



Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

Tilley Awards 2008 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 tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 25th April 2008**. 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.

Section A: Application basics

1. Title of the project: Operation Themis
2. Key issue that the project is addressing : Gang Violence and Drug Dealing

Author contact details

3. Name of application author: Police Sergeant Josie Harris
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Secondary project contact details

8. Name of secondary contact involved in the project: Detective Chief Superintendent Carl Bussey

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10. Secondary contact telephone number: 0208 246 1402

Endorsing representative contact details

11. Name of endorsing senior representative from lead organisation: Alan Dalton Hillingdon Borough Council

12. [Endorsing representative's email address: Adalton@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:Adalton@hillingdon.gov.uk)

13. For all entries from England & Wales please state which Government Office or Welsh Assembly Government your organisation is covered by e.g. GO East Midlands: **GO London**

14. Please mark this box with an X 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 B: Summary of application - In no more than 400 words use this space to provide a summary of your project under the stated headings (see guidance for more information).

Scanning: Problem: Youth/Gang Violence and associated offences (Operation Themis)

In 2007 Hillingdon Borough saw a marked increase in the level of gang violence and associated criminality. The main area of concern was Hayes Town Centre, which is on the borders of Townfield and Botwell wards. Conventional policing methods in this area were having no impact, with large gangs of youths attempting to intimidate police through weight of numbers and acts of violence against police when called to the area.

Analysis:

These wards had the highest percentage of reported youth on youth violence and the local MP highlighted it through e-mails he had received from members of the public and youths themselves that a lot of crimes were also going unreported. Complaints of anti- social behaviour, drug dealing and persistently high levels of crimes like robbery, vehicle crime and residential burglary were disclosed.

Response:

Research into the underlying reasons for large gangs of youths gathering at this location was carried out. It became apparent that the reason large groups gathered was due to an open drugs market. The gang called themselves the Purple Hayes Crew and wearing their purple colours could identify them as a gang member. A Gold Group meeting was arranged with police senior members of the Local Authority and plans on how to deal with the issues in this area were agreed. Operation Themis was carried out in 3 phases.

- Phase 1 Evidence gathering
- Phase 2 Arrest phase
- Phase 3 Partnership activities to reduce demand and make environmental changes to ensure there was no re- emerging drugs market in that area.

Assessment

- This area is now free from the gang and drug culture
- Reduction in overall crime in this area since arrest phase
- Local authority commitment to environmental improvements in the area to assist with target hardening
- Environmental improvements including waste management and lighting
- Introduction of a gating scheme
- Reduction in complaints regarding drug dealing in the area through residents/councilors
- Key Individual Network surveys show a marked reduction in the fear of crime in the area, as these gangs no longer hang around the streets intimidating residents/businesses and workers.
- Positive press coverage of the operation through the local newspapers and radio station
- Referrals for drug users into the drug and alcohol referral scheme.
- Engagement of gangs of youths through detached youth workers and the active involvement team.

State number of words: 399

Section C: Description of project - Describe the project in no more than 4,000 words. Please refer to the full guidance for more information on what the description should cover, in particular section 11.

Operation Themis

Scanning:

In 2007 Hillingdon Borough saw a marked increase in the level of gang violence and associated criminality. Research identified the main area of concern was Hayes Town Centre which is on the borders of Townfield and Botwell wards. Youths favoured hanging around on the Townfield part of the Town Centre outside the fast food premises. These wards had the highest percentage of reported youth violence and in addition to youth violence these areas were highlighted by local MP's and the members of the public alike with complaints of anti- social behaviour, open drug dealing and persistently high levels of crimes like robbery, vehicle crime and residential burglary.

This gang related violence and criminality was having serious repercussions on the local residents and businesses. Conventional policing methods in this area were having little to no impact, with large gangs of youths attempting to intimidate police through sheer weight of numbers and acts of violence against police when called to the area.

A covert intelligence gathering operation was undertaken to establish the underlying cause of the problems within these areas. Observations and source led intelligence quickly identified an 'Open Drugs Market' being serviced by a local organised criminal network calling themselves the 'Purple Hayes Gang'. The age range on this group was between 15 and 21 years.

A number of the people identified as frequenting the area and associating with this gang were known drug users with previous convictions for various crimes including vehicle crime, burglary and robbery.

Through further consultation with the local authority and business partners and appropriate involvement from other agencies it was agreed that the problem identified needed to be dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible. It was agreed that would be by way of

- Covert police operation initially in order to obtain sufficient evidence to secure prosecutions at court against the drug dealers
- Enhanced support services for the drug users
- Environmental changes to deter any future drugs market re-emerging in the area
- The re-education of youths through workshops, youth clubs schools and colleges

Analysis:

The extent of the problem was measured through a variety of ways

- Key Individual Network questionnaires were conducted on the two wards affected, by teams visiting residential property, commuters and youths.
- E-mails of complainant received from youth agencies, where they have been receiving information from youths attending their clubs, of crime occurring within the Town Centre area and the concerns of youth services where relating to the unreported crimes. This was confirmed through police engagement with youths within the clubs.
- Police indices (CRIS CAD) These showed an increase in crime against the same period of 2006
- Community meetings, Ward Panel meetings where expressing their concerns regarding the matter
- Borough Intelligence Unit research showed both wards were high crime areas.
- A Problem Profile on Youth Violence was produced by the Borough Intelligence Unit
- Youth questionnaires carried out by Safer Schools Officers and Safer Transport Teams with youths at schools and on buses.

Operation Themis

- The Safer Neighbourhood Teams spoke to local businesses and their views were recorded by way of Key Individual Network Surveys.
- Stakeholders also carried out their own research through e-mails to all partner groups who provided facilities for youth to gauge their perception of what was happening in the area and why, This was done in order to gain a youth perspective on the problem.

The research that was carried out showed that the offenders were aged between 15 and 22 and that there were 19 suspects identified as dealing in Class A drugs.

They were also shown as belonging to a gang calling themselves "The Purple Hayes Crew." This was common knowledge amongst youths in the area and by the gang's use of a bandana or clothing of a purple colour.

The victims were local residents, business community, youths and drug users themselves. Some of the drug dealers were also seen as victims due to their age.

The location where the dealing took place was identified as outside a fast food café, in a parade of shops. Youths would gather at this location and if the weather was warm they gathered outside the shop. When it rained they sat inside the café. Staff working within the café was afraid to challenge these youths for fear of reprisals. There is an alleyway that runs behind the shops, in the shape of a horseshoe giving two ways in or out. This alleyway was badly lit with no CCTV coverage, which provided the ideal environment for drug dealing to take place, and it encouraged youths to gather in that area.

Data suggests that the problem had arisen because there was a gang culture developing; there was little or no integration of these youths into constructive youth programmes and facilities. The locality was close to a college and café's offered a meeting place for dealers and buyers alike.

As a result of the consultation and research that was carried out it became clear that the criminal activity was of significant concern to the community as residents were afraid to leave their homes, businesses did not employ female staff to work after 4pm due to fears for their safety and youths were afraid to come to the town centre in the evening for fear of crime.

Response:

Through consultation with business partners Operation Themis was devised in order to deal with the problems associated with the Town Centre. It was agreed that this operation would take place in 3 Phases.

The overall purpose of the operation was to

- Gather evidence in order to arrest and successfully prosecute those drug dealing
- Improve the quality of life for residents and businesses in the areas
- Curb youth violence
- Reduce crime of the effected wards
- Consolidate the work of police and partnership agencies

Phase 1

Evidence Gathering

This phase of the operation was police lead in order to gather sufficient evidence to gain successful prosecutions at court. This was done through a covert test purchase operation using undercover police officers.

Op Themis began on the 10th September 2007, the initial stage of the operation was to establish a series of observations points to provide blanket coverage of the local area and during the next two weeks pro-active officers were solely engaged staffing observation posts on a daily basis utilising both video and still photography to identify every member of the gang engaging in criminal activity whilst gathering best evidence for their future prosecutions.

The next part of this part of the operation was the deployment of Authorised Test Purchase Officers, eight test

purchase officers were deployed on forty-one separate occasions purchasing Class 'A' drugs on seventy-one occasions and Class 'C' drugs on seven occasions corroborated by observation evidence and technical support. During this phase evidence was gathered on drug dealers in the area and photographs were taken of those buying drugs. It was evident that a number of the users coming in to the area to buy drugs were some of the Boroughs priority prolific offenders. Research also revealed that there were cross border priority offenders coming into the town centre to buy their drugs.

Evidence was gathered against 19 offenders who were involved in drug dealing in the area.

The evidence that was gathered was presented to the Crown Prosecution Service for review and it was agreed that there was sufficient evidence to arrest and charge. With this knowledge a date was agreed and the operation entered Phase 2.

Phase 2

Arrest Phase

This was the arrest phase of the operation, which was to be carried out over 2 days. The first day was planned to arrest known dealers from the street through the use of the undercover police officers. Then the second day was used to execute warrants on any outstanding suspect's addresses. A total of 23 suspects were arrested over the two days, 19 were arrested and charged with supplying Class A controlled drugs.

All the families of the suspects arrested were given an information pack that was made of various agencies that they could go to for support as we were aware that some may have no idea that their family members were dealing in drugs.

Provisions were also made so that all the suspects that were arrested were visited in the custody area and offered the services of the drug and alcohol referral unit.

Referral and information packs were left with the parents of youths arrested for drug dealing, which assisted them to find support services.

All those arrested eventually pleaded guilty at court and have each received sentences ranging between 4 months and 4 years imprisonment.

Phase 3

Partnership Activity

This aspect of the operation detailed the joint working between police and partners to provide community reassurance, regeneration of the area, and support for drug users through partners and a safe environment for the community through additional patrols, community meetings and promoting the advantages of street champions for the area. This phase of the operation was planned to run for initially for 1 month after the arrest phase and involved a team of 1 police sergeant 4 police constables and 4 police community support officers and officers from the drug and alcohol referral unit, detached youth workers, environmental services, community payback scheme and licensing and highway officers.

Drug and Alcohol Referral Teams

Using information sharing protocols meetings were held with the drug and alcohol referral team and the photographs of the unknown drug users who were attending the Town Centre were disclosed to the officers, who were able to identify some of the unknown faces within police records. This meeting also revealed that some of those buying drugs were already enrolled on drug treatment programmes.

A mobile base was placed into the town centre as a base and drug awareness sessions were run in conjunction with the detached youth workers. Drug education posters were put up throughout the area and the operation obtained wide media coverage.

Once the drug dealers had been arrested police worked initially with the drug and alcohol referral officers to assist the drug users who were attending the area to buy drugs, to address their drug habit through the referral teams that were based on site. Six users were referred during the first few days and drug users already known to the team had

their treatment reviewed by the officers, in light of the fact that they were still buying drugs.

Detached Youth Workers

Towards the end of the week patrols were also carried out between police and detached youth workers to provide information and contact points for various activities in the area for youths found hanging around in the vicinity. This aspect of the operation also focused on engagement of those who did not attend regulated youth programmes or activities in the area to see if there was a better way of attracting disengaged youths and hard to reach groups into the youth clubs and programmes that were being provided.

Local Authority

This phase of the operation incorporated the regeneration aspect of the area by way of gating projects to prevent people being able to use the area behind the shops as a thoroughfare and place out of sight of camera to commit offences. Plus through negotiations with the local authority seven additional CCTV cameras have been agreed for the area. A clean up of the area, by way of removal of graffiti and clearing of rubbish, has taken place through the use of the Community Payback Scheme. (This is working in partnership with Probation Service and offenders giving something back to the community). This has received positive feedback from the local community that has encouraged the local community to volunteer for and support the next stage of the project with was the introduction of Street Champions.

Street Champions

A week of action has taken place where police and the local authority have worked together to carry out visits to licensed premises, fast food cafes. Additional street cleaning and road sweeping was agreed during this period and improvements to lighting were also made. As a result of the activity a number of local residents and businesses were canvassed with a view to becoming Street Champions for the area. This has now been progressed and the residents identified have received their identification badges through the local authority and are actively monitoring the area and reporting any problems to the local authority. Residents and businesses feel that their concerns are heard and being met as issues they raise receive an enhanced service through the local authority and police this has encouraged their participation in the scheme.

Youth Services and Police

The Borough is also in the process of launching number of youth forums within youth clubs. The aims of the forums are to provide young people with the opportunity to talk about issues regarding their local area. These could include concerns about crime, not enough activities for young people to do in the evenings, issues to do with school, gang membership or transport etc. Guest speakers will attend the meetings depending on the issue to be discussed.

The information discussed is fed back to Hillingdon Youth Council members and then back to the main Council for further discussion and action in the longer term.

Assessment:

In the lead up to the arrest phase of this operation the Key Individual Network Surveys (KIN) were carried out. In the weeks following the arrest phase of the operation the same KIN survey was carried out with the same people surveyed as to whether they had seen an improvement in the area as a result of the operation. They reveal that residents/businesses and workers have seen an immediate change in the area and are happy that police and partners have taken action.

Every Safer Neighbourhood Team now has a Ward Youth Panel so that a two-way flow of information develops and areas and issues of concern to youths can be addressed through the setting of priorities. This forum addresses the issue of youths not telling police that they were afraid to go into the town centre. This form is also used as a way to break down barriers between youth and police by showing them that we are willing to listen and deal with their concerns.

Other Key achievements:

Operation Themis

- Through research and measurement of the crime reports there has been a reduction in burglary on this ward. Between 25th November 2006 - 19th January 2007 there were 37 burglary reports. There have been 26 reports for the same time period this year. This equates to a 29.7% reduction in burglary on this ward.
- There has been improved relationships between police and the local community and this is reflected in the increased attendance at ward panel meetings
- Due to the month long patrols there has been an improvement in the working relationships with business partner's especially detached youth –workers, youth services and the drug and alcohol referral team. These patrols together have led to a better understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities.
- No further drugs market has emerged in this area since the operation, which finished 3 months ago.

This operation has also led to increased local authority funding for this area and a commitment to environmental improvements with 7 CCTV Cameras being put in place to assist with target hardening. Other environmental improvements have been made including waste management, lighting and the introduction of a gating scheme.

Stronger links with the local community have been built up and maintained through regular meetings, ward panels and street champions and KINs.

Police have also seen a reduction in complaints regarding drug dealing in the area through residents/councilors and calls to the area through the Computer Dispatch System.

Kin surveys show a marked reduction in the fear of crime in the area, as these gangs no longer hang around the streets intimidating residents/businesses and workers.

The Borough has received positive press coverage of the operation through the local newspapers and radio station

Overall this has been a successful operation which resulted in the arrest and conviction of 19 suspects for drug dealing offences in Hillingdon.

The success of this operation relied on our business partners, local residents and local businesses working in partnership with police to ensure that the offenders were arrested and brought before the court.

Good lines of communication were opened and built up throughout the operation with the local authority and the various departments within the council.

The achievements of this operation have been published both internally and externally through the press, intranet and across London Radio Stations.

State number of words used: 2769

Section D: Endorsement by Senior Representative - *Please insert letter from endorsing representative, this will not count towards your word or 1MB size limit restrictions.*

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 e.g. civil or criminal proceedings pending in relation to your project?
7. Have you inserted your project name as a footer note on the application form? Go to View-Header and Footer to add it.
8. Have you saved you application form as a word document and entitled your message '**Tilley 08 entry (followed by project name in brackets)**' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please email it to Tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. One hard copy must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice & Communication Team, 4th Floor, Fry Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF and be received by 25th April 2008.