

Summary

During the start of the 1998/1999 fiscal year, the Chief Constable of Lancashire stated that every Policing Division and Department should embrace Problem-oriented policing within its policing plan. This entry refers to the organisational problem of implementing a Problem-oriented policing philosophy within the Southern Division of that Constabulary. The Basic Command Unit concerned has a staff of 441 police officers and 111 support staff covering the towns of Chorley, Leyland and Skelmersdale. The Division covers an area of 250 square miles and a population of over 309,000, and borders the other Police Forces of Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

The entry sets out how, using project management methodology, other police agencies were scanned to glean their experience: Although no ready template was found the project found consistent strategic issues which had been confronted by many of these agencies. The entry shows how each of these issues was analysed and responses at Force and Divisional level were taken. The entry then focuses upon the range of interventions which were made within Southern Division to create the policing environment in which community based initiatives could thrive. These interventions involved such issues as: selection, induction, reward, intelligence, I.T., demand management, ethics, finance, media, leverage, and partnerships. The entry then goes on to show how the perceived success of this approach was evaluated at two levels, in terms of overall outcome, and then in relation to individual partnership (SARA) initiatives.

In the first year of implementation the Division showed a reduction of reported crime by 6% disorder by 3.6% the first reduction in this area for many years road casualties by 9%. It also shows that community consultation was improved and satisfaction increased. Amongst many learning points the essay argues that its main benefit lies in the fact that it provides a template which may benefit other police agencies.

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What are the objectives of the project

During the 1998/9 policing year the Chief Constable of Lancashire stated that her Divisions would be assessed on their ability to reduce crime, reduce disorder and nuisance, and reduce road casualties. She also asked that they enhance the level of community-focused patrol, consult and keep the public informed, and to maintain/improve public satisfaction.

To achieve these objectives the Chief Constable stated that all officers and support staff of the Lancashire Constabulary would embrace Problem Oriented Policing and identify and solve community problems through innovative and ethical means. The affect this had on systems and structures within the Constabulary was significant. This entry focuses upon the changes that were made to the Southern Division of the Lancashire Constabulary, to achieve those objectives.

How did you define the problem?

I was in the enviable position of previously being asked to co-ordinate the implementation of POP force wide. During 1997 I had been tasked to look at whether problem oriented policing should be introduced to the Lancashire Constabulary. As a result using a formal project management methodology I reviewed police forces in England and Scotland who had implemented this approach; which included Leicestershire, Cleveland, Thames Valley, Surrey, and Strathclyde. Consultation also took place with the Police Research Group (Home Office, England), as well as other academics active in this field. A wider review, via the Internet and PERF (USA), led to a 12 day visit to the San Diego Police Department, U.S.A. Although each agency had committed considerable resources to this philosophy such changes appeared intuitive. Each organisation however appeared to confront consistent strategic issues, which are summarised as follows:

Quality staff.

There is considerable research in the U.S. and England to say that those who are 'attracted' to work within police agencies, are more suited to enforcement than a community approach, which utilises partnerships to solve problems. This meant that prior to implementation issues such as recruitment, intrinsic selection, reward and appraisal, needed to be examined.

Who know their part in the organisation.

Those who were employed to deliver problem-solving within the Constabulary had to have clarity of role and purpose. The Chief Constable therefore had to explicitly define the purpose for her staff, and define the competencies she expected from Constables, Sergeants, Inspectors, and Superintendents. For clarity all this had to be communicated and understood.

Who have the tools to deliver.

Many tools were identified. Most importantly staff needed to be empowered and be close to their community; as such resources were most effective when they were

devolved to local control. Secondly ISIT systems needed to supply the right information at the right time, for the Constabulary this meant that crime and disorder records had to be merged. Further there was the critical issue of partnerships and the capability to implement them successfully at strategic and tactical levels. Finally, and overarching all of these, came the concept of knowledge management, in that the organisation needed to be able to harness and spread good practice.

Who are allowed to deliver.

Identifying and producing the tools was only effective if staff were able to use them, therefore leadership was identified as one of the most crucial aspects. There was also a need to manage the incoming demand from the public, only deploying to necessary incidents, thereby giving officers the space to pro-actively identify and solve community problems.

Who want to deliver.

This area includes organisational culture. A longitudinal study conducted of new recruits replicated other findings found nationally. It showed how police officers went from a service minded approach to a perspective that was internally focused, and biased towards enforcement. Clearly plans to reverse this cultural indoctrination were required.

And finally.. who do deliver outputs and outcomes.

How do police forces know that their inputs (their officers, their vehicles, and their policing strategies) are linked to their outputs and eventually outcomes?. Another important issue here was that the service provided should be ethical, which led to methods of audit and evaluation being debated.

Once these implementation issues were completed a present position audit was completed at a Force level and a risk assessment was then made concerning the blockages that might be faced and the impact these would have in hindering implementation. Using the same strategic framework the author facilitated a 2 day workshop for all Divisions and Departments which resulted in a one year policing plan, and which dealt with these issues. There were major changes to systems, for instance a competency framework was developed which infused problem solving at all levels. Similarly there were changes in IT, finance, training and intelligence. At this stage I was transferred to Southern Division where the following action was taken.

How did you deal with the problem?

- Presentations were made to all stakeholder groups and the general community to make them aware of the philosophy the Division was following.
- Suitable partners at strategic and tactical level been identified at a divisional level and directories of useful contacts has been produced
- The divisional policing plan clearly articulated how problem solving would be embraced.
- The Division, like all others, moved to a geographic structure. Southern Division has the largest percentage of resources under the control of geographical Inspectors:

- Each geographic area and support department set individual plans and targets. Analysts provided, on a monthly basis, information concerning re-occurring incidents and trends. Areas also had on a weekly basis information concerning reported crime and disorder.
- All posts within the Division were re-evaluated to make sure they added value to community problem solving. ,
- Geographic posts took priority and support departments carried vacancies
- The philosophy was infused into all Divisional induction processes and selection processes. Recruitment for specialist posts, including detective posts and promotion to Sergeant, involved all staff being questioned about their involvement and understanding of problem solving.
- A reward system was initiated. Officers were acknowledged and a Force competition (organised by the Division) resulted in a Sergeant from the Division attending the international conference at San Diego. Similarly Divisional Commander commendations were given for problem solving and following lobbying by the Division, Chief Officer commendations are now changing to acknowledge work that is partnership as well as law enforcement based.
- All staff received training so that all staff understood their part in this philosophy. When later evaluated it showed that few had understood it enough to make an impact. As such the training programme was changed and delivered by the Divisional Detective Chief Inspector to show management commitment.
- Finance was devolved to the Division and geographic Inspectors controlled their overtime. Through the year a total of £50,000, which was saved from other activity, was released to fund targeted POP initiatives.
- Consultation groups were identified and systems put in place to gather these views.
- An intranet database, devised through a working group chaired by the Division, was put in place to share good practice
- Two problem-solving conferences, again organised by the working group, were held by the Force, the latter involving Mike Scott from the USA.
- Communications staff were trained in problem solving and deployments reduced by approximately 10%
- A SARA form was introduced across the Force to structure problem solving.
- Local officers are acknowledged for getting involved in partnerships at a tactical level?
- The importance of ethics and values is constantly articulated. The Division has initiated "we would rather fail than cheat" poster campaign.
- Checks and balances have been put in place to audit such issues as crime reporting.
- Interventions have taken place to move the organisational culture of the Force from the present state to one, which facilitates problem solving?

External implementation issues

Having set the internal parameters there was also great deal of work mobilising the community. The following initiatives and remainder of the entry focus specifically upon the Southern Division of the Lancashire Constabulary.

Special Constabulary. The special constabulary are unpaid volunteers who wear a uniform similar to regular officers, and who have the same powers and equipment. They provide a critical support to general policing. Upon implementing POP these officers were taken away from central control and placed within the control of geographical Inspectors. An in-depth review of their capability has since been conducted. Southern Division received two in-force awards during this year, the first for recruiting the most special constables, the second for the most hours worked by them.

Neighbourhood watch. A present position audit was done in terms of neighbourhood watch. This showed that watches were depleting in number and that their confidence in the police was reducing. A number of crisis meetings were held and skill audits were completed of what members could offer. A different approach was needed and as a symbolic gesture neighbourhood watch co-ordinators were invited to a "police only" meeting relating to the launch of a high profile operation. The police were amazed when over 100 co-ordinators turned up to listen. Since then the neighbourhood watch have been utilised more pro-actively and a structured training programme has been completed, which involves the principles of problem solving. Since then the neighbourhood watch have both headed community initiatives and been used to assist the police in others. Recently they have volunteered to distribute thousands of crime prevention leaflets in crime hotspot areas.

Partnerships were another critical area, which needed improvement. A review was done of all existing partnerships and either improved or exit strategies prepared. Grants and sponsorship was also looked into and improved dramatically. Further with the Division having its own budget it could vire money from staff vacancies, allowing the police to donate money to other multi-agency initiatives. One example was a public house called the Swann with 2 necks. This had been a problem with disorder frequently occurring on Friday and Saturday nights for over 15 years. One local Sergeant saw a solution through redesigning the environment, which would cost £9,000 to complete. A partnership was therefore started which included local government, the company who owned the public house, local elected representatives, and the police. The police agreed to put £2,000 into the initiative if the other money was found elsewhere. This was agreed. Over that year £50,000 was made available for such initiatives.

Passing information to the public. Prior to the implementation of POP there were few systems in place for passing information to the public. Once this issue was highlighted supervisors were assigned in each of the 3 communication rooms within the Division. Part of their role was to keep the media informed on a day to day basis. This **was** supplemented by a bi-monthly meeting chaired by the author who gave the media more of an insight into underlying strategy, trends and performance. Similarly geographic areas have supplemented this communication with newsletters.

Leverage. At times potential partners have been reticent to help find solutions for a number of reasons. This is common in retail theft when the partner accepts a certain amount of theft and relies on the police to initiate proceedings against the offender. One recent example the Division encountered involved a large grocery store, which left a fire door unsupervised allowing a quick escape route for thieves. The store refused to co-operate with the police stating that the amount stolen was not significant in overall takings. The crime analyst noticed the majority of stolen items were alcohol enabling

the police to re contact the store manager to tell him they would object to his liquor licence. The manager knowing this would cost the store considerable amounts of money agreed to the proposed solutions and the problem was eradicated.

This example of leverage is not isolated and the Division having taken legal advice, has decided upon a hierarchy of leverage tools, which involves such issues as 'shaming' and informing insurance companies of negligence. To verify partners are co-operating rather than not reporting the, thefts the Division has agreed a protocol whereby it will stay in contact with the partner until it can inspect the remedial action.

How successful was your approach?

There are two aspects to the evaluation. The actual outcome of all activity and the success in terms of partnership initiatives.

First in terms of outcome Southern Division was the only one in the Constabulary to meet all 3 reduction targets with reported crime being reduced by 6.5%, nuisance and disorder by 3.6% and road casualties by 9.5%. In terms of the qualitative data surveys showed that the Division had an overall level of public satisfaction with service delivery of 92%, had the highest number of people assigned to community focused posts at 87% and had the highest % of time devoted to community focused activity (60%). There was also a considerable amount of anecdotal evidence. Consultative groups changed dramatically from being a confrontational critical meeting to a much more constructive one. Similarly the praise the police were given was both unexpected and rewarding; as a result it was noticed that we as an organisation were much more accommodating than we had previously been.

Were these results due to a POP approach. On first impressions the Division was doing business differently and this was by general policing officers and not specialists. A few of the more notable successes were:

Park Hall nightclub and Camelot theme park are based on a single site, close to a motorway service station, near to the town of Chorley. This was one of the Division's worst hotspots for crime and disorder mainly because the night-dub, which was not centrally located, offered promotional deals to bring in large groups of young people who were allowed to purchase alcohol at low prices. As a result serious violence and drugs offences were commonplace. Also the carparks at the nightclub and theme park had no security and thefts from vehicles were common. This problem had been continuing for approximately 15 years (it was nicknamed Crime-a-lot), and police had responded by deploying more resources to the area. In the 1998/99 year a review of the site was made and the cost of police deployments, over the past few years, was assessed. The management of the site were warned that unless a number of recommendations were initiated the police would inform the community of the cost of policing the commercial site as well as challenging the liquor license. The initial response was positive. The management employed a new night-club manager who implemented recommendations such as the moving of a fast food bar and taxi rank.

However although violence and disorder dropped no action took place into the carparking and thefts continued. Again leverage was applied and this together with the night-dub losing money due to its more professional supervision the site was sold. The police continued to work actively with its new managers and the night-club was closed to promote a more family oriented theme park and hotel. Following increased security, thefts have reduced from 209 crimes in 1995 to a projected 40 this year. Staff at the complex have been trained in crime prevention. Police staff have now been released to spend more time in the community.

The *Tatton project* related to young people who were disrupting the quality of life for residents in that area. The underlying cause for the problem was that young people said they had nowhere to go and nothing to do. A survey showed that they wanted a skate park. As such the Tatton Group was formed involving neighbourhood watch, local business, and the police. The Skate Park was provided with the help of 14 local partnership groups, which also involved a local prison who provided the benches for young people to sit on. Reported nuisance and crime in the area significantly reduced. The group continues to work in the community and a gala day is planned later this year.

One of the main causes of reported nuisance in the summer holidays involves young people kicking footballs in the street. As such a number of initiatives ensued whereby the police contacted partners such as local housing groups to sponsor local football clubs to supervise football training during periods where most nuisance was reported. One of the most successful initiatives in Skelmersdale creatively controlled participant's behaviour outside the training sessions by deducting team points in a football tournament should a team member come to the attention of the police. This initiative resulted in a 33% reduction in reported nuisance.

In terms of road casualty reduction considerable work took place, often involving local government who re-engineered accident hot spots through speed ramps or speed cameras. One initiative 'drink-link' involved a free-phone number for people to inform on those they knew were persistently driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs. Such people were targeted and resulted in a very high conviction rate banning such drivers from driving in the future. This initiative was later utilised by the Victoria Police (Australia). Another initiative, to reduce collisions, involved a partnership with insurance companies to target high-risk drivers, young people who drove high-powered cars, and who did not disclose previous motoring convictions. This information was passed to the insurance companies who withdrew cover therefore forcing the drivers to use lower powered cars.

It was also realised that a significant impact could be made through making the public more aware. For instance 12% of all autocrime in the police area was from vehicles left insecure. Similarly at the start of each summer there was a preponderance of garden sheds broken into. To combat this the pro-active use of media, neighbourhood watch, local businesses and community groups were used to pass crime prevention messages in hotspot areas, and also to sell a mobile alarm, which could deter shed break-ins. As a result of this publicity thefts from insecure vehicles reduced by 50% and over 1000 garden shed alarms were sold. One offender was so surprised when he heard the alarm that he unfortunately soiled his trousers.

Enforcement also stayed on the agenda. Liaison was considerably improved between the police and the local courts and the crown prosecution service. Files increased in timeliness and quality and continued liaison meant that those worst offenders were more likely to be kept in custody.

In conclusion there were extremely creative initiatives throughout the year, in the Division, with good practice being replicated. For example a CCTV system, which worked well in the town, was developed by one officer into a mobile CCTV van for rural areas and provided through local business, local community and a Home Office grant. Similarly all this good work has been acknowledged through many avenues. Police consultative groups have expressed their appreciation verbally and in writing. Similarly an officer from the Division attended the 1998 international POP conference after winning a Force competition (this example is not in this essay), and the Division are presenting 3 papers at a British POP conference.

Evaluating Community Safety partnership initiatives

HMIC (1998) in a national review of Community Safety partnerships had found only 5% had proved ultimately successful. Implementation failure appeared a national phenomenon therefore it was important to evaluate all SARA initiatives that had been conducted that year. Evaluation had been a difficult issue, which many forces in England had wrestled with unsuccessfully.

The analysis commenced with a simple coding matrix. Each of the 46 initiatives were initially analysed as to whether they involved a particular partner (59 potential partnerships were proposed, later amalgamated into 17 categories). These initiatives were then analysed as to whether they were community focused; based on crime prevention theory; had clear objectives; had evaluation criteria; had sufficient resources; had been evaluated; had been successful; provided sustainable solutions; and had an exit strategy. These variables were an amalgam which external bodies such as the Audit Commission, Crime Concern, and H.M. Inspectorate of Constabulary had emphasised as important.

The data was interpreted using Smallest Space Analysis (SSA). A more detailed account of this technique can be found in Canter, Hughes & Kirby (1999). This analysis provides both simple frequencies in terms of which variables were more prevalent, as well as providing a scattergram plot which shows how each variable correlates with every other variable. Figure 1 shows that those variables likely to co-occur in the same initiative will be grouped together on the visual plot. For instance figure 1 shows that initiatives which involved youth groups were also likely to utilise partners from education (i.e. schools or colleges).

The analysis highlighted a number of important issues. They were:

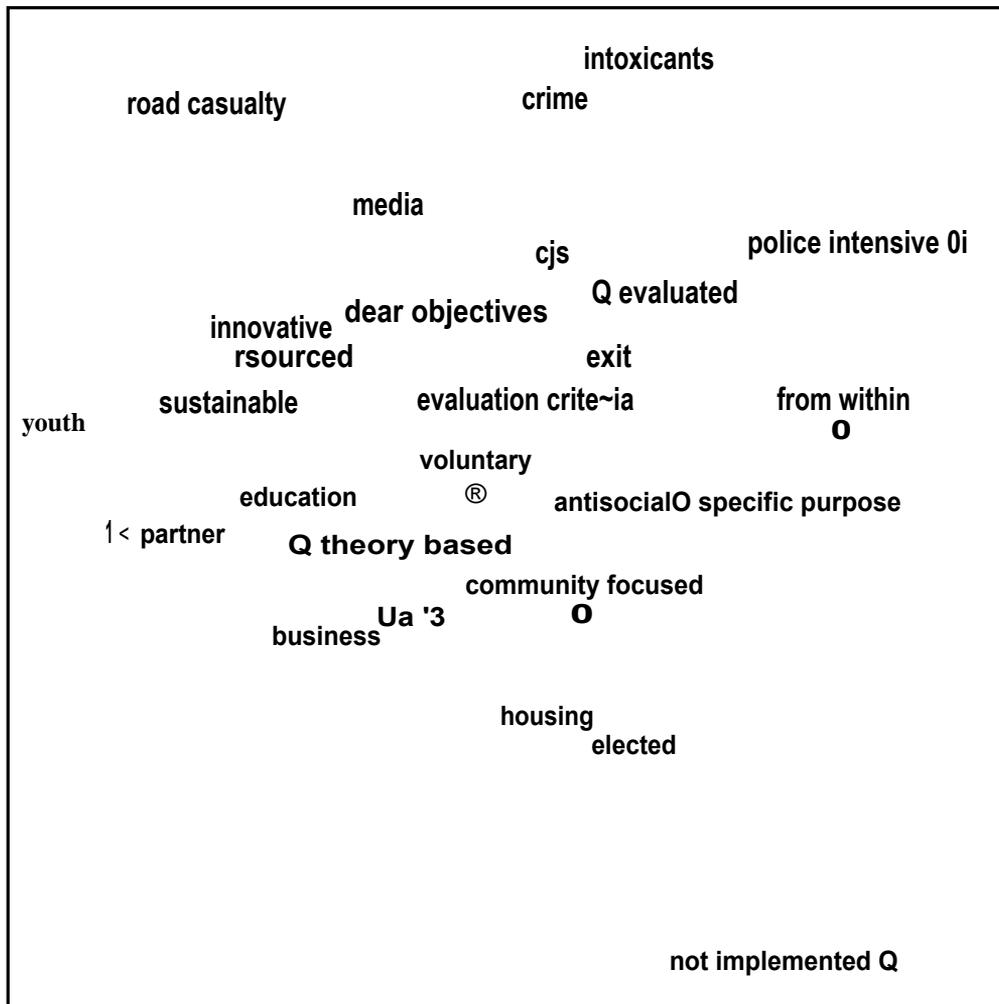
- Although 33% were successful (a significant improvement on HMIC findings) this meant 67% of initiatives were not successful in showing sustainable reductions. This was a terrible waste of resources.

- Many potential partners such as the County Council, Health Authorities, victim groups, help groups, minority groups and the environment agency were poorly utilised. It appeared that those partners closest to the problem were the ones most likely to be used (i.e. local authority, schools, local business).
- The majority of initiatives (71%) had clear objectives and were community focused, a possible benefit from a structured problem solving approach the SARA model had provided.
- Sustainability is positively correlated with those initiatives which are: innovative, properly resourced, having clear objectives, evaluation criteria, being theory based and having the involvement of more than one partner. This corroborated the findings of HMIC, Crime Concern and most recently the Audit Commission (1999). A simple checklist was therefore available which could assist *officers* in implementing initiatives.
- Sustainability was negatively correlated with partnerships which are intensive in police resources.

This again provided a useful present position audit from which the Division can improve its service to the public.

References

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- Crime Concern (1994a) Counting the cost: A briefing paper on financial losses arising from crime, Swindon: Crime Concern.
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NO.	VARIABLES	%	NO.	POPS VARIABLES	
1	Partner from within	17	15	Evaluation criteria	63
2	CJS(criminal justice depts)	15	16	Resourced	59
3	Intoxicants	22	17	Evaluated	54
4	Youth	17	18	Sustainable	33
5	Education	6	19	Exit	46
6	Housing	13	20	1<partner	30
7	Elected	17	21	Innovative	7
8	Local authority	13	22	Crime	67
9	Business	63	23	Antisocial	57
10	Voluntary	4	24	Road casualty	11
11	Media	35	25	Police intensive	41
12	Community focused	70	26	Not implemented	11
13	Theory based	59	27	Specific purpose	85
14	Clear objectives	72			

Figure 1 — showing the frequency (in %) of how 27 variables featured in the analysis of community based problem solving initiatives and their correlation in respect of each other.