



Home Office

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 Courier
2. Key issue that the project is addressing e.g. Alcohol related violence: Illegal Drug use and street dealing

Author contact details

3. Name of application author: Inspector Paul Deathridge
4. Organisation submitting the application: West Midlands Police
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7. Telephone number: 0121 428 6015

Secondary project contact details

8. Name of secondary contact involved in the project:
9. Secondary contact email address:
10. Secondary contact telephone number:

Endorsing representative contact details

11. Name of endorsing senior representative from lead organisation: Chief Supt. Paul Scarrott

12. Endorsing representative's email address: p.scarrott@west-midlands.police.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 West Midlands

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):

X

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:

- The Lozells neighbourhood is an area of national significance
- In both 1985 and 2005 the area was subject to riot and disorder
- Over recent years it has seen an increase in gang related violence and shootings
- The area is extremely diverse and has been affected by historical tension between the black Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities
- Community cohesion and confidence has been affected by one of the highest areas of deprivation and unemployment in the country
- Villa Road in the heart of Lozells has been subject to gang related activity and overt street drug dealing for a number of years

Analysis:

- An understanding of the scale of the problem and the impact it had on the community was paramount.
- In addition to police analytical data, a base line assessment of the area was commissioned with community support/involvement
- The development of the intelligence gave clear evidence of those involved in street drug dealing having a total disregard for the community or any enforcement agency
- Overt drug dealing was affecting public safety and confidence

Response:

- Intelligence developed and strategy put in place
- The holistic approach required several strands to the strategy that ensured any enforcement activity was planned alongside and complemented by coordinated support mechanisms and reassurance
- Civil litigation was to play an important part in tackling the issues
- Lessons were learnt from the Brixton No Deal initiative and this was also developed in the area and provided not only education but also provided a sound marketing opportunity
- The St Silas Project was set up by the police in conjunction with the public and voluntary sector providing support, referrals and signposting to users
- Neighbourhood Management and police action plans around environmental and commercial properties
- A force covert operation would support the enforcement phase targeting drug dealers

Assessment:

- Civil interventions resulted in a number of Class A closures orders and eight known street dealers being served with interim injunctions
- The sector has seen 12.5% reduction in total recorded crime
- The St Silas Project has been evaluated and received positive feedback
- There has been universal acclaim and gratitude from the community and partners such as Cllr Hussein, ex Lord Mayor of Birmingham and the current Chair of the Constituency Strategic Partnership
- Removal of drug dealing and associated anti-social behaviour from Villa Road

State number of words: 400

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.

Scanning:

The Lozells neighbourhood is an area of national significance having been the subject of major disorder and high deprivation over the past 20 years. The area is extremely diverse and has recently suffered from lack of investment and development in both residential and commercial property stock. This has been compounded by the decline of public confidence and community cohesion.

The area has been subject of major disorder and riot in both 1985 and 2005, which attracted national and international attention from both government and media. The area and in particular, Lozells, has been historically subject of negative perceptions and this has contributed to community tension.

It was one of the first areas nationally to be identified as a Neighbourhood Element Area and a Neighbourhood Manager would be appointed to work alongside police and other agencies to address issues within Lozells. More recently the Lozells and East Handsworth Neighbourhood was selected for the pilot for a Community Justice Programme.

The presence of overt street drug dealing along the main thoroughfare of Villa road, Lozells, was well known not just in the neighbourhood but also as far away as Jamaica. The ready availability of drugs, particularly Class A drugs, attracted drug users and street workers to the area from across the city. This contributed to the high levels of drug criminality and the associated acquisitive crimes and anti-social behaviour. A sad observation of our intelligence gathering and research highlighted that the community appeared to have come to accept the daily overt drug dealing along Villa road and as a consequence, the road had been 'taken over' by those intent on criminal activity. The high number of fast food commercial premises, along with local Bulls Head public house, presented a haven for drug activity.

From a local neighbourhood perspective, it was decided in conjunction with our partners, such as housing officers, ward support officers, outreach workers and neighbourhood forums, to tackle the illegal drug dealing of Class A drugs. A holistic problem solving approach would be taken that would encompass associated anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime through supplementary work around prostitution issues and educational work focusing on cannabis issues. This would complement and provide support to force wide and national strategies to tackle gang related criminality and violence.

Analysis:

An independent base line assessment was commissioned and was supported and facilitated by local neighbourhood police and PCSO staff. The commitment ensured excellent community contact and provided quality data that was both representative and significant, a response rate of 36% being achieved. A number of questionnaires were conducted and targeted to residents but also local traders, schools and youth forums and key stakeholders from both the public and voluntary sector. Further qualitative data was gained through the facilitation of a number of focus groups and semi-structured interviews. A number of key recommendations were made around housing, health, environmental and community safety and these included inter-locking issues around drugs, prostitution and gang culture. The analysis showed that 72% of those that responded identified drug dealing as the main issue in the neighbourhood and 72% stated their priority for improving Lozells would be more visible police foot patrols.

The results of which were taken back to the community through public meetings and structured workshops to agree and identify priorities. These would ultimately form the basis for the ongoing Neighbourhood Managers delivery plan and Neighbourhood boards. Relevant police data was analysed and included along with other public sector data appertaining to unemployment, education, housing and health.

Analysis and local knowledge had shown that the police had seen limited success with tackling criminality and in particular street drug dealing in the area. Previous attempts of dealing with the issues through enforcement alone had little success or impact. Lack of public confidence, fear and those adept at avoiding the criminal system through experience and intimidation ensured this. Gang related violence and drug dealing within the area had been a problem for years and had a negative stranglehold and influence through peer pressure even on children in local primary schools.

The area around Villa road and particular Radnor road was subject to a high number of street workers who frequented the area in the knowledge that they could earn money engaging in prostitution and spend this on the purchase of ready available Class A drugs. Their association with those engaged in other criminality, such as burglary, also compounded the issues and levels of crime in the area. This was having not only a negative visual impact on the community but also resulted in significant environmental and health hazards through the discarding of condoms and used hypodermic needles.

Lessons were also learnt from benchmarking with other forces and in particular Brixton and the 'No Deal' initiative. Local officers visited Brixton and were able to identify good practice and some of the issues encountered through this initiative. Although predominantly focusing on Cannabis and zero tolerance, the 'No Deal' initiative would ultimately provide a marketing tool and also re enforce the dangers and potential mental health hazards of Cannabis abuse.

A force operation, Operation Clean would also be supported and driven by the F3 operational command unit (OCU) and would involve the extensive development of intelligence and use covert tactics targeting known Class A drug dealers of both crack cocaine and Heroin over a 18 month period.

At a neighbourhood level it was agreed that a major impact could be achieved through the tackling of overt drug dealing in the area and in particular along Villa road due to its significance, high profile and key location. This would provide a significant problem solving opportunity that would complement and contribute to the overall strategic tackling of drug issues and gang related criminality.

Early collaboration between key stakeholders such as legal services and Birmingham Anti-Social Behaviour Unit would prove crucial in ensuring a pragmatic and SMART approach was taken from the start. Research of civil options were explored and discussed at length at a number of stakeholder meetings in an attempt to provide some creative solutions both short and long term.

The support of housing, health and education stakeholders would also be required to provide invaluable support and educational messages and to contribute to successful criminal and civil remedies.

Briefings of key stakeholders and our Constituency partners, such as local Councillors and Constituency Director, ensured that the strategy had the full support from not on the OCU but City and Constituency wide.

Local community support and engagement would be the golden thread throughout the operation and empower those living and working in the community to take some responsibility and ownership of the problem. Regular contact and briefings through community meetings, neighbourhood tasking groups, neighbourhood boards, ward committee and traders associations would maintain a focus and provide important reassurance and feedback.

The Lozells Drug Strategy, Operation Courier, was set up in March 2007 as the local neighbourhood policing response.

Response:

A holistic approach was taken and the strategy was to take the form of four strands:

- 1 Enforcement (criminal)-Operation No Deal
- 2 Civil Interventions and Immigration issues-Operation Enigma
- 3 Support and Education-St Silas Project
- 4 Public reassurance-Operation Northwind

Operation Courier would be the overall umbrella operational name.

Clear and achievable objectives of the strategy needed to be agreed between all partners and stakeholders and it required the full support of not only the OCU but also the community and the Constituency. Regular briefings and reviews were to be crucial to maintain a consistent and focused approach with timescale.

Community support and views would be sought and communication mediums pursued to provide information and feedback. Existing publications and police briefings at Neighbourhood Forums, residents groups and monthly community meetings form the basis of reaching the community.

Funding opportunities were sought and obtained and these would provide not only sustainable high visibility police patrols in the area but also marketing material and educational initiatives.

Operation No Deal:

The No Deal initiative was developed and tailored to suit the strategy locally and to meet the community's needs. Local officers visited Brixton and took away the principals and lessons learnt in Brixton, however rather than the focus being on zero-tolerance No Deal provided an education opportunity and market spin that provided a community focus. The emphasis would also be on cannabis, which would complement the holistic strategy of tackling all drugs and the associated criminality and anti-social behaviour.

A small area around Villa Road and Lozells Road was selected as a 'zero-tolerance zone' around all illegal drug activity. This was publicised through the display of high visible partnership posters displaying maps of the zone and a clear police, partner and community message. Part of the funding was used to rent a billboard in a prominent position on the Lozells road with the clear message 'Lozells Community Say NO to Drugs'. Other marketing materials included the 'No Deal' logo (cannabis leaf within circle with red line through) stickers for shop windows, badges for local school children, No Deal 'rizla papers' that fold out with educational information about the law and harm drugs cause.

Two thousand No Deal carrier bags were developed not only showing the No Deal logo but also on the reverse information about local neighbourhood contact numbers and e-mail and web-site addresses. These were distributed to local traders and handed out to the community through local business and retail outlets.

The No Deal strand was finally launched through the local media in conjunction with the local neighbourhood forum chairperson and local Councilors. A street briefing was conducted next to a portable No Deal billboard at the gateway into Lozells road and radio interviews conducted along with newspaper and photograph opportunities.

The Lozells No Deal initiative had provided the strategy with a visible and recognisable marketing spin in addition to providing important educational material to complement the support strand. The community was able to identify with the operation and feel very much part of it assisting with the promotion of the key message.

Operation Enigma:

Experience had shown the difficulties in tackling street drug dealing through the criminal route and in particular securing evidence for a successful conviction at court. The penalties also indicated that it was on occasions a short-term approach and did not eradicate the problem. A number of the known drug

dealers were of Jamaican origin and there was evidence of rivalry between Jamaican and English drug dealers along Villa road.

Part of the strategy was to identify other means of addressing the problem and finding solutions and as a consequence meetings were held with the immigration service to agree and identify the current status of some of the drug dealers. Regular sharing of information and consultation ensured that the strategy would be provided with a number of problem solving solutions and options. This also provided neighbourhood officers with enhanced skills and knowledge of immigration issues.

Strategy meetings with partners such as legal services and BASBU provided clear guidelines and options as to civil remedies available and in particular those that would give us the required control over drug dealers. An extensive trawl and review of police and community intelligence by the local neighbourhood policing teams and Legal Services identified a number of known drug dealers who frequent and live in the Villa road and Lozells area.

These nominals were promoted across the OCU and further intelligence sought through effective briefings and the use of the OCU briefing systems. It was agreed to initially target the most prominent eight street drug dealers and use civil legislation from Section 222 of the Local Government Act 1972. This would provide a civil burden of proof and options around control over the eight nominals that would prevent the dealers entering a controlled zone in particular Villa road and provide police with some enforcement powers.

Again community support and involvement was crucial and a number of community impact statements were obtained outlining the overt drug dealing, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in the area. The success in obtaining these statements were in part due to the involvement and briefing of the community from the beginning. A planned and extensive intelligence gathering phase was then undertaken using covert tactics and options. This not only supported any civil case, but also confirmed the alarming level of overt street drug dealing in front of the public in broad daylight. It was clear that the dealers had a total disregard for the police, the community and any other enforcement or disciplined service.

Commercial premises and those residential premises used by drug dealers and users were identified and targeted through police and community intelligence. Class A Closure Orders were pursued and a number of commercial fast food outlets and bookmakers were made subject of agreed joint action plans. These plans would improve CCTV and drug taking and dealing opportunities through the removal of window posters and counters that provided cover for activity. British Telecom was also engaged and a number of telephone kiosks identified in the area that were used for dealing illegal drugs and leaving drugs for collection. It was agreed with BT that these kiosks would have all advertising and doors removed to target harden drug activity. Local planning applications were monitored and influenced.

St. Silas Project

The Lozells and East Handsworth neighbourhood policing teams wanted to influence and improve support and voluntary services in the area and identified the need to fill the potential gap left by any criminal or civil enforcement activity. A review was conducted of current services available for drug users, street workers and vulnerable persons. A strategy meeting was set up, all agencies briefed about Operation Courier and discussions initiated to coordinate an approach to supporting and signposting to drug users within the Lozells and surrounding areas.

The level of commitment and interest was impressive and the police led initiative welcomed by voluntary groups. Groups represented included ANAWIM (support of vulnerable woman involved in prostitution, offending behaviour and drug abuse), Vulnerable Women's Group (street workers), BEST (Birmingham ex offenders support team), Phoenix (drug support and vulnerable persons) and DAT (drugs action team).

The St Silas Project pilot was reviewed at a local Drugs work stream and a decision was made to obtain funding to continue the project. A change of venue to a local church ensured confidentiality and continuity

to allow for extensive marketing. The church benefited from some welcome funds from the hire of the church ensuring again the cycle of neighbourhood benefits. Posters and cards were designed in conjunction with voluntary agencies and distributed across the neighbourhood, including phone kiosks, public house toilets and locals public facilities, offering the free confidential services.

The project was taken into the prison service through briefing of the support staff within the Birmingham Prison and information cards distributed to those in prison. This ensured the continued development and the reaching of those in most need of the services.

Local shops were involved and provided support in the form of food and provisions and local dental practices provided dental hygiene products that go towards packs that were supplied to those visiting the project. These packs not only provided food, energy drinks and basic hygiene provisions but also condoms and vitamins to promote health messages and support.

This strand included educational messages and a programme of events that would engage with every primary school in the neighbourhood. All neighbourhood officers were aligned to a school and some have become school governors, showing a commitment to improving community engagement and influence.

Local neighbourhood officers obtained funding and arranged for a summer programme that would reach around 3,000 primary school children over a week activities. The 'Natural High Programme' was delivered by David Graham, a runner up on pop idol, and covered drugs issues and acceptable standards of behaviour through music and stage activity. A local rap artist was also commissioned to give out anti-drugs and gang messages through music and school engagement. A programme of outdoors activities, such as rock climbing and cycle proficiency courses complement the positive message and improve trust and confidence between police and children.

Outreach work with the youth in the area with agencies such as EVOLVE provided opportunity through joint patrols to communicate and engage and facilitate activities such as sport through direct participation or signposting.

Operation Northwind:

The final strand would provide the all important reassurance and community engagement opportunities. This was delivered by way of good basic high visibility policing of the area working closely with our Neighbourhood Managers.

Daily contact and feedback was ensured through consistent patrolling on foot using a number of police tactics that provided maximum coverage and effect. Opportunities were sought to reach all ages and groups, such as attendance at sheltered housings schemes, youth clubs and local places of worship. Outcomes and good news stories were delivered through structured letters or flyers and contributions to local Neighbourhood Forum Newsletters.

Involvement with Neighbourhood Management Plans would ensure influence and commitment to tackling environmental issues and negative visual impacts, in particular those related to discarded drug paraphernalia and street working. Neighbourhood Tasking Groups would be the conduit for community issues and delivered with our partners across the constituency and residential social landlords.

The Neighbourhood Managers Plan focused on agreed community safety issues, community cohesion, housing, children and young people and environmental issues. These resulted in numerous improvements for example improved lighting, CCTV schemes, development of green space and detached youth work.

Street 'Walkabouts' were developed where local officers along with housing, environmental officers, constituency ward support officers and members of the community, would conduct visual audits.

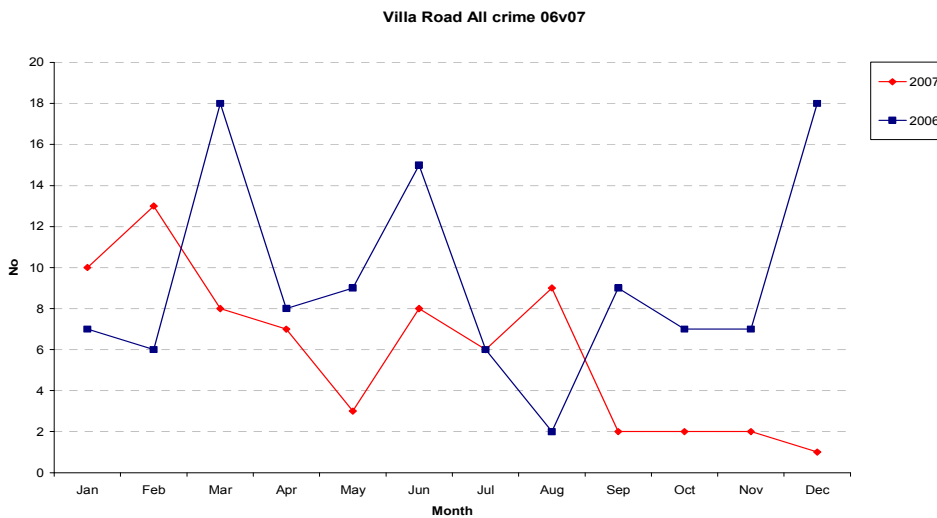
Through daily and sustainable contact the local neighbourhood, officers were able to gauge community

reaction, continued support, concerns and positive feedback that would provide continued up to date intelligence and community impact assessment.

Community Justice provided opportunities for further positive community engagement and feedback through the 'pay back' un paid work scheme for community orders. Magistrates and a local Judge were briefed fully about Operation Courier and local issues and aspirations at the police training centre.

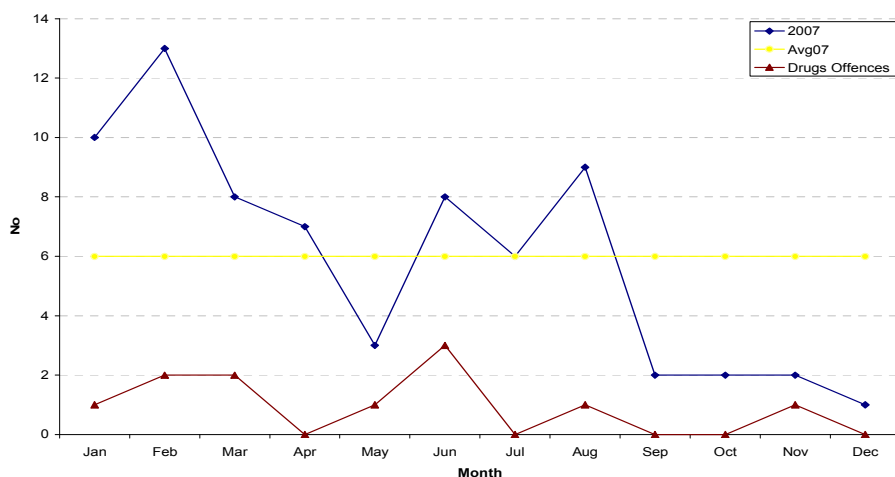
Assessment:

Operation Courier has delivered the Lozells Drug Strategy and achieved holistic short and long term objectives through focused community based partnership work.



The Lozells and East Handsworth Neighbourhoods are currently seeing an overall crime reduction of around 27% based on the monthly comparison of December 2006 and December 2007. Operation Courier has influenced total recorded crime reduction on the Lozells and East Handsworth Sector, a reduction of 12.5% for total recorded crime has been achieved year on year, set against a target of 3% reduction. In February 2007 there were 13 offences recorded on Villa road alone, in December 2007 there was just one and this was not drug related. The drug dealing and related offences have been eradicated from Villa road.

Villa Road All Crime 2007



Eight known Class A drug dealers have been successfully served with interim injunctions under Section 222 of The local Government Act, preventing them from entering the Lozells Area. This has had a major impact on eradicating drug from the area and in particular the Villa Road and providing the community with a tangible positive outcome.

There have been a 14 Class A Closure Orders in the neighbourhood resulting in notable arrests, recovery of illegal drugs, associated paraphernalia and cash seizures under POCA. These have been conducted in conjunction with housing landlords and vulnerable persons support groups. The quality of the evidence and case files have been praised by the courts and experiential learning has ensured that the case has been successful at initial hearing. The positive message of the closures has been highlighted to the community through local corporate letter drops on the day and the use of closure banners.

The criminal enforcement and focused patrols using a number of tactics of the No Deal zone have resulted in significant reductions as highlighted above and maintains a focus for the strategy through the marketing material, the bill board has been funded for a further 3 months. Operation Clean initiative in the Lozells and Handsworth area has resulted in 95 arrests with 75 of those remanded in custody. This has complemented the civil remedies and support strand of Operation Courier and sent out a positive and committed response to the community message-Lozells Community Say NO to Drugs.

The St Silas Project has been evaluated by an external agency which measured a number variables such as number of referrals, how referred and who referred to. Some weeks, up to 20 clients attended the project and 13 positive referrals to other services were made over the initial 23 weekly sessions. The project recently held an open day for the briefing of other agencies and to capacity build.

The below is an account from a neighbourhood officer who was setting up the project:

"I arrived with the usual donations of free food and a young lady offered to help carry some of the items in

for me. This young lady stated that she had dragged herself out of bed to get to the project, as she did not want to miss it. She went on to tell me that she had attended last week and had a consultation with a member of project staff who had referred her into treatment for her drug addiction.

She told me she injects heroin and smokes crack cocaine and is a sex worker to fund her habit, which she doesn't want to do but sees no alternative. She said that if it was not for the project, she would be dead"

The number of positive and grateful comments from the community has increased dramatically and many have provided statements post implementation to support the civil remedies and below are some extracts from two residents:

"I came back and stood on the road for approximately half an hour at about 10.30 at night. This time would always be busy for dealers. I stood and looked up and down the Road. No more drug dealing, the Road had peace and quiet, I felt happy and proud that I had helped the Police and Courts in making the area better."

"The problem was a massive one that had beaten Police for years. I'm glad to say that I was wrong and that I have been witness to a complete change around on Villa Road and the surrounding areas. My confidence in the Police is higher than it was, as I truly didn't think such a difference would or could be achieved"

Recognition has not only come from the community but also from an officer who has recently retired and worked in the area for 30 years, who said *"It is the best Villa Road has been for as long as I can remember."* Councillor Hussein, who is the chair of the Constituency Strategic Partnership and ex Lord Mayor of Birmingham, has expressed public gratitude and recognition for the work and successes in the Lozells and East Handsworth Neighbourhood.

Operation Courier has recently been selected for the impending HMIC inspection as best practice for neighbourhood policing and we have recently had a visit from a European film crew who completed a short documentary on neighbourhood policing in Lozells following recent disorder in France. During the filming the crew was approached by a local resident who insisted in telling them of the changes and good work of the neighbourhood teams.

The reports and intelligence of drug dealing and street working in the area has vastly reduced and this is borne out during OCU strategic assessment and review data.

Operation Courier continues to develop and we continue to learn from our experiences. This, coupled with its sustainability, has been one of its strengths. Capacity building opportunities are being sought and other agencies and voluntary groups, such as the Vulnerable Woman's Group, ensures that we continue to address wider issues and provide long term problem solving solutions.

The final phase is the regeneration of the area and work has already started on the 'Master Plan' of which the police continue to influence and contribute to.

State number of words used: 3,986

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.