



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: *"Parklife"*: Combating Disorder through Partnership in Lower Morden, Merton
2. Key issue that the project is addressing e.g. Alcohol related violence: Anti Social Behaviour in Open Spaces

Author contact details

3. Name of application author: Chris Williams
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Secondary project contact details

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Endorsing representative contact details

11. Name of endorsing senior representative from lead organisation: Annalise Elliott

12. Endorsing representative's email address: annalise.Elliott@merton.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:

Analysis of Merton's 2005 Annual Resident's Survey identified the Lower Morden ward as having the second highest fear of crime in the borough, despite having the lowest level of actual crime.

Analysis:

A consultation exercise found the cause to be King George's Playing Field, a park situated in the centre of the ward, whose broken down fence allowed access to the park via open, privately owned alleyways. There was increasing youth disorder in the park and in the streets around it, as it had become a focus for the gathering of local youths to drink and smoke. The quiet residential streets in the vicinity became awash with graffiti. A park ranger living in a tied house in the park was subject to frightening victimisation.

Response:

Funding was acquired to replace the fence for the 1.5km perimeter of the park with a 2.7m high ultra-modern variant. Resident Action Groups were formed around existing Neighbourhood Watches and alleygates installed. These Resident Groups were given Incident Diaries in which to record anti-social behaviour, as there was an issue with under-reporting. Intelligence gathered from these diaries led to the identification of a cannabis factory next to the park, which was selling drugs to the young people on the park. This was raided and an arrest was made.

Diversion and engagement of the youths in the park took place, led by the Safer Neighbourhoods Police team but with assistance from youth outreach workers, and "Reclaim the Park" events took place, including several youth football tournaments organised by the local police team.

Assessment:

Fear of crime in the ward dropped from 75% claiming to be "very" or "fairly" worried about crime in 2005, to 54% in 2007.

Calls to police in the park or its perimeter dropped by 16.5%, and graffiti callouts to the park dropped by 39% over a six-month comparative period.

There was no evidence of displacement either to the surrounding streets or to nearby green spaces. It seems likely that the young people ceased gathering en masse once the park became harder to access and the cannabis factory was closed, and instead dissipated across the area and back into the neighbouring Sutton borough, where many of the young people were suspected to have originated. A youth centre is being established in an old pavilion in the park to give local young people somewhere to go.

State number of words: 393

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.

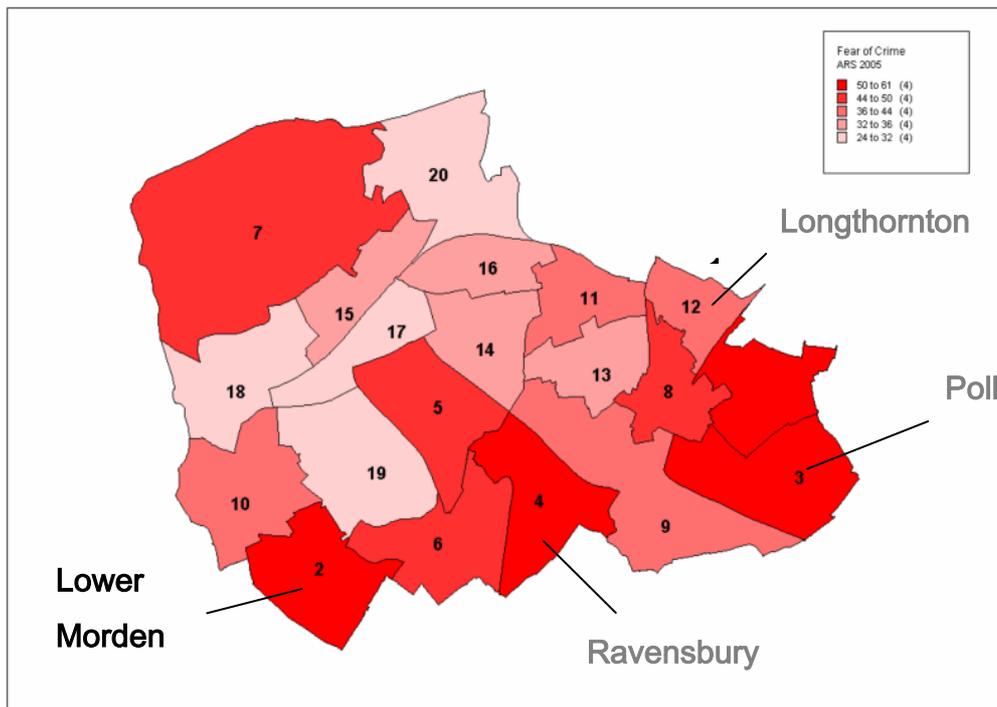
Scanning:

Lower Morden is a quiet residential ward on the southwest edge of the London Borough of Merton. It has the lowest levels of recorded crime in the borough, with just 51% of the average amount of recorded crime in Merton.

Ward	Offences per 1000 Population
1.Lower Morden	48.01
2.Cannon Hill	51.04
3.Raynes Park	58.33
<i>Merton</i>	91.93

**Fig. 1.1
Bottom
three
wards for
total
offences,
2005-6**

Despite this, Merton's 2005 Annual Residents' Survey identified that levels fear of both crime and anti-social behaviour (henceforth ASB) amongst Lower Morden's residents were the 2nd highest in the borough.



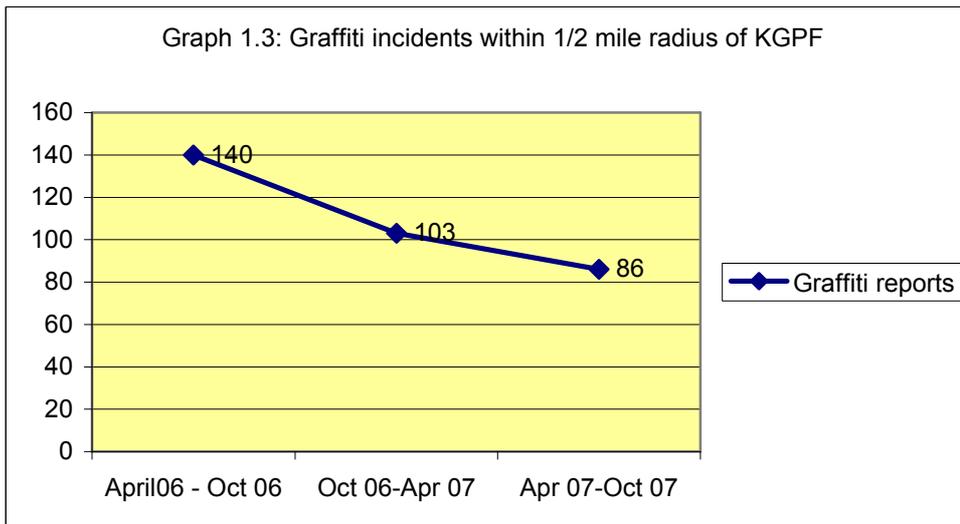
**Fig. 1.2
Merton
Annual
Resident's
Survey
Results,
2005**

The significant size of the Reassurance Gap was followed by consultations with local residents, the results of which provided reinforcement to the findings of the survey and led to the initiation of a problem-solving process in June 2006 with the objective of reducing the fear of crime. The consultations identified that the main cause of fear was issues of youth disorder in the local park, King George's Playing Fields (henceforth KGPF).

The local Safer Neighbourhoods Police Team (SNT) reinforced this, establishing that the number one source of complaints for residents was disorder in the park, which led to high levels of fear for residents surrounding it. The drivers for the process, therefore, came from both the local residents, who were complaining to the Safer Neighbourhoods Team about disorder in the park; and from the wider partnership, concerned about rising fear levels and the reassurance gap. The Local Strategic Partnership have a Local Area Agreement to reduce the fear of crime by 5% over the three years to 2007-8.

Analysis:

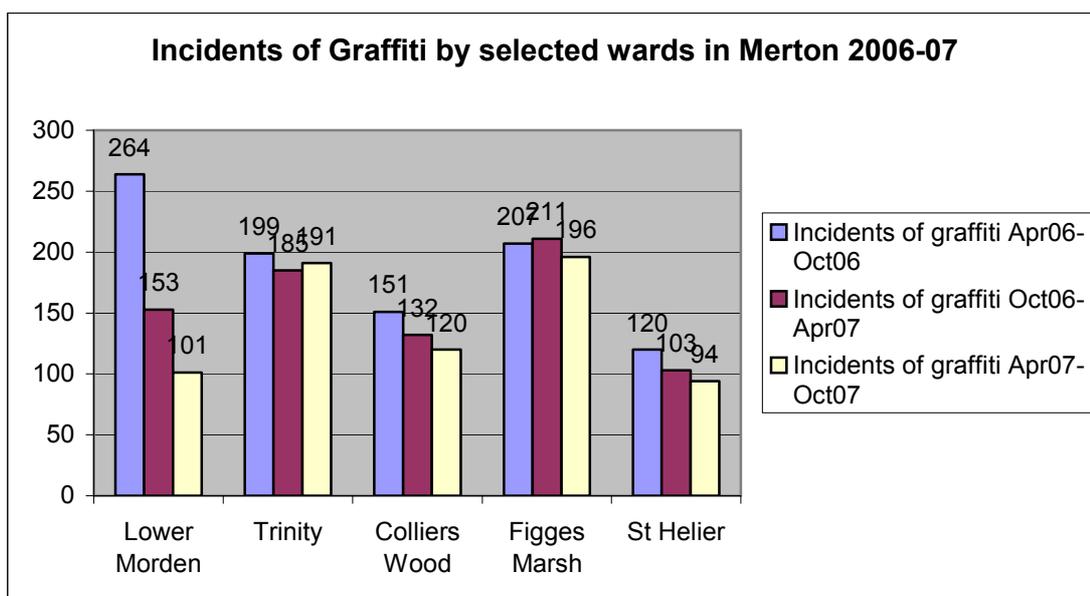
In the initial phase of analysis, police and partnership analysts looked at calls to service for ASB and disorder in Lower Morden. The analysis showed that whilst these were concentrated on the perimeters and in roads with access to the park, there was little reporting of *actual* incidents within the confines of KGPF. Indeed, of 85 reported incidents between April and September 2006 only 14 (16%) were within the park itself.



This piece of analysis threw up several major issues: Firstly, in the annual residents' survey of 2005 Lower Morden revealed the second highest fear of crime index of the twenty wards in Merton, despite having the lowest quantity of actual crime over the same period. This data obviously begged the question: if Lower Morden was such a low-crime/disorder ward, why did residents manifest such high fear of crime levels?

This then led the group to question whether the park might be a centre for unreported ASB and disorder; and thirdly, if it was, who was committing the offences?

Needing to go beyond drawing conclusions based purely on analysis of reported crimes, it was recognized that data needed to be collected from a broader cross-section of stakeholders and agencies. The tracking of graffiti offences within the park proved the first major breakthrough as this demonstrated high levels of criminal damage within the park itself that were going unreported beyond the London Borough of Merton's Enforcement Team (see graph 1.3)

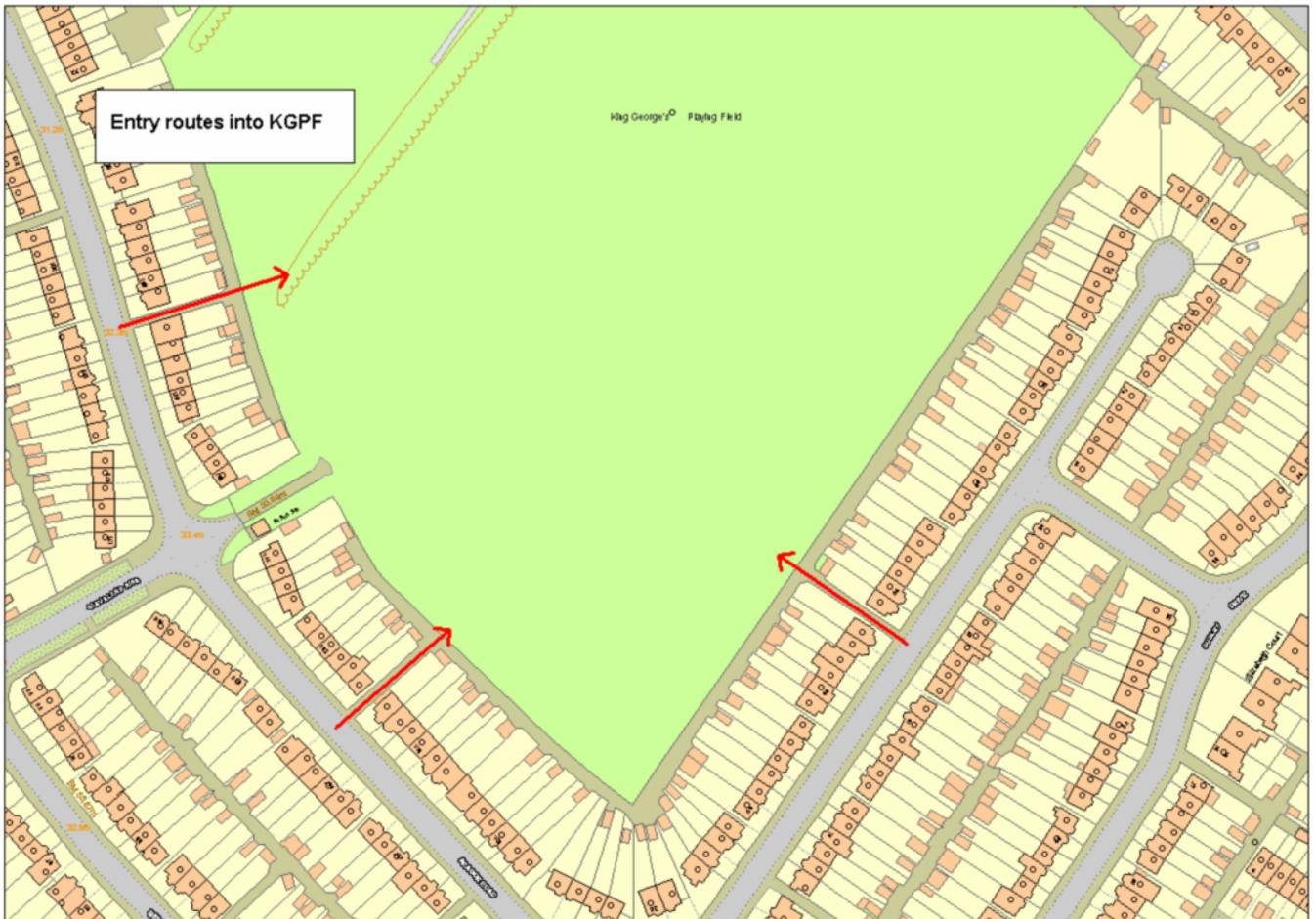


Although superficial conclusions drawn from the graffiti statistics might point to young people perpetrating the crimes, it was the valuable input of the local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) that allowed for the compiling of more precise profiles of those in the park. The SNT patrols revealed important information, not only regarding the age and gender of those they engaged in the park, but also allowed for geographical variables to come into play. Indeed, the SNT team reported that they repeatedly engaged groups of 13-18 year olds via stop and searches carried out within the park itself; a proportion of who were local to the ward, but a significant number of who stated they were from the neighbouring borough of Sutton, the border of which is very close to KGPF.

Contact was then made with colleagues from Sutton CDRP who explained that the parks immediately within their borders all had far tighter restrictions on young people congregating. Particularly significant was the fact that Sutton has a Parks Police service that patrols its 43 parks. We concluded that at least some of those in the park after hours were Sutton young people who were being displaced into KGPF, as it was relatively secluded, close to Sutton's borders and allowed for easy access.

Of the young people that the SNT engaged who stated they were from Merton, some were local to Lower Morden, but officers repeatedly found that young people from the adjacent St. Helier ward were amongst those in the park. The significance of this emerged when the young people often stated that the dispersal zone in place in St. Helier was leading to them being displaced and KGPF was a convenient and isolated location. Significantly, a high proportion of the young people from both Lower Morden and St. Helier identified that there was no diversionary provision in the immediate vicinity for them to attend; the closest youth club was two miles away and had had to reduce its activities due to funding cuts.

Whilst this information allowed the partnership to begin to construct a picture relating to the movement of young people in and out of the park, there was still a gap in information relating to actual incidents within the park. The park was being locked up at dusk or 9pm (whichever was sooner), but young people were entering the park through the alleyways running round it and over the broken fence. The map below shows how young people entered the park via alleyways.



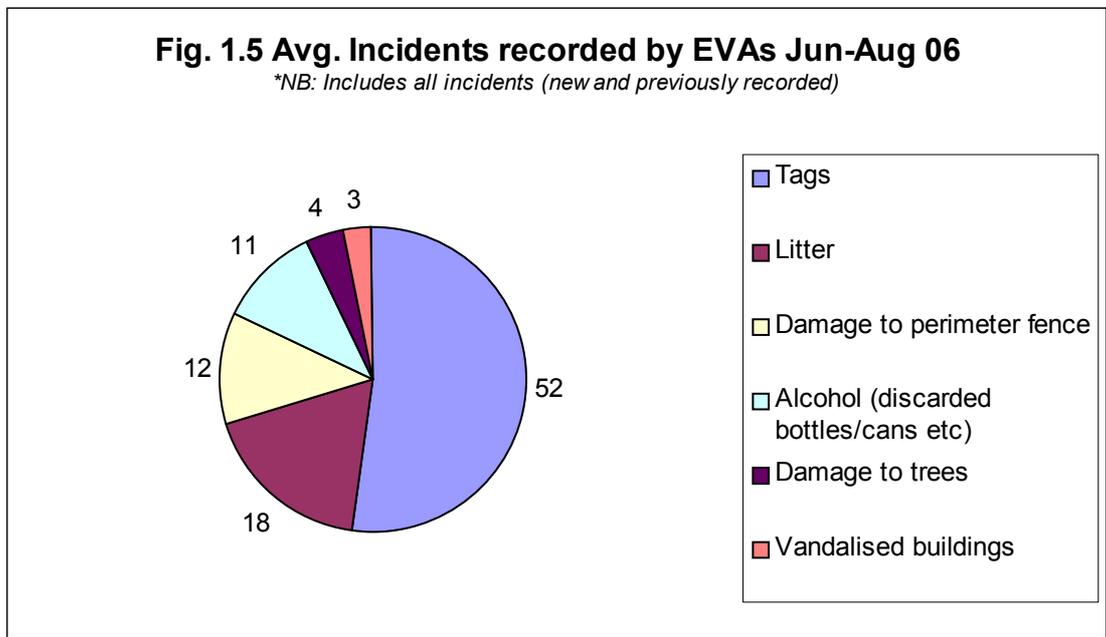
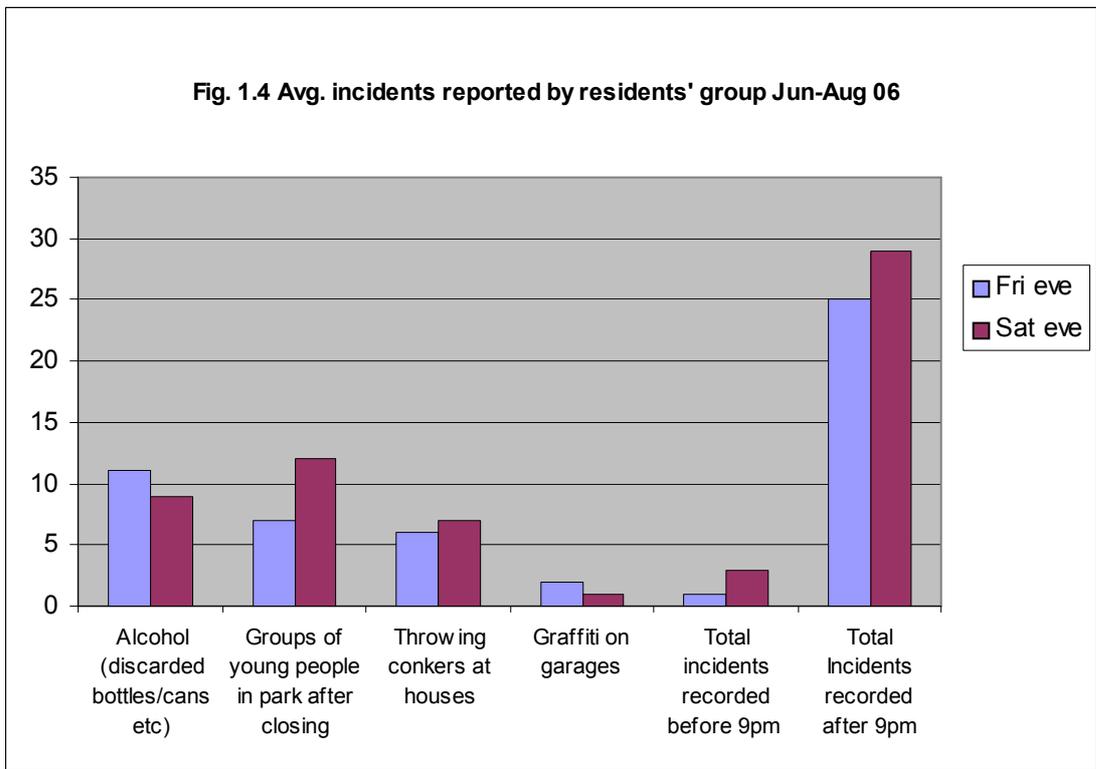
This led the partnership to assess how information regarding incidents might be collected. It was concluded that given the high levels of insecurity amongst residents, it would be beneficial to contact the Key Individual Network of residents on a weekly basis to ascertain ongoing issues, who resides in the park itself, over a period of three months.

As more interviews were carried out, it was noted that interviews in the immediate aftermath of the weekend revealed particularly high levels of dissatisfaction and anecdotal reporting of young people causing disorder by both the ranger and local residents. However, this could simply be explained that residents were more likely to witness disorder, as they were present for a much greater proportion of the day. Regardless, this was still impacting on their feelings of security and perceptions of their area.

The difficulty was to quantify this anecdotal data in a way that allowed for the sort of detailed analysis that would allow firm conclusions to be drawn. The partnership decided that a two-stage approach was required. Firstly, Environmental Visual Audits (EVAs) of the park were taken at key times over a sustained period to ascertain incidents taking place within KGPF. A multi-agency EVA team was established and carried out a number of audits on Monday mornings to investigate the damage caused by the weekend's activities. Occasionally EVAs took place later in the week to see if there was much difference; it was noted that littering and graffiti levels were higher on Mondays than later in the week.

The second stage involved the partnership pulling together a Key Individual Network of 20 residents (loosely collated from the local Neighbourhood Watch) whose homes backed directly onto the park. On the basis that residents were more likely to record incidents in a diary or verbally rather than phone the local SNT or dial 999, the group were given Incident Diaries and re-interviewed using set questions (relating to ASB/disorder, graffiti, and their times and locations within KGPF) following EVAs. The park was divided into sections and residents were asked to roughly map areas where they witnessed groups of young

people congregating. The results of the EVAs and Resident Group analyses are shown in figures 1.4 and 1.5.



The most significant findings of the research revealed that there were high levels of ASB/disorder within the confines of the actual park after 9pm despite the fact that the park was closed (the gates locked) at

dusk. Access to the park was through side alleys that ran around the southern and eastern border of the park.

This led to the question of how groups of young people were gaining access to the park late in the evening/night. The EVAs supported the conclusion that the poor state of the perimeter fencing was a major contributory reason. Access to the park was allowing for groups to congregate after closing, where alcohol was being consumed which was leading to many of the incidents highlighted by residents, the ranger and CAD analysis.

An unexpected, result from the residents’ testimonies was the high concentration of groups in one particular area of the park, the southeastern corner. Conclusions were initially drawn that groups convened there as it was: the most isolated part of the park, furthest away from the main road, and the section where the perimeter fence was in its worst state of disrepair. It subsequently emerged that residents had reported the possibility of a cannabis dealer residing in the vicinity and so whilst previous the initial conclusions were certainly feasible, a new variable was introduced.

Response:

The problem-solving process began in June 2006 and was coordinated by Safer Merton, the borough’s CDRP. In this way, by centrally coordinating multiple responses and agencies, the group sought to accentuate the use of professional experience in the relative areas and avoided duplication of work or action. At the same time, this permitted agencies to share critical information on what might initially have been assumed to be unrelated issues and initiatives. This served to direct the timings and locations of enforcement activities and patrols, and also project content and delivery.

The partnership adopted a flexible approach that divided up responses into three strands: short, medium and long-term, with each strand running through the Problem Analysis Triangle (victim-offender-location).

A number of objectives were set:

Aim	Baseline
To reduce fear of crime in Lower Morden by 5% by October 2007	75% very or fairly worried
To reduce by 10% reports to police in park and perimeter by October 2007	85 reports
To reduce graffiti call outs by 10% by October 2007	140 call outs
To hold two community events by October 2007	0 events
To install four alleygates by October 2007	0 gates

It was hoped that the first stage of the project would be completed by October 2007, with ongoing work continuing beyond this to ensure sustainability and manage resident’s expectations in the long term.

The problem-solving group was aware that none of the three factors that made up the triangle had any priority over either of the others, and this approach allowed for a complementarity of responses that dealt with the full spectrum of variables that impacted on the problem from immediate short-termist perceptions

of local residents through to addressing long-term structural changes to the local area.

Of particular concern to the short-term victim strand of work was the issue of under-reporting, which was the symptomatic manifestation of a lack of confidence in the local police force's ability to respond when called. The empowerment that the formation of the group of incident-recording residents created went some way to addressing this, particularly when the group was interviewed on a weekly basis by CDRP and SNT members. This forged stronger bonds between residents and the SNT that, in turn, allowed for more reliable and consistent reporting structures to be put in place.

Due consideration was given to the problem that such an intense level of consultation with local residents would not be sustainable in the long-term and that this might negatively affect residents' perceptions of local law enforcement once the consultation was concluded. However, in the first instance, this was an indispensable tool in the collection of data, and thus a necessary, but calculated risk, and in the second instance the close relationships that the consultations formed, allowed for this particular issue to be raised immediately and residents responded positively. Action Plans ensured that there would be a long-term strategy for the area with leadership falling to the Parks Dept. and the Police respectively.

Moreover, it was directly due to information passed on by locals that a local warrant was issued for searching the premises of the suspected cannabis dealer and a raid and arrest was carried out on 13th September 2006. This was considered to be successful as we saw an immediate cessation of youths gathering at that end of the park; it seemed that once the source of drugs was removed, the attraction for congregating had also gone.

Recognising the key role played by the graffiti team, the partnership also established a specific incident reporting structure for the graffiti team, including tracking tags of known graffiti offenders to help identification of those involved. A specific graffiti-related subgroup was established with the Merton Enforcement Team, the Met police and Safer Merton. The group developed an online database to track taggers and passed the list onto the local SNT who engaged known offenders and young people more generally when they carried out high-visibility patrols in the park between 2000 and 2200 hours and a concomitant number of stop and searches. These patrols were supported by Task Force officers deployed in a marked carrier so as to reassure residents of a more concentrated police presence at peak times of ASB/disorder.

The issues relating to a lack of diversionary activity in the area were a cause for concern. With the park having been identified as somewhere young people congregated after having been displaced from other areas made it essential that some form of constructive engagement be initiated and that young people be offered structural activities. It was clear that although young people were welcome to use the park during opening times, disorder would not be tolerated. However, as it was accepted that there was little else available in the area for young people, a long-term solution was necessary to prevent displacement.

The diversionary strand of work therefore adopted a two-pronged approach. Firstly, in partnership with the local Endeavour Youth Club (which had had its funding cut), a bid was presented to the Youth Opportunities Fund for redevelopment and staff resources. The bid was presented by a unified group involving the SNT, local residents, young people and youth workers and was successful. A three-month redevelopment project was then initiated and young people involved in the layout, design, acquisition of furniture and the designation of activities during the week that gave the young people ownership and responsibility for their own interventions and actions.

As well as the redevelopment of the youth club, it was realised that young people were in the park as it was a secluded, easy and convenient place for them to meet. As a result, an outreach team of youth workers was designated to the area for a sustained period of engagement. The outreach workers were used to make contact with young people with a view to gaining confidence and trust that will then result in channelling YP's into diversionary activities at the Endeavour as well as mentoring through the use of positive role models.

As outreach work was limited to 15 working hours a week, the SNT had to improve its engagement with young people, which it did admirably. This provided a lot of good anecdotal information that gave direction to many responses, forged strong links between the SNT and local young people, broke down barriers and allowed the SNT to be a medium by which information relating to local initiatives could be passed onto the young people. Diversionary projects were co-ordinated by Safer Merton initially before being passed over to Merton's Youth Service. In 2008 the Youth Service applied for funding to redevelop the old changing rooms in the Park into a part-time youth centre, to give young people a place to congregate safely and under supervision without having to travel the two miles to the Endeavour.

From the point of view of the situational responses, several options were considered. Residents demanded that CCTV be placed around the park and the partnership discussed this at length before deciding it would be an inefficient use of resources. Cameras could have been placed at the entrances but as young people were climbing over and through damaged perimeter fences, it was discarded as an option. Residents were unhappy with this as they saw "parks in Mitcham [a more deprived nearby area] with their own CCTV". However this criticism was taken as part of the raising of local expectations.

Given that the main access for the perpetrators was the damaged fencing, it was agreed that this needed to be replaced. Unfortunately the department responsible for the maintenance of the fence did not possess the necessary funds and so the partnership came together with residents to develop a solution. The partnership allocated 50% of the total cost as leverage funding and the residents approached Viridor, a waste management company, to allocate some Landfill Tax Credit funds towards the remaining 50% of the cost. The fence was installed in March 2007 at a total cost of £60,000. The residents formed a Friends of King George's Group which was able to access this funding source; this also vastly improved community cohesion in the area.

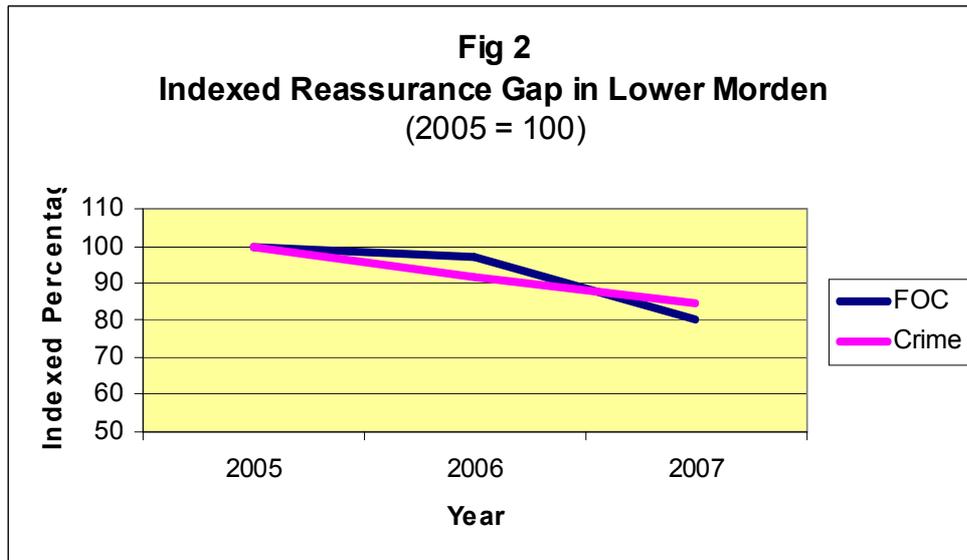
At the same time residents organised a local consultation in partnership with the council's Alleygates coordinator to garner enough support for the installation of six alleygates, strategically placed to block off the ends of the alley that the young people were using to access the park and that were the main locations for graffiti/criminal damage.

This coordinated solution was an effective and quick solution to the access issues that affected KGPF. It also had a positively cohesive effect on the local community that came together to give the project local impetus. The local SNT, conscious of the need to consolidate this cohesive spirit, then organised two community days in the park itself, open to all and with a wide-variety of activities offered by a range of partners from the London Fire Brigade, the Metropolitan Police dogs team through to a football tournament run for the local young people. The first of these events, held in August 2006 was so successful that residents repeatedly approached the SNT for further events and another was organised for October 2006 with equal success. This has had a very positive effect on the social fabric of the area and there were further events held in May and August 2007, with annual events now firmly enshrined in the local calendar.

Assessment:

The evaluation of the KGPF initiative was ongoing with monthly updates fed back to the multi-agency partnership not only on the identified objectives, but also the progress and/or barriers of individual parts of the various strands. The initiative itself concluded in October 2007 when the partnership was brought together to analyse the outcomes and measure success versus the established objectives, though work in the park continues.

The first and most palpable outcome was that the fear of crime index fell sharply (see fig. 2). Comparing 2005 when 75% of residents expressed insecurity around crime, the figure fell to 58% in the 2007 annual residents' survey.



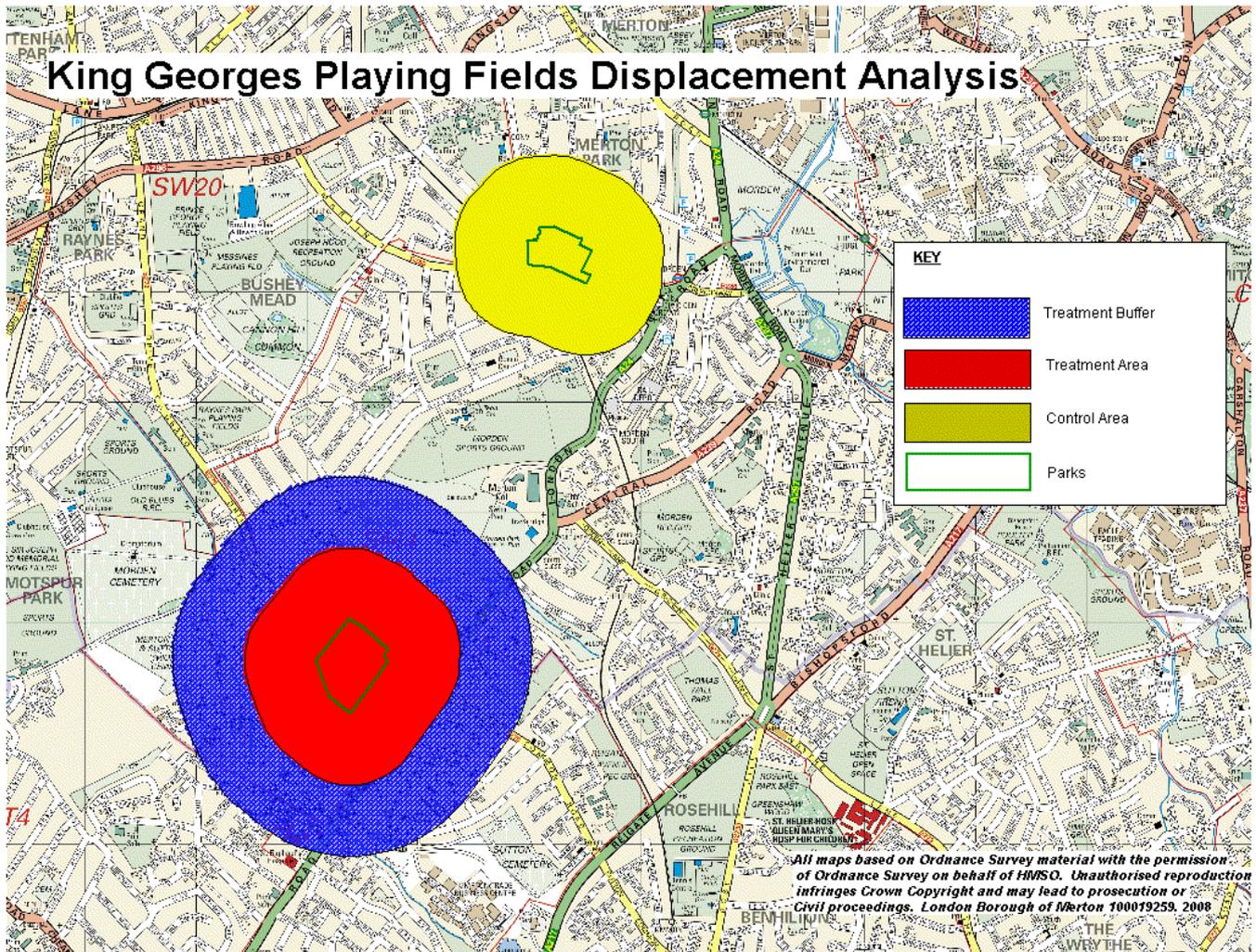
As far as graffiti was concerned the number of callouts fell dramatically from 140 in 2005-06 to 86 in 2006-07, a significant drop of 38.6%. This is a saving of £260,100 according to Cost of Crime figures.

The reduction of 10% in incidents in the park and environs was also achieved, with the number of incidents falling by 16% from 85 to 71 in the year 2006-07.

The replacement of the fence, alleygates and the holding of community cohesive activities were also achieved. The fence around the park was entirely replaced and six alleygates put in place to block off easy access areas. The four community events that were held over 2006-07 served to instill a level of communal confidence and satisfaction in the achievements of the partnership.

We were very keen to ensure that no displacement took place. We measured this by adopting the displacement test analysis devised by Bowers and Johnson (2000). This helps us assess displacement by looking at three areas - the test area (KGPF), a buffer surrounding the test area and a control site (Mostyn Gardens, a similar park in a different part of Merton).

King Georges Playing Fields Displacement Analysis



After averaging out the total crime to ensure that the areas were of comparative size we began the analysis, which consisted of the following steps.

Step 1 - We looked to see if the problem has changed since the response has been initiated. This is called the “Gross Effect”.

Total crimes in the King George’s Playing Field treatment area before the response (–) total after response = decline of 14 (16.5%) crimes

Step 2 - We then looked to see if the response was the reason behind the change. This is called the “Net Effect”.

To do this we compared the change in the treatment area, to the change in the control area - for this exercise Mostyn Gardens was used as the control. This produced a figure of **0.43**, which, indicated that the response was most likely attributable to the intervention.

Step 3 - What was the relative size of the displacement or diffusion? To ascertain this the Weighted Displacement Quotient (WDQ) was used.

Using the formula provided by Bowers and Johnson a figure of 0.172 was produced. This showed that there had been a very small diffusion of benefits to the surrounding area but no displacement had taken place

Step 4 -

To conclude, it was important to find out what the total net effect of the work undertaken in King George's was.

The Total Net Effect for the work undertaken in King George's was 66, which indicated that the intervention had been "highly effective".

SNT Patrols in the buffer areas were increased following the erection of the fence to help minimize the effect of any displacement. This may actually have contributed to a rise in the number of reported crimes in the buffer zone, as police were more likely to apprehend perpetrators and witness events.

Nonetheless, whilst at a statistical level the objectives were exceeded, some of the positive outcomes that the project produced are not so tangibly quantifiable. Indeed, levels of satisfaction with local statutory services (principally the police and council) needed to be maintained for the medium-long term benefits of the work to show through.

Therefore, the partnership decided that in the six months after the closure of the PSP, a further series of in-depth consultations were needed. The group of residents that formed the incident-recording group were re-assembled and interviewed at length. The feedback was extremely positive with 100% (20 out of 20) stating that they felt crime and ASB were "Much" or "A bit" better since the erection of the fences and alleygates, with 60% (12 out of 20) saying it was "much" better. In addition, 100% said they felt the installation of the alleygates had improved their quality of life "a great deal" or "a fair deal", with 70% (14 out of 20) saying it was "much" better.

Aim	Baseline	Performance	Outcome
To reduce fear of crime in Lower Morden by 10% by October 2007	75% very or fairly worried	54% very or fairly worried	-21%
To reduce by 10% reports to police in park and perimeter by October 2007	85 reports	71 reports	-16.5%
To reduce graffiti call outs by 10% by October 2007	140 call outs	86 call outs	-38.6%
To hold two community events by October 2007	0 events	4 events	-
To install four alleygates by October 2007	0 gates	6 installed	

Concluding remarks:

We have seen an excellent overall set of results – a reduction in crime, a reduction in fear of crime, and perhaps most importantly, lasting environmental change (a new fence, new alleygates) and a commitment towards a lasting legacy of diversionary opportunities for young people in an area previously bereft of options, which had led to disorder.

State number of words used: 3,954

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

The work Safer Merton have led on, in partnership with several different agencies, in King George's Playing Fields, Lower Morden has been extremely successful. The team and its partners have made a real difference to people's lives in the area, and the change in "feel" of the area is extraordinary and reflected for me best in the changed attitudes of residents at public meetings.

An elderly resident stood up and said, "The new fence and the work you've done down here has changed my life massively – thank you so much for everything". Testimonies like these tell a far greater story than mere figures on a spreadsheet.

The work in Lower Morden has formed a blueprint for us in Merton as to how we handle issues in parks, and has blazed a trail in working in partnership across services to solve problems.

I therefore give this submission my wholehearted approval.

Annalise Elliott
Safer Merton Manager

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.