THIS IS PROBLEM SOLVING POLICING

99-39

Reviews and testimonials

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN MADISON

January 9, 1998

Superintendent Brian Gresty
Merseyside Police
P.O. Box 59
Liverpool L69 1JD
United Kingdom

Dear Brian,

I regret that, because of an extraordinarily busy schedule since the POP conference, I have only now been able to get around to reading the draft report on Problem Solving Policing in Merseyside. My regret is compounded, because, now that I have gotten through the report with care, I realize that, because of my delay, I've been denying myself an extraordinarily satisfying experience. I am very impressed by the report and what it reflects of both your achievements and your plans, and I want to extend to you and the Project Team my congratulations on a job well done.

As you can imagine, I have had the experience of having all kinds of efforts called to my attention as examples of the implementation of problem-oriented policing. Most are very superficial, and a large number reflect very little understanding of the concept as I have tried to articulate it. After a time, one begins to engage in a great deal of self-doubt, questioning one's ability to communicate clearly.

It is thus refreshing to read a document that reflects a superb understanding of what I tried to get across and, recognizing that I have no monopoly on the its development, goes on to build on the concept in very constructive ways. The Task Force did its homework, and I am moved to commend its understanding of several specific, critical points that are often ignored or simply misunderstood:

-the true meaning of making problem-oriented policing the overarching, embracing concept ("ethos" or "philosophy") that affects all aspects of a police agency's operations; provides the unifying, central theme and focus; and provides room, within it, for incorporating smaller concepts, like dealing with repeat victimization, entering into partnerships, and adopting zero tolerance when appropriate.

-the importance of addressing more than just crime, extending to problems of disorder and the provision of other services that the public has come to expect of the police

-the importance of recognizing the need to deal with problems at different levels—not just the "front end"—and that this requires a readiness to pass the problem-solving function up to a higher level when it involves problems that are common throughout an area or jurisdiction, overlap among areas or jurisdictions, or simply require the involvement of a higher level of management.

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Your Project Team recognized that, contrary to the widespread image that problem-solving is simply common-sense, implementing the broader concept, with all of its implications and interrelationships, is quite complex, and requires the kind of ambitious agenda you have spelled out.

Relating to the acknowledgment of the need for problem-solving at various levels, I appreciated the references to analysts who would provide support regarding area-wide problems and to the need (in recommendation #26) for working with ACPO officers when it appears desirable to take problems up to the regional or national level. The higher the level, the more important it is to provide qualified staff to conduct the comprehensive, in-depth studies that are required. At this stage in the development of the concept, I appreciate the reluctance to designate substantial personnel resources for this purpose. But I do feel that, ultimately, police forces would find a high return on an investment in personnel assigned to a "research and development" function (such as the analysts you propose). They would have an opportunity to examine the literature on the problem and to search far and wide for how others might have dealt with the problem in a creative and effective manner. Currently, our state of mind leads us often to conclude that anyone not actually doing police work or directly supporting on-the-street operations is a drain on police resources. I understand where this view comes from in the U.S., given the way in which we waste valuable resources on non-essential tasks. But as we sort through the use of personnel, I predict the day will come when police, like private enterprise, will recognize that a high return can be realized on a relatively small investment in people who are paid to think full time about what the agency is doing, how effective this is, and what they might do to produce a product that is more effective.

On reviewing a report of this nature, I normally end up with a long list of comments. But my notes are few in number and are predominantly compliments. The draft plan is clearly one of the most thoughtful efforts to implement what I had in mind when I developed problem-oriented policing. It is comprehensive and ambitious, requiring a great deal of work. But the work already done, because it reflects such a good understanding of the concept, also identifies the promise and the potential in much more concrete terms—and that is exciting and should be an incentive to press on.

Were the distance not so great, I would –had I known of your work earlier—volunteered to join in some of your deliberations. It is very stimulating for me to engage with those who have invested so much in thinking about this approach to policing, who demonstrate such an excellent understanding of problem-oriented policing in all of its dimensions, and who see so clearly the potential for their force and for other police agencies as well.

I wish you the best as you continue your work. Please keep me informed. And please let me know if, from this distance, I can be of help on any specific points.

Sincerely yours,

Herman Goldstein
Professor of Law Emeritus

POLICE CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

USA

25 JA 229

DCC

January 15, 1999

Chief Constable Norman Bettison, MA, MBA
Merseyside Police
Police Headquarters
Canning Place
P.O. Box 59
L69 1JD
England

Dear Chief Constable Bettison:

I want to take a moment to commend you and your staff for the manner in which the members of my staff were treated during their visit to your department on January 7 & 8, 1999. Chief Inspector Bryan Gresty and many others were a tremendous help. It was obvious that the agenda for the two day visit was well planned and coordinated. My staff has returned very excited about many of their observations and we will conduct a full staff debriefing next week. We hope to learn from your experiences with problem solving and implement some of the good ideas that we discovered during this visit. Captain Chuck Johnson is already planning to open a small Incident Management Unit for his district and collect data to justify its implementation department-wide. My staff obviously found the visit to your department very beneficial.

As we proceed to develop the specifications and requirements for our problem solving database, I hope you will consider sending a member of your staff to participate in a seminar we are planning for March or April. Not only would this give us an opportunity to share more experiences, but we could return the favor of the great hospitality we were shown while visiting your department. We will pass on further information about this seminar as it develops.

I am sending separately a package as a small token of my appreciation for your generosity and hospitality. If we can be of service to your department in the future, please do not hesitate to ask. And thank you very much for making our visit such a wonderful and memorable experience.

Sincerely,

Dennis E. Nowicki
Chief of Police

c: Chief Inspector Bryan Gresty

Draft response for CC please - thanks, glad to help, pleased to be represented at Seminar where we can further share experiences etc

Praise for new police approach

By Richard Elias
Crime Correspondent

A LEADING American academic has praised Merseyside Police for their forward-thinking in fighting crime.

Herman Goldstein was speaking at a seminar held in Liverpool yesterday at which the force's latest approach to tackling criminals was highlighted.

Entitled "Problem-solving policing", the idea is to examine the causes of crime as well as its effects and is intended to provide long-term analysis of the symptoms which lead to law-breaking.

At the meeting, Merseyside's Deputy Chief Constable Paul Acres explained the thinking behind the strategy.

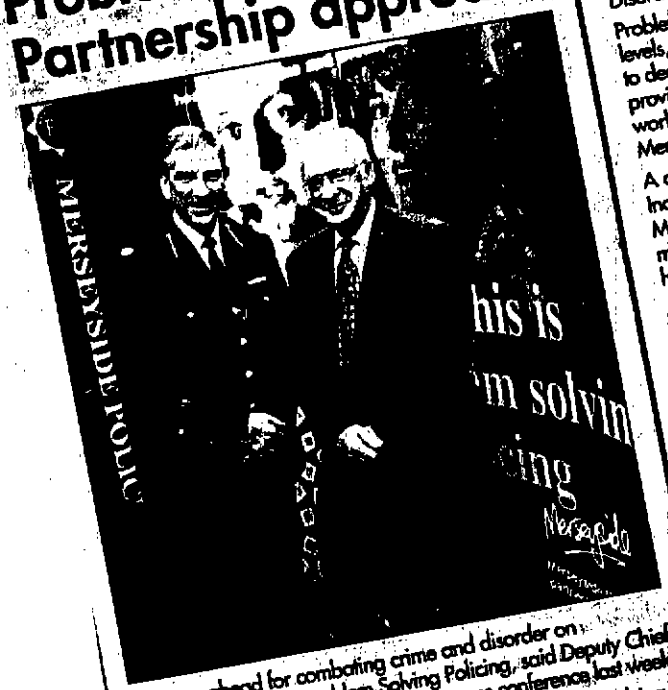
It involves creating better performances with improved planning and intelligence, coupled with better use of the force's existing resources.

Prof Goldstein, Professor of Law emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Madison said Merseyside's approach was "an excellent understanding of problem-solving policing in all its dimensions."

"Problem-solving aims to address issues and problems at all levels. We will use it to reduce disorder and we will use it to deal with armed robberies and international drugs cartels."

Daily Post

Problem Solving - Partnership approach



THE way ahead for combating crime and disorder on Merseyside lies with Problem Solving Policing, said Deputy Chief Constable, Paul Acres, speaking at a press conference last week. Problem Solving Policing, based on a classical problem solving approach, will bring such benefits as better planning and intelligence systems, best value and greatly improved performance.

Said Mr. Acres: "Problem Solving Policing means the development of new approaches to long-term problems affecting the community. It focuses on the causes of problems, as well as their symptoms, and is an essential part of our multi-agency, partnership approach to implementing the new Crime and Disorder Act."

Problem solving aimed to address issues and problems at all levels, he said. "We will use it to reduce disorder. We will use it to deal with armed robberies and drugs cartels. It is intended to provide a common approach to all problems and a way of working which will realize our philosophy for creating a safer Merseyside."

A central element of Problem Solving has been the setting up of Incident Management Units (IMU's) covering the whole of Merseyside. Their role is to integrate call handling, crime management and intelligence, all of which will be instrumental in helping to make better use of available resources.

Above all, Problem Solving Policing aims to deliver a more effective policing service at local level, using partnerships with other agencies and mobilising the community to solve problems.

The Merseyside approach to problem solving has won strong approval from the acknowledged guru of problem oriented policing, as he originally termed it.

Herman Goldstein, Professor of Law Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, congratulated the Force on its "excellent understanding of problem solving policing in all its dimensions" and especially remarked on the way the force has "invested so much thinking in this approach to policing".

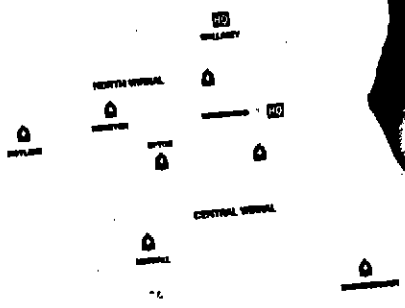
Professor Goldstein, pictured below at the IMU at Admiral Street was in Liverpool for the launch of Problem Solving Policing, particularly noted the emphasis on addressing more than just crime; extending, indeed, to problems of disorder and the provision of other services that the public has come to expect of the police.

Merseybeat

28 WIRRAL NEWS GROUP 13 February, 1999

WIRRAL | *Organisational shake-up sees change in approach*

New units 'will improve service'



ALL CHANGE ● How the new units are organised

Police aim to solve problems at their root

by Liam Murphy

A huge shake-up in Wirral's police force is set to deliver improved policing in the borough, according to top officers.

Senior police, including the new Merseyside Chief Constable Norman Bettison, attended the official launch at the International Business and Management Centre in Birkenhead of the Wirral's two Incident Management Units (IMUs).

The North Wirral division's IMU covers Wallasey, Moreton and Hoylake, while the Central Wirral area includes Birkenhead, Upton, Heswall and Bromborough.

The new approach is intended to move away from purely "reactive policing" and emphasises a "problem-solving" approach.

The idea behind it is to tackle persistent problems at their root, rather than just reacting to calls from the public.

Detective Sergeant Brian Hart of Central Wirral IMU explained that by using a computerised database and trained crime analysts the force could identify persistent problems and seek solutions.

Speaking at the launch, Chief Constable Norman Bettison said due to increasing demands on their resources, police had become more effective at answering emergency calls and providing "specialist" policing.

But he added: "In doing that we might be guilty of taking our eye off providing a quality call-answering service and maintaining a police presence."

He said: "The Incident Management Unit is part of a strategy in putting those two parts back."

Area Commander Supt Paul Forrester said the IMUs were to be the police's "window onto the world."

He said the Wirral force receives 200,000 calls a year, including 50,000 999 calls, and the new system was intended to help the police deal more effectively with "quality of life" calls, such as youths causing annoyance.

He added: "Over a period of time we hope for this change to lead to incident reduction, creating a virtuous circle."

If you want to get in touch with your local police — and it is a non emergency call — dial the following:

- **777 2080 for the North Wirral area which includes Wallasey, Moreton, Hoylake and West Kirby, and**
- **777 2222 for Central Wirral if you live in Birkenhead, Upton, Heswall and Bromborough.**
- **In an emergency, you should still call 999, wherever you live.**

Wirral News

LOCAL NEWS

New unit forges links with community

USA bobbies learn from us

by MELANIE JACKSON

A POLICE unit, set up only five months ago, have been visited by police officers from America.

The Incident Management Unit, Admiral Street, was started as a direct response to the needs of local communities, with the officers handling more than 100 calls per day.

The team of dedicated officers manage all non-urgent telephone calls for the Dingle, Toxteth, Aigburth and Wavertree areas.

Officers have immediate access to the latest computer systems used by Merseyside Police, and they also have contact with many other agencies who can help to solve local problems.

The visiters from the Charlotte Meckleburg Police Department, North Carolina, were able to see for themselves how the unit works and are considering investing 3.5 million dollars in emulating the good work of the unit back in the states.

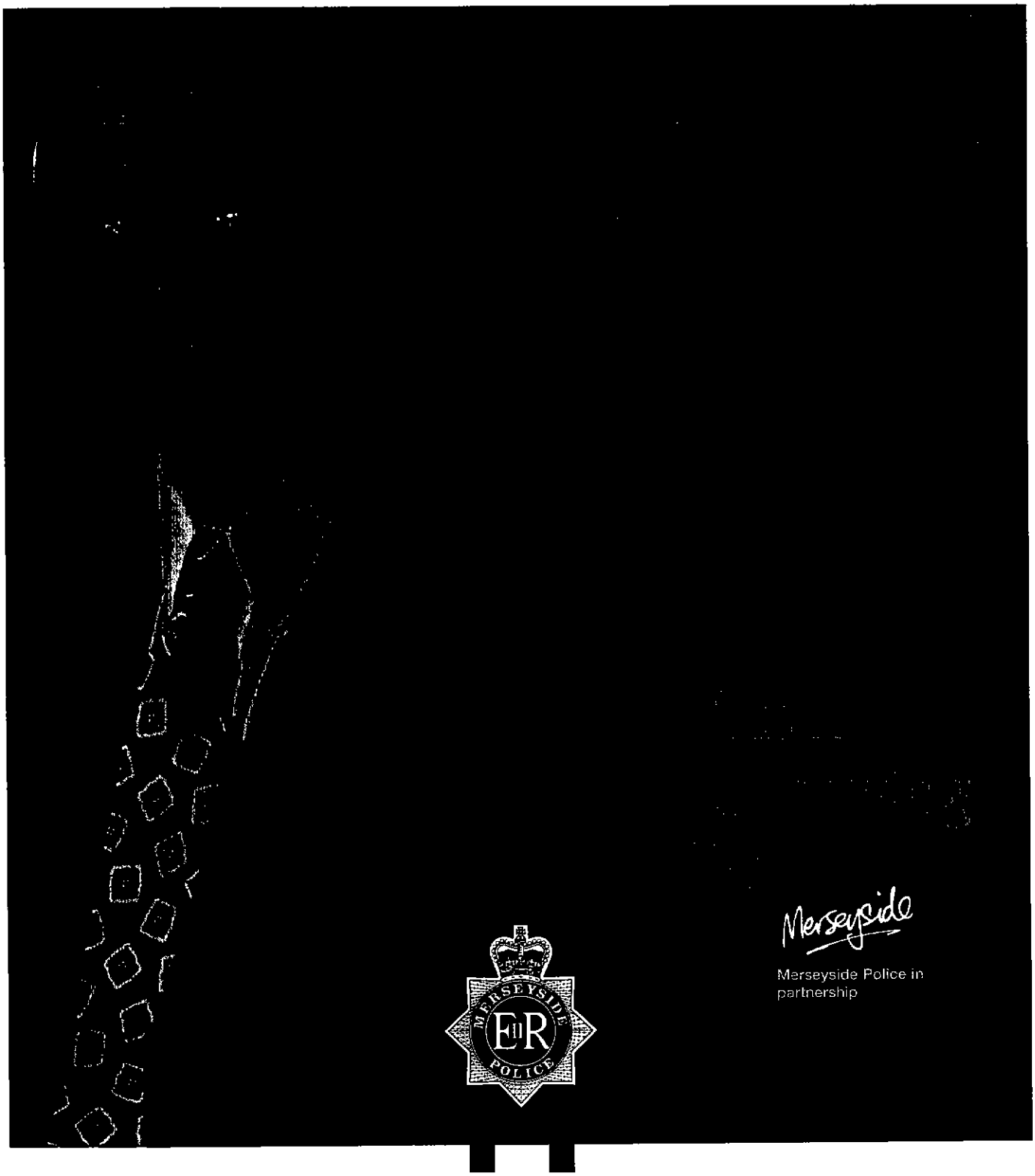
Detective Sergeant slater, the manager of IMU, said: "The aim of our team is to work closely with members of the community to solve problems which affect the quality of their lives.

"We have access to a number of specialist police departments who can help and we hope that people will utilisefully the excellent service that we offer."

This is
problem solving
policing

Merseyside

Merseyside Police in
partnership



Merseyside

Merseyside Police in partnership

This is problem solving

In November 1997 Merseyside Police commenced a large-scale research project to examine the implications of implementing problem oriented policing into the Force structure.

The nature of the problem was that the structure and processes of the force were not able to deal with a large increase in general demand and firearms offences. Neither did it support the large scale restructuring of the force, designed to develop a more community based focus that was more problem/cause oriented with an enhanced intelligence capability.

Evidence was gained via a major investigation, including internal workshops and a review of external forces/bodies that had already adopted a POP's approach. This included an in depth review of a major operation developed to deal with middle tier criminal activity within Merseyside.

The team followed the philosophy of Professor Herman Goldstein, recommending that problem solving policing be introduced to the Force as a holistic approach to everything that they did.

policing. MERSEYSIDE.

An implementation plan to phase in problem solving over a three year was proposed, however, due to the timescales of the Crime and Disorder Act, the implementation plan was truncated to eight months.

The plan concentrated on areas of

- Structure and organisation
- HR
- Systems and processes
- Marketing
- IT
- Evaluation.

A plan to train all of the members of the force from the Chief Constable was commenced almost immediately and the implementation team began to set up incident management units in every policing area. These became the hub of operational problem solving. Marketing on a national and local scale commenced and included a visit to the force by Professor Goldstein who was interviewed on television and radio.

The first of two full evaluations into problem solving in Merseyside has been completed. It shows evidence via activity analysis that officers are spending more time on patrol than prior to implementation. Similarly, the number of deployments to non-urgent calls has reduced and public satisfaction via surveys has increased to an average of 95%.

As a result of the successful implementation of problem solving in Merseyside twenty-three UK and three international forces have visited the force to examine the structure and systems. A number of those have altered their own structures as a result of the visit.

There is increasing evidence that problem solving is becoming embedded in the systems and processes of Merseyside Police.

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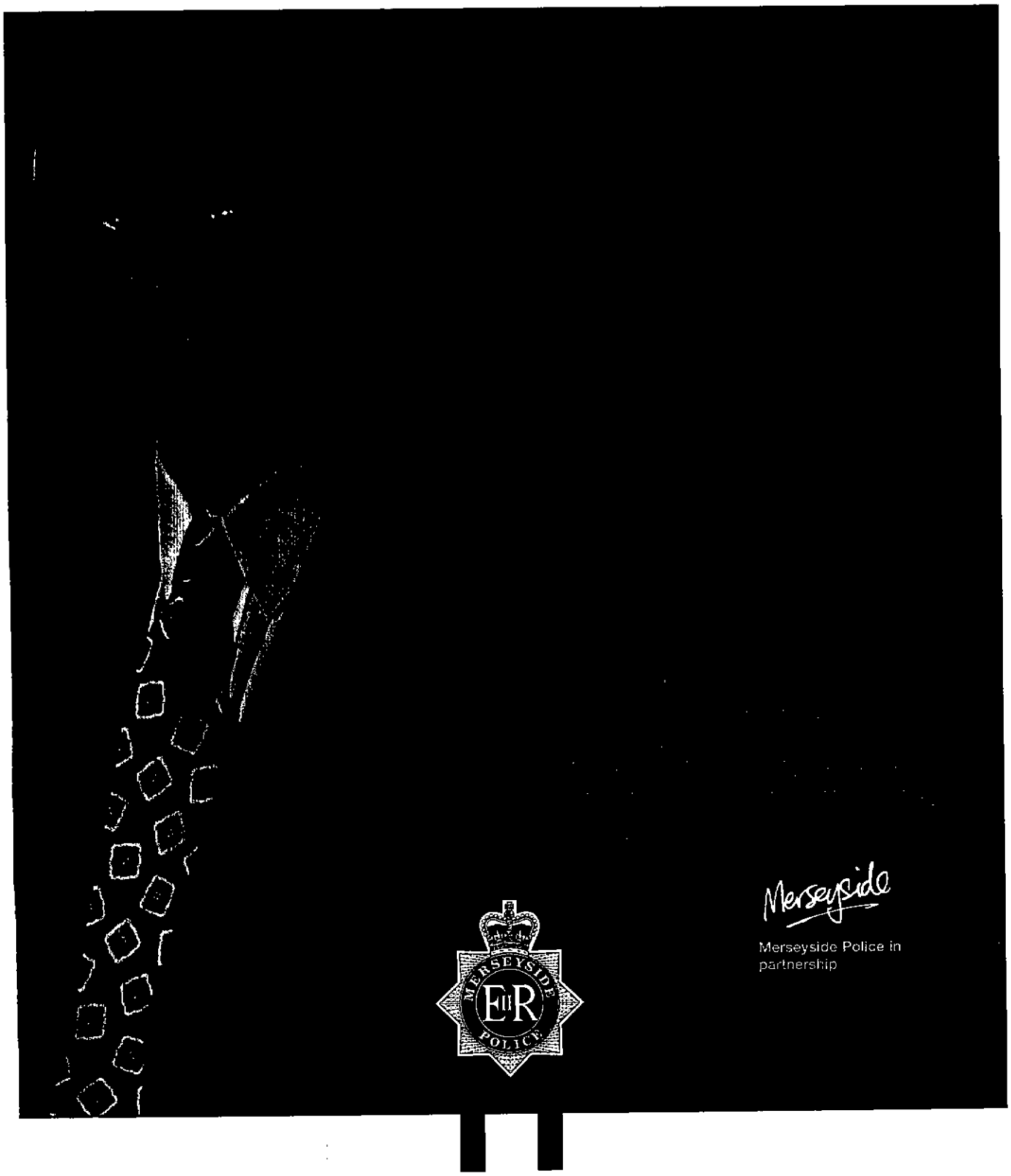

Merseyside

Merseyside Police in partnership

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MERSEYSIDE
ER
POLICE

This is problem solving policing. MERSEYSIDE.

During the early and mid-1990's a number of internal and external pressures began to be exerted on Merseyside Police.

From an internal perspective, the Force faced the prospect of having to meet an increase in demand for its' services, with considerably fewer resources. During this period, the Force lost some 433 officers and yet the pressures to deliver the full range of services to the necessary standard, remained.

In addition, in the report "Developing an Empowered Organisation" published in July 1993, it was recognised that Merseyside Police was primarily a reactive, demand driven organisation. This resulted in the establishment of a change programme from 1994 onwards to give the Force a more community based focus, making it more problem/cause oriented with an enhanced intelligence capability. This switch in emphasis was designed to enable local Commanders to deliver policing services to local communities, supported by the strategic centre. It brought with it specific problems, however, particularly in relation to the means by which such change could be facilitated.

The force also continued to restructure by reducing the number of areas and to promote self sufficiency aligned with accountability, at area level. This rationalisation was designed to help support the change programme and help manage increasing demand.

Following the murder of David Ungi in 1995 and the subsequent increase in the criminal use of firearms in Merseyside, a strategic approach was adopted to combat these crimes, through Operation Pivot. Using this operation as their base, the strategic debrief team assessed the short and long term strategic implications of problems facing Merseyside Police and made recommendations for improvement.

One of their recommendations was that the force should consider adopting "Problem Oriented Policing" (POP) to provide a holistic approach to the policing of Merseyside.

At the same time, external pressures were growing on the force, namely:

- A new government was elected with a brief to be "tough on crime; tough on the causes of crime". This clearly meant that all organisations having an impact on crime and community safety issues were likely to be the focus for special attention.

- The need to keep tight control on public spending gave rise to the increasing pressures to demonstrate "value for money", latterly encapsulated in the "best value programme".

- The Crime and Disorder Act placed specific external pressures on the force, particularly in relation the need to work in partnership with other agencies in an attempt to take a planned and integrated approach to crime, criminal and community safety issues.

- The fact that parts of Merseyside were given objective 1 status by the EU placed specific pressures on the force to establish partnerships with other agencies in the Merseyside area, in order to unlock significant amounts of European funding.

Despite these pressures for change and the adoption of certain measures in response, there was perceived to be no overall concept of policing in the force, which brought together the essential elements of response, targeting, community focus, problem analysis, proactivity and partnership.

A philosophy of policing had been determined by Merseyside Police but not tightly defined. There were various strands of Problem Oriented Policing/Problem Solving (POP/PS) type approaches in certain locations, but they had not been brought together into an integrated problem solving approach.

Additionally, structures and processes had not been developed to specifically support a problem solving approach across the force. The development of POP/PS type approaches had therefore, been largely unstructured and fragmented with no common direction.

The need to adopt a POP/PS approach was reinforced by the report "Merseyside Police: A changing world", completed in April 1997. As such, POP/PS was seen as "tying the knot". That report outlined **what** the force needed to do to become a more effective, customer focused organisation; POP/PS was seen to be **how** the force could do so. As such, it was seen as the final piece in the jigsaw of the change process, which the force embarked upon almost five years ago, and the means by which the force could meet many of the internal and external pressures upon it.

To consider how a POP/PS policing style might be adopted across Merseyside Police, a project team was established, with the following aim:

"To define and develop a problem solving approach and systems to all aspects of policing which create a safer Merseyside"

In its' deliberations, the team were required to deliver the following outcomes:

- A clearly defined philosophy of problem oriented policing.
- Clearly defined systems and structures supportive of that approach.
- A clear definition of the skills required to deliver this policing style and consequent training needs.
- A costed implementation plan.
- A publication, or part of a Home Office Police Research Group (PRG) report which provides an overview of Problem Solving (PS) on Merseyside.

2. ANALYSIS

The focus for this work was on the **what** rather than the **how**. As such, it assessed what Merseyside Police need to do, from a structure and systems point of view, to move towards the effective force wide adoption of PS.

To carry out this work, a small project team were established, comprising a Superintendent, a Detective Inspector, a Sergeant and a Constable, assisted by an external consultant. Home Office PRG resources were also used periodically to offer advice, as appropriate.

The work essentially comprised the following five stages:

- External fact finding
- Internal consultation
- Review of Merseyside Police systems
- Gap analysis
- Preparation and production of report

In simple terms, the focus of this work was to address the three questions in relation to Merseyside Police and the adoption of a POP/PS approach, namely:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?

External fact finding

It was recognised that several forces in England and Wales have already professed to have adopted a PS approach to policing in their areas. It was felt that an early part of the work should be to look at how these forces have approached PS, how they brought about any required structural and system changes, what problems they have encountered in the operation of PS and how they have overcome them (if at all).

Internal consultation

The fundamental focus of the work, however, had to be within Merseyside Police and a wide ranging consultation process was carried out to identify the extent of PS currently taking place within the force and issues which might mitigate against the effective adoption of PS across the whole force. The consultation process was built around the following elements.

Board interviews

All members of the board were interviewed individually to assess their views in relation to PS but from a strategic standpoint and a pro forma was used to structure each session.

Co-ordinators interviews

Two of the force co-ordinators were interviewed to identify how they perceived that problem solving would affect their role.

Operational manager interviews

All Area Commanders, heads of relevant departments (for example, traffic, OSD) and other appropriate individuals were individually interviewed to assess their views of PS from an operational management perspective.

Non-operational manager interviews

A wide variety of non-operational managers were interviewed, including the heads and other staff in the following departments:

- Strategy and Planning
- Human Resources
- Finance and Administration
- IT
- IS Projects
- Management Development and Training
- Communications
- Vehicle fleet
- Purchasing and supply

In-force project teams

The project team was aware of a number of other in-force projects, which might affect and be affected by the POP/PS project, in its deliberations. Discussions were, therefore, held with representatives of the following project teams:

- Shift review team
- Role of Inspector review
- IT scoping study
- Recognition and reward project
- Multi agency approach to organised and serious crime project
- Force structure review team

Staff Associations

Discussions were also held with representatives of the two main staff associations, the Police Federation and UNISON.

Focus Groups

A series of focus groups were held with a cross section of officers, traffic wardens and civilian staff to assess the views of "front line" operational and support staff with respect to PS. During these sessions, participants were initially invited to identify the issues, which they felt existed in relation to the effective adoption of PS.

In syndicate groups, they then considered these issues in greater detail before reporting their deliberations, including possible solutions, to the full group for wider discussion. A focus group was held for each police District.

An additional focus group was held for representatives of all of the Local Authorities in the Merseyside area. This enabled the views of the major "partners" in Merseyside to be assessed in relation to PS, to identify good practice and to recognise those issues which might prevent them from working more closely with the police.

This comprehensive approach enabled all levels of the organisation to be consulted, that is, operational, operational management and support and strategic management. The overwhelming view was supportive of a move towards a Problem Solving style of policing. Both staff associations echoed this positive view, though there was a degree of scepticism that the resources necessary to support a move to a problem solving approach would be forthcoming.

Preparation and production of the final report

Following the internal and external data gathering process, the project team held a two-day workshop to consider all of the information gathered. At this workshop, the team also agreed a series of recommendations, which would help to position Merseyside police to adopt PS effectively.

Following the fact finding and consultation processes, it was clear that Merseyside Police needed to change in several areas to accommodate a shift to a force wide PS approach to policing Merseyside. Change needed to occur in five broad areas, namely:

- Structure and organisation
- Systems and processes
- Information technology
- Human resources
- Marketing

In addition, there needed to be a clear view about what PS is and what its' aims are. The force also faced a number of choices or options for action regarding how it should adopt a PS approach and even whether it should do so.

In the report of the project team some 47 recommendations were put forward as a means by which Merseyside Police could adopt a PS approach.

Herman Goldstein, contends that the purpose of the police is best served by creating the conditions and providing the resources to allow problem solving, that is, solving the ***underlying*** problems, to take place routinely. He further contends that the ***whole*** service needs to be problem focused, servicing the officers who know the underlying issues and are in touch with the community.

The project team strongly supported this view, and suggested that the concept of problem solving should be applied across ***all*** areas of the force and all aspects of the organisation. Any issue, operational or non-operational, could (and should) be viewed from a Problem Solving (PS) perspective.

The first and primary recommendation of the team was, therefore, that:

"Problem Solving should be adopted by Merseyside Police as an"umbrella" philosophy under which all activities, operational, non-operational and support, can fit."

As such, problem solving should not be seen as a tactic, but a philosophy, which embraces the whole ethos of policing in Merseyside. Such approaches as zero tolerance, proactive policing, intelligence led policing and repeat victimisation were, therefore, seen as acceptable tactics within an over-arching problem solving strategy.

A definition for PS in Merseyside was, therefore that:

"Problem solving is a system to identify and tackle the causes of any policing problem"

To support the acceptance of this philosophy and to improve understanding with regard to the role of and need for problem solving clear aims for PS needed to be set namely:

- To deliver a more effective service at a local level.
- To make best use of available resources.
- To use partnerships effectively, where appropriate, to solve problems.
- To tackle the causes as well as the symptoms of crime, disorder and community safety problems.
- To engender good community relations.
- To provide valued internal support to all staff.

The acceptance of these high level principles facilitated the delivery of an integrated approach encapsulated in the other recommendations of the project team. In December 1997, the Force policy group and Board accepted all 47 recommendations of the project team, without reservation. A new team was then established and tasked with preparing an implementation plan to support the adoption of these recommendations.

The original recommendation was that PS should be phased in over a period of up to three years. It was felt, however, that the pressures on the force were such that this was unacceptable. In addition, it was held that from an operational perspective, PS needed to be firmly established by the time the provisions of the Crime & Disorder Act came into force in April 1999. As a result, commencing in February 1998, the new implementation team was required to implement PS across the whole of the force by June 1999.

The implementation team in effect co-ordinated an extensive programme of work by both carrying out a wide range of activities and by tasking groups with specific areas of responsibility. Structural matters such as the establishment of Incident Management Units (IMUs) were co-ordinated through liaison officers in each of the eleven operational areas.

In addition, a team of eight dedicated trainers was established to deliver the integrated programme, part of which was to ensure that every member of the force (police officer and civilian support staff) receive training in the principles of PS and its' implementation in Merseyside.

Some areas were reluctant to introduce IMUs and the philosophy of problem solving. As a result, the implementation team embarked on a roadshow, discussing the implementation process with area command teams and other operational managers. At the same time, the first meeting of IMU supervisors was held. This meeting has now become established on a regular basis and is seen as a valuable means of addressing issues in the IMUs and disseminating best PS practice.

The force Chief Officer group also embarked on a training programme and took part in a three day PS workshop, facilitated by two members of the implementation team.

In addition, the implementation team also became members of a project group with the brief to develop a broad operational requirement for a force wide management information system.

The original report outlining the proposed Problem Solving (PS) approach for Merseyside Police recommended that the approach should be evaluated post-implementation to assess it's value and impact. During the implementation process, it was agreed that the evaluation should focus on two core areas, namely:

- The impact that the approach has had on Force performance.
- The relevance and effectiveness of structures and processes established to support the operation of PS.

Due to the complexity of adopting such a fundamental shift in organisational philosophy, the implementation process has been relatively lengthy. The need for prompt evaluation is also recognised, however, in order that early changes can be made to the approach where appropriate. For this reason, it was decided that the evaluation should be split into two phases.

The first phase would cover the adoption of PS at an operational level, and would take place approximately six months after the final operational area "went live" with PS. This evaluation was completed in May 1999 though the final area did not "go live" until January 1999 due to unavoidable delays caused by the rebuilding of the main police station in the area.

The second phase of the evaluation will take place at the end of 1999, some six months after the intended "live" date for the whole organisation.

In addition, an early review of the operation of Incident Management Units (IMUs) took place in December 1998 to identify any issues emerging from their implementation.

It could be argued that as PS is an underlying philosophy for the force it seeks to facilitate the achievement of all of the objectives for the force. As such, it can be measured by considering the current PI's and targets for the force.

It is almost impossible, however, to identify exactly what impact PS has had in the achievement of a particular objective or associated target. It is equally problematic to prove that PS has ***caused*** a particular change in a specific measure or PI. However, by utilising a diverse range of data collected from a number of sources, the evaluation seeks to compile a "basket of measures", which, taken together, might ***indicate*** the contribution of PS as an approach to the operation of Merseyside Police.

The main sources of data for the evaluation are:

Crime and incident data

The data currently available from the Command and Control and ICJS systems was utilised together with information from the Performance Indicator reports. Changes to the territorial structure of the organisation and to the Home Office counting rules in March and April 1998 respectively have, however, prevented the completion of any meaningful comparisons with the position prior to that time in relation to crime.

Activity Sampling

To assess the impact of PS on deployments a limited activity sampling exercise was carried out in two areas of the force. Officers in St. Helens and Knowsley were requested to note down their activity using a simple seven variable coding system. A period of seven days was chosen for the exercises, one in November for the pre-implementation exercise and one in March for the

post-implementation exercise. Each shift was broken down into half-hour periods and officers were requested to enter the relevant code for the predominant activity in each period.

Problems with the value and accuracy of such exercises are well documented. It was felt, however, that keeping the exercise simple would reduce the extra burden on those being asked to take part. As a result, it was hoped that the results would be more valid.

Officer and staff perceptions

A 5% sample of officers by rank up to and including Inspector and Detective Inspector were surveyed by questionnaire in relation to their perceptions of the impact of PS and the effectiveness of its' operation in practice. The sample was chosen at random by the HR/Personnel department.

Senior and Chief officer perceptions have also been gathered through an extensive interview process. Most area commanders and chief officers have been interviewed together with other appropriate individuals, including representatives of the Police Federation and the Training Department.

In addition, all IMU supervisors and a cross section of IMU staff have been approached for their views and comments.

Case Studies

Case studies have been used to offer evidence of the effectiveness of PS in dealing with actual problems. Such cases have been gathered through discussions with officers and support staff, particularly the IMU managers.

Call handling data

A range of data has been produced by the Radio and Telecommunications Department at Headquarters, which seeks to identify the impact of PS on calls to Merseyside Police.

In relation to recorded incidents, while it is difficult to arrive at an accurate total incident figure, there does appear to have been a reduction in recorded incidents of disorder since the implementation of PS (down 6% on the year to March 1999). Incidents of juvenile disorder, however, have risen over the same period.

As for the impact of PS on crime, it would appear that early signs of some effect might be emerging, specifically in relation to crimes of violence, vehicle related crime and certain types of damage. It is recognised however, that levels of recorded crime can be affected by many factors and that the precise impact of PS in generating these reductions is almost impossible to assess. There is some evidence that the implementation of PS, particularly the establishment of IMU's has had a negative effect on detection rates, though they seem to have recovered as PS has become established.

After early suspicion it appears that PS is being increasingly accepted as a valid approach by both the public and members of the Force. Failure to market the approach properly, early in the implementation process adversely affected the credibility of the Force and the PS approach, but it appears that the public now accept the approach as a more effective way of working, once it is explained to them.

There is much anecdotal evidence which suggests that operational officers view the IMU in particular as a major aid to managing demands on their

time, more effectively. This is reinforced by data, which suggests that since the implementation of PS, there has been a 12% reduction in deployment of officers, with a 25% reduction in deployments to minor disorders. PS also seems to be generating an increased sense of professionalism and pride in providing a better quality service, particularly in relation to IMU staff. It is also clear that PS is facilitating more effective multi-agency working.

The level of understanding of the principles of PS is impressive. The extent to which PS is embedded into officer's routine ways of working is, however, less clear. While PS has been "lifted off" in the Force, it seems that many officers still have to make the "leap of faith" and commit fully to the approach.

Since the implementation of PS, there appears to have been a significant reduction in the number of non-urgent calls received with an associated increase in the quality of service provided, as perceived by the public. Early indications from the IMU's also suggest a very high level of public satisfaction with the quality of service provided (an average of 95% satisfaction across the board). Apart from isolated problems with a high proportion of incoming calls remaining unanswered (now addressed), call handling performance in the IMU's has been impressive. Issues have been identified, however, with respect to the validity of the data used in calculating one of the PIs relating to IMU performance, which must be resolved speedily.

A simple activity sample exercise has identified a significant shift from the time officers are deployed to general patrol time, since the inception of PS. In addition, following the adoption of PS officers appear to be spending an average of an hour per shift longer out of the police station, than they were prior to PS.

As with any fundamental change in methods of working, the approach is taking some time to bed down. Essentially though, the implementation process has run relatively smoothly, especially considering the complexity of the project, and for this the implementation team deserve much credit.

From an internal perspective, Performance Indicators have now been established which measure the performance of the Incident management Units in delivering an effective service to the public. In addition, plans are in place to embed the evaluation and assessment into the EFQM process. This will ensure local ownership of assessment and a continuing commitment to evaluation of the approach.

To date, the implementation team have hosted visits from 23 UK police Forces and 3 international forces, which reinforces the view that Merseyside Police are at the cutting edge with regard to the adoption of problem solving.

Overall the Force should be greatly encouraged by the early findings of this evaluation. PS does seem to be starting to have an impact on some crime and incident types, workloads and working patterns such that, already, the public of Merseyside is beginning to perceive a better quality of service from their police Force. The second stage evaluation at the end of 1999 will explore the extent to which the impact has been sustained and whether or not the organisational issues have been addressed. The considerable and professional contribution of the implementation team is clear and their role has been pivotal in the achievement of the results to date.

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