

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

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 **BELFAST CITY CENTRE BEAT PARTNERSHIP**

Name of force/agency/CDRP: **POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND (PSNI)**

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

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s)

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s)

2. Summary of application

Belfast is the Capital City of Northern Ireland and one of the most dynamic small cities in Europe. Within the city centre there is a thriving business and commercial community. Belfast City Centre is policed by Musgrave Street Sector officers. This sector covers approximately 2 km² covering the city's main shopping area. It attracts in excess of 100,000 visitors during weekdays rising to 130,000 on Saturdays.

Illegal street trading, traffic problems, antisocial behaviour and environmental issues have persistently been identified by local traders as their major concerns.

After identifying organisations who would have responsibility or interest in these problems/concerns; a problem solving partnership was established, Belfast City Centre Beat. This partnership, not only includes the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) but a number of other government bodies and private business enterprises.

The best identified solution was to implement a dedicated police resource. The resource was to be funded by local businesses and would work alongside, but independently of, Musgrave Street sector policing team. Two dedicated PSNI officers work on a daily basis to meet the key objectives, with the full use of powers available to them, working in collaboration with and sharing information with Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) representatives, Belfast City Council officers, Roads Service Traffic Wardens, Enforcement officers from Trading Standards and HM Customs and Excise.

The partnership objectives are to:

- Adopt a highly visible "community police" presence in the City Centre
- Eradicate illegal street trading within the City Centre
- Enforce strict traffic control and to improve on traffic related nuisance within the City Centre
- Reduce all forms of anti-social behaviour within the City Centre
- Educate and change the public attitude with regard to littering, graffiti and other environmental issues
- Implement an approach to alleviate the suffering of those with chronic social needs who frequent the City Centre and for example sleep rough, abuse alcohol or solvents and are perceived to be making a negative impact on the City Centre
- Increase liaison between PSNI, City Centre Traders and the Business sector to raise awareness and address issues of concern

The partnership was launched on 06 June 2005. Since establishment the illegal street trading has been eradicated, those with chronic social needs are no longer within the constant criminal justice cycle, traffic issues are being dealt with in a standardized manor and regular business liaison takes place.

3. Description of project

BACKGROUND

Belfast is the Capital City of Northern Ireland and one of the most dynamic small cities in Europe. Within the city centre there is a thriving business and commercial community. It is the primary retail area within Northern Ireland.

Belfast City Centre is policed by Musgrave Street Sector officers. This sector covers approximately 2 km² covering the city's main shopping area. It attracts in excess of 100,000 visitors during weekdays rising to 130,000 on Saturdays.

Illegal street trading, traffic problems, antisocial behaviour and environmental issues have persistently been identified by local traders as their major concerns.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The main aim of this project is to improve people's experience and perceptions of Belfast City Centre by enhancing feelings of safety and creating a safer and more attractive environment with lower levels of crime. To achieve this main aim, a problem solving partnership was established, Belfast City Centre Beat (CCB). This partnership, which not only includes the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), a number of other government bodies and private business enterprises, set the following objectives.

They are to:

- Adopt a highly visible "community police" presence in the City Centre

Illegal Street Trading

- Eradicate illegal street trading within the City Centre

Traffic Issues

- Enforce strict traffic control and to improve on traffic related nuisance within the City Centre

Antisocial behaviour and Environmental Issues

- Reduce all forms of anti-social behaviour within the City Centre
- Educate and change the public attitude with regard to littering, graffiti and other environmental issues
- Implement an approach to alleviate the suffering of those with chronic social needs who frequent the City Centre and for example sleep rough, abuse alcohol or solvents and are perceived to be making a negative impact on the City Centre

Business Liaison

- Increase liaison between PSNI, City Centre Traders and the Business sector to raise awareness and address issues of concern

These objectives were set using the SMARTER principle (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely, Evaluate and Review). When setting the objectives, all partnership organisations knew how they would contribute to the achievement of these objectives.

DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

Although anecdotally and from experience talking with our partners in Belfast City Centre it was obvious we had both a practical and perception problem of safety within the City Centre and the social and environmental issues analysis was carried out to establish exactly what these problems were, a consultative approach was adopted to establish the contributing factors to the low perception of safety and the levels of crime within the City Centre.

To be able to carry out the analysis, a number of data sources were used which included:

- Crime and Incident Data – Sourced from PSNI crime and incident recording system, Command and Control
- Illegal Street Trading Operations – Musgrave Street Sector Commander and Belfast City Council, Regulatory Services
- District Policing Partnership Meetings Minutes and Community Policing Partnership Committee Meetings Minutes
- Belfast City Centre Management Healthcheck
- Fixed Penalty Notices – PSNI, Traffic Wardens and Department of Regional Development – Roads Service
- Home Office Publications
- Other anecdotal evidence from local business owners through the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce (BCTC)

The data was analysed using the 5Ws and 1H principle (What, Where, When, Why, Who and How). The analysis highlighted the following:

Illegal Street Trading (IST)

Since 2001 BCC – Regulatory Services/PSNI had seized:

- 741 Stalls / Traders
- 64 Hot food trolleys
- 14 Catering trailers
- 5 Ice cream Vans
- 9 Tonnes of seized food
- 450+ Delivery cages 'Stalls'
- 42 Arrests for obstruction
- Over £1.5m worth seized

Analysis also showed that:

- 10 or more illegal stalls operating on a daily basis
- Hotspots for IST and habitual offenders identified
- Counterfeit and stolen goods being sold
- Unsightly appearance of stalls
- Obstruction of footpaths
- Little deterrent due to lenient fines

It was evident that previous actions to tackle this problem had achieved short term wins but the problem persisted. Planned operations resourced by Musgrave Sector police, Tactical Support Groups (TSG) and Belfast City Council (BCC) – Regulatory Service workers were carried out on a weekly basis. This was time consuming to co-ordinate, resource intensive and costly. This would only remove the traders for a small amount of time and most were back operating the next day. The traders were becoming accustomed to these operations and their stalls were becoming more adept to quick dismantling leading to unsightly stalls appearing.

It was an increasing concern of BCC that neither organisation could sustain these operations indefinitely and already

had been cancelled due to TSG being unavailable. A more sinister development with regard to these operations was the fact that the BCC workers were being intimidated and threats to life were made.

Traffic Problems

The main problems identified were:

- Deliveries being made outside permitted hours
- Parking in pedestrian areas
- Vehicles entering restricted areas
- Vehicles not adhering to one way systems
- Vehicles being given informal permission to park within the control zones but officers on the ground being unaware of this permission and therefore issuing fixed penalty notices.
- Lack of focus due to problem not being a strategic priority for the DCU
- A number of business repeat victims with regarding to access violations

Analysis also identified key hotspots where these offences would take place. Bank Square which is a small area situated between a number of buildings and was the only means of access for deliveries to a number of these buildings was on a daily basis becoming congested. It also had the added problem of antisocial behaviour problems.

Antisocial Behaviour and Environmental Issues

Through the information provided a number of issues were identified:

- On-street drinking and rough sleepers
- Abuse of solvents
- Littering
- Criminal damage
- Graffiti

These types of incidents were being reported on a daily basis from businesses within the City Centre and the general public. Antisocial behaviour was impacting on how businesses were operating and in some cases causing a loss of business. Again Bank Square was highlighted as a hotspot due to the fact that it was in particular attracting on-street drinkers/solvent abusers and rough sleepers. This was resulting in litter, urination in public, small fires being lit, begging and general disturbances (including youths causing annoyance). Those participating in this antisocial behaviour were generally falling into the category of those suffering from chronic social needs.

Police were responding to these incidents and on most occasions arresting those involved for disorderly behaviour or simple drunk. The offenders were being taken into police custody and remaining in the cell until fit. Usually they would be bailed to attend court, which they wouldn't turn up for, a warrant was issued and then arrest executed. This was resulting in these persons being involved in a constant criminal justice cycle. Again a considerable amount of police time was taken up by taking these persons into police custody, processing them, executing warrants and re-arresting. On many occasions cells were then unavailable for use for a number of hours after the person had left due to the fact that the cell required cleaning.

Conclusion

It was evident that these problems were all contributing to the fact that the general perception of Belfast City Centre was that at certain times and in certain areas, personal safety may be compromised, that levels of crime were high and that businesses were suffering due to antisocial behaviour, traffic problems and illegal street trading.

These were cross community agency problems not just policing issues, a partnership approach was the optimum way forward.

Recommendations

A number of possible solutions were documented, encompassing the fact that previous actions had been unsuccessful. Best practise from other organisations was researched and visits made to other forces.

Possible solutions included:

- High visibility patrolling in the areas highlighted through analysis as hotspots for both crime and incidents. Especially foot and bicycle patrolling due to the vast pedestrian areas.
- Education of the public with regard to traffic restrictions within the city centre.
- A standardised approach to those caught within the criminal justice cycle other than arrest ie help with addictions, housing etc
- Conveying to the illegal street traders the benefits of acquiring a license.

RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM

Partner Involvement

Meetings were held between the Chief Executive, BCC and the ACC Urban Region, PSNI regarding illegal street trading and the sinister development. Also discussed were a number of other problems occurring within the city centre especially those highlighted by BCTC and its members. A number of cross-cutting issues such as reducing crime and fear of crime were raised.

It was obvious that the PSNI could not resolve the problem alone. A number of these problems were not strategic priorities for the DCU, although, the issues could be have been raised through the Tactical, Tasking and Co-ordinating Group (TTCG), it would have become difficult to sustain funding due to prioritisation. Musgrave Street sector's priorities were vehicle crime, street robberies and shop theft.

After identifying organisations who would have responsibility or interest in these problems; in January 2005 the Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) strategic group was formed. The Assistant Chief Constable Urban Region and Chief Executive Belfast City Council (BCC) jointly chaired this group. Along with PSNI, other members included:

- Department of Social Development – Belfast City Centre Regeneration
- Belfast City Council – Health and Environment
- Belfast City Centre Management
- Department of Environment – Roads Service
- HM Revenue and Customs
- Trading Standards
- Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce

All members of this group sat at a strategic level within their own organisations. This guaranteed that the actions would remain realistic with regard to results that could be achieved. The role of the strategic lead was to ensure all agencies required to implement solutions were on board and that the separate strands of the strategy developed in a cohesive way.

Following initial meetings it was decided that the optimum way forward was the provision of a dedicated police resource which would lead the combined agency response on community safety. The resource was to be funded by local businesses and would work alongside, but independently of, Musgrave Street sector policing team. This To ensure consistency of personnel necessary to build confidence and acceptance of the “community policing” role, the PSNI agreed to provide 2 named officers who were to be dedicated to the scheme full time.

Getting Started

Identified partners who could implement the solutions required to meet the objectives committed to a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The Steering Group known as the City Centre Beat Partnership was established to monitor and

oversee the SLA, to identify priority action areas and to give direction. The Steering Group consisted of the following representatives or their nominees:

- Musgrave Street Sector Commander
- President of Chamber of Trade and Commerce
- BCCM City Centre Manager
- BCCM/BCTC Operations Manager
- Head of Environmental Services, BCC
- Head of Cleansing, BCC

Two dedicated PSNI officers were to work on a daily basis on the 4 key issues, with the full use of powers available to them, working in collaboration with and sharing information with Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) representatives, Belfast City Council officers, Roads Service Traffic Wardens, Enforcement officers from Trading Standards and HM Customs and Excise.

An information sharing protocol was agreed with all partners in the ASB Strategic Group to ensure follow up and rapid response to any identified issues. This protocol was designed to fulfil legal obligations arising from the Data Protection Act and Human Rights Act (Article 8).

Funding and Management

- BCTC provided £80,000 towards the start up costs of the project for year one (pilot).
- PSNI provided the shortfall for the full costs of the 2 officers and provided a dedicated vehicle clearly identifying the officers as the dedicated city centre resource. The officers covering a 57 hour period in aggregate over each 7 days.
- BCCM provided a business manager to oversee the officers and ensure the effective running of the scheme.
- BCCM co-ordinate the meetings of the SLA steering group and the collations and reporting of the performance measures and outcomes.

Implemented Solutions

Implementation Plan

- A communications strategy to address the public perceptions of the moral panic 'fear of crime' was introduced to use the media to deliver the positive aspects about the city centre. Including a public launch of the initiative on 06 June 2005 together with media coverage.
- A 12 month media strategy, including an article in The Belfast Telegraph, "The Day in the Life" of a Belfast CCB Officer. This article shows that the officers are helping the community, liaising with them and have an important role along with partner organisations in achieving the objectives set out by the Belfast CCB Partnership. It also conveys the uniqueness of this partnership in Northern Ireland.
- Establishment of effective points of contact within each organisation.
- Dedicated rapid response vehicle liveried with the CCB Partnership logo.
- Additional police officers to provide cover and consistency.

Illegal Street Trading

- No longer do up to 35 persons on a weekly carry out seizure operations. CCB officers now offer information packs to the illegal street traders. Within these packs there is information regarding how to apply for a license and get a legal pitch within the city centre.

Traffic Issues

- Along with the DRD a Traffic Awareness Campaign was launched on 18 November 2005. This involved the production of leaflets detailing information regarding parking, vehicle control zones and parking permits. A total 120,000 leaflets were produced and distributed throughout the city centre. The leaflets were also sent to all car parks, blue badge holders and the retail community. These leaflets detailed information with regard to times that deliveries could be made officially, information for blue badge holders and where they could park, car parks that were available within the city centre and how to go about getting a permit for parking.
- Installation of improved and consistent signage at the main access points to the city centre carried out by DRD.
- Proposal to install retractable bollards at Chapel Lane and Marquis Street to eradicate illegal parking – to be implemented by DRD and DSD.
- Refurbishment of Bank Square by the Department of Social Development. Gates have been installed to avoid congestion which caused some deliveries unable to be made. Retailers who require deliveries via Bank Square now have keys to allow access to this area.
- CCB officers to patrol known hotspot areas for congestion, to issue fixed penalty notices and ensure adherence of traffic controls.
- Rapid response of CCB officers to any traffic issues which may have serious repercussions for pedestrian safety, traffic flow and public transport access.
- Anyone that wishes to park within the city centre and who does not have a permit will be asked to contact the CCB officers who are now the centralised point of contact for this provision. Therefore once a pass has been issued the CCB officers inform the rest of the DCU thus ensuring that no confusion arises as had previously been the case.

Antisocial Behaviour and Environmental Issues

- The Welcome Centre, which is situated within the city centre, takes homeless persons in and gives them warm meals and a place to stay during the day. They had limited funding initially but secured £12,000 through the CCB partnership. The centre now allows the centre to open for extended hours to cover from 08:00 – 22:00 hrs. Once a report is received regarding an on-street drinker/rough sleeper the Welcome Centre workers are contacted and collect the individual and return them to the Welcome Centre. Not only do the CCB Officers now use this service but any police officer within the DCU now have this facility through a phonecall.
- A dedicated cleansing unit, supplied by Belfast City Council to tackle environmental issues including litter, graffiti and flyposting, is deployed on a daily basis ensuring that the City centre is clean and tidy throughout the day.
- BCC have provided the CCB officers with direct access to the Cleansing Call Centre. Thus ensuring a rapid response service to ensure the city remains clean and attractive.

Business Liaison

- CCB officers now have direct contact with businesses within the city centre on a day to day basis. The CCB officers have issued their business cards detailing their names, direct contact numbers and email address to the general business community.
- BCCM have given the officers access to their membership database to allow proactive contact with businesses to be carried out.
- The CCB officers now attend focus groups which have been set up for retailers within small areas of the city centre. The groups discuss matters arising within their own small geographical area and policing issues, the officers are aware of all problems encountered by the retailers.

Problems Encountered

- Seven drafts of the SLA were created before sign off, therefore delaying launch date
- The dedicated cleansing unit was not established until November 2005 due to 2 failed bids for the resource.
- Dispute over the location of legal street trading pitches.
- BCTC initially, due to the fact that they were funding the project, requested that they became involved in the selection process of the dedicated officers and the operational performance. It was then agreed that the officers would be appointed with normal terms of the PSNI selection process.

The City Centre Beat Partnership was launched officially on 06 June 2005. A media launch took place and newspaper articles and television interviews were given.

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

The City Centre Beat Partnership has now been in operation for 9 months. From the outset, evaluation was to be a key part of the project and was incorporated into the SLA.

Methods of Evaluation

- Statistical information gathered on a weekly basis with regards to each key objective. Each objective has a number of performance indicators which monitors both the social issues which are occurring and how the solution is being enforced.
- Debriefings, every Monday and Friday, from the CCB Officers to the Business Manager of BCCM who administrates the SLA.
- Regular liaison with the CCB officers and the businesses, which are funding the scheme, through the focus groups and proactive visits.
- Quarterly performance reports, produced by BCCM, brought to the attention of the CCB Steering Group and 6 month report for the Antisocial Behaviour Strategic Group.
- Press reports are monitored in relation to public opinion on the strategy.
- An independent evaluation of the project is proposed to take place, both with regard to the project itself and the commitment of the organisations involved.

Below gives details of the statistics recorded against the performance indicators from 01 June 2005 to 28 February 2006.

City Centre Beat Performance Indicators

| | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Illegal Street Trading | | | |
| No of illegal street incidents prevented | 7 | 17 | 6 |
| Moved on | 37 | 3 | 4 |
| Statements | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Seizures | 10 | 8 | 5 |
| No. of days during the quarter when there was no illegal street trading | 66 out of 92 | 72 out of 91 | 85 out of 90 |
| Business Liaison | | | |
| No. of calls | 225 | 355 | 429 |
| No. of hours in meetings | 68 | 95 | 51 |
| Traffic Issues | | | |
| Tickets Issued | 1166 | 1452 | 1366 |
| Vehicles prevented illegally entering | 5575 | 3737 | 4684 |
| Leaflets distributed | N/A | 1245 | 62000 |
| Antisocial Behaviour & Environmental Issues | | | |

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Vandalism | 1 | 3 | 29 |
| Solvent Abuse | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| On street Drinking | 302 | 284 | 130 |
| Graffiti | 230 | 373 | 0 |
| YCA | 38 | 68 | 32 |
| Begging | 18 | 4 | 6 |
| Littering | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Flyposting | 289 | 654 | 265 |

The above table highlights the number of days without IST since the start of the project. This has seen a positive increase.

Illegal Street Trading

- Planned operations involving Musgrave Street sector officers, TSG and BCC workers have not been carried out since before June 2005. There has been a cost benefit to all organisations involved.
- Annually Musgrave Street sector run a Christmas Policing Plan. This strategy normally includes additional resources to carry out a number of illegal street trading operations. December 2004 saw a total of £35,000 worth of goods being seized. No such operations took place as illegal street trading had been almost eradicated prior to December 2005.
- Illegal Street Trading is no longer the key objective of the CCB Partnership due to the eradication of the problem. Therefore Traffic issues have now taken on the priority objective for the partnership.
- A habitual illegal street trader who had been trading this way for 30 years, acquired his first license in January 2006.

Estimated cost saving that BCC will have secured as a direct result of the City Beat Initiative. This is based on comparisons against the cost of providing illegal street trading operations only.

| | Estimated Savings from Q1 to Qtr 3 | Projected Savings Qtr 4 | Total Projected Savings |
|--|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Illegal Street Trading Operations | £38,250 | £12,750 | £51,000 |

PSNI estimate a **saving of £110,544**, with regards to illegal street trading.

Traffic Issues

- DRD have reported a considerable reduction in city centre parking which is borne out by the vast increase in applications to them for access permits.

Antisocial Behaviour and Environmental Issues

- Total number of referrals to Welcome Centre - 716
- Associated crime levels are down (see below)

Business Liaison

Overall, the Belfast City Centre Management Healthcheck 2005 showed an improvement in the publics' and business perception with regard to safety and security.

Perception of Safety

| | |
|--|--|
| Shoppers' perceptions of safety | 74% rate good/excellent (+11% from 2004) |
| Business Sector | |
| - personal safety (self/staff/customers) | 26% rate good/excellent (+11% from 2004) |
| - business security (premises) | 33 % rate good/excellent (+12% from 2004) |

Letters of support and thanks have been received from partnership organisations and local businesses. Extracts as follows:

- ***"...The CCB partnership has demonstrated what can be achieved when there is a willingness to work in partnership across the public and private sector to address common areas of concern...."*** William Francey, Director of Health & Environmental Services, BCC
- ***"...Since the inception, the CCB officers have been working tirelessly to improve this area for the good of all the retailers...there has been a significant improvement....the fact we are dealing with the same officers who have good knowledge of the problem..."*** Sam Robins, Owner, Alto's Café
- ***"...The partnerships forged by the project have had a direct impact on perceptions of safety and I believe the CCB partnership....the officers have demonstrated excellent performance, significant conscientiousness, a high level of motivation and strong interaction with Belfast Chamber members..."*** Gerald Steinberg, President, BCTC
- ***"...I would like to thank the officers for their continuous support and help to sort out an off street parking problem....it has enable me to park and gain access... to the back entrance of the shop..."*** Pauline Jenkins, Manager, Harry Corry Ltd

Additional Benefits of the Project

- Possible introduction of the National Business Information System (NBIS) which is currently being evaluated by PSNI. This information system helps build ownership and responsibility by coordinating and sharing information from a number of sources.
- The Rough Sleepers Forum, a multi-agency group chaired by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has recognised the good work of the dedicated officers.
- Crime Levels in areas related to antisocial behaviour, such as criminal damage have seen a reduction since the start of the project. Also Vehicle Crime has been lowered due to the decrease in the number of vehicles entering the city centre. Incidents from June 2005 to March 2006 were compared to the previous year.
 - **Criminal Damage – 1% decrease**
 - **Vehicle Theft – 45% decrease**
 - **Theft from Vehicles – 54% decrease**
- Value for Money Analysis – June 2005 to March 2006

| | Leverage | Savings Made | HM Treasury |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Actual 9 Monthly Totals | 71,645 | 148,794 | 119,520 |
| Projected 12 Months | 108,145 | 198,392 | 159,360 |
| Total Economic Benefit | | | £465,897 |