



Crime Detection and
Prevention Series
Paper 87

Tackling Street Robbery: A Comparative Evaluation of Operation Eagle Eye

Janet E. Stockdale
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Police Research Group: Crime Detection and Prevention Series

The Home Office Police Research Group (PRG) was formed in 1992 to increase the influence of research and development in police policy and practice. The objectives are to sponsor and undertake research and development to improve and strengthen the police service and to identify and disseminate good policing practice.

The Crime Detection and Prevention Series follows on from the Crime Prevention Unit papers, a series which has been published by the Home Office since 1983. The recognition that effective crime strategies will often involve both crime prevention and crime investigation, however, has led to the scope of this series being broadened. This new series will present research material on both crime prevention and crime detection in a way which informs policy and practice throughout the service.

A parallel series of papers on resource management and organisational issues is also published by PRG, as is a periodical on policing research called 'Focus'.

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Foreword

Street robbery is a crime which affects not just the direct victims, but all those made fearful that they too may become targets. It is, therefore, important that effective prevention strategies are developed and disseminated. During the early 1990s the Metropolitan Police became increasingly concerned about rising numbers of offences and a relatively low clear-up rate in London. This led to the development and launch of Operation Eagle Eye – a proactive intelligence-led strategy to tackle the problem.

This paper takes a detailed look at Operation Eagle Eye and compares it with the approaches used by the West Midlands Police and Strathclyde Police. Like the PRG evaluation of Operation Bumblebee published in 1995, this paper draws out the lessons that have emerged so far from Operation Eagle Eye and highlights areas for further development. The paper is being published to assist all those concerned with street robbery – in the police and other agencies – in developing their strategies to reduce and prevent street robbery.

S W BOYS SMITH
Director of Police Policy
Home Office
March 1998

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Executive summary

The research

Street robbery has been a source of growing concern over the past decade. In London and in other metropolitan areas, the incidence of street robbery has increased significantly, while clear-up rates have remained static.

Operation Eagle Eye, launched by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in August 1995, is the MPS's strategy for tackling street robbery. It combines a proactive, intelligence-led approach with improved investigative practices and the concentration of resources – personnel, vehicles, surveillance equipment, information technology and extra funding – in those divisions most affected by the problem. In February 1996, co-operation with British Transport Police (BTP) was formally recognised when BTP adopted the Eagle Eye banner for their action against street robbery.

The research examines how far Operation Eagle Eye achieves its aims of improving performance against street robbery and increasing the detection rate, and how the strategy compares with action taken by West Midlands and Strathclyde Police. During the research period, these two forces relied on local, generally short-term, operations to tackle various aspects of street crime, including robbery but, more recently, both forces have implemented force-wide initiatives.

Major findings

Recorded offences, detections and stops/searches

- Notwithstanding the difficulties of isolating factors associated with changes in crime levels, Operation Eagle Eye does appear to have made a contribution in its initial stages to controlling street robbery. However, there are indications that street robbery is again rising in the Metropolitan Police District.
- Eagle Eye is associated with an increase in primary detections in both the MPS and BTP. In the MPS, the Operation is also associated with an increase in secondary detections arising from post sentence visits. There are indications that initial improvements in detection in the MPS are not being maintained.
- In the MPS, those divisions designated as Eagle Eye sites generally performed better than non-Eagle Eye divisions. Divisional performance was variable and improvements in performance were not restricted to Eagle Eye divisions.
- BTP's performance against robbery and theft person, although variable across the London areas, has improved, especially with respect to detections. The substantial contribution BTP have made to the success of Eagle Eye is particularly noteworthy given BTP's very limited resources and the extent of the travel networks they have to cover in London.
- There are some indications of displacement as a result of Eagle Eye activity.

- Eagle Eye has not led to an increase in either the number of stop searches (covered by Section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act) of males who are black or in the proportion of male stop searches involving people who are black.
- The flexible, problem-oriented approach to robbery and other aspects of street crime has worked well in Strathclyde. The response of West Midlands Police has been affected by the force reorganisation but, more recently, there is some evidence that their force-wide initiative against street crime has had some success in controlling theft person offences.

Positive features of Eagle Eye

- *Focusing of effort and resources:* The creation of robbery squads and provision of resources, especially vehicles and high technology equipment, within the framework of a 'branded strategy' has aided the MPS's response to street robbery.
- *Intelligence and proactivity:* The Operation has encouraged a greater emphasis on proactive policing and improved use of intelligence.
- *Partnership:* The Operation has helped to strengthen the commitment of the MPS to partnerships with other organisations and to a multi-agency approach to crime reduction.
- *Victim and witness care:* Although the need to support victims and witnesses was already widely recognised, further steps have been taken to improve their care.
- *Prevention:* A range of crime prevention initiatives has been undertaken, including some innovative diversionary schemes.
- *Liaison:* Eagle Eye has improved liaison and co-operation between BTP and the MPS.

Issues to be addressed

- *Training:* The failure to meet training needs sufficiently early and on an adequate scale has meant that the full benefits of the resources provided to support Eagle Eye have not yet been realised.
- *Proactivity and intelligence:* Reactive demands frequently erode proactivity; this problem is particularly acute within BTP. Information exchange needs to be improved, both within and across structural boundaries. Further liaison and co-operation between the MPS and BTP would benefit both forces.
- *Partnership:* Earlier consultation and greater co-operation with the community would contribute to both formal partnership activity and improved community relations.

- *Criminal Justice*: There is further scope for seeking support from other elements of the Criminal Justice System in deterring street robbery and for closer examination of the role of community-based disposal in preventing reoffending.
- *Marketing*: Internal promotion of the strategy would help to secure a wider sense of ownership and involvement, especially among uniformed officers. The external marketing of Eagle Eye did not maximize awareness among the public, while the focus of the publicity associated with the Operation's launch may have detracted from the support for its aims among certain sections of the community.

Conclusions

- Operation Eagle Eye merits continued commitment and practical support. But, there are issues which need addressing if the approach is to yield consistent and enduring improvements in performance against street robbery. Furthermore, given financial constraints and competing priorities, there are doubts about the Operation's sustainability in the longer-term.
- Examples of good practice identified in both the Eagle Eye and comparison forces deserve wider dissemination and more general application.

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1. Introduction

Street robbery: definition and measurement

The definition and measurement of street robbery are problematic. For many, street robbery, street crime and mugging are synonymous, whilst for others the terms differ in their application. None of these terms, as commonly used, corresponds to an offence category.

Street robbery

The term street robbery, as used by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), includes robbery and attempted robbery of personal property and snatch thefts, irrespective of their location. While crime statistics collected by the MPS allow compilation of figures for street robbery according to this definition, those collected by other forces usually do not.

Mugging

The term mugging is commonly used to describe street robbery, as defined by the MPS. For example, in the British Crime Survey (BCS), mugging is one of four categories of violent crime and refers to all robberies, attempted robberies and snatch thefts. However, in recent analyses of notifiable offences (Home Office Statistical Bulletin 18/96), although the term muggings is offered as an alternative to that of street robberies, it does not encompass snatch thefts.

Street crime

The term street crime is often used interchangeably with street robbery (eg. by the MPS) but often has a wider interpretation and can include pickpocketing (i.e. dips), prostitution, drug dealing, woundings, assaults and public order offences.

Offence categories

Robbery encompasses both substantive offences and attempts (i.e. assault with intent to rob), and refers to both personal and business property. Whilst robberies and assaults with intent to rob are recorded separately, most figures do not differentiate between personal and commercial property.

The offence of theft from the person, also known as theft person, includes both 'snatch' and other thefts from the person (eg. pickpocketing or dips) but again these two sub-categories of offence are not usually distinguishable in police statistics.

The scale of the problem

Since statistics relating to street robbery are not available for the majority of police forces, the scale of the problem has been addressed using the most appropriate data available.¹

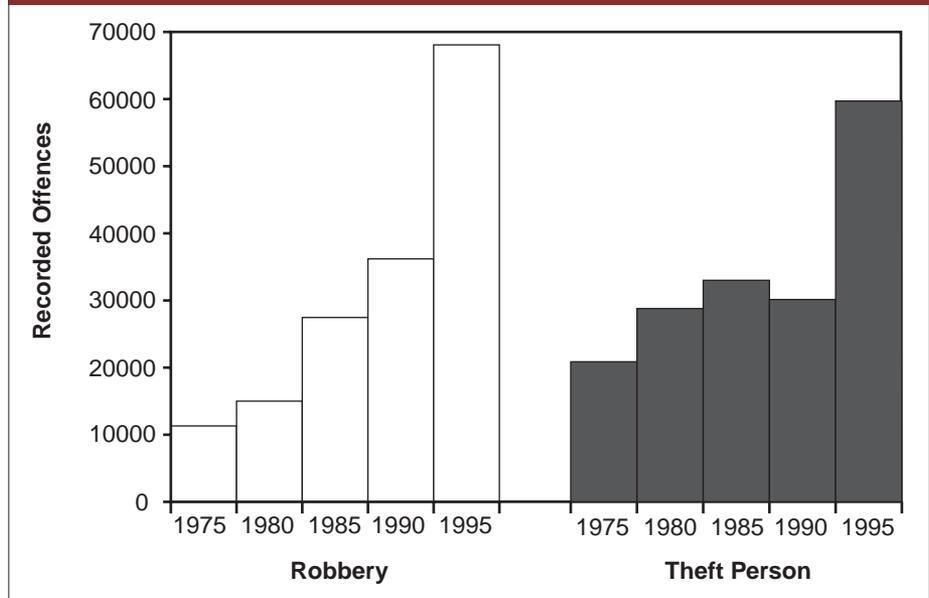
¹ The statistics for England and Wales were obtained from the Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate and those for Scotland from the Scottish Office Statistical Bulletin CrJ/1997/3. All the national statistics refer to calendar years. The statistics relating to street robbery offences recorded by the MPS were provided by the MPS Performance Information Bureau (PIB). Those relating to the British Transport Police (BTP), West Midlands Police and Strathclyde Police were obtained from the forces' annual reports.

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² According to the Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate 'most recorded robberies are street robberies – or muggings' (Home Office Statistical Bulletin 18/96).

Robbery and theft from the person: Over the period 1975 to 1995, there have been substantial increases in robbery² (+501%) and theft person (+186%) in England and Wales (Figure 1). In the last five years, both offences have nearly doubled in number. In 1995, all but nine of the forty-three forces in England and Wales recorded rises in both offences, and there was an overall increase in robbery of 13% (compared with 4% in 1994) and in theft person of 17% (compared with 7% in 1994). Three-quarters of each of these offences were recorded by metropolitan police areas.

Figure 1: Robbery and theft person 1975 to 1995: recorded offences England and Wales



Both the MPS and West Midlands Police have experienced substantial increases in both of these offences over recent years. Over the ten-year period to December 1995, the increases for robbery (+96% in the MPS and +237% in the West Midlands) were higher than those for theft from the person (+45% in the MPS and +178% in the West Midlands). In 1995, there were rises both in robbery offences (+15% in the MPS and +12% in the West Midlands) and in thefts from the person (+19% in the MPS and +17% in the West Midlands). In 1994/95, BTP recorded a rise (+13% compared with the previous fiscal year) in the number of robbery offences in England and Wales and over a third (35%) related to travelling on London Underground. In 1994/95, the number of offences of theft from the person recorded by BTP in England and Wales also increased (+16%). The majority (85%) of these offences were related to travelling on London Underground.

The clear-up rate for robbery in England and Wales fell from 40% in 1975 to 22% in 1985, but has remained relatively static over the past ten years, standing at 23% in England and Wales and at 19% in metropolitan areas in 1995. In the MPS and the West Midlands, the clear-up rates for robbery have shown more variability, but both stood at 18% in 1995. In 1994/95 BTP's clear-up rate for robbery was also 18%.

The clear-up rate for theft from the person, whilst fluctuating from year-to-year, has not changed dramatically over the last twenty years and in 1995 was 10% in England and Wales and 9% in metropolitan areas. In the MPS, the clear-up rate for theft person has also remained relatively static and stood at 6% in 1995. In the West Midlands, the clear-up rate for theft person has shown more variability but in general has been higher than that achieved by the MPS and in 1995 stood at 12%. In BTP, the clear-up rate for theft from the person was 2% in 1994/95.

Crime statistics in Scotland are not directly comparable with those in England and Wales, but there are some similar trends. In 1995, crimes of violence (non-sexual) rose by 11% and robbery/assault with intent to rob (which constituted 29% of such crimes) rose by 4% in Strathclyde. These rises are higher than those recorded in Scotland as a whole where, in the same year, crimes of violence (non-sexual) rose by 7% and robbery/assault with intent to rob by less than 1%.

Street robbery: According to the 1996 BCS, mugging increased by 54% during the period 1981-95 with most of the increase since 1991 (Mirrlees-Black et al., 1996). However, mugging remains relatively rare with only 0.8% of BCS respondents reporting being mugged in 1995. Young men aged 16-29 years are most at risk (3% reported being victimised in 1995) and account for over half (57%) of all incidents of mugging. Among the categories of violent or 'contact' crime covered by the BCS, muggings are the most likely to be reported (60% are reported).

Over the ten years to 1994, the number of street robberies in London doubled and rose from some 28,000 in 1993/94, to over 32,000 in 1994/95. MPS research prior to Operation Eagle Eye confirmed earlier findings (Barker et al., 1993) that the prevalence of street robbery varies across the Metropolitan Police District (MPD). Just under a third (n=22) of the MPS's 63 divisions accounted for nearly two-thirds (63%) of the total recorded offences, with four divisions accounting for 19% of the total. The MPS's public attitude survey (1994) showed that, next to burglary, street robbery was the crime which Londoners feared most.

MPS statistics also indicated that the majority of those suspected of and arrested for street robbery offences were black (Afro-Caribbean/African). Data relating to 28,469 street robbery suspects showed that in 42 of the 63 divisions in the MPD more than 50% of suspects were described as black and in 10 divisions (Vauxhall, Battersea, Peckham, Brixton, South Norwood, Kilburn, Walworth, Tottenham, Stoke Newington, Lewisham)

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more than 80% of suspects were described as black. Across the MPD, 69% of street robbery suspects were described as black, 20% as white, 3% as Asian and 2% as of other ethnic origin; such information was not available for 6% of suspects. In the fiscal year 1994/95, of the 2,811 persons arrested for street robbery offences, 54% were black, 28% white, 5% Asian, and 3% of other ethnic origin; in 11% of cases ethnic origin was not known.

The research

The research examines how far the MPS's strategy for tackling street robbery, Operation Eagle Eye, achieves its aims of improving performance against street robbery and increasing the detection rate, by reference to the eleven objectives associated with the strategy's six themes. The research aims to identify changes in approach and working practices associated with Operation Eagle Eye and to relate these to changes in performance. In addition, it examines how the MPS's strategy and its impact compare with West Midlands Police's approach to street robbery. The research also draws on the experience of BTP who are co-operating with the MPS under the auspices of Eagle Eye, and of Strathclyde Police. The research aims to assess the effects of the strategies on performance, process, working practices and service delivery and to identify implications for good practice.

The forces and policing environments

MPS: The largest police force in England and Wales, the MPS has an establishment of some 28,000 officers and employs over 16,000 civilian staff. The MPD has a socially and ethnically diverse population of some 7.5 million. The MPS was restructured in 1995 and now comprises five areas containing a total of 63 divisions or operational command units. The five divisions sampled (one from each area) were all Eagle Eye 'sites' i.e. the number of offences recorded in the year preceding Eagle Eye placed them in the top 25 divisions for street robbery. In August 1995, their rankings for street robbery offences were: Paddington (1 Area) 3; Shoreditch & Hackney (3 Area) 7; Walworth (4 Area) 9; Holloway (2 Area) 12; and, Streatham (5 Area) 15.

West Midlands Police: With an establishment of over 7,000 officers and some 3,000 civilian staff, West Midlands Police is the second largest police force in England and Wales. Although the population (2.7 million) is less than that of the MPD, the force area has many characteristics which make it an appropriate comparator. Following restructuring in April 1995, the force comprises nine divisions (each sub-divided into areas) of which four were selected to reflect the wide range of socio-economic and policing environments. 'F' division covers the centre of Birmingham; 'K' division, the borough of Sandwell; 'J' division, Dudley and Brierly Hill; and, 'M' division, the city of Coventry. 'F' division has the highest incidence of robbery and theft person among these four divisions (and across all nine) and 'J' division the lowest.

BTP: The force, which has over 2,000 officers and some 400 civilian staff, is divided into eight areas and is responsible for policing Britain's rail network, including London Underground. The three areas sampled cover the greater London area: London North (which extends as far Oxford and East Anglia); London South (which covers the whole of South East England); and, London Underground. These three areas have over 1,000 officers, nearly half the force's total establishment, who deal with over half (57%) of the crimes recorded by BTP.

Strathclyde Police: The force area (population about 2.3 million – about half that of Scotland) is geographically and socially diverse and includes the city of Glasgow (population nearly 700,000). Strathclyde Police has an establishment of over 7,000 officers and just under 2,000 civilian staff. The force is divided into fifteen divisions, of which three were visited: 'A' division (central Glasgow) which typically experiences one of the highest incidences of robbery/assault with intent to rob; 'D' division (North-East Glasgow); and, 'K' division (Paisley).

Data sources

The research draws on a range of data sources:

- interviews with a structured sample of officers of all ranks in the participating forces;
- interviews with community representatives in London and the West Midlands;
- examination of relevant documentation supplied by the forces;
- analysis of data relating to recorded crime and detections.

Police interviews

The interviews elicited officers' views about their force's approach to street robbery and its effectiveness. In total, 160 officers and other relevant personnel from the MPS (n=76), BTP (n=19), West Midlands Police (n=52) and Strathclyde Police (n=13) were interviewed. The interview data were supplemented by examination of relevant documentation.

Community interviews

Interviews were conducted with community representatives (n= 20) in the five relevant London boroughs and in the West Midlands. Those interviewed included: local authority officers concerned with police monitoring, public safety, crime prevention and community relations; members (lay and professional) of Community Police Consultative Groups (CPCGs); Safer Cities personnel; and, staff of other agencies, such as the Probation Service and Victim Support.

INTRODUCTION

Crime statistics

The three forces in England and Wales (MPS, BTP and West Midlands Police) were all asked to supply a range of crime statistics for the period April 1993 to September 1996. In some cases, it was not possible to supply all of the data requested and the analyses reflect these constraints.

Assessment criteria

The comparative evaluation of Operation Eagle Eye is structured around three domains:

- i. The six thematic areas which comprise the strategy: intelligence and proactivity; investigation and identification; partnership; victim and witness care; prevention; and, criminal justice.
- ii. Wider implications of the strategies for both the police and the community.
- iii. Changes in recorded crime and detections – street robbery and other selected offences.

Structure of the report

Section 2 of the report outlines the development of Operation Eagle Eye within the MPS and BTP, and identifies the key features of the approach to street robbery taken by West Midlands Police and by Strathclyde Police. Section 3 provides a comparative evaluation of Operation Eagle Eye by reference to the Operation's key themes and objectives. Section 4 uses statistical performance indicators to assess changes in the incidence and detection of street robbery and other selected offences. Finally, Section 5 presents the conclusions, identifies good practice and highlights issues of strategic importance.

2. Strategies for tackling street robbery

Operation Eagle Eye

Development and launch

During the early 1990s, the MPS became increasingly concerned about the rise in recorded street robbery offences and the relatively low clear-up rate. In 1993, a Steering Group was formed to prepare a corporate strategy for tackling street robbery. Examination over a two-year period of key areas – investigation, personnel deployment, intelligence, training, partnership, publicity and performance indicators – resulted in recommendations about how the problem should be tackled under the rubric of Operation Eagle Eye.

Prior to the Operation's official launch, the Commissioner invited politicians, opinion formers and community leaders to discuss the upward trend in street robberies or 'muggings' and how Eagle Eye aimed to address the problem. In his invitation, the Commissioner stated that 'very many of the perpetrators of mugging are very young black people who have been excluded from school and/or are unemployed'. He also highlighted the sensitivity of dealing with what is more than just a police problem. The Commissioner's letter and subsequent press statements led to extensive media coverage. Reactions were mixed. Whilst there was some distorted comment and, in certain cases, severe criticism, there was also support for the Commissioner's approach and constructive discussion of the issues raised. Operation Eagle Eye was formally launched on 3 August 1995 and was supported in September by a Met-wide publicity campaign.

Key elements

The aim of Operation Eagle Eye was to improve performance against street robbery and to increase the detection rate to 15% during 1995/96, working in partnership with the local community, showing high ethical standards and care for victims. The strategy was developed around six themes and eleven objectives (Table 1).

Eagle Eye, although modelled, in part, on Operation Bumblebee (the MPS strategy to combat burglary) and centrally led and resourced, was less prescriptive, and placed more emphasis on the responsibility of local managers to implement the strategy appropriately. A booklet 'Tackling Street Robbery: Guidance and good practice for local managers' (July 1995) formed the basis for divisional implementation.

STRATEGIES FOR TACKLING STREET ROBBERY

Table 1: Operation Eagle Eye: themes and objectives

Themes	Objectives
Intelligence/proactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maximising the proactive response enhancing the capture, analysis and dissemination of intelligence, including that obtained through the investigation process
Investigation and Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving the quality of the initial recording and investigation of street crime exploiting and developing good practice and experience in the investigation process increasing the opportunity for victims to make positive identifications of suspects locally and soon after the offence
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enlisting the support and co-operation of relevant community groups and local agencies
Victim and Witness Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> showing consideration and professionalism in dealings with victims and witnesses
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reducing the likelihood of becoming a victim reducing the likelihood of becoming an offender target hardening and designing out crime
Criminal Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seeking support from the other areas of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in deterring street robbery

Resourcing

At an early stage it was recognised that the Operation required logistical support. The resource strategy comprised corporate projects, a special informant fund and divisional equipment 'packages' for those twenty-five divisions within the MPD which suffered disproportionately from street robbery (Table 2). The roll out of the equipment began in October 1995 and the majority of the Eagle Eye sites received had it by February 1996.

The cost of the resource strategy was originally estimated to be £3.4 million. In 1996/97, the total investment in vehicles, technology and training to support Operation Eagle Eye was costed at £4.8 million and the cost of divisional and area personnel dedicated to Eagle Eye at £17.1 million (MPS Policing Plan, 1996/97).³ But, obviously, even in the absence of a 'branded' strategy some of these resources would nevertheless be directed at combating street robbery.

³ The total expenditure of the MPS in the fiscal year 1996/97 was in excess of £1.9 billion.

STRATEGIES FOR TACKLING STREET ROBBERY

Table 2: Operation Eagle Eye: resourcing elements

Corporate/special elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witness Albums Disc System 2 (WADS 2) – a locally based system, allowing photograph albums of criminals to be entered on a laptop computer and shown to victims/witnesses in their homes. One system per each of the five areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicity – poster campaigns and radio commercials to raise/maintain public consciousness and so ensure a large scale strategy to combat street robbery remains acceptable to the broader community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional funding for informants to enhance the capture of intelligence.
Divisional packages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radios – small radios providing good reception to be used on a dedicated frequency plus covert harnesses, earpieces etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles – two unmarked surveillance vehicles (to support the proactive team), one unmarked response vehicle (to support investigative work), hire of a minibus plus driver (three days per month) to take victims/witnesses to scenes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video and associated surveillance equipment – one kit for mobile surveillance; another for use at static observation points (OPs); a base kit comprising equipment for viewing tapes and making tape and hard copies; and, associated surveillance equipment. Equipment provision to be supported by funding for further development and by training in the use of specialist equipment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Technology (IT) – hardware and a range of software including appropriate licence fees and training.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal justice support – equipment to play video tapes when interviewing suspects, at case conferences etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership – ‘pump-priming’ funds to support local partnership schemes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer safety – covert stab resistant vests for use by arrest/decoy teams (an interim measure prior to the issue of the METVEST to all officers).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overtime – additional overtime funding during October to December 1995.

Monitoring and further development

The Eagle Eye co-ordination group: comprises representatives from across the MPS and from BTP and meets on a regular basis to monitor resourcing needs, assess the progress of the operation, share good practice and discuss future developments.

BTP participation: the benefits of co-operation were recognised by both the MPS and BTP at an early stage and BTP were involved in the development of Eagle Eye in 1995. London-wide action by BTP against robbery on the rail and tube networks, was initially entitled Operation Lynton. But, in February 1996, co-operation was formally and publicly recognised with the announcement that BTP would work in partnership with the MPS under the Eagle Eye banner. BTP had already begun to enter details of all robberies within their jurisdiction (in London) on the computerised system developed by

the Home Office for major enquiries (HOLMES) to provide a unified database. BTP officers dealing with robbery were also provided with some of the Eagle Eye equipment.

Further developments: there was increasing recognition of the need to raise awareness of Eagle Eye within the MPS and to encourage further partnership with external agencies. An Eagle Eye workshop (July 1996) attended by representatives of the Eagle Eye sites and members of the Co-ordination Group, aimed to identify outstanding issues and to collate good practice and new ideas for a revised guide to tackling street robbery (issued in a loose-leaf binder for easy up-dating, October 1996). An Eagle Eye Week (October 1996) aimed to provide a showcase for the Operation to both external and internal audiences and to enlist their support. The Operation has also been supported by advertising and crime prevention posters and leaflets.

New objectives: improved performance against robbery remained a key objective in the MPS's 1996/97 Policing Plan but the published detection target for street crime (at least 15%) remained unchanged. The corporate strategy, 'The London Beat' (August 1996) which outlines the focus of MPS efforts over the next five years, made no mention of specific crimes but did emphasise the need for crime reduction using intelligence, proactive operations and police-community partnership.

Comparison strategies

West Midlands Police's approach to street robbery

West Midlands Police had not adopted a force-wide strategy for dealing with street robbery during the designated research period (i.e. pre-October 1996), with each division free to respond appropriately. Nor had additional or specialist equipment been made available for action against street robbery. Although there was no strategy with which to compare Eagle Eye, the West Midlands Police and the MPS can be compared with respect to resource deployment and working practices.

All four divisions sampled had taken some action against street robbery. The portfolio of responses included an integrated divisional strategy ('K' division), long-term area and divisional operations ('F' division) and short-term local initiatives ('J' and 'M' divisions). The strategy developed by 'K' division in 1996 and its associated operations (Jericho I and II) have some similarities to Eagle Eye. The aims were to increase the division's detection rate for street robbery to 22% during 1996 and to improve the quality of service to victims/witnesses. The strategy specifies objectives and methods in five domains: pro-activity, intelligence, investigation and identification, victim and witness care and prevention. 'F' division's response to street robbery had developed from an 'F1' initiative (Operation Suncrown, April 1995 to February 1996) to a divisional initiative (Operation Utah), which was relaunched in a modified form in August 1996 (Operation Blizzard). In 'J' division, outbreaks of street robbery had been dealt with by short-term initiatives involving the use of decoys, high-profile patrols,

targeted 'stop and speak' and covert surveillance of suspects. Operation Lasheen, which deployed plain clothes officers on surveillance of high risk areas in Coventry, was 'M' division's response to an increase in street robbery in 1995/96.

The force's 1996/97 policing plan included robbery among the list of offences for which performance targets had been adopted. The force sought to raise the detection rate for robbery to 20% in 1996/97. The means by which this target was to be met, other than through the force's reorganisation and improved crime management procedures, was left to divisional management teams. In October 1996, West Midlands Police launched Operation Street-Strike, a five-week, force-wide initiative (jointly funded by headquarters and divisions) to combat a range of crime and nuisance categories, including street robbery and violence. Key elements of Street-Strike are shown in Appendix A.

Strathclyde Police

Street crime – not only robbery but also violence and other problems linked to drug and alcohol use – is an issue in many of Strathclyde's divisions. Although no force-wide initiative against street crime had been undertaken during the designated research period, Strathclyde's approach aimed to integrate crime prevention and investigation and emphasised awareness, education and high profile enforcement. A major innovation has been the creation of local crime action teams which meet regularly to review crime patterns and initiate short-term (90-day) divisional operations to address problems of concern to the police and the community. Although the criminal investigation department (CID) deals with all categories of crime and is generally reactive, most divisions have an integrated anti-crime unit (comprising both CID and uniformed officers) which aims to be proactive and to target local problems. Some divisions have specialist squads which deal with certain crimes (eg. credit card fraud, shoplifting) and squads are established on an ad hoc basis to focus on emergent problems, including street robbery, under the 90-day rubric.

Only one of Strathclyde's fifteen divisions had undertaken recent action against street robbery. 'A' division (Glasgow city centre) had responded to increases in street robbery with two 90-day initiatives, Operation Scarecrow (March–May 1995) and Operation Turpin (February–April 1996), which aimed to reduce the occurrence of street robbery and to increase detections and intelligence. A force-wide report identified a rise in the number of street robberies and a fall in the detection rate in the first quarter of 1996. Further consultation and strategy development led to the Spotlight initiative, which was implemented in October 1996 and is still ongoing. This long-term strategy aims to reduce violent crime, disorder and fear of crime in all of the 12 council areas covered by Strathclyde Police. The 15-point strategy is directed at a range of problematic behaviours and locations, including street robberies. Key attributes of the Spotlight initiative are shown in Appendix A.

3. Strategy implementation

The comparison of the ways in which the MPS and BTP are tackling street robbery, under the auspices of Operation Eagle Eye, with the approaches taken by the West Midlands Police and Strathclyde Police is organised within the framework offered by Eagle Eye's six themes. Summary tables (Appendix B) provide an overview of strategy implementation. The comparison also highlights some wider strategic issues.

Intelligence and proactivity

Key issues

- Most officers recognise the advantages of a proactive approach to tackling street robbery.
- Reactive demands often seriously erode the capacity to be proactive.
- Proactivity is enhanced by the provision of appropriate support, such as technical equipment, IT applications and overtime funding.
- There is a greater reliance on the collection, analysis and dissemination of criminal intelligence and on crime pattern analysis (CPA) to target resources against street robbery.
- The inflow and output of intelligence and information exchange needs to be improved, not only locally, but also across the structural borders within and between forces.

Eagle Eye forces

■ Maximising proactivity

All the MPS divisions and BTP areas sampled endorsed action against robbery. MPS divisional policing plans for 1996/97 identified street robbery as a priority, with some local variation (eg. Streatham proposed to target prostitution and assault as well). Most MPS officers interviewed regarded street robbery as one of the three most important crime-related problems locally, ranking second only to burglary. One of BTP's objectives for 1996/97 was to reduce robbery offences from the 1995/96 figure by 1%. Perceived advantages of BTP participation in Eagle Eye included a higher profile for robbery and closer co-operation between the MPS and BTP. However, some BTP officers saw Eagle Eye as imposed by headquarters and as merely endorsing existing working practices. Although a proactive approach was supported by officers in both forces, the extent to which it was implemented varied and was seen to be limited by reactive demands and resource constraints.

In four out of the five MPS divisions sampled, a dedicated robbery squad (comprising between 4 and 13 officers, CID and uniformed) had been established

either in response to Eagle Eye or because street robbery had already been identified as a problem. While one squad was primarily proactive (Walworth), others combined reactive and proactive roles (Paddington, Shoreditch & Hackney) or had a mainly reactive role (Streatham). In Holloway division, where CID has been devolved to sectors, each sector had four officers who dealt with robbery. In all five divisions additional proactive input was provided by CID officers.

Although no additional staff were made available to implement the Operation, each of the Eagle Eye sites had been given a specific budget in 1995/96 to meet the overtime costs associated with Eagle Eye activities. However, in the new financial year, action against street robbery had to compete with other local priorities for overtime funding from a reduced budget. Late in 1996, this had led to a reduction in the overtime available to support proactivity. Use had been made of area resources, such as the territorial support group and area surveillance teams, but these too had implications for divisional budgets.

None of the robbery teams in the three BTP (London) areas is dedicated to proactivity but they do mount short-term proactive operations to target vulnerable locations or active robbers. Temporary teams are created to control sharp rises in robbery. The lack of dedicated proactive teams, combined with the volume of offences, means that reactivity dominates the work of the small number of robbery squad officers. London Underground considered dividing its central robbery squad into proactive and reactive teams but current staffing levels did not permit this separation.

Most MPS officers interviewed were enthusiastic about the Eagle Eye equipment, especially the radios which, because of their clarity and ease of concealment, were fully utilised. The high performance response vehicles and surveillance vehicles were both appreciated, although the surveillance vehicles did not remain covert in all cases. This was not always considered disadvantageous; some officers believed that an 'Eagle Eye car' acted as a deterrent. The surveillance equipment was also welcomed, although not all had been fully exploited. Some officers questioned its suitability for street robbery operations or highlighted technical constraints (eg. limited signalling range). By the end of the research period (September 1996), all five sample divisions were using the equipment for proactive operations against other types of crime.

Of the IT applications provided, CRIMINT (the MPS criminal intelligence database) was considered to be invaluable in the handling of intelligence, identifying suspects and profiling targets. However, HOLMES was not regarded so positively and was rarely used in relation to street robbery. The data input is labour intensive, the system is not user-friendly and offers few advantages over CRIMINT and CRIS (the crime recording information system). There was considerable variation in the use of other IT applications such as I2 (an analytic tool for use with CRIMINT), Mapinfo

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

(for identifying crime hot spots) and Astraguard (a software package for detecting changes in a pre-selected sample of videotape), with no division fully exploiting their potential. Only one division highlighted the contribution of SID, the new systems for intelligence and detection.

The major barrier to full utilisation was the lack of trained personnel. There were insufficient officers qualified to drive the response vehicles and a lack of officers trained in surveillance techniques and the use of IT, especially for the analysis of criminal intelligence and crime patterns. Although when the resource strategy was devised, a parallel training programme was established, this had not met the considerable training need with respect to either the use of the new equipment (especially IT) or other competencies integral to the strategy. Both the low level of IT skills on division and the resource demands of training, in terms of provision and abstractions, are acknowledged. Equally, it must be recognised that a more intensive training programme, implemented earlier, would have reduced officers' frustration at not being able to exploit the new resources to the full and helped to maximise the benefits derived. Despite these limitations, the equipment strengthened officers' belief that they could have an impact on street robbery.⁴

⁴ Many of these findings are congruent with an internal MPS evaluation of Operation Eagle Eye.

Those BTP officers who had seen and/or used the Eagle Eye equipment were impressed by its practical benefits. However, there had been some delays in the provision of equipment, notably the radios, to BTP officers and reactive demands had prevented full utilisation of the surveillance equipment. Because of the limitations of BTP's computerised crime recording system and to facilitate information exchange with the MPS, data had been entered on HOLMES which was used to identify offence patterns, offender teams and victim profiles. However, unless HOLMES can be demonstrated to offer clear benefits, there are sound arguments for discontinuing its use in relation to street robbery. A corollary of such action is that BTP officers would require access to CRIMINT. (BTP's HOLMES travelling robber database has been copied to the MPS for input into CRIMINT.)

■ Criminal intelligence and CPA

All the MPS divisions emphasised that the divisional intelligence unit (DIU), which provides intelligence 'packages' for proactive operations and regular briefings, and sector intelligence officers were central to Eagle Eye activity. The DIU worked closely with the robbery squad and in some divisions one of its staff was dedicated to street robbery. All had adopted the 'prominent nominals' system and tried to make all officers, including uniformed patrols, aware of their identities. In Streatham, photographs of local 'prom noms' were used as screen savers.

The use of informants had increased, though most officers had been tasked with identifying potential informants rather than with their recruitment and management, which were considered skilled tasks requiring training. Holloway had instituted a 'mentor' scheme whereby specific officers were assigned to recruit and task informants. In Streatham, officers dealing with juvenile offenders or youth groups had been encouraged to seek information about street robbery. Post sentence visits (PSVs) were seen as a valuable source of intelligence, as well as of clear-ups, and three of the five divisions had appointed dedicated PSV officers.

Despite examples of the successful use of criminal intelligence and CPA, there were criticisms of the extent to which information was shared within and across structural boundaries. Many sector and shift officers felt 'left out' of Eagle Eye, arguing that they received insufficient intelligence and that, when they did submit intelligence reports, they received little recognition. Although Eagle Eye has highlighted the importance of sharing information and there are some excellent informal networks, the mechanisms for information exchange need to be improved and the role of the area intelligence units clarified.

The general view in BTP was that, although more intelligence-oriented than in the past, the three London areas are constrained by the volume and distribution of offences and resource levels, and that the policing environment often makes it more feasible to target locations, rather than suspects. Despite growing recognition that intelligence can be obtained from ticket offences (experience has shown that robbers rarely have a ticket), there is still some apathy about submitting intelligence reports, especially among uniformed officers. BTP does not generally carry out PSVs, so they are not a source of intelligence, but is seeking to ensure that informants are paid promptly.

Co-operation and exchange of intelligence between the MPS and BTP was considered to have improved since their joint participation in Eagle Eye (Box A) but remains variable. Although there is liaison between the three BTP areas and the corresponding MPS areas, information sharing is heavily dependent upon informal, ad hoc contact. BTP provides intelligence bulletins and closed circuit television (CCTV) stills etc. to the MPS but receives little feedback, and the MPS divisions had scant knowledge of BTP's travelling robber database. The paging scheme, currently being developed, may aid inter-force communication but there is scope for improved information exchange at all levels.

Box A: Operation Narrative (April–May 1996): MPS and BTP

- A four-week intelligence-led street robbery initiative
- Involving five MPS divisions (from 4 and 5 Areas) and BTP London South
- Designed to address the problem of street robbers who cross divisional boundaries
- Analysis (by two of the participating divisions) indicated that less than half of all suspects charged with robbery lived in the division where they were charged
- Prior to the operation, the divisional intelligence analysts were asked to identify:
 - 'hot spots', with a view to establishing OPs
 - any other patterns in the occurrence of street robbery
- Emphasis was placed on the rapid and comprehensive exchange of intelligence:
 - daily briefing meeting conducted by the divisional intelligence officer (DIO)
 - circulation/display of photographs etc.
 - information passed to the DIO transferred to the other participating MPS divisions and to BTP by telephone and fax
 - divisional team leaders able to communicate via mobile telephones and pagers
- All of the participating divisions were CRIMINT and CRIS live
- All details of arrests, stop and search slips and sightings were entered into CRIMINT
- Curfews between 7.00pm and 7.00am were requested for all robbers charged
- Intelligence gathered was made available to reactive robbery investigators
- All MPS divisions were informed of the joint operation
- Impact of the initiative indexed by recorded offences, arrests, charges and stops
- Extent to which 'cross-border' robbers had been successfully targeted assessed by analysing the divisions from which offenders originated

Comparison forces

■ Maximising proactivity

In the West Midlands, officers' assessments of the importance of street robbery varied across the four sample divisions, reflecting the volume of offences. In 'F' division (central Birmingham), officers endorsed action against street robbery, and higher detection rates for robbery and theft person were among the division's key objectives for 1996/97. A combined proactive and reactive squad (fourteen strong) established by 'F1' area to tackle robbery/theft person (Operation Suncrown) was retained when

the initiative was extended across 'F' division (Operation Utah) and its size increased to a nominal 35 officers when the initiative was strengthened further (Operation Blizzard). However, the operation was still widely perceived to be an 'F1' initiative, with only lukewarm support from the other area management teams.

In 'K' division (Sandwell), officers supported action against street robbery, where victims were frequently Asian women wearing gold jewellery. Operation Jericho I (Box B), which reduced street robberies but had little impact on detections, had a dedicated five-strong proactive team and a modified version (Jericho II) involved 21 officers (plain clothes and uniformed). In both 'J' (Dudley) and 'M' (Coventry) divisions, assaults and criminal damage were seen as more of a problem than street robbery, and the creation of temporary teams to implement short-term proactive operations was seen to be an appropriate response.

Where specialist squads existed, there were concerns about their proactive capacity, given reactive demands, exacerbated by the requirement to meet 'call management' targets. Also, following the disbanding of the serious crime squad, the investigation of serious offences had been devolved to divisions, and squads were depleted by frequent abstractions – often of the most experienced officers – to special incident rooms.

Box B: Operation Jericho I (March 1996): West Midlands Police

- A dedicated proactive team (one detective sergeant and four detective constables)
- Intelligence-based operations including identification of 'prominent nominals', tasking of patrols to gather intelligence, recruit informants and 'adopt a robber'
- High profile policing targeted at high risk areas/times and the designation of 'low tolerance zones'
- Covert surveillance of high risk areas together with 'dragnet' operations, using a combination of overt and covert policing
- Targeting of potential victims with multi-lingual leaflets and talks to target groups
- Improved identification procedures including area searches with victims and the use of local witness albums

In Strathclyde, there was a commitment to reducing street crime in general and one of 'A' division's (Glasgow city centre) objectives for 1996/97 was to reduce the incidence of serious assaults and robberies and to increase their detection level. Elsewhere, there has been management support for short-term initiatives targeting various aspects of street crime, including robbery. While there are no permanent robbery squads, teams of dedicated officers have been established to target street robbery and/or other aspects of street crime under the 90-day rubric. Their role is

typically both proactive and reactive. Some divisions have a crime unit or sub-divisional proactive units which target problematic offences. For example, on 'D' division each of the three sub-divisions has a proactive unit comprising two five-person teams which cover from 10.00am to 2.00am. Recognising that proactive work requires a cultural change which does not come easily to everyone, members of these teams are experienced CID and uniformed officers who are willing to be flexible in their approach and work patterns. Abstractions to deal with major enquiries had had an impact in Strathclyde where, although divisions have some surveillance capacity, they have no surveillance vehicles. Divisions can call on the force's two surveillance teams (used primarily for major crimes) or the divisional surveillance unit (for divisional crime operations) and some divisions have increased the number of officers who are surveillance trained.

No specialist equipment has been supplied to either West Midlands or Strathclyde Police to target street robbery. Except for encrypted radios, the equipment generally available was less sophisticated than that for Eagle Eye. However, the use of CCTV systems was more widespread than in London, with officers closely involved in their management and monitoring, and using them to guide resource deployment, to identify suspects for targeting and for evidential purposes.

■ Criminal intelligence and CPA

Officers in some of the West Midlands divisions sampled reported increased use of intelligence 'packages' and CPA to target suspects and high risk areas. 'K' division's street robbery strategy highlighted the need for up-to-date intelligence and there was more emphasis on informants and obtaining intelligence from PSVs. However, the force's restructuring programme and call management targets were judged to have hindered moves towards a more strategic approach. These problems were exacerbated in 'F' division, where co-operation between areas was considered poor.

Strathclyde Police have increasingly used intelligence information and CPA to target their resources effectively (Box C), aided by their computerised crime reporting and management system. Crime reports, telephoned in by officers (freephone system), are recorded on computer by civilian staff and can be accessed by all officers. The crime reports are automatically forwarded to: CID (staffed 24 hours); the intelligence unit; the CCTV team; and, the crime target unit. The criminal intelligence system, a computerised free text retrieval system, enables analysts to prepare intelligence packages, which are evaluated and passed to the sub-divisions for action.

Box C: Operation Turpin (February–April 1996): Strathclyde Police

- DIU produced intelligence on those believed to be active street robbers on 'A' division
- CPA used to identify vulnerable locations
- CCTV monitoring used to identify suspects – full descriptions then circulated
- OPs established in locations identified as 'hot spots'
- All suspects and prisoners interviewed by members of a dedicated team to improve the intelligence held on those responsible for street robberies
- All officers conducting a stop and search for offensive weapons submitted a report to the DIO and, where an arrest was made, the dedicated team conducted an interview

The submission of intelligence reports was facilitated by good working relations and communication within and across divisions. On 'D' division, the DIU encouraged officers to call in and those who submitted reports received a written acknowledgement, which dramatically increased the number received. Details of all arrests are forwarded to the DIU and those arrested are interviewed to obtain intelligence. The force is considering prison visits for intelligence purposes and has increased its number of registered informants, who are now being specifically tasked. On 'K' division, whose bulletin 'Special K' conveys intelligence in an accessible style, officers are made accountable for their action (or inaction) in response to the divisional CPA report distributed to each shift.

Investigation and identification

Key issues

- Street robberies are difficult to investigate and identification evidence is critical.
- All officers recognise the value of CCTV in the investigation of street robbery and the identification of offenders.
- Officers typically undertake immediate local searches with victims but there is wide variation in the use of other identification aids.
- There is some concern that time is wasted investigating offences unlikely to yield a result.

Eagle Eye forces

■ Recording and investigative practices

In both the MPS and BTP, there was a general agreement that robbery squads were effective, with members sharing information and benefiting from colleagues' inputs. In BTP, some squads felt an administrative post, to co-ordinate the information flow within and outside the squad, would make them more effective. Some senior MPS and BTP officers considered that junior officers – often first at the scene – needed better training in how to conduct the initial investigation (especially in statement taking) and supervisors needed guidance to ensure quality. BTP supplies an aide memoir listing information to be recorded initially, but recognises that, when a victim is severely affected, a statement may be better if delayed. In the MPS, local training had aimed to improve the quality of initial recording and investigation and some sharing of good practice resulted from the Eagle Eye meetings and workshops.

The use of person descriptive forms (PDFs) and bodymapping was variable. Some officers favoured their use but others considered them helpful only if the description was detailed or the offender's clothing distinctive. There was concern that using a PDF could distort people's recall and about its implications for disclosure. The use of a PDF may be encouraged by the standard form (developed by the co-ordination group), which aims to facilitate body mapping and ensure data conformity. Although not intended to replace a statement, some officers argue that a PDF may be sufficient, unless a suspect has been identified, when a statement will be necessary. This might cause problems if the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board were to require a statement from all those making a claim.

■ Identification evidence

Many officers highlighted both the importance and difficulty of obtaining identification evidence. When the offender had been sighted, MPS officers usually searched the local area with victims/witnesses (unless they need medical attention). BTP officers also seek to adopt this practice but their opportunities are limited. Some victims are unwilling to return to the scene and travelling on the same routes is rarely productive. Also, many offences are initially reported to the MPS and, unless the report is telephoned to BTP, the information transfer can delay a response. Where incidents are reported directly, a dedicated response vehicle would help officers to respond more immediately.

Officers would welcome the introduction of computerised, easily up-dated, witness albums to replace local, often out-of-date, albums. Where statements are good enough, BTP officers do an e-fit – all three London areas had purchased a portable system and trained officers in its use. BTP officers also interrogate HOLMES to identify potential suspects but the lack of descriptive details often results in a large

number of possibilities. BTP officers criticised the computerised bodymapping system's lack of a search facility, which meant that local intelligence officers had to examine hard copies. A database of clothing and body jewellery etc. was felt to have potential in aiding identification. BTP's excellent identification suite facilities are heavily used but difficulties in rearranging parades, when bailed suspects fail to appear, can lead to victims withdrawing their complaints.

Where they are available, use is made of CCTV recordings for identification and evidence. There are comprehensive CCTV systems covering the underground and major railway stations in London and more installations are planned at shopping centres and similar sites. Although continuous monitoring is impossible, where an incident may have been recorded, BTP officers inspect relevant tapes – a time-consuming task. However, systems are not always well-maintained, some pictures are of poor quality and station staff are sometimes unwilling to release tapes without replacements. Also, both MPS and BTP officers reported that many offenders now hide their faces while committing offences and/or change their clothes immediately afterwards. Some community representatives in London expressed concern about civil liberties and Lambeth CPCG had prepared a draft code of practice.

Comparison forces

■ Recording and investigative practices

In the West Midlands and Strathclyde, specialist squads, even if temporary, were considered to facilitate the investigation of street robbery. All the West Midlands divisions visited had taken action to improve investigative practices. For example, under Operation Jericho ('K' division), all officers received a seven-point guide to initial investigation and in 'F' division, short attachments to the robbery squad provided patrol officers with experience. However, the policy of single-crewing of patrol cars was considered to have inhibited officers' response to street robberies, especially those involving weapons.

■ Identification evidence

In the West Midlands, both 'F' and 'K' divisions conducted an immediate local search where victim/witness information merited it. Local witness albums had been introduced as part of Operation Jericho ('K' division), together with guidance about the recording and rapid circulation of detailed descriptions. 'J' division had purchased a computerised system, 'PCFax', which allowed a body-map or e-fit to be scanned and transmitted to other stations for local printout.

In the West Midlands considerable reliance was placed on CCTV, especially the system covering the New Street shopping area. Eighteen cameras, monitored by officers in 'F' division's headquarters, provide high quality images, freeze-frame,

zoom and tracking facilities and immediate prints. In Glasgow, the CityWatch CCTV system, comprising thirty-two, continually recording, individually-controlled, colour cameras, with night vision capability, provides similar facilities. As well as tapes offering the opportunity to identify offenders, immediate action by the controller can enable officers to effect an arrest while a crime is being committed.

Partnership

Key issues

- Efforts are being made to establish links with relevant community groups and local agencies and to develop a more integrated approach to crime reduction.
- There is evidence of improved co-operation with local authority departments.
- There are some questions about the reality of partnerships and the adequacy of consultation.

Eagle Eye forces

All five boroughs in which the MPS sample divisions were located had active and well-attended CPCGs. However, street robbery had not figured prominently on their agendas. Officers in all divisions – especially senior officers and crime prevention specialists – were convinced of the importance of partnerships with local agencies, but reported few initiatives directly attributable to Eagle Eye. All reported good co-operation with local authorities which had brought a range of benefits eg. target hardening and/or installation of CCTV systems; joint action on public education about street robbery and support for diversionary schemes. The community representatives interviewed considered that co-operation with the police had improved but they were not as satisfied as officers with the level of consultation.

The five London boroughs had all benefited from Safer Cities projects and employed specialist officers for police liaison. In every case street robbery had been one of the issues on which police and council staff had sought to work together. One example is Holloway division's participation in Islington's 'Youth Safety and Crime Prevention Forum' along with the council, the probation service and six other local organisations. The Forum's aims include support for Summer activity schemes, consultation with young people – including offenders – about their needs and the provision of community programmes for offenders. In Walworth, a Community Safety Strategy Group has been established and the division covers the cost of accommodating the Crime Concern Co-ordinator. Hackney & Shoreditch division publicises the local Police Community Safety Unit via its website.

Recognition of the need to improve liaison between Lambeth Council and the police led to the creation of the Lambeth Partnership Policing Strategy Group, comprising

representatives from Lambeth Council (eg. Housing, Education, Environment and Social Services), the MPS (divisional superintendents and the borough liaison officer (BLO)) and the CPCG. The group's aims include: reducing crime and fear of crime; promoting community safety; and, addressing the causes, as well as the effects, of crime. Its work is supported by sector working groups and the division's community liaison office.

The problem of obtaining revenue funding for the operation, maintenance and monitoring of CCTV systems was highlighted in the MPS. Although capital funds were available, partnership initiatives needed to address the issue of revenue funding. There also needed to be more co-operation with agencies and businesses with a CCTV facility; no division had completed an audit of local CCTV.

BTP seeks joint action with the railway companies and London Underground through regular meetings of the Police Consultative Liaison Groups and meetings between officers and company representatives. Although passenger security is high on the agenda in discussions with service providers, verbal support for improved security measures is not always translated into action, with providers needing to be convinced of the commercial benefit of improved security. BTP, with the support of the railway protection inspectors, had succeeded in persuading companies to monitor or close vulnerable areas (eg. badly-lit access points to stations). BTP welcomed the provision of CCTV on stations and improved lighting but expressed concern about the policy of withdrawing station staff which was seen as having serious implications for passenger safety.

Comparison forces

In the West Midlands, where there are 30 CPCGs, community relations are led by a central community services department, headed by an assistant chief constable, with a specialised unit in each of the nine divisions. Officers reported a wide range of local partnership activities, some of a general nature, others directed at robbery and theft. These ranged from arrangements with the local bus company to provide later services, to the installation and maintenance of CCTV systems, which typically involved partnership with local authorities, property developers, traders' organisations and city challenge initiatives.

Strathclyde Police are the operational partners of the CityWatch Association, a registered charity, which consists of Glasgow Development Agency, Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and private sector companies. Its key feature is one of the largest and most advanced city centre CCTV systems in the UK. Full funding for the scheme (£1.1 million over a three-year period) was not in place when it was introduced and there is still a shortfall. But, with reductions in both crime and fear of crime, the business case for its continued operation is clear.

'Operation Street Safe' (1996), illustrates how co-operation can help to address the problem of violent crime, including robbery. Following approaches from the community involvement branch, Glasgow retailers undertook to maintain a voluntary register of purchasers of knives and other weapons, to request identification and not to sell weapons to unaccompanied juveniles. Staff at public houses were briefed to ensure that no patrons were allowed to leave the premises carrying bottles or glasses.

Victim and witness care

Key issues

- There is clear appreciation of the trauma street robbery can cause.
- Officers are concerned that their efforts to care for victims (and witnesses) are impeded by other demands – especially in the West Midlands Police.

Eagle Eye forces

In the MPS and BTP, actions taken to improve the standard of victim and witness care included:

- automatic referral of all street robbery victims to Victim Support;
- ensuring that victims have a specific contact point;
- advising victims of any developments or results in the investigation;
- allowing victims, who had refused to provide a statement because of fear of recrimination, to adopt a pseudonym when providing a statement – the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) agreed to these procedures (BTP initiative).

BTP robbery squad officers reported that victims often rely more on the investigating officer than on Victim Support. They try to support victims and witnesses called to give evidence in court – many are apprehensive or feel that the likely outcome does not make attendance worthwhile. In some areas, BTP take a victim impact statement from all victims, whereas in others it is obtained only when it is judged such information would benefit the victim.

Comparison forces

None of the initiatives in the West Midlands, where referral to Victim Support is also standard procedure, included any new policies in respect of victim/witness care. However, a number drew attention to its importance – improved victim care was one of 'F' division's key objectives for 1996/97. In Strathclyde, the frequent association between street crime and drug use, non-payment of money-lenders and prostitution means victims/witnesses are often afraid to come forward.

Prevention

Key issues

- The public is not always receptive to crime prevention advice to reduce street robbery.
- Officers emphasise the role of work with young children in discouraging offending and there is considerable support for diversionary schemes.
- Many are critical of the limited penalties available for juvenile offenders.
- There are a number of schemes, usually in conjunction with local authorities, which address design issues or aim to target harden.

Eagle Eye forces

■ Advice to victims

Both the Eagle Eye publicity and local crime prevention initiatives, undertaken by all divisions, were judged to have made the public more aware of street robbery. The MPS booklet 'Stay Safe: A guide to personal safety', had been widely distributed and some divisions had issued leaflets advising people how to minimise the risk of being robbed. Some councils (eg. Westminster) offered free training courses in personal safety and self-defence. In Holloway, the police had worked with Islington Council to establish an 'escort service' using volunteers to accompany older people to and from the post office and bank. Although BTP's pamphlet 'Travel Safe' had been widely circulated to London hotels and was available at travel interchanges, some BTP officers would like to see more publicity targeted at the travelling public. The help provided by Victim Support was seen as particularly valuable to repeat victims but such victims were not referred to personal safety training courses.

■ Diversionary projects and other interventions

The aim of diversionary schemes is to offer young people the opportunity to be involved in purposeful activity so as to divert them from crime. The MPS has taken steps to increase educationalists' and social workers' awareness of the need for diversionary activities for potential street robbers, including those excluded from school. Senior officers made a presentation about street robbery and Eagle Eye to a conference organised by the Association for London Government (September 1996). Eagle Eye Week (October 1996) featured presentations to community representatives. However, such initiatives, although beneficial in gathering support and raising awareness, did not occur until more than a year after the launch of Operation Eagle Eye and may have been more effective at an earlier stage.

Crime prevention officers (CPOs) and BLOs in the MPS reported close working relations with local authorities, particularly with education services and youth and crime prevention co-ordinators, and some divisions had introduced truancy patrols. Within the limits of their resources, BTP were also active in school liaison. All the MPS divisions supported diversionary projects. In August 1996, thirty-six Summer Action schemes, involving co-operation among local authorities, parent/community groups, local businesses and the police, operated in London. Although many schemes receive private sponsorship, the costs of police resources are often high and some divisions are being forced to review their commitment.

There were other good examples of multi-agency partnership initiatives. Several divisions had contributed to anti-bullying campaigns in local schools and there was an initiative to reduce street robbery in Hackney. The 'Safer Streets Campaign' involves a partnership among Stoke Newington and Hackney & Shoreditch divisions of the MPS, Safer Cities, the London Borough of Hackney's Youth Justice Service and Youth Service, Dalston Youth Project and the Inner London Probation Service. The campaign contains a number of elements including:

- Fast-tracking of offenders to increase the chance of a community-based disposal;
- A mentoring programme for young street robbers, who also attend college training courses;
- A publicity campaign aimed at young offenders and potential offenders;
- Targeting associates of known street robbers to combat coercion/peer pressure.

Such innovative programmes, of which there are many examples elsewhere, deserve support but their contribution to crime reduction needs to be evaluated. The potential benefits of a community-based disposal for some young men convicted of street robbery do appear to have received some recognition (cf. The Audit Commission, 1996). The Inner London Probation Service's Community Sentence Project, based in Southwark, had seen an increase in referrals since the launch of Eagle Eye. Offenders are required to attend a programme of instruction, personal development, allied to vocational training or education. Research suggests that those completing the programme have a lower reconviction rate than those leaving young offender institutions.

■ Target hardening and design issues

All five MPS divisions offered advice to local authorities – through CPOs or architectural design advisers – about target hardening and installation of CCTV in high risk areas.

■ High profile policing

Both the MPS and BTP highlighted the role of high profile policing in preventing street robbery. A number of MPS divisions had deployed uniformed officers or, in some cases, police dog patrols, in vulnerable locations both as a deterrent and to provide reassurance. BTP frequently combined high profile policing with plain clothes operations and/or targeted stop and search.

Comparison forces

■ Advice to victims

In the West Midlands, three sample divisions had targeted crime prevention advice at the most vulnerable groups locally. Action specific to street robbery included: multi-lingual leaflets, aimed particularly at Asian women; visits to mosques and temples; and, advice to limit repeat victimisation.

■ Diversionary projects and other interventions

Both comparison forces supported diversionary projects and other initiatives aimed at minimising young people's involvement in crime in general rather than street robbery in particular. Such activity included the establishment of junior crime prevention panels in schools, provision of a confidential 'crime line' for young people and an anti-bullying campaign (all in the West Midlands) and 'Truancy Watch' which involved joint action by local uniformed officers and Glasgow education department.

■ Target hardening and design issues

In the West Midlands, design advisors offered advice to local authorities about lighting, street and estate design and target hardening. Both redesign of vulnerable areas and the installation of CCTV, appeared to have yielded some positive effects. Similarly, Glasgow's CityWatch CCTV system appears to have had an impact on crime in the city centre. Strathclyde Police's guide for designers and planners, 'Designing Out Crime' (produced by the community involvement branch), emphasises crime prevention through design rather than target hardening and recommends early consultation with architectural liaison officers and their membership of the design team.

■ High profile policing

In the West Midlands, all officers interviewed considered that high profile activity acted as a deterrent but that the effects were short term. Similar tactics were used in all four sample divisions. Typically, high profile foot patrols in high risk areas were supplemented by the deployment of dogs, the mounted branch and patrol cars. Such action was often coupled with covert surveillance of adjoining areas to deal with potential displacement.

Strathclyde Police had used the local press to publicise their targeting of a particular area with uniformed officers and increased use of stop and search. This had led to a temporary decrease in street crime and no apparent displacement.

Criminal justice

Key issues

- Attempts to enlist the support of other elements of the criminal justice system are limited.
- Where co-operation has been sought, some CPS offices, magistrates and judges are perceived to have responded.

Eagle Eye forces

Police relations with the CPS were generally reported to be good. In Hackney & Shoreditch, a CPS lawyer was located within the police station, for a trial period, to provide a source of immediately accessible advice. This experiment, although not a direct result of Eagle Eye, was considered to have improved the police response to street robbery. In Holloway and Streatham, the CPS had agreed that all offenders carrying knives would automatically be charged, rather than cautioned. In Paddington, active use of the local media was directed, in part, at influencing magistrates and judges to deal firmly with convicted robbers. Although most officers were critical of sentencing policy, some did suggest Eagle Eye may have contributed to sentences which did reflect the seriousness of the offence.

Comparison forces

In the West Midlands, efforts to seek support for police action against street robbery from other parts of the CJS were limited to 'F' division (central Birmingham), where senior officers had informed the CPS about relevant operations. In Strathclyde, under the auspices of Operation Turpin, all those arrested for street robbery were detained and a request was made to the Procurator Fiscal's office that they should be treated firmly. The sentences offenders received were published in the local press.

Other issues

Eagle Eye forces

■ Internal marketing and external publicity

All the MPS and BTP officers interviewed were aware of Eagle Eye and had some appreciation of its objectives. Members of specialist squads and senior officers were, in most cases, well-informed and strongly committed but many uniformed officers were ill-informed and did not exhibit a sense of 'ownership' or participation. Many BTP

officers still referred to Operation Lynton. A significant minority of MPS officers expressed concern at first hearing of Eagle Eye through the pre-launch press coverage.

The internal marketing strategy for Eagle Eye relied on the distribution of the good practice booklet 'Tackling Street Robbery' to every supervising officer in the MPS (and to BTP) and coverage in the MPS in-house newspaper 'The Job', including a special edition devoted to the Operation. Also, part of the role of the five MPS area co-ordinators (usually detective superintendents) serving on the Eagle Eye co-ordination group, was to cascade information and good practice via area Eagle Eye meetings. BTP was represented on the Eagle Eye co-ordination group and was invited to area meetings. Despite such efforts, there was little evidence that they had succeeded in 'marketing' the Operation so as to ensure that all officers were informed about their roles in achieving its objectives. Distributing booklets to supervisors does not of itself constitute a familiarisation programme for *all* officers. Moreover, the cascading of information not only requires co-operation from officers at all levels in the organisational structure between the information source and the target, but is also very vulnerable to other, often more pressing, demands. Many of these concerns echo those voiced in relation to Operation Bumblebee. Until it is recognised that internal communications – targeted, role-focused and highlighting the contribution to be made by all officers, not just those in specialist teams – play an integral role in strategy implementation, no major operation will achieve its full potential.

The MPS's Eagle Eye publicity campaign, which included radio advertisements, leaflets, pamphlets, posters and press statements, was professional and often imaginative, reinforcing the Operation's crime prevention advice and warnings to offenders. However, Eagle Eye promotional material was rarely available in police station waiting areas. Although the campaign appears to have achieved some degree of awareness, the level of publicity contrasts starkly with the much greater effort made to bring Operation Bumblebee to public attention. It is acknowledged both that the funding available to support large-scale advertising campaigns has been reduced and that street robbery differs from burglary in that it is differentially distributed across the MPD, rather than a high volume crime spread throughout the capital. However, given the often frightening nature of street robbery, the mobility of London's population and the high number of visitors unfamiliar with the risks, there are very good arguments for seeking greater investment in publicity to ensure that the appropriate messages reach all the relevant target audiences.

■ Community relations

All those interviewed from outside the police service considered street robbery to be one of the major crime-related problems in their local area but acknowledged that dealing with it was problematic. The majority judged police performance, although

still not adequate, to be improving as a result of a more proactive approach – aided by the installation of CCTV in vulnerable areas – and a greater willingness to co-operate with other organisations. There was a call for more multi-agency work with resources devoted to better urban design, target hardening and diversionary schemes. Satisfaction with the police service, though generally good, was limited by concern about police attitudes, especially toward members of ethnic minorities. Young people, especially young black males, were perceived to be alienated by police activities, such as ‘stop and search’, which was seen as a defining element of Eagle Eye. Such action was seen to affect the attitudes not only of the persons stopped but also of other family members. The more co-operative attitude of senior management was not always displayed by officers on the streets. Police culture was seen as changing for the better but there was still a long way to go. Some community representatives were concerned about the new long-handled batons, arguing that they made officers appear threatening and aggressive.

All those interviewed had heard about and welcomed Operation Eagle Eye. However, many community representatives said that their main source of information about Eagle Eye was the media and were concerned that the Operation had been launched prior to, rather than following, consultation with important interest groups. None had received what they considered to be adequate briefing from police officers or been consulted before the Operation was implemented. These rather negative perceptions conflict with the MPS’s view of the adequacy of the consultative process. From the MPS perspective, consultation with the community was both extensive and appropriately timed. Following wide-ranging consultation with the community, including CPCGs, in 1994/95, street robbery was included in the MPS Policing Plan for 1995/96. A further programme of consultation, devised with the assistance of a group of CPCG chairs from South East London, culminated in the Commissioner’s invitation to opinion formers, community leaders and others to meet with him to discuss street robbery. Consultation continued after the announcement of Eagle Eye with both further briefing meetings by senior officers and discussion at divisional level with CPCGs about the best way to address the problem locally.

The opposing views of the consultative process appear to derive both from different interpretations of the term ‘consultation’ and from contrasting perceptions of its timeliness. Despite the considerable effort devoted to keeping people informed about MPS objectives, the dominant view amongst the community representatives interviewed was that there had been inadequate discussion of the proposed action against street robbery or of its implications for community relations. Moreover, the timing of the meeting with the Commissioner, just a few days prior to the launch of Eagle Eye, accentuated the view that its aim was to impart information about police plans and tactics which had already been formulated, rather than to consult about options well in advance of any announcement.

There was concern that the initial media publicity, resulting from the leaking of the Commissioner's letter to community leaders, had focused attention on the race issue rather than on the Operation's essential messages. Half of those interviewed highlighted its content, saying that it had been unhelpful, not only to Operation Eagle Eye but to relations between ethnic minorities and the police in general. Despite such concerns, the majority believed that young black males were the most frequent perpetrators of street robbery. Some considered that this was an almost inevitable result of the general alienation of young black men who were excluded from society through discrimination both at school and in the job market. 'Mugging' was seen to have become an integral part of the subculture, encouraged by peer pressure and lack of opportunity to acquire money by legal means (cf. Burney, 1990; Savill, 1994).

■ Sustainability

The overwhelming majority of MPS officers interviewed considered that Operation Eagle Eye should be maintained, arguing that a high profile, well-resourced operation, combined with effective working practices, offered the best chance of tackling street robbery. However, some were sceptical of the MPS's ability to sustain the Operation, arguing that changing priorities would lead to a reduction in resources. This had already occurred in some divisions with respect to Operation Bumblebee, where resources previously devoted to combating burglary had been diverted to Eagle Eye. Another perceived threat to Eagle Eye's long-term future was the change in financial procedures in 1996/97, whereby the Operation's separate overtime allocation was removed and Eagle Eye was required to compete with other activities for overtime funding from a reduced divisional budget.

Comparison forces

■ Internal marketing and external publicity

In the West Midlands and Strathclyde, the absence of any force-wide, high profile strategy meant that publicity, both internal and external, was a less significant issue than in the MPS or BTP. However, the general level of awareness of force and divisional priorities was satisfactory and, where short-term divisional operations were conducted against street robbery, there was evidence that local management had tried to ensure that all participating officers – including patrol officers – were fully briefed. Both forces relied on localised publicity for short-term initiatives using the press, radio, leaflets and crime prevention presentations to community groups. Strathclyde's Spotlight initiative (implemented after the designated research period) does involve high profile media coverage and marketing to both external and internal audiences and one of Strathclyde's aims for 1997/98 is to develop a proactive marketing strategy for the force.

■ Community relations

Interviews in the West Midlands focused primarily on Birmingham, where community representatives mentioned the problem of street robbery, but only as one of a long list of local concerns. Street robbery was perceived to be increasing and unacceptably high, notably in the city centre. Although the police response was considered to be inadequate, there was some recognition of the difficulties of detection and the problems created by the design of central Birmingham. The extensive use of CCTV was welcomed but more visible uniformed patrols would be appreciated. Views about the police service echoed those expressed in London. The police were perceived to be trying harder to develop better community relations but were still seen to be insufficiently sensitive or open in their dealings with the community.

■ Sustainability

In the West Midlands, the majority of the operations against street robbery were planned to have a limited life, although it was hoped that the deterrent effect of short-term, intensive action would extend beyond the implementation period. A substantial number of officers argued that a well-resourced, sustained commitment to tackling street robbery was required, especially in central Birmingham, though few expected that the necessary resources would be made available. Officers' views had clearly been affected by the force reorganisation in 1995, which was not popular. They were often more concerned about the negative impact of the restructuring and the emphasis on 'functionality' and call management than on the best way to tackle street robbery. In Strathclyde, the reliance on 90-day initiatives, either locally-based or, more recently, force-wide, was seen to offer both a flexibility of approach and the ability to respond to local problems as and when appropriate. However, these short-term initiatives have now been superseded by the Spotlight initiative which is viewed as a long-term policing philosophy and as an integral part of the force's planning cycle for the foreseeable future.

4. Statistical performance indicators

Force comparisons

The MPS's definition of street robbery precludes comparisons with other forces which do not disaggregate their crime statistics in the same way. Inter-force comparisons were therefore restricted to robbery (i.e. offences involving both personal and business property) and theft from the person (i.e. snatch thefts and dips). Using selected performance indicators, the analyses compare the year(s)⁵ prior to Operation Eagle Eye with the first year of its implementation. The date on which a change in performance might realistically be expected was designated as 1 October 1995 and therefore the comparison years run from October to September. Within the MPS, analyses have been conducted for the force as a whole and for the Eagle Eye divisions (n=23)⁶ and non-Eagle Eye divisions (n=40).

Robbery

Recorded offences: In the first year of Eagle Eye, the number of robberies recorded by the MPS increased by 8%, compared with a rise of 14% in the previous year. The rate of increase in the number of robberies slowed in both Eagle Eye (EE) divisions (from +9% to +3%) and non-Eagle Eye (non-EE) divisions (from +25% to +16%). In the same year, BTP (London) recorded a rise of 13% in robberies but there was considerable variation among the three areas. London North (LN) recorded a reduction (-6%), London Underground (LUG) a minimal rise (1%), while London South (LS) experienced a dramatic increase (+37%).⁷ Over the same 12-month period, West Midlands Police (WMP) recorded a rise of 11% in robbery (Figure 2).

In 1996,⁸ although the majority of forces in England and Wales recorded increases in robbery, the average increase slowed from 13% in 1995 to 9% in 1996. The eight metropolitan forces recorded an average increase in robbery of 8% and the MPS and West Midlands Police were among five such forces which recorded increases: the MPS (+11%), Greater Manchester (+10%), Merseyside (+8%), South Yorkshire (4%) and West Midlands (+4%). The increase of 3% recorded by Eagle Eye divisions in the MPS (October 1995–September 1996) and the decrease recorded by BTP in London (March 1996–February 1997) compare favourably with the overall increase in England and Wales and in the metropolitan forces (January–December 1996).

Clear-ups: In Eagle Eye's first year, the number of clear-ups for robbery in the MPS increased by 65% (+22% in the previous year) and the clear-up rate was 23% (15% in the previous year). Both Eagle Eye and non-Eagle Eye divisions showed similar improvements in performance. In the same year, BTP (London) increased the number of clear-ups for robbery by 73% and raised their clear-up rate from 16% to 25%. All three areas showed increases in both performance measures, with London South achieving the greatest increase in clear-ups (+107%) and London North the highest clear-up rate (29%)⁹. Over the same 12-month period, West Midlands Police increased the number of clear-ups for robbery by 11% but the clear-up rate remained static at 18% (Figure 3).

⁵ Data were available for the two prior years for the MPS and for one prior year for both BTP and the West Midlands Police. The data were supplied by the PIB in the MPS and by the equivalent statistical units elsewhere.

⁶ Although 25 divisions were originally designated as Eagle Eye sites, two of these were excluded (after consultation with the MPS). One had ceased to exist in its original form and the other allocated the equipment idiosyncratically (vehicles to the TSG and IT to the AIU).

⁷ More recent figures (to February 1997) indicate a year-on-year decrease in robbery across BTP (London) of 3.6% (London North: -24%, London Underground: -2%, London South: +9%).

⁸ The statistics for England and Wales refer to calendar years and were obtained from the Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate.

⁹ More recent figures from BTP for March 1996 to February 1997 indicate a year-on-year increase in detections across the three London areas of 29% (+58% for London South, +53% for London Underground and -19% for London North) and an overall clear-up rate of 34%.

Figure 2: Force comparisons: recorded robbery offences (October–September)

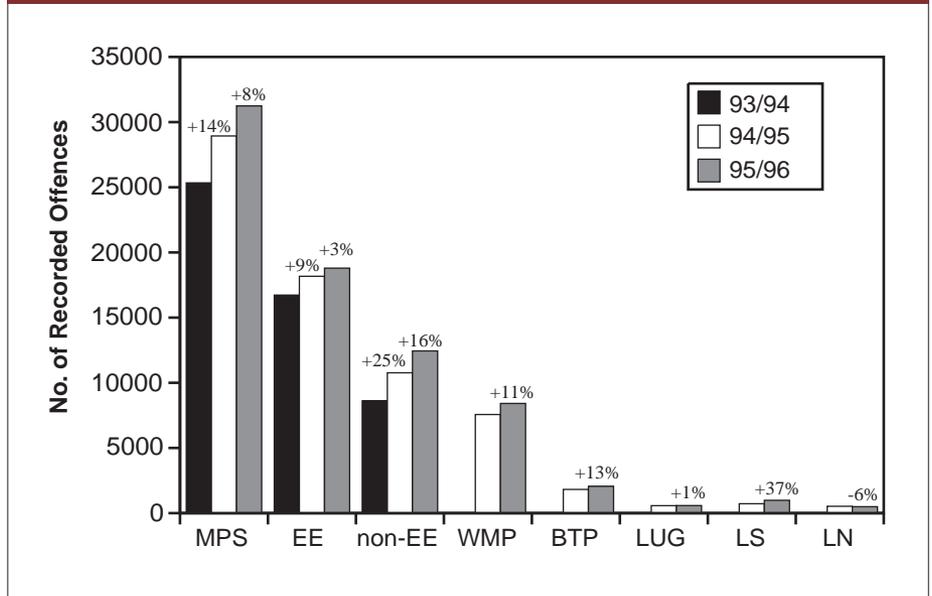
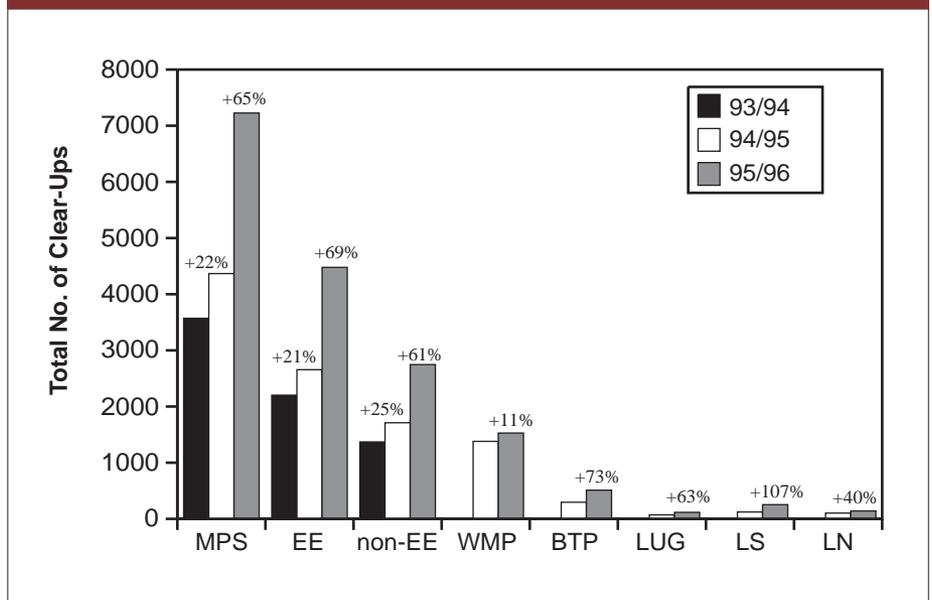


Figure 3: Force comparisons: robbery clear-ups (October–September)



Theft from the person

Recorded offences: In Eagle Eye's first year, the number of theft person offences in the MPS increased by 5%, compared with a rise of 16% in the previous year. While the rate of increase in the number of such offences slowed in non-Eagle Eye divisions (from +22% to +14%), Eagle Eye divisions saw a reduction of 7%, compared with a rise of 9% in the previous year. In the same year, BTP (London) recorded a decrease in theft person of 28% and London Underground, where the majority (91% in 1995/96) of such offences occur, recorded a decrease of 31%. Over the same 12-month period, West Midlands Police recorded a rise of 1% in theft person offences (Figure 4).

In 1996, the majority of forces in England and Wales recorded decreases in theft person, resulting in an average reduction of 0.7%, compared with a rise of 17% in 1995. Among the metropolitan forces, which recorded an average fall of 0.6%, the largest decreases were recorded by Northumbria (-20%) and the West Midlands (-18%)¹⁰. Three metropolitan forces recorded increases in theft person in 1996: South Yorkshire (+17%), the MPS (+4%) and Greater Manchester (+3%). The decrease in theft person of 7% recorded by Eagle Eye divisions in the MPS (October 1995–September 1996), although not as large as some of the reductions elsewhere, is greater than the average decreases in both the metropolitan forces and England and Wales as a whole and the reduction in theft person recorded by BTP (October 1995–September 1996) is larger than that recorded by any of the metropolitan forces.

Clear-ups: In the first year of Eagle Eye, the number of clear-ups for theft person in the MPS increased by 88% (+14% in the previous year) and the clear-up rate was 9% (5% in the previous year). Although both Eagle Eye and non-Eagle Eye divisions showed improvements in performance, these were greater for the Eagle Eye divisions. Across the Eagle Eye divisions, the number of clear-ups for theft person increased by 138% (compared with an increase of 47% across the non-Eagle Eye divisions) and the clear-up rate for theft person was 14% (compared with 7% across the non-Eagle Eye divisions). In the same year, BTP (London) experienced a decrease of 11% in the number of clear-ups for theft person but the clear-up rate increased from 2% to 3%. Over the same period, West Midlands Police experienced a decrease of 5% in the number of clear-ups for theft person and their clear-up rate for such offences remained static at 13% (Figure 5).

¹⁰ The year-on-year change in the number of theft person offences recorded by the West Midlands Police in 1996 (-18%) differs substantially from that recorded during the research period, October 1995 to September 1996 (+1%). The decrease in 1996 reflects falls in the last three quarters of the year, the most dramatic of which occurred during October to December (-39%). This fall may well be a consequence of Operation Street-Strike, the force-wide initiative against a range of crime and nuisance offences, which was implemented for a five-week period from October 1996.

Figure 4: Force comparisons: recorded theft person offences (October–September)

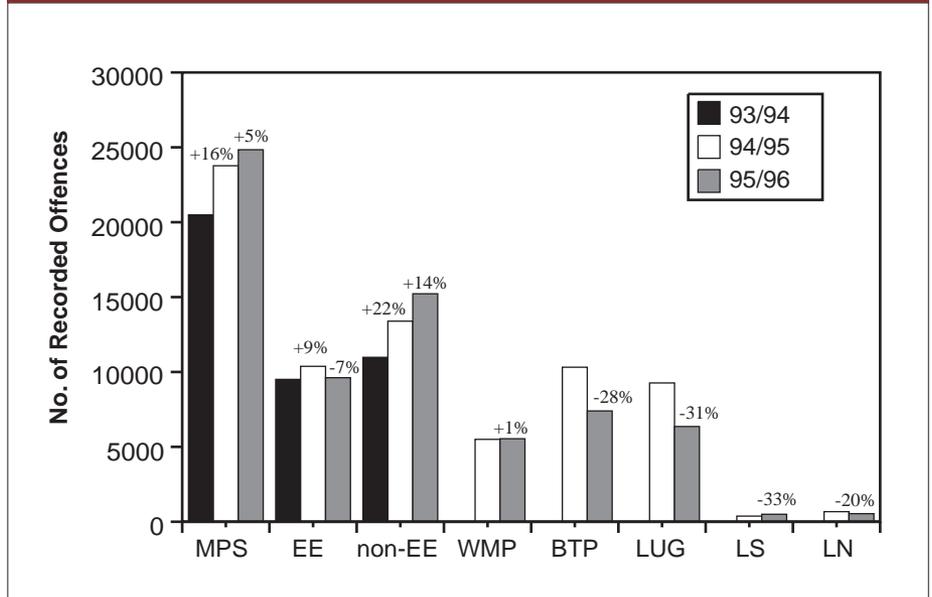
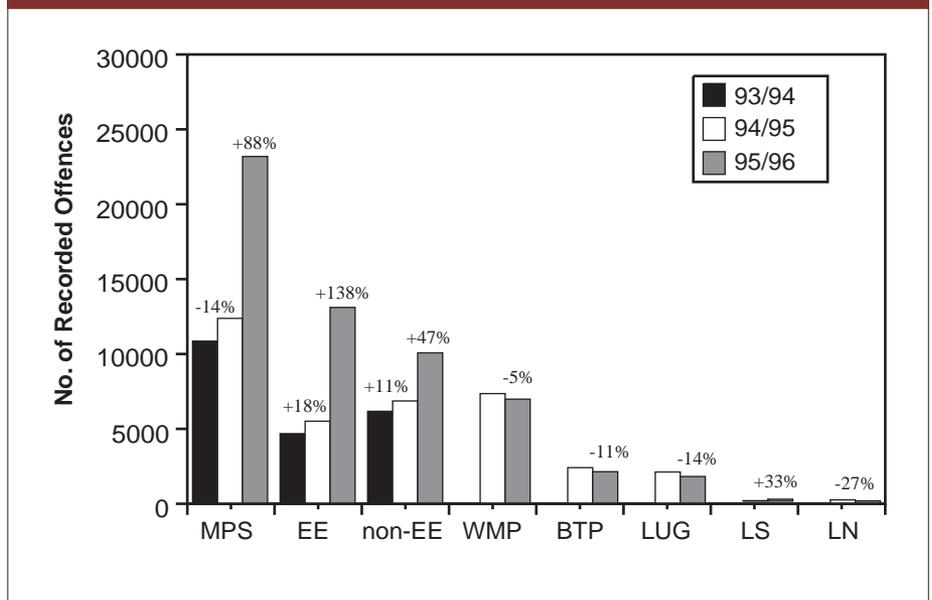


Figure 5: Force comparisons: theft person clear-ups (October–September)



Street robbery in the MPS

The analyses compare the two years prior to Eagle Eye with the first year of its implementation (October 1995 to September 1996). The analyses focus on the MPS's overall performance and on comparisons between Eagle Eye and non-Eagle Eye divisions. Although comparisons of changes in performance (i.e. post- vs. pre-Eagle Eye) between Eagle Eye and non-Eagle Eye divisions are an obvious way of assessing the Operation's impact, drawing conclusions from such comparisons is not without some pitfalls. First, the two sets of divisions were not selected at random; those designated as Eagle Eye sites had the highest incidence of street robbery. Therefore, there is the possibility that divisions with an initially high number of offences will experience a decrease, while those with an initially low number will experience an increase. Such an outcome is a statistical effect (regression to the mean) and would not be a function of the Operation. Second, there is the possibility that non-Eagle Eye divisions may have changed their working practices in line with their Eagle Eye counterparts, thus improving their performance. Third, displacement of street robbery may have occurred from Eagle Eye to non-Eagle Eye divisions.

Recorded offences

In Eagle Eye's first year, the number of recorded street robberies across the MPD remained static (-0.1%), compared with a 26% rise in the previous year. Eagle Eye divisions recorded a decrease (-5%), compared with a prior increase of +18%. Across the non-Eagle Eye divisions, although street robbery showed a year-on-year increase, the rate of increase slowed from +40% to 7% (Figure 6). Quarterly analyses showed that, although street robbery had been reduced or controlled in late 1995 and the first half of 1996, the numbers were again rising. Recorded street robberies rose by 7% in the third quarter and by 21% in the final quarter of 1996¹¹. The increases were greater in non-Eagle Eye divisions (21% in the third quarter, 35% in the fourth quarter) than in Eagle Eye divisions (0.1% in the third quarter, 13% in the fourth quarter). Further analyses showed that the 12-month moving average number of street robberies has been rising since September 1996.

Examination of the changes in the number of recorded street robberies pre- and post-Eagle Eye for each of the MPS's 63 divisions indicated that the statistical tendency of high and low values to move toward an average value, although present, was not a major explanatory factor. There was considerable variation in the changes in the number of street robberies among both Eagle Eye and non-Eagle Eye divisions (Table 3). Although there was a trend toward a greater reduction in Eagle Eye than in non-Eagle Eye divisions, this difference was not statistically significant.

¹¹ Additional data relating to the final quarter of 1996 were made available in order to examine whether trends observed in the research period were continued.

Figure 6: Street robbery in the MPS: recorded offences (October–September)

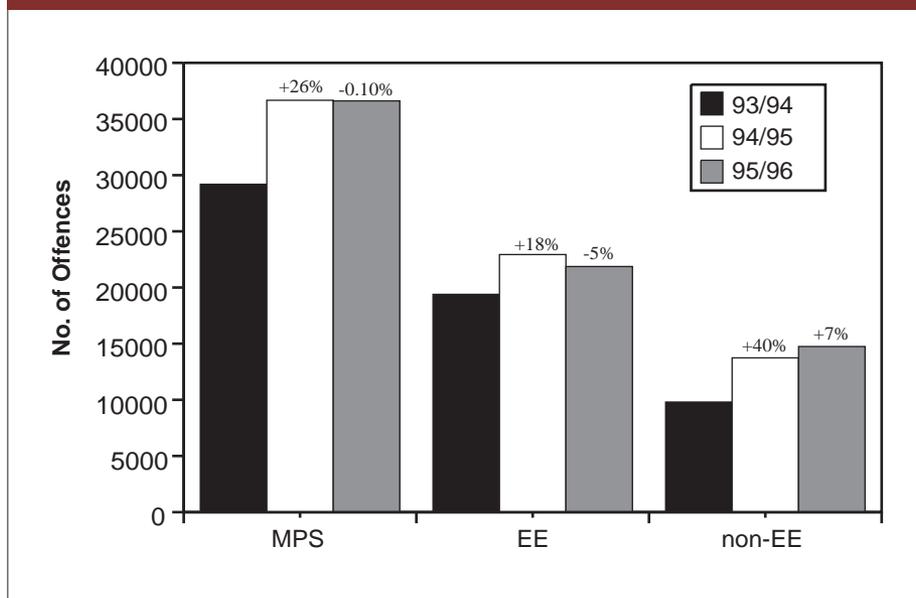


Table 3: Changes in recorded street robberies: pre/post-Eagle Eye (October–September)

	Eagle Eye divisions	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	MPS
Change	n (range)	n (range)	n
Decrease	12 (-42% to -7%)	14 (-40% to -2%)	26
Increase	11 (+3% to +38%)	26 (+3% to +96%)	37
Total N (Overall % change)	23 (-5%)	40 (+7%)	63

Some divisions' performance was highly discrepant from others. Among the Eagle Eye divisions, where there is a reduction in street robbery overall, three divisions recorded substantial increases: Tottenham (+38%), Kilburn (+32%) and Wembley (+24%). All of these divisions are on 2 Area, which was the only MPS area in which the overall performance of Eagle Eye sites was worse than that of non-Eagle Eye divisions.

Whereas on 1, 3, 4 and 5 Areas, the overall number of street robberies recorded by Eagle Eye divisions fell, the overall number recorded by 2 Area Eagle Eye divisions rose and this rise was greater than that recorded by non-Eagle Eye divisions. While Wembley could cite no obvious reason for the rise in street robbery, feedback from the other divisions attributed the local rises in street robbery to gang activity (now controlled) and the release of active robbers (Tottenham and Kilburn), and displacement from Wood Green (Tottenham).

Among the non-Eagle Eye divisions, where the dominant trend is an increase in street robbery, seven divisions recorded substantial decreases: Brompton (-40%), Belgravia (-33%), Golders Green (-19%), Croydon, Southwark, Holborn (each -17%) and Dagenham (-16%). Brompton division encompasses Notting Dale which was one of the original 25 Eagle Eye sites. Belgravia division, anticipating displacement from local Eagle Eye divisions, had chosen to target street robbery (especially prominent nominals) using a four-person team, aided by CID input and a covert vehicle. Golders Green were also concerned about displacement and had made street robbery a local priority. Awareness of both the force-wide priority afforded to street robbery and its growth locally had led Croydon to create a predominantly proactive robbery squad. Also, Croydon had the benefit of most of the Eagle Eye equipment, purchased from 4 Area funds. Holborn division established a proactive unit both to control anticipated displacement and to target cash points, where tourists are especially vulnerable. This had resulted in apprehending a prolific offender, who received a four-year sentence and subsequently admitted 150 robberies. Holborn had also gained the support of local community leaders for the overt video-recording of gangs of youths suspected of targeting women. This action appeared to have had a deterrent effect as had the high profile activity associated with the threat of terrorism. Dagenham division had used high profile policing with dogs in problem areas (eg. Barking town centre) and had improved their use of intelligence by using the Eagle Eye model for the DIU, aided by CRIMINT and CRIS.

Further analyses of recorded street robbery offences pre- and post-Eagle Eye showed that improvements in performance were greater for snatch thefts than for robbery/ attempted robbery of personal property. In the first year of Eagle Eye, the number of snatch thefts recorded by the MPS fell by 8% (compared with a rise of 50% in the previous year), while the number of robberies of personal property increased by 3% (compared with an 18% rise in the previous year). The number of recorded snatch thefts fell by 13% in Eagle Eye divisions (compared with a rise of 41% in the previous year) and by 0.9% in non-Eagle Eye divisions (compared with a rise of 66% in the previous year). While Eagle Eye divisions recorded a reduction of 2% in robbery of personal property (compared with a 12% rise in the previous year), in non-Eagle Eye divisions the rate of increase slowed (from 31% to 11%).

Arrests

The number of arrests for street robbery in the MPS increased in the first year of Operation Eagle Eye by 22% (+20% for Eagle Eye and +24% for non-Eagle Eye divisions). This compares with an increase of 74% in the preceding year (+69% for Eagle Eye and +84% for non-Eagle Eye). Quarterly analyses indicated that the increase in the number of arrests evident in late 1995/early 1996 was not being sustained. Further analyses confirmed that the 12-month moving average number of arrests has remained relatively static since March 1996.

Clear-ups

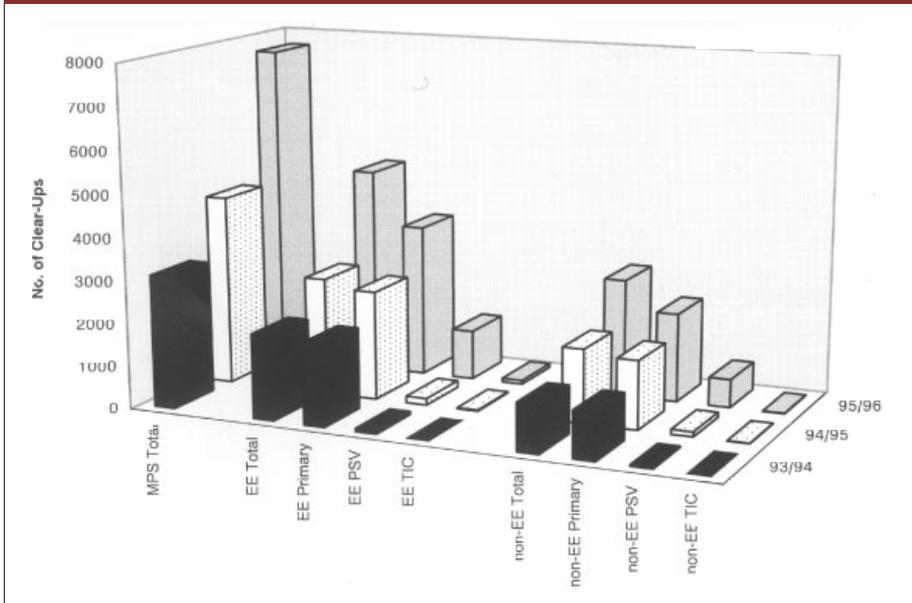
In the first year of Eagle Eye, the number of clear-ups for street robbery increased by 70%, compared with an increase of 44% in the previous year. The increase in clear-ups was greater in Eagle Eye (+77%) than in non-Eagle Eye divisions (+60%). The clear-up rate for street robbery in Eagle Eye's first year was 21% (22% for Eagle Eye and 19% for non-Eagle Eye divisions), compared with 12% in the previous year. Further analyses showed that the 12-month moving average clear-up rate for street robbery reached the revised target figure of 20% in May 1996 and remained at 20–21% up to December 1996.

In Eagle Eye's first year, the number of primary clear-ups increased in both Eagle Eye (+41% compared with +34% in the previous year) and in non-Eagle Eye divisions (+30% compared with +47% in the previous year). About mid-way through Eagle Eye's first year, attention was focused on the need to raise the number of key primaries and to achieve a key primary clear-up rate of 15%.¹² Analyses show that the 12-month rolling averages for both key primary and other primary clear-ups increased up to March 1996 but remained relatively static thereafter. The maximum primary clear-up rate achieved was 16% and the maximum key primary clear-up rate was in the region of 10%.

The changes in the number of secondary clear-ups have been dramatic. Secondary clear-ups had been rising in number in the year preceding Eagle Eye (+158% in the divisions subsequently designated as Eagle Eye sites and +381% in the remaining divisions) but in the Operation's first year, they increased by 560% in the Eagle Eye divisions and by 446% in the non-Eagle divisions. Secondary clear-ups constitute about a quarter of all clear-ups and the majority (93% in Eagle Eye and 99% in non-Eagle Eye divisions) of secondary clear-ups are PSVs. In the first year of Operation Eagle Eye, about half (48% for Eagle Eye and 53% for non-Eagle Eye divisions) of the observed increase in total clear-ups is attributable to the increase in PSVs (Figure 7).

¹² Key primaries encompass the following reasons for clear-up: charged; summonsed; taken into consideration (TIC) previously recorded; cautioned; formal warning; offence committed by child under the age of criminal responsibility; offence committed by juvenile and police report to a local authority; and, youth and community service (YACS) referral. Other primaries include: accused dies; accused ill etc.; guilt clear but victim refuses/unable to give evidence; and, sufficient evidence to charge but it is decided that no useful purpose would be served by proceeding.

Figure 7: Street robbery in the MPS: clear-ups (October–September)



In Eagle Eye's first year, the number of clear-ups increased for both snatch theft and robbery of personal property, but the increases were greater for snatch theft than for robbery of personal property in both Eagle Eye divisions (+138% compared with +60%) and in non-Eagle Eye divisions (+94% compared with +54%).

Other offences

MPS

Changes in the recorded number of other selected offences and of total notifiable offences across the MPS and in Eagle Eye and non-Eagle Eye divisions (Table 4) provide only limited evidence of category displacement during Eagle Eye's first year. The increases in theft from shops do offer some support for the suggestion that certain groups of street robbers are turning to theft from shops, especially in Eagle Eye divisions. Also, the increase in robbery of business property may indicate some change in the targets for robbery offences. However, business property offences constitute only a small (but rising) proportion of robbery offences (14% in Eagle Eye's first year). The slower rate of increase in other theft person offences post-Eagle Eye, suggests that the Operation may have helped to control dips as well as snatch thefts. It did not prove possible to examine the contention that some street robberies might be recorded as common assault as this is not a notifiable offence and the statistical returns are incomplete.

STATISTICAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Table 4: Year-on-year change (October–September) in recorded offences (selected categories)			
Offence	Scope	Pre-Eagle Eye 94/95 v. 93/94	Post-Eagle Eye 95/96 v. 94/95
Other theft person (drips etc.)	MPS	+131%	+14%
	Eagle Eye divisions	+94%	+1%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	+153%	+21%
Robbery business property	MPS	-13%	+56%
	Eagle Eye divisions	-20%	+66%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	-4%	+47%
Theft from shops	MPS	+15%	+17%
	Eagle Eye divisions	+12%	+20%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	+15%	+16%
Theft of motor vehicles	MPS	-12%	-4%
	Eagle Eye divisions	-11%	-0.1%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	-13%	-6%
Theft from motor vehicles	MPS	-12%	-1%
	Eagle Eye divisions	-13%	-1%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	-12%	-1%
Non-aggravated burglary (residential and non-residential)	MPS	+11%	-5%
	Eagle Eye divisions	+4%	-5%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	+15%	+6%
Total notifiable offences	MPS	+4%	-0.4%
	Eagle Eye divisions	+5%	-1%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	+4%	+0.2%

The pattern of change in the number of clear-ups for other selected offences and of total notifiable offences (Table 5) lends some weak support to the argument that the focusing of effort on street robbery has had a detrimental effect on the detection of other offences. Although for some offences there have been increases in the number of clear-ups in the first year of Eagle Eye, in certain cases these increases were smaller than the increases observed in the preceding year. There was particular concern that Eagle Eye may have had a negative effect on the resourcing of Operation Bumblebee and hence on the detection of burglary. However, although the increase in the number of clear-ups for burglary across the MPS as a whole was smaller than that observed pre-Eagle Eye, the increase was larger across the Eagle Eye divisions, suggesting that the new Operation had not affected the detection of burglary. Also, the number of detections for all notifiable offences increased post-Eagle Eye, especially on the Eagle Eye divisions.

STATISTICAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Table 5: Year-on-year change (October–September) in number of clear-ups (selected categories)

Offence	Scope	Pre-Eagle Eye 94/95 v. 93/94	Post-Eagle Eye 95/96 v. 94/95
Other theft person (dips etc.)	MPS	+142%	+41%
	Eagle Eye divisions	+91%	+85%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	+177%	+20%
Robbery business property	MPS	-28%	+110%
	Eagle Eye divisions	-25%	+114%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	-30%	+15%
Theft from shops	MPS	+14%	+16%
	Eagle Eye divisions	+15%	+20%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	+14%	+14%
Theft of motor vehicles	MPS	-46%	-31%
	Eagle Eye divisions	-63%	+2%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	-37%	-42%
Theft from motor vehicles	MPS	-37%	+19%
	Eagle Eye divisions	-13%	+33%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	-46%	+15%
Non-aggravated burglary (residential and non-residential)	MPS	+17%	+5%
	Eagle Eye divisions	+6%	+12%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	+24%	+1%
Total notifiable offences	MPS	+4%	+7%
	Eagle Eye divisions	-9%	+20%
	Non-Eagle Eye divisions	+12%	+1%

BTP

In the first year of Eagle Eye, there was little evidence of categorical displacement: both theft from the person and theft of personal property decreased, compared with the previous year. Total notifiable offences also showed a year-on-year decrease (-8%). However, the rise in robbery offences on London South suggested some geographical displacement either within BTP (London) and/or from the MPD to the South London travel networks. There is some suggestion that the effort devoted to Eagle Eye may have affected the detection of 'dips' (where clear-ups decreased by 11%), but clear-ups increased for theft of personal property (+45%) and for total notifiable offences (+8%).

West Midlands Police

During the period October 1995 to September 1996, the West Midlands Police experienced increases in a number of offences, including burglary (+5%) and vehicle crime (+9%), and in the number of total notifiable offences (+5%). The number of clear-ups fell for burglary (-14%), vehicle crime (-1%) and for total notifiable

offences (–4%). There were minimal changes in recorded offences and clear-ups for other theft (i.e. excluding theft person and vehicle theft). Boundary changes made it difficult to draw inferences about geographical displacement resulting from short-term initiatives.

Stop and search

Analyses of stop and search data were conducted, first to determine whether the Operation was associated with any change in the number or distribution of stop searches and, second, in response to concerns (expressed by some police officers and community representatives) that stop searches were disproportionately distributed among ethnic groups. The analyses were restricted by the availability of relevant data and, although indicative, do not permit inferences to be drawn about the impact of Eagle Eye on all stops or on all searches. The data available relate to those searches conducted following a stop covered by Section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE). These figures omit not only the majority of stops (since most stops are not followed by a search) but also an unknown number of non-PACE searches.

MPS

The data analysed refer to all recorded stop searches of males which are covered by Section 1 of PACE. The analyses compared the 12-month (October–September) periods pre- and post-Eagle Eye in both Eagle Eye and non-Eagle Eye divisions.¹³ Where divisional population statistics, based on the 1991 Census, were available (20 out of 23 Eagle Eye divisions, 33 out of 40 non-Eagle Eye divisions), comparison was made of the percentage of stop searches of ‘Black’ (Afro-Caribbean/African) males with the percentage of population self-defined as ‘Black’ in the 1991 Census.¹⁴ However, since stop searches are more likely to involve young men, note was taken of the percentage of the population defined as black in the 5–29 year age group. It is recognised that the 1991 Census data relied on optional self-definition of ethnic origin which is likely to have resulted in an undercount of black people and also that the 1991 Census data do not reflect current population characteristics.

In Eagle Eye’s first year, the total number of male stop searches fell in both Eagle Eye divisions (–13%) and non-Eagle Eye divisions (–2%), compared with the preceding year. Across the MPS, these changes equate to some 21,000 fewer male stop searches. In the MPS, the number of male stop searches fell in 33 divisions (11 of 23 Eagle Eye and 19 of 40 non-Eagle Eye divisions). The number of male stop searches fell in all ethnic categories across the Eagle Eye sites – stops of black males decreased by 19%, those of Asian males by 9% and those of white males by 11%. Across the non-Eagle Eye sites, stop searches of black males declined by 1%, those of white males by 3%, while those of Asian males increased by 1%. Overall, across the Eagle Eye divisions, the percentage of male stop searches involving those who are black

¹³ Failure to record ethnic origin means that such information is not available for all stop searches. The calculations of the percentage of male stop searches in a particular category are based on the number of stop searches of persons known to be in that category, relative to the total number of male stop searches.

¹⁴ Boundary changes mean that census data are not congruent with some divisions.

showed a slight decrease – stop searches of black males accounted for 41% of all male stop searches pre-Eagle Eye and for 38% of such stop searches post-Eagle Eye. Across the non-Eagle Eye divisions, stop searches of black males accounted for 16% of all male stop searches both pre- and post-Eagle Eye.

Many of the Eagle Eye divisions have larger black populations than the non-Eagle Eye divisions. In Eagle Eye divisions, the percentage of the population defined as black ranges from 5% of the total population (7% of those aged 5–29 years) to 30% (34%, 5–29 years). In non-Eagle Eye divisions, the percentage ranges from 1% of the total population (1%, 5–29 years) to 12% (15%, 5–29 years).

In every Eagle Eye and non-Eagle Eye division (for which census data were available), the percentage of stop searches of black males is higher than the population percentage, both pre- and post-Eagle Eye but there is little evidence that Eagle Eye has consistently accentuated these differences. In Eagle Eye divisions (but pre-Eagle Eye), the proportion of male stop searches where the person was black ranged from 23% (in a division where black people were estimated to comprise 6% of the population) to 60% (where 30% of the population was estimated to be black). Post-Eagle Eye, these two divisions still defined the range (27% to 57%) across the Eagle Eye divisions. Obviously, there is variation across divisions. Among the 23 Eagle Eye divisions, the percentage of male stop searches where the person was black rose in 8 but declined in 15 divisions, while among the 40 non-Eagle Eye divisions, this percentage rose in 22 and declined in 18 divisions.

Although the percentage of stop searches of black males was consistently higher than the relevant population estimate, the overall percentage of stop searches of black males was lower than the percentage of street robbery suspects described as black or the percentage of those arrested for such offences who are black. Across the MPS as a whole, where two in three suspects (69%) are described as black and one in two of those arrested (54% in 1994/95 and 52% in 1995/96) is black, only one in four male stop searches (27% pre-Eagle Eye and 25% post-Eagle Eye) involved a person who was black. In Eagle Eye divisions, where nearly four out of five street robbery suspects (78%) are described as black, two out of five male stop searches (41% pre- and 38% post-Eagle Eye) involved a person who was black and in non-Eagle divisions, where one in two suspects (54%) is described as black, one in six male stop searches (16%) involved a person who was black.

Further analyses of stop and search data showed that the average number of arrests resulting from stop searches was higher for Eagle Eye than for non-Eagle Eye divisions. But, while the number of such arrests rose across non-Eagle Eye divisions, it fell on Eagle Eye divisions, in the Operation's first year. The percentage of black and white male stop searches leading to an arrest remained between 11–13% across the two sets of divisions, both pre- and post-Eagle Eye.

BTP

During the 12-month period, October 1995 to September 1996, the number of stop searches (covered by Section 1 of PACE) conducted by BTP rose by 15% (+27% for white people and -0.7% for non-white people).¹⁵ The percentage of stop searches involving non-white people decreased from 35% to 28%.

¹⁵ The ethnic categories used by BTP are 'white' and 'non-white'.

Conclusions

The analyses suggest that the number of stop searches (covered by Section 1 of PACE) of males who are black and the proportion of such stop searches involving people who are black both decreased post-Eagle Eye. The percentage of stop searches of black males remained higher than the local population percentage (based on the 1991 Census). However, the range and reliability of the data analysed places some limitations on the conclusions which may be drawn from these findings. There are concerns about both the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the recorded PACE searches. Additional problems arise from: the fact that black people are more likely to be multiple stopped/searched; evidence that searches tend to be highly localised and targeted mainly on people who do not live in the immediate area; the uneven distribution of minorities across different divisions; and, the undercount of black people in the now out-of-date 1991 Census. Most importantly the data analysed present an incomplete picture of stop and search activity. Since the recorded figures exclude non-PACE searches and the majority of stops, no conclusions can be drawn about the overall impact of Eagle Eye on the number or distribution of all stops or of all searches.¹⁶

¹⁶ These issues are dealt with in more detail by:

FitzGerald, M. and Sibbitt, R.
1997, *Ethnic Monitoring in Police Forces: A Beginning.*
Home Office.

FitzGerald, M. and Hale, C.
(forthcoming) *Police Stops of Different Ethnic Minorities in London and Elsewhere: a BCS Analysis.* Home Office.

5. Overview

Does Eagle Eye work?

Analyses of recorded offences and clear-ups indicate that Operation Eagle Eye has had some effect on both the incidence and detection of street robbery:

- within the MPS, performance against street robbery of Eagle Eye divisions was, on average, better than that of non-Eagle Eye divisions;
- the number of recorded street robberies decreased across Eagle Eye divisions and the rate of increase slowed across non-Eagle Eye divisions;
- clear-ups for street robbery increased across both Eagle Eye and non-Eagle Eye divisions.

The Operation's impact, however, is not unequivocal:

- comparisons of the number of street robberies pre- and post-Eagle Eye showed wide variation in performance among Eagle Eye divisions (and among non-Eagle Eye divisions);
- the decrease in street robbery across Eagle Eye divisions appears to derive more from a reduction in snatch theft than from a reduction in robbery of personal property;
- the early improvements in performance associated with Operation Eagle Eye do not appear to be being sustained.

The number of recorded offences will reflect local circumstances (eg. number of active prominent nominals, level of organised gang activity, release of active offenders, displacement etc.) but is also likely to reflect the way the strategy is implemented and the degree of management support offered at both divisional and area level. The greater impact of Eagle Eye on snatch theft than on robbery of personal property may reflect a differential deterrent effect but may indicate that some snatch thefts are being recorded as dips. This is countered by the finding that the incidence of dips post-Eagle Eye was considerably lower than that recorded pre-Eagle Eye, although it has been suggested that dips are now only being recorded if the victim has observed their property being stolen. The increase in clear-ups in non-Eagle Eye divisions, as well as in Eagle Eye divisions, is likely to be a function of a number of factors: the fact that street robbery is a declared priority for the MPS as a whole; formal and informal dissemination of Eagle Eye priorities and practices across the MPD, aided by the transfer of officers; increasing pressure to meet performance targets which exists throughout the service; and, normal feelings of competitiveness among all MPS divisions.

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The MPS's failure to control street robbery in the later stages of Eagle Eye's first year may reflect relaxation of effort but is equally likely to be a function of factors outside police control. Street robbers adapt to changing circumstances and devise strategies to counter police tactics or move their activities elsewhere within the MPS. The rise in clear-ups is impressive but the clear-up rate has remained static in recent months. The most likely explanation is that having reached the target clear-up rate there was little incentive to seek to achieve a higher level of performance. Furthermore, given the difficulties of investigating street robbery, there may be little scope for increasing the number of primary clear-ups and officers would therefore be reliant on PSVs which have already increased dramatically.

BTP's performance against robbery and theft person, although variable across the London areas, has shown improvement, especially with respect to clear-ups. Although BTP formally began working under the Eagle Eye banner half way through the Operation's first year, they have made a substantial contribution to its success, especially given their very limited resources and the extent of the travel networks they have to cover in London. It is also likely that some areas have suffered from displacement from the London streets.

West Midlands Police, despite some excellent local initiatives, failed to make much impact on the incidence or detection of robbery or theft from the person during the research period. Performance may well have been affected by the force's reorganisation, which clearly had a detrimental effect on officers' morale. However, the more recent reduction in theft person offences is likely to be one consequence of their force-wide operation against various aspects of street crime. In Strathclyde the strategy of using short-term initiatives, within a broader strategic framework, offers a coherent and flexible approach to a range of offences which are often inter-related.

Facilitators and barriers to success

Eagle Eye has served to introduce or reinforce a range of good practices and, although centrally led, has encouraged innovation at a local level. However, the human and technical resources and the changes in working practices that comprise the Operation are both wide-ranging and variable across the Eagle Eye sites. Where there has been a degree of success, it is not possible to determine which elements are associated with which outcomes, but there are some elements of the strategy which appear to have contributed to Eagle Eye's 'added value':

- the use of a 'branded' strategy to **focus effort**, supported by provision of **equipment and technical resources**;
- a greater emphasis on **proactivity**, with increased use of **intelligence and CPA** to guide resource deployment;
- an increased emphasis on **partnerships for crime reduction**.

The Operation was not without deficiencies in each of these areas and there were a number of other opportunities for improvement, especially in the areas of **publicity/marketing, training, use of CCTV and community relations**. These issues, some of which resonate with those identified in the evaluation of Operation Bumblebee (Stockdale and Gresham, 1995), need to be addressed if the current strategy, and similar future operations, are to achieve their full potential.

Key domains: issues and opportunities

Focusing of effort and resources

The creation of robbery squads and provision of adequate and appropriate resources, within the framework of a 'branded' strategy, focus effort on the problem of street robbery and encourage officers to believe that concerted action can bring results. Effective radios, fast response and covert vehicles, surveillance equipment and appropriate IT and software applications are all essential elements in combating street robbery and many other offences. But, training deficiencies and reductions in overtime funding have meant that some of the resources have not been fully utilised. While HOLMES has not been of significant value in relation to street robbery, other systems, such as CRIMINT and CRIS have proved extremely useful. Access to WADS at divisional, rather than just at area level, would also be an advantage, though this would require additional investment in hardware.

Proactivity

There has been a shift toward a more proactive approach to street robbery but conflicts continue to arise between reactive demands and proactivity. It is vital to ensure that proactivity is seen as the responsibility of all officers, not just those designated as members of proactive units, and as an essential element of reactive policing rather than as a mutually exclusive option. Although intelligence and CPA are increasingly being used to guide resource deployment, there is more scope for directed rather than passive patrolling and for flexibility in deployment to try to match staffing levels and likely demand.

Improvements have been made in the collection, analysis and dissemination of intelligence but deficiencies remain. Officers not designated as proactive, especially uniformed patrol officers, are not sufficiently aware of the importance of intelligence gathering, nor is the value of the contributions they do make always acknowledged. Equally, where they have been given intelligence targets, a system of accountability is advisable to ensure they do seek and return information. Intelligence needs to be analysed and disseminated rapidly, so as to be immediate rather than retrospective. Consideration should be given to staffing DIUs for longer periods to facilitate rapid

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analysis and using IT to provide immediate intelligence briefings. Improved information flow across structural, functional and geographical boundaries would provide the basis for increased co-operation and joint action against shared problems.

Partnership and consultation

Although Eagle Eye has not been the sole stimulus, progress has been made in the development of closer co-operation between the police and local agencies in areas such as diversionary schemes and environmental design. Despite a strong commitment to the partnership ideal, police consultation with interested parties is often perceived to be inadequate or too late – criticisms levelled at Operation Eagle Eye – offering too little opportunity for discussion of relevant issues prior to decisions being taken by the police.

Diversionary projects and related schemes can make a valuable contribution to crime reduction but police involvement is time-consuming and expensive. There is a real danger that, faced with competing demands, divisions may withdraw their support. Evaluation of the societal and monetary benefits should be an integral element of all such intervention programmes, to serve as a basis for constructive discussion with local authorities, community groups and other agencies about the most appropriate role for the police in integrated crime reduction strategies which tackle the range of juvenile nuisance and offending.

Publicity and marketing

Despite efforts to ensure awareness of Eagle Eye and its objectives within the MPS, the internal marketing was neither extensive enough nor sufficiently targeted to ensure that all categories of officer were aware of the contribution they could make to the Operation's success. More needs to be done to ensure that all officers are aware of their role and, more importantly, that they feel a greater sense of ownership and commitment. In particular, patrol officers need to be aware of the importance of intelligence gathering, questioning of prominent nominals and identification of potential informants (and should be tasked appropriately). Short-term attachments to robbery squads can help to increase involvement and to share good practice. Internal marketing methods need to be reviewed and monitored. While the MPS has taken action to gauge public attitudes to the service it provides, similar steps have not been taken to assess the awareness of or attitudes towards aspects of its core business held by its officers, especially the uniformed constables who make up the greater proportion of the service.

The external publicity for Operation Eagle Eye compared unfavourably with the effort made to create public awareness of the MPS's anti-burglary strategy, Operation Bumblebee. The Eagle Eye launch was not as well handled as may have been wished and, in some areas, may have decreased rather than increased public support. There

was inadequate prior consultation with community representatives and little effort was made to provide comprehensive information about the strategy and its rationale, until some time after it was implemented.

Training

The training element of Operation Eagle Eye's resourcing strategy was not appropriate in terms of either the amount provided or its timing. Training needs must be recognised prior to strategy implementation and addressed early in the resource allocation cycle. The training needs identified were wide ranging and included:

- use of IT applications and software;
- use of high-technology surveillance equipment;
- recruitment/management of informants;
- surveillance techniques;
- advanced driving skills;
- intelligence gathering and dissemination;
- patrol officers' initial investigatory skills (eg. statement taking, street identification, and local searches for forensic evidence);
- supervisory skills (eg. quality control of crime reports and initial investigations).

CCTV

Apart from at the major railway and underground stations, CCTV is less extensively used in London than in many other city centres, where such systems appear to have made a valuable contribution to the prevention and detection of street robbery. However, there are a number of concerns: revenue funding limitations often restrict both monitoring and maintenance; the output from many systems is very poor; off-site access is rarely available; knowledge of privately owned systems is limited; and, with some exceptions, the civil liberties implications of CCTV and product use have not been examined. There is a need to research these issues and to develop both a technical standard and a code of practice to ensure optimum but ethical use of CCTV.

Passenger security was not given a high priority when franchises were awarded for the rail network. The Department of Transport should be asked to consider placing an obligation upon operators to offer a comprehensive package of security measures, including CCTV with off-site access for BTP, to enhance passenger safety.

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Community relations

Data limitations preclude firm conclusions being drawn about the overall impact of Operation Eagle Eye on the number or distribution of all stops or all searches. However, the available data do indicate that, contrary to many people's fears, Operation Eagle Eye has not led to either any consistent increase in the number of PACE stop searches of males who are black, or to a rise in the proportion of male stop searches involving people who are black. Although Eagle Eye has not accentuated the discrepancy between the percentage of male stop searches involving people who are black and population estimates, this difference remains throughout the MPS. Clearly, it can be argued that effective use of resources requires that stop searches are targeted at members of those population groups which evidence suggests are most likely to commit street robbery. But, such targeted action has consequences for community relations in the longer-term, especially if some officers do not recognise how such a policy is frequently perceived or do not display sensitivity in their dealings with all sections of the community.

Conclusions

Operation Eagle Eye, which has provided the opportunity for concerted action by the MPS and BTP against street robbery, is associated with some improvement in both incidence and detection. However, the 'added value' of Eagle Eye varies across divisions and, in some cases, extends to non-Eagle Eye divisions. It is related more to snatch theft than to robbery of personal property and shows signs of diminishing. There are concerns about displacement and the Operation's impact on the control and detection of other crimes and some doubts about the sustainability of Eagle Eye in the longer-term.

Consideration should be given to extending the Operation across the MPD, offering a flexible resource package appropriate to local needs to help non-Eagle Eye divisions deal with displacement from Eagle Eye divisions. Also, there is a need to consider how changing priorities can be accommodated by a force committed to supporting two high-profile strategies (Eagle Eye and Bumblebee) without such strategies becoming ineffectual through the depletion of the resource base and management support. BTP faces an impossible task given its resource levels relative to the travel networks it polices. A review of the resourcing needs of BTP is essential and service providers should be asked to make their contribution to ensuring the safety of the travelling public.

In both the West Midlands and Strathclyde, reliance on specific, often short-term action against street robbery is not only an appropriate response given the scale and nature of the problem but offers flexibility. However, there are arguments for considering integrating some of the excellent local initiatives into a single operation

to address the problem of street robbery across all city and town centres in the force areas. Operation Street-Strike and Operation Spotlight went some way toward this but were only short term and did not have the technical resources afforded to Eagle Eye. Co-ordinated action would encourage communication and dissemination of good practice across local boundaries and, in the West Midlands, a more strategic approach would also help to counter some of the negative effects of organisational changes.

The research suggests that a proactive, well-resourced strategy for dealing with street robbery can have an impact, but that it requires the co-operation and active involvement of all operational officers, not just members of specialist teams, and must be allied to a rapid and effective reactive capacity. 'Proactive' and 'reactive' policing are not distinct and separate but are complementary facets of an active approach. Such an approach can aid crime reduction but cross-border co-operation is necessary to address geographical displacement and common problems. An active and anticipatory policing style can increase primary detections by targeting known offenders, vulnerable locations and peak time periods for criminal activity and by ensuring a rapid response. Such practices require the rapid analysis and dissemination of intelligence and crime reports and strategic and flexible deployment of resources. Secondary detections – mainly as a result of PSVs – can be useful, not only to increase the total number of detections but as a source of intelligence. But they should not be the main focus of an active strategy. Also, more open discussion within the police service of the role of PSVs and education of the public about their use would lessen the degree to which they are seen as an easy means of boosting detection figures.

The problem of street robbery – and indeed of crime in general – is not simply a matter for the police. Energetic early intervention can help to prevent people from engaging in criminal activity, or to halt their criminal careers at an early stage, by identifying and tackling the precursors and corollaries of criminal activity. But, much of this work lies outside the domain of the police service and there is a need for a more radical and co-ordinated multi-agency approach to the problem of youth crime, of which street robbery is just one element. This recommendation resonates with the views expressed in the Government's recently published Crime and Disorder Bill (Home Office, 1997). This document proposes a new legislative framework to ensure that the contribution of all key partners to the prevention and reduction of crime is maximised. Collaborative action involving all elements of the CJS – not just the police service – local authorities, a wide range of other agencies and services, and the public will be necessary to develop and deliver a comprehensive and integrated strategy for community safety. Police action alone cannot, and should not be expected to offer the solution to what is a societal problem.

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Appendix A: Recent strategic developments in the comparison forces

Table A1: Operation Street-Strike (West Midlands Police): key elements	
Method	
■ Targeting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local plans/resources to be directed using analysis to identify 'hotspots' and 'potential problems' Optimum use of graded response to ensure effective deployment of resources
■ Engaging the force	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on team policing and directed patrol based on local crime analysis Police – especially beat officers, special constables and traffic wardens – to encourage a positive community spirit/the supply of quality information Divisions to lead the community in a partnership approach to fighting crime and public nuisance
■ Engaging the community	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central and local media strategies, supported by crime prevention initiatives Aimed at re-engaging the community in a partnership approach to combating crime and nuisance and to reinforce their 'primacy' as victims and witnesses Clear and unequivocal message 'Don't walk past – take action'
■ Evidence and intelligence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real time evidence/intelligence to be used eg. search for/support witnesses, 'hotspotting', use of covert surveillance/CCTV Aim to turn information and intelligence into tangible evidence to detect crime
Measurement	
■ Quality outcomes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determination to combat street crime Public reassurance – increase in public confidence Enhanced performance eg. increase in detection and arrest rates Clear message to would-be offenders Effective use of DNA and technology
■ Quantitative measures	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of arrests/primary detections Number of incidents of street crime/nuisance incidents dealt with Number of stop and searches and those where arrests made Number of DNA samples taken (cell block and scenes) Number of PACE (Sec. 17, 18 & 32) authorised searches

Table A2: The Spotlight Strategy (Strathclyde Police): key features

• Clear mission statement
• Focus on disorder – thereby affecting violent crime and fear of crime
• Build on the Chief Constable's commitment to community policing/officers
• Plan/seek media coverage to boost public support and confidence
• Tackle fear of crime directly through a positive campaign
• Promote corporate working with the 12 councils eg. diversion and clean-up
• Form a partnership with BTP
• Make representations to the Procurators Fiscal and seek their co-operation
• Develop the spotlight initiative into a 'Floodlight' series of such operations tackling various aspects of street disorder (two spotlights per week)
• Uniformed patrol maximised by ensuring use of good practice
• Intelligence to be gleaned with a view to supporting a street robberies spotlight
• Full support to officers using their powers within the force's policing principles
• Ensure ownership among key players by holding divisional commanders meetings every two weeks to hone tactics, exchange good practice, agree mutual aid etc.
• Form a consultancy/support unit comprising experienced/imaginative individuals
• The strategy to be evaluated eg. statistical indicators and public survey results

Appendix B: Summary of Eagle Eye implementation

Summary tables (B.1-B.6) provide an overview of the extent to which the good practice recommendations contained in the Eagle Eye strategy have been implemented: generally (✓✓✓), partially (✓✓), rarely (✓) or not at all (x). In the case of a comparison force, where a recommendation is not part of the force's approach to street robbery, it is deemed not applicable (n/a). The data relating to the West Midlands Police (WMP) and Strathclyde Police (SP) refer to the research period, during which action against street robbery had been locally determined, and so do not cover the force-wide strategies implemented in October 1996.

Table B1: Summary: intelligence and proactivity

	MPS	BTP	WMP	SP
Objective 1: Maximising the proactive response				
• require commitment from senior management team down	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
• a dedicated group of local officers to respond proactively	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
• adequate resources to be made available	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
• bid for assistance from higher tier resources (eg surveillance team etc, crime unit advice/training)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Objective 2: Enhancing capture, analysis and dissemination of intelligence				
• use the 'prominent nominals' system	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
• robbery squad to have a dedicated intelligence officer	✓✓	✓✓	✓	n/a
• intelligence officer to brief robbery squad officers	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
• all divisional officers to be briefed about and encouraged to approach suspects	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
• all officers encouraged to cultivate informants, who should be appropriately rewarded	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
• intelligence to be sought from prisoners and from convicted robbers – via post sentence visits (PSVs)	✓✓	✓	✓	✓

APPENDIX B

Table B2: Summary: investigation & identification				
	MPS	BTP	WMP	SP
Objective 3: Improving the quality of the initial recording and investigation				
• consider forming a dedicated squad to carry out the initial investigation	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
• direct CAD controllers to organise immediate response/initial investigation	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
• CID/robbery squad should give input to training days re. crime sheet details required	✓✓✓	x	n/a	n/a
• crime reports and statements should be reviewed and feedback provided	✓	✓	✓	n/a
• personal descriptive form (PDF) to be used to record fullest possible description of robbers	✓	✓	n/a	n/a
• body mapping to be promoted and undertaken at every opportunity	✓	✓	✓	n/a
• victims to be thoroughly debriefed	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
Objective 4: Exploiting/developing good practice and experience in the investigation process				
• divisional officers with relevant experience to lead investigations/share good practice	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	n/a
• divisional training to cover street robbery investigations	✓	x	n/a	n/a
• collate/circulate good practice on initial recording and investigation	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
Objective 5: Increasing the opportunity for victims to make positive identifications of suspects locally and soon after the offence				
• consider creating local witness albums/sharing existing facilities	✓	✓	✓✓	✓
• managers to seek most effective way of increasing hours ID suites available/make funds available for 'out of hours' identification parades	✓✓	✓✓✓	n/a	n/a
• officers to search local area with victim/witnesses at time of initial investigation	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
• divisional training units to cover street identification	✓✓	x	n/a	n/a

Table B3: Summary: partnership

	MPS	BTP	WMP	SP
Objective 6: Enlisting the support and co-operation of relevant community groups and local agencies				
• use existing structures to consult with community representatives in deciding local tactics	✓✓	✓✓ ¹	✓✓	✓✓✓
• consultation should be undertaken with parent groups and those having a rapport with local young people	✓	x	✓✓	✓✓
• consider setting up a local Crime Reduction Strategy Group, or individual partnerships to promote crime prevention activities	✓✓✓	x	n/a	n/a
• borough liaison officers (BLOs) – or equivalent – should co-ordinate partnership activities	✓✓✓	x	✓✓	✓✓

¹ BTP officers cannot consult with **all** the community groups in the London area served by the rail/underground networks but do attend those community meetings arranged by the MPS most relevant to BTP jurisdiction. Also, BTP officers, at both senior management and station level, meet representatives of the transport business to discuss action against local problems.

Table B4: Summary: victim and witness care

	MPS	BTP	WMP	SP
Objective 7: Showing consideration/professionalism in dealings with victims and witnesses				
• a contact/liasion point for victim to be nominated	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
• victims and witnesses to be shown witness albums	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
• referral system to Victim Support to be reviewed	x	x	n/a	n/a

APPENDIX B

Table B5: Summary: prevention				
	MPS	BTP	WMP	SP
Objective 8: Reducing the likelihood of becoming a victim				
• crime prevention advice should be given to potential victims	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
• make use of existing personal safety booklets and videos	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
• make use of advice and courses on personal safety available outside the division	✓✓	x	✓	✓✓
• consider seeking funding for providing personal safety training courses	x	x	n/a	n/a
• seek the help of the Victim Support Scheme in referring targeted victims to personal safety training courses	x	x	✓	n/a
Objective 9: Reducing the likelihood of becoming an offender				
• awareness about street robbery should be raised through the Schools Involvement Programme	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
• there should be close liaison with Borough Education Officers to find placements quickly for children excluded from school	x	x	n/a	n/a
• support should be offered to diversionary projects	✓✓✓	x	✓✓✓	✓✓
Objective 10: Target hardening and designing out crime				
• focus the efforts of Crime Prevention Officers (CPOs) and Crime Prevention Design Advisors (CPDAs)	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓

Table B6: Summary: criminal justice				
	MPS	BTP	WMP	SP
Objective 11: Seeking support from other areas of the CJS in deterring street robbery				
• diligently research and present objections to bail	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
• actively police bail conditions	✓	x	✓	✓
• obtain a further statement from victims shortly before trial to illustrate the longer-term effects	✓✓	✓✓	✓	n/a
• meet with local CPS and magistrates (or equivalent)	✓	✓	✓	n/a
• develop a system for notifying local media of robbery arrests and the outcome at court	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓

Glossary

Astraguard: software package for detecting changes in a pre-selected sample of videotape

BCS: British Crime Survey

BLO: borough liaison officer

BTP: British Transport Police

CAD: Computer Aided Dispatch

CCTV: closed circuit television

CPDA: Crime prevention design advisors

CID: criminal investigation department

CJS: Criminal Justice System

CPA: crime pattern analysis

CPCG: Community Police Consultative Group

CPO: crime prevention officer

CPS: Crown Prosecution Service

CRIMINT: criminal intelligence database (MPS)

CRIS: crime recording information system (MPS)

DIO: divisional intelligence officer

DIU: divisional intelligence unit

HOLMES: computerised system developed by the Home Office for major enquiries

I2: analytic tool for use with CRIMINT

IT: information technology

LN: London North (BTP)

LS: London South (BTP)

LUG: London Underground (BTP)

Mapinfo: IT application for identifying crime hotspots

MPD: Metropolitan Police District

MPS: Metropolitan Police Service

GLOSSARY

OP: observation point

PACE: Police and Criminal Evidence Act

PDF: person descriptive form

PIB: Performance Information Bureau (MPS)

PSV: post sentence visit

SID: systems for intelligence and detection (MPS)

TIC: taken into consideration

WADS: witness albums disc system

WMP: West Midlands Police

YACS: youth and community service

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