



# 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](mailto:tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> 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: **Burnt Tree Community Cohesion Project**

2. Key issue that the project is addressing e.g. Alcohol related violence: **Community Cohesion**

#### Author contact details

3. Name of application author: Rosina Ottewell, Senior Community Safety Officer

4. Organisation submitting the application: **Safer Sandwell Partnership**

5. Full postal address: **Community Safety Unit, Sandwell MBC, Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE**

6. Email address: [rosina\\_ottewell@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:rosina_ottewell@sandwell.gov.uk)

7. Telephone number: **0121 569 3331**

#### Secondary project contact details

8. Name of secondary contact involved in the project: Joan Gooden

9. Secondary contact email address [Joan\\_Gooden@Sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:Joan_Gooden@Sandwell.gov.uk)

10. Secondary contact telephone number: 0121 569 3027

#### Endorsing representative contact details

11. Name of endorsing senior representative from lead organisation: **Mr. Kevin Dennis, Head of Community**

**Safety, Sandwell MBC**

12. Endorsing representative's email address: [kevin\\_dennis@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:kevin_dennis@sandwell.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 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):



**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 Burnt Tree Community Cohesion Group was created in 2007 to deal with on-going and escalating tensions between and within different ethnic groups, a wide variety of anti-social behaviour, drug dealing, petty crime, arson, criminal damage, intimidation and at times violent behaviour in the Tividale area of Sandwell. Subsequently, evidence emerged that a gang culture was beginning to take hold with links to other areas of the borough.

Via Neighbourhood Tasking arrangements on-going problems were identified and intelligence gathered which led to the decision to create the Burnt Tree Community Cohesion Group. In addition to the intelligence from the four weekly Tactical Assessment document, drawn from the anti-social behaviour action line, police data, Sandwell Homes, West Midlands Fire Service, Park Rangers, Sandwell Wardens and others, information was gathered from walkabouts, local schools and colleges, local businesses, meetings and groups not traditionally engaged with (e.g. young Muslim women).

**Analysis:**

**Location** Oldbury is one of six towns that comprise Sandwell. Oldbury is the least deprived town. Burnt Tree, Tividale is a neighbourhood in Oldbury. Mixed housing tenure, major trunk road runs through. Largest Pakistani population in Oldbury town. High pre-school age population, and a low proportion of the population over 60.

**Offender** Large groups of Muslim males acting anti-socially unable/unwilling to engage with other young people in the area. Profile of 'hardcore' young people of Muslim origin:

- Aged between 13 –19
- Majority excluded from school
- No aspirations/motivation
- Unemployed
- Little parental control
- Little respect for any Authority .

**Victims** The rest of the population within the area irrespective of ethnic origin, age, sex; businesses; education establishments; agency workers.

**Response:**

Creation of BTCCG

Interventions from Youth Service, NACRO outreach work.

Alternative education in local schools.

Involvement of Community Liaison Officer by the Tividale and Community Arts College.

**Walkabouts, meetings, planning for real to create an Action Plan for the area.**

**Extra Police, PCSO patrols in area, provision of head cams.**

**Clean up of the area, graffiti removal, cutting down trees and bushes, litter removal.**

**Work to identify possible premises for provision of facilities for young Asian women ongoing.**

**Substantial funding secured for a Multi-use games area.**

**Assessment:**

**No longer appearing as 'hotspot' area in Tactical Assessment.**

**Positive feedback from local residents.**

**Demonstrable improvement in behaviour and attitudes of older Muslim youths. 2 'ring leaders' now in employment.**

**State number of words: 397 (Limit 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.

#### **Introduction**

The Burnt Tree Community Cohesion Group (BTCCG) was created in 2007 to address on-going and escalating tensions between and within different ethnic groups, a wide variety of anti-social behaviour, drug dealing, petty crime, arson, criminal damage, intimidation and at times violent behaviour in the Tividale area of Sandwell. There is evidence to suggest that a gang culture was beginning to take hold with links to other areas of the borough.

Sandwell operates Neighbourhood Tasking arrangements, which form part of the broader neighbourhood management and neighbourhood policing strategies. It was via this process that the on-going problems were identified and intelligence gathered which led to the decision to create the Burnt Tree Community Cohesion Group (BTCCG). The baseline community cohesion report 'All of Us' launched in December, 2006 led to a greater understanding of issues in the Borough.

BTCCG using the SARA and result based accountability problem solving models would work with the local communities and all the agencies to try to gain a deeper understanding of the issues within the area and put in place a variety of measures to try to resolve the problems. Key Officers regularly met to track progress was being made against agreed actions.

#### **Scanning:**

A Tactical Assessment is prepared every 4 weeks from a wide range of data, including data from Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Housing, Anti-Social Behaviour Action Line, Environmental Services, Sandwell Wardens and Park Rangers and mapped into 'Hot spots' together with an explanatory text.

The Burnt Tree area of Sandwell had appeared as a hotspot area within the Tactical Assessment for some time. Extracts from Tactical Assessments for just for the period from September 2006 to December 2007 show recorded incidents :

- Substance Misuse 3
- Anti-social behaviour/rowdy nuisance behaviour 161
- Arson 2
- Hoax Calls 7
- Banging footballs against people's windows 1
- Criminal damage 27
- Nuisance vehicles 11
- Threatened behaviour with swords 1
- Damage to cars
- Harassment/malicious communications 4
- Youths on scaffolding throwing bricks into the canal 1
- Under-age drinking
- Families fighting 2
- White skinned European male surrounded by 10 Asian males arguing.

Later as the scanning process continued more worrying issues of tensions and gang culture began to emerge.

The scanning process showed that there were issues in several places linked and within the Burnt Tree area. Colleges and schools in the area were recording worrying behaviour amongst the young Muslim men. The previous Head of the High School had to deal with a lot of racist email in the school and exclusions were becoming increasingly necessary.

Police identified drug dealing and an under-age drinking problem. There was a wide range of young people involved from 8 to 24 years old who were engaged in the anti-social behaviour. During their regular patrols Police had spoken to young people who voiced their opinion of the lack of play areas available and that they felt that they had nothing to do. A variety of interventions and agency responses continued with throughout

the period (see under response section).

In September 2007 young women aged 17-18 years olds in the area told the Chair of the BTCCG that they were concerned because they knew young men who were carrying knives to defend themselves. These young women felt that the root cause might be drug related. They said that it had started with attempted theft from cars and attempts to slash tyres, the young women had established a local youth group with assistance from the Rewind initiative, their information was highly credible.

The extent of this problem was clear from the intelligence gathered from all the agencies within the Tactical Assessment and from the walkabouts and a variety of other meetings/events with the public and local agencies.

The area was in dire need of tidying and cleaning up. Shopkeepers spoke of the total lack of respect for authority by the young Asian Muslim men to any kind of authority or people who were not part of their own established groups. Shopkeepers had organised their shelves and the goods they display based on theft and what's of value to the community. For example, all cigarettes in the post office were kept behind the counter where staff could serve from behind the security screen. It seemed that members of the white community who have lived in the area for years have no pride in the area anymore.

BTCCG organised a walkabout of the area in November 2007 which included many key partners i.e. Police, Street Wardens, Groundcare, Youth Services, Environment Direct, Oldbury Town Team, Environmental Health and Trading Standards, Parks and Green Spaces Staff and the local college. At that time issues which were identified included litter, poor lighting, damaged fencing, racist graffiti, dog fouling as well as actions being taken on these by the relevant partners, Police Officers were tasked with investigating the complaints of drug taking in specific areas of Burnt Tree.

Also during that month a meeting with the Muslim elders and the Police at the Gate Street Mosque showed that the Muslim community was 'at the end of their patience' with the group of Asian lads who were causing problems in the area. At that time the elders had been trying to resolve the problems themselves locally, but they were beginning to realise that they were having little effect. They agreed to start reporting issues to the Police so that they could be dealt with promptly.

The Muslim elders were aware of the perceptions outside the Muslim community and they were under no illusions of how the activities of these young Muslim men were affecting their outward image to other community groups. The elders expressed their full support to a robust approach by the Police and partners towards asb and crime. They supported a local residents meeting which was organised for all groups in the area to discuss issues.

The Tension monitoring return form to GOWM for January 2008 showed concerns from various agencies about youth gangs in the borough and notably in the south of the borough. It related specifically to Asian gangs and worryingly identified that a group in Smethwick calling themselves 'Smedrock Pakiz' were associating with gangs in Tipton calling themselves 'Tipton Taliban' or 'Tipon Thug Pakiz' in the Tividale Burnt Tree area (B69). Website analysis carried out by the police and others showed that Smedrock Pakiz and 'Capeside' youth gangs had firearms and possession of drugs. There were also related but separate issues of a recruitment drive with interfaith relationships between Sikh girls and Muslim lads which the elders do not like. Sandwell College was continuing to report disturbances between Asian young men of different ethnic backgrounds the cause seeming to be interfaith relationships but also rivalry in terms of turf.

The report recorded an incident on 25<sup>th</sup> January when over 30 Sikh pupils from Halesowen College congregated outside Tividale Community Arts College. A fight took place and the police were called. The reason why the youths gathered outside the High School was unknown but intelligence gathered indicated that a Sikh female pupil from Halesowen College was going out with a Muslim youth, this relationship had ended and the female sent a text saying how she hated Pakiz. A rumour began to circulate in the college of attempted abduction and rape. Halesowen College confirmed the attempted abduction but denied that rape had taken place. The Chair of the BTCCG stated that ' Given the challenges in Burnt Tree, Oldbury College of Sport, Cape Hill and Windmill Lane, Holly Lodge, Shirelands and the fact that the youth service is working with some of the gang members – its gang culture is becoming a growing concern.....The pictures I have seen are frightening – sawn off shot guns, machetes and drugs, members of the various gangs are pictured with these in their possession'.

## Analysis

In terms of the Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT) the conditions in the area are as follows:

### Location

Sandwell is an ethnically diverse area, the different communities are not evenly dispersed across the borough, it is divided into six towns, one of which is Oldbury. Tividale is an area of Oldbury, which borders Dudley. Housing tenure is mixed with a major trunk road running through the heart of the area.

Oldbury is the least deprived town in Sandwell, it has an age structure which is fairly similar to the borough average. Burnt Tree, Tividale is a neighbourhood in Oldbury. The population is 3918 with a very young population 34.5% under 24 years. 30.5% between the ages of 25 and 39 years old. 21% between the ages of 40 – 59 and 14.0% over the age of 60.

In September 2006 there was evidence of escalating friction between African Caribbean and Pakistani young males in the Burnt Tree, Tividale area of the borough. Burnt Tree has the largest youth population of Pakistani origin in Oldbury as below:

Ethnic Origin	Population	Percentage of population
White	979	55%
Indian	237	13.5%
Pakistani	366	21%
African Caribbean	74	4%
Other		3.5%

Local knowledge of the area showed that there were good relationships between the older generations, for example Sikh elders and Muslim elders would liaise to try to resolve problems.

In recent years the Sikh community has tended to migrate to a new estate on the periphery of the Burnt Tree neighbourhood.

Tividale Road, Holcroft Street and surrounding areas have been the area where most problems have occurred. In Holcroft Street there is a small green space in close proximity to a Senior citizen's housing complex.

### Offender

Large groups of Muslim males acting anti-socially and who it seems do not know how to engage with other young people in the area. They see the park as their territory and this in turn seemed to be causing tensions with other young people. They also appear to have little respect for authority whether it be the Police or their own elders, their behaviour has shown a lack of care or consideration for other people living in the area.

In June 2007 it was identified that there was a hardcore group of Asian Muslim lads aged 13-20 who were causing most of the problems in the area and that this was influencing other young people. They hung around the Holcroft Street area and were mixing with young white girls who were drinking alcohol underage. This was causing some community tensions.

Analysis of intelligence gathered by the BTCCG showed that the profile of the hardcore of young people of Muslim origin, who congregated in Holcroft Road thus:

- Aged between 13-19
- The majority excluded from school
- No aspirations/motivation
- Unemployed
- Little parental control

It was thought necessary to tackle the ring leaders and try to get them into employment. In June 2007 it was noted by the group that one member of 'hardcore' youth had secured a job with a large local retailer. It was felt that he could be a role model to other disillusioned youths.

## Victim

The victims here include the rest of the community both old and young living in the area also local businesses have been affected and the local education establishments (please see details within analysis). Victims feel that they are not respected by these youths and they are fearful for their safety and feel intimidated by the youths. Also agency staff have stated that they feel unsafe in the area whilst walking around the area and that they fear for their personal safety.

It was clear from work on the ground by both Sikh and Muslim communities who worked together to resolve community tension that this was not a black and white issue.

Muslim women also revealed that they are concerned about the anti-social behaviour/criminal behaviour of these young males and the general state of the area. They said that they would like the opportunity for young women to come together in a youth club or similar. They also expressed the desire for English classes to be made available.

## Response/resources

From analysis of the problems it was clear that because of the wide range of ages involved that several agencies would need to be included. It was recognised that these were complex and long-standing problems which were going to take a long time to resolve. Meantime improvements had to be made with community cohesion in the area and the BTCCG felt that some initial successes were vital in order to strengthen subsequent work and gain the various communities support. Public support and engagement would be a vital element in any resolution. Getting young people into work and targeting the ring leaders in order to transform their influence on the groups in more positive ways was seen as vital.

In June 2007 NACRO received funding to do some outreach work in the area. They worked predominately with white children. BTCCG provided the link with the Youth Service and co-ordination with youth service work schedules in the area. Subsequently, they have been working with a group of young people the group have shown fear/concerns towards other groups to young people that were accessing Tividale park and workers have been concerned that there would be problems between the Muslim boys and the young people NACRO are working with. These young people state that tensions arise when they are in the 'wrong place at the wrong time'. This clearly indicates that there are certain times that non-Muslim youth can occupy the park and times when they feel it isn't safe to walk around the neighbourhood. As stated above NACRO workers themselves feel unsafe in this area.

The Youth Service (working with the Muslim youth) undertook a variety of activities through Positive Activities for Young People over the summer 2007. Although they have made good progress with some of the older youths. They also provided sessions at St Michaels Church, which were well attended with approx 25 young people.

There is still considerable concern about the younger members who call themselves the Tividale Park Taliban (TPT) and are using graffiti to highlight their presence and territory.

KRUNCH worked with the local schools on alternative education. This initiative helps children on the verge of exclusion, the programme runs for one to two years depending on the ability of the child. It is an accredited personal development programme looking at coping with feelings, relationships etc and includes one to one mentoring, day workshops etc. Funding to extend the project was sourced from the school budget 'Aim Higher'.

The Tividale Community Arts College employ a Community Liaison Officer, he was in able to identify problems as they manifested within the College and make links to the community beyond. He worked within the BTCCG, with the students and other young people and liased with other agencies.

A Spectrum event celebrating multi faith celebrations was held and it was felt that this had broken down some barriers and made some in roads to achieving community cohesion between families.

Additional resources for youth activities in the area were secured.

Police regularly patrol the area and maintain a presence in Holcroft Street and Twydale Avenue. They

adopted a robust approach incorporating the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. A bid was successful for the provision of head cameras for PCSOs to use in the area. Section 30 Dispersal were also considered and evidence collated.

Street cleaning and cutting down some of the trees and bushes in the area was arranged by the Town Team in order to give the area a less intimidating feel.

It was decided that community development work in the area would be needed once initial work to draft an action plan had been produced.

On 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008 Tividale Community Arts College held the first meeting for Community Representatives at that meeting they began to develop the Burnt Tree Community Cohesion Action Plan, dispersal orders and future community/multi agency events. Those attending were asked to relay the message back to their parents and community links.

BTCCG produces a bi-annual newsletter for all the households, the first of which was distributed in March 08.

### Assessment

Burnt Tree is no longer a 'hotspot' area on the Tactical Assessment. Over the time period 1/1/08 to 14/4/08 there have been 73 incidents of ASB considerably fewer than previously. Although, plans had been made to apply for a Section 30 dispersal order in the area, this has not materialised, as there is no longer sufficient evidence to support such a measure.

NACRO believe that tensions are still high and any opportunity of bringing the two youth groups together to build bridges they believe is not appropriate currently but it is an aspiration for the future.

The Youth Service state that there is considerable improvement in the behaviour and attitudes of the older Muslim lads and that this is demonstrated by their reaction to members of other groups and the reduction in fights and social disorder between this group and other young people at away day events.

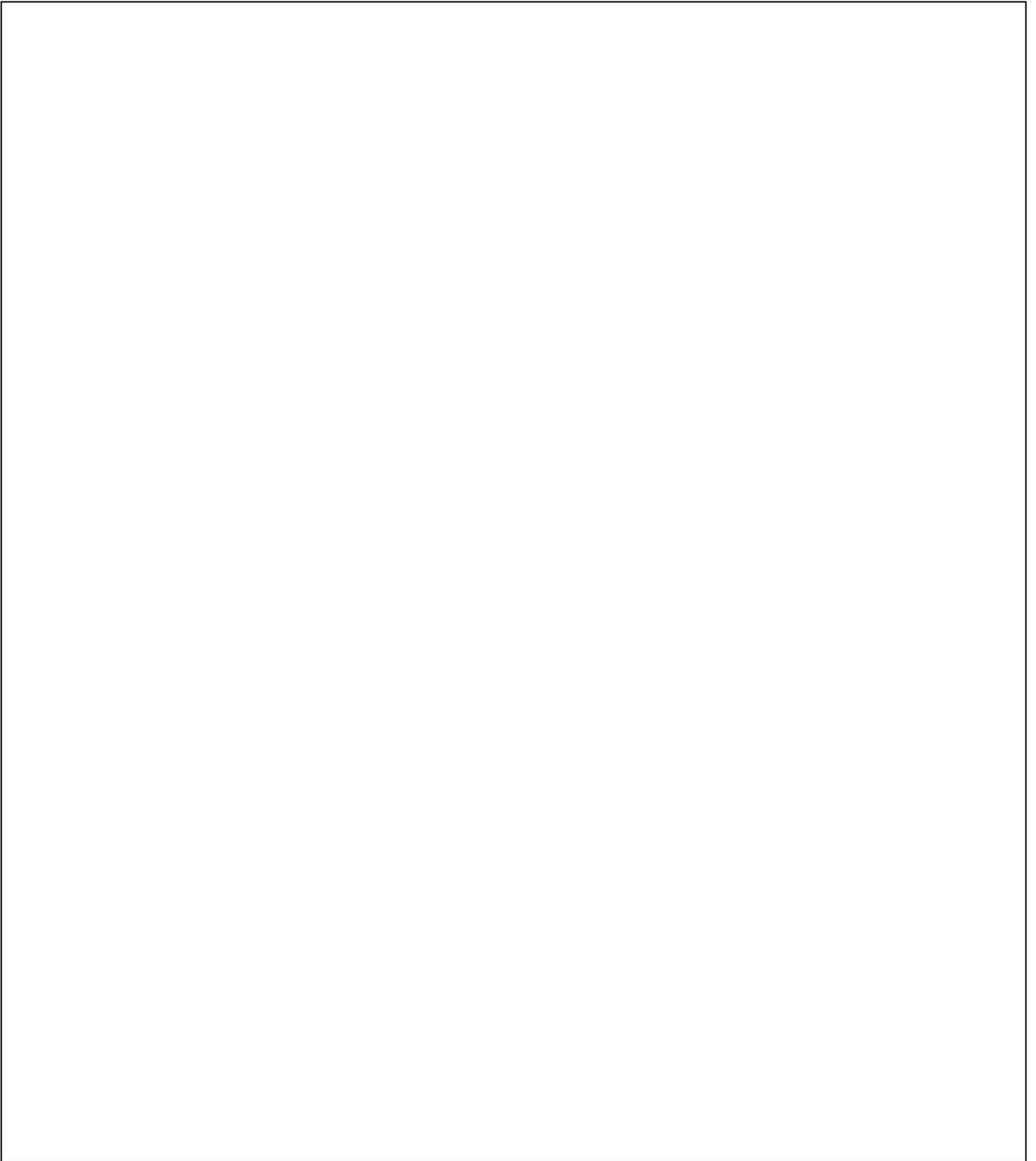
For example, Raza is a young man from the area who they have worked with he was referred along with his friends in the group onto the PAYP programme. Staff recognised that he had a passion for cars. They found him a placement at a local garage. He is now committed to his work, turning up on time and learning new skills, he says:

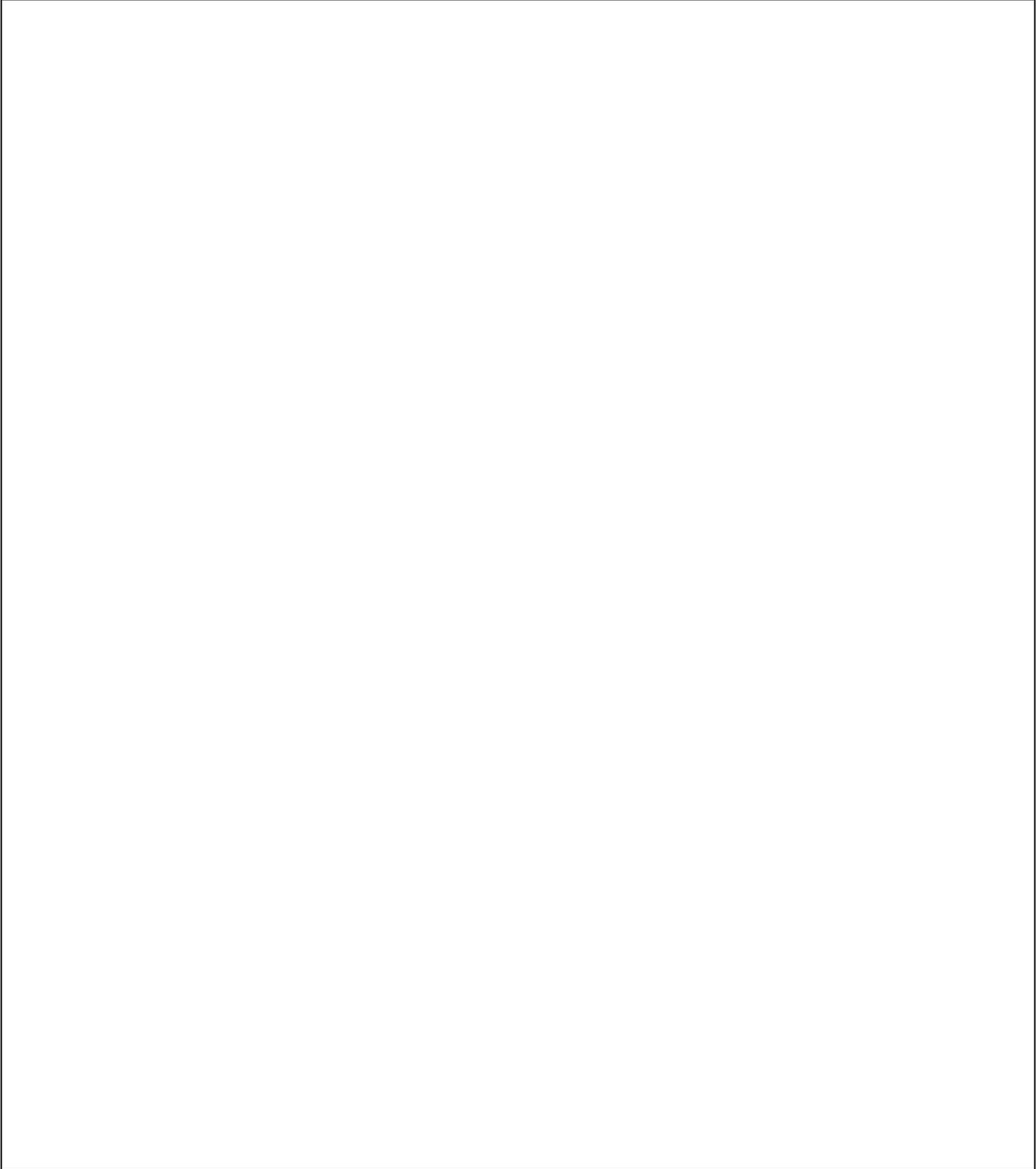
'It's great! The best thing that has happened to me. I've learnt that being streetwise doesn't help you to get a career or pay for shelter. Working life has given me a purpose and I'm happy in my job. Javed gave me a second chance, when others didn't believe in me..... I would say to other people not to give into peer pressure, but rely on yourself to learn what's right and what's wrong and think about your future.'

They recognise that there have been a number of significant achievements there is still a long way to go and many challenges to over come especially with the younger members of the groups.

It is clear that problems in Burnt Tree are complex and long-standing and that quick fixes will not be sufficient to address them. The work of the BTCCG so far has put in place firm foundations to carry work forward. The group are aware that much hard work and patience will be required possibly over several years.

(Word count 3067)





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

This is to confirm that this application for Burnt Tree Community Cohesion Group is endorsed by:-

Kevin Dennis  
Head of Community Safety



23rd April 2008

**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](mailto: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 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008.