



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 Reclaim

Name of force/agency/CDRP/CSP: Hounslow Community Safety Partnership

Name of one contact person with position and/or rank (this should be one of the authors):
Adrian Baxter Partnership Inspector. Metropolitan Police

Email address: adrian.baxter@hounslow.gov.uk

Full postal address:
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CED
London Borough of Hounslow
Lampton Road
Hounslow
TW3 4DN

Telephone number: 0208 583 2465

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

Name of endorsing senior representatives(s):

Dr Ali Dizaei

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

Borough Commander, Hounslow Police

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s):

Hounslow Police Station

5 Montague Road

Hounslow

Middlesex

TW3 1LB

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).

Motor Vehicle Crime is a concern in Hounslow. The Borough has a greater problem with property stolen from motor vehicles than London generally, costing the borough £18,000,000 a year. The audit identified Motor Vehicle crime as the largest crime type committed, accounting for 26% of all crime. We also recognised, that vehicle crime was a generator of other crime types and affected residents perceptions and fear of crime generally.

Operation Reclaim was having one or two ward teams working together targeting crime hotspots. We had all 12 Police staff in high visibility jackets situated in the designated hotspot. The 'spotters' identified vehicles and were supported by the Automatic Number Plate Reader (ANPR) mounted in the CCTV van. Two removal vans were in situ.

We only seized vehicles where there was an absolute offence: For example, where there was no doubt regarding insurance or driving license status. We allowed the driver every opportunity to prove their status was legal and we designed a form with the contact details of an identified person with 20 of the main insurance companies. These were issued to all staff. This ensured that all stops and seizures were 100% accurate. We have received no complaints or civil actions to date.

When people driving their vehicles legally were stopped, a full explanation was provided and the lead Officers details were offered. This not only provided reassurance, it ensured that the criminal fraternity knew what we were doing. This had the added bonus of reducing their presence in the area. To counter this, we would move the operation from one identified hotspot to another at regular intervals.

As a result of the project, we have been experiencing a continued reduction in crime in the hotspots targeted. During the initial pilot period, Heston, the borough's main vehicle crime hotspot, experienced the following reductions:

Burglary	9%
Robbery	40%
TDA (Taking and Driving Away)	42%
Theft From Motor Vehicle	67%
Criminal Damage (all offences)	48%

Residents have stated that their fear of crime has been reduced by this operation.

The operation was evaluated through Police statistics showing continual downward trends, at Area Committee for councilors, at Safer Neighbourhood Panels in the wards where it was in operation and at the Partnership Board who are concerned with community safety. All fully endorsed this simple but highly effective initiative. Operation Reclaim

is now being rolled out across London in this format.

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).

Objectives of the project

Vehicle crime was identified as a key objective in the Safer Neighborhoods priority, within the Hounslow Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008. Our aim was to work in partnership with the community to prevent and reduce anti social behavior, crime and the fear of crime at ward level. We recognised that Vehicle Crime was a significant contributor to other crime types: Drugs, Anti Social Behaviour, Youth Crime, Serious Road Traffic Accidents, and therefore disproportionately increased the fear of crime. This was identified as an area of significant concern to our local residents in the 2004 Crime and Drugs Audit and Community Safety Strategy Consultation. This has been further endorsed by the ward panels set up as part of the safer neighborhoods concept. The ward panels comprise Police (ward teams 1 sergeant, 2 PC's and 3 Police Community Support Officers PCSO's), local residents, local businesses, local councilors and The Neighborhood Watch.

Our target was to reduce vehicle crime by 24% by the end of 2008, and as a bulk crime this would significantly assist us in attaining our overall target of reducing all British Crime Survey (BSC) comparator crime by 20%.

As a result of the SOCA (Serious Organized Crime Act) legislation, section 165(a) RTA 1988 gave Police power to seize vehicles if the following criteria existed:

- No Insurance
- Driving not in accordance with a licence

Once the vehicle has been seized, the owner has 14 days to recover it, provided the costs have been paid and the insurance/licence produced. This is in addition to any court proceedings that apply.

The Metropolitan Police struggled with implementing this legislation owing to the lack of a cohesive partnership approach, and the lack of car pound spaces.

The above legislation was the cornerstone to our thought processes, and we were able to present our concept, 'Operation Reclaim', to engage other agencies.

In Hounslow, we are working in partnership with the Council; in particular the Community Safety Team, the Environmental Team, and Parking Enforcement. We also engaged a local school and 'Wings Security', who established a car pound in Heston.

Definition of problem

Motor Vehicle Crime was a concern in Hounslow. While there were fewer thefts of motor vehicles in Hounslow, compared to other London boroughs, the Borough has a greater problem with property stolen from motor vehicles than London generally, costing the borough £18,000,000 a year. The audit also identified Motor Vehicle crime as the largest crime type committed, accounting for 26% of all crime. We also recognised, as previously mentioned, that vehicle crime was a generator of other crime types and affected residents perceptions and fear of crime generally.

Theft from a motor vehicle			
Year	England & Wales (excl London)	London	Hounslow
2001/02	119	153	174
2002/03	121	160	177
2003/04	110	142	161

National, regional and borough number of motor vehicle crimes (theft of and theft from) per 1,000 population, April 2001 to March 2004.

The above table has been taken from The Hounslow Crime and Drugs Audit 2004.

Some of the causes and underlying conditions that precipitated our decision to use Heston as the pilot site as for 'Operation Reclaim' was:

- It was identified as one of the three vehicle crime hotspots in the Crime and Drugs Audit 2004.
- The English indices of Deprivation (revised) 2004, identified the most deprived areas in Hounslow which are notable and persistent, includes Heston.
- It was the last area in Hounslow to have a dedicated Sector Inspector.
- Heston residents felt less safe during the day than in any other part of the borough (72%)
- According to the Police Matrix scoring system PESTELO (Political, Environment, Social, Technology, Economic, Legal and Organizational) recognized that there are fewer custodial sentences for this crime and there is an increase in the number of Satellite Navigation systems used by car owners.

Gaps in information

Vehicle crime has a significant impact on local residents affected by this crime and increases the fear of crime. Damaged vehicles and the broken glass on the road both serve to heighten the sense of fear in a locality. As mentioned above, the vehicle crime costs services in the borough millions of pounds, which could be used to improve other, services and address other priority issues.

We consulted widely and tackled the problem in a partnership approach, engaging key stakeholders. Please refer above for our consultation process and agencies involved in the project.

Response to the problem

Concept

Operation Reclaim was simply having one or two ward teams working together targeting crime hotspots. We had all 12 Police staff (6 per team) in high visibility jackets situated in the designated hotspot. They had 'spotters' to identify likely vehicles and were supported by the Automatic Number Plate Reader (ANPR) mounted in the CCTV van purchased by the Partnership in 2005.

Wings security would have 2 vehicles on standby and could ferry vehicles seized to the car pound and be back on site within 15 minutes. DVLA staff, local neighbourhood wardens and Police staff from neighbouring areas, who were studying our procedures, often supported us.

We only seized cars where there was an absolute offence: For example, where there was no doubt regarding insurance or driving license status. (we ignored missing 'L' plates if the driver could show the L plate had been present when they left the house) We allowed the driver every opportunity to prove their status was legal and we designed a form with the contact details of an identified person with 20 of the main insurance companies. These were issued to all staff. This ensured that all stops and seizures were 100% accurate. We have received no complaints or civil actions to date.

When people driving their vehicles legally were stopped, a full explanation was provided and the lead Officers details were offered. This not only provided reassurance, it ensured that the criminal fraternity knew what we were doing. This had the added bonus of reducing their presence in the area. To counter this, we would move the operation from one identified hotspot to another at regular intervals.

Methodology

The project was used as to not only deal with a bulk crime issues (vehicle crime), proven through crime trend analysis, but also as a method to reassure the public and thereby reduce perceptions and the fear of crime. We further believed that all crime types would also be reduced, as we would be targeting habitual criminals and their preferred transport methods. Operation Reclaim was chosen as it fell within the new legislation and we were in a position to utilise the newly formed Safer Neighborhood Teams. These teams could concentrate on the project, whereas response teams and traffic officers could not. These teams were also fully informed and aware of local criminals, crime trends and were personally known to the local community they served. Further, Safer Neighborhood Teams also have a prime role of reassuring the communities they are responsible for at ward level. They have excellent contacts with the local authority and can have visible signs of crime removed quickly (broken glass), and contact vehicle owners if damaged vehicles are found.

By using a multi agency partnership approach to this problem, each with a specific area of responsibility, ensured that the overall project worked more efficiently and to a greater degree than if one agency had attempted to go it

alone. For example, if it had been solely Police led, we would not have had the car pound space or the means to actually remove the vehicles.

Costs

Until Operation Reclaim was implemented, there was a substantial cost to Police using the new legislation on their own. The cost of low loader transportation to remove cars and the hiring of car pounds was proving to be very expensive and extremely inefficient. Once the low loader was full, the operation would cease. Operation Reclaim utilised local authority resources and encouraged Wings Security to open a car pound in Hounslow. They in turn would therefore be the sole recipients of the removal costs. The number of vehicles that could be seized was limitless and the operations could take place at any time day or night. Police staff time was absorbed into the planned work programme, as crime reduction and managing peoples fear of crime was core business for the Safer Neighborhood Teams.

In essence, by working in partnership with all the agencies mentioned, there were **no financial costs**. The project was implemented as a pilot study for a two-month period to ensure that it would work, to iron out any problems and resolve any issues that were highlighted.

The difficulties we identified and managed during the pilot period were resolved immediately.

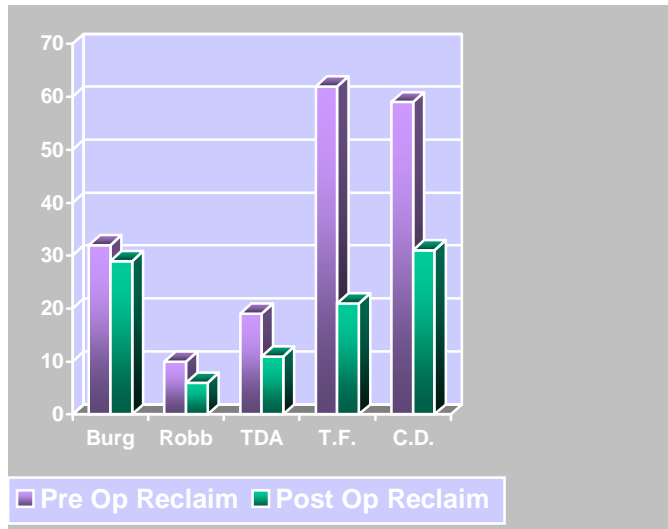
- **Car pound space:** The need for a local contractor and a car pound proved to be a fundamental obstacle. We encouraged Wings Security to build a pound in Hounslow and they would then be in a position to seize the bulk of the vehicles. This allowed them to make their money whilst the needs of the project were achieved. (reduction in all crime and the fear of crime).
- **Engaging partners:** The local authority initially saw this as a threat to their vehicle removal of untaxed cars. By engaging them in the planning stages, we managed to show them that it would in fact assist them in removing untaxed vehicles (a reason to stop the car being driven) and would expand the services that Wings could supply. Therefore their targets would be easier to attain. They also took ownership of the project.
- **Police protocols:** The Metropolitan Police Traffic Division had protocols in place to utilise the new legislation. These protocols were restrictive, expensive and therefore not only were their seizure targets very limited, but the wider impact of removing uninsured vehicles was not being addressed. The operations were soparodic and only lasted as long as there was space on the low loader. We finally managed to convince them that a pilot of Operation Reclaim would examine a potentially better way of working, have much wider impact than simple vehicle removal and would have no financial costs.

We constantly reviewed our working practices by having two lead officers identified, who were responsible for the entire pilot. During this phase, we created databases, designed a single 'ticket' that was served on the driver at the scene (previously there had been three), and we sought feedback from local residents where we were implementing the project. We designed systems to ensure letters were sent to all registered keepers (if a friend was driving the car when it was seized) and ahd processes to have all data entered onto the Police national Computer and the DVLA databases. Communities at ward level were understandably delighted that not only were traffic issues being addressed in their neighbourhood, levels of anti-social behaviour came down and that all crime was falling. Police Officers, Police Community Support Officer's and council staff were highly visible on their streets, which provided a visible reassurance in crime hot spots and had a strong deterrent factor to our local criminals.

The pilot proved so successful, that we received permission to expand it across the borough and it is currently being rolled out across all of London. This concept was not only an innovative use of legislation, it utilised partners and worked extremely well.

Evaluation of the intervention

Crime reduction



Burglary	9%
Robbery	40%
TDA	42%
Theft From M/V	67%
Criminal Damage	48%

Serious Crime

There have been many examples of how this project has uncovered serious crime and it will no doubt continue whilst the operations take place. In Hounslow, three early examples are as follows:

1. A vehicle was identified by a spotter who noticed the tax disc was out of date. Once stopped the vehicle was seized as the driver was uninsured. The details were entered on the PNC and a few days later a crimestoppers docket was forwarded to Hounslow. It suggested that there was a firearm hidden in the foam base of the front passengers seat. The vehicle was searched, and the firearm recovered. When the owner returned to collect his vehicle he was arrested. The matter is currently still under investigation. The investigation uncovered that the firearm had been used in several serious crimes in London and the Home Counties.
2. A spotter identified a vehicle that appeared unroadworthy. It was seized as the driver did not have a valid drivers licence. Whilst the vehicle was in the car pound awaiting collection, information was received, from a local informant, that this vehicle was used to transport drugs. The vehicle was subjected to a thorough search, supported by drugs dogs, and the petrol tank was found to be divided into two sections. One of these sections was used to store drugs and transport them around.
3. Two Vietnamese males who appeared to be very young were stopped driving a vehicle in Heston. They were not able to read or speak English and their car was not insured. The vehicle was seized and they were arrested, as their immigration status was in question. When their home address was searched, a cannabis factory was uncovered. This led on to two further cannabis factories being discovered and closed down.

Further examples continue to come to light and we use them for positive press releases to not only reassure the public that the operation is necessary, but also to highlight that the Police and partners are working together to reduce all crime. This in turn addresses the fear of crime in Hounslow.

Case study

Bulls Bridge was Heston Sector's vehicle crime hotspot. Operation seizure ran in this location on 12.6.06. For the following 36 hours there was zero vehicle crime recorded. This had never happened in the past.

The operation was run again at this location on the 26th and 27th June 2006. There was no vehicle crime recorded in this location from the 26th to the 29th of June

Additionally, there was no vehicle crime recorded at both the North side and South side of Heston motorway services. This was the second vehicle crime hotspot in Heston. This was directly attributed to the operation taking place on the arterial roads that link these locations

Feedback

We have received numerous letters of support from local residents and have received comments from some of our Prolific Offenders.

In thirty years, I've never seen this many police officers on the street in Heston"
Tom Woods, Chairman, Heston East Ward Panel.

"Since the start of Operation Reclaim, the crime and robbery in my store has fallen dramatically"
Simon, Tesco's Store Manager. (Bulls Bridge Store)

"The living and working environment in Heston has become safer and we have received fewer complaints regarding our pupils from our community"
Phil Ward, Head Teacher, Heston Community School.

"When are you going to f*****g stop doing this s**t, you are ruining my business"
Hardeep Thind, Drug dealer and PPO.

Conclusion

To date, over 2000 vehicles have been seized in Hounslow and there have been no substantiated complaints or civil actions. This was not the case under the initial use of the new legislation. Many complaints were received as all offenders had their vehicles seized with little or no discretion used. Several civil actions were taken out at a great cost to the public purse.

The operation was evaluated through Police statistics showing continual downward trends, at Area Committee for councilors, at Safer Neighbourhood Panels in the wards where it was in operation and at the Partnership Board who are concerned with community safety. All fully endorsed this simple but highly effective initiative. Operation Reclaim is now being rolled out across London in this format.

Section 4: Endorsement by Senior Representative

Please insert letter from endorsing representative:



**Hounslow Police Station
5 Montague Road
Hounslow, Middlesex
TW3 1LB
Tel: 020 8247 6101
Fax: 020 8247 6190
ali.dizaei@met.police.uk**

27/04/07

To Whom it May Concern,

Tilley Award – Operation Reclaim

I am currently the joint chair of the Hounslow Community Safety Partnership and fully endorse the application submitted to the Tilley Awards 2007 outlining the work of the Operation Reclaim.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ali Dizaei', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Ali Dizaei
Borough Commander
Hounslow Police

On behalf of the Hounslow Community Safety Partnership

Checklist for Applicants:

Have you read the process and application form guidance?

Have you completed all four sections of the application form in full including the endorsement from a senior representative?

Have you checked that your entry addresses all aspects of the judging criteria?

Have you advised all partner agencies that you are submitting an entry for your project?

Have you adhered to the formatting requirements within the guidance?

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?

Have you saved your 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.