



Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

Tilley Awards 2007

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, within the stated word limit and ensuring the file size is no more than 1MB. Failure to do so will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 27th April 2007**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Alex Blackwell on 0207 035 4811. Any queries regarding publicity of the awards should be directed to Chaz Akoshile on 0207 035 1589.

Section 1: Details of application

Title of the project: **Operation Totem**

Name of force/agency/CDRP/CSP: **Cheshire Constabulary**

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

Inspector Mark Watson

Email address: mark.watson@cheshire.pnn.police.uk

Full postal address: C/O The Safer & Stronger Communities Unit, Cheshire Police Headquarters, Clemonds Hey, Oakmere Road, Winsford, Cheshire. CW7 2UA.

Telephone number: 01244 615270

Fax number: 01244 614566

If known please state in which Government Office area you are located e.g. Government Office North West, Government Office London etc: **Government Office North West**

Name of endorsing senior representatives(s):

Detective Chief Inspector Andy Southcott

Name of organisation, position and/or rank of endorsing senior representatives(s):

Crime Manager, Western Area BCU, Cheshire Constabulary.

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s):

C/O Northwich Police Station, Chesterway, Northwich, Cheshire. CW9 5EP

Please tick box to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):

Section 2: Summary of application

In no more than 400 words please use this space to describe your project (see guidance for more information).

Operation Totem is a coordinated multi-agency response driven by the Western Area BCU of the Cheshire Constabulary to reduce the number of criminal damage offences being committed within that area over the last 12 months.

Whilst national statistics show that one third of all British Crime Survey Comparator Crime offences are criminal damage, in Cheshire, a quarter of ALL recorded crime is criminal damage whilst in the Western Area the problem is even more acute, with one local authority area having 45% of its BCS crime comprised of such offences, one of the highest proportions in the North West region.

Whilst other crime areas – notably burglary in a dwelling and violent crime particularly – had been addressed with notable success, this operation was raised as local analysis clearly showed that the sheer volume of the crimes involved was impacting upon many areas, not just the performance regimes of the police, local authorities and other statutory partners, but also upon public confidence in the wider community.

Criminal damage is a “signal crime”, a crime that when experienced – or in many cases just seen – can trigger a member of the public to interpret it as a warning about their level of security. This can have disproportionately negative impact upon their feelings of safety and satisfaction with living in their community.

Cheshire Constabulary, Vale Royal Borough Council, Chester City Council, Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council, Cheshire County Council, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and several Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) contributed important information to the work. All were fully consulted and informed, and agreed to continue to support the project both with information and practical action in the long term.

A 12 month target was set from March 2006 – March 2007 which had two strands. Firstly, stop the rise in police recorded criminal damage offences in the first six months and secondly, reduce the numbers of offences by 5% in the second six months compared to the first six months. This was seen as realistic and achievable.

This target was achieved and indeed exceeded. The second six months statistics show a total of **3801** criminal damage offences in the Western Area. This compares with a total of **4181** for the proceeding six months equating to a reduction of 380 offences or a **9.1%** reduction. This was an excellent result and a testament to the efforts of all agencies concerned in the project.

Section 3: Description of project

Describe the project in no more than 4000 words (see guidance for more information in particular Section 7 - judging criteria).

Commencement & Objectives

Operation Totem formally commenced in June 2006 although work had been taking place since the end of the previous financial year (March 2006) to identify the scale of the problem together with possible response and solutions. All parties ultimately involved were agreed on one very clear single objective – reduce the number of criminal damage offences being committed within the Western Area Basic Command Unit (BCU) of the Cheshire Constabulary.

In national terms, Government statistics show that one third of all British Crime Survey (BCS) “Comparator Crime” offences are criminal damage. In Cheshire, a quarter of ALL recorded crime is criminal damage. In the Western Area BCU the problem was even more acute at the inception of the project, with 35% of all BCS crime in the Chester City Council area comprised of criminal damage, whilst in the borough of Vale Royal, 45% of all BCS crime was criminal damage, one of the highest proportions in the North West region.

For many reasons, recent policing activity had hitherto been directed at other crime areas. Offences of burglary in a dwelling and violent crime particularly had been addressed, and with notable success. This operation was raised to tackle criminal damage as analysis clearly showed that the sheer volume of the crimes involved was impacting upon many areas, not just the performance regimes of the police, local authorities and other statutory partners, but also upon public confidence in the wider community.

Criminal damage is an excellent example of a “signal crime”, a crime that when experienced – or in many cases just seen – can trigger a member of the public to interpret it as a warning about their level of security. This can have disproportionately negative impact upon their feelings of safety and satisfaction with living in their community.

The 2004 Crime & Disorder Audits in the Western Area had identified criminal damage as a crime that had precisely that effect, and public perception was that it was on the increase. Whilst criminal damage may often appear to be a minor crime, it is a crime that the public are concerned about – consistently appearing in the 3 strands of anti-social behaviour causing most concern in Western Area community perception surveys.

It was therefore not just the police identifying this issue. All agencies involved in the local Crime & Disorder reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) were involved in discussions surrounding this project and were in agreement with its instigation. CDRPs, local and county authorities and other partners could play a significant role in the project and benefit accordingly.

A 12 month target was set from March 2006 – March 2007 which had two strands. Firstly, stop the rise in criminal damage offences in the first six months and secondly, reduce the numbers of offences by 5% in the second six months compared to the first six months. This was seen as realistic and achievable.

Definition of the Problem

Analysis of police recorded crime figures provided an initial set of base data to show the increases in criminal damage offences, and the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) compliant police figures were accepted as the baseline data that would be used for this project.

As criminal damage is a BCS “Comparator Crime”, the three Western Area CDRPs (Vale Royal, Chester and Ellesmere Port & Neston) are all judged against reducing these offences as part of their contribution towards the Public Service Agreement (PSA) 1 target of reducing BCS “Comparator Crime” by 15% between 2005 and 2008. A 3% reduction in this area of volume crime would have significant benefits for all three CDRPs in terms of the achievement of the PSA 1 target.

The Constabulary and partners are committed to the National Intelligence Model (NIM) process and the SARA model was used in this operation – Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment. Experience of problem solving crime reduction work suggests that detailed analysis is invaluable in helping define problems as clearly as possible so that appropriate responses can be put in place. Analysis appropriate to this area wide problem was initially carried out by the CDRP analyst who had access to data from all partner agencies. It was acknowledged that all agencies held data relevant to solving this problem, and that the CDRP analyst was best placed to utilise all such sources effectively.

The analysis was also mindful of identified effective practice stemming from the Government Office for the North West (GONW) seminar "Understanding and Tackling Criminal Damage" which took place in September 2005, together with the Home Office series of guides to combat criminal damage.

As part of the scanning and analysis process, a detailed investigation was made by the CDRP analyst who produced a significant report which informed the project direction. The analysis was thorough and covered all offences recorded in the previous 6 months across the entire area. The research soon identified several themes that became the areas to be addressed in the "Response" phase of the operation:-

- Criminal damage in the area had no clear action plan or leadership, one consequence of which was that there was little focus on reduction and the offence was not regarded as a priority. This had to change.
- "Hotspot" areas of damage offences and offending patterns were identified using mapping software.
- Repeat victims and repeat locations were also identified by the same process along with repeat offenders who had been convicted of criminal damages offences within the relevant areas.
- Times of offences – the majority of offences were committed between 7pm and 4am. Patrols were directed to the relevant areas at the relevant times for maximum impact.
- Audit issues – the analysis also looked at the current position regarding the recording of instances of criminal damage. There was some evidence of incorrect recording, "multiple recording" and potential malicious reporting. In the last two years, Cheshire Constabulary moved to a centralised crime recording system whereby crime details are recorded immediately upon receipt of the initial report to the Call Handling Centre. A situation had developed whereby some crimes were being recorded which did in fact not fit the NCRS criteria for recording and did involve purely accidental damage. These offences were also recorded more than once on many occasions, e.g. when different persons rang to report the same damage to street furniture. A particular issue was identified with some RSLs whereby people reported criminal damage to their property which they had in fact caused themselves, purely to enable them to get RSL staff to repair the damage at no cost to them. The closure of this "loophole" was an important factor in reducing the number of offences reported -and ensuring crime statistics were more accurately recorded - and had not been considered prior to this analysis.
- Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) input was not taking place in the area. CSIs were not being deployed to criminal damage offences and it was identified that investigative opportunities were being lost.
- Environmental Audits by a multi-agency team had been successful in identifying and addressing problems in certain areas. Through the Community Action Meeting (CAM) process, all agencies could participate in an area meeting involving the local community and properly address local concerns and develop solutions within a specific timeframe. Community consultation and involvement is important to identify interventions that will elicit the cooperation and involvement of residents that is needed if measures are to be effective.

By combining the statistical and "on the ground" work, a full and informed picture of the "hotspot" areas identified could be built up.

Cheshire Constabulary, all three local authorities and CDRPs, Cheshire County Council, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and several Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) contributed important information to the work. All were fully consulted and informed, and agreed to continue to support the project both with information and practical action in the long term.

Response to the Problem

Once the detail of the problem was more clearly understood, an appropriate response could be put into place.

The Cheshire Constabulary use a system called ProMS (**Profile Management System**) to manage all tactical activity in Neighbourhood Policing Units (NPU). This system allows for the creation of records which detail the problem to be tackled, the analysis done on the problem, the intelligence that supports the conclusions drawn and finally the range of tactics that can be deployed in the problems resolution. Tactical options are normally divided into the categories of

- **Enforcement**
- **Prevention**
- **Intelligence Gathering**
- **Communication**

For this campaign, Prioritisation was also included due to the previously low profile ascribed to this area of work.

From the outset, a clear relationship existed between the analysis and the design of the response. The Western Area is committed to Neighbourhood Policing, Citizen Focus and Partnership working. This project allowed all three strands to mesh together to address problems causing concern to statutory agencies and the community served by them. The responses chosen identified themselves from the analysis and as can be seen from the following paragraphs, were effective. Without the involvement of partners, the operation would not have succeeded to the extent that it did.

This is not to say that difficulties were not encountered, indeed financial issues and budgetary constraints would prove the most difficulty issue. Partner agencies had allocated and devolved budgets to a number of different parts of the relevant organisations and the coordination of these many and varied bodies was one of the most difficult challenges. It was overcome by good working between police Partnership Inspectors and local authority / County Council staff who were able to negotiate compromises to the satisfaction of everyone, and make the case for progressing with this work. The above secured over £10,000 from each CDRP and considerable extra funding from within the Constabulary and Cheshire County Council.

Under each tactical area, the following work was done.

Prioritisation

- Prioritisation of the reduction of criminal damage within all partner agencies, led by a champion. The BCU Crime Manager, DCI Andy Southcott, acted as “Champion” for the police in this piece of work whilst each NPU had a local champion, usually at Sergeant rank.
- Identification of suitable funding streams to assist project development. Each CDRP set aside money from existing Safer & Stronger Communities Funding to contribute towards the operation. The police also contributed funding and ensured that funding was correctly channeled into outcome focused projects.

Enforcement

- Detailing of a programme of high visibility patrolling by police, PCSOs, Special Constabulary, local authority Community Safety Wardens and community volunteers. An early intervention approach was agreed which would send out a clear message that the problem was being taken seriously. In Cuddington evidence was gathered against 5 males against whom ASBOs were obtained which reduced the number of offences in that particular area to almost zero. In Elton, plain clothes officers were deployed to observe “hotspot” areas and offenders were subsequently arrested by uniform staff and Special constables. In Northwich, a male was arrested for criminal damage to a bus shelter having been observed by plain clothes officers. He was also jointly visited by the police and RSL staff and warned that a further conviction would affect his tenancy of his property. He has not re-offended since.
- Existing and mobile CCTV was used in priority areas.
- The potential link between alcohol and criminal offences is well-established and understood. Operations to reduce the availability of alcohol to young people were conducted in all areas. Hundreds of litres of alcohol were seized from under-age possessors of the same.
- A “zero tolerance” approach to criminal damage was adopted supported by a poster campaign and attendant publicity. Reported offences were prioritized and allocated for investigation. A location in Ellesmere Port was the scene of nearly 30 offences over a 6 month period. The deployment of officers, Technical Support Unit cameras and covert observations identified the source of the damage and that enquiry is continuing. Since the police intervention, no further damage has been reported.
- A dedicated criminal damage CSI was employed via police funding. This member of staff was a retired police officer with over 20 years CSI experience. This resource was invaluable in many ways, not just in gathering evidence for investigation. The post holder worked hard to detect offences that had occurred but at the same time whilst visiting scenes, he was mindful of the NCRS guidelines which enabled some reports to be “no crimed” in full compliance with the NCRS. The post holder has undoubtedly improved customer satisfaction within the area of criminal damage and has proved that the role of a dedicated criminal damage CSI is successful in both providing performance and good value for money under the best value principles. Statistics for 6 months in respect of his work appear below (NB – There is a forensic laboratory analysis backlog of 2 to 3 months therefore there are certainly further detections yet to be recorded) :-

	Scenes Attended	DNA recovered & hits	Detections	No Crimes	Other forensic	Fingerprints recovered	Footwear recovered
Oct 06	62	0	3	5	14	5	6
Nov 06	86	4(1)	1	10	8	2	2
Dec 06	71	0	0	5	3	1	4
Jan 07	83	2	0	4	7	1	2
Feb 07	63	4	0	3	12	3	2
Mar 07	62	0	0	5	3	3	3
Total	427	10(1)	4	32	47	13	19

- In the Western Rural NPU, 82 post boxes and hedges were destroyed / set on fire over a wide rural area. The CSI attended every scene and finally some DNA was recovered from one of the 82 offences and matched to an offender. This male was arrested and he admitted the offences together with an accomplice whom he implicated. All the 82 offences were thus detected when they would not have been prior to this operation.

Prevention

- A “rapid response” process within agencies was established to enable the repair of environmental damage such as graffiti, fly-tipping etc. Such arrangements already existed to a degree but all agencies now fully committed to the programme. The removal of graffiti was a particular success.
- Particular locations such as public buildings were often highlighted as “repeat locations” for criminal damage. Crime Reduction Advisers (CRAs) were tasked to attend these locations and gave crime prevention advice. Significant changes were made to a town centre market area which reduced offences by over 50%.
- Cheshire County Council looked at educational opportunities in schools and in conjunction with CRAs, ensured the schools were given help in crime prevention and “designing out” the potential for damage as far as possible. County Council funds were also made available for this work.
- The already effective Prolific and Other Priority Offender (PPO) scheme was used to ensure that criminal damage offenders were given “premium service”, with particular reference to the Prevent and Deter strand.
- Suspected youth offenders were referred to the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and diversionary schemes (such as the Youth Inclusion & Support Programme - YiSP)
- One initiative involved Winsford police working with the local authority, Cheshire Fire & Rescue, Housing associations and various youth organisations. Funding was provided via the project for coaching in sporting activities on Friday and Saturday nights on the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Wharton, Winsford between 6pm and 9pm. This area had a very high incidence of damage during those times. Cheshire Fire & rescue brought their Outreach vehicle and interacted with children who did not get involved in the sports. Local DJs also attended with mixing decks which was a popular activity. As this was happening, further funding was obtained to ensure that the local youth club was opened on Friday and Saturday evenings, again with organised activities. This proved very successful and again offences were substantially reduced.
- Situational measures were reviewed and acted upon where possible, including vulnerable lighting, hedging etc. Locations were “target hardened” where possible through County Council funding.
- The Probation Service engaged with the operation and persons on the Visible Unpaid Work scheme were used in priority areas to enhance the environment.
- From within the police a Sergeant was identified as a “Crime Auditor” sitting within the Area Demand Management Unit (DMU). The post holder would conduct a review each month of all criminal damage offences, concentrating on assessing the crime for further lines of investigation to detect the crime (in conjunction with CSI input), reclassifying the crime to its correct crime type if incorrectly recorded under NCRS guidelines and assessing crimes for “no criming” potential, again within NCRS guidelines. The post holder also attended all three Area CDRP meetings as well as meeting RSLs and jointly interviewing tenants suffering disproportionate amounts of criminal damage offences. The robust intervention of a Senior Housing Officer in Ellesmere Port led to a marked decline in the recording of criminal damage within their housing stock. It was discovered that people were reporting accidental damage, and damage they had caused themselves, as offences of criminal damage simply to get repairs effected at no cost to themselves. Some RSLs were difficult to engage with at first due to difficulties with their data systems and working practices. The effort in this area was maintained and ultimately successful. The post holder was able to quite correctly “no crime” many offences during the operation and obtain evidence to lead to the detection of many more.

- The below table has information from September 2006 to March 2007 inclusive:-

	Audited	No Crimed	Re-Classified	Detected
Sept 06	351	85	5	87
Oct 06	93	26	0	18
Nov 06	212	27	9	14
Dec 06	107	7	3	70
Jan 07	136	58	4	21
Feb 07	141	59	2	15
Mar 07	114	22	1	12
Total	1154	284	24	237

Intelligence Gathering

- Data about victims of criminal damage was shared with RSLs and partners, including adult services. Some people reporting repeat criminal damage offences were found to be vulnerable in other ways and in need of Social services support.
- On a weekly basis, intelligence submitted to the police and other partner agencies was shared, evaluated and allocated for action where necessary and possible. Information was received from a variety of sources about named problem individuals in the Hoole area. CAT police officers and PCSOs, supported by force Level 2 resources including Dog handlers and Area Support Group (ASG) staff worked deviated shifts to address the people who were all subsequently arrested.

Communication

- An extensive local publicity campaign to raise awareness of the issue to residents and those working within identified "hotspot" areas was instituted and maintained.
- All positive initiatives / arrests / progress were proactively marketed via the local press and partner agency websites, as well as being the focus of discussion at public meetings. This gave a clear message that something was being done about this issue and that the "status quo" would not be tolerated.
- Community Impact Days where all partner agencies "flood" an area for a day to highlight issues and raise awareness of the operation were well received by the public and led to a valuable amount of information being given to the police from members of the public who may not otherwise have provided it.
- Key Stakeholders in terms of Councillors and other local political figures / voluntary organizations were fully supportive of the project and joined in with the positive press marketing of the operation and its results.

The below plans are indicative of those adopted in all six NPU areas of the BCU. This example is from Chester Inner NPU:-

Tactical Options	Police	Partners / Agencies	Public
Enforcement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enforcement of alcohol seizure legislation and enforcement of no drinking zone within City Centre. 2. Tasking of Police patrols to identified criminal damage hotspots. 3. Zero tolerance approach towards offences of criminal damage. 4. Prompt allocation of criminal damage crimes for investigation. 5. Resourcing of additional officers to Patrol City Centre hot spots during peak times. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Licensing and Trading Standards to target problem premises. 2. Removal of abandoned vehicles (car clear) 3. Removal of graffiti from walls and sub ways - Chester City Council. 4. Promote and encourage use of civil injunctions and breach of tenancy agreements via the local authority. 	
Prevention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criminal damage champion identified - Sgt Steve Jones. 2. Criminal damage hotspots to be identified. 3. High visibility Community Action Team (CAT) patrols to prioritise criminal damage hot spots. 4. Review all criminal damage crimes within Inner NPU area. 5. Review criminal damage reports by repeat victims. 6. City Centre CCTV to be advised of hotspots and repeat locations. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that local authorities are tasked with removing causation factors and tidying up damaged property. 2. Crime Reduction Adviser (CRA) to visit all repeat victims/locations. 3. City Centre CCTV to monitor identified hotspot areas and assist with identification of offenders. 	
Intelligence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain and review weekly criminal damage statistics. 2. Ensure 451 intelligence is allocated and actioned promptly. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish information flow from intelligence unit for review and action. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise profile of initiative at council meetings and CAMs to gather further intelligence.
Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote all positive initiatives and success in local press. 2. Circulate high profile cases in CATs news letters. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chester University Students Union to be advised of initiative and to pass details to members. 	

Evaluation

At the outset of the operation, a 12 month target was set which had two strands, namely stop the rise in criminal damage offences in the first six months and secondly, reduce the numbers of offences by 5% in the second six months compared to the first six months.

This target was achieved and indeed exceeded. The second six months statistics show a total of **3801** criminal damage offences in the Western Area. This compares with a total of **4181** for the proceeding six months equating to a reduction of 380 offences or a **9.1%** reduction. This was an excellent result and a testament to the efforts of all agencies concerned in the project.

The response achieved was in excess of the original intention. The data analysed to provide the evaluation was again the police recorded crime figures as was the intention.

The overall project was an excellent learning exercise in joint working across diverse agencies with sometimes differing priorities. The lesson learned was that serving the communities of Cheshire is the role of all the agencies, and that purpose should never, and need not, be prevented from happening by a lack of cooperation.

The work continues to date.

Section 4: Endorsement by Senior Representative

Please insert letter from endorsing representative:

In reply address correspondence to:

DCI Andy Southcott
Northwich Police Station
Chesterway
Northwich
Cheshire CW9 5EP
Telephone: 01244 614265
Fax: 01606 49000
E-mail: andrew.southcott@cheshire.pnn.police.uk

26/04/2007

To the Judges, Tilley Awards 2007,

I am pleased to endorse the preceding application for the 2007 Tilley Awards in respect of Operation Totem.

As Crime Manager for the BCU area involved, I have taken great personal interest in this project from its inception and have worked with other partners to ensure its success.

I commend the application to you in terms of its success, problem solving work undertaken, excellent cooperation with partners and some innovative diversionary activity, all against a background of ever increasing demands upon all agencies involved.

Do not hesitate to contact me if I can clarify anything further.

Regards,

Andy Southcott

Detective Chief Inspector
Western Area BCU Crime Manager
Cheshire Constabulary

Checklist for Applicants:

1. Have you read the process and application form guidance?
2. Have you completed all four sections of the application form in full including the endorsement from a senior representative?
3. Have you checked that your entry addresses all aspects of the judging criteria?
4. Have you advised all partner agencies that you are submitting an entry for your project?
5. Have you adhered to the formatting requirements within the guidance?
6. Have you checked whether there are any reasons why your project should **not** be publicised to other police forces, partner agencies and the general public?
7. Have you saved you application form as a PDF attachment and entitled your message 'Entry for Tilley Awards 2007' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please email it to Tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. Two hard copies must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice, Support & Communications Team, 6th Floor, Peel Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.