

Tilley Award 2005

Application form

The following form must be completed in full. Failure to do so will result in disqualification from the competition.

Please send completed application forms to Tricia Perkins at patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

All entries must be received by noon on the 29 April 2005. Entries received after that date will not be accepted under any circumstances. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Tricia Perkins on 0207 035 0262.

1. Details of application

Title of the Project: Castle Circus – the Partnership Approach

Name of force/agency/CDRP: Devon and Cornwall Constabulary (South and West Devon Basic Command Unit (Torbay) – Lead Agency)

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2. Summary of application

Project Summary

The English Riviera is a premier south-coast resort, the town of Torquay being the focal point. A long line of shops extends from the picturesque harbour for over half a mile, culminating in an area known as 'Castle Circus'. This area is the seat of local government, dominated by the historic town hall. Its extended pavements make it an ideal meeting place and 'gateway' to the town centre.

However, a darker side has evolved, primarily as a result of gradual centralisation of services for homeless/rough sleepers and those misusing drugs. The problem became so ingrained that traditional policing methods failed to cope with the disorder and open drug-dealing taking place, accompanied by aggressive begging and other intimidating behaviour. The area, a main route for pedestrian and vehicular traffic to the town centre had become a virtual 'no-go' area.

The formation of a truly multi-agency Problem-Solving Group was the beginning of a process that has achieved excellent results and cemented long-term successful partnership working in Torbay.

A detailed SARA process was undertaken, mapping the multitude of complex issues, using the combined skills of Police and Council analysts to determine the causes of the current situation.

Short, medium and longer-term action plans were developed, encompassing the views of all partners as well as residents, visitors and users of the Castle Circus area, achieved through extensive public consultation.

Short-term actions began with the implementation of a full-time police team dedicated to strict enforcement in Castle Circus, complemented with medium-term actions including the introduction of street wardens, landscaping of public areas, and removal of incoming call facilities to telephone boxes used for drug-dealing.

Ongoing monitoring was achieved through re-visiting the SARA process, acknowledging it as an iterative model, and through three separate public consultations, gauging the progress made. These were complemented with police and council data, presented to a steering group on a regular basis.

Enormous successes have been achieved when assessed against the original objectives of the group including:

- Over 300% increase in feelings of public safety in area
- 89% reduction in those subjected to drunken behaviour
- 76% reduction in those subjected to begging activities
- Drug offences down by over 47%
- Disorder calls to the police down by over 42%
- A virtual eradication of rough sleepers in the area

Lack of displacement further highlights the success of the results and the problem-solving approach taken.

3. Description of project

Project Aims & Objectives

The most effective crime reduction strategies use a problem solving approach and the SARA process was adopted from the onset of this project.

An overall shared aim was agreed at the first meeting of a multi-agency problem-solving group (the 'Group') in May 2003 **'to work together to significantly reduce the level of anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime in the Castle Circus and surrounding area'**.

SMART objectives were set by the Group in October 2003 after scanning and analysing Police and Council data and receipt of initial public survey results, with mechanisms built in for regular review of progress against baseline data by the partnership researcher. The objectives agreed upon were as follows:

- 1. To improve feelings of public safety during the daytime for users of Castle Circus to 75% by October 2004**
- 2. To reduce the occurrences of daytime disorder in public places within the Castle Circus area by 25% by March 2005**
- 3. To reduce the incidences of daytime drug offending in the Castle Circus area by 30% by March 2005**

The Nature of the Problem

Situated on the eastern seaboard of the South West peninsular, Torbay forms part of the sea-side holiday area known as the 'English Riviera'. Torquay forms the major conurbation, originating as a holiday resort in Victorian times. At the top end of Torquay town centre, surrounding the Town Hall, is an area known as 'Castle Circus', a residential and business area covering one square km.

In the Spring of 2003 it began to emerge that the area of Castle Circus was deteriorating dramatically with an increase in disorder incidents reported to the police together with a rise in complaints received from the general public and local business proprietors by Torbay Council and local police Neighbourhood Beat Managers. In May 2003 a Police Liaison meeting was held in the area, which had an unusually high attendance, particularly by local business proprietors who were extremely vocal in raising their concerns about the deterioration of the area and the apparent lack of action being taken by the Police and Local Authority. The meeting was reassured by local police that the situation would be looked at immediately and it was acknowledged that a new approach was required.

Changes in this area over the past years have resulted in Castle Circus providing a centralisation of services, particularly for homeless/rough sleepers and substance mis-users. Services include:

- Project 58, a daytime drop in centre for rough sleepers and homeless people
- Factory Row Homeless Hostel
- Shrublands Drug and Alcohol Service (NHS)
- Job-Centre Plus
- A well-used pharmacy providing methadone prescriptions
- Magistrates Court.
- Probation Office with a Prolific Offender Unit
- A Community Mental Health Team
- Licensed premises

There is a large seating area outside the Town Hall, a multi-storey car-park in the immediate vicinity, public toilets adjacent to Castle Circus and a park called 'Memorial Park' situated opposite the Magistrates Court. All provide focal points in the area. With public telephone boxes, seating and 'safe zones' out of the public and CCTV view, these areas became hot spots for the commission of crime and disorder as well as meeting places for groups of service users, increasing levels of concern for the public and creating a vulnerable target audience for potential offenders.

Crime and anti-social behaviour became a feature of this area referred to by many as a 'no go zone' with the general public experiencing a high fear of crime during the daytime. The main incidents being reported to the Police and

Council related to overt drug activity with increased drug related litter, drunkenness and street drinking, begging, rough sleeping, public disorder and violence.

Owners of businesses in this area were reporting incidents of abusive behaviour directed at their families and themselves by local service users, particularly those of Project 58 and Factory Row Hostel. Other businesses, particularly McDonalds fast food outlet and a local convenience store were reporting regular fighting and aggressive behaviour inside their outlets, which was impacting on their profitability. McDonalds were also experiencing problems with people using their toilets to inject drugs, leaving used needles and syringes behind. Employees leaving work and going to their parked vehicles in the multi-storey car park were being intimidated by people begging as well as having to make their way through groups occupying the stairwells, drinking and injecting substances. Overall, the visual impact of the area was poor with greatly reduced positive use of an area of the town that should ordinarily have been a focal point and central hub of activity.

During the year June 2002 to May 2003, the police received 888 incident reports for this area, half of which related to disorder, resulting in an almost continuous drain on resources. Using the Problem Analysis Triangle of Victim, Offender, Situation, it became clear that daytime offences had a strong causal link with service provision in the area with offences often committed by service users against each other or the general public.

The Response to the Problem

In conjunction with 'Safer Communities Torbay' (merged Community Safety, Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) and Youth Offending Service (YOT)), the police called a multi-agency meeting. Representatives from the Local Authority, local businesses and all the service providers operating in the Castle Circus area were invited to attend. The Leader of the Council became the Group's Champion and the police led on the project from the outset.

It was recognised that as a result of the location of many of the services, their clients were contributing to the problems in Castle Circus and members gave their commitment to a joint approach to drive forward solutions to address the core issues and concerns for the long term. This would also seek to address the impact of any displacement upon Torbay. A combination of traditional policing methods to provide short-term solutions together with in-depth research analysis and long-term problem-solving partnership solutions using the SARA model were required and have been delivered. The Group members agreed police enforcement in isolation was not the sole answer, the underlying problems needed to be addressed working in partnership with the local community.

Immediate short-term measures put into place following the May meeting were the introduction of high profile policing, adopting a 'zero-tolerance' approach, followed by the setting up of a dedicated police 'Town-Centre Team' targeting offenders and hot spot areas. This was a sound financial investment by Torbay Police and produced an immediate improvement in terms of offending behaviour and the visual impact of the area.

A revamp of the Memorial Park by Torbay Council, including the cutting back of all the overgrown shrubbery to remove the 'out of view areas' and painting of perimeter fencing, immediately eradicated crime and disorder in the park, attracting positive use by the public. This work also coincided with the introduction and enforcement of alcohol-free zones including Castle Circus and the town centre. These measures did cause some displacement for daytime street drinking but these areas were quickly identified and targeted with police intervention, signposting individuals into local services including Project 58 or through enforcement. As a result of the work of the Town Centre Team, many people arriving from outside Devon and Cornwall, who were rough sleeping in Castle Circus, soon departed.

Full scanning and analysis of police crime data and operational incident logs was undertaken by the partnership researcher who worked closely with Torbay Council's Environment Department and agreed a method of exchanging information in relation to incidents they recorded of drug-related litter and vagrancy. An initial public survey was prepared and agreed by the Group to feed into the scanning process. This survey was sent out for service users to complete at the various service provider establishments in the area as well as to local businesses and statutory agencies for completion by staff. It was also available on the internet and at local shops and Council Connections Office situated in the heart of Castle Circus for completion by other members of the public. In total 533 completed surveys were received and analysed.

The results of the scanning and analysis phase enabled the Group to prepare a 'Cause and Effect' Ishikawa diagram (shown below) focusing on the key areas needing direct action namely **Methods, Behaviours, People, Services, Environment**, all of which were contributing to a high fear of crime locally.

Castle Circus – Cause and Effect – Analysis of Scanning

Methods

Behaviours

Non-targeted overt policing – lack of visible policing

Limitations of planning process/transport links – tourism

Policy of Community Prescribing – limited outlets

Needle Exchange Policy – limited outlets

Services working in isolation – lack of info sharing on clients

National Govt policy on funding for clients/provision and location

Policy on Homelessness – definitions/availability of housing

Discharge policy for Torbay Hospital

Incident Reporting Systems – lack of clarity on who/how

Policy on dual diagnosis – mental health/substance misuse

Referral process of homeless - disjointed

Public Toilet Policy – availability/opening times

Ease of access to state benefits from different locations

Sentencing/enforcement policy of convicted offenders

Drunkenness – social gathering place/ aggressive/ disorderly/ loud/ incapacitated/ cheap alcohol

Aggressive – shouting/threatening/harassment/violence

Begging – aggressive/passive/intimidating/busking

Drug Misusing – dealing and using/‘safe’ areas/ready supply/available market/demand/services concentration

Rough Sleeping – local/non-local/‘on the run’/ enforced/inability to house

Anti-social - Urinating in public places
Shouting/Swearing

Employees/clients have a high fear of crime in the Castle Circus area

Beggars – substance misuser / mental health issues / destitute / professional

Victims – Employees/Clients

Drunks – street drinkers/alcoholics / homeless / rough sleepers

Drug Misusers – dealers/users/addicts

Clients undergoing treatment for mental health/drugs and alcohol

Rough Sleepers – local/non-local / choice/circumstance alcoholics / drug misusers / mental health issues / beggars

Homeless Hostel

Homeless day drop-in Centre

State Benefit Agencies – Housing/Jobs

Post Office

Probation Service

Drug & Alcohol Treatment Service

Pharmacy – community prescribing

Public Areas – phone box, benches, park

Magistrates Court

Rubbish in derelict area

Memorial Park Area – lack of natural surveillance

Public Toilet – drug misuse

Public Telephone Boxes – drug misuse

Public Benches – meeting/waiting area for clients

Lower Union Lane Car Park Level 8A – rough sleepers

‘Safe’ areas for drug dealing

Lack of attractive facilities for positive use

People

Services

Environment

A 'Solutions Event' was held at the Town Hall in December 2003 and was attended by over 40 invited representatives of statutory and voluntary agencies, the business sector and community representatives. Initially, 45 questions were posed under headings shown in the Ishikawa diagram for delegates to consider. Questions were written, one per A3 sheet of paper and delegates were given 'Post-It' notes to write their thoughts and ideas down for tackling these areas in the short, medium and long-term. They were also asked to identify whether the issue was a high, medium or low priority and if it should be best managed locally, regionally or nationally. Finally, they were asked to indicate the appropriate lead agency to address the issue and confirm who else should be involved.

At the conclusion of this exercise delegates were arranged into working groups covering key themes and asked to discuss the responses to their questions and draft an Action Plan. Following this event a useful, although somewhat bulky, overall Action Plan was drawn up for the Group to consider.

It was vital we then consulted with the general public to update them on the work undertaken by the Group to date, interim measures put in place and their successes, with suggestions for long-term action and change. This would be in addition to the ongoing media publicity the Group received in the local newspaper and on the local radio station.

Two events took place in April 2004 on a Saturday from 10am to 6pm and a Tuesday evening to maximise community engagement. Torbay Council helped organise these events, held in and around the Town Hall. It was agreed entertainment would be required to attract the public to the main Saturday event and a local band, stilt walkers, a children's face painter and juggler provided this.

All of the service providers sitting on the Group attended with display stands set up in the Connections Office, giving the public the opportunity to speak with them and address any issues of concern to them. It also gave these service providers an opportunity to promote their objectives to support the wider community.

A documentary of this public consultation was filmed by a local student with the support of the Safer Communities team including interviews with local residents, service users and members of the Group. The documentary (including an update 8 months later) has since been used in various public presentations to demonstrate the work of the Castle Circus group as well as assisting the student with his University coursework and work placement applications.

Five key themes were highlighted following development of the Solutions Event Action Plan and the public consultation in April 2004, namely **Homelessness, Community Safety, Environment, Drug/Alcohol/Dual Diagnosis, and Business Support and Development.**

The original group split into these five themed sub-groups to progress their action plans reporting regularly to a Steering Group chaired by the Torbay Police Commander. The agenda for each group is owned and driven forward by a range of chairs from the Police, DAAT and Torbay Council.

Police and Council statistics were available at these meetings together with information relating to any displacement. Updates on action plan progress were given to ensure success was measured, and new actions created and/or updated as needs changed over time.

In July 2004 the SARA process was re-visited by the Steering Group to measure performance, ensure the initial aims and objectives remained relevant, and that the overall project was still focused on the current problems in Castle Circus. Key to this process were the results of two public surveys undertaken since the project began.

Funding was secured from the Police and Local Authority in the form of provision of personnel and £2,500 from the Building Safer Communities fund to meet the cost of the public consultation events and conducting of surveys.

Some of the Projects initiated by the Sub-groups

- Two Street Wardens were introduced in summer 2004 to work closely with local police, residents and businesses, providing a highly visible presence to increase public confidence and deter offending behaviour. These street wardens have now been mainstreamed within Torbay Council
- The Street Wardens and local Neighbourhood Beat Managers are now holding joint public 'drop-in' surgeries on a regular basis at the Connections Office in Castle Circus. They also undertake joint visits to residential and business addresses dealing with any issues, providing crime prevention advice, free property marking and promoting Neighbourhood Watch
- A Neighbourhood Watch Scheme has been set up together with a 'Friends of Memorial Park' local residents Group
- The multi-storey car park is now locked from 11pm until 7am each night to reduce rough sleeping and urinating. Needle boxes and improved cleansing have been provided
- The incoming call facility to telephone boxes outside the Town Hall was removed to deter use for illegal activities and open, continental-style phone boxes are being introduced
- Torbay Drug and Alcohol Team has been working alongside partner agencies to review care co-ordination of those adults described as 'vulnerable' and perceived as causing harm to the community. They are contributing to a 'dual diagnosis' co-ordinator post to support relevant community services in working with those described as having a 'Dual Diagnosis'. They are also commissioning work from Project 58 to signpost some of Torbay's most vulnerable adults into appropriate services. Working alongside the Primary Care Trust, a strategy called 'Closing Gaps', aiming to provide a safety net for those who often fall out of mainstream services, is being developed
- Torbay was selected as a national pilot site to develop good practice guidelines on the management of Drug Related Litter. This included Focus Groups with active injecting drug users to inform a campaign, raise awareness of drug related litter issues and promote peer education and use of needle exchange schemes
- Project 58 is working effectively with local businesses to eradicate inappropriate behaviour by their clients, laying down stringent rules to ensure appropriate behaviour in the Castle Circus area. They continue to provide vital day care facilities with activities five days per week, seeking funding to provide outreach workers to deal with relevant and targeted problems
- Various environmental improvements by the Council are taking place including regular and improved street cleansing and tidying and improvement to open spaces. Visual improvements in the form of improved footways, resurfacing of carriageways and the provision of cycle ways and racks, better litter bins, hanging baskets and raised planters
- Introduction of a 'Police Linked' scheme, an effective communication link between the police and the council CCTV office, focusing council front-line staff on hot spot areas and problem scenarios, especially in Castle Circus
- A 24-hour mental health line has been established
- Attractions and activities provided outside the Town Hall include craft stalls and farmers' markets
- The successful implementation of a police test purchase operation resulting in 30 arrests for drug supply offences in February 2005, many of which related to Castle Circus. All have received prison sentences ranging from 18 months to 4 years

The Group continues to provide feedback to the public about progress in Castle Circus via the Safer Communities website, local media and with continued use of information posters and leaflets placed in prominent locations. A final public survey, conducted in January 2005, measuring public satisfaction and current 'fear of crime' in Castle Circus, showed the dramatic improvements achieved by the Group.

Evaluation of the Intervention

1. Fear of Crime – Survey Results

Objective 1 was to improve feelings of public safety during the daytime for users of Castle Circus to 75% by October 2004.

The results of the survey are detailed in the pie charts on the following page, which show that feelings of safety have increased from 26% in October 2003 to 82.8% in January 2005. The survey showed dramatic improvement in public perception in terms of:

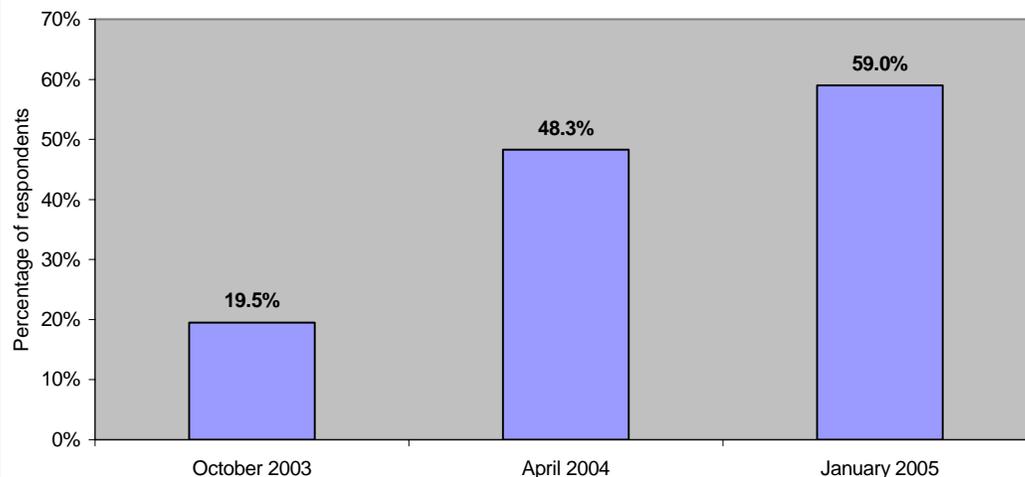
- The improvement in the overall situation
- The public's satisfaction with the level of policing

Public perception of significant improvement in the area is also reinforced by:

- Police and Council statistics
- Complaints recorded at the Town Hall regarding incidents of disorder outside their premises reduced from 29 in 2003 to just 1 in 2004 and none so far in 2005
- Positive feedback from the Local Chamber of Trade who have seen a significant increase in business in the area
- Positive feedback from the Council CCTV team who are currently finding no street drinking activity and much reduced criminal activity in the area

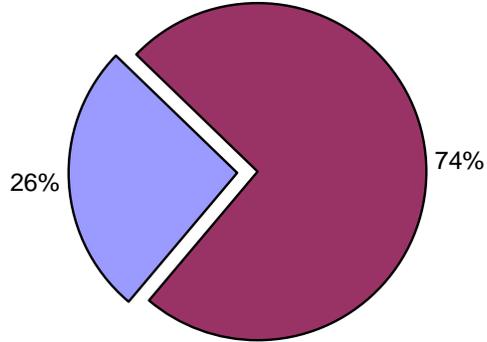
N.B.: When reading the following charts, it is helpful to consider that the full-time policing team was removed from the area in July 2004. The continuing successful trends are testament, not only to the platform provided by that team, but also the many other initiatives which have taken effect and contributed to the overall success of this project. This evidences the long-term benefits of a multi-agency partnership approach, demonstrating that the police alone are not the answer to such complex issues.

Percentage of respondents to survey who felt the situation in Castle Circus had got better/much better



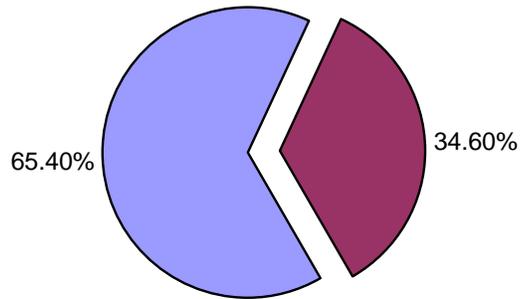
Improvements in feelings of safety in Castle Circus – survey results

Percentage of respondents October 2003



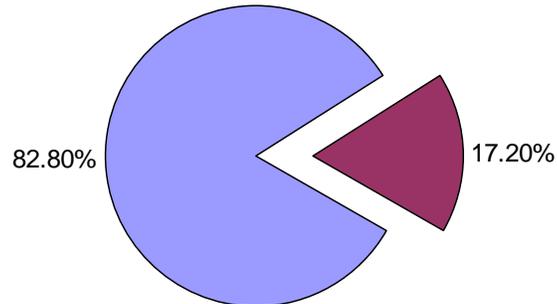
■ Safe/very safe ■ Neither safe nor unsafe, unsafe or very unsafe

Percentage of respondents April 2004



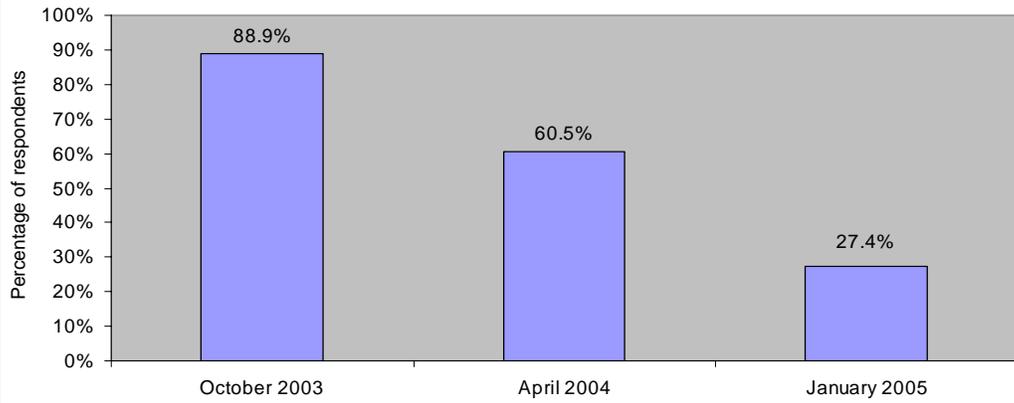
■ Safe/very safe ■ Neither safe nor unsafe, unsafe or very unsafe

Percentage of respondents January 2005

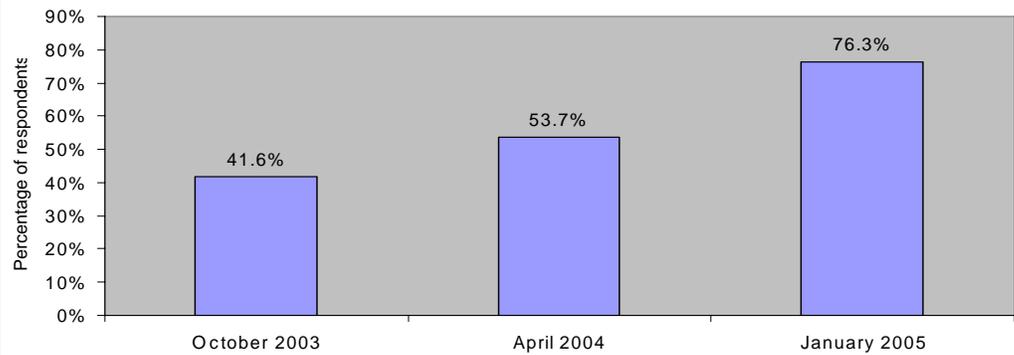


■ Safe/very safe ■ unsafe or very unsafe

Percentage of respondents who felt there was a serious/very serious problem with intimidating/anti-social behaviour in Castle Circus



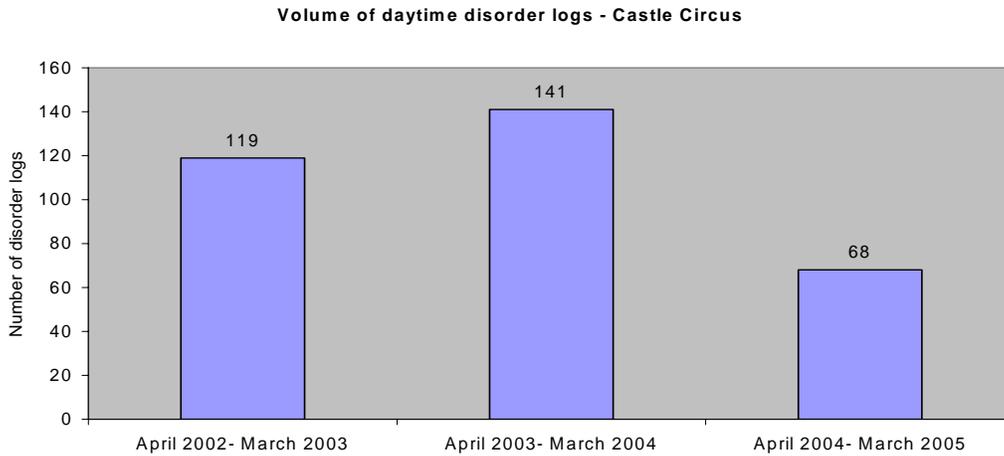
Percentage of respondents to survey who felt satisfied/very satisfied with the policing in Castle Circus



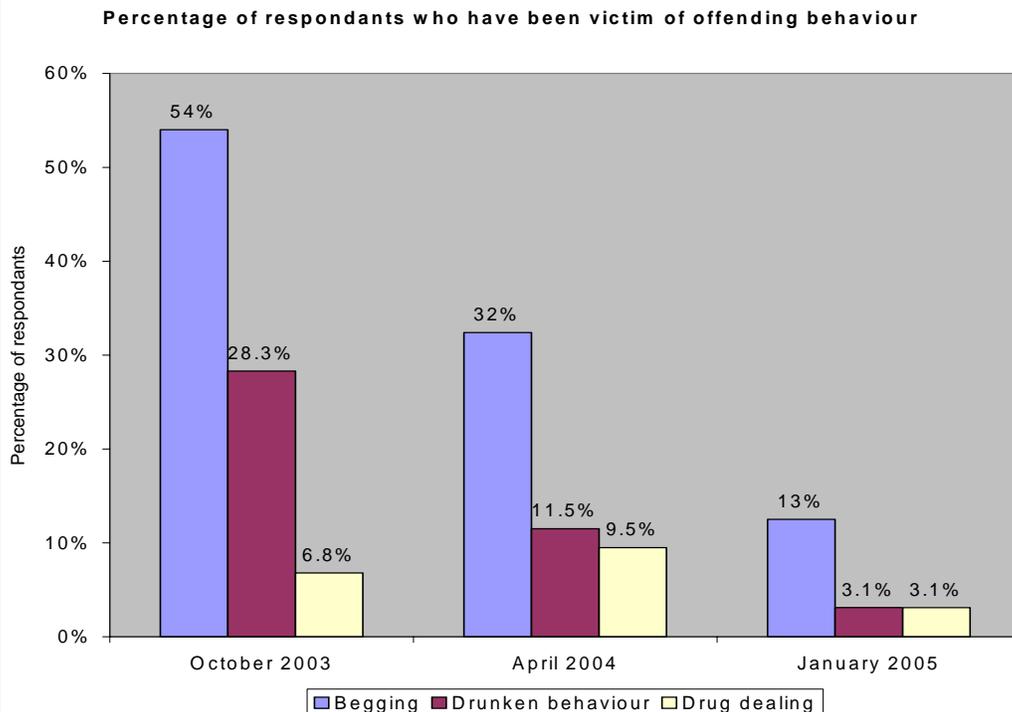
2. Disorder Incidents

Objective 2 was to reduce incidents of disorder by 25% by March 2005.

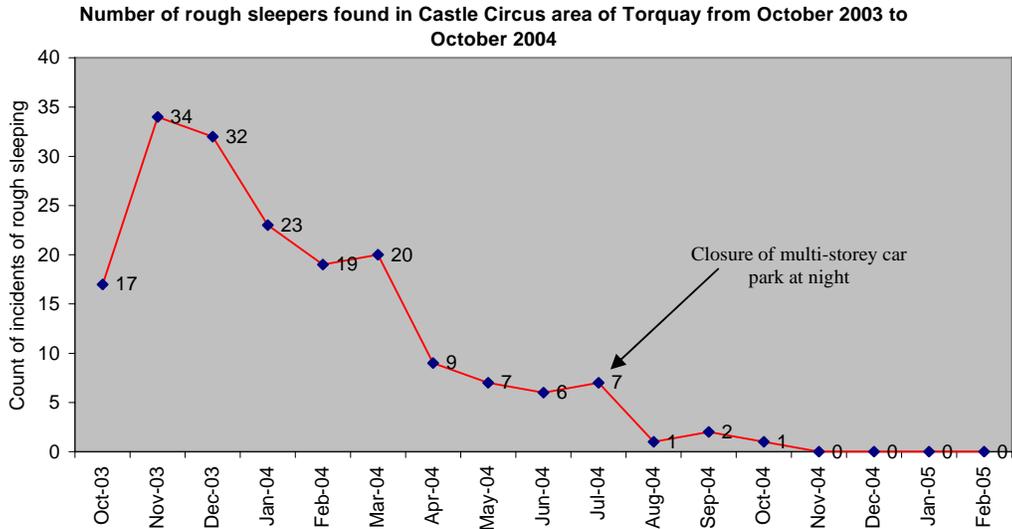
This target was linked to local Crime and Disorder targets, and has been achieved with a reduction in disorder incidents of over 42% (from March 2003 to March 2005), as evidenced in the charts below. This chart also shows continued and sustained reduction in disorder incidents after the police Town Centre Team was removed from the area in July 2004.



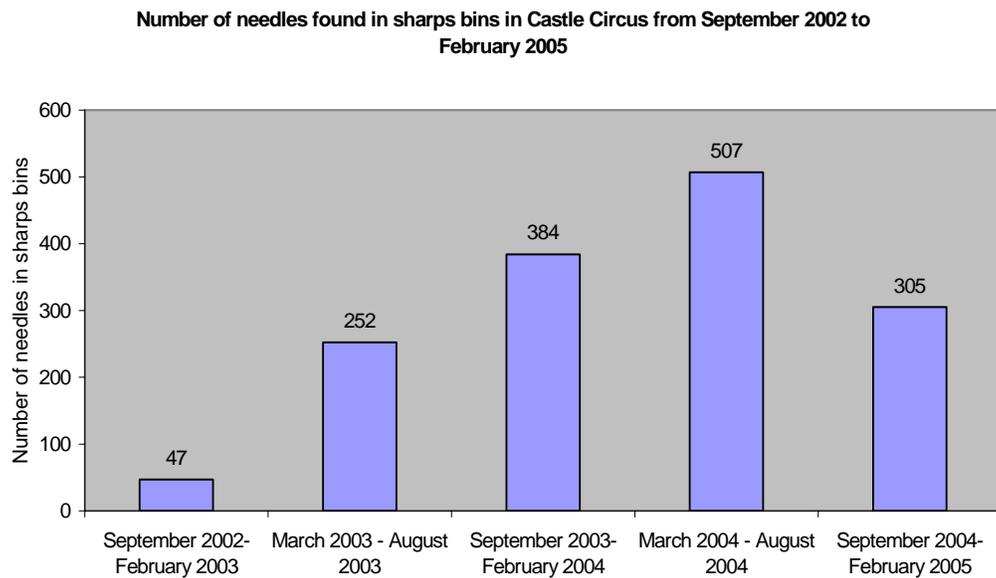
Results of the public surveys also show significant improvements in relation to people being a victim of begging, drug dealing, drunken behaviour and aggressive/violent behaviour, evidenced in the chart detailed below.



The incidences of rough sleeping are evidenced in the chart below and show a current trend of minimal to zero rough sleeping taking place in the area. The relevance of the closure of the nearby multi-storey car park is clear to see. Importantly, no displacement has been apparent at any time.



Drug related litter had been a major problem in the Castle Circus area with little use of the needle bins provided. Through engagement with the service providers, the distribution of advisory leaflets and constant reminders to service users, the situation improved dramatically as shown below. Parents who had reported their children coming across needles in the street were eventually able to pass through the area with confidence. This also represents the removal of a potentially serious public health problem. The closure at night of the car park in July 2004, reduced the overall use of the Castle Circus area and explains the drop in use of the bins up until February 2005. No displacement has become evident.

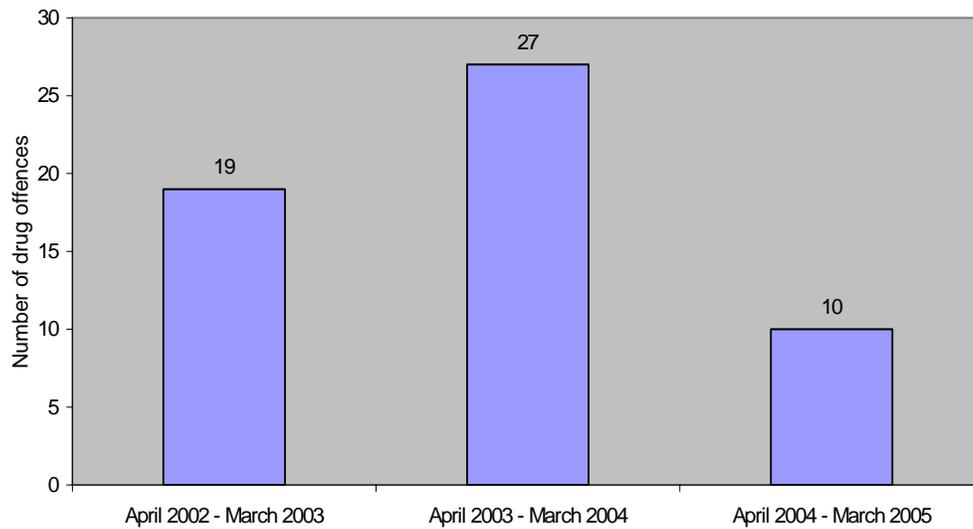


3. Reduction of Crime

Objective 3 was to reduce the incidences of daytime drug offending in the Castle Circus area by 30% by March 2005.

This target was also linked to the local Crime and Disorder targets and has been met with a reduction of over 47%, from March 2003 to March 2005. The high level of offending from April 2003 to March 2004 coincides with the period that the full-time police team was in operation. Their level of pro-activity and 'zero-tolerance' explains the detection of additional offences.

Number of drugs offences across the three years in Castle Circus



Conclusion

The work of the Castle Circus Partnership Group and its methodology has been taken forward by Torbay Council and the local Police as an example of 'good practice' for addressing large-scale problem solving. As a result of the huge contribution made by all members of this group, including engagement with the broadest community, a great deal has been achieved not only in relation to achieving the Group's objectives but also in increasing community engagement and confidence in the area.

Newspaper headlines proclaiming "Purge police win praise", "We've got the rot on the run", and letters to the editor entitled "Applause for the police" and "Town cleaned up" illustrate the wide reaching impact of the successes in the area.

The Leader of Torbay Unitary Authority Council has remarked "The Castle Circus project has provided excellent opportunities for Council employees from different departments to work in partnership with colleagues from other agencies. This has actively demonstrated Torbay Council's commitment to partnership working with the resulting benefits the Group has brought to this area for the local community."

The manager of Project 58, the homeless day-care centre, added, "Working in partnership with other stakeholders in the Castle Circus problem solving group was a frank success both on the level of crime reduction and community general safety and nuisance visibility. We were also able to come along side local businesses to offer palliative and educational solutions for the reduction of crime using attendance as an incentive to prohibit offending from our clients"

The Group will continue to operate to ensure further improvements are introduced and the longer-term solutions are delivered that impact on sustained deliverables, e.g., drug/alcohol treatment and outreach working. This will ensure Castle Circus remains a vibrant focal point for the town, enjoying positive community use, a reputation as a place to visit by tourists as well as meeting the needs of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Bibliography

Nick Tilley, Gloria Laycock 2002 – Working out what to do: Evidence based crime reduction
Universal Improvement Skills – Project management and facilitated events
Home Office Crime Reduction Website