

## Tilley Award 2006

### Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the Guidance. Please complete the following form in full and within the word limit. Failure to do so could result in disqualification from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to Tricia Perkins; [patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

All entries must be received by noon on Friday 28th April 2006. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Tricia Perkins on 0207 035 0262. Any queries regarding other aspects of the awards should be directed to Michael Wilkinson on 0207 035 0247 or Lindsey Poole on 0207 035 0234.

Please tick box to indicate whether the entry should be considered for the main award, the criminal damage award or both;

Main award

Criminal Damage Award

Both Awards

#### 1. Details of application

Title of the project                      Graffiti project Hornchurch High Street

Name of force/agency/CDRP: Metropolitan Police Havering OCU

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## **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.

### **Problem Outline**

Following the establishment of the St. Andrews Ward Safer Neighbourhood Team in September 2004, an initial public survey was undertaken that highlighted public concerns over damage to phone kiosks and bus stops, and youth gang activity. As none of these concerns had previously come to police attention, an Environmental Visual Audit was conducted together with a wider survey consisting of a questionnaire that was delivered to several hundred residential and business addresses in the area. This revealed that the public perception was one where the level of graffiti in the area had raised the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour in the area.

### **Description of Initiative**

Together with partners from businesses, schools and transport providers, the level of graffiti was established through the regular cleaning of a prominent site. The officers researched the youth graffiti culture to establish the drivers to the phenomenon, and information was cleaned from partners that allowed regular offenders to be identified from their "Tags" and visual cctv images. Successes in arrest and charge of offenders featured in the local media and on posters requesting information about such offences.

### **Intervention Principles**

This project relied upon gaining an understanding of the territorial nature of the graffiti gangs, and also upon how high level of graffiti adversely affects the public perception of safety. To this end it was necessary to disrupt the offenders; promote that graffiti was unacceptable; and publicise the successes of the initiative to reduce the fear of crime.

### **Project Outcomes**

Following the conclusion of this project, three identified walls remained clean of graffiti for periods of between 2.5 months to 5.5 months, thus exceeding the initial 1-month target in every case. Additionally it was intended to bring to justice offenders for 50 offences. During the operation offenders were brought to justice for 121 offences.

Longer-term outcomes have included the development of a town centre association from the partnerships formed during this operation, together with the development of an urban strategy and a plan for the deployment of cctv in the area.

### **Design and Evaluation.**

The project was designed to identify the drivers behind graffiti damage; identify and nullify offenders; restore the environment and reduce the fear of crime. Evaluation was achieved through the monitoring for the presence or otherwise of graffiti on three target walls and by the number of offenders brought to justice for causing criminal damage through graffiti.

### 3. Description of project

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

#### **THE HORNCHURCH HIGH STREET ANTI-GRAFFITI PROJECT** **TO REDUCE THE INSTANCE OF GRAFFITI IN AND BRING OFFENDERS TO JUSTICE**

##### Scanning and analysis

The St Andrews Safer Neighbourhood Team consisting of one sergeant, two PC's and three PCSO's was founded on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004. The ward centres round Hornchurch High Street, a traditional High Street with a busy retail and night time economy.

At the inception of the ward a public opinion survey, was carried out by an independent company. One hundred people were asked to comment on problems they perceived as being relevant to Hornchurch High Street.

##### **The results**

*% Of those questioned that thought the matters were*

	<i>Serious problem</i>	<i>Minor problem</i>	<i>Problem has caused me to change my behaviour</i>
<i>Graffiti</i>	5	24	8
<i>Fights in the street</i>	2	6	0
<i>Drunk and disorderly Behaviour</i>	3	14	1
<i>Damage to phone boxes</i>	18	48	28
<i>Damage to bus stops</i>	22	52	32
<i>Other vandalism</i>	8	32	6

These perceived crimes did not tally with any of the information in police intelligence reports or against police crime reports. Checks were made to confirm with BT and Adshel that there was not unreported criminal damage to bus stops and phone boxes. They confirmed this was not the case and crime figures (which showed nil crime damage to bus shelters and phone boxes) should be a true reflection of the matter.

The Ward Team carried out a second survey sending 500 questionnaires to businesses in the High Street and local residents. They were asked to grade their perception of a series of issues, which may or may not affect Hornchurch High Street from 1 to 5. 1 being very serious, 5 being of no issue.

*The results were as follows*

*Percentage of people who considered the matters 1 (very serious) or 2 (serious)*

<i>Graffiti</i>	<i>37.5%</i>
<i>Burglary</i>	<i>53%</i>
<i>Drug dealing and taking</i>	<i>51.5%</i>
<i>Street Robbery and snatch</i>	<i>48.5%</i>
<i>Groups of youths</i>	<i>63%</i>
<i>Anti social behaviour</i>	<i>61.5%</i>
<i>Vandalism</i>	<i>63.5%</i>

Considering the crime reports and police intelligence reports the public perception of issues that impacted on them in relation to the High Street were at a variance to our recorded data. Indeed Hornchurch could be considered from the police perspective as being an area of low robbery with comparatively low levels of reported violent crime and criminal damage.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2004 the St Andrews Safer Neighbourhoods Team in partnership with the local authority carried out an environmental audit of Hornchurch High Street. To investigate first hand how the public were interpreting the problems of Hornchurch High Street and to try to identify any environmental signals that were increasing the feelings of discomfort and vulnerability. The audit consisted of members of the public visiting 20 locations in the High Street area between 9 PM and 10.30PM on a Friday night. At each location they were asked to comment on how safe they felt and what environmental features created the feeling of safety or otherwise.

The time of the audit was designed to coincide with the High Streets night time economies busiest period.

Graffiti was mentioned repeatedly as a factor that led the participants to feel vulnerable.

A number of the participants of the questionnaire were contacted again and it became apparent that people were making a link between graffiti, which was evident in the High Street and other crimes, which were occurring. In short where people saw graffiti they assumed that there would be high levels of burglary and robbery along with gang activity and violence.

We asked ourselves four questions about graffiti

What do we know about it?

What don't we know about it?

What don't we know, we don't know about it?

Where can we find the answers?

### **Partners**

Clearly given the publics perception, there was a problem that traditional police methods were failing to address. It was clear that a multi-stranded problem solving approach with as many partners focused on the issue was vital. The graffiti appeared on business and residential premises as well as street furniture, public buildings and public transport.

Internal - we identified and approached the following partners; Transport for London, BIU KD, Youth Offending Team. Other ward Teams and schools Officers.

External - The local authority, Street Care, The public, MacDonald's Restaurant, The Beard Youth Centre, Gaynes, Hall Mead, Abbs Cross and Emerson Park Secondary Schools, Blue Triangle Buses, British Transport Police, local councillors, the Member of Parliament and The Romford Recorder.

### **Graffiti, what is it?**

We began to look closely at the marks in the High Street and while it appeared in a variety of mediums (tile grout pens, glass etching, spray paint and marker pens) it was apparent that mostly the graffiti took one form, a word usually with less than 6 letters followed by three letters that did not make a word.

We spoke to our partners and no one was able to explain what these marks meant. The St Andrews Ward Police Team spent a considerable time exploring internet sights, talking with local youths, talking to people with previous convictions for graffiti and we discovered the following facts.

Graffiti is a subculture with a list of rules and etiquette.

The longer words appearing on our walls were 'TAGS' or pseudo identities of people involved in the graffiti. The three letter marks represented gang or 'crew' which the tagger was a member of. The crew tag will be a variation of initials representing the gang's name. However spelling is often questionable i.e. K often stands for crew.

An example of this is one of our most frequently appearing tag was LANKIE DMS

Lankie is the pseudo identity of a young man; DMS (Drugs Money Sex) is his crew.

The purpose of a crew is to promote its name and claim a territory. Violence can erupt between gangs but normally there is an air of mutual respect and competition between the groups.

A gang leader will often enrol younger people into the gang. Although these new members have no artistic ability they will be coached by other gang members in return these young people or 'toys' will be required to mark the gangs three letter tag in as many places as possible.

You can be promoted from one gang to another. If your work is recognised as being of particular artistic merit, or you become known for the frequency and daring of your tags you can be elected into a new crew. The effect of a youth looking for promotion can be dramatic. One of Havering's young men who wanted to move from the DMS crew to the TNK, marked every bus stop both sides of the road for two miles, dozens of NTL cases, phone boxes, lamp posts, street signs and tens of thousands of pounds worth of shop windows in a two week period!

***Information on how these gangs operate was vital to this initiative.***

***How much graffiti was there and how can we measure success?***

The High Street had a large amount of graffiti and to establish the extent of the current problem and identify the historic graffiti from the recently made marks members of the police team painted out graffiti on a wall adjacent to a MacDonald's restaurant.

With our new understanding of graffiti we were able to identify this as the most attractive site for 'tagging' in the High Street as it was near a facility that youths travel to use (i.e. McDonald's) and stood proud of the building line where it could be seen by passing buses.

This wall was heavily marked within 72 Hours. The marks or 'tags' were recorded for future reference.

The matter was discussed with the council and we co hosted a public meeting where it was decided that an operation should be mounted to reduce the fear of crime in Hornchurch High Street by reducing the level of graffiti. It was clear that the level of the graffiti needed to be reduced before it would be cost effective to remove the graffiti, as at its present level the marks would re appear too quickly.

## **The aim of the operation**

### **Objective 1**

It had been shown via questionnaires and environmental visual audits that graffiti was a key environmental feature, which increased public concerns about becoming a victim of crime or anti social behaviour. As such removal of all graffiti was desirable. However after consultation with local business that were victims of graffiti it was apparent that they would not remove graffiti as a clean wall seemed to attract new attacks immediately. General agreement was reached that if a wall could stay clean for a month then removing the graffiti was both worthwhile and a system of graffiti removal maintenance would then be practical. It was not practical to clean the whole of the town so a system to monitor graffiti was required. Three walls that were particularly attractive to tagging crews were identified. The first objective of this operation was that within 12 months these walls could be painted white and stay clean for more than a month.

### **Objective 2**

To send out a clear message that graffiti is a crime and would not be tolerated. Using the counting rule of one suspect to one victim, despite multiple attacks, equals one offence, (i.e. if someone marks every bus stop for two miles this equals one offence) the second objective was to bring to justice 50 offences within 12 months.

### ***Interventions made to reduce graffiti.***

#### **Short term**

To confirm the frequency of graffiti and the current 'tags' an initial test wall was selected. This wall was chosen because after researching graffiti it was identified as being a prime graffiti spot. It was in the High Street near a fast food outlet used by youths. The wall was white and stood out from the building line facing a bus route. The wall was painted white by my team and the 'tags' that appeared on it were recorded and compared against other marks in the High Street.

**Posters** were displayed in prominent areas warning of the consequences of being involved in graffiti.

This was done because a strong element of graffiti is gang making and we wanted to reclaim these spaces. Our posters were put over prominent graffiti to stamp our authority and as an insult to the tagging crew. The posters were changed daily to avoid the embarrassment of having them defaced.

Once we had made an arrest we immediately put up posters stating we had done so and naming his tag as an invitation to anyone that had been a victim of this mark to come forward. The new posters also listed three other tag names with an appeal for information. We would already know one of the identities of these three. This person would then be arrested spreading fear among the graffiti community that if you were named on a poster you would be caught.

**A reward was offered** in the local press for information leading to the arrest of the most prolific tagger.

**Police Patrols** of worst effected areas were increased.

**Show me your hands.** I defy anyone to create graffiti and not get pigment either on the heel of their palm or under the quick of their nails. Police staff can quickly tell who is involved in graffiti by inspecting youth's hands.

**Youths** were spoken to and contact was made with the local youth club and schools. It became apparent that suspects would routinely mark their graffiti identities on schoolbooks. In partnership with social services the Police Team created a video presentation to be given to 'problematic' youth groups. This video was used to reinforce the fact that graffiti was being made a high local priority and that offenders would be caught and prosecuted.

**Blue Triangle Bus Company** runs the 248-bus service through Hornchurch. These are traditional double decker buses that have an extensive CCTV system fitted. The bus company were contacted at regular intervals to find any images of offenders.

**Schools** Youth and Community Team had an out reach worker in schools presenting educational material about the problems graffiti created. Teachers were asked to routinely scan books for evidence of our most prolific offenders

reporting back to the ward team.

**News coverage** The local press posted a series of articles explaining police success and detailing the onerous consequences of being involved in graffiti.

### **Medium term**

**Streamlining the enforcement process** The entire police team were used to collect evidence in advance of arrests. The police community support officers were sent out with cameras and format statements to seek out and record new evidence of graffiti. They were in regular contact with Havering Street care, local housing estate caretakers looking for new instances of graffiti. This was collated in the office and filed ready to be used as evidence against an offender. Traditionally when a person is caught making a graffiti mark they get dealt with for that mark in isolation. Under our system we were able to match the mark with others in our record and bring them to account for all their offences. This provides immediate evidence for post conviction Anti Social Behaviour Contracts. It was possible in some cases to make and arrest and have an offender dealt with at court for multiple offences and ASBO'd with less than 3 hours post arrest work on case file preparation.

The standard conditions obtained were when in a public place not to have in your possession any item capable of dispensing a pigment that could be used for graffiti including any pens, marker pens, tile white or grout pens or spray can.

Not to be present when anyone creates graffiti or commits criminal damage.

Not to create graffiti.

When in a public place not to have in your possession any item made, adapted or intended for etching or scratching glass.

**Education of self and partners.** Graffiti slide show presentation was made and delivered at New Scotland Yard and other London Boroughs in the hope of fuelling an exchange of ideas and best practices across the Metropolitan Police. The presentation was delivered to two local authorities and Havering Youth Services for the same reasons. Regular contact was encouraged between all partners to keep our skills and understand up to date.

**Cleaning graffiti** This was not widely encouraged during the initial stages of the operation as it was felt if local businesses cleaned the marks and they re appeared it would create despondency and a lack of trust in the effective nature of the partnership operation. During the initial monitoring period police painted out marks on the monitoring walls. As the operation progressed B & Q sponsored us providing a 100 litres of exterior paint and a work party made up of police staff, local residents, Mc Donald's employees and local children painted out the worst effected buildings. This had several positive effects. It engendered a sense of ownership and civic pride among the participants. It was another opportunity for a positive press story. It was a way of showing local businesses that joining the partnership would benefit them.

### **Identification of emerging youth groups**

Using all the tools of partnership it was possible to identify youth groups active in the area. This is in part done by examining police data and reports and looking for the youth gang marks which might appear as graffiti. Talking to local youths and youth groups and from information passed by schools and youth workers.

It is then a simple process of approaching these groups when encountered by police staff on patrol and explaining that rules are applied in the area and the consequences of being involved in inappropriate behaviour. Our partners in education and youth services can then also target the group with education or diversionary activities.

### **Long term solutions and exit strategy**

**CCTV and engagement in creation of an Urban Strategy** We have agreed with our partners at the local authority that there would be significant advantages to both this project and to other issues for an extensive CCTV system for Hornchurch High Street. This has been agreed and an initial 8 cameras will be erected early 2006. This will benefit this project by acting as both a deterrent and helping identify any future offenders. It also gives us another tool to

offer to other potential partners.

**Creation of a town centre association** The installation of the CCTV system gives us the ideal opportunity to launch a self-managing town centre association. The launch meeting has already been held and the title of the project is Safe and Sound. This will be a partnership between High Street retailers and those earning a living from the night-time economy. The members will have town link radios connecting to each other member and the operator in the CCTV control room. As the graffiti project is now in a maintenance phase and the instance of graffiti is much diminished the project will be handed to the Safe and Sound Association who will become the lead partner. New targets will have to be set for the graffiti project as those originally created have been met.

**Urban strategy** The principle partners in the graffiti project are also now involved in the Hornchurch Urban Strategy. This project will redesign significant elements of Hornchurch Town Centre. Target hardening and designing out crime will be principle elements of the Urban Strategy and the lessons learned during the anti graffiti operation can and will be applied to make sure that the proposed new infrastructure of Hornchurch is far less vulnerable to graffiti attack.

### **Evaluation**

**Objective 1. Within 12 months of the start of the operation, to be able to paint all three monitor walls white and to have them remain clean for on month.**

#### **Result**

**Wall 1 remained clean from 26.06.2005 till 10/11/2005**

**Wall 2 “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ 04/09/2005**

**Wall 3 “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ still remains clean 10/12/2005**

**Objective 2. To within 12 months to bring to justice offenders for 50 offences. (Using the formula one offender, despite multiple attacks, to one victim equals one offence)**

#### **Result**

**Using the counting rule above during the period of this operation we held offenders accountable for 121 offences.** This was actually made up of hundreds of tags as under this counting rule if an offender marked every bus stop for 4 miles this would count as one offence only.

#### **Additional benefits**

A point of interest that became apparent during this operation is that everyone that we charged with graffiti either prior to the charge of shortly afterwards was discovered to be involved in burglary. The St Andrews Ward team reduced residential burglary by 35% over the period of this operation without carrying out any other activity in this area. The two wards that neighbour St Andrews Ward (Elm Park and Hylands) also show a reduction in residential burglaries. All other ward teams in Havering show an increase.

The best practice created during this operation was emulated by other teams and during the year April 2005/2006 the Sector containing St Andrews Ward showed a 21% reduction in all forms of disorder and I understand Havering OCU over the same period showed a reduction of 1000 offences of criminal damage against the previous year.