

## 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](mailto: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

#### **Operation Triangle**

Name of force/agency/CDRP:

#### **South Yorkshire Police**

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

#### **Inspector Shaun Morley**

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Name of endorsing senior representatives(s) **Mr R Dyson**

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s) **Assistant Chief Constable**

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s)

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South Yorkshire Police Headquarters  
Snig Hill  
Sheffield S2 8LY**

## 2. Summary of application

The Triangle is an area of central Sheffield of approximately 3 square kilometres and falls within 3 BCUs. It is a diverse area incorporating affluence, alongside urban decay, a vibrant commercial centre, and busy night-time economy. It houses both Sheffield universities and student accommodation. The highest levels of robbery were experienced during the university terms with students accounting for 54% of victims.

Policing methods within the area had traditionally relied on surveillance operations to apprehend criminals in the act of robbery or used large numbers of uniformed officers to flood the area. Both methods had limited success.

Analysis of robbery offences identified three contributory factors, namely:

- Availability of potential robbery victims
- Availability of potential offenders
- An environment in which robbery can flourish

The objective was to reduce street crime by tackling each of the factors, addressing the causes rather than the offence.

Police and partnership action centred on micro managing the contributory factors through the following actions:

**Intelligence** – Spatial and temporal analysis of crime patterns underpinned by daily analysis of offending to identify 'hot spot' areas. The analysis identified a link between street crime and underlying anti social behaviour.

**Prevention** – Environmental upgrading and the creation of a managed space supported by directed high profile patrols in 'hot spot' areas, targeting potential victims and disrupting offenders. Potential victims are given advice and supported over personal safety. Potential offenders are assertively challenged about their anti-social behaviour. A pro-active media campaign aimed at crime reduction and reassurance.

**Effective Partnerships** – A Triangle Management Team was established, including police, local authority, CCTV, Ambassadors Scheme, Students Unions, Retail / licensee organisations. Regular focused meetings with action plans resulting in a co-ordinated tactical approach for each problem.

**Enforcement** – Joint police and local authority action targeting street crime and anti social behaviour offenders through the use of ABC's, ASBO's, and dispersal orders.

### Results

Between April 2002 – April 2003 the Triangle area experienced a 64% reduction in street crime.

Between April 2003 and April 2004, the Triangle again saw a reduction in street crime of 57%.

Overall crime reduced by 25%

Principles are now being replicated within the district to tackle other crime issues such as night-time disorder.

### 3. Description of Project

In 2002 there was a national media outcry at the rapidly rising levels of Street crime. These were predominately offences of robbery and snatch theft. This perceived 'explosion' of street crime was at odds with the other trends of recorded crime, which were showing consistent decreases. The Home Office identified 10 Forces who were experiencing a disproportionately high incidence of Street Crime. South Yorkshire was one of these 10 forces. Within South Yorkshire the street crime hotspot was Sheffield, within Sheffield the main street crime hotspot was an area referred to by officers as the Triangle. 20% of South Yorkshire's recorded robbery happened within the Triangle. It was clear that an effective approach to street crime within this area would have a significant effect on achieving the targets set.

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## Operation Triangle

### Identifying the problem.

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The Triangle is an area 3 sq km at the heart of Sheffield which represents 0.84% of the total area of Sheffield. The Triangle was so named as each of Sheffield's 3 BCUs had approximately a third of the geographical area within its boundaries. The crime within this area in 2002 was disproportionate to its size as can be seen below:

	<b>Street crime</b>	<b>Burglary</b>	<b>Vehicle crime</b>
<b>Sheffield North</b>	14%	8%	8%
<b>Sheffield Central</b>	26%	9%	15%
<b>Sheffield South</b>	18%	10%	7%
<b>Sheffield</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>

Looking at street crime in a countywide context, the Triangle represents 0.20% of the total area of South Yorkshire, 13% of all street crime was recorded in the Triangle.

The Triangle is a diverse area incorporating affluent areas alongside urban decay, together with both of Sheffield's Universities and student accommodation. The area contains many of the city's night-clubs and bars. Entertainment and commercial areas of the city centre cause a net influx of people to either work or have an evening out. The area contains Sheffield's main transport interchange and Midland Railway Station. There is also a network of dual carriageways with underpasses and subways.

Following the launch of the Street crime initiative in May 2002, a multi-agency street crime group was established under the umbrella of Sheffield First for Safety, (Sheffield's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership). Analysis showed that young people featured disproportionately within the

robbery figures, both as offenders and victims. Sheffield's hotspot was the Triangle, at its centre was a council owned and built Skateboard park, in an area know as Devonshire Green.

The target set in the first year was to halt the rise in street crime and maintain the same level of offending as in 2001/02

The process of reducing crime in the area was under constant revision by the group utilising the crime information and intelligence from other agencies.

After the first 12 months of the initiative there was a reduction in Robbery of 11% from 704 victims to 624 in the Triangle area. Analysis showed that this reduction had been in the number of school-aged victims, but the number of undergraduate victims had increased. Robberies were committed predominately between 8pm and 2am each day, more frequently on Friday and Saturday nights and the property most frequently stolen was cash, mobile phones, and bankcards. South Yorkshire Police and partners failed to achieve the target set in the first year recording an 8% increase in robbery across the county.

## **TARGETS**

The Challenge for 2003/2004 was to achieve a reduction in robbery of 14% and 15% in 2004/2005. To achieve these targets a significant review of tactics combined by a revisiting of the SARA model based firmly on the principles of crime reduction was required.

In previous years the police had used covert operations aimed at apprehending criminals in the act of robbery, but this had limited success, as did operations to flood the Triangle with uniformed officers. Each of these policing methods had short-term effects, were resource intensive, and not cost effective.

The Street crime action group was refocused and an extensive period of scanning and analysis of the area began, this identified why the area was the robbery Hotspot. The reasons were unsurprisingly

- Availability of street crime victims
- Availability of street crime offenders
- An environment in which street crime can flourish

Analysis of street crime showed that the area had been the robbery hotspot for the previous 5 years.

Good practice dictates that the removal of one of the elements of Victim, Location, or Offender from the equation reduces the incidence of a crime occurring. A strategy was adopted and a new action plan developed aimed at reducing the levels of robbery.

## **TRIANGLE STRATEGY**

Operation Triangle set out to achieve a reduction in Street Crime by targeting potential victims and offenders, as well as utilising environmental crime reduction techniques. The street crime initiative itself was formed around four elements.

**Education/Diversion**  
**Crime Reduction**  
**Public Reassurance**  
**Enforcement**

These elements were embedded in the work in the triangle area.

## VICTIMS

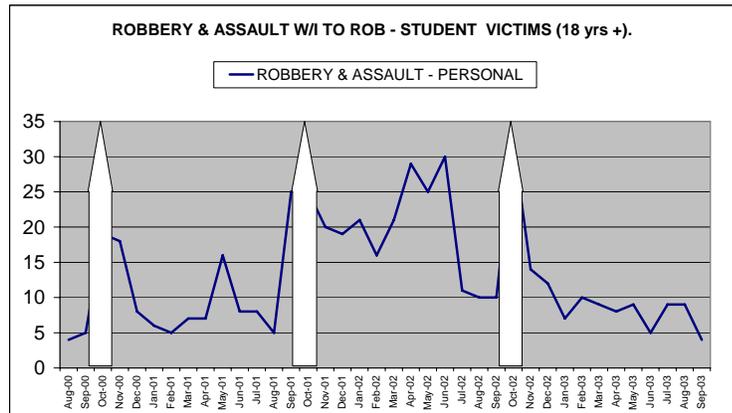
During the first year of the initiative, researched was commissioned from Sheffield University, interviewing street crime offenders aimed at exploring their motivation. This research was completed at the end of 2002/03 and the findings were fed into the end of year review. The findings from this research ran alongside analysis, which identified that the rise in street crime in the city coincided with the return of the students at the start of the academic year.

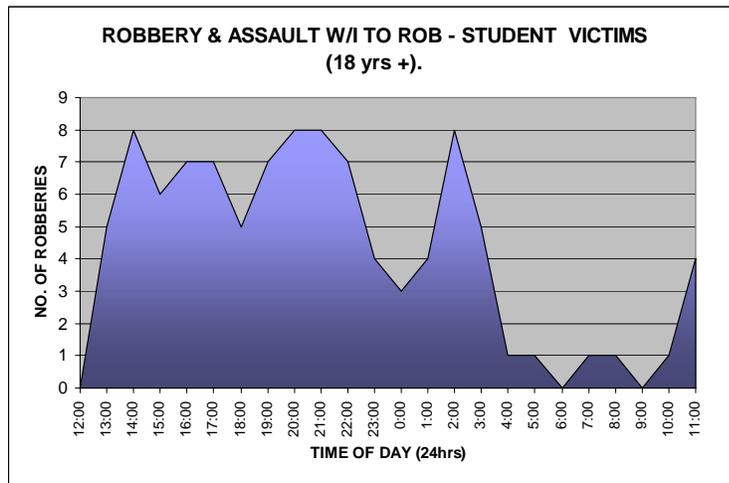
Convicted robbery offenders expressed a preference for student victims seen as 'rich pickings' and vulnerable targets. This epitomises the profile throughout the Triangle.

The activity at year one had been aimed primarily at school children with diversionary summer activities put in place and targeted patrols employed in and around Devonshire Green and the skateboard park.

A result of the analysis being fed into the Street Crime Action Group was the creation of an additional crime reduction advisors post to work specifically with the students in the city. Sheffield Hallam University seconded a member of staff who had previously received training as a crime reduction officer. This individual was tasked with identifying national good practice and implementing student focused crime reduction campaigns to reduce the victimisation of students. This activity led to the engagement of the students' unions and the format and funding of two student crime reduction panels.

Extensive analysis, as outlined in the graphs below, showed that students are particularly vulnerable, especially new students. Consultation with the student unions highlighted the problem that many of these students were living away from home for the first time in an unfamiliar environment and were not 'street wise'.





Students were often found to be lost in deprived housing estates carrying mobile phones or lap top computers. Many also become drunk especially in ‘Freshers’ week, leading to them becoming disorientated and vulnerable within unfamiliar surroundings. The underlying issue was the vulnerability of the students, especially within the first few weeks of term. It was necessary to reduce their vulnerability to a minimum by educating the students and allowing them to acclimatise to their new environment, through the provision of crime reduction and personal safety advice.

A verity of methods were used including radio commercials, posters, flyers, face to face information, beer mats, key rings, personal attack alarms, and bus advertising. Safety messages on the start page of university computers, Student Union web site, and even student safety pages on the Force web site added value to the campaign.

Finally, local crime prevention officers and special constables held regular seminars at the universities within ‘Fresher’ weeks to promote crime prevention and the use of Green routes in and out of the city.

The Green routes are main arterial routes from residential areas populated by students to the city centre. Uniformed officers heavily patrol these routes, particularly during the months of September, October, and November with a range of staff being used to patrol these routes including special constables, PCSO’s, and the council warden scheme known as the Ambassadors. These routes were advertised to students through the production of maps of the city centre with the green routes clearly marked. They were sent to the ‘Freshers’ home addresses prior to the start of the academic year.

Policing tactics were also utilised to disrupt offenders and additional environmental crime reduction work was conducted by Sheffield City Council, such as the cutting back of shrubs and repairing street lighting on the green routes.

Underpinning this victim focused activity were the high visibility patrols, which ensured potential victims were offered crime prevention advice about why they were at risk in that environment.

## **OFFENDERS**

On a daily basis, the street crime offences were analysed by local community based officers to establish patterns in offending and behaviour. This micro management of information and intelligence ensured that daily high profile patrols were directed and focused on the areas where they could achieve maximum impact.

These daily patrols were undertaken, not only by uniformed police officers but also by community support officers, special constables, and the local authority wardens' scheme. In this way, we have been able to ensure a daily high visibility uniform presence in all 'hot spot' areas. The effective use of the extended police family in this work has not only ensured maximum impact, but it has been achieved at minimal cost to the organisation.

Offenders tend not to commit Street Crime without going through stages of confidence building. Interruptions in confidence building can hinder the progression towards robbery, therefore officers targeting potential victims were equally active targeting potential offenders, actively engaging them over low level offences. Assertiveness by officers has proved to undermine the offenders confidence and with it their capacity for offending.

The high visibility patrols were co-ordinated with the activities of the forces central robbery team. They thoroughly investigated each and every offence committed within the Triangle area. Detectives from the central robbery team also used proactive patrols to identify street criminals and then directed the uniformed patrols to confront the potential offenders and disrupted their pattern of behaviour. The detectives also respond to reported robberies

Uniformed officers attended and patrolled in the area of a reported robbery for at least 1 hour. Their purpose was to prevent a second offence occurring. The presence of high profile uniformed officers' acts to reduce the opportunity to commit robbery by introducing a capable guardian. These officers also acted on information from the detectives about the offender's appearance or any outstanding property, improving the opportunity to make an early arrest.

The presence of uniformed officers immediately following a street crime ensured that the public is reassured and the prospect of engagement and information flow from the local community is increased.

## **LOCATION**

Significant work was undertaken to change the urban environment. Additional CCTV cameras were installed covering the area around Devonshire Green and the Green itself. The funding for the cameras was secured from South Yorkshire Police street crime monies and Sheffield City Council.

Environmental and landscaping work was completed at the Skate Board park to clear fencing, trees and shrubs, this ensured that the site and its occupants were over looked. An additional council employee was funded to clean the area of rubbish and broken glass along with additional emptying of refuse from bins (there had been a problem with robbery offenders threatening victims with broken bottles obtained from the area.) Derelict seating was also removed from the area. This was combined with a review of street lighting conducted on the main arterial routes into and out of the city centre, followed by remedial action such as cleaning and replacement of lights.

Crime reduction officers now work with council architects to develop plans to regenerate the area utilising the Sec 106 money that has been generated by significant development of flats and apartments in the area.

Sheffield City Council has started to provide targeted youth provision in the area in school holidays to engage those hard to reach young people who may have been tempted into offending.

The activity based around the location of Devonshire Green was possible because of the Street Crime Action Group (SCAG).

The SCAG has been pivotal in the response to street crime within the Triangle. The partnership consists of representatives from South Yorkshire Police, Sheffield City Council's Community Safety Team, Victim Support, the LEA, Connexions, Youth Services, Street Force and the City Centre Management Team.

This partnership has allowed the high profile patrols in the area to be supported by the council CCTV system. CCTV controllers scan 'hot spot' locations, identifying potential victims and offenders before directing the 'high visibility' patrols to confront these individuals. Potential offenders are shown the CCTV cameras and informed that they are being monitored.

The SCAG has led to a tactical partnership being formed consisting of South Yorkshire Police, Sheffield City Council's City Centre Management Team, CCTV, Special constables, Sheffield City Council's Ambassadors Scheme and representatives from key organisations from the business and retail sector along with Pub Watch.

The group meets on a fortnightly basis to discuss emerging trends in street crime, retail crime and associated anti social behaviour. Analysis and intelligence is used to identify underlying issues around each 'hot spot' before the group agrees a co-ordinated plan to address each issue. Individual agencies or groups are then tasked with specific actions to reduce the emerging trend. The success of each action plan is then evaluated at a subsequent date so that tactics can be adjusted as and when necessary.

To embed the changes within the patrolling culture, 2 police officers are now seconded to work with the City Centre Management team and Ambassadors. This role will be further enhanced by the creation of a Local Partnership Team in July. The LPT will be based within the triangle and comprise of Police officers, PCSOs, and City Centre Ambassadors tasked on a daily basis.

The Tactical group has introduced the CCRAC (City Centre Retailers Against Crime) radio system. This provides a direct radio contact between the city's retailers, night-time entertainment venues, and the police patrols. In this way the majority of emerging street crime and anti social behaviour incidents are immediately brought to the attention of the police, who can intervene at an early stage. The 'confidence cycle' of the potential offenders is therefore consistently interrupted by the introduction of a 'capable guardian' to the environment and has made the Triangle area of Sheffield City Centre a much less attractive option for potential offenders.

## **MEDIA STRATEGY**

The whole of the street crime initiative had a pro-active media strategy, this was seen as being especially important in getting the message to young people. In an effort to do this we utilised advertising on local commercial radio, street furniture and bus advertising. The adverts were targeted at three groups namely university students, young people of School age, and the offenders.

Messages were also delivered utilising the IT systems of both Universities and the two students unions, as well as a poster campaign and by face to face interaction with the patrolling capable guardians, be they PCSOs, City Centre Ambassadors or Police Officers.

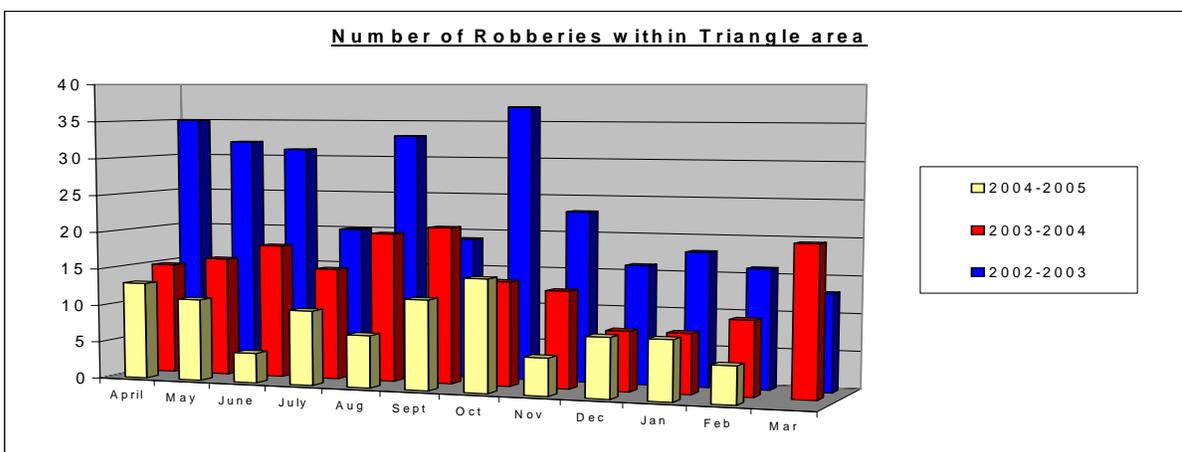
The media strategy for the Triangle was an extension of this with every opportunity taken to attract media into the area covering the different type of policing events and to advertise the increase in safety of the area.

Whilst the media effect cannot be quantified, it clearly undermined criminals confidence and reduced the vulnerability of victims through improved crime prevention measures.

## RESULTS

The chart and graph below evidence the reduction in Robbery offences brought about as the result of the partnership and policing initiative.

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2002-2003	35	32	31	20	33	19	37	23	16	18	16	13
2003-2004	15	16	18	15	20	21	14	13	8	8	10	20
2004-2005	13	11	4	10	7	12	15	5	8	8	5	0



This has resulted in a **64.6%** reduction in recorded robberies between 2002/3 and 2004/05.

In the year 2002/ 2003, a total of 293 robberies were committed in the Triangle area compared to 178 robberies in 2003/04 and 104 robberies in 2004/05.

The strategy used in Operation triangle not only had a positive effect on street crime. It also led to a reduction in volume crime.

## OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES

The first year of this operation demonstrated that the use of force resources as a high visibility presence was ineffective. Force resources were increasing the high visibility presence of uniformed officers within the Triangle area but it was impossible to ensure they were physically briefed as they were often based in a variety of locations and deployed to the Triangle area on an ad hoc basis. The deployment of these resources was therefore inefficient as the patrols were not focused or directed. Consultations with these officers, and our IT experts identified a solution to the problem.

By creating a dedicated intelligence and tasking site on the force Intranet system, it would ensure that every officer within the force would be able to access current intelligence and information. If this could be achieved the patrols would be directed to current hot spots and individual targets. The system also had an added advantage in that the Triangle area crosses the boundaries of three policing districts, which again created logical problems in ensuring that staff, utilised with Operation Triangle, had access to current intelligence. The creation of this electronic briefing system has ensured that ALL staff are fully informed and therefore able to direct and focus their patrols to ensure maximum efficiency in our patrol strategy.

The combination of these simple police tactics, integrated partnership working, and maximising the effective use of all resources has successfully reduced robbery within the Triangle area.

During the initial phases of Operation Triangle, the operation was well supported by the three policing districts that had a stake in the Triangle area. However, due to the success of the initiative, and the conflict that BCU managers have with achieving a wide range of targets, it became increasingly difficult to ensure that robbery maintained its position as the number one priority. The Triangle operation therefore became the victim of its own success as the reduction in robberies meant that the policing districts involved reduced the number of resources committed to the project.

The reality of having to maintain the effectiveness of the operation with reduced number of staff prompted a review of the resources used. Having consulted the staff involved in the operation, it was apparent that the majority of uniformed officers utilised on the high profile patrols were young inexperienced officers. The officers, although relatively effective in their role, had no ownership or responsibility for the problem. However, when local community officers were used, it was found that the results were improved and again consultation suggested this was due to the local knowledge, experience, and motivation of these officers as they had responsibility for the issue as a local community problem. A change in emphasis was therefore suggested in which local community officers within and surrounding the Triangle area would take responsibility for providing the core patrols.

However, although community officers added a great deal in terms of experience and ownership, they were insufficient in number to be fully effective. Further consultation with the relevant Districts, led to 25 Special Constables being dedicated to the operation. In the past our Special Constables were used on duty groups to perform general reactive policing duties.

The Triangle experience has now radically changed that philosophy. The Special Constables took ownership of the Triangle initiative. They were provided with additional and refresher training of the skills, required to police the Triangle area. A system was established to ensure that their views and experience were fed back into the planning process. The Special Constables became specialists in this particular area, developing knowledge of the local issues, criminals and criminality. They became familiar with the tactics used to address the street crime problem and increasing effective in reducing robbery offences.

With the reduction in resources, the operation had to ensure an increased effectiveness in addressing the root causes of robbery. Analysis of offender profiles showed, in a large proportion of offenders, their involvement in both anti social behaviour issues and street crime. This was particularly significant in terms of those offending in and around the city centre where 35% of offenders also had a background in aggressive street drinking or begging with many street crimes resulting from persistent, drunken, and abusive requests for money.

It appeared that an environment in which these offences could flourish leads to an escalation in street crime. It was decided to also address the anti social behaviour, which escalates into street crime. The operation incorporated information about anti social behaviour, particularly begging and street drinking into its identification of 'hot spot' areas. In this way, the police patrols could effectively tackle underlying issues that promote street crime.

Working with Sheffield City Council has reduced underlying anti social behaviour significantly by the serving of acceptable behaviour contracts (ABC's) on those engaged in aggressive anti social behaviour. These contracts have been particularly successful in dissuading those who are involved in begging or street drinking to move away from the Triangle area. Voluntary agencies helped with diversionary programmes. 80% of those served with ABC's have not re-offended in the Triangle area. For those individuals who persistently offend in terms of anti social behaviour, we have jointly pursued Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's) against these individuals, with the city council.

Where persistent problems are identified in particular localities, we have used dispersal orders to alleviate the problem. This has been extremely effective in addressing the immediate problem at a given locality but interestingly with street drinkers and beggars it has simply displaced the problem to a different area. This displacement is largely due to these offenders not having roots to one particular area and therefore having the ability to simply move around the city. In consultation with the local authority, it is intended to introduce an alcohol exclusion zone across Sheffield City Centre, which will go a long way to eradicating the attractiveness of the city centre for these forms of aggressive anti social behaviour. This will be introduced in July 2005.

The effective use of available legislation has therefore played an important part in tackling street crime and its underlying factors.

## **CONCLUSION**

Triangle operations have achieved a dramatic reduction in robbery and street crime. This has been brought about by recognition of the factors that contribute to the phenomenon of robbery and their complex interaction. By understanding the influence of each component, the partnership agencies have been able to devise and implement the appropriate interventions.

A model for analysis and planning has emerged with proven success. This model concentrates on the three factors that contribute to the robbery problem within the Triangle area, namely victim, offender, and environment. By positively influencing each of these factors the partnership agencies have been able to achieve a sustainable reduction in robbery which has dramatically reduced the fear of crime within the Triangle area and has enhanced Sheffield's reputation as one of the safest cities in the country.

The street robbery problem has not been eliminated but significantly reduced and better understood as a result of this initiative.