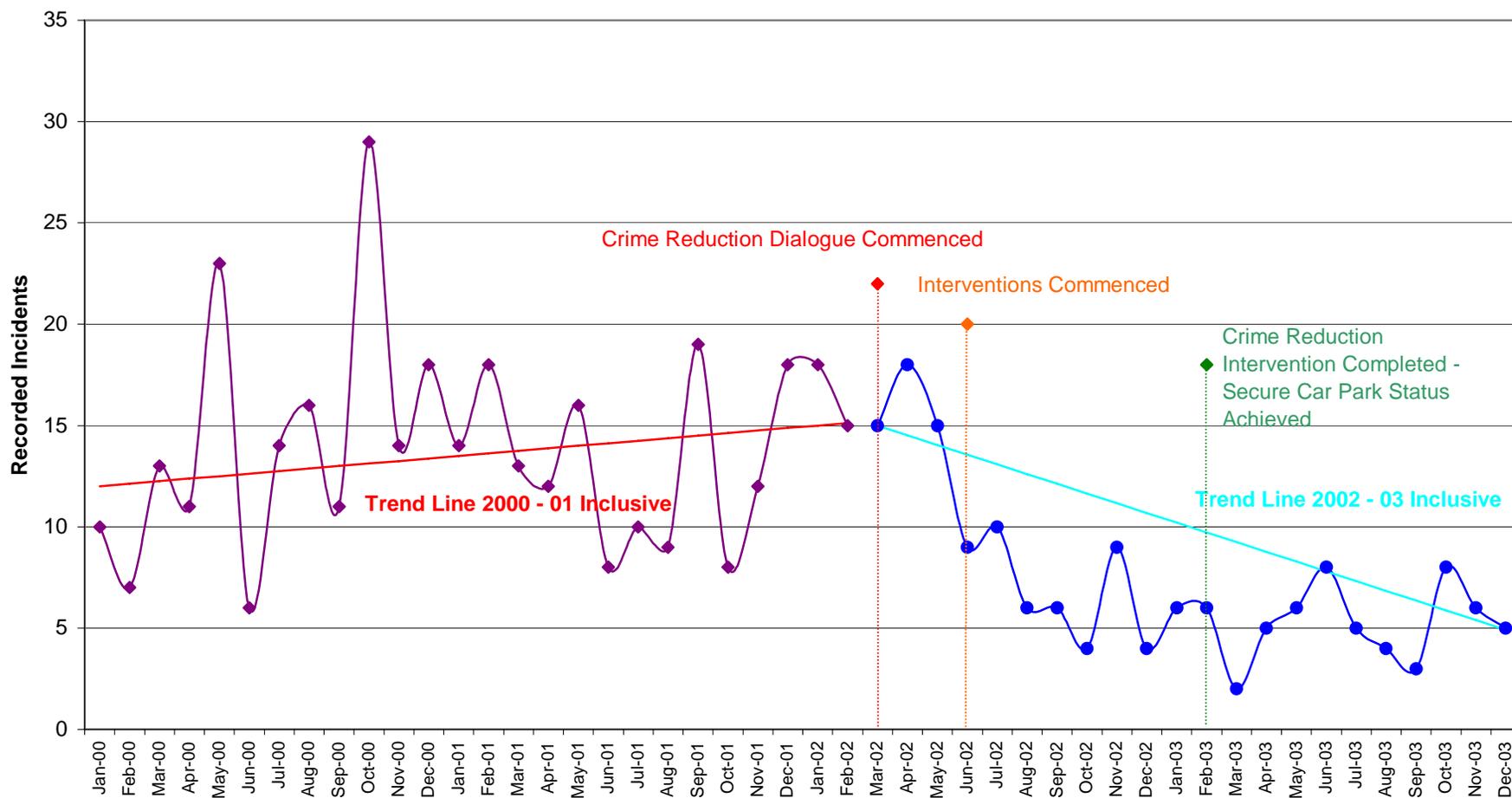
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Nightowl - All Incidents 2000 - 2003 Inclusive



Nightowl - Vehicle Crime Comparison Of Identical Eighteen Month Periods

January 2001 - June 2002 and July 2002 - Dec 2003

