

***TITLE***

The Bestwood Estate - Crime and other problems - Solved? - an opportunity to 'reflect.'

***THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM***

The Estate, comprises 872 pre and post-War properties owned by Nottingham City Council, 200 other houses are in private ownership, purchased under 'Right to Buy' provisions.

During 1997/8, problems were evident including very high crime rates, loss of public confidence in local Services, high incidence of 'voids' within the housing stock, poor quality amenities, high unemployment, falling school rolls etc, optimised life in this area.

Resident morale was low and potential for poor quality of life was obvious. Frustration was also evident amongst committed members of staff from public, private and voluntary sectors.

The above provided a unique opportunity for 'partnership.'

***EVIDENCE***

A primary source of evidence are statistics of reported crime, both before, during and after numerous Initiatives.

There was particular emphasis to detection/prevention of domestic burglary. This mirrored the local aim of 'Working together to make Arnold Division safer.'

There will be opportunity to verify evidence from 'Key' persons from outside the Service.

## ***THE RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM***

In 1996, I was posted to the Arnold Division, which encompassed several inner-city housing estates, including Bestwood. This Estate is within the jurisdiction of Nottingham City Council.

I took the opportunity of initiating and launching several, simple, high profile policing operations, in an effort to convince demoralised staff that workable and viable solutions were available. These were later to be more protracted.

Liaison at strategic, policy and administrative level took place with public and voluntary sector partners regarding issues of crime prevention, detection, liaison, victim care etc. Early success raised confidence.

Council Objectives were concerned with reducing high numbers of 'voids', improving the environment, budget overspend, victimisation etc.

An excellent, early example of 'partnership' was to emerge.

It must be recalled that the arrangements were pre Crime & Disorder Act and entirely voluntary and spontaneous.

## ***IMPACT***

By early 1998, excellent supporting evidence from the Council, particularly with 'voids,' indicated the Estate had been transformed from a crime ridden, unsafe area, to a desirable one which had a waiting list of potential tenants. (BBC Video - 3 April 98 transcribed - Appendix 2).

Complaints of victimisation/harassment were non-existent.

The crime figures, on 1 April 98, were the culmination of many policing initiatives. This date saw Arnold Division disestablished into a larger Division. (See Appendix 1 for crime figures).

The project concerning the Bestwood Estate effectively ran for twelve and eighteen months, between October 96 and March 98.

The overall project contained many Initiatives of different size, shape and complexity, but with proactive, disruptive, intelligence led policing at its core.

The project will seek to identify the key role that many partners played over the period and indicates that with a committed workforce across the sectors, real, genuine and sustainable progress can be achieved.

Attention is drawn to several appendices dealing especially with crime statistics which indicate a dramatic trend downwards in reported crime which I would link with growing public confidence, positive Police and other agency action, with reassurance and ethics at its core.

The estate had been bedevilled over the years with a high crime rate. A report of an academic study in 'The Times' newspaper, placed Arnold (Bestwood) at 185 out of 189 towns. (See Appendix 3).

Significantly, several problematic, criminal families resident on the estate had enjoyed a near 'cult` status within their immediate sphere of influence. Their power base was wide. Some activities were characterised with the commission of domestic burglary, handling stolen goods and other 'economic' crime. Victimization or re-victimisation of new or vulnerable tenants was rife.

Other criminal families preferred to commit crime associated with the drug culture with the organisation of various criminal activities to support this lucrative activity.

Motor vehicle crime of all types was characterised amongst younger offenders. Reported offences were high.

I have always followed the maxim that 'crime and its detection/prevention is far too serious to leave to the Police alone.' I therefore, with full support of the Divisional Commander, instigated a 'partnership approach,' initially at director level at the Nottingham City Council Housing Department. Personal liaison also took place with the leader of the Council. Environmental and Highway services also needed to be brought on board.

A 'problem solving' approach was applied to the issues before the 'partners.'

There was an in-depth Scanning, which identified a wide range of problems by reviewing data and sources of information.

Structure was applied to the 'problem solving' by applying quality Analysis where knowledge and skills were combined to identify important common ground within the partnership and the common underlying causes.

A varied Response was initiated and the solutions and outcomes are mentioned below.

An Assessment of the results of the action taken were reviewed and they are detailed in the various success criteria seen at the end of the submission.

It is emphasised, that the partnership arrangements were informal and convivial but focused and business-like.

It was clear, that the potential for crime might be reduced if a sense of 'community' were to be brought to the Bestwood Estate and the 120 (or 13.6 %) of void houses filled. Some 70 houses at one time were 'voided' on one street! Care had to be exercised with high potential for victimisation but allowing the roots of a 'new' community to establish.

Sound supporting structures were established within the Police and other partners, to enable accurate statistics to be tabulated to measure potential success. A 'broken windows' philosophy was to be encouraged.

I ensured that the Bestwood Estate issues were a major priority on the Division. The Estate and its immediate area were drawing in excessive resources and if it could be stabilised, then a more equitable policing service could be provided around the Division. There was a similar co-objective within the local council.

The Bestwood Estate had, been described in a 'depravation' report as being in 'extreme social need.' This was to become a key driver for change for all parties.

## **DEFINITION**

The Divisional Intelligence Unit was revamped by the Divisional Detective Inspector and further resourced enhanced under quality supervision. Additional detective skills were recruited. The potential for intelligence gathering, interpretation and development was much improved. The City Council had recently purchased a small 'standalone' computer to assist with Police intelligence development.

It was clear, that although intelligence was forthcoming, its quality and quantity flow required to be greatly improved to enable appropriate planning of proactive policing operations to be considered.

Working with the Detective Inspector and a Uniform Inspector with 'Bestwood', responsibility, I set about analysing crime, general Police statistics, housing statistics and other data providing indicators as to the parameters of the problem. The results of this process were shared with local officials and elected representatives. The protocols of the Data Protection Acts were observed. It was here that the true value of the Area Housing Co-ordinator was to be appreciated, (see 'Acknowledgements').

The analysis undertaken confirmed that a number of locally resident extended families of first, second and third generation, played a very significant current criminal role with an additional core problem of very active young burglars and auto offenders.

A simple *gap* analysis *took* place as to how further intelligence information might be gained and to develop its potential further use in proactive operations and other positive policing options.

It was clear all policing services had to be harmonised to confront the problem. A weekly Operations Meeting was to be the focus of Divisional tasking.

## ***DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM***

The overall response to the Bestwood Estate involved many tactical policing options. These included: (not exhaustive)

- \* *Targeting a hard core of persistent, active offenders*
- \* *High visibility patrols - reassurance to the public*
- \* *Publication of CrimeStoppers number*
- \* *Covert Operations - intelligence based*
- \* *CID to play a pivotal role - reorganised by Det Inspector*
- \* *Positive and focused use of two proactive teams on the Division (co-located with intelligence function in Police Station)*

- \* *Special Constabulary in vol veme-r-t - Focus patrol days and other activities*
- \* *Cultivation of informants within Force Policies*
- \* *Encouraging, through public and voluntary sector partners, openness and trust in policing and other services*
- \* *Better use of IT, ie 'Ringmaster' and 'Hunter' system*
- \* *The establishing (around the Division), of regular crime prevention 'surgeries' in which any member of the community could visit to obtain crime prevention advice, UV packs etc. (Advertised via local radio, BBC radio, newspaper media, community newsletter etc). There was a significant take up and this was a key part of community re-assurance. Everyone encouraged to attend. One Surgery had over 400 visitors for advice. Advice discharged in schools, community centres, Church Halls etc*
- \* *The negotiation of financial support for Police overtime from the Council to compliment high visibility patrols*
- \* *Involving other agencies, ie HM Customs & Excise, Trading. Standards etc*
- \* *Liaison with the CPS to ensure common ground*
- \* *Victim Support Scheme volunteers transported to and encouraged onto the Estate*
- \* *Custody Suite liaison DC to seek intelligence through detained, local prisoners. (Now adopted Force wide based on Devon & Cornwall model developed by the Det Inspector)*
- \* *Use of permanent Beat Officers, known in the community*
- \* *CCTV to assist in a former problematic part of the Estate*
- \* *Confirming the establishment of a Crime Scene visitor PC, to provide valuable expertise*
- \* *'Displacement' issues were considered and included in the operational planning process - the criminal fraternity might travel to offend*
- \* *I instigated a 'pro-forma' Witness Statement for Police Officers who had attended neighbour disputes, to enable their use in later possession proceedings by Council Legal Department*
- \* *Leaflet drops for Crime Prevention issues.*

Council Objectives included: (not exhaustive)

- . *Evicting problem tenants*
- . *Reduced high incidence of voids*  
*Reduced reports of harassment*
- . *Increased income from rents*
- . *Reduced budget overspend on housing repairs*
- . *Reduced vandalism/intimidation*
- . *Improve `visual' environment.*

The achievement of the above, would lead `inter alia' to improved confidence in local services and to encourage people to come forward with intelligence information.

A costed Policing Plan was considered particularly with Operations Acid Drop 1 and 2. Despite these formalities and in order for the estate to be prevented from becoming a `no go area,' it was inevitable that very substantial policing resources had to be committed to the problem. This was non-negotiable.

As part of the strategy of implementation, active use was made of the local media in an attempt to reassure the public of policing intentions. (Several broadcasted interviews with Jeremy BALL - BBC Reporter and with Damien BROOK and Brendan McGRATH, the Chief Crime Reporters of the Nottingham Evening Post are on record). (Appendix 4).

In terms of overall difficulties, it was obvious that sectors of the criminal community were openly hostile to high visibility patrols. Through thorough briefing of these patrol elements and personal commitment by presence on patrol, the key, counter message of dedication to task, disruption and public reassurance, was provided:

In terms of operational policy, many high visibility, proactive policing operations took place, some lasting several weeks in duration. The operational names of Jubillo, Archangel, Bumblebee, Corral, Avalon, Acid Drop 1, Acid Drop 2, with many others, are synonymous with the policing of this area at this time and are, I understand, still affectionately remembered.

The operational element was delivered by a soon to become well motivated team of Uniform and specialist staff.

Following receipt of intelligence, simple options such as focused 'arrest days,' involving the detaining of persons circulated as wanted who resided within a 'tight' geographical area, also served to disrupt the criminal fraternity on the Division and the Bestwood Estate in particular.

Further partnership opportunities were developed with the local Magistrates Clerks' Department with Fine Default Officers executing warrants on 'problem' criminals, supported by Police Officers. This contributed to considerable uncertainty and disruption within the criminal fraternity who were consequently dissuaded at every opportunity from their unlawful activities.

It was not unusual for the 'focused arrest day' philosophy to see twenty-five plus, Officers parading for duty at 6am on the relevant day. They were divided into small teams supported by additional vehicles. Twenty to twenty-five persons arrested on these days were not uncommon. In hindsight, a first class tactic.

This above approach was further complimented by a standing, dedicated Operation to positively policing all bail conditions through Operation 'Nighthawk.' Bail conditions were rigorously policed and later arrests programmed with offenders kept in custody to appear before the Courts. This Operation had the desired effect of 'housing' a significant number of criminals who were placed in fear of arrest, remaining at home in accordance with their bail conditions, reducing further, the potential for crime. A further very successful disruption tactic.

High visibility Police presence and support was also given to housing officials detailed to serve 'notices intending to seek possession' on disruptive tenants. This emphasised a 'team' effort.

A very positive, ethical, policing culture was prevalent at the Division and a new zest and vitality was obvious from all staff, whether Police, Support or Special Constabulary.

A viable and sustainable decrease in reported crime is particularly evident during 1997. (See Appendix 7).

## **THE SUCCESS CRITERIA**

A successful criterion for the Police, was of course a substantially reduced levels in reported crime. Other success areas included: (not exhaustive).

- \* *Vastly increased flow of intelligence - Quantity and Quality*



*Much lower incidents reported en-the computerised Command & Control System*

- \* *A 70% reduction in burglary and theft from motor vehicles and 22% reduction in violent crime between 1.1.98 and 31.3.98 for Bestwood. A 13.6% reduction in Divisional crime overall, (see Appendix 1)*
- \* *11% reduction in crime on the Division itself, (1 Apr 97-31 Mar 98)*
- \* *Increase in detection of offences*
- \* *Significant 'tensions' in drug fraternity, unable to 'operate'*
- \* *Greater public reassurance and confidence (Source - Internal Audit by FHQ)*
- \* *The offence of 'witness intimidation' charged where possible, (see Appendix 9)*
- \* *Feedback from Police, public and private sector officials*
- \* *Reduced voids - 3 in Mar 98!*
- \* *Housing Costs - within budget, (£250,000 saved) - re-invested in other projects, (Best Value')*
- \* *Increases in local school rolls - school viability maintained, (particularly Bestwood Community School)*
- \* *The obvious further potential for enhanced 'Partnership' working*
- \* *100+ families on waiting list for housing allocations at Bestwood (Council statistics)*
- \* *'Block' lettings were a useful tactic recommended to the Housing Dept*
- \* *Weekly 'check-point' meetings held with housing officials*
- \* *Non-existent complaints of anti-social behaviour*
- \* *Dec 97 - only 3 'burglary' offences - 'Op Bumblebee'*
- \* *Victim Support Services - accessed.*

**Incidental** success criteria included:

- \* *The stagnant 'private' housing market showed significant movement*

\* *Increased family occupations, ensuring the 'future' of the Estate.*

(Please note Appendix 5 re extracts from Bestwood Housing Office Strategy Document)

Other feedback was received via local community representatives, ie Councillor Carol STAPLETON, who fedback very positively, the views of her constituents.

Success was undoubtedly underpinned by Operations in December 1997, under the cover of Op. 'Bumblebee.' This Operation was to be very successful and achieved the arrest of many of the offenders on the Estate who enjoyed the 'cult' status with their criminal activity. This involved the positive use of the TV, Radio and Newspaper media, who attended the Police Station at Sam on the morning of the Operation, to film 'live,' the arrest and search activities. These issues were broadcasted on regional television and radio throughout the day. The criminals credibility was to become completely broken. They were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, (see Appendix 6 re transcription of Central News TV Bulletin).

The approach taken also received the most favourable comments at a National Housing Conference held in Liverpool as an issue of potential 'Best Practice.'

### ***OTHER GENERAL INFORMATION***

On 1 April 98, the latest Force Restructure took place and Arnold Division was absorbed into the new 'B' Division.

The current Force Objectives include the requirement to adopt a more proactive, intelligence led, community style of policing. The measures taken on Arnold Division were already 'embedded' and have greatly assisted the post implementation policing philosophy. The basis of a large Neighbourhood Watch Scheme was created. Arguably better than the formal structures.

In short, many local Bestwood criminals had been sentenced to substantial terms of imprisonment for burglary and other activity. Vital 'breathing' space had been obtained to enable the routine of Community Policing and council service provision to be instigated to the clear and obvious benefit of all residents.

Potential offenders have been dissuaded and others seriously disrupted. There was to become a genuine sense of community within a poor, inner-city housing area which was now enjoying, for the first time, the luxury of a 'waiting list' situation for allocation of its housing stock. The peace and tranquillity remain. The Detective Inspector, who has 10+ years experience of policing the area and is responsible for

the CID covering the estate, has described it as 'dead' in terms of crime being committed.

The above measures were to locally 'pioneer' a Problem Orientated Policing' approach in this part of inner Nottingham. The key components were coherent, strategic, policy and implementation issues with full co-operation of all parties across the public and voluntary sectors.

A revamped intelligence gathering system with a clear direction and willingness from management to 'lead,' assisted in rejuvenating the workforce to be committed to the issues in hand. A strong and trusting partnership ethic was to prevail.

There were substantial reductions in reported crime and increased detections. Police performance and morale in all areas was raised.

The co-ordination of specialist policing services was arranged. Mounted patrols in particular, are well remembered by local residents.

The policing philosophy carried out on the Bestwood Estate was permeated around the Division and for the year 1 April 97 to 31 March 98, there was a 11% reduction in crime and substantial improvements in the numbers of offences detected.

To also demonstrate the organisational development which had taken place, Arnold Division became accredited, in Summer 1997, as an 'Investor in People.'

There were several visits to the Division by ACPO Officers and the opportunity was taken to advise of potential 'Best Practice.'

The 'partnership' not only worked, it was 'seen to work.' There was much evidence of the right people involved, the right commitment, leadership, management and a willingness to train and brief people accordingly.

## ***RECENT UPDATE***

The nearby Broxtowe Estate and Bulwell Hall Estates are, unfortunately, experiencing currently, the problems optimised at Bestwood during 1997/98. I have been pleased at the instigation of the Leader of the Council and the Assistant Director of Housing, to liaise personally with the Local Area Commander, to communicate, in detail, the policing philosophy practised at Bestwood with regard to Broxtowe. Copies of Operational and Strategic documentation have been provided for his perusal. Actions for Bulwell Hall are pending.

Early indications are positive for reduced levels of crime in the Broxtowe area.

The Bestwood Estate enjoys tranquillity. This has prevailed since Spring 1998. The positive action taken has substantially contributed to this situation. It has proved that positive, ethical and trusting partnerships can deliver a quality product.

It **was** a pleasure to have played a positive role in the stabilisation of this difficult and problematic residential area and worked alongside so many dedicated people.

## **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

The effects of the Policing Initiatives and Partnership co-operation enabled the area of Bestwood, within the Arnold Division, to be positioned strategically for the new Force Restructure. Significantly, although 'The Morgan Report' was being frequently quoted as likely to be enacted by the incoming Labour Government, that and the Crime & Disorder Act were, relatively, 'aeons' away.

The Partnership approaches were cemented by commitment and loyalty to task and in view of that, I believe, all the more robust.

The various policing activities allowed me to 'champion' with another colleague, organisational and managerial change within the Division, which led to the Investors in People Accreditation. This allowed a structured training approach to be built into the policing style and various specialist inputs were provided, ie crime scene preservation, crime prevention etc.

A significant success factor to the 'Bestwood' problem was undoubtedly the Police teamwork which was encouraged at every opportunity. Traditional barriers of Uniform and CID were broken down. Joint briefings are common-place and greatly assisted the cross-flow of information.

Special mention must be made of dedicated Special Constabulary members who remained committed to the task.

Though anecdotal, there were hundreds of telephone calls received lending support to the Policing and Partnership philosophy from members of the public.

I hope and trust, that Broxtowe and Bulwell Hall Estates will achieve the results seen at Bestwood and it has been a pleasure to be involved in a fresh impetus being provided in those locations. This is a time for very positive thinking and there should be no complacency in those areas.

It was a pleasure to be concerned within Division for that period of time and to be part of perhaps the most successful news story that the tactics, philosophy and the

culture I was able to so positively develop, led to the lowest level of reported crime, on Arnold Division, for over eight years!

To return to the title of this submission, *The Bestwood Estate - Crime and other problems solved?' an opportunity to reflect:'*

Reflecting back now, a year after leaving the Division, one can only exude satisfaction on the work done and impact made.

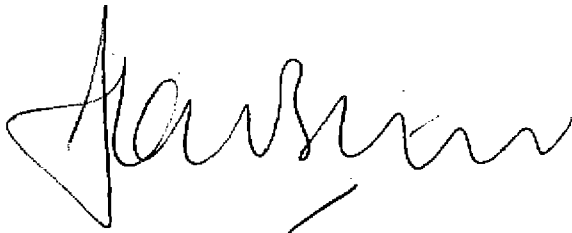
The 'secret heroes and heroines,' are, undoubtedly the law-abiding tenants on the estate who remained in residence despite extreme pressures, personal provocation and intimidation, assisted the Public Services in their duties. Though, I suspect, much of this was anonymous, it was none the less positive and provided information to enable the public bodies to act in such a positive way.

Police Officers, Public Sector or volunteers had the opportunity of going 'home' elsewhere after a days work. The important ethic which I think drove the project work from the start, was that we must act in support of local law-abiding residents who have to live on the estate, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week etc. They were the people who lived in the fear of crime and following a days work, being uncertain whether their house or motorcar might be broken into, damaged or stolen.

I am glad to say the potential for this to happen has greatly reduced and a sense of public confidence has ensued.

In closing, I refer the Reader to Appendix 8. Here, two abstracts are seen from the Bestwood Neighbourhood Housing Office Strategy Document.

In short, 'a picture paints a thousand words!'



**Alan BUTLER - Chief Inspector (Operational Support)**  
**'A' Division - Nottinghamshire Police.**  
**12.7.99.**

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# *APPENDIX 1*

# COMPARATIVE CRIME FIGURES,

TAKEN FOR THE PERIOD 1st Jan - 29th March 1996/7/8

**Table 1 - Arnold Division**

	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>% +1- (with 96)</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>% +1-, (with 97)</b>
<b>Total Crime</b>	4177	3384	- 18.9%	2925	- 13.6%
<b>Burg House</b>	743	637	- 14.3%	322	- 49.5%
<b>TWOC</b>	666	382	- 42.6%	333	- 12.8%
<b>TFMV</b>	656	501	- 23.6%	437	- 12.8%
<b>Violence</b>	191	157	- 17.8%	142	- 9.6%

**Table 2 - Bestwood Beat**

	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>% +1- (with 96)</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>% +1- (with 97)</b>
<b>Total Crime</b>	952	852	- 10.5%	476	- 44.1 %
<b>Burg house</b>	194	193	- 0.5%	55	- 71.5%
<b>TWOC</b>	162	81	- 50.0%	56	- 30.9%
<b>TFMV</b>	124	110	- 11.3 %	32	- 70.9%
<b>Violence</b>	48	41	- 14.6%	32	-21.9%

**Table 3 - % of crime for the Bestwood beat to the Division**

	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>
<b>Total crime</b>	22.8%	25.2%	16.2%
<b>Burg house</b>	26.1%	30.3%	17.1 %
<b>TWOC</b>	24.3%	21.2.%	16.8%
<b>TFMV</b>	18.9%	21.9.%	7.3%
<b>Violence</b>	25.1 %	26.1 %	22.5 %



## ***CONTACT DETAILS***

**Project contact person:**

*Alan BUTLER*

**Position:**

*Chief inspector*

**Address:**

*Nottinghamshire Police  
Division HQ  
Police Station  
Great Central Road  
Mansfield  
Notts NG 18 2HQ*

**Telephone no.**

*01623 483011 (direct line)*

**Fax no.**

*01623 483004.*