

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:

Keeping Problem Solving out of the Company Zoo - Mainstreaming Problem Solving within the UK's largest Police Service

Name of force/agency/CDRP:

Metropolitan Police Service

Name of one contact person with position/rank (this should be one of the authors):

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Lillie Road
London SW6 1TR

Telephone number:

07789 032556

Name of endorsing senior representatives(s)

Mark Gore

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s)

Chief Superintendent (OCU Commander)

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s)

Problem Solving Unit
Central Safer Neighbourhoods Team
Empress State Building
Lillie Road
London SW6 1TR

2. Summary of application

In no more than 400 words please use this space to describe your project. Include details of the problem that was addressed a description of the initiative, the main intervention principles and what they were designed to achieve, the main outcomes of project particularly in relation to the problem, evidence was used in designing the programme and how the project is evaluated.

The essay explains how the MPS Problem Solving Unit approached the problem of mainstreaming problem solving within the UK's largest police service.

The essay follows the structure of problem solving by scanning, researching, responding and assessing.

The essay is structured into 5 sections:

Part 1: Our overall Aim (Scanning)

Our Aim was to find a sustainable method of mainstreaming problem solving policing within all 32 London Boroughs by April 2005. We looked at the position now. We looked at the history of problem solving in the MPS and why it failed before. We asked what would success look like?

Part 2: Researching the project

We interviewed people from a range of organisations, we talked to other police forces, we talked to practitioners and people who had previously tried to implement problem solving, we read key publications/internet resources etc. subject.

Part 3: Analysing our findings

We arrived at six key findings. These became our Aims and we designed Responses to meet them.:

Part 4: Defining the Project and Responding to the 'Problem'

We set Project Timescales and designed the Project plan for implementation.

Stage 1 - October 2001 to March 2002 - Pilot run in five London Boroughs.

Stage 2 - April 2002 to March 2004 - Roll-out programme to remaining 27 Boroughs.

Stage 3 - April 2004 to September 2004 - Revisit under-performing Boroughs to get them to an acceptable standard.

Stage 4 - October 2004 to March 2005 - Maintenance Programme across all 32 Boroughs, with the purpose of gradual disengagement, leaving the team to fulfill its function as the MPS lead.

A Case Management system was designed that can be integrated with the National Intelligence Model.

Training designed and delivered and a maintenance programme put in place.

Part 5: Assessing the Results

We evaluated the project, the training and the Case Management system

We took part in Borough Inspections, evaluating problem solving on two fronts:

Process evaluation - Boroughs are inspected and measured on their ability to have Critical Success Factors in place. Gaps identified and action plans developed to close those gaps.

Impact evaluation - The effect that problem solving activity has had on crime, fear of crime and calls for service.

Conclusion

Our Aim was to mainstream a problem solving approach into all 32 London Boroughs by April 2005.

We met our Aim in March 2005.

(390 words)

3. Description of project

Describe the project following the guidance above in no more than 4000 words

Keeping Problem Solving out of the Company Zoo

Or Mainstreaming Problem Solving within the UK's largest Police Service

PS Neil Henson & PC Steve Colgan

**Problem Solving Unit
Safer Neighbourhoods
Metropolitan Police Service UK**

April 2005

Introduction

Companies and Institutions, from time to time, embark on introducing major changes. Some changes succeed in full, some in part and some not at all.

Over the last 25 years, police forces from around the world have tried to integrate problem solving into their policing style. Some have succeeded in full, some in part and some not at all.

But what happens when an organisation goes to all the effort and expense of collecting and nurturing something that doesn't perform to their expectations? Not surprisingly, they are very reluctant to let their investment go despite its ineffectiveness. And so these things are quietly put out of the way into the *Company Zoo*; a place where beasts are fed and watered but no longer perform any useful function.

Our task was to successfully integrate problem solving into the Metropolitan Police Service, and to **not** have our efforts sent to the Met Police's own Company Zoo.

Part 1: Our overall Aim

Our Aim was to find a sustainable method of mainstreaming problem solving policing within all 32 London

Boroughs by April 2005.

History

At **Service level**, Police and **Community Safety Units** are focused on crime reduction targets, burglary, robbery and other priority crimes. The demand for this comes from the Home Office and is directed by **Government Office for London (GOL)**.

At **local level**, the Community (residential and business) is more concerned with local issues, which are often not the same as those above. These are not easily resolved, but the best chance of success lies with long-term problem solving with agencies working in partnership.

The police had invested time, people and resources into solving local problems but, when the immediate symptoms were eased, other demands took their attention elsewhere. This inconsistency of approach, together with the dependence on personalities and a high turnover of local officers, meant that the early stages of problem solving were often repeated, and the resolution was rarely achieved.

The MPS needed an infrastructure to ensure sustainable problem solving.

What would success look like?

1. Problem solving would be partnership-led and used to find sustainable solutions to long-term problems.
2. It would be recorded using a case management system.
3. It would support the requirements of the **National Intelligence Model (NIM)** including the work of Intelligence Analysts, Strategic Assessments, Problem Profiles and taskings from the **Borough Tasking and Coordination Group (BTCG)** meetings.
4. It would consist of locally-based initiatives that support Borough Community Safety Strategies and underpin the **Safer Neighbourhoods** Programme (Reassurance).
5. Boroughs would be capable of applying and progressing problem solving without direct support from the central **Problem Solving Unit (PSU)**.

Part 2: Researching the project

We asked 'Why did Problem Solving fail when it was attempted previously?'

Officers were interviewed from Camden, who tried to adopt problem solving in 2001, Westminster (attempted 2000), Lewisham (1999) and Hammersmith (1998). The conclusions were that there had been insufficient support for practitioners and that the existing SARA-based approach did not satisfy their needs.

We traced and interviewed retired Commander Mike Hoare who had been the project lead when the MPS first attempted to introduce problem solving in 1984. We also searched MPS archives and found his 1985 report detailing why Problem Solving failed to be adopted service-wide and the lessons learnt. In summary, it stated that power and expertise had been concentrated at the centre of the organisation with no shift to OCUs.

Surrey, Lancashire, Leicestershire and Merseyside were contacted as they had implemented problem solving. Two recurring themes emerged that affected their implementation:

- an inadequate infrastructure; and
- the absence of a support programme to nurture problem solving.

We contacted and interviewed partner organisations including:

- GOL;

- the 32 London Local Authority Community Safety Units;
- the Safer Schools Programme;
- Project Lion (a Government funded initiative that aimed to unify information sharing);
- Metropolitan Police Authority;
- Greater London Authority;
- Centrex; and
- the National Reassurance Policing Programme.

We examined key documents. For example, from Herman Goldstein's **Problem Oriented Policing**, 1990, we identified that:

'...the likelihood of realizing the benefits of a segregated project perhaps can be best realized, and the negative consequences minimized, if there is a commitment from the outset to expand the project, (either in numbers or in areas) assuming that it succeeds.

In this manner, a steadily increasing percentage of department resources would be committed to working in the new mode.'

From **Britpop** (1996) and **Britpop 2** (1998) by Adrian Leigh, Nick Tilley and Tim Read:

'The POP Coordinator is critical to the success or failure of a project.'

'Previous attempts to variants of POP have been hampered by a failure adequately to train officers in both the concepts and the mechanics to be adopted.'

'It is now recognised that a longer term programme of cultural change is needed to effect alterations in routine ways of thinking and working.'

From **Not Rocket Science**, 2000 by Nick Tilley and Tim Read, we found that:

'Detailed analysis is needed to help define problems in ways that open them to creative responses.'

'Site specific analysis of problems is needed to select responses that are relevant to local circumstances.'

'In selecting responses it is crucial to work out in detail how they are expected to produce their intended effects.'

'Increases success

- *The provision of practical help and advice in planning and doing problem solving.*
- *Provision of information, training and experience to inform problem-solving.*
- *Development of methods to disseminate good practice.*
- *Development of structures to encourage problem-solving.*
- *Development of units or task-forces dedicated to specific areas of problem-solving.'*

'Capacity building

- *Officers were trained in problem-solving, using practical examples.*
- *The use of research studies was promoted. Attention had been paid to HMIC reports.*
- *notably Beating Crime.*
- *HQ was providing written and personal advice on problem-solving.*
- *HQ provided forms for capturing problem-solving, which were collected together for dissemination.'*

From **Problem-Oriented Policing in Practice in San Diego Police Department** , 2003, by Gary Cordner, Eastern Kentucky University:

'Another interview question asked officers what, if anything, should the police department do to provide more

support for problem solving? Interviewees offered 32 different ideas. Three of the four most common responses are logically related to more officers (23%), more time (19%), and streamlining of POP documentation (22%). Other top suggestions were more mentoring (13%) and more information on resources that are available (11%)'.

Other reading included Mike Scott's **20 years of POP**, Paul Ekblom's **Defining the Problem-Oriented Approach to Crime Reduction and Community Safety**, Michaels Stevens' **How to be a better Problem Solver**, Richard Chang and P Keith Kelly's **Step-by Step Problem Solving** and many more from both the public and corporate sectors.

Ultimately our research showed us what we needed to achieve to implement Problem Solving.

Part 3: Analysing our findings

Our research revealed six key findings that would define our project. These became our Aims:

1 An updated problem solving approach is required.

We identified that people found that the traditional SARA approach was not meeting the requirements placed on them in the 21st Century. As a result, we took the best from 25 years of experience with SARA and the best from corporate problem solving approaches and produced a nine stage process for the MPS. This became known as the **Problem Solving Process (PSP)**.

2 There must be an easy-to-use Case Management system.

We identified that it was essential that problem solving activity is recorded.

3 Problem Solving must be integrated with the NIM.

We identified that it was critical that we integrate fully with the NIM and its application at a Borough level.

4 People need to be knowledgeable to apply problem solving correctly.

We identified that a training programme was needed that met the requirements of practitioners and would increase their ability to succeed.

5 Practitioners need to have support at local level.

We identified that people needed a locally-appointed person who they could contact and seek advice in progressing a positive outcome to their problems (this was to become the Problem Solving Advisor or PSA).

6 A dedicated group should exist to lead the MPS.

We identified that it was critical to have a small, dedicated team of experienced practitioners to provide leadership to integrate problem solving into Borough-based policing. This dedicated team would provide initial training, strategic and tactical advice, support the Borough PSAs, develop the Case Management system and identify best practice from around the world and channel it into the MPS.

We also discovered gaps in our knowledge. For example, we needed to understand more about Local Authority Community Safety Units and how their work could be combined with ours. We secured funding from **Government Office for London** to employ a Council Analyst for a year from September 2003. He became an invaluable link and also produced two spreadsheets for coordinating problem solving activity that have been adopted across the MPS and which are now mandatory for Safer Neighbourhoods Teams.

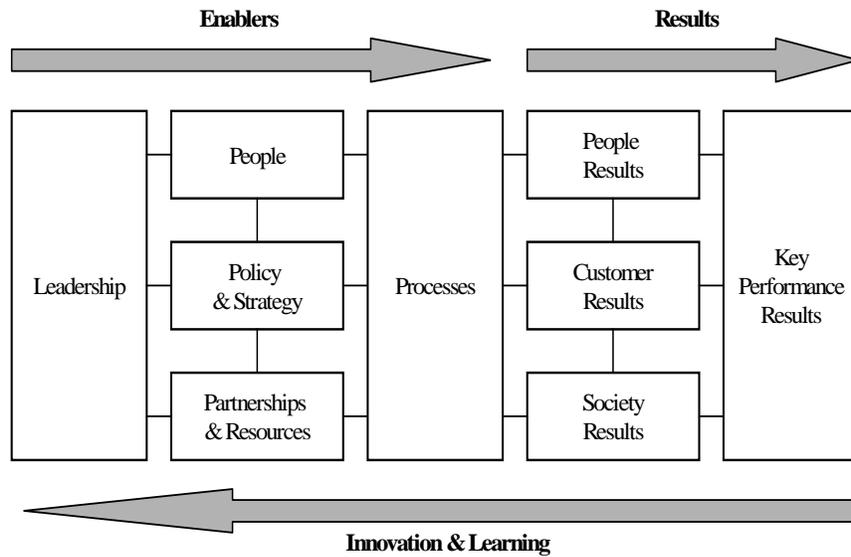
The **MPS Problem Solving Focus group** was formed from senior management leads and practitioners. This group met for the first year of the change programme. They were interviewed about what was working, not working and why. They were also asked what they needed to increase their own success in applying problem solving. Their

needs were included in the Problem Solving Implementation Programme.

The **NIM Implementation team** was sited in the same room as the PSU at Territorial Policing Headquarters. This enabled planned and spontaneous debate take place, which produced far better products and processes.

Part 4: Defining the Project and Responding to the ‘Problem’

Our analysis demonstrated that for problem solving to succeed, all of its activities and support systems needed to be integrated and mainstreamed. We chose to use the **Excellence Model** as a framework for all of our activities, which, in turn, supported the commitment to the needs of the customer.



®The EFQM Excellence Model is a Registered Trademark

There are nine elements within the Excellence Model, split into ‘Enablers’ (how we achieve things) and ‘Results’ (What we achieve). We used these nine elements to help us focus on what was needed by the Boroughs.

Project Timescales

London is divided into 32 borough-based Operational Command Units (OCUs). Our task therefore was considerable – especially as the Problem Solving Unit is a team of only five staff. We therefore set a realistic timescale; the change programme would run over three and half years, the first six months of which would be used to run pilots in five boroughs.

The implementation project was divided into four key stages:

Stage 1

October 2001 to March 2002 – A pilot run in five London Boroughs.

Stage 2

April 2002 to March 2004 - A roll-out programme into the remaining 27 Boroughs.

Stage 3

April 2004 to September 2004 - Concentrated on two objectives:

- (1) To revisit the under-performing Boroughs and get them to an acceptable standard.
- (2) To support the first phase of the Safer Neighbourhoods Programme.

Stage 4

From October 2004 to March 2005 we delivered a Maintenance Programme across all 32 Boroughs, with the purpose of gradual disengagement, leaving the team to fulfil its function as the MPS lead.

Yearly Strategic plans were produced and objectives were set with time scales and a separate lead for each.

Resources

Staffing the PSU was important. The team had to be experienced Problem Solving practitioners and have a range of expertise, including training and course design, strategic thinking, partnership working, crime reduction and use of police intelligence systems. The team also had to be left alone to focus all activity on achieving the Strategic Aim and not be abstracted for other tasks.

All of the PSU staff were provided with laptops, overtime for training and site visits, mileage for visits and mobile phones to enable people to make contact easily.

However, we were still only a team of five and demands upon our time were exceedingly high (Not just for training more people, but also more sites visits, facilitating initiatives and reviewing the completed forms etc.). Therefore, to best manage the workload, we divided London into four quadrants with one member of the PSU taking each and our team leader taking responsibility for presentations and training of senior management teams.

To build sustainability, we increased the role taken by the Borough PSAs by designing an extensive development programme. Consequently, they were then able to review the forms, support the problem solvers with advice and encouragement and undertake some of the site visits. In addition, separate meetings were started on each quadrant just for the PSAs. This became a vehicle to enable mutual support and share good Borough practice.

Designing a Case Management system

A system was needed that would be suitable for all and sufficiently versatile, while remaining focused on the processes of Problem Solving, whichever model (SARA, PROCTOR, PSP etc.) was used.

It had to compliment the requirements of the NIM (Note: In fact, we found that our system filled the some of the gaps identified by the National NIM implementation team, such as managing Community Intelligence and the strategic approach to large or multi layered problems (Town centres, Borough initiatives, volume crime etc.).)

It had to be in plain English and suitable for use with other agencies' recording systems.

Finally, it was not copyrighted as this would restrict usage by organisations outside the MPS.

The Case Management System is built around four forms:

Form 301 – The Strategic Profile - This combines Strategic Problem Solving and Project Management. It is used to manage Safer Neighbour wards, town centres, gun-enabled crime, drug markets, schools, hospitals, and Borough based initiatives.

Form 302 – The PSP File - This manages individual problems. It is used by all agencies and records the different stages of the problem solving approach. An Analyst links their Problem Profile to this document.

Form 303 – Action File - This enables other agencies to request that work is undertaken. It links directly back to the appropriate 301 or 302.

Form 304 – Bidding File - This is used by those running initiatives that either manage funds or request funding from

others.

A set of **guidance notes** was produced for completing the forms.

There are also two **spreadsheets** that each Borough must use to manage the 301s and 302s.

Training

It was important for training to be provided locally so that more partners could attend. Therefore we provided dates and the numbers that could be trained and Boroughs organised the location and attendees.

We developed a course specifically for practitioners. We trained over 3200 people in three years, including the first 96 Safer Neighbourhoods teams, 200 school officers, teachers and education officers and over 100 volunteers. We also trained Crime Reduction Officers and Architectural Liaison Officers.

The Safer Neighbourhoods training team have taken over the training of the further 392 Safer Neighbourhood teams. This means another 2353 problem solving practitioners will be trained within two years.

Advice and Support

We have produced a website that holds all of our documents, examples of good practice from within the MPS, and links to other websites to help practitioners in their own research, analysis, responses and evaluations.

We created an email address, **problemsolvingunit@met.police.uk** which enables people to easily contact us.

Maintenance Programme

- Each Borough was visited once every quarter. This visit was divided between providing a surgery, offering advice, and a site visit.
- A Support day for the Borough Problem Solving Advisors (PSA) was run once a quarter, by each PSA.
- An examination of a specific problem or theme was examined once every three months.
- Every Borough was provided with the Standard Problem Solving course every quarter.
- The Borough PSA was offered the opportunity of a Personal Development Programme.

Review Process

We decided after the pilot that we needed to review ourselves, to ensure that we could meet the envisaged increase demand for our services. As a result, we ran a 4 month process using the Excellence Model. We identified over 60 areas for Improvement. These were recorded and each completed within 4 months.

Our training was assessed every month, with an examination of the assessment sheets and follow-up interviews with people who had been trained one month earlier. We also interviewed Borough trainers to see if they were given additional feedback.

We also reviewed the completed problem solving forms. We identified that the problems were not accurately recorded and the Aim was not SMART. As a result, the course was changed to include more time on problem definition, writing proper Aims and Objectives and effective Evaluation of projects.

Our documents were reviewed every three months, to ensure clarity and that the information was still relevant and up to date.

Part 5: Assessing the Results

When assessing how effectively we ran the implementation project, we looked at what had been achieved, how it was achieved and whether things could be improved further. Ultimately, we asked ourselves, 'Did we meet our Aim?'

- Over 3300 police and partners have been trained in three years. This means that, on average, over 100 people on each Borough have a good understanding of problem solving. We have trained more than 500 people from statutory partner organisations and over 200 from non-statutory partner agencies and volunteers.
- We designed the training for the 640 Safer Neighbourhoods teams and have successfully handed it over to the Safer Neighbourhoods Training Unit.
- Problem solving training has been built Probationer training.
- We are active participants at the ACPO Problem Solving Working Group.
- The London Prolific Offenders Scheme has adopted the Problem Solving Process, had our training delivered to their police Liaison officers, and uses our Case Management system. This has been endorsed by the Probation Service, Government Office for London and the Prison Service.
- Our Case Management system is now part of Borough business and integrated with a number of BCTGs. The forms are downloadable from the internet and MPS intranet. The system has been recommended by the National Police Reassurance Programme as best practice.
- The Borough PSAs are now the first point of contact for Problem Solvers and they now manage their own quadrant meetings.
- A specific PDR was produced for PSAs.
- We have created an Intranet site where our documents, examples of Problem Solving initiatives and suitable links to other websites are stored.
- A Special Interest Group for problem solvers has been created and administered centrally. This is a discussion forum that enables practitioners to discuss issues with each other.

We have been proactive in researching new ways to put Problem Solving methodology into all aspects of policing. For example:

- We worked with our Air Support Unit to support requests for problem identification, research and interventions for the 'location' aspect of the Problem Analysis triangle.
- We have worked with Murder Investigation Team (West) in managing their murder and serious crime hotspots. All of their Analysts were trained.
- The use of Joint Agency Groups is being applied across all 32 Boroughs to support both the Safer Neighbourhood schemes and the Prolific Offenders Scheme.

How we evaluated the project

We asked Problem Solving Advisors how things were going for them and how we could improve our support for them and their problem solving practitioners. This was done one-to-one and as a discussion item at the PSA meetings. They wanted more support in chairing problem solving meetings.

We regularly attended **Borough Tasking and Coordination Group** meetings to see how problem solving was being managed. Feedback was sought from the meetings' Chairs. They wanted clarification on how our system integrated with the existing documentation.

We shadowed staff in the BIUs to make sure our material assisted. For example, the three-monthly strategic

assessments were checked and our Strategic Profiles (301) were cited by Higher Analysts as good practice.

We remotely accessed Intelligence systems and provided feedback and advice to the local PSA.

We interviewed Borough Liaison Officers and Partnership Inspectors. From these interviews we established that we needed to focus on supporting Borough Crime and Disorder Partnerships. As a result we briefed a number of CDRPs at their meetings and arranged for them to attend local training.

Every aspect of our core business was examined at our regular team meetings and actions tasked to the business leads where improvements could be made.

We examined our own professional needs analyses and these were recorded on our own Personal Development plans. As a result, we have undertaken a number of courses, including Mentoring, Coaching, Crime Prevention and Intelligence Analysis. We have also been authorised to travel anywhere in the UK, to attend UK conferences, and to visit the USA to increase our own expertise and individual networks.

We used the 12 Principles from **Investors in People** (IIP) to ensure that everyone is supported in their roles as Problem Solvers and PSAs.

The specific PDR for the PSA was assessed by the MPS HR Directorate. They have recommended it to the National Working Group.

Evaluating Training

Feedback sheets showed a 98% satisfaction rate from attendees. All the courses have become over-subscribed, so an application system is in place on a number of Boroughs.

We evaluated the training course using the **Kirkpatrick system**. We met the top Level (4), whereby 'people trained have a positive impact on their community'.

Our training abilities have been assessed. Each team member holds a **Certificate in Education** and delivery has been assessed using NVQ A1 and A2 direct and indirect assessors and a V1 internal verifier.

Evaluating the Case Management system

We used remote computer access to dip-sample Borough spread sheets and problem solving forms to see how they were being completed. Problems that appeared frequently were identified and dealt with.

We then made suggestions (via email) directly to the authors, and passed copies to the respective Problem Solving Advisors.

Changes were made to the forms when needed and additional notes added to the Guidance sheets.

Hundreds of problems are now recorded, by police and partners, using our system. It is used by Analysts and Researchers in their work. A number of Community Safety Units are using the system.

An examination by the MPS Performance Management Team resulted in them rewriting their descriptions of effective problem solving activity. This is also used in the selection process from Sergeants, Inspectors and all ranks of Senior Management.

Inspections

We evaluated on two fronts:

Process As the result of our three year implementation programme, we identified **Critical Success Factors** (CSFs); those things that had to happen for problem solving to succeed. These CSFs were then

widely circulated. Boroughs are inspected and then are measured on their ability to have those CSFs in place. Gaps identified and the PSA and their Borough develop their own Action Plans to close those gaps.

Impact

The effect that problem solving activity has had on crime, fear of crime and calls for service. To measure this, we draw heavily upon the **Passport to Evaluation** published by the Home Office Crime Reduction College, 2002.

The Inspections are now integrated within the **Borough Inspection Process**, and are undertaken by the **Performance Review Unit**. This team was trained by us and provided with appropriate briefing documents.

The same criteria also forms part of the Gold, Silver and Bronze plans for the roll-out of **Safer Neighbourhoods** Inspection teams. Four Inspectors have been recruited to take over the Borough inspections, previously undertaken by the PSU.

Conclusion

Our Aim was to mainstream a problem solving approach into all 32 London Boroughs by April 2005.

We met our Aim in March 2005.

As the result, Problem Solving is unlikely to ever be relegated to the Company Zoo.

PS Neil Henson
PC Steve Colgan

(3977 words)