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THE TILLEY AWARD 2001

**ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT
CATEGORY**

ROTHERHAM EAST: COMMUNITY SAFETY & PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING DEPARTMENT

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The Rotherham East: *Community Safety and Problem Oriented Policing Department.*

SUMMARY

The District Command team of the Rotherham East Police Area in South Yorkshire recognised that resources were not being put to best use and that the method of Policing was almost entirely reactive.

The concept of Problem Oriented Policing was identified as potentially an effective way forward in dealing with problems across the District, which could reduce the demand for reactive Policing and at the same time have a significant impact upon Community Relations.

A new department was established, the '*Community Safety and Problem Oriented Policing Department*'. This was a combination of the Community Constables and the specialist Community Safety officers, which was intended to provide a broad range of skills and abilities in order to combat problems in the District. In addition, the links with the Community and other agencies were seen as essential ingredients to any success.

The management team for this new department was one Inspector and two Sergeants who were given the task of implementing Problem Oriented Policing in the District.

Their first task was to develop a system for processing identified problems. They relied heavily upon the Police Research Group Publications, '*Brit Pop* and '*Brit Pop 2*.

They identified the essential ingredients of Problem Oriented Policing and a basic framework was developed around the use of the '*SARA*' process.

It was recognised from the outset that it was vital for the process to be intelligence led and that meaningful analysis was required, before, during and on completion of projects. To this end the services of the District Crime analyst were employed and remain an integral part of the process.

A District Policy was put into effect, and all of the staff employed across the District was made aware of the move to Problem Oriented Policing.

A total of 66 projects have been processed during the first 12 months.

The impact upon the District has been tremendous. The worth of Problem Oriented Policing was clearly shown in the way that the high profile repeat incident hot spots were targeted and dealt with. Thereby reducing the need for officers on the reactive duty groups to continue to attend.

The problem solving approach to our way of working has been widely recognised as being effective combining with our multi agency, partnership approach which is encapsulated by the department maxim, **`together we can make a difference'**.

The Rotherham East : Community Safety and Problem Oriented Policing Department

The Rotherham East District is the third largest Policing area covered by the South Yorkshire Police. It has a population of around 139,000 and covers a total area of some 150 square miles.

It comprises of some quite densely populated settlements linked by expanses of rural areas with relatively low populations.

There are around 40,000 incidents requiring Police attention and some 11,500 crimes recorded each year.

The area is Policed by 194 Police officers, 25 special Constables and 35 support staff who are based at four main sites across the District.

The method of Policing the area up to the beginning of 2000 had in the main been reactive and it was recognised that more effort should be devoted to looking at the cause of crime and disorder. Systems were required which could properly identify problems, analyse them and measure the effect of action taken.

Deployment of the community officers across the District linked to the four different sectors was managed locally by the relevant sector Inspector. It was recognised that this was not best use of what is a very valuable resource.

It was decided to re-organise the community officers into one Department combining them with the specialist staff, which comprises the Community Safety Department. This provided a department, which now consisted of the Community Officers, Domestic violence, victim support, child protection, crime reduction, minorities, schools liaison and press officers. This new department was headed by an Inspector and two sergeants and given the name of the Rotherham East Community Safety and Problem Oriented Policing Department.

The brief given the department by the District command team was to develop a problem solving approach to our way of working which would address the District strategic aim, '**To reduce crime and disorder and make the district a safer place for people to live and work.**'

It was also anticipated that by developing an effective problem solving model we would free up reactive duty group staff to allow them to be more pro-active and able to devote more quality time to investigations and other appropriate incidents.

We began by obtaining copies of the Police Research Group publication 'Crime Detection and Prevention Series paper 75. Problem-Oriented Policing Brit POP.' And the Police Research Series Paper 93. Brit POP 2: Problem-Oriented Policing in practice.'

This provided us with a basic framework for developing our system and it was immediately clear to us that it was absolutely necessary for problem solving to work effectively for there to be in place a system which was intelligence led. But that was also able to provide the required analysis to identify problems and allow solutions to be carried out and for further analysis to take place on completion to establish the effectiveness of the action taken.

We developed four separate pro-formas (Appendices 1 to 4) for use by District staff to act as a guide to the problem solving process. They are:

1. Community Problem Form 1 - This is used by officers on the front line to identify a problem and for them to record basic information to evidence it.
2. Community Problem Form 2 - This is the analysis form and includes the Problem Analysis Triangle.' (PAT). Includes the reports from the Crime Analyst.
3. Community Problem Form 3 - Is the response. Normally takes the form of a POP project or operational order.
4. Community Problem Form 4 - This is the assessment of the action taken and updated analysis from the Crime Analyst.

The whole system is underpinned by the use of the 'S A R A' Process.

- SCANNING:** Spotting problems using knowledge, basic data and electronic maps.
- ANALYSIS :** Using hunches and 'IT' to dig deeper into problems', characteristics and causes.
- RESPONSE:** Working with the community, where necessary and if possible, to devise a solution.
- ASSESSMENT:** Looking back to see if the solution worked and what lessons can be learned.

The work of the District Intelligence Department was clearly going to be a crucial element in the process and in particular the crime analyst. There was a willingness on all sides to try this new approach and the services of the analyst were made available for this process.

The Crime analyst uses data from a number of different recording systems in order to obtain as full a picture as possible about the particular problem.

These consist of our 'Comrad', Command and Control system, on which all reported incidents are logged. The 'Crime Management System' on which all recorded crimes are logged and the Operational Intelligence System, to provide details of suspects.

The analyst can prepare an easily understood analysis report, (Appendix 5).

Similarly once an action has been completed the analyst will complete further analysis and prepare a report which will detail the effect we have had upon the problem.(Appendix 6)

A district policy was created outlining the aims of the department and the objective for the problem solving approach to our way of working, (Appendix 7). The district and department staff was made aware of this and what was expected of them.

It was intended that the Community officers would be at the forefront of our problem solving approach as it clearly linked into working with communities and other agencies to try to address the problems that are being experienced locally.

There are a total of fourteen community officers across the District, having direct responsibility for identified areas and communities. It was decided from the start that these would be used as a team where necessary and appropriate. This would mean that they could be required to work in other parts of the District as part of a 'Problem Oriented Policing Project' (POP) in support of their colleagues.

In addition the 'specialist' community safety officers were also there to be utilised as appropriate. The press officer in particular was seen as an important post in order to give publicity both internally and externally regarding what has been achieved.

We introduced a system for the recording of forms received and an acknowledgement slip (Appendix 8) to be sent to the officer submitting the form along with a filing system to administer the process.

The whole process was then linked into our District Intelligence tasking and Co-ordinating meetings, which are held on a weekly basis. The function of these meetings is to identify the prevailing problems in the area and to agree resources in targeting those problems. Partners are also updated on the progress of action taken in respect of ongoing projects.

We devised a flow chart for the District Problem Solving process, circulated this to all staff and displayed it on notice boards. (Appendix 9)

So with the system in place we began our journey into Problem solving Policing.

OPERATION GECKO

Scanning: One of the first projects targeted the problem of youth nuisance in the Maltby area. Maltby is a small township of around 21,000 residents. There are few facilities locally for young people and consequently the reports of youth nuisance and associated crime were consistently high.

The problem was identified and recorded on the 'POP1' form. This was received and logged. The 'POP 2' form was completed and as a part of this process the Crime analyst prepared his report.

Analysis: This showed that between 1.10.99 and 29.2.00 there had been 258 complaints of youth nuisance recorded, and that the trend was increasing. Clearly action was needed to address this problem, the analysis indicated the 'hotspot' location, which tended to cluster around the local comprehensive school.

We decided that in response to this problem our approach would be one of looking at the short, medium and long term. This is recorded on the 'POP 3' response form.

The project was given the name, 'Operation Gecko'.

Response: In the short term it was clear that it was necessary to take some quick and effective action to bring the situation under control. Therefore the first part of our response was to carry out covert observations in the area to identify the ringleaders and those who were active in committing offences. This was carried out over a four-day period and was quickly followed by **phase** two, a high profile uniform operation targeting the known offenders and identified hot spots for the incidents.

We also linked in the press officer who after contact with the local press asked if a reporter could accompany the officers during the phase two section of the response. Full access was given to the press who attended briefings and accompanied officers as arrests were made. The resulting article (Appendix 10) sent out a positive message to the residents of Maltby and a warning to those who were involved in the offending.

As part of the medium term approach we linked up with the local Comprehensive school and put together a package, on the subject of good citizenship, for our schools liaison officer and the local community officer to deliver to targeted groups within the school. This has become an ongoing piece of work, which has been welcomed by the school.

We also targeted the local youth club and worked closely with the youth workers to deliver the same information.

Both these actions have assisted in developing and strengthening our working relationships with the school and youth workers, which has been of great benefit in many other spheres of our work.

Also in an effort to address the issue of facilities for young people we were instrumental in raising funds for a youth shelter in the area. This was constructed in partnership with the local Youth Club and Probation Service and provided somewhere for young people to gather as an alternative to street corners, where they often became a nuisance to residents.

Looking at long-term measures we linked in with the community and other local action groups to look at further provisions for young people in the area. This included a drop in cafe, all weather basketball/football court and further shelters.

As part of the Rotherham Borough Crime and Disorder Strategy, we are a partner on the 'Young People and Crime task group'. Through this body we learned of a programme initiated by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales which was called the 'Youth Inclusion Programme', (YIP). This made funding available to areas which in general were deprived and suffered high levels of crime, truancy and youth nuisance in the target group of young people aged 13 — 16 years. There was a figure of some £75,000 available over the first two years with the possibility of further funding depending upon the meeting of targets.

Through our involvement and knowledge of Maltby we felt that this would be an ideal area in which to carry this project. We suggested this to the task group supported by the relevant crime and youth nuisance statistics and it was agreed that this would be the pilot area in Rotherham for the project. This we felt would compliment the action we were already taking in the area and assist in particular with the longer-term goals for youth provision and thereby reduce the youth nuisance problem.

A major part of this project is the involvement of members of the community and other local agencies/action groups, including Police, on the Neighbourhood Steering Group. It is this group which identifies activities for the young people in order to divert them away from involvement with crime and disorder. This group has made steady progress.

Through our strong links with the community in Maltby we were able to introduce the Youth Offending team manager who was in charge of the 'YIP' project to the association of twelve residents groups who agreed to form a partnership and were the basis of the Neighbourhood Steering Group.

Also as part of our commitment to try to address the youth nuisance problem we have through the local Community Constable developed a number of partnerships and involvement with local schemes. Some examples of this are as follows:

1. Maltby Linx — Lunch Club. This was set up to provide activities for students from the Comprehensive School during lunch times. This included a structured programme aimed at delivering relevant information to the young people, about topics such as drugs and alcohol **abuse**.
2. Maltby Outside-In. This was a local group of volunteers with the aim of working with young people of the area and trying to provide activities for them.
3. Detached Youth Workers. We work closely with the detached youth workers and they will target the identified hot spots to work with the young people.
4. Maltby Amateur Boxing Club. This was seen as another alternative activity, which was attractive to some of the young people.

We have been able to supply some limited funding from our own 'partnership' budget for the above schemes which has assisted in maintaining and extending provision for the young people of the area.

In addition looking at the most vulnerable people in Maltby, the elderly, we utilised a local project known as Keepsafe, which provides target hardening for residential properties. Linked to this was improved streetlighting for identified areas as a crime reduction measure.

We have continued to monitor the numbers of incidents each month to establish the trend and to take necessary action. The carrying out of linked high profile Policing operations when required reinforced this.

Assessment: This initial activity resulted in a total of twenty-one offenders being dealt with for a variety of offences which in the main consisted of public order, criminal damage and assault.

There was an assessment carried out after the initial action had been completed and this showed an immediate reduction of 41% in incidents reported to the Police. This included a costing of the Policing operation as detailed on the Assessment form, 'POP 4'. The result was a continued reduction in the number of incidents from a high of seventy-five incidents during February down to twenty-nine in September.

We have now reached the position in March 2001 where, mainly due to funding from the Youth Inclusion Programme, some of the longer-term goals are about to be realised. The funding for an all weather football/basketball court and an improved shelter in place of the original one has been realised. These should be in place within the next two months.

In addition there is to be a further shelter in another part of the area along with provision for BMX riders. This has been driven by a local action group formed from the community and supported by the Police and financed by the Local Authority. This is particularly relevant, as one of the more recent complaints has been in relation to the use of a local supermarket car park as a BMX track. This once again would assist in reducing this problem by providing a relevant facility for young people.

From this operation we learned that it was absolutely necessary to be able to continue to monitor the situation and respond as and when required whilst working towards the longer-term goals at the same time. Equally the involvement of the community and other agencies was seen as essential ingredients to trying to provide different answers to the same problem.

The most important lesson though is probably that there are no quick fixes. We have been targeting this particular problem for 12 months now and though we can say the situation has improved. There has to be a focus on the longer-term aims, which will, it is hoped, have a substantial impact upon the problem.

Equally important though is being aware of what is happening outside our own organisation, in respect of other, agencies and being able to tap in to these where appropriate. This is essential were you are looking for outside funding as clearly evidenced in our involvement with the Youth Inclusion Programme. We feel the action taken in Maltby typifies our way of approaching problem solving.

Estates Projects

We were already progressing along the road of having 'estate projects' on some of our most difficult areas and it was clear that introducing problem solving into these would be of great benefit. These estate projects consisted of a truly multi agency approach, community led, with all parties working together as equal partners in trying to improve the area in question.

There are currently three such projects in the District. These are at Maltby, Parkgate and Dalton.

Each of them operates on a similar basis. There are regular monthly meetings where the 'management' teams get together. These teams comprise of a mix of representatives from the Community, Local Authority, Private Housing Association officers, Landlords, Community Development workers, Area Assembly officers, local councillors and Police.

The ethos is very simple and is really one of, 'improving the area', in all aspects.

We have found that one of the biggest impacts is taking action in respect of environmental issues. We were already plainly aware that crime and disorder was, in general, more prevalent on 'run down' estates.

In one of the areas for example, we had experienced large numbers of arsons taking place in the many derelict and unoccupied houses on the estate. This was, more often than not, followed by attacks upon Fire and Police Services when they attended the incidents. Local youths would be concealed behind large overgrown hedges and throw missiles consisting of debris from the derelict houses, at the officers. In addition the streetlights were either broken or not working.

This led to an area where a large minority of the residents felt they were free to commit crime and that no one was concerned about what they were doing.

The remaining majority of law-abiding residents felt intimidated and powerless to prevent the decay of their estate.

The first actions of the estate partnership team were to address the environmental issues. The derelict houses were demolished. The unoccupied ones made secure. Overgrown hedges cut down. Streetlights repaired. The Streets were cleaned and rubbish removed from the area. This approach is based on the 'broken windows' theory of Wilson and Kelling' from the United States.

¹ *Broken Windows Theory-- Wilson & Kelling USA 1982*

This had an immediate impact **upon** the area and sent a positive message to the residents. Encouraging the law-abiding majority to become more involved with the management of their estate and deterring the minority offenders.

Over a period of time the crime and disorder on that estate have reduced significantly. Arsons are thing of the past as are the repeat incidents of public disorder. Overall the area has improved substantially.

The same approach has worked equally well in the other areas and because of their success we have had requests from other communities to take part in the process.

We are currently in the early stages of setting up another three such projects, which we are pleased to report, have been at the request of the local communities. This is very encouraging as it supports the initiative and indicates that it is what the people want as a way of trying to improve their areas.

The basic aim of this project is to empower the local communities, provide them with the necessary support to deal with problems and together as a team to improve the quality of life for all concerned.

HOW THE SYSTEM HAS DEVELOPED

The system, which we have developed, processed a total of fifty suggested projects for problem solving Policing during 2000. During 2001 we have up to the end of March processed some sixteen projects.

We have ensured that we adopt quite a rigorous approach to deciding whether a suggestion becomes a project. We base this upon analysis and intelligence and where this does not support a significant problem then the matter is returned to the officer who put it forward, with the information attached and reasoning why the decision was made.

The Problem solving approach has been very widely embraced by staff across the District. The submission of the 'POP 1' forms has been at a consistently good level and is a clear indication that officers on the ground have a belief in it.

The main problem now, some twelve months along the road, that we are in a position where we are the victims of our own success in that we do not have sufficient staff and resources to be able to deal with the numbers of problems submitted to us.

This is a question for senior management to try to address. The power to allocate more resources to us lies in their hands. The Problem solving, (Problem Oriented Policing), approach works. The results have been excellent and we, as a Department, are fully committed to progressing it.

We see the future being one where the department is increased, which will in turn reduce the problems in the area and similarly reduce the demand upon the

reactive duty groups. This will in turn release further staff for Community Problem Solving.

The concept is simple. Community Constables are located in the Community, working together with the public and other agencies. They address and prioritise local problems within the framework we have devised. It is a team effort where we are all working together to make a difference.

We believe that this way of working is delivering a high quality service that reduces crime and disorder and raises confidence in our communities.

Our maxim is, "**together we can make a difference**".
