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28 April 2008

Dear Sir

Tilley Award Nomination

It gives me great pleasure to endorse the nomination of Operation Breakthrough for the Tilley Award 2008.

This initiative adopted a problem solving approach to reducing criminal damage in Bury St Edmunds. The volume of damage being committed prior to this operation was rising steadily and this prompted Chief Inspector Bacon to review damage trends over the preceding two year period. Comprehensive analysis resulted in a wide range of responses being implemented in partnership with St Edmundsbury Borough Council. At the conclusion of Operation Breakthrough the volume of reported damage offences had reduced by 16.8%, which is tremendous.

I can confirm that the application is accurate and St Edmundsbury Borough Council is aware of this entry.

Yours faithfully

P MARSHALL
Chief Superintendent
Western Area Commander
paul.marshall@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED



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. Operation Breakthrough
2. Criminal Damage in Bury St Edmunds

Author contact details

3. Chief Inspector Mike Bacon
4. Organisation submitting the application: Suffolk Constabulary
5. Full postal address: Police Station, Raingate Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 2AP
6. Email address: mike.bacon@suffolk.pnn.police.uk
7. Telephone number: 01284 774102

Secondary project contact details

8. Name of secondary contact involved in the project: Helen Lindfield, Community Safety Officer, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Angel Hill, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 1XB
9. Secondary contact email address: Helen.Lindfield@stedsbc.gov.uk
10. Secondary contact telephone number: 01284 757620

Endorsing representative contact details

11. Name of endorsing senior representative from lead organisation: Chief Superintendent Paul Marshall
12. Endorsing representative's email address: paul.marshall@suffolk.pnn.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 East**

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:

Operation Breakthrough is a project commissioned to reduce the volume of criminal damage in Bury St Edmunds. It is the largest crime category in Bury St Edmunds and in 2005/06 it was also the fastest growing category of crime (accounting for 27.2% of total crime). If criminal damage continued unchecked then it was predicted that the volume of offences would exceed 1200 during 2006/07, which posed a significant threat to the town achieving its crime reduction target. Additionally local residents were becoming concerned about levels of damage. Reducing the volume of damage was also a priority for the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Analysis:

Problem solving methodologies were adopted to identify opportunities for crime reduction, with attention given to the most significant hotspots as well as to core offending groups. Crime trends were analysed over a two-year period with a view to identifying the main problem locations. Four council wards accounted for 66% of all damage in Bury and hotspot locations in each ward were identified, together with a summary of the problem, likely causes and suggested solutions. Factors relating to victim, offender and environment were considered. The locations ranged from areas in and adjacent to the town centre as well as a housing estate. 24 Intelligence gaps were highlighted and answers sought. Once all intelligence gaps were filled, recommendations were made for the response phase, both generic and hotspot specific solutions.

Response:

A project team was established to implement the recommendations chaired by myself and including representatives from the Crime Reduction Unit, Media, District Inspector and Borough Council Community Safety Officer. The main recommendations were that there were clear links to the night time economy, a low perceived risk amongst potential offenders, to raise the profile of damage as a crime, target hardening, increased intelligence and to adopt a problem solving approach. Terms of reference were to reduce the volume of offences compared to 05/06. The initial operation would run for a 12 month period with specific actions focussing upon hotspot locations, victims or offenders. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership provided additional funding.

Assessment:

Upon conclusion of year one of Operation Breakthrough (06/07) the number of damage offences had decreased by 16.8% compared to the previous year (191 less offences). Additionally the operation has provided a 'tactical toolbox' of actions for addressing criminal damage and successful reduction has continued during 07/08.

State number of words: 395

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.

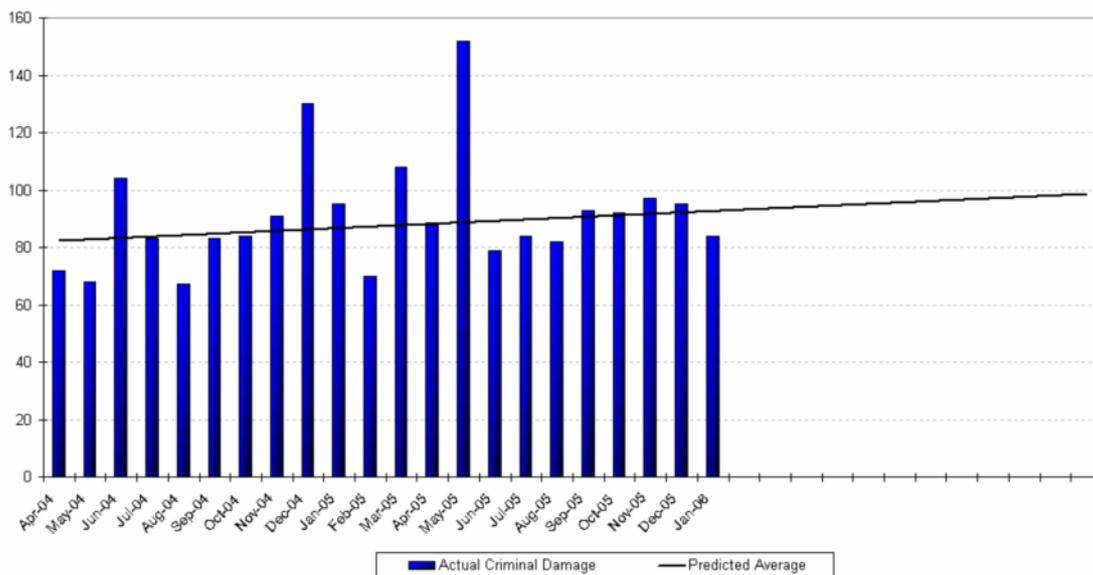
Bury St Edmunds is the third largest town in Suffolk, with a population of 35,000. The town centre attracts many tourists, with its mediaeval street plan and impressive architecture. The town has a vibrant and expanding nighttime economy. I was appointed District Commander with responsibility for Bury St Edmunds in January 2006 and during this time high levels of damage offences were being recorded. As Bury St Edmunds is the largest town in the Western Area Basic Command Unit the high volume of recorded crime was having a detrimental impact upon the BCU performance figures. I was given a clear steer by my Chief Superintendent to reduce levels of damage in the town!

Scanning:

Crime statistics revealed that in 2005/06 criminal damage accounted for 27.2% of all crime in Bury St Edmunds and was also the fastest growing category of crime. Analysis of criminal damage performance over the previous 2 years showed that without intervention the average monthly amount of damage in Bury St Edmunds was likely to continue to grow, with a prediction that by April 2007 the yearly total would reach 1200 offences compared to 1000 in 2006.

29.3% of total damage was committed between 8pm and 4am on a Friday and Saturday evening/night.

Graph showing the actual amounts of monthly criminal damage in Bury St Edmunds compared to the predicted average amounts for 2006.



Reducing the volume of damage was an objective of the Force Control Strategy as well as a priority for the Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Additionally, concerns were expressed by the shop owners in and around the town centre whose premises were being damaged on a Friday and Saturday evening and residents on a particular housing estate who were affected by damage to vehicles, premises and garden walls. GO East, had also identified the increase in criminal damage offences as a concern that required addressing.

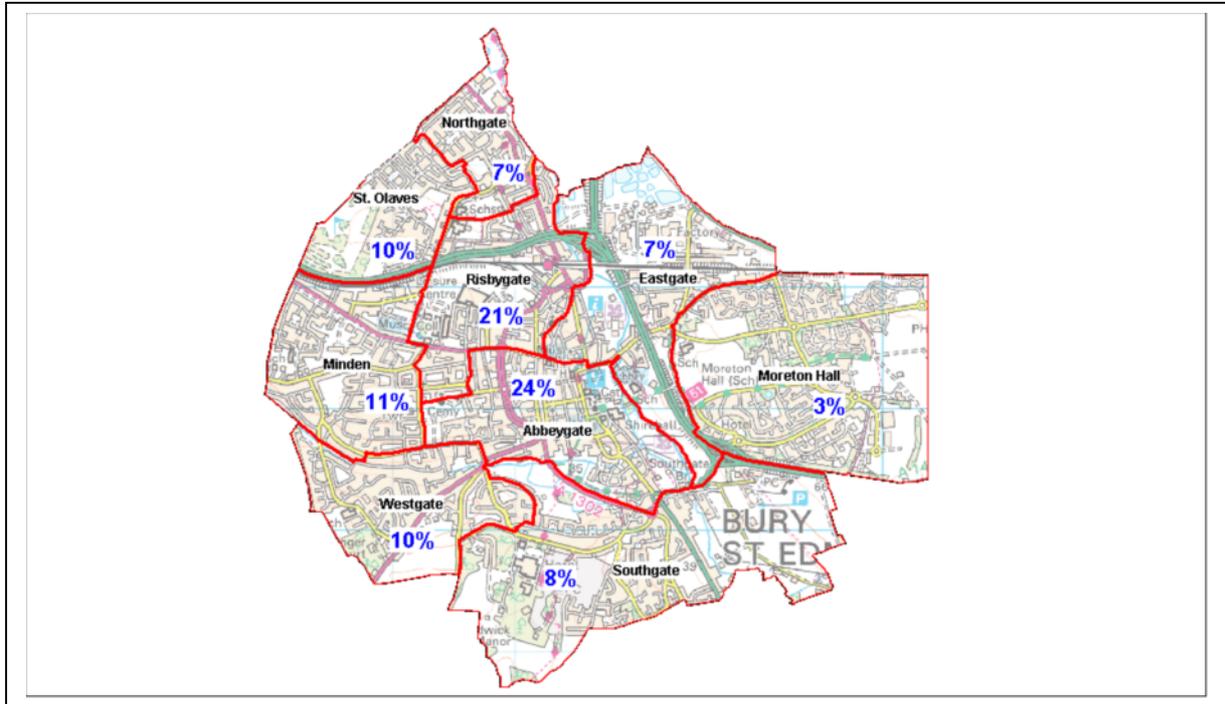
I resolved to create a long-term solution to reduce the volume of damage offences as it had a major impact upon the many victims, both emotionally and financially. Historically, damage had not been tackled using a sustainable and structured analytical approach and the absence of national 'best practice' illustrated this fact.

Following discussion with Senior Analyst Matt Bland we decided to commence a project that would use problem solving methodologies to identify opportunities to reduce the volume of criminal damage in Bury St Edmunds during 2006/07. As damage is a broad crime category it was logical to accept that police will have the greatest impact upon crime figures by targeting the biggest problems, focussing upon hotspots, offender and victim.

Analysis:

Damage crimes that had been committed in Bury St Edmunds between 2004 and 2006 were analysed and broken down into geographical hotspot locations. The town consists of eight District Council Wards and four wards in the town accounted for 66% of all reported damage.

Hotspot Locations



These were Abbeygate and Risbygate in the town centre and Minden and Westgate, which are predominantly housing estates.

Subsequent analysis was broken down into four sections, one for each ward. The content of each section addresses key contributory issues to damage with regards to the profile of victims, offender and location.

The analysis identified the problem in each ward, the causes and offered solutions to these problems as well as identifying the potential reduction in offences if the suggestions were implemented. Intelligence gaps for each ward were raised. Please see examples below which are taken from the analytical document detailing findings in relation to Abbeygate and Minden Wards.

Abbeygate Ward

The Town Centre

The Problem

Reducing nighttime economy related criminal damage in the town centre is the biggest challenge for Bury St. Edmunds sector but potentially yields the greatest benefit.

The central shopping precinct area of Bury St. Edmunds accounts for over a third of all the criminal damage in the Abbeygate ward. Over half of this damage takes place during the hours most associated with the nighttime economy (Thu-Sat nights). This is almost exclusively to shop windows or parked vehicles. In most cases there is no evidence of attempt at theft, which indicates that the offences are alcohol related.

The peak period for alcohol related damage in the town centre is during May to August and again in November. Offending is greatly reduced during January.

The Offenders

Some repeat offenders have been identified in connection with the town centre, mainly concerning damage to vehicles.

The Causes

This area suffers from a considerable number of crime attractors – most notably the licensed premises, restaurants and fast food outlets. This situation presents both a generator and enabler of crime. This presents several opportunities for crime prevention in the town centre via:

INTELLIGENCE GAPS

- How many officers are deployed on patrol duty in BSE on Thu/Fri/Sat late shifts?
- Is CCTV utilised on Thu/Fri/Sat to help police respond and if not, is this feasible?
- Is banning criminal damage offenders from town centre licensed premises a feasible option?
- Are offenders aware of the risks of committing crime?
- Are shop owners prepared to contribute (financially or otherwise) to crime prevention measures?
- Where are Thu/Fri/Sat late shifts deployed in BSE town centre?

The Solutions

Solutions should be based around the identified causes of crime. The following are proposed but have not been assessed for cost benefit or feasibility at this stage:

Tactic	Cause Addressed	Term
Hotspot patrols at key times.	Increased protection, higher risk for offenders	Short to mid term
Use of CCTV to direct patrols and response units	Increase protection, higher risk	Long term
Advertise CCTV around town	Increased protection and risk	Long term
Park mobile patrol vehicles in hotspot locations	Increased protection and risk	Short to mid term
Use CCTV car(s) in hotspot locations	Increased protection and risk	Short to mid term
Ban offenders from the town centre	Offender discouragement	Long term
Initiate media campaign advertising risks	Increased perception of risk	Short term
Hand out branded material at club and pub entrances	Increased perception of risk	Short to mid term
Place posters in key locations in the town	Increased perception of risk	Short to mid term
Place posters in shop windows	Increased perception of risk	Long term
Encourage business to protect own windows	Improved protection	Long term
Create database of offenders and trigger plan of activity	Offender discouragement	Long term
Include offenders on Pubwatch roster	Offender discouragement	Long term

POTENTIAL SAVING: 75 CRIMES PER YEAR

Minden Ward

- 11% of criminal damage in BSE
- A residential ward located to the east of the town centre, containing the oldest housing estate in Bury St Edmunds, the Priors Estate.
- High number of resident offenders who commit crime on the estate and in other parts of Bury St. Edmunds.

The Priors Estate

The Problem

Hotspot mapping shows the most significant repeat location in this ward to be All Saints Church and the adjoining Church Hall, situated on Park Road. Over the last 3 and a half years this hotspot has accounted for 4% of all damage in Minden.

There are 4 main streets within the Priors Estate hotspot that have suffered from criminal damage, Ashwell Road, Highbury Road, Brockesby Walk and Park Road. Of these, Ashwell Road has seen significantly more crimes than the other streets, accounting for over 60% of the offences. It is also the only street to see an increase in 2005.

The crimes are not day specific but 60% have occurred between the hours of 16:00 and midnight. There is no evidence of crimes being related to alcohol. The offences comprise damage to dwellings (50%) and vehicles parked in this vicinity (37%) and centres primarily on dwelling and vehicle windows.

The Offenders

Offenders from the Priors Estate frequently commit crime and anti-social behaviour in the town centre as well.

Within the current group of Priors Estate offenders are some of the most persistent targets in the St. Edmundsbury District. Limited success has been achieved in the past with anti-social behaviour legislation and targeted patrolling. The group in question regularly drinks (illegally) and is found wandering the estate after midnight. Besides criminal damage, the group causes nuisance to local residents. This operation will look to address the long-term criminality of the individuals but some attention should still be paid to gathering intelligence in order to find preventative solutions.

The Causes

The Priors Estate does not suffer from environmental crime enablers as it is well laid out and offers fewer opportunities for crimes to be committed, unlike estates designed in the 1960's. Of the crimes that have occurred this year, a third have been committed by youths and this is a pattern which has developed in this area of Bury St Edmunds with Operation Hare, a large series of damage that took place at the end of 2004/beginning of 2005. Whilst these offenders were dealt with using ASB legislation and are no longer living in the area, the next generation of would be offenders have now come to notice.

Analysis of the repeat locations in Ashwell Road shows two causation trends. Damage is caused as a type of persecution against residents on the estate, (e.g. the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator and a family recently moved to the street), or it occurs as a result of disputes, be they domestic, acquaintance or neighbour. The close-knit nature of this community hampers the investigation of incidents and the subsequent apprehension of offenders, as witnesses are reluctant to come forward, frightened of retaliation.

INTELLIGENCE GAPS

- What, if any, youth activities currently exist for children resident on the estate?
- Would Havebury Housing Association be able to provide toughened glass for all future replacement windows?
- What is the current intelligence picture on the key criminal damage offenders on the Priors Estate?

POTENTIAL SAVING: 36 CRIMES PER YEAR

Similar analysis was carried out for other wards in Bury St Edmunds.

24 intelligence gaps in total were highlighted and addressed by staff, with the findings re-submitted to the Senior Analyst for preparation of a second document, which included recommended solutions.

Summary of Intelligence Gaps

Intelligence Gap Number	Hotspot	Requirement
1	Abbeygate: Town Centre	How many officers are deployed on patrol duty in BSE on Thu/Fri/Sat late shifts?
2	Abbeygate: Town Centre	Is CCTV utilised on Thu/Fri/Sat to help police respond and if not, is this feasible?
3	Abbeygate: Town Centre	Is banning criminal damage offenders from town centre licensed premises a feasible option?
4	Abbeygate: Town Centre	Are offenders aware of the risks of committing crime?
5	Abbeygate: Town Centre	Are shop owners prepared to contribute (financially or otherwise) to crime prevention measures?
6	Abbeygate: Town Centre	Where are Thu/Fri/Sat late shifts deployed in BSE town centre?
7	Abbeygate: Westgate St.	What is the current set-up for liaison with the YMCA?
8	Abbeygate: Westgate St.	Who is currently staying at the YMCA?
9	Abbeygate: Westgate St.	What "anti-crime" marketing material is there currently at the YMCA?
10	Abbeygate: Westgate St.	Does or can the YMCA impose any penalties on residents who commit crime?
11	Risbygate: Town Centre Border	Are the key roads within this hotspot patrolled at weekends?
12	Risbygate: Town Centre Border	Where are the CCTV points on the key roads?
13	Risbygate: Town Centre Border	Is there another location where cars could be parked at peak crime times?
14	Risbygate: Vicinity of Station Hill	What are the possibilities/implications of instigating a zero tolerance/banning policy?
15	Risbygate: Vicinity of Station Hill	Is there another location where cars could be parked at peak crime times?
16	Risbygate: Vicinity of Station Hill	What measures are landlords currently taking to ensure that people do not become over intoxicated?
17	Risbygate: King Edward VI High School	What funding is available to improve security at the school?
18	Risbygate: King Edward VI High School	What is the main source of missiles for offenders – is it within the school or do they bring in their own? Can these missiles be removed?
19	Minden: Priors Estate	What, if any, youth activities currently exist for children resident on the estate?
20	Minden: Priors Estate	Would Havebury Housing Association be able to provide toughened glass for all future replacement windows?
21	Minden: Priors Estate	What is the current intelligence picture on the key criminal damage offenders on the Priors Estate?
22	Westgate: Childrens Home	What communication links currently exist between the Children's Home and the police?

23	Westgate: Childrens Home	Who is currently living at the Childrens Home and what other types of crime have they committed/do they commit?
24	Westgate: Childrens Home	Are there any crime prevention techniques that could be utilised in and around the Childrens Home?

When responses to the intelligence gaps were received, general recommendations were made.

These identified

- Links to the night time economy
- The low perceived risk amongst potential offenders
- The need to raise the profile of criminal damage as an offence
- Target hardening opportunities
- Improved intelligence required about offenders
- The need for a long term problem solving approach

Hotspot specific recommendations were also made.

Analysis showed that much of the volume crime problem in Bury St. Edmunds is linked to the nighttime economy. In reality, few offenders are caught and those that are face light punishment. Subsequently there is a low perceived risk among potential offenders.

In order to be successful it was crucial that Operation Breakthrough sought to raise the perceived risk of offending in order to deter crimes and anti-social behaviour before it happens. There are two main methods to achieving this: a) to raise the profile of criminal damage and b) to raise the consequences of committing crime.

It was also crucial that the Operation Breakthrough project team identified clear objectives for the project. On the basis of the terms of reference for the scanning and analytical phases of this project it was recommended that the following were considered as objectives:

1. To reduce the number of criminal damage offences in Bury St. Edmunds during the period 2006-2007 year.
2. To increase public awareness of criminal damage in Bury St. Edmunds

Response:

In order to maximise the opportunity for success the operation would run for a period of 12 months from April 2006 to March 2007. A project management team was established, chaired by myself and consisting of the District Inspector, Town Centre Sergeant, Crime Reduction Officer, Media and Press officer and the Borough Council Community Safety Officer. The Community Safety Officer also provided funding support for the operation.

In view of the fact that raising the profile of damage was a key objective, I decided to brand this initiative as Operation Breakthrough.

Hotspot recommendations were given to action owners to progress and report back to the project team. A range of measures based upon the analytical recommendations were then implemented.

Criminal Damage Team

A dedicated criminal damage team, consisting of two officers, was created to provide a consistent focus to some of the Breakthrough objectives. Their remit included the investigation of damage series in a hotspot, ownership of the mobile CCTV camera and auditing of all damage offences to ensure all investigation opportunities have been identified as well. The team also worked alternate Friday and Saturday evenings when their task was to identify people via the local CCTV Control room who were acting in a disorderly manner and intercepting them before damage occurred or to arrest after the offence is committed.

Mobile CCTV Cameras.

Crime Reduction Partnership mobile CCTV cameras were deployed to identified hotspots. Images are downloaded via a laptop. Image quality is dependent upon ambient lighting though and while this tactic did not identify any offenders it did act as a deterrent because of its obvious presence.

Poster Campaign

A poster was designed to raise public awareness of Operation Breakthrough and the risks and consequences of being caught. This was displayed in licensed premises, youth clubs and schools. *See attached copy of poster.*

CCTV Control Room

Officers on light duties and Special Constables were deployed to the Borough CCTV Control room to assist in identifying potential offenders in the town centre and prevent damage linked to the night time economy.

Chamber of Commerce

Operation Breakthrough was promoted to all businesses in the town centre via key partners at the Chamber of Commerce and a letter circulated identifying key crime reduction measures that could be implemented to prevent a business becoming a victim of damage. This included using laminated glass and removing graffiti as soon as possible.

PubWatch

Members of the PubWatch committee in Bury St Edmunds (100% membership) agreed to ban any person convicted of damaging property in the town centre while under the influence of alcohol. Operation Breakthrough was an agenda item at Pub Watch banning meetings. Subsequent bannings were publicised in the local media.

Childrens Home

A children's home situated on the border of Westgate and Minden Ward had generated a damage hotspot location and a problem-solving project was implemented here. This included the use of an 'incentivisation' scheme in partnership with local shops whereby giving the children vouchers to spend locally rewarded a period of good behaviour. A PCSO was also nominated to become a regular link between the local police and the home. Crime and Disorder Partnership Funding was used to enable diversionary activities to be undertaken with the children in conjunction with youth workers and police.

Alternative Parking

In Risbygate ward, St Andrews Street regularly suffered damage to vehicles at weekends when nightclub revellers walked from the town centre back to the housing estates. Wing mirrors and aerials were common targets. Options were explored with St Edmundsbury Borough Council to encourage local residents to park their cars in the nearby public car parks rather than on the street on these evenings, removing the problem. However people were extremely reluctant to change their parking habits and this approach was not successful.

Availability of children's activities

On the Priors Estate in the Minden Ward, high levels of damage were experienced, especially the trend of pushing over garden walls. Observations were conducted to identify offenders although this was not successful. Suspects were then visited by the Criminal Damage Team and informed that they were actively investigating these offences. The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit arranged targeted youth activities on the estate such as 'Turn Up and Play' and also deployed detached youth workers to divert this minority from offending behaviour.

Crime Reduction Leaflets

Branded Operation Breakthrough A5 leaflets were delivered to residents in hot spots streets advising them to fold the wing mirrors and remove the aerials on their cars to avoid becoming a damage victim. The key message being 'Help us Breakthrough damage'.

Internal Marketing

A key issue was to reinforce the importance of Operation Breakthrough with patrol staff. There was a culture of 'how can we reduce damage...it happens all of the time?'. I championed this cause, raising the profile of damage to such an extent that I would ensure that a series of offences in a particular locality was investigated thoroughly with house to house enquiries and that sufficient staff were made available to do this. This did not happen prior to Breakthrough, as damage was not considered a priority. This sent out an important message to both staff and the public.

Door Supervisors

After much persuasion, Door Supervisors agreed to wear a fluorescent yellow armband and act as 'damage spotters', working in partnership with the police. They were encouraged to be vigilant in the streets adjacent to the licensed premises and contact police should they witness damage being caused.

Street Lighting

Crime reduction surveys were conducted in hotspot locations. Suffolk County Council agreed to upgrade street lighting in identified locations to discourage offending. This proved successful in Cannon Street.

Parking of Police Vehicles

Marked police vehicles (that were coming to the end of their working lives) were procured from Headquarters and parked unattended in hotspot locations to act as a visible deterrent. The Criminal Damage Team moved the vehicles around at frequent intervals to act as a mobile deterrent.

Assessment:

At the conclusion of Operation Breakthrough in March 2007 the project was evaluated. The number of damage offences recorded compared to 05/06 had reduced by 16.8%, which was 191 less crimes. The largest reductions were in the town centre wards, Abbeygate and Risbygate.

WARD:	POTENTIAL SAVINGS:	ACTUAL SAVINGS:
Abbeygate	95 crimes	50
Risbygate	77 crimes	51
Westgate	31 crimes	36
Minden	67 crimes	22

The key success factors for Operation Breakthrough were

- A comprehensive analytical product.
- The greatest success was in hotspots linked to the night time economy
- Long-term actions and dedicated resources.
- Changing the 'damage culture' both internally and externally.

The successful tactics implemented during Operation Breakthrough have now been adopted by the Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

So far during 2007/08, damage in the Bury Central Safer Neighbourhood Team (which encompasses Abbeygate and Risbygate Ward) has reduced by 9.2% when compared to 06/07. This demonstrates that 'tools' acquired during Operation Breakthrough continue to have success in reducing damage.

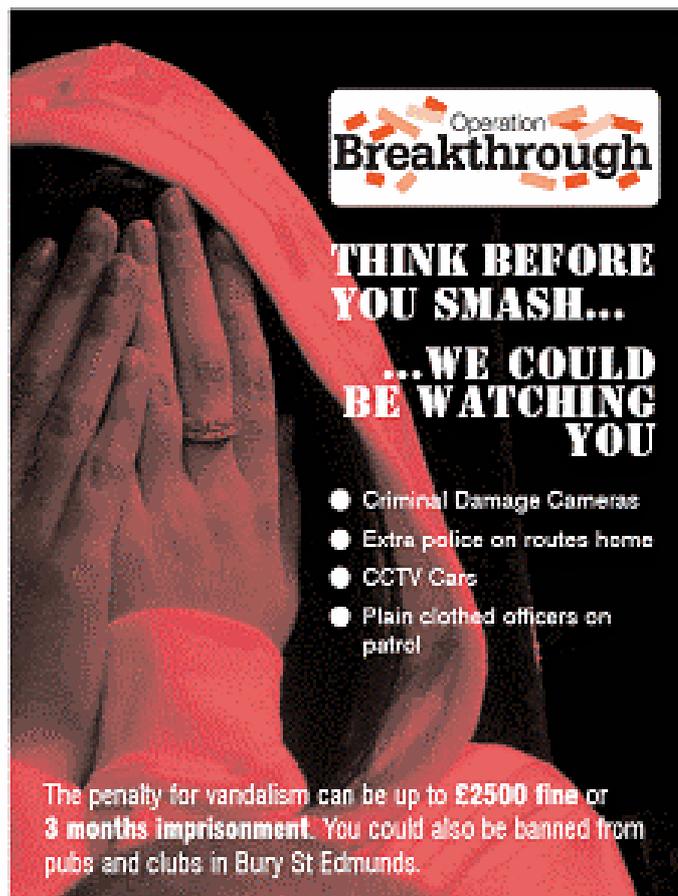
The majority of tactics used contributed towards a reduction in the volume of offences. Measures, which required a change of habit, such as advising people to park their cars in off road locations such as car parks, were less impactful.

In April 2007 the Police Crime Standards Directorate received a briefing on Operation Breakthrough. They were researching existing damage projects nationally and had been invited to Suffolk to see how a smaller Force tackles these issues.

The presentation was well received. Operation Breakthrough was the only project that they had seen which used a long-term problem solving approach to reduce damage and I was advised to submit to the Tilley Awards.

State number of words used: 3555

**OPERATION BREAKTHROUGH POSTER DISPLAYED IN LICENSED PREMISES,
SCHOOLS AND YOUTH CLUBS IN BURY ST EDMUNDS**



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.