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## **THE TILLEY AWARD 2004 – STOCKPORT DIVISION SUBMISSION**

### **THE CHEADLE ROYAL CRIME REDUCTION INITIATIVE**

#### **SUMMARY**

The Cheadle Royal complex is a prestige leisure and retail development, attracting a customer base which is over-represented in the higher income groups. The car parks tend to be populated with high-value vehicles, with high-value contents. Since opening, it became an established and entrenched crime hot-spot, the principle volume crime committed being theft from motor vehicle.

During 2002 there were 106 thefts from motor vehicle recorded, averaging 9 per calendar month. From June – December 2002, the average increased to 11 per calendar month. The worst month on record was January 2001, when there were 22 offences committed.

Although the Police had attempted to tackle the crime problems on the site, the responses had always relied upon the Police deploying highly intensive and costly assets after the event.

As a result of the Strategic TCG, in April 2002, the Chief Inspector Operations was tasked to lead a problem solving crime reduction initiative at the site. The objective set was, "The delivery of significant and sustainable crime reduction for the Cheadle Royal Complex.

The Police then led the formation of a problem-solving group that involved members of all the key site-holders. This group commissioned a program of site-vulnerability survey's, the results of which led to the following key actions being implemented;

- 1) A state of the art CCTV system was installed across the complex
- 2) Attention to landscaping and foliage management ensured that natural surveillance was enhanced
- 3) Crime prevention literature and signage was improved
- 4) A 'joined up' approach to crime and security issues was promoted. A culture of shared responsibility was fostered.

As a result, crime has been reduced as follows;

- 1) For the year 2003, the volume of offences reduced to 56. This, compared to 106 in 2002, demonstrating a 48% reduction across the year.
- 2) When comparing the last six months of 2003, which showed only 13 offences committed, to the last six months of 2002, with 65 offences committed, we see an 80% reduction in volume.
- 3) In December 2003, there was just 1 offence committed. Compare this with the worst month on record, January 2001, when 22 offences were committed and the magnitude of the reductions becomes apparent.

# THE CHEADLE ROYAL CRIME REDUCTION INITIATIVE

## INTRODUCTION

The Cheadle Royal complex is a site of mixed retail, leisure and commercial properties developed on a green-field site in the Cheadle area of Stockport. The complex was developed in the early 1990's and development of the site continues today. Of particular note is the fact that the development predates the Crime and Disorder Act and the emphasis that was placed upon 'designing' crime out.

The complex itself is immediately adjacent to the A34 by-pass. This provides for excellent communication links. Travelling North from the complex, one reaches the M60 within two miles. This affords access to the National Motorway network. Travelling South from the complex, within two miles one enters the Cheshire Force area and has the easiest access to the highly desirable commuter areas of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge. Manchester City Centre lies some seven miles to the North.

The site itself was developed by AMEC and in a somewhat confusing, but highly relevant, arrangement some site stakeholders own their land and sites outright and some lease from AMEC. This leads to a lack of clarity and ownership a number of issues and critically, crime reduction. This situation persists to this day. The individual site stakeholders include the John Lewis Partnership, Sainsbury's and David Lloyd. They are complemented by the TGI Fridays and Travel Lodge chains. In short, the complex represents a high-class retail and leisure development.

As one would expect, the complex therefore attracts a customer base, which is over-represented in the higher income groups. Accordingly, the car parks tend to be populated with high-value vehicles, with high-value contents. In summary, a target rich environment, with the very best access and exit routes.

The problem we faced is that those with criminal intent were finding the Cheadle Royal experience as pleasant and rewarding as their victims.

# 1) PROJECT OBJECTIVES

## Introduction

One of the critical success factors that was established from the outset was the clarity of objective for the project. It was genuinely critical that all those involved in the project knew what it was that being aimed for. A useful question that was posed on numerous occasions to reinforce the point was, "What does success look like?"

To ensure there was clarity around this concept, the objectives for the project were set from inception as "The delivery of significant and sustainable crime reduction for the Cheadle Royal complex".

Although the terminology used within the statement of intent appears sufficiently obvious not to require further interpretation, in actual fact further 'operationalising' of the concepts was to prove beneficial.

### **"Significant"**

The initiative aimed to deliver reductions that were 'at least statistically significant'. However, it was felt that there was an opportunity to achieve far more than reductions that felt like marginal improvements. As will be set out fully in further sections, the problem analysis had demonstrated that there were many 'structural' and 'long term' casual factors that were allowing criminal activity to thrive at the location. It was felt that if known, that is to say, evaluated solutions were applied in a structured problem-solving approach, then the complex could be transformed into one where crime and criminals found it a much more hostile environment.

Therefore, there was an ambition from the outset to aim for reductions of magnitude, rather than marginality.

### **"Sustainable"**

It was identified at an early stage that should the significant reductions in crime be achieved, this should not of itself be considered a 'success'. The Police had infact achieved a series of short term 'successes' in the past.

These 'successes' were typified by resource intensive operations that either involved surveillance on the car parks and, or, a high profile period of intensive policing. Whilst it is not to say that such operations did not have an impact, the defects with this approach were;

- i) the approaches were neither intelligence-led or problem-solving in nature
- ii) the Police were working in isolation and there was no engagement or involvement with community stakeholders or partners
- iii) Consequently, the operations would usually result in arrests for criminality on the car parks, but this by no means resulted in arrests

- of 'identified' targets, it was more a case of who wandered into the plot at the relevant time
- iv) within weeks, or sometimes days, of the operations concluding criminal activity would resume and resulted in 'short term blips' to crime patterns. On a strategic level, these operations were having no impact on criminality
  - v) this was leading to a self-fulfilling cycle of Police interventions having little or no impact on crime levels and staff becoming demoralised and believing that "nothing works".

Therefore, the initiative had to learn the lessons of previous interventions and seek to identify those underlying, structural causal factors that would enable a genuinely problem-solving approach to the situation to be implemented.

As highlighted at ii) above, there was no evidence of the Police working with any of the stakeholders on the site previously. Therefore, it was felt to be critical to success to involve and engage these stakeholders if 'sustainability' were to be assured. Crime, security and safety 'had' to be everyone's concern, not just the Polices'.

Developing this point, the concept of leaving a 'legacy' was reflected during the discussions on sustainability. This point will be expanded upon later, but as part of a phased response to the causal factors identified, the initiative wished to ensure a 'Business Watch' scheme was established. This was intended to maintain the 'shared' approach to problem solving and ensures that issues do not end up being left to one person or agency.

### **"Crime"**

Although the complex suffered from a variety of crime types, the initiative specifically set out to focus upon the crimes that were committed in the "public and shared" areas of the complex, rather than the private and individual areas.

By this rationale, the initiative was focusing on auto-crime (almost exclusively theft from vehicles) and 'street crime' type offences. Although the volume of robbery was low, it was recognised that the factors were present to 'allow' robbery to develop into a problem on the site.

What was consciously 'excluded', were offences such as shoplifting and deceptions. The rationale for this decision was based upon the assessment that individual internal security measures were developed and robust. Where there was an obvious gap and lack of ownership were the external, shared, public areas. What had been allowed to develop was a situation where individual stakeholders paid great attention to internal safety and security issues and paid comparatively little to the shared areas.

## 2) PROBLEM DEFINITION

### Information sources used to analyse the problem

The information sources and processes used to analyse this problem were the standard and mainstreamed NIM products and processes.

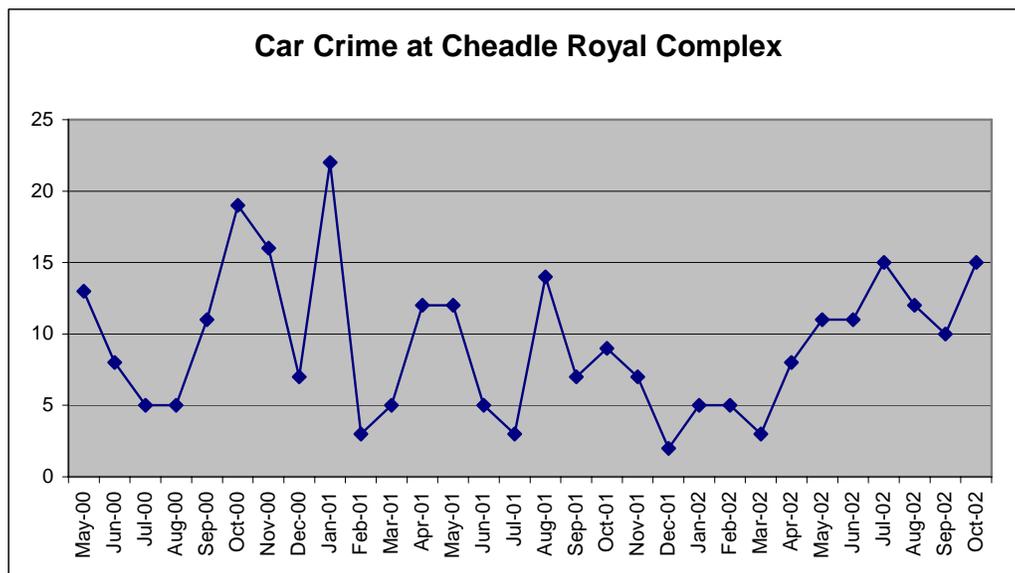
Specifically, the fact that the complex was a consistent and serious crime hot-spot was identified, repetitiously, via Strategic and Tactical Threat Assessment documents, which then informed the STCG & TTCG meetings that followed them.

In addition to this, the Operational Policing Unit (OPU) for the Southern Area was conducting daily meetings to review crime trends, patterns and taskings. Even on the basis of the 'anecdotal' nature of these meetings it was clear we had an entrenched crime problem at the complex.

However, it was the Strategic products (STCG Threat Assessment) that set into context the nature and extent of the problem. In short, since the site had opened it had been either the number one or two hot-spot for the Southern Area in terms of auto-crime. The analysis also demonstrated that as a location for repeat crime activity (all categories) the site was regularly the number one hot-spot.

Fig. 1 below demonstrates the volume of auto-crime at the complex between May 2000 and October 2002.

(Fig. 1)



At the STCG held in early summer 2002, the meeting set auto-crime & crime activity specifically at the Cheadle Royal complex as a high priority within the control strategy. The meeting directed that the Chief Inspector Operations

would be responsible for leading a crime reduction initiative at the site. The initiative was to be predicated upon a problem solving approach and the objective was to “deliver significant and sustainable crime reduction for the Cheadle Royal complex”.

### **Who was involved in analysing the problem?**

As a result the Chief Inspector, had a member of staff submit a ‘Problem Identification SARA Form’. This document can be found at Appendix A. This was prepared and submitted by the Operations Co-ordinator in the OPU.

Additionally, the Analyst within the OPU, was responsible for the production of the STCG TCCG Threat Assessments. Within the STCG Threat Assessment was a problem profile that provided further definition still on the nature and extent of the problems at the complex. An extract from this problem profile can be located at Appendix B, where the reader should note that the four top repeat locations are all part of the Cheadle Royal complex.

### **Did the analysis demonstrate an understanding of the causes and underlying conditions that conditions that precipitated the problem?**

Taken together, the problem profiles, crime pattern analysis and problem identification form, graphically highlighted that the nature of the problem was both structural and entrenched.

A three-stage model was proposed to tackle the problems and this placed particular emphasis on a program of site-vulnerability surveys to be undertaken by GMP HQ Architectural Liaison Officers (ALO) and the findings that emerged from them.

The survey’s highlighted that, whilst there were obviously some differences between individual site-owners, there were a number of critical ‘thematic’ or overarching factors that were found across the complex as a whole

The key contributory factors identified were as follows;

### **ACCESS TO AND FROM THE COMPLEX**

**Motor-Vehicles** - By motor vehicle, there is immediate access afforded to the site from the A34 By-pass and it’s ease of connection to the National motorway network and adjoining Force areas. Both are achieved within two miles of the complex.

**Foot/Cycle Access** - There are also numerous legitimate and ‘desire lines’ of entry and exist to the site whilst on foot or on cycle

### **SURVEILLANCE**

**CCTV** - Although there were some excellent ‘internal’ CCTV systems within the stores, the situation was much less desirable in the public car park areas.

For example, whilst some stake-holders did have some coverage, much of it was installed at the time the site opened, was of very poor quality and left huge gaps in coverage.

This situation was at it's worst in the main customer car parks for Sainsbury's and John Lewis. They effectively had no functioning system. At the time of the survey there were only two camera's mounted and both were pointing towards the ground and not connected to monitors or recording equipment. To offenders with even the most elementary surveillance consciousness, this spoke volumes about the threat to them operating in the locality.

**Natural Surveillance** – There were a number of issues identified with foliage and landscaping across the site.

### **CRIME PREVENTION SIGNAGE AND LITERATURE**

This proved to be a protracted issue. There was an obvious lack of crime prevention signage and literature across the site. However, as simple as it sounds to resolve, this proved to be problematic to resolve and is explained more fully in later sections.

### **NO 'JOINED UP' APPROACH TO CRIME REDUCTION ISSUES**

As highlighted earlier, the overall site management is collaboration between AMEC, who developed the site and lease some of the sites to the individual companies and those who own their sites outright.

This is further complicated in the case of, for example, TGI Friday's. This is a concern operated by the Whitbread Corporation, who manage the business via an area manager. Therefore, when trying to address crime reduction issues with TGI Friday's, one is faced with a situation where the unit manager, regional manager and AMEC all have some involvement and 'responsibility'. The result being that there was a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibility. Crime prevention was simply falling through the gaps.

If one took the complex as a whole, a situation had developed whereby there was no collaborative, or joined up approach to crime reduction. Individual companies were addressing internal security issues, in some cases to quite a sophisticated level. However, for the public and shared areas, i.e. the car parks, there was no integrated approach to crime reduction.

### **SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS OF UNDERLYING CAUSES AND CONDITIONS**

If one now considers the above analysis regarding the causal factors and conditions, it puts into a clearer context the Policing responses that had been engaged previously (see 'Sustainable' 1-5). It becomes readily apparent why these approaches could almost be expected to fail or, more correctly, only deliver short-term impacts at a high-cost to the Police.

In the final analysis, the Police had previously failed to recognise the nature and underlying causes of the problem and therefore had been selecting tactical options that were unlikely to work.

A new approach was required, which was to be strategic in its nature, engaging site-stakeholders and tackling underlying causes.

### **Were all the agencies that have a stake in this problem identified and consulted?**

It was assessed as critical in terms of achieving the 'significant and sustainable' outcome, to fully engage the site stakeholders in the solutions to the issues.

The first stage of the process was for the Chief Inspector to invite key managers, that is, those with authority to make decisions about finance and operations, from all the site stakeholders. Those who didn't respond to written invitations received a 'cold call' from the Chief Inspector.

At the inaugural meeting of the crime reduction initiative, the Police were represented by the Chief Inspector (who chaired the meeting), the Police Inspector with geographic responsibility for the area and the local Crime Reduction Advisor (CRA).

The minutes from the meeting are attached for information at Appendix C. It will be seen that Chief Inspector Hull gave a full explanation to those present of why they were present and what their aims and objectives were to be.

The subsequent response was definitely shaped by the inputs from this partnership grouping. Whilst this most certainly was instrumental in delivering the solution, there were a number of difficulties that were encountered along the way and these are set out in the next section.

## **RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM**

### **In what way did the analysis contribute to the design of the response**

As illustrated previously, it was now clear from the analysis what the nature and extent of the problem were. It was also equally clear why previous interventions had failed to deliver. Therefore, the following methodology was applied to tackle the problem;

- i) The Chief Inspector accessed the crime reduction web-site and downloaded the 'Evaluated Options/Toolkits' that related to vehicle crime and car park security and reviewed the contents with his CRA.
- ii) These then formed the basis of a bench-mark for the options proposed and ensured there was an evaluation base

- iii) This was of real importance because we were in the business of persuading commercial enterprises that they had to commit funds on the basis of our recommendations
- iv) A three stage model was designed to progress matters;
  - a) Firstly, a partnership group would be formed to drive the actions necessary to tackle the underlying causes of crime at the complex
  - b) Secondly, each individual site would undertake a thorough site vulnerability survey, to be conducted by GMP HQ Architectural Liaison Officers (ALO). The recommendations produced would be reviewed by the group and some, or all of them, would be implemented
  - c) Only when the evidence that the structural measures required under stage b) above had achieved the desired effect (this being the 'significant' crime reduction set as the outcome measure), would the group move on to ensure the sustainability element of the project by the formation of a 'business watch' scheme.

**Stage A)** - This was achieved by the establishment and regular meetings of the partnership group. The group held it's inaugural meeting on 6/9/02 and held regular meetings thereafter until early Summer 2003.

**Stage B)** – The program of site vulnerability surveys was undertaken during the first few months of 2003. A copy survey is attached for information at Appendix D. (It should be noted that David Lloyd had actually commissioned their own survey earlier in 2002, albeit that the recommendations had not been implemented by the time Stage A took place. David Lloyd were content for our ALO staff to review the survey and its recommendations. Our view was this was a thorough piece of work with the correct recommendations identified).

**Stage C)** – As we are now satisfied that the crime reductions observed are significant and directly correlated to the actions undertaken as a result of the first two stages, the final phase of the model is to be implemented.

Therefore, the Inspector with geographic responsibility for the complex, together with the respective Community Beat Officer (CBO) have now been tasked to draw together the respective staff from the site stakeholders to form an effective 'business watch' scheme to consolidate the sustainability element desired from the outset.

**What difficulties were encountered and how did the project respond to these?**

Establishing the partnership group and undertaking the site vulnerability surveys, were in comparative terms, the easy element of the project. The difficulties and tensions emerged once the surveys had been completed and the recommendations known. The principle difficulties were as follows;

- i) Selecting the best options and securing finance for them
- ii) Commercial 'sensitivities'
- iii) Maintaining momentum

### **Selecting the best options and securing finance for them**

The project was now at the point where we were going back to the individual site-owners and asking them to commit funds to pay for the improvements necessary. Although one, (naively) thought that successful commercial enterprises would have little difficulty in authorising the necessary funds, this was simply not the case. This was certainly a learning point for the author.

On reflection, one of the reasons that the companies involved are commercial successes is because they do critically assess the need to commit expenditure and require assurances that it makes 'commercial' sense.

'Commercial sense' meant that the companies concerned would commit expenditure for improvements, but only to those recommendations that were most likely to work and that only expenditure on those projects deemed critical would be released. Therefore, any recommendations that were felt to be 'desirable' rather than 'essential' would not be progressed

To this end, the project group then set out to explain which options were most likely to result in the crime reductions sought. It was never going to be a viable position, to expect that all the recommendations would be implemented from the outset. Instead, what followed was a careful examination of the options and a 'crime reduction case' for each option had to be developed.

The actual improvements selected and implemented were;

### **CCTV**

For the main car park area of John Lewis and Sainsbury's, a new system, which afforded coverage of the entire car park was implemented.

David Lloyd also installed a brand new and much more effective camera system.

Overall, what this meant was that now the vast majority of the complex was under CCTV surveillance from a modern system, with minimal gaps in coverage. Previously, there were large areas with no coverage at all, or coverage by inadequate and outdated systems.

### **NATURAL SURVEILLANCE**

The issues that were identified with foliage and landscaping were, virtually, all addressed and therefore natural surveillance was enhanced in line with the recommendations from the surveys.

## **CRIME PREVENTION LITERATURE & SIGNAGE**

As highlighted earlier, whilst this may have appeared the easiest of recommendations to implement, this was simply not the case. The reasons for this are explained fully in the next section.

However, some progress was made and signs have gone up, specifically in relation to the presence of CCTV and more general crime prevention posters have been displayed.

### **Commercial sensitivities**

#### **Denial**

From the outset this project encountered a sense of 'denial' that a problem actually existed, within some quarters.

At the inaugural meeting, the Chief Inspector presented the crime statistics and gave the strategic overview so that those present appreciated where the complex sat in the table of 'hot-spots' and 'repeat locations'. There then followed an enlightening discussion around the issue of whether this was having a "detrimental effect on customers".

It was necessary to promote the benefits of reducing crime on the sight and ensure that the 'commercial sense' argument of such an outcome was understood.

It was also necessary to ensure that those present understood that the Police did not intend walking away from a situation where no improvements to security would be undertaken. Whilst there was no explicit threat to go public, the inference was clear. There was no doubt what impact this could have on public perception. The 'commercial sense' fully appreciated this.

#### **Customer perception**

A further significant issue emerged for many of the site owners present. Accepting that we had a crime problem and that we had to do something positive to combat it, a clear consensus emerged that whilst it was a laudable objective to make the environment uncomfortable, or hostile, for criminals to operate, we had at the same time to ensure that the environment remained comfortable for customers. Therefore, any measures that customers could perceive as the environment 'feeling' less safe were to be avoided.

Therefore, had the project team had available funding to implement a 'lock-down' regime on the site, this simply would have been commercially unacceptable.

The best example I can provide to demonstrate this, refers back to the issue of crime prevention posters. One will be aware that the Home Office have produced a wide range of crime prevention posters for car parks. These tend

to be of a high-visibility colour scheme and often incorporate a message about 'car thieves operating in this area'. These were deemed wholly inappropriate. Indeed any message declaring crime present was a non-starter. The project team felt that only messages that 'reminded' customers about the security of their possessions were acceptable. Those suggesting there was a present risk or threat to them were not.

The outcome of these deliberations is attached at Appendix E. A series of letters were exchanged and the project team then actually designed their own crime prevention posters, which were jointly funded and produced by the project stake-holders, including the Police.

One would flag this issue up as being of real significance. At a time when the Home Office and Police Forces are trying to reconcile a situation where crime is falling and yet the public perception is that they are less safe, it is interesting to note how private sector organisations deal with the issue. John Lewis personified the approach (although both David Lloyd and Sainsbury's took a similar view) although the **reality of crime** was important to them, the **perception** of their customers was of at least equal importance. This informed and shaped their response to the problem.

It would be easy to misinterpret what one is saying of John Lewis here. Although it initially conflicted with the natural inclination of the Police, who were pushing hard for conventional crime prevention messages, on reflection one would conclude that the management of the site are actually closely attuned to the needs of their customers and displayed high levels of what the Police Service would now call 'Organisational Intelligence'.

## **Momentum**

Maintaining momentum in the project was also a difficulty. Whilst some stakeholders did commit time, energy and funding to the initiative, others contributed little and would rarely come to the meetings.

This is hardly a revelation in terms of partnership working and those site-holders who were most important in terms of delivering the necessary improvements did undertake those actions that were of the highest priority.

## EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Did the response achieve what was intended?

### 'Significance'

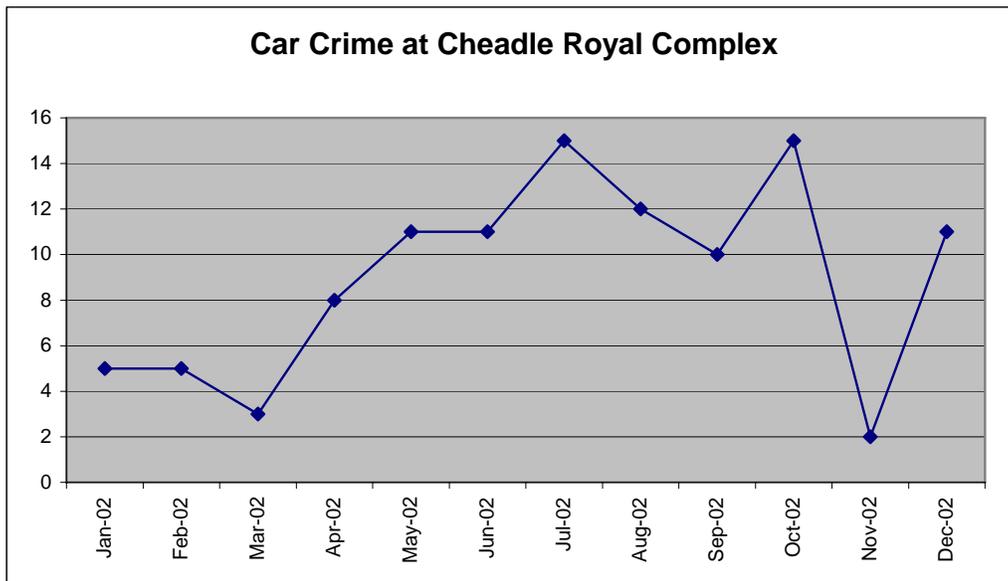
The objective from the outset was "to deliver significant and sustainable crime reduction to the Cheadle Royal site".

CPA analysis has shown that from start date of the initiative until December 2003, this objective has been achieved.

Specifically;

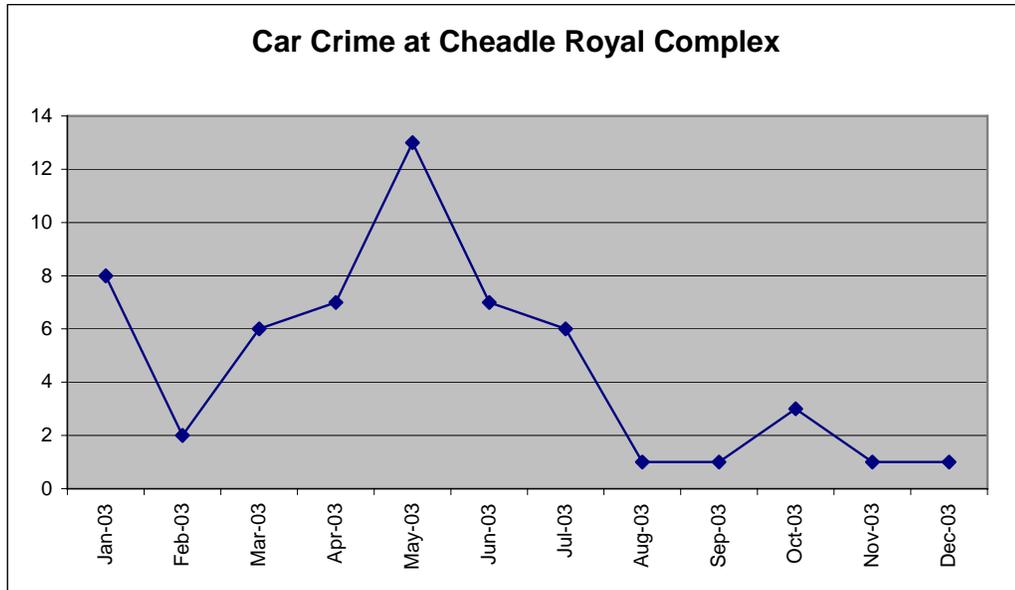
As Fig 2 below shows, for the year 2002, there were 106 TFMV at the complex. This equates to an average of 9 per calendar month.

(Fig. 2)



However, if we compare this data with the recorded volume for 2003 Fig. 3 below), we see that offences fall to 56, equating to a monthly average of 4.5 per calendar month.

(Fig 3)



Therefore, as set out in the table below, we observe a reduction in volume of 50 offences between 2002 and 2003. This equates to a 48% reduction of crime.

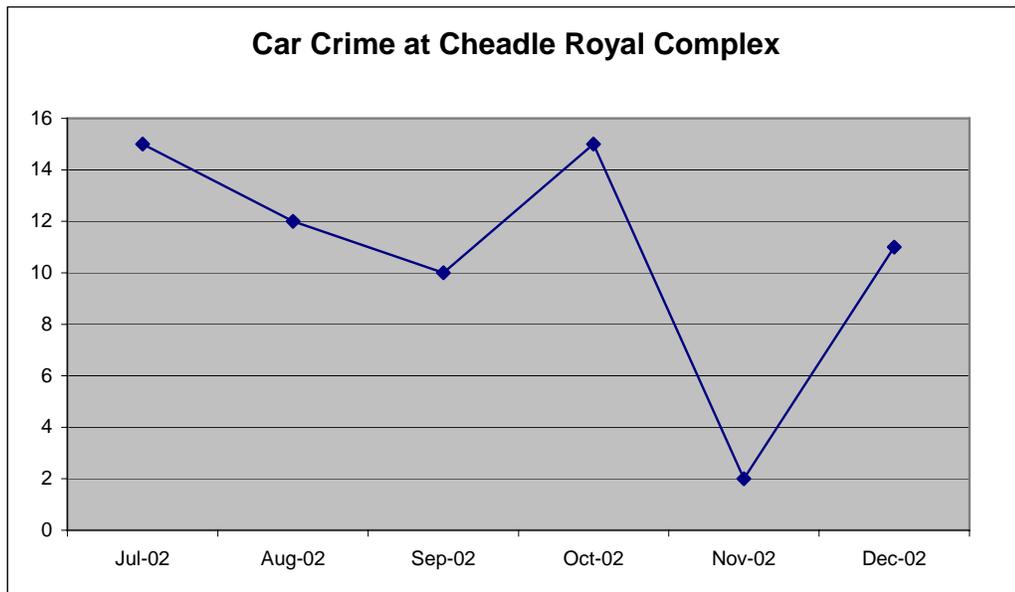
Year	Volume	+/- (n)	+/- (%)
2001	101		
2002	106	+5	+5%
2003	56	-50	-48%

As impressive as this reduction is, if we then compare the latter six months of 2002, against 2003, we see an even more marked and significant reduction.

The importance of the latter six month comparison, lies within the fact that many of the measures, e.g. CCTV, were actually only implemented and 'on line' from late spring/early summer of 2003.

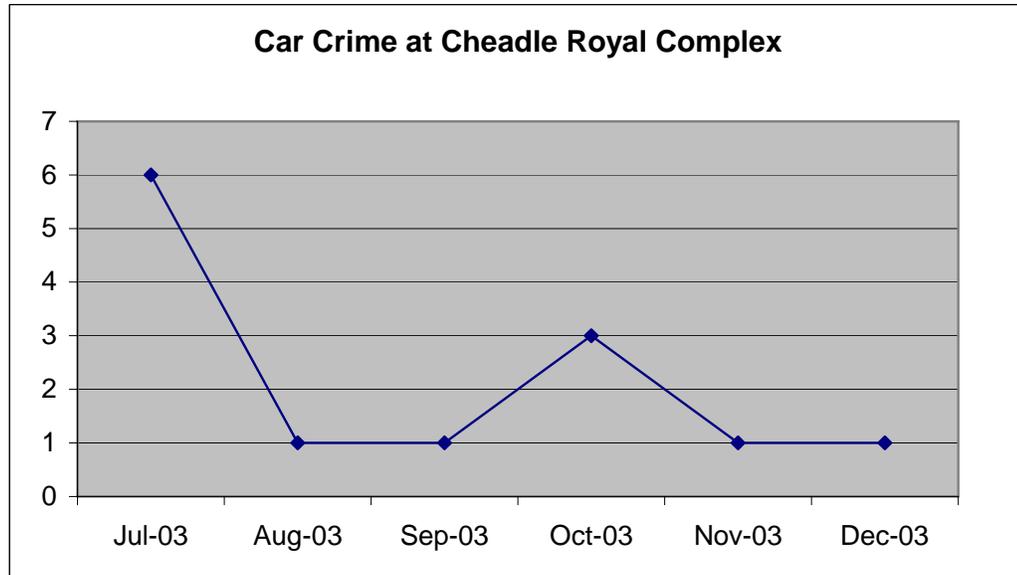
Therefore, Fig 4 below illustrates the incidence of auto-crime at the site between July – December 2002. We see 65 offences in total, representing a monthly average running at 11 per calendar month.

(Fig. 4)



However, if we then compare the latter six months of 2003, at Fig 5 below, we see that the total offences committed reduces to only 13, or an average of 2 per calendar month.

(Fig.5)



Therefore, as the below table demonstrates, when comparing the later six months of 2002 and 2003, we see a reduction of 52 offences. In percentage terms this represents an 80% reduction.

Six month period	Volume	+/- (n)	+/- (%)
July-Dec 2002	65		
July-Dec 2003	13	-52	-80%

One final useful comparison, is between the worst and best month on record. In January 2001, there were 22 offences committed at the complex. In December 2003 (and also Aug, Sept & Nov 2003) only one offence is committed.

### **'Sustainability'**

In terms of sustainability, the above analysis shows that the reduction in crime levels has been both sustained, and accelerated throughout 2003. Therefore, it is now assessed that Stage B is successfully concluded and it is now the right time to implement 'Stage C'.

**Stage C** – The exit strategy or legacy, is now to establish an effective and active business watch scheme for the site. This will comprise of staff from tactical levels within the partner organisations; for example, the Police Area

Inspector and CBO staff will represent the Police service. It is anticipated that security staff/managers would represent the other partner agencies.

The Police are keen to ensure that evaluated best practice is enshrined with the business watch. For example a local radio net, to enable all the sites on the complex to talk to each other is the next logical step and ensures that the effect of the CCTV coverage is maximised. Regular meetings to discuss crime data, intelligence and other tactical issues will form part of the meetings.

The Chief Inspector is in the process of writing to all the partners' management to ensure they fully support this final stage and also to discuss a media strategy to celebrate the success achieved so far.

The original SARA package remains open, but it is intended to close it once the business watch has been successfully implemented. The projected time scale for this is the first quarter of 2004.

### **What methods of evaluation were chosen and who was involved?**

In terms of statistical analysis, the methods of evaluation chosen have been the standard CPA products, which are a mainstreamed part of the business processes on the Division.

There is integrity in this form of evaluation, given that it was the standard products and processes that led the problem being highlighted and analysed in the first instance. This also ensures that like data, is being compared with like data.

In terms of more qualitative based evaluations, none have been conducted, or as yet proposed.

This paper does represent a descriptive account, or a 'participant observation' of one of the key personnel involved, namely the Chief Inspector. None of the other partner agencies, or personnel have conducted any form of evaluation.

However, given one's earlier observations regarding the 'organisational intelligence' of some of the partner agencies and their sense of what their customer's perceptions were, it would be an interesting and informative exercise to conduct a survey with a sample of the regular customer base to determine their perception of crime levels and safety at the complex. Although we have no baseline survey data for comparative purposes, an assessment of their perception of the risk of crime, now and historically would be enlightening.

**David Hull**  
**Chief Inspector**