

TILLEY Award 2003

Alcohol+Youths +Damage=Signal Crime

Category

Crime and Disorder reduction.

Surrey Police

Endorsing Chief Officer

Name: Peter Fulton

Position: Borough Inspector

Address: Woking Police Station , Station Approach Woking

Telephone Numbers : 01483 655103 mob. 07967 988305

Email address: 2036@surrey.police.uk

Alcohol + Youths + damage ~ Signal Crime

Force: Surrey Police

Contact: Inspector Peter Fulton 01483655103

Nature of the Problem

West Byfleet is a fairly typical village situated within the Borough of Woking, Surrey. In early 2002 it was recognised that response demand, crime and disorder had increased disproportionately in the area. This recognition stemmed from a combination of factors, not least incident / crime scanning, concern expressed by local residents and information obtained from Local Authority Officers & Elected Members.

Evidence Used to Define the Problem

A particular problem was identified with youths gathering at specific locations resulting in regular police attendance. On police arrival the youths would disperse only to either relocate or return once the officers had left. Those who remained were usually affable and polite, some had clearly consumed alcohol yet evidence of substantive offences was rarely apparent at the time. However the areas frequented by these youths corresponded with increased reports of criminal damage, graffiti, damage to fences, walls and vehicles. This was accompanied by increased reports of anti-social behaviour. Residents concern was corroborated by crime pattern analysis, resulting in a concerted partnership response involving Police, Residents, Local and County Councils.

The Response to the Problem

It was clear from the outset that conventional policing methods were not geared towards tackling such sporadic and spontaneous incidents. Thus a more holistic strategy was required that addressed immediate concerns yet facilitated a more permanent resolution in the longer term. Perhaps most productive was the dialogue that this 'shared' problem initiated between the interested parties, indeed the realisation that this was not simply a 'Police' problem was extremely refreshing.

Short term Strategy

Analysis indicated that the period for these problems peaked on a Friday and Saturday evening. Operation 'Lurcher' was therefore launched.

This operation involved Special Constables and regular officers working together. A spotter was used in plain clothes to monitor groups of youths and where anti social behaviour or criminal acts were seen this officer would call on uniformed colleagues to attend. This approach prevented the police dealing with the innocent groups of youths.

Long term Strategy

The longer-term strategy concentrated on achieving a Sect 12 Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 order to ban the consumption of alcohol in designated public places. The provision of CCTV in the area and the effective management of the Off Licence premises in conjunction with the County Trading Standards Department. Police were also keen to demonstrate to the local residents their commitment to problem solving activity.

Impact of Response

Crime and Disorder in the area has been significantly reduced. In the first three months of 2002 there were 47 reports of criminal damage in the West Byfleet area compared with only 7 for the same period during 2003. The volumes of incidents reported to statutory agencies have also declined, as, indeed, have calls for service for repairs and restitution resultant from incidents of damage and disorder. In addition the relationship between the Police and local community is increasingly strong, the advent of a shared problem solving approach providing a solid foundation for constructive dialogue and concerted action.

Alcohol + Youths + damage = Signal Crime

The priorities reflected in Ministerial Priorities do not always accord with the needs of smaller communities, particularly those in an affluent county like Surrey. Such drivers often focus on National issues more relevant to inner city urban environments. Nevertheless the impact of volume crime, albeit relatively minor in nature, cannot be overstated when viewed in the context of a stable, perhaps cosseted community.

Problem Definition

West Byfleet is a village situated on the periphery of Woking a large town in Surrey.

The village has a relatively low level of crime and disorder and is generally thought of as a desirable place to live.

In the months between January and March 2002 a large increase in criminal damage offences was noticed by both the local Beat officer and the Crime Analyst. (Annex A crime statistics)

This increase in criminal damage was directly correlated to an increase of calls by members of the public to attend the area to respond to anti social behaviour and in particular groups of 'youths,' The analytical information showed clearly that the criminal damage was being committed on Friday and Saturday evenings. The time parameters for these offences tended to be 1900-0900hrs the following day due to the fact that often the damage would not be noticed until the following morning and then reported to the police. When this analytical information was compared to the requests for police to attend to deal with anti social behaviour the time frame for these calls was reduced further to 2000-0200hrs on a Friday and Saturday evening.

When all of the data was mapped the analysis showed that there were four main locations in the village that required targeting between the hours of 2000-0200hrs. The intelligence was limited on who the youths causing the problems were and this was one of the main areas to be focused on in solving the problem.

The reality of increasing crime undoubtedly contributed to an increasing fear of crime. Although difficult to measure indicators of this were the physical disorder caused by the damage, graffiti and litter left at the locations together with the Social disorder caused by the youth where they exhibited anti social behaviour. Through a culmination of physical and social disorder and associated problems, incidents of criminal damage and anti social behaviour became what can be termed as 'Signal Crimes'. It was this feeling amongst local residents that became so debilitating. Their view of their environs became increasingly distorted to a point where they clearly believed it was irrevocable. These concerns manifested themselves in a number of ways, not least vociferous outbursts at public meetings and increasing pressure upon Police and Local Authority Officers and Members to take action

This area therefore became a Police priority.

The Response to the Problem

Given the immediacy of the problem it was decided to implement a two-tier strategy designed at solving the problem. A **short-term strategy** and a **long-term strategy** were therefore agreed as follows

Short-term strategy

- To tackle the immediate issues of behaviour and offending
- To identify the offenders and ascertain why they were drawn to the particular area.
- To prevent and detect crime
- To Reassure the Public
- To encourage prompt reporting of any incidents to ensure we were well informed of activity.
- To identify the core issues for of this problem and tackle therefore the root of the problem in the longer term.

To tackle the immediate issues of behaviour and offending.

In order to tackle the immediate issues of behaviour and offending Operation 'Lurcher' was written. This was an operational order, which detailed what the police response would be and gave officers strict instructions on how to carry out patrol.

Of particular note was the deployment strategy for this operation. It was recognised that not all young people in the area were causing these problems and so as not to alienate the entire youth population who lived or visited the area a mixture of plain clothed and uniformed officers were deployed. The plain clothed officer would attend the 'hot spot' areas and monitor the activity. If this activity was deemed anti social they would call on their uniform colleagues to attend and take the appropriate action. The plain clothed officer could therefore pin point who was exhibiting anti social behaviour, consuming alcohol underage or who had committed a criminal offence.

Legislation which was to be specifically utilised to disrupt activity included

1. The Confiscation of Alcohol (Young Persons) Act 1997
2. Sec7(3) The Children's and Young Persons Act1933 (Seizure of Cigarettes and Tobacco)
3. Public Nuisance- Common Law
4. Drunk In A Highway or other Public Place Sect 12 Licensing Act 1872
5. Drunk and Disorderly in a Public Place Sect 91(1) Criminal Justices Act 1967

To identify the offenders and ascertain why they were drawn to the particular area.

The intelligence summary highlighted the lack of information that we did not have a good picture about who the youths were, specifically those who were offending. A spreadsheet (**annex b**) was therefore created to gather details of who was spoken to by police, in what location and what they were doing. Officers were also requested to complete 'youth stop check forms' to collate these details and pass back to the local Beat officer to enable the spreadsheet to be updated. The officers were also tasked to ascertain why the youths were in the area to establish any links. If in possession of alcohol they were questioned as to its source i.e. where it was purchased from. It was established that despite there being good provision for youth clubs, cinemas, leisure centres the youths were not interested in attending these.

To prevent and detect crime

In order to impact upon the young people who were in these problem areas Police undertook a letter writing strategy linked to the database. The youths were informed that their details were being recorded and that if spoken to again in these areas a letter may be sent to their parents. This letter informed them that, *'Their son or daughter had been spoken to by police in a specific area at a time when there were several incidents of crime and disorder reported to police.'* It also included the local officers contact details should they wish clarification. This activity encouraged parents to be more proactive about where their sons or daughters were and was on the whole very positively received. Where persons were stopped with alcohol they were dealt with using the appropriate legislation always involving an appropriate adult and all criminal offences were dealt with in the usual manner, it was apparent that the youths were **bringing** the alcohol to the area and not purchasing it in local Off Licence's. This was something that was targeted in the long-term strategy.

To Reassure the Public

Links were made at an early stage with local Councillors and indeed the Borough Council to ensure that both the Police and Council had a combined approach to this problem. Where possible Police informed the public or elected members of the good work in order for them to pass this on to the local residents. Effective use of the media was also used with any successes passed to them for inclusion. The increased use of uniformed patrol officers on foot including Special Constables proved to be a valuable tactic in ensuring the public could see an officer dealing with the issues that concerned them. The local beat Officer was also heavily involved in meeting with the public and discussing their concerns.

To encourage prompt reporting of any incidents to ensure we were well informed of activity.

In order to have an accurate picture of activity prompt reporting of incidents was required. At local meetings including Police Community Partnership Meetings this message was emphasised to the public. Closer links were also developed with the Borough Council ensuring that any graffiti removal or repair to council property was reported as a crime and priority given to clearing up and damage or graffiti in the area.

This short-term strategy was effective in reducing crime and disorder however was not a sustainable way of dealing with the problems. Although it had drastically reduced the problems in a cost-effective manner using little overtime, Special Constables and Local officers were effectively 'policing (the problem)' not in fact solving it. The database had grown extensively and several of the youths had been stopped more than once and their parents received letters or visits. This action therefore assisted in informing the public what Police were doing and ensuring that where possible parents were passing on advice to their young adults.

To identify the core issues of this problem and tackle the root of the problem in the longer-term.

From all of the activity of Operation 'Lurcher' it became clear through seizures of alcohol and interaction with the youth that the majority of the damage was caused as a result of the youths being drunk and in high spirits. Often one of them would cause damage and as a result of 'peer' pressure others would follow suit with drastic results for the community. The anti social behaviour was also attributed mainly to drinking of alcohol. As the youths became more intoxicated so they became more abusive to members of the public including other groups of youths who were en-route to the train station or from the station en-route home. Police also established that the youths comprised both local residents in the village and others who had travelled to the area by train to meet up with their friends. The majority of the alcohol had been brought from the home or purchased out of the area by the youths. These findings therefore assisted in forming a large part of the long-term strategy.

Long-term strategy

- To ensure that officers who attended the area had sufficient legislation to tackle the core issues of this problem.
- To prevent and detect crime
- To educate on a Borough wide basis local Off Licence's ensuring they did not sell alcohol to underage youths.
- To Reassure the Public demonstrating a long term commitment where needed to solving local problems
- To put in place a monitoring process to ensure that should the problem arise again Police would be able to intervene effectively and quickly therefore minimising the increase in crime and disorder to the community.
- To ensure that the learning could be transferred to any location throughout the borough to address similar problems.

To ensure that officers who attended the area had sufficient legislation to tackle the core issues of this problem.

As identified by the short-term measures the use of appropriate legislation to deal with offences was of paramount importance during this problem solving approach. The legislation used during the short-term measures and contained within Operation 'Lurcher' was reactive legislation and designed so that when officers are confronted with offences or behaviour they therefore utilise relevant legislation to enable them to deal with the problems. This approach was fine for the short-term strategy of reducing the immediate impact and did in fact send a strong message to the perpetrators. In the longer-term strategy it was clear that preventative legislation was what was required. This would prevent the acts and give a power to police if this legislation was ignored.

Analysis and intelligence indicated where the problems were being caused and on what day and time. The actual identification of individuals was not as defined. Police had stopped over one hundred youths in the area. It was clear that in order to **have** an effective impact in the long term the most appropriate legislation would be to utilise the relatively new powers under Section 12 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001. The police powers conferred under this act are preventative. When looking at the legislation used to deal with the problem in the short-term strategy it was clear that this legislation fitted well and was intended to deal with '*Disorder and public nuisance arising from alcohol consumption in a designated public place.*' In order to apply for an order it was necessary to show that there were incidents related to alcohol consumption in public places which were attributed to or causing acts of disorder, disruption or public nuisance. Clearly the evidence gathered was more than suitable for this purpose.

As the order is made by the local authority Police communicated closely with Woking Borough Council. The council were well aware of the issues in the local area concerning and had undertaken various actions during the short-term strategy.

In order to take this forward Police provided aU of the crime statistics and background on what had occurred in the area and also drew up maps of the areas proposed to be designated under the act. The Borough Council completed all of the consultation and their legal department drafted the order. In deciding on areas to be designated special attention was paid to possible 'displacement' caused to other areas where the order would not cover. The order will be in place in the very near future. Woking Borough Council have been working directly with the Home Office in the design of the signs and once these are agreed and put up in the area the order will be in force. A copy of the suggested format is at **annex C**.

To prevent and detect crime

In order to successfully prosecute those youths who persist in causing crime and disorder the quality of evidence is of paramount importance. The prevention of offences is also desirable to ensure that people feel safe and the fear of crime is reduced. West Byfleet does not have a fixed CCTV system. This is an area that the Borough Council are exploring however the system that has been designed for the area is proving cost prohibitive. In order to improve visibility and gather evidence the Police, in partnership, with Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council decided to implement a project to fit Close Circuit Television into a Police Support unit Carrier. This vehicle was then marked up in high visibility colours with the fact it was a CCTV vehicle written across the rear. The vehicle is fitted with three cameras and was launched in the local press. It can be deployed anywhere in the Borough however a Standard Operating Policy has been written to ensure that any deployment is compliant with human rights legislation and that the vehicle is deployed on a needs basis to tackle specific problems of crime and disorder. Restorative justice is a further area that is being developed in line with this project. Several of the offences of damaged property belonged to the Borough Council and County Council. These crimes are often seen as victimless and therefore less important. Rather than simply deal with this in the normal manner it is intended to show CCTV footage this to the youth who caused the damage and their guardian, where applicable, in order to heighten the impact that this offence has. This will ensure that both the youth and their guardian are aware of the impact that the damage can have and to discuss the reasons why. This will have a greater effect than simply a reprimand or a final warning would have. (Annex d is a picture of the vehicle)

To educate on a Borough wide basis local Off Licence's ensuring they do not sell alcohol to underage youths.

The purchase of alcohol by young persons undoubtedly had an effect on crime and disorder in this instance. Although intelligence suggested it was not the local West Byfleet Off Licences where the youths were purchasing their alcohol undoubtedly several premises within the borough were supplying alcohol. We therefore contacted Trading Standards and they agreed to run a trial in part of Woking borough to 'test purchase' alcohol using an underage youth in controlled circumstances. This operation was supported by police and six out of six premises visited sold alcohol without even questioning the youth. Clearly a problem was identified here. Once more rather than rely on prosecution Police decided to supplement this with a prevention strategy. The Woking Crime and Disorder Partnership (CDRP) comprising Police, Borough Council and County Council allocated £3 000 to trading standards. With this money they undertook to visit 43 Off Licence premises and give education on the sale of alcohol, cigarettes and lighter fuel to the licensee's. Once they had rolled out their programme their intention is to complete some further test purchase operations. The operations preventative side is still ongoing however feedback has been positive from both the local residents, who are aware of this work from community meetings, press exposure and the actual licensee's.

To Reassure the Public through showing a long term commitment where needed to solving local problems

With the signs due to go up for the designated places order and positive public meetings where the reduction in crime and disorder in the area has been evident the public are pleased with the progress. The local Beat officer has now been supplemented with a 'Police Community Support Officer' (PCSO) to assist in the work on the area. The remit of the PCSO is to carry out 'Patrol with a Purpose.' They target specific problem areas and give reassurance to the local community as well as problem solving local issues with the Beat Officer and other partners. High profile media launch of the CCTV vehicle and when fully implemented the Drinking in Designated Places Order will further reassure the public of our commitment.

To put in place a monitoring process to ensure that should the problem arise again we are able to deal effectively and quickly therefore minimising the increase in crime and disorder to the community.

Through identification at an early stage of crime trends or patterns it is now possible to ensure early interventions are made in potential problem areas. Crime statistics are now available on a Weekly basis showing the rise or fall in particular aspects of crime and disorder. On a monthly basis 'Ward' based data, which shows the level of offending throughout the Borough. Through the crime statistics and a greater more 'localised' team comprising the Beat officer, Police Community Support Officer and the Beat officers Line manager trends are now identified from the public at a much earlier stage.

Police are currently working with partners at the borough Council to develop a database for reassurance issues. This database will record physical disorder issues such as graffiti, criminal damage, extensive litter and abandoned vehicles. The council and **will** enter these onto the database according to the problem type and location. This information will then be passed to police for mapping against crime and disorder that has been reported to the police. A reassurance analyst employed by the police will then overlay all of the information onto a geographic mapping system. This map will then produce 'reassurance hot spots' or areas where incidents of crime and disorder are heightened. The partner agencies will then agree a strategy to deal with the area or individuals causing problems within it. This system when up and running will have a dramatic effect on how we work making us even more intelligence led in our patrol and policing activity.

To ensure that the learning and operation is able to be implemented in any location throughout the borough to address similar problems.

In most towns up and down the country there are similar problems with youths gathering and causing a nuisance. Often the causes of these problems are different however the means to **successfully** prevent, reduce and detect crime have common threads throughout. The CCTV vehicle is a 'tool' that can be used throughout the Borough and is highly impactive. The spreadsheet that has been created has now been expanded to include other areas within the borough to gather intelligence on the youth who are causing problems and assist in the development of problem solving should the need arise. Operation 'Lurcher' is a flexible operational order that can be adapted to work in any location. This report will also serve as comprehensive outline of good practice that can be used to solve problems using partners and police resources.

Evaluation

The work outlined above represents 12 months of activity. The majority of actions mentioned are now in place, or will be in the immediate future. We were initially faced with a problem of crime and disorder which gave increased demand to police through reports of damage and anti social behaviour.

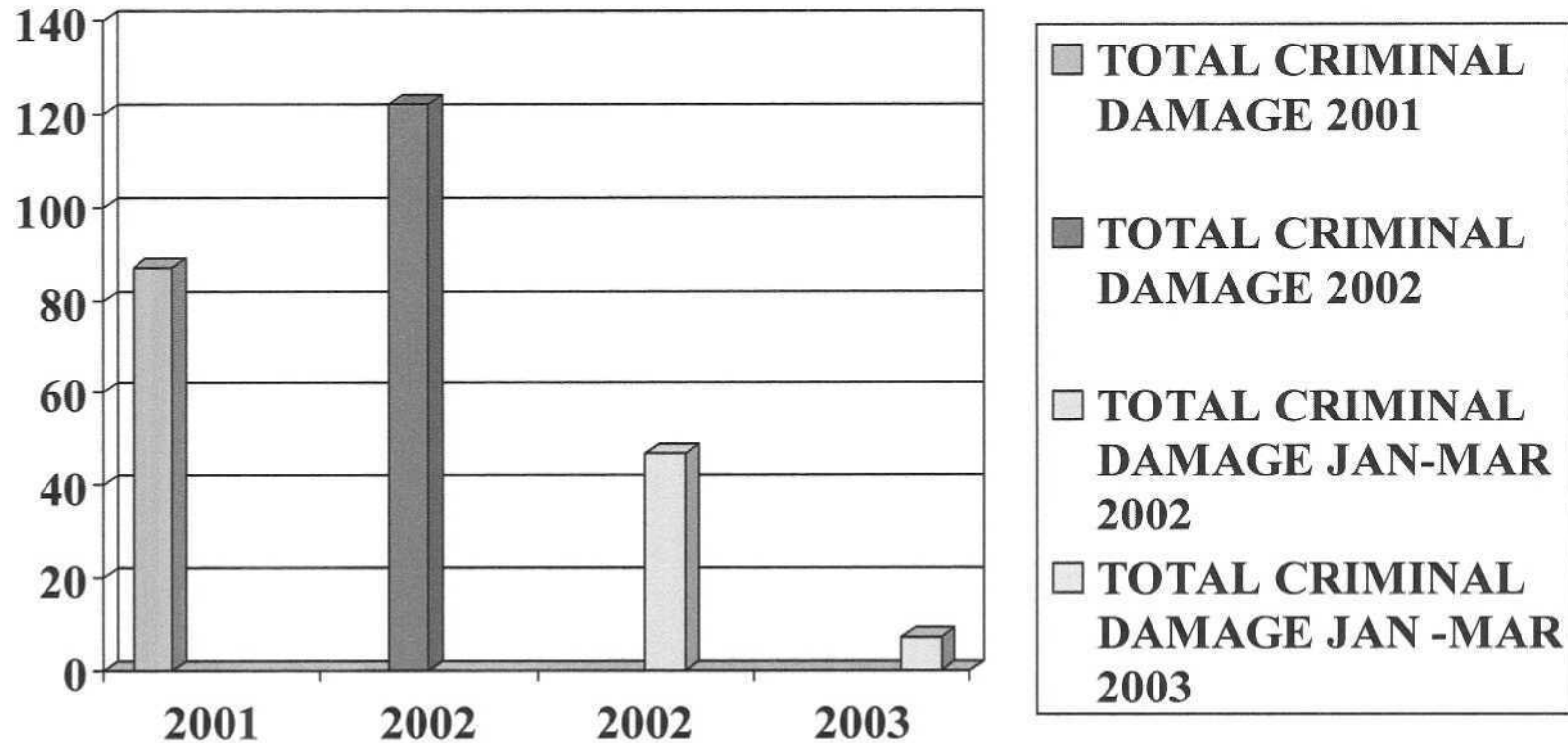
The success of the problem solving activity can therefore be summarised as follows

- Crime in the area is now down to acceptable levels.
- New legislation has been introduced to prevent the problem happening in the future together with knowledge gathered to implement further drinking orders quickly elsewhere within the Borough area.
- New technology has been invested in to ensure we are able to deploy to problems such as this and use a valuable tool against people who commit crime and disorder.
- The rationale of the problem solving activity **has** been documented.

Annex A

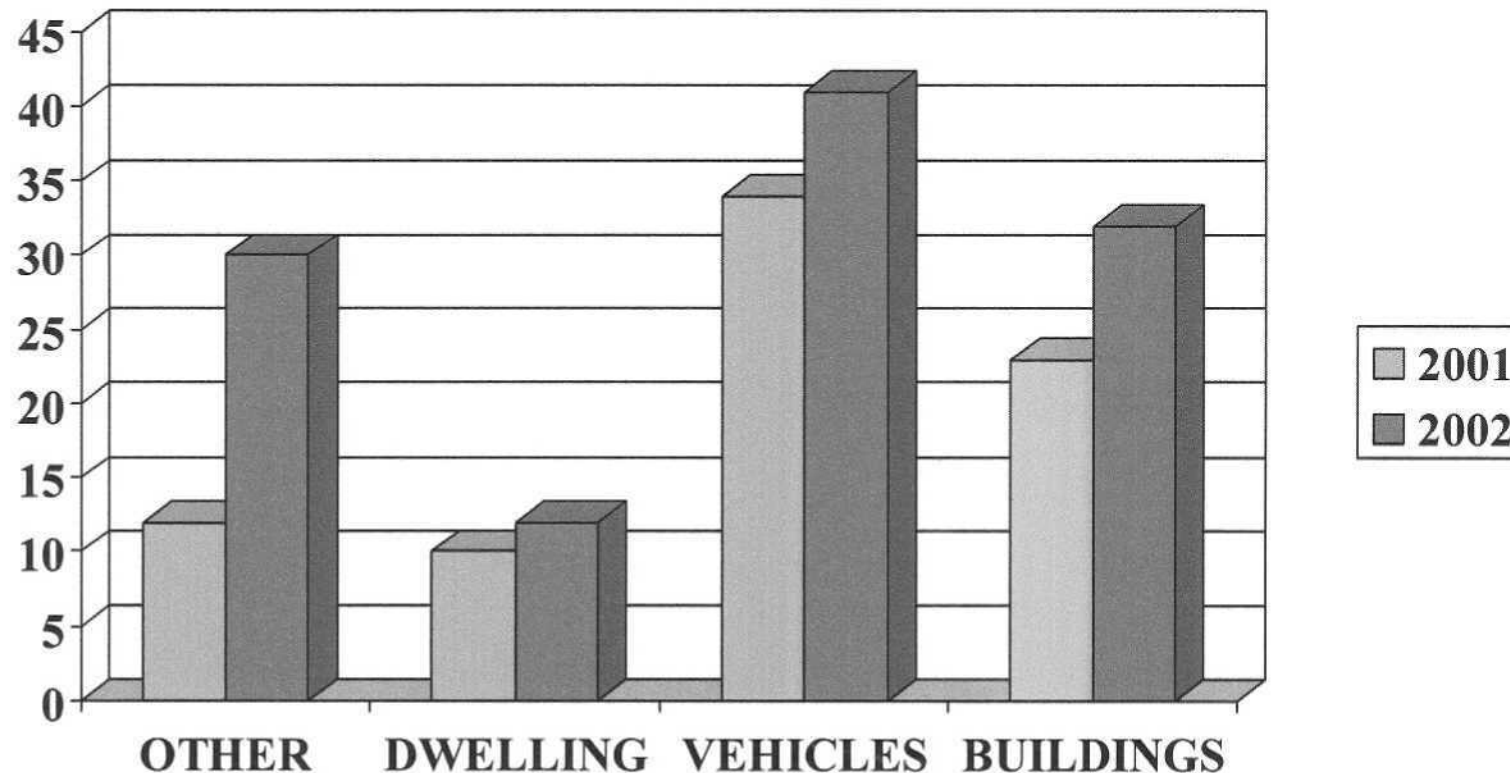
Crime Statistics

Total Criminal Damage Rate West Byfleet



In 2001 -2002 there was a clear increase in offences of criminal damage. A large proportion of offences that led to an increase in 2002 resulted in the interventions to reduce crime. The same time period for 2002- 2003 shows a large reduction of offences of criminal damage in 2003.

Break Down of Offences of Criminal Damage West Byfleet 2001-2002



Annex B

Excerpt from Spreadsheet for youths.

Area URN	Surname	Christian Name	Age	House No.
	1st 2nd 3rd			
DWK/02/005	Tiller	Nick	15	71
DWK/02/006	McDonald	James	15	9
DWK/02/007	Freeman	Matt	16	7
DWK/02/008	Flynn	Nick	16	11
DWK/02/009	Groom	Stas	17	15
DWK/02/010	Carmichael	Gareth	16	17
DWK/02/011	Green	Paul	15	Squirrells Leap
DWK/02/012	McDermott	Liam	16	27
DWK/02/013	Gill	Aman	15	51a
DWK/02/014	Jacques	Charles	15	Sampford
DWK/02/015	Hopper	Matt	15	12
DWK/02/016	Brant	Craig	15	43
DWK/02/064	Cullum	Timothy	17	April Cottage
DWK/02/065	Sanders	Brett	17	1 Horsell Dene
DWK/02/089	Jacques	Charles	15	Sampford
DWK/02/099	Shoosmith	Annalise	14	35
DWK/02/100	Wicks	Danielle	7	27
DWK/02/101	Wicks	Kari	15	27
DWK/02/102	Payne	Jade	15	36
DWK/02/103	Jacques	Charles	15	Sampford
DWK/02/104	Cozens	Lucinda	15	64
DWK/02/105	Knighton	Kenora	15	12
DWK/02/106	Knight	Sian	16	94
DWK/02/110	Bunce	Andrew	16	Brooklands
DWK/02/111	Rutherford	Kevin	17	39
DWK/02/112	McGill	Christina	16	70
DWK/02/066	Lovesey	Tristan	15	5
DWK/02/067	Young	Alexander	15	23a
DWK/02/068	Coker	Gregory	14	6
DWK/02/069	Shoosmith	Annalise	14	35
DWK/02/070	Muttock	Lee	17	79
DWK/02/071	Corrie	Janine	15	47
DWK/02/072	Butler	Samantha		3
DWK/02/033	Gunn	Richard	18	34
DWK/02/034	Breddal	Tom	18	Horning

Road Name	Area	Post Code	Time	Date
Hamilton Avenue	Pyrford	GU22 8RU	21:55	29-Mar-02
Nursery Close	Woodham	KT15 3SS	21:55	29-Mar-02
Sanway Close	Byfleet	KT14 7SP	21:55	29-Mar-02
Wexfenne Gardens	Pyrford	GU22 8TX	21:55	29-Mar-02
Windsor Walk	Weybridge	KT13 9AB	21:55	29-Mar-02
Elveden Close	Pyrford	GU22 8XA	21:55	29-Mar-02
Woodham Park Way	Woodham	KT15 3SD	21:55	29-Mar-02
Weybarton	Byfleet	KT14 7EF	21:55	29-Mar-02
Green Lane	Addlestone	KT15 2TX	22:05	29-Mar-02
Elmstead Road	West Byfleet	KT14 6JR	22:05	29-Mar-02
Cornwall Avenue	Byfleet	KT14 7EX	22:05	29-Mar-02
Selsdon Road	New Haw	KT15 3HP	22:05	29-Mar-02
Tudor Close	Woking	GU21 4PQ	22:10	12-Jul-02
Ridgeway	Horsell	GU21 4OR	22:00	12-Jul-02
Elmstead Road	West Byfleet	KT14 6JR	21:30	10-Aug-02
Oyster Lane	Byfleet	KT14 7HS	20:52	23-Aug-02
The Avenue	New Haw	KT15 3RL	21:10	23-Aug-02
The Avenue	New Haw	KT15 3RL	21:10	23-Aug-02
Birchwood Road	West Byfleet	KT14 6DW	21:10	23-Aug-02
Elmstead Road	West Byfleet	KT14 6JR	21:10	23-Aug-02
Albert Drive	Sheerwater	GU21 5QZ	21:10	23-Aug-02
Henslow Way	Sheerwater	GU21 5RA	21:10	23-Aug-02
St. Michael's Road	Sheerwater	GU21 5PZ	21:10	23-Aug-02
Warren Lane	Pyrford	GU22 8XQ	20:30	24-Aug-02
Newlands Close	Walton	KT12 4PW	20:30	24-Aug-02
Birchwood Road	West Byfleet	KT14 6DP	20:30	24-Aug-02
magdalen Close	Byfleet	KT14 7SS	1:00	23-Jun-02
Sanway Close	Byfleet	KT14 7SP	1:00	23-Jun-02
St Cripins Way	Ottershaw	KT16 0RE	1:00	23-Jun-02
Oyster Lane	Byfleet	KT14 7HS	1:00	23-Jun-02
Rectory Lane	Byfleet	KT14 7LX	1:00	23-Jun-02
Ferney Road	Byfleet	KT14 7BB	1:00	23-Jun-02
Wakefield Close	Byfleet	KT14 7NA	1:00	23-Jun-02
Ambery Drive	Woodham	KT15 3SL	0:44	30-Apr-02
Oak End Way	Woodham	KT15 3DY	0:44	30-Apr-02

Location	Alcohol possess/consumed	Type of Letter	Date Sent
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			10-Sep-02
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station	Possess/Consumed		10-Sep-02
BR Station			10-Sep-02
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			10-Sep-02
BR Station	Consumed		
BR Station	Consumed		
BR Station	Consumed		
BR Station			
BR Station			
BR Station			
Camphill Road	Consumed		
Camphill Road	Consumed		
Camphill Road			
Camphill Road			10-Sep-02
Camphill Road			
Camphill Road			
Camphill Road			
Madeira Road			
Madeira Road			

This is a designated public place



WARNING

**Drunken behaviour is
not permitted in this area**

If a police officer finds you
drinking alcohol in this area
you may be asked to stop.

Maximum fine for refusing to do so:

£500

If you refuse to give up any
intoxicating liquor to a police officer
you may be arrested.



Annex D

