



Tilley Award 2004

**Staines Town Centre night
bus scheme**

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Project title: **Staines night bus**

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Executive Summary

Staines night bus

Tackling town centre violence and anti-social behaviour

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North Surrey division is one of four territorial divisions within the county of Surrey. The division itself is divided into three Borough areas, Epsom and Ewell, Elmbridge and Spelthorne.

Prior to 1999 the Metropolitan Police serviced the Borough of Spelthorne. In the County boundary Policing changes, Surrey Police took responsibility for the Borough, including the busy town centre of Staines.

The Borough of Spelthorne has a population of 90,390 from varying ethnic and social backgrounds. The main focal point for the Borough lies within the confines of Staines town.

The town has two large shopping areas, a large cinema complex, numerous restaurants and varied types of bars and clubs. During the day the town is well serviced by public transport, as it is on a main line train and bus route.

In recent years the Spelthorne crime and reduction partnership have invested heavily in designing out crime in Staines town centre. Major funding has been spent on a close circuit television system, secure by design car parks and a safer shopping scheme that has received a national award.

Although reducing crime and disorder in Staines town centre had been one of the Policing priorities since Surrey Police took over the Borough, the perception of the volume of crime with the public was higher than the reality.

A consultation was carried out by the crime and reduction partnership with the residents of the Borough and the following problems were identified:

There were concerns over the number of youths causing criminal damage and acting anti-socially in the town late at night.

There was insufficient transportation to take people away from the town centre after 11pm at night, during peak licensing times.

Vulnerable people were avoiding the town centre on Friday and Saturday evenings, due to the fear of crime being higher than the reality.

Along with conventional enforcement approaches, after in depth analysis a late night bus scheme was decided upon to combat the identified areas of concern. This would deal with the imbalance between supply and demand for transportation between 11pm and 3am on Friday and Saturday evenings.

The availability of suitable transport would offer the extra flexibility to move greater numbers of late night revelers safely away from the town centre. This in turn would reduce the opportunity for anti-social behaviour, violence and criminal damage. In reducing the number of people in the streets after licensed premise closing times, this offers the benefits of heightening public reassurance.

Similar schemes have been successful in Merseyside, Brighton and the Metropolitan areas. Although the schemes have been successful, they have been heavily subsidised by central Government funding. A snapshot was taken from the crime figures in Staines town centre between 19th December 2003 and 28th January 2004. A reduction in public place violence of 32% was shown against the same period in the previous year and a reduction of 24% in criminal damage offences.

Project-Staines night bus

North Surrey division is one of four territorial Divisions within the County of Surrey. It consists of three affluent Boroughs whose residents have a notably high fear of crime. Staines is the busiest town within the North Surrey Division and is the administrative centre for the Borough of Spelthorne.

90,390 people live within the Borough of Spelthorne. The town centre of Staines is renowned for its busy nightlife, especially during the busy weekend period. It is the nearest Surrey town that offers the availability of nightclub entertainment that is adjacent to the Metropolitan areas.

So what was the problem

Staines town centre is the home to a large number of business premises. There are a good mix of shops, restaurants, pubs, clubs and a large Warner cinema complex. Staines has a main line railway station and during the day there is good access to public bus services.

Up until 2001 Staines had only two licensed premises that offered late drinking. Due to the expansion and ongoing development of the town, a further two premises were established offering extended drinking hours, with more planned.

Much consultation and work had gone into staggering the closing times of the relevant premises. It was still evident that weekend trade tended to move to the premises with the latest licence therefore diminishing the effects of staggering opening hours.

The main problem seemed to be that public transport servicing Staines town centre after 11pm in the evening fell severely short of the requirement. This was due to a number of reasons outlined below:

The bus service for the town finishes shortly after 11pm in the evening.

There are insufficient private hire taxis for the Borough during peak service periods.

There are very limited Hackney carriage taxis for the Borough during peak service periods.

The train station is a significant distance from the main entertainment area of the town. It also terminates service prior to the late licence bars closing.

The lack of taxicabs available is due to the proximity of Staines town centre to Heathrow airport. This is because the taxi operators can earn significantly higher remuneration transporting customers who have not been drinking alcohol.

Upon consultation taxi operators also preferred to transport people from the airport as they were far less likely to make off without paying their fares. The customers were also less likely to damage the taxi operator's vehicles and there was less likelihood of them being abused, or assaulted.

- The Crime and reduction partnership, through the implementation group recognised that Staines town centre had significantly higher levels of public place disorder than the remainder of the Borough. Although high visibility Police patrols at key times were having a positive effect on disorder and reassurance, the town remained a “hot spot” area.
- It should be noted that the levels of worry in Spelthorne are substantially lower than levels shown by residents in the South East of England, in the last British crime survey.
- 12% were very worried about being mugged (in Spelthorne it was 6%)
- 14% were very worried about being attacked (in Spelthorne it was 5%)
- There was still the widening gap between the actual levels of crime and disorder and the reality. The problem therefore not only lay with reducing crime and the potential for crime, but in the need for the partnership to reduce the fear of crime.

To achieve the objectives of a scheme to transport late night revelers the following points had to be considered:

- To achieve the goals identified there needed to be suitable transportation during peak times in the town centre.
- The transport needed to service the relevant routes for the customer base identified.
- The transport had to be seen as safe, affordable and accessible.
- The transport also needed to be seen as enhancing already available late night travel and not replacing it.

How did we respond?

Detailed Police, Borough council and partnership analysis was carried out as to the most appropriate, cost effective and manageable way forward. The following were identified solutions to the lack of transport servicing the town centre between 11pm and 3am on busy Friday and Saturday evenings.

1. Enhanced private hire taxi availability servicing the town centre.

This was ruled out at an early stage due to the proximity of Staines to Heathrow airport, it was impossible for taxi operators to employ extra drivers just for a four-hour period.

2. Enhanced Hackney carriage taxis.

This was also ruled out at an early stage as the Hackney carriages could make far in excess of what they could earn in the Heathrow area.

3. A partnership run late night shuttle bus service.

The late night shuttle bus service was the chosen option due to the feasibility of obtaining a suitable vehicle and the lack of need to make money from the service. The service would only need to become self sufficient and therefore not reliant upon earning high remuneration.

The transportation

- Once the actual transportation to be provided had been decided upon, a suitable service provider was required. Using links with British Airports Authority a potential service provider was identified and this was with a company called Centra who service the airports of Gatwick and Heathrow. Their function at the airports is to transport passengers to and from the car parks to the respective departure and arrival terminals.
- Centra agreed to provide suitable transport in the form of a seventy four-seat double Decker bus that ran from their depot at Hounslow. The company agreed to provide a bus and dedicated driver for the service, which would be on a part sponsorship basis until the scheme became fully self supporting.

The route

- Due to the geographical location of Staines being adjacent to the river Thames, a problem was identified with the suitability of only one bus servicing the North and South of the river. This was due to the volume of potential customers requiring the service over the high demand period and the location customers wanted to go to.
- To deal with this problem a figure of eight bus route was devised which could deal with the potential volume of custom, the areas requiring servicing and the closing times of the licensed premises.

Southern route

Staines Town Centre	11:30	00:50	02:10
Egham Town Centre	11:34	00:54	02:14
Royal Holloway College	11:37	00:57	02:17
Virginia Water Station	11:43	01:03	02:23
<i>Approach</i>			
Addlestone Tesco	11:51	01:11	02:31
Chertsey Heriot Road	11:56	01:16	02:36
Pooley Green	12:00	01:20	02:40
Staines Town Centre	00:04	01:24	02:44

Northern route

Staines Town Centre	00:10	01:30	02:50
Stanwell Whetsheaf	00:18	01:38	02:58
Stanwell Tesco	00:22	01:42	03:02
Ashford High Street	00:25	01:45	03:05
Feltham Station	03:15
Sunbury Cross	00:31	01:51	03:27
Upper Halliford	00:36	01:56	03:32
Shepperton Station	00:40	02:00	03:36
Laleham Church	00:45	02:05	03:41
Staines Town Centre	00:56	02:10	03:46

- To ensure that the route was going to cover the maximum customer needs, licensees were tasked through links with the local pub watch scheme to canvas customers by means of provided questioners. The Police licensing officer for the Borough collated the information, which was gathered over a four-week period to give an overall monthly picture of customer base. The information was analysed and the information used to design the route.
- Other influences to the route were things such as the close proximity of the Royal Holloway Medical University to the town. It was seen as an extra opportunity to provide safe, affordable transportation to the one thousand plus medical students who potentially use the town during the weekend. The student council who had issues with the lack of late night transport for their female students to return to campus welcomed this.
- The timings of the bus were designed to best match the times of the licensed premises closing and the stops were intentionally designed to be closest to the centre of the drinking circuit.

Media

- As this was the first time a scheme such as this had been piloted in the County of Surrey it was extremely important to ensure that it obtained maximum media coverage.
- Prior to the launch of the scheme the local press were invited to the centre of Staines town, were representatives from the Police, Borough Council, Pub watch, Centra and local chamber of commerce were available as part of the partnership. Photographs were taken of the bus with the relevant partners and a full editorial was put into the local newspapers.
- A radio interview was carried out involving members of the partnership and a representative of the local taxi consortium. The representative of the taxi consortium was extremely supportive of the scheme and this assisted immensely with the partnerships efforts to show the bus was designed to enhance existing transport arrangements, and not replace them.

- A poster campaign was designed with the assistance of Centra and they were displayed in all the licensed premises in Staines. The Police Community safety officers also displayed posters in licensed premises and other prominent places in the areas that the bus was going to service. The cost for the poster campaign was £540, which gave a mix of colour A4, A3 posters and A5 flyers.
- Partners assisted with advertising by placing the advert into their relevant newsletters and the Borough council ensured that all the local notice boards displayed the details of timings and locations of the service.
- As well as the newspaper editorial a two-week colour advert was placed into the free newspapers that were applicable to the areas the bus was servicing. The cost for the newspaper advert was £1200, but this gave press coverage to over 60,000 homes within the catchment area.
- Further methods of advertisement and incentives were utilised to promote the scheme, such as pre-sales of tickets to licensed premises. It was decided that the cost of the bus fare was to be a flat rate of £2.00, this would allow customers to travel to any point on the route. The bus would stop at any location along the route, however it would not deviate along its course.
- The tickets were also pre-sold to the Royal Holloway University of London at a reduction of twenty pence per ticket. This acted to prompt the pre-sale of the tickets by giving remuneration to the student union funds.
- As with most campaigns it was found that the best medium of advertisement was by word of mouth. As stakeholders in the scheme the licensees utilised their sound systems within their premises and in bar video display systems to promote the service.
- Staff from the stakeholder premises also engaged in a campaign, in which members of the bar staff approached potential customers in the street during the evening and handed out flyers. The flyers had easy to read information relating to the scheme on the front and a bus schedule on the reverse.

Having a night out in Staines?
We'll get you home...



Introducing the...

staines**night**bus



One fare to anywhere!

£2.00
per person

Every Friday & Saturday night
Starting Friday 6th February 2004

Route N100 From the **Blue Anchor pub**
Egham, Royal Holloway College, Virginia
Water, Addlestone, Chertsey & Pooley Green
Departs Staines @ 11:30, 00:50 & 02:10

Route N200 From the **Blue Anchor and the Post Office**
Stanwell, Ashford, Sunbury Cross,
Upper Halliford, Shepperton & Laleham
Departs Staines @ 00:10, 01:30 & 02:50
02:50 departure also serves Feltham



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Security

- As this type of scheme was a totally new concept to Surrey it was extremely important to ensure the bus was seen to be a safe form of transport. To ensure that the potential to maximise reassurance, the bus was staffed by a uniform Police presence for each one of the services within the first four month period, which was phase one.
- During phase two the responsibility of security for the scheme moved to the licensee stakeholders, who provide door staff security. This not only alleviated Police resourceing around the scheme, but also gave further ownership to the other stakeholders.
- An added value of the bus scheme is that staff working in the licensed premises in the town centre are allocated free bus passes, therefore ensuring safe transport is available to take them home late at night.

Funding

- To start phase one of the scheme funding was sought through the Government office of the SouthEast (GOSE). GOSE allocated £8500 towards the scheme to allow it to be pump primed and evaluated over a four-month period. For the initial two months the service was free to allow the maximum number of customers the opportunity to find out about the bus and get use to using it.
- After this period the fare of £2.00 was started and the remuneration from this was used to offset the cost of the advertising campaign.
- The cost of the door staff to ensure reassurance on the bus was £50.00 per evening and this was fully funded by the pub watch stakeholders. The licensees could recuperate a large proportion of this costing by the 20% reduction in the cost of ticket pre-sales, this acted as a further incentive to promote the scheme.

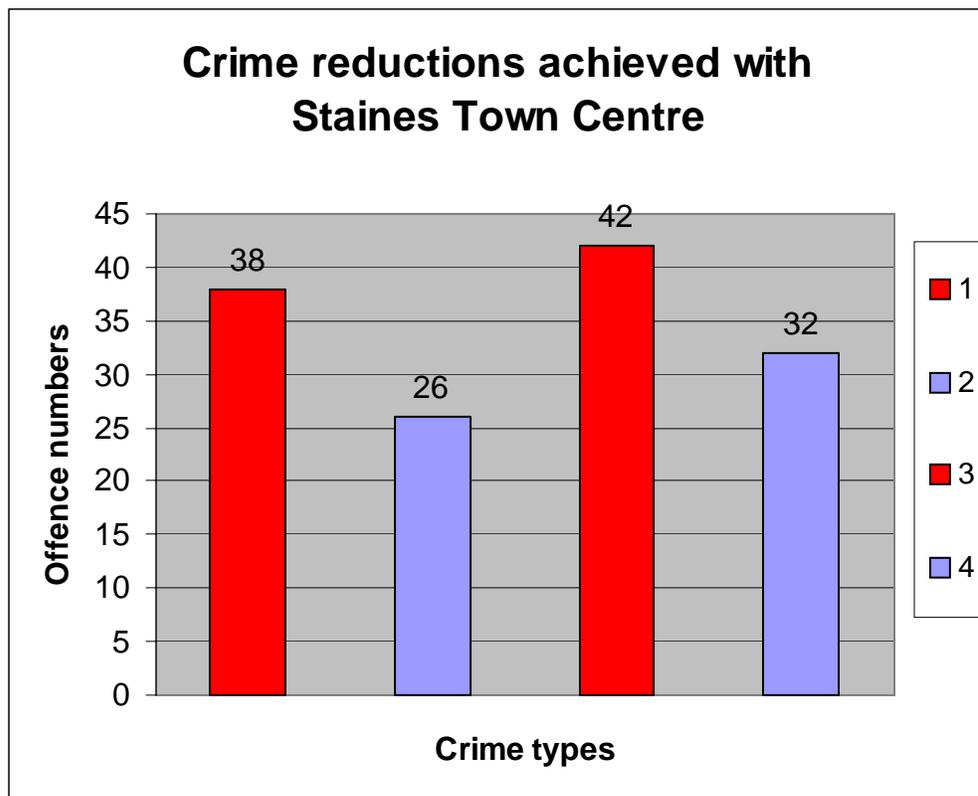
Breakdown of scheme funding

- 19/12/2003-28/02/2004 at £275 per evening = £6600
- This period shows no cost to customers and cost of bus hire from Centra of £275 per evening.
- 05/03/2004-27/03/2004 at £150 per evening = £ 1200
- This period shows the cost of £2.00 to customers and cost of bus hire from Centra of £150 per evening.
- Advertising campaign
- Press campaign = £1200
- Posters campaign = £540
- Total cost of scheme = £9500
- The funding from GOSE to pump prime the scheme was set at £8500 and the £1000 difference is made up from revenue on pre-sale of tickets and on bus sales between the 06/03/2004 and 27/03/2004. The amount of tickets pre-sold over this period is 1400, giving revenue of £2520.

- The pre-sale of the tickets has ensured that the scheme has delivered its target of becoming self sufficient within a four month period and not exceeding the funding allocated by GOSE.

Evaluation

- The scheme required evaluation over a number of areas, crime reduction, reassurance and project sustainability. Firstly crime reduction statistics were analysed over the period of 19/12/2003-28/01/2004, against the same period in the previous year. A reduction of 32% was seen in public place violence and a 24% reduction shown in acts of criminal damage within the defined town centre area.
- The licensee stakeholders carried out a reassurance survey for the same comparative period. This was done by means of a questionnaire completed by customers in the target-licensed premises. The feedback received was extremely positive and every person questioned considered the scheme to be positive step towards reducing the fear of crime. This was also the case when the taxi cab drivers were scoped for their views.
- The final area of evaluation was the project sustainability. The project will be self-supporting from the first of April 2004. The pre-sale of tickets has shown that the bus will completely support itself and this was of paramount importance, as the scheme will not be sponsored by Government subsidy from April 2004.



- **Columns 1 and 2 represent the decrease in Staines town centre reported violent crime between 19/12/2003 and 28/01/2004 against the same period in the preceding year.**
- **Columns 3 and 4 represent the decrease in Staines town centre reported criminal damage between 19/12/2003 and 28/01/2004 against the same period in the preceding year.**

Conclusion

- There is little doubt that the Staines late night bus scheme has been a huge success, both in reducing crime within the town centre area and in heightening reassurance. The feedback from the service's customers has been extremely encouraging, likewise from licensees.
- The scheme has allowed the town centre to disperse late night revelers significantly more swiftly therefore reducing the potential for anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and violent crime.
- The scheme is totally self-funding therefore it is not a further drain on partnership funding. The scheme has now been fully handed over to the stakeholders, who are running the administration of the bus, negating the requirement for further Police involvement.
- As the scheme has been so successful, the proposal of Surrey Police is that it will be rolled out to the other major towns within the County.

