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29 June 2006

Mr Rob T Guerette
School of Policy and Management
University Park
PCA 366B
Florida International University
112200SW 8th Street
Miami, FL33199

Dear Mr Guerette,

The Herman Goldstein Award 2006

NORTHERN DIVISION – OPERATION SEAQUEST

I am delighted to personally endorse and forward the attached entry in respect of this year's Herman Goldstein Award.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course. Should any of the Lancashire submissions be successful in this award I would be grateful if I am the first point of contact for the Force.

If you have any enquiries regarding this application please do not hesitate to contact me on the telephone numbers shown. Alternatively, you may wish to speak with Mrs Kathy Harris, in the HQ Neighbourhood Policing Implementation Team, who is co-ordinating these competition entries on the Force's behalf. Kathy is available on telephone number 01772 412503.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Mc Allister
Acting Deputy Chief Constable



**Lancashire
Constabulary**

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**LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY SUBMISSION TO THE
2006 HERMAN GOLDSTEIN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
IN PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING**

OPERATION SEAQUEST

Submitted By

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Operation SeaQuest

Submission to the 2006 Herman Goldstein Award
For Excellence in Problem Oriented Policing

Endorsing Officer:
Mr Adrian McAllister, Acting Deputy Chief Constable
Lancashire Constabulary

1. SUMMARY - Operation SeaQuest

SCANNING

Morecambe Bay is rich with cockle-beds where harvesting is governed by fast moving tides. In February 2004, 23 Chinese nationals farming cockles tragically lost their lives. Cockle-harvesting has since become a multi-million pound industry, with Fisheries scientists predicting Morecambe beds contain millions of pounds worth of cockles, drawing hundreds to the area daily. During 2004, there were 29-recorded complaints from residents. Historic responses were ad-hoc with government agencies operating in isolation, with conflicts arising over ownership. These factors evidenced the magnitude of the problem, providing scope for further tragedy.

ANALYSIS

In-depth analysis showed 48 Fisheries permits had been issued to Chinese nationals illegally in the UK, with only 160 permits issued to a workforce exceeding 800. Observational surveys showed 100 un-roadworthy vehicles carrying multiple roof-riding passengers on the sands, with only 11% using life-saving equipment, and no information who was on the cockle-beds. Further information indicated 29% fraudulently claiming government social benefits.

RESPONSE

In October 2004, the police devised *Morecambe Bay Action Group (MBAG)*. Primary aims utilised stakeholder-agency skills and knowledge enabling an intelligence-led cohesive approach, developing safe-working practices for cockle-harvesters, encapsulated in Operation SeaQuest, utilising a four-point plan: Awareness - Education – Partnerships - Enforcement.

ASSESSMENT

MBAG's citizen-focused approach has seen provision of a comprehensive database, with inter-agency working and vetting resulting in 1200 regulated workers recorded on the revised Fisheries permit scheme, with fraudulent benefit claims reducing by 20% saving £828,000 annually to HM Treasury, with HM Revenue interventions resulting in 220 gangmaster's and cockler's now working legitimately in the formal economy. Revised procedures ensure illegal immigrants no longer work in the industry. Un-roadworthy vehicle usage has reduced by 84%, with roof-riding eradicated. All cockler's now carry personal life-saving equipment, with records of workers on the sands routinely provided. Lifeboat deployments to cockler's reduced from 34 in 2004 to 1 in 2005, saving the lifeboat service £7425, leading to a 93% reduction in complaint letters, to the satisfaction of the local MP and residents. MBAG have recently worked with and advised authorities over cockle-harvesting in North, South Wales and Scotland, With the Government Gangmaster Licensing Authority currently working with MBAG, integrating best-practice elements into proposed Government Regulations. Cockle-harvesters have embraced our non-statutory safe working practices, with gangmaster's unreservedly agreeing working with MBAG sanitised them into becoming responsible citizens, generating numerous financial savings, most importantly, preventing further tragedy; therefore the savings in human emotion terms are priceless.

2. DESCRIPTION - Operation SeaQuest

SCANNING

The Area

Cockle Harvesting has a long modern history in Morecambe Bay, where even in fair weather; the vast expanse of flat sand is rendered featureless, increasing the chance of becoming lost. In February 2004, 23 Chinese Nationals farming cockles tragically lost their lives trapped by fast incoming tides. International media attention concerning the tragedy highlighted a multi-million pound industry, with Morecambe having the richest cockle beds throughout Europe. Sea Fisheries scientists predicted the beds contain cockle seams worth millions of pounds on the open market.

Cockle Harvesting

Cockle Harvesting in Morecambe's inter-tidal estuary is dictated by fast moving tides sweeping through deep and changeable gullies, easily catching the unwary, with harvesters driving over the hostile terrain to cockle beds located up to five miles from the shore. Beds are farmed, just as land is farmed, by local families and newcomers. Cockling is a physically demanding, but simple process. Firstly, sand is riddled with a wooden tamper, and cockles raked out, placed in bags for transportation via processing plants, sold to the food industry for around £2.00 a pound. The motivation behind the industry are vast profits, with prices soaring from £200 a ton four years ago to £1,300 today, as cockle beds elsewhere throughout Europe are providing poor stock.

Government Agency Concerns

48 cockle permits had been issued to Chinese Nationals illegally in the UK, with only 160 permits issued to a workforce exceeding 800, with only 11% using personal safety equipment and no information available who was on the sands at any time. Further information highlighted 29% of the workforce fraudulently claiming social benefits. Observational surveys showed an average 100 vehicles carried 400 fishermen daily to the shoreline, with 79% found un-roadworthy, or carrying multiple roof-riding passengers on the sands. The local council and environment agency had concerns over litter routinely dumped along the shoreline. English Nature had concerns over increased harvesting deterring migratory birds from using the bay as a refuge. Historic responses were ad-hoc and reactionary, based on limited intelligence with agencies operating in isolation, with conflicts arising over ownership of the problem, as a legal definition of the bed of the bay was difficult to obtain.

Public dissatisfaction

During summer 2004, 29 complaints were recorded from residents over numbers of fishermen converging on the area and litter.

ANALYSIS

Data Sources

- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- Department of Environment for Fisheries
- Lancashire Constabulary Intelligence
- Department for Works and Pensions
- Maritime & Coastguard Agency
- North West Chinese Council
- Health & Safety Executive
- Sea Fisheries Committee
- Lancaster City Council
- Immigration Service
- English Nature

Analysis was broken down into three key areas; Location, Victim, Offender.

Location

Northern Division's Western boundary comprises 35 miles of coastline of Morecambe Bay's inter-tidal estuary extending 5 miles offshore. The sands contain substantial cockle beds, opened and closed by Sea Fisheries, dependent upon environmental factors such as size and yield of cockles. In 2003/4, abnormally mild winters provided unusually high stocks where beds would normally be closed, affording Morecambe Bay international recognition as cockle stocks elsewhere in the UK and Europe had fallen drastically due to failure of spat-falls, (cockle reproduction cycle). Sea Fisheries scientists calculated 10,000 tonnes had been harvested from the Bay over the past two years, projecting the beds still contained millions of pounds in value of harvestable cockles. English Nature had concerns increased harvesting deters migratory birds using the sands as their natural habitat. Cockle beds move with tides, calendar and shifting sands displacing harvesters to different parts of the bay, placing additional demands on government agencies.

Victim

Victims are multi-faceted:

a) Chinese Nationals

Many are illegal immigrants, exploited by gangmaster's, paying up to £20,000 to enter the UK. This money, including accommodation and transport charges being deducted weekly from paltry wages after working long back-breaking shifts.

b) Local residents

Victims are local residents and visitors alike, affecting those closest to the shoreline, confronted by gangs of workers. The shoreline provides anonymity to cockler's, with numerous ways of accessing the sands, raising local concern, placing additional demands trying to regulate activity. The Police conducted door-step surveys revealing face to face complaints from residents and local businesses, it was clear feelings mirrored what our research confirmed that little was being done to address increasing numbers, and reckless attitude to safety through financial greed, and vandalism of the environment.

c) Government Statutory Agencies

In-depth analysis and observational surveys conducted in October 2004 evidenced the magnitude of the problem and potential for further tragedy, additional information included; The Sea Fisheries Committee permit scheme contained scant applicant vetting procedures with 48 permits having been fraudulently obtained by Chinese nationals and only 160 permits issued to a workforce exceeding 800. In October 2004, there were 61 Chinese Nationals working illegally on the sands, of concern to the Immigration Service and other agencies. Health & Safety Executive (HSE), & Marine Coastguard Agency (MCA) had no information who was on the cockle beds at any given time, also identifying only 11% of the workforce carried lifejackets, GPS and flares whilst on the sands. The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) intimated 29% were fraudulently claiming benefits, with H.M. Treasury losing £23,400 a week, equating to £1,216,800 between April 2003 and 2004. An average 100 vehicles carrying up to 400 cockler's visited the shoreline daily, with 79% found to be un-roadworthy, overloaded, or carrying multiple roof-riding passengers in a dangerous manner. These issues coupled with an extensive litter problem were of concern to the local Council, Environment Agency, Police and HSE. Ad-hoc agency responses had limited impact due to limited intelligence on which to plan or act, as intelligence was non-specific, with differing opinions over key issues leading to agencies operating in isolation. Conflicts arose over ownership of the problem, with agencies legal departments stating the sands were out of their jurisdiction as a legal definition of the bed of the bay was proving difficult to obtain. This situation created barriers between agencies and the community, who were pulling in the same direction, but without cohesion.

Offender

Migrant workers may be categorised as both offenders and victims, due to a lack of knowledge of cultural and legal information, inherent fear of government officials, together with a limited command of the English language make them a vulnerable group within society, migrant workers without work-permits or passport's makes them offenders.

Gangmaster's, workers, product buyers and markets for Morecambe Bay produce associate with Scotland and Wales, with up to 400 persons traveling to Morecambe daily continuing unabated. Those who came were from poor socio-economic backgrounds were known to the police and other agencies. As they migrated, they brought a wariness of law enforcement, fostering an avoidance philosophy with little regard for local residents and a reckless attitude to safety in pursuit of profit from the rich pickings in Morecambe Bay. (1)

RESPONSE

Extensive research provided legal clarification following reference to archived material dating from the Magna Carta, defining the sands as "*rights of way, providing the common people of England to collect cockles for personal or commercial benefit*". The archaic legal position determined an enforcement regime would be unsustainable, and may result in irresolvable confrontation. (2)

Partnership working

The problem was complex and diverse, involving several major factors, including environmental, that could not be dealt with by any single body. The police acted as the catalyst to create the *Morecambe Bay Action Group*, (MBAG). Primary aims were developing safe working practices for those engaged in cockle harvesting by utilising differing skills and knowledge enabling a cohesive plan of action. Data sharing protocols were agreed prior to the inaugural meeting in November 2004, with the group burying their operational jargon and cultures, learning how to effectively use each's strengths and weaknesses in achieving the synergies expected of them.

Morecambe Bay Action Group Stakeholder Agencies:

- Lancashire Police
- Immigration Service
- Cumbria Constabulary
- Lancaster City Council
- Sea Fisheries Committee
- Health and Safety Executive
- Maritime & Coastguard Agency
- Vehicle Operating Service Agency
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Department of Environment for Fisheries

Morecambe Bay Action Group Objectives

1. Preservation and safeguarding of life, preventing further tragedy.
2. Implementing non-statutory working practices creating a safer working environment. (3)
3. Intelligence database of persons employed in cockle harvesting.
4. Increase partner-agency conspicuity, providing Community Reassurance.

Stakeholder Agency Individual Objectives.

5. Sea Fisheries Committee

Cockle-harvesting local By-Law compliance and revised permit scheme vetting procedures.

6. Immigration Service

Permanent removal of illegal immigrants working on the sands.

7. Police, Vehicle Inspectorate, Health & Safety Executive & Marine Coastguard Agency

Improve vehicular and personal safety compliance.

8. Department for Work and Pensions

Drive workforce social benefit fraud down to 9%

9. Environment Agency

Managed access points, minimising coastal erosion.

10. Lancaster Council

Litter removal.

We jointly agreed voluntary compliance through a process of education and advice with enforcement as the ultimate sanction, focusing on primary issues of personal safety and preventing further tragedy. The velvet glove / steel gauntlet approach was encapsulated in Operation SeaQuest, focusing on a high-risk group in a high-risk area at a high-risk time, which determined our key objectives:

- Changing cockler's disregard for personal safety and reluctance to interact with law enforcement agencies.
- Implementing an educational and awareness strategy, proposing non-statutory safe working practices for cockle harvesters.

Meetings convened with gangmaster's and local residents rounded out the analysis, as well as identifying, and separating the compliant from the not so. After board-blasting information gathered, MBAG implemented Operation SeaQuest, articulated within the framework of a four-point plan:

- Awareness
- Education
- Partnership
- Enforcement

Awareness

MBAG Safety Clinic

This was the cornerstone to our proposals, with several shoreline non-punitive clinics held between November 2004 and Summer 2005, with MBAG officers engaging cockler's, gangmaster's and local residents, polling concerns and proposing solutions encompassing:

- Un-roadworthy vehicles / driving standards
- Sea Fisheries permit scheme compliance
- Personal life-saving equipment usage
- Foreshore muster points
- Social Benefit fraud
- Illegal immigrants

Established muster point

Analysis determined a workforce muster point should be identified and carefully located to minimise coastal erosion and conflict between residents and visitors. MBAG identified an expanse of foreshore affording safe access. To make this desirable, the council relaxed a local by-law permitting a catering caravan on the sands to serve as a workforce welfare contact point.

Community Engagement

We devised a leaflet raising awareness to the strategy, with a timetable of activity distributed to residents, and shops. (4) MBAG officers regularly attended community meetings to discuss residents concerns and expectations.

Education

MBAG publicity material

Safety warnings were distributed regarding suitable vehicles permitted on the sands to minimise personal risk, prevent them becoming stuck, endangering life. (5) Further handouts distributed incrementally encompassed guidance on driving standards, passenger safety, and lifesaving equipment advice, with Chinese, and Polish translations embracing an influx of legitimate Eastern European migrant workers. (6) 1000 tide-tables were reprinted, promulgated through MBAG and local Chinese Council, with multi-lingual translations containing personal safety advice, sold throughout the area with proceeds donated to the local Lifeboat hover-craft fund. Gangmaster's arranged for tutors, teaching basic English literacy to a group of Polish workers, and more recently shoreline Polish speaking interpreters, provided through the Transport and General Workers Union.

(4).APPENDIX B – MBAG Community Notice

(5).APPENDIX C – MBAG Warning Notice

(6).APPENDIX D – MBAG Guidance Notice

Partnerships

Liaison officer

At inception, Morecambe Bay Action Group (MBAG), comprised 12 full-time officers, nicknamed the '*Cockle Cops*' by the workforce, with two police constable secondments co-ordinating activity. Health & Safety, Department for Works & Pensions and the Sea Fisheries Committee quickly followed suit. Similar proposals saw a gangmaster representative working alongside, representing the needs of the workforce.

Catering caravan

The catering proprietor consented to a notice board on the caravan with safety literature on prominent view. The cockler's liked the board, proposing their own, which was agreed and used in tandem displaying vehicle and contact details of workers on the sands and tide times. To engender good practice, MBAG mirrored this by displaying their contact details alongside.

Litter

MBAG consulted with gangmaster's, resulting in notices posted requiring the workforce to undertake daily litter sweeps, coordinated by the catering proprietor who charged a levy on sales for daily collections by the local council. (7)

English Nature

MBAG consulted English Nature, resulting in closing remote beds used by migratory birds, details were circulated to gangmaster's and closed beds monitored by MBAG, ensuring compliance.

Enforcement

Intelligence database.

Collated intelligence was translated into paper records containing personal details and photographs of individuals holding cockle permits, ordered alphabetically into buyers, gang-masters and workers, provided to each MBAG officer as a reference point. Department for Works & Pensions provided analyst support, collating and disseminating multi-agency intelligence via relevant legal gateways. Sea Fisheries scientists provided weekly predictive analysis, highlighting cockle bed movement, which displaced harvesters to different parts of the Bay, and proved invaluable in maximising MBAG operational capability. In 2005, MBAG devised a newsletter in electronic format, presenting an intelligence snapshot on cockle-bed stock and work-force movement updates, cascaded to government agencies across the region.

MBAG practitioners guide

A practitioners guide was devised containing summaries of offences relevant to each agency, used operationally by MBAG officers working individually, to act as eyes and ears for the group, providing corroborative evidence on intelligence proformas regarding issues beyond their defined remit when there was no multi-agency presence on the sands.

MBAG Operations

Intelligence-led interventions identified and segregated compliant from non-compliant gangmaster's, resulting in targeted enforcement operations implemented incrementally, encouraging compliance in following areas:

- Use of personal life-saving equipment
- Sea Fisheries permit scheme
- Un-roadworthy vehicles
- Social benefit Fraud
- Driving standards
- Immigration

ASSESSMENT

Evaluation Sources

- MBAG intelligence
- Joint Liaison Group
- Complainant re-visits
- Stakeholder Agencies
- Gangmaster liaison officer
- Catering caravan proprietor
- Sea Fisheries permit scheme
- Local M.P and ward councillors
- Observational shoreline surveys

Meeting Set Objectives

1. Partnership Approach.

Cohesive working of Morecambe Bay Action Group (MBAG), took partnership working to new levels with stakeholders developing a shared responsibility culture, credited by the local Member of Parliament with undertaking effective coordinated action dealing with a unique and complex problem. Its success is due to the innovative and uninhibited way MBAG work, sharing intelligence, back-office decision making, and intelligence-led interventions in tandem, ensuring multi-agency capability. Partner agencies started valuing the intelligence flowing round the group, what were minor issues to one were frequently of greater interest to another. Officers began slowly working in confidence on their own, becoming adept at routinely passing intelligence by mobile-phone to other MBAG officers, resulting in swift and cost-effective interventions. Having collated gangmaster's mobile numbers, officers routinely contacted them directly, ensuring immediate compliance. Completing the circle, once the workforce knew MBAG were working in unison, without being present in numbers, they became more compliant to the non-regulatory code of behaviour being sought.

2. Morecambe Bay Action Group (MBAG) Intelligence database.

The MBAG database forms a comprehensive reference regarding Morecambe Bay's cockle industry, providing extensive details of employers, and those employed, with buyers, gang-masters, workers, vehicles and home addresses accurately recorded. The database dovetails the revised Sea Fisheries permit scheme ensuring accurate inter-agency vetting and updates as workers were assessed, and newcomers identified.

Working mechanisms were undertaken via 3 key stages:

a) Generate and Collate.

Information generated operationally from MBAG officers / permit applicant data was collated by the DWP analyst.

b) Evaluate & Consolidate.

Data was distilled into intelligence and disseminated back to MBAG officers for further interventions with identified offenders.

c) Implement & Disseminate.

The net-offset enabled false ID's, wanted persons, benefit claimants, immigrants, tax offenders and non-compliant individuals to be swiftly challenged with cost-effective "velvet glove" interventions ensuring compliance as pre-emptive actions to permit issue. Resultant actions were disseminated back to the analyst, translated into a meaningful form, creating a visual association chart demonstrating association and linkage between gang-masters, workers and product buyers. Intelligence was inputted weekly to the next tier, the Joint Liaison Group, stakeholder agencies and Sea Fisheries for newsletter updates via host electronic media, and the National Crime Intelligence Service, regarding gang-master activity. Further analysis highlighted MBAG's alliance afforded cost-effective intelligence-led working practices, providing a regulated and vetted workforce with compliance to the National Intelligence Model at local-level.

3. Community Reassurance.

Quality of life greatly improved, by replacing resident's fears with reality, letters of complaint reduced from 29 in 2004 by 93% to 2 in 2005. In 2006, to date, there has only been one landowner access complaint, since resolved. Re-visits from Neighbourhood Policing officers with 38 residents who complained in our survey, showed all but one were now completely satisfied. In 2005, the workforce formed a shell-fish association, convening weekly, pro-active support from MBAG recently saw membership increase to 40 fishermen. A recent fund-raising event saw proceeds donated to the local RNLI hovercraft appeal, thereby increasing public confidence, trust of local residents and MBAG officers. Local residents were involved in evaluation via 1000 leaflets distributed by Neighbourhood Policing officers; with ward councilor's intimating community responses were positive, supporting the MBAG strategy.

MBAG Stakeholder Agency Individual Objectives.

4. Sea Fisheries Committee

The revised Fisheries permit scheme has benchmarked effective identification of individuals, regulated itinerant pickers, and highlighted visible and invisible economy offences running rife in the industry. MBAG intelligence-led interventions saw improved vetting procedures including applicant photographs on the database. In 2005, the revised scheme was robustly enforced bay-wide, with 632 new applications vetted in the first month, including 18% of self-policing from those with permits reporting those without. In January 2006, further improvements saw permits containing multi-lingual MBAG safety literature, emergency contacts and tide-tables. There are currently 1200 workers recorded on the scheme, with revised procedures ensuring illegal immigrants no longer work in the industry.

5. Immigration Service

In February 2005, MBAG officers arrested 21 Chinese immigrants. There are now no Chinese Nationals working as cockle harvesters, with immigration officers utilising MBAG intelligence to identify outstanding individuals and their current whereabouts.

6. Police, Health & Safety Executive (HSE) & Marine Coastguard Agency (MCA).

Comparative data before and after implementation show numbers of un-roadworthy vehicles have significantly reduced by 84%, with 31 scrapped, and voluntary remedial action taken before court proceedings were instigated, in all but 4 cases. Multi-riding of quad-bikes and 4 x 4 vehicle roof-riding were similarly dealt with driving standards greatly improved. Observational surveys undertaken since February 2005 indicate 100% compliance regarding safe carriage of passengers on vehicles approved for use on the sands.

MCA have seen dramatic improvements in personal life-saving equipment usage, with 98% of the workforce now complying, with gangmaster's ensuring lifejackets; GPS, flares and tide-tables are carried, with records of workers on the sands routinely posted on the catering caravan. The outstanding 2%, who hold a contemptible disregard for authority, have been subject to unyielding targeting, coupled with intelligence from compliant cockler's to prevent them endangering life, resulting in product buyers refusing to deal with non-MBAG accredited gangmaster's, one of which has recently ceased trading. In February 2006, compliance checks indicated 99% of the workforce were conforming to personal safety issues.

7. Department for Works & Pensions.

To date, persons claiming benefit whilst holding a Fisheries cockle permit have fallen to the projected Objective of 9%. The 20% reduction providing savings of £18,000 a week. Having brought fraudulent claims into check, the loss is down to £388,800, saving an annual £828,000 to H.M. Treasury. Figures for 2005 are not yet available, interim projections show reductions to less than 6% with recent shoreline interventions extinguishing fraudulent benefit claims completely as newcomers arrive on the sands, resulting in £1,000,000 projected savings to the Treasury.

8. Environment Agency & Lancaster Council

The catering caravan proved pivotal in eradicating litter, and has evolved to become a community centre, and respite, as mingling with 400+ workers in this hostile environment, often in adverse weather conditions was not ideal.

Diffusion of Benefits

1. Cockle beds opened and closed by Sea Fisheries, in turn displace harvesters to other UK coastal areas. The demonstrable benefits of MBAG have transcended local boundaries with the group working with and advising authorities in North Wales and Merseyside over Deeside cockle beds, South Wales regarding Colwyn Bay, and Government agencies in Scotland over Solway Firth, who are collectively implementing full and abridged versions of the SeaQuest strategy to regulate cockling and workforce safety.
2. In 2005, MBAG identified further exchequer fraud offences running rife in the industry, resulting in links being forged with H.M. Revenue & Customs (HMRC), who analysed the intelligence, projecting in 2004 a multi-million pound retail turnover within the shellfish industry originating from Morecambe's cockle beds. From the projection, it was calculated an estimated ten-million pounds has disappeared into the hidden economy in undeclared shoreline cash transactions between gangmaster's and product buyers. In June 2005, HMRC joined MBAG, working with the Local Government Association eliciting intelligence from housing officers to identify offending gangmaster's from employees living in HMO's (houses in multiple occupancy). Resultant data identified those working in the shadow economy, resulting in an open meeting where 220 gangmaster's and worker's attended, volunteering their intent to legitimately register for tax purposes and enter the formal economy. It is expected a large proportion of the estimated undeclared revenue will be returned to the Treasury by April 2007, following a programme of interviews.

3. Morecambe Bay Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) hovercraft deployed 69 times between April and September 2004, with 34 attendances to errant cockler's, each call-out costing £225.00. Between October 2004 and March 2005, deployments reduced by 21% to 43, with only 12 to cockler's, resulting in savings of £4,950. The consecutive 12 months to March 2006 showed deployments reduced to 5, with only 1 turnout to cockler's, saving the RNLI an additional £2475.
4. In March 2006, three Chinese gangmaster's collectively received twenty years custodial sentences for manslaughter, and ordered to be deported back to China after their sentences, regarding 23 Chinese cockle-pickers tragically losing their lives in 2004.

Conclusion

Community satisfaction, and that of the local MP, surpassed expectations, with gangmaster's and product buyers agreeing, unreservedly, that working with, rather than against MBAG sanitised the workforce into becoming more responsible law-abiding citizens, and most importantly prevented further tragedy or life-threatening incident on the sands. Operation SeaQuest has fostered positive relationships between workers and government officers, in turn, these relationships generated many financial savings, however, most importantly, we have prevented further tragedy, therefore the savings in human emotion terms are priceless. These outcomes testify to the impact a citizen-focused approach to problem solving can have on a significant public safety issue.

The most gratifying seal of approval was that expressed by the gangmaster acting as workforce liaison, who stated, "*You've turned this industry around by walking amongst us instead of working against us*". We believe we've won the industry over, evident, in light of the SeaQuest strategy, individuals throughout the shellfish industry are abandoning the mindset of operating in the shadows of the informal economy, supporting evidence of significant culture change emerging within this industry.

Continued analysis highlights anyone without experience can set up as a cockler, with current legislation more concerned with what happens to cockles, than welfare of cockler's. The Government Junior Fisheries Minister recently advised the Gangmaster Licensing Authority (GLA), formed to curb exploitative activities of gangmaster's and safeguard workers interests, to meet with MBAG officers, Following this, the GLA acknowledged the unique nature of the SeaQuest self-regulatory initiative. Consequently, the timetable relating to introduction of statutory offences applicable to the fishing industry being deferred to April 2007 to allow the GLA time to evaluate the SeaQuest strategy integrating best-practice elements into the proposed Gangmaster Regulations.

3. AGENCY & OFFICER INFORMATION

A) AT WHAT POLICE LEVEL WAS THE INITIATIVE ADOPTED (ENTIRE DEPARTMENT / SELECT OFFICERS)

Two experienced operational Police Constables were selected to create, coordinate and deliver the strategy.

B) DID OFFICERS RECEIVE PRE PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING / PROBLEM SOLVING TRAINING

Both officers received in-house formal community oriented, problem solving, customer service approach training well before the project commenced. The officers have since demonstrated commitment to expand their repertoire beyond reactive policing by crafting numerous effective and impactful problem-solving partnerships with innovative responses, addressing local and national crime trends, and needs of the community. Both currently lead other multi-agency problem solving crime reduction strategies in their day-to-day neighbourhood policing.

C) WERE ADDITIONAL INCENTIVES GIVEN TO POLICE OFFICERS ENGAGED IN PROBLEM SOLVING

Both Constables have previously received a Chief Constables Commendation for commitment to multi-agency working and problem solving in the workplace. The author won the 1999 Lancashire Annual POP competition, and 2002 Home Office Tilley Award with a submission on motorcycle safety that has since been adopted by all UK forces. Both officers have since been short-listed on three occasions with problem solving projects submitted to the Home Office Tilley Award. The officers have been encouraged to mentor less experienced colleagues in problem solving, and disseminated the Op SeaQuest strategy to other forces and government agencies at problem solving conferences throughout the UK.

B) WHAT RESOURCES / GUIDELINES (Manuals / Past Problem Solving Examples) WERE USED

Bullock.K & Tilley.N. (2003) Crime Reduction & Problem Solving – *Rolling out the National Intelligence Model: key challenges*
Tilley.N (2005) Crime Prevention & Community Safety – Scott M.S; *Sharing Police Responsibility to Address Public Safety Problems*.
Clarke.R.V. & Eck.J (2003) Problem Solving Analyst – *Environmental Criminology / Finding practical responses / Assessing the Impact*
California Highway Patrol – SAFE Program – 2002 Herman Goldstein Award Winner.

C) WHAT ISSUES WERE IDENTIFIED WITH THE POP MODEL OR THE PROBLEM SOLVING MODEL.

The problem-solving model was initially only understood by the Police. This, and use of departmental jargon amongst different agencies led to protracted debate about an agreed way forward in the early stages. Most agencies had their own established way of working and agendas and brought different cultures to the group, some were not used to working amongst a hostile work force, for others this was routine. This caused initial perception that some authorities didn't want to, or weren't pulling their weight. There were concerns about adopting the Police data sharing protocol within the legal constraints of the UK Data Protection Act. Discussion about which agency had signed the protocol, and what intelligence could be discussed in front of those who had not, also took up valuable time at the outset. After a slightly contentious start, joint working eventually became a reality with the group soon realising each authority was gathering information for itself by virtue of working in tandem with other agencies and the intelligence that started to flow being shared collectively with the purpose of working towards a common goal, a purpose permissible under the Data Protection Act.

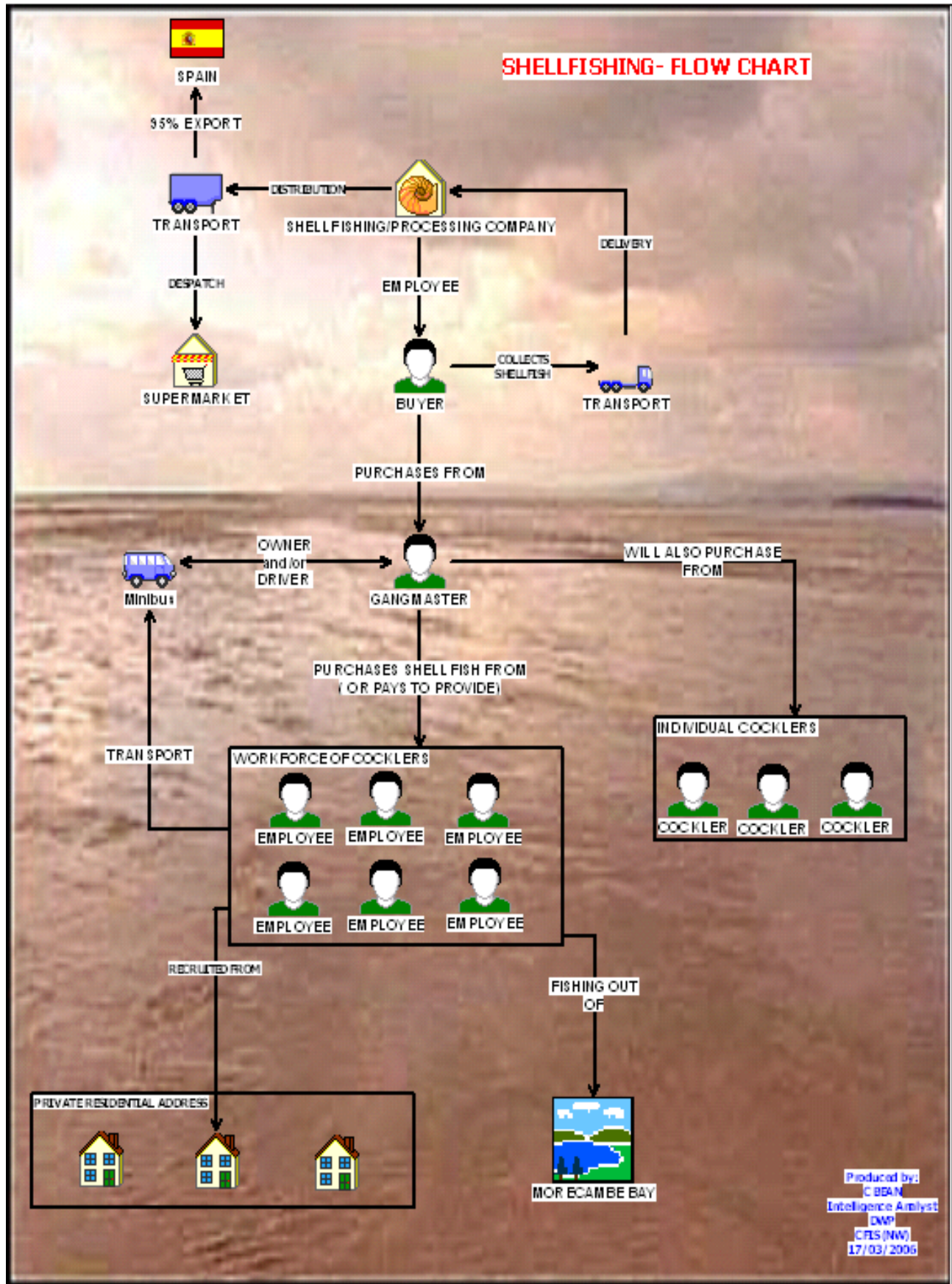
D) RESOURCES COMMITTED TO THE PROJECT, AND WHAT WENT BEYOND EXISTING DEPARTMENT BUDGETS.

At inception, Morecambe Bay Action Group (MBAG) comprised 12 full-time agency officers, with Police six-month secondment posts coordinating the multi-disciplinary task force managed within departmental budgets with no additional cost incurred. Specialist Polish and Chinese language interpreter and education material printing costs were particularly expensive. These and other administration costs were absorbed collectively amongst the group, or provided by external partners as a goodwill gesture. Since June 2005, the self-regulating strategy and reduction in complaints has enabled the group to significantly reduce to eight part-time officers, enabling the Police to transfer coordination of MBAG to the Sea Fisheries Committee who manage the cockle beds. Op SeaQuest is a transferable commodity, and been disseminated to other operational officers with the Police and other agencies, resulting in interventions becoming less frequent, now revolving mostly round vetting and compliance with newcomers to the industry. Day to day shore-line activity is overseen by the Marine Coastguard and Sea Fisheries who provide 24/7 coastal cover. These agencies now only contact selected MBAG officers when a response is needed. This methodology allows swift and cost effective interventions to be facilitated within current operational working practices and budget constraints for the Police and stakeholder partner agencies.

E) PROJECT CONTACT PERSON:

Police Constable 660 Keith Collins
Northern Division Police Headquarters
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APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B

LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY

NORTHERN DIVISION

Dear resident,

You may have noticed police activity on the shore at Bolton-Le-Sands over the last few months. This leaflet explains what is going on, how you can help and hopefully answer some of your questions.

We have been gathering intelligence for some time, and are aware of many unsuitable and un-roadworthy vehicles being used, especially on the sands.

We are aware the numbers harvesting the Bay can adversely affect residents in the area, who are confronted by many of these vehicles on the foreshore and sands most days of the week.

We have recently formed the Morecambe Bay Action Group, comprising officers from the Police, Health & Safety Executive, Vehicle Inspectorate and other enforcement agencies to address many issues concerning the cockle harvesters. The use of vehicles and litter are amongst a number of priority issues we will try to resolve. We have compiled a list of appropriate vehicles for use on the sands, and advised the harvesters about their use, and the dangerous manner in which some are driven. We intend to carry out further operations targeting those who choose not to heed this advice.

It is our aim to provide you, your family and your community a safe and comfortable environment in which to live and work. With your help and continued co-operation we intend to carry out similar operations targeting those who have little respect for other people's quality of life, and remove un-roadworthy and abandoned cars which are of greatest concern to residents.

If you have any information that may be of use about the activities of the cockle harvesters, please call **CRIMESTOPPERS** free, and anonymously if you wish on **0800 555 111**, alternatively, you can call us locally if you would like pass on information personally, or would like to know more about our work please ring Constable's Keith Collins or Ian Johnston at Morecambe station on **01524 596929**.

Inspector
Morecambe Police Station

Morecambe Bay Action Group
COMMUNITY NOTICE

APPENDIX C

Morecambe Bay Action Group

WARNING NOTICE

You may have noticed recent enforcement agency activity, the reason for this is we have been gathering intelligence for some time, and are aware of many unsuitable and un-roadworthy vehicles being used, especially on the sands.

You are reliant on your vehicles to transport you and your equipment to and from the cockle beds. It is important they are well maintained and suitable for being used on the sands. It is particularly important to manage your vehicles movements so as not to put anybody's safety at risk, and keeping the brakes in good order, and capable of stopping the vehicle if they are wet.

The past few months have also seen an increase in the number of people being carried on roofs and bonnets of vehicles. This is an extremely dangerous way of transporting passengers and this practice must stop. Vehicles used for the carriage of passengers must be suitable for the task, incorporate safety features to reduce the risk of injury and normally carry no more than the manufacturers recommendations, taking account of any other load. The future riding on steps, drawbars or on the outside of vehicles will not be tolerated and is likely to lead to enforcement action.

The Police, Health & Safety Executive and Vehicle Inspectorate have compiled a list of suitable and appropriate vehicles for use on the sands. Over the coming week we will be making visits to offer advice about this, and discuss the way they are driven on the sands and foreshore access roads.

We are taking an opportunity to inform you now to make sure your vehicles are safe and passengers are carried safely. We intend carrying out further operations targeting those who choose not to heed the advice. Those vehicles that are un-roadworthy, or unsuitable for use on the sands may be seized and destroyed.

Many of you who live and work in the area are well aware of the risks and we are grateful for your continued support. As a result, we will be working closely with the local communities and our partners to permanently remove unsuitable vehicles and eradicate the dangerous way people are being carried on them. If you know of, or see anyone acting irresponsibly, it is asked they are advised to desist, before we act to deal with them as we see fit.

**Our aim to make the community a safe environment in which to live and work
Thank you for your help and co-operation.**

**Morecambe Bay Action Group
WARNING NOTICE**

APPENDIX D

Morecambe Bay Action Group

Guidance for vehicles use on sands of Morecambe Bay

These are guidelines for your information from the Police, Health & Safety Executive about the use of suitable vehicles in the tidal areas of Morecambe Bay for cockle harvesting.

Suitable Vehicles

You rely on you vehicles for safe transport on the sands to and from the cockle beds. It is vitally important they are suitable for that purpose as Morecambe Bay contains areas of shifting quick-sands and fast filling gullies. The use of saloon, estate cars, light goods vehicles (vans / pickup trucks) are not acceptable as these vehicles are not constructed by the manufacturers as off road or all terrain vehicles.

The use of tractors and trailers, ATV's and All Terrain 4 wheel drive vehicles such as Land Rovers or Mitsubishi Shoguns are acceptable, providing they are in a well-maintained and roadworthy condition. The use of certain saloon / estate cars that happen to be fitted with an all wheel drive capability are unacceptable as they do not have sufficient ground clearance for this environment. Tractors and adapted tractor bases must be fitted with rollover protection (ROPS) when used for fishing on the sands.

Trailers

Trailers used for the carriage of passengers would normally only be acceptable when drawn by a tractor, provision must be made for side and headboard protection where a trailer or other flat back vehicle is used:-

Maintenance

Those vehicles deemed to be acceptable must also be suitable for the work area by being well maintained and in a road legal state, **The use of unsuitable or un-roadworthy vehicles will not be tolerated and may lead to enforcement action**

Passengers

The future riding on steps, drawbars or on the outside of vehicles will not be tolerated and may lead to enforcement action which will be targeted against the driver / owner of the vehicle.

Manner of driving

The sands, foreshore access roads and car parks are a public place and there is a risk from moving vehicles to people walking in the area. Some of these people may be local residents or visitors enjoying a walk or visit to the beach.

Inconsiderate, careless or dangerous driving will not be tolerated and may lead to enforcement action

Over the coming weeks we will be working closely with the local community and our partners to permanently remove unsuitable vehicles and prosecute those responsible for the dangerous way people are currently being carried on them. If you would like further advice, or are unclear as to what is required please contact Keith Collins or Ian Johnston at Morecambe Police station on 01524 596929 and we will be happy to help. Please appreciate we are working with you to make the community a safe environment in which to live and work.

Thank you for your help and co-operation

**Morecambe Bay Action Group
VEHICLE GUIDANCE NOTICE**

APPENDIX E

Morecambe Bay Action Group

LITTER NOTICE

The past few months have seen an increase in the amount of litter being left on the sands and foreshore car parks at Morecambe Lodge, this practice must stop or you will lose the butty bar.

We have persuaded Lancaster City Council to allow the catering caravan to park on the sands as a concession, but only if the rubbish is collected. You may not be aware that the owner of the butty bar has been cleaning up litter, as a goodwill gesture on your behalf, but is finding it increasingly difficult to continue.

Having recently spoken with a number of labour organisers, the consensus of opinion is for the gangs to donate a sum of money every week to the owner of the butty bar who will act as coordinator to pay for the continued collection of all the rubbish.

We have worked hard on your behalf to keep the butty caravan on the beach, it is up to you to decide if you want to keep it. We will be speaking to the owner over the coming week and hope the issue will be resolved amicably.

Our aim is to make the community a clean and safe environment in which to live and work.

Thank you for your help and co-operation.

LITTER NOTICE 1