

Tilley Award 2005

Application form

The following form must be completed in full. Failure to do so will result in disqualification from the competition.

Please send completed application forms to Tricia Perkins at patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

All entries must be received by noon on the 29 April 2005. Entries received after that date will not be accepted under any circumstances. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Tricia Perkins on 0207 035 0262.

1. Details of application

Title of the project **Operation Bearing**

Name of force/agency/CDRP: **South Yorkshire Police**

Name of one contact person with position/rank (this should be one of the authors):

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Name of endorsing senior representatives(s) **Mr R Dyson**

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s) **Assistant Chief Constable**

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s)

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2. Summary of application

One of the newly formed Local Partnership Teams set up Operation Bearing in the Bolton-Upon-Deane area of Barnsley to tackle local problems of antisocial behaviour that had been blighting the lives of residents for 15 to 20 years. Problems ranged from minor nuisance, verbal abuse, urinating in public, egg-throwing at windows, damage to property and underage drinking in public. The victims were local people and problems were worse during the evening when youths congregated in certain areas of the village.

The main aims of the operation were to reduce the levels of antisocial behaviour, increase public reassurance and confidence in local partnership working and improve the quality of life for local people.

The SARA model and the South Yorkshire Police problem-solving model were used as a joint systematic approach.

Both Police Officers and Community Support Officers engaged with residents by visiting them with specially designed questionnaires to assess the scale of the problems and the causes. Council employed impact wardens carried out environmental surveys to identify clean-up areas and target hardening.

The information contained in the questionnaires and that from statements obtained was used to obtain a section 30 authority (power to disperse/remove groups of 2 or more) under the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003. Quick wins were identified in terms of arrests, acceptable behaviour contracts and other forms of interagency intervention in addition to regular high visibility patrols. A "Golden-Line" telephone system was set up so residents could report minor matters to the team.

A monthly joint agency meeting was established with key partners and cases were prioritised with action being taken by those concerned. The team made effective use of local media to be proactive in keeping the community informed.

Two months into the operation all residents were visited again to assess team performance and there was a 99% satisfaction rate and a 65% decrease in antisocial behaviour.

The work carried out to support the section 30 was identified and adopted as good practice within South Yorkshire.

After 6 months the team held a public meeting with residents, the police authority and was filmed as part of a BBC documentary.

Tremendous positive feedback was received at the meeting. The team had achieved increased levels of confidence and public reassurance in addition to maintaining the reduction in antisocial behaviour and improved quality of life.

3. Description of project

Aims

The aims of Operation Bearing, which began in February 2004, were to

- ❑ reduce levels of antisocial behaviour
- ❑ increase public reassurance and confidence in local partnership working and
- ❑ improve the quality of life for local people living in the Bolton-Upon-Dearne area of Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

Success was to be judged on how well the team performed in these areas.

The newly formed Local Partnership Team, one of four in Barnsley District, which was based at a local police station, was to play an integral part in the success of the operation. The operation was the first one that the team tackled and it also allowed for other operations in other communities to take shape without detracting from the aims or the quality of service delivered.

Project Method

The S.A.R.A. model (scan, analysis, response and assessment) and the South Yorkshire Police problem-solving model were used as a joint systematic approach in tackling the local problems that were identified. The South Yorkshire model centred on the approach being territorially based, intelligence led, problem oriented and partnership enhanced. All elements were present throughout the operation.

The Local Partnership Team was made up of a mixture of Police Officers, Community Support Officers, a Tasking Officer and Impact Wardens funded by the local authority. Each police officer and each community support officer had designated geographic responsibility in order to provide the public with named contact points in addition to their role as part of the team. A "golden-line" telephone system was set up to provide the public with a dedicated line on which to report non-urgent matters to the team. The team had a computerised problem and performance management system (PPMS) which was used to track the progress of the operation and all the other cases that they dealt with. This enabled local accountability amongst the team and was of benefit when updates had to be given at local public area forum meetings that the Tasking Officer attended.

The introduction of Local Partnership Teams is a key part in the Reassurance, Accessibility and Visibility Strategy of South Yorkshire Police and a citizen-focussed approach was a golden thread throughout Operation Bearing.

The various stages of the operation will now be presented based around the two policing models.

Scanning

Research

Crime pattern analysis and previous reported incidents of antisocial behaviour were researched from the police incident computer log along with information from the Community Cohesion Analyst and existing local officer knowledge. The Community Service Desk located at Barnsley was able to carry out research and free up officer time.

Engagement

- It was decided that one of the best ways to engage the local residents was to visit them door to door. Information was gathered from them and recorded onto a specially designed questionnaire that enabled the following information to be obtained: the extent and nature of problems
- the hotspots
- the victims
- possible offenders
- their views on what the causes of the problems were
- how it was affecting their quality of life

➤ the demographic make up of the community.

Some residents provided full written statements detailing the same information. It became clear that the public had reduced confidence in the police on the whole prior to the Local Partnership Team's presence in the area. During the initial engagement phase local residents seemed a little apprehensive but nevertheless welcomed the Local Partnership concept and the start that was made.

The Tasking Officer attended regular local area forum meetings and forged closer links with councillors and members of the community. The meetings were another key area from which local problems were brought to the fore for action to be taken and also for people to be informed of the work of the Team.

The team held monthly Beat Surgeries where the public was encouraged to meet with their local officers, inform of their problems and members of the team had further opportunity to engage with the public gathering information/intelligence, providing feedback or just simply building confidence through general conversation.

As a further engagement tool each community support officer was given the responsibility of liaising with the local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators.

Analysis

The information obtained from the questionnaires, statements, historic police incident data, crime pattern analysis, local knowledge and intelligence was analysed and it was found that the majority of problems centred around five locations. These were St. Andrews Square, Dearne Road, West Avenue including an adjoining small park, Wath Road and Mansion Fields Park. Each location attracted youths either because of the shops, the open space and the play areas.

St. Andrews Square was the main shopping area in the village. Youths congregated around the rear of the shops, where they were out of sight, in order to drink alcohol and be verbally abusive to residents who tried to move them away.

West Avenue consisted of mainly residential premises however the presence of a small park at the rear was an obvious attraction for those who wished to drink alcohol, cause general nuisance or be abusive to residents.

Residential premises surrounded the **Mansion Fields Park** on all sides but residents on one side only namely **Wath Road** encountered problems of antisocial behaviour.

Dearne Road was made up purely of residential premises and was a link between Wath Road, the Mansion Fields Park and West Avenue. Some residents on Dearne Road experienced antisocial behaviour problems associated with West Avenue.

The problems ranged from minor nuisance, verbal abuse, urinating in public, egg-throwing at windows, damage to property, litter and underage drinking in public and mainly occurred on an evening.

The offenders, aged anywhere between 10 years and 20 years old, were described as a mixture of local youths and those who lived in adjoining villages that were visiting friends, although very few were named. Gangs of up to 30 had been reported.

Most local people were of the opinion that the behaviour of the youths was attributable to:

- a lack of parental and individual responsibility
- no respect for the community
- boredom
- the lack of any effective action by the police on previous occasions
- poor conception of police powers

The impact wardens carried out environmental visual audits of the area and identified locations that could be cleaned up and/or have a better means of denying access to the youths in addition to target hardening.

The analysis was successful in identifying all aspects of the Problem Analysis Triangle (P.A.T.) namely victims, locations and possible offenders.

Excellent local links with the media were established to proactively publicise the Team's commitment, future work and informing the public of good work and results from matters reported.

Monthly Joint Agency meetings were established with key partners ranging from the Fire Service, Neighbourhood Safety Unit, Tenancy Enforcement, Social Services (local children and families), Education Authority, Youth Services, Barnsley Drug and Alcohol Advisory Service (BADAS).

Response

The analysis was the driver for the response.

Quick wins were identified with arrests being made for public nuisance, harassment, damage and public order. A number of youths were invited into the police station along with their parents to enter into Acceptable Behaviour Contracts with a view to curbing their behaviour and making them responsible for their actions.

From the Joint Agency meetings other quick wins were identified with problem families who agreed to enter into Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. The Neighbourhood Safety Unit arranged for mediation between two families and local residents in one instance where the two families had poor social skills rather than prosecute them from the outset. A local mother was warned regarding her continued tenancy as a result of leaving her teenage children in the house on a weekend when they caused mayhem for the rest of the street. They all signed acceptable behaviour contracts in conjunction with the landlord, the council and the police.

As a result of the environmental visual audits that the impact wardens carried out they were able to clean-up the area behind the shops in St Andrews Square and the shopkeepers were able to provide better fencing and a padlocked gate to prevent unauthorised entry.

The local grocery shops were advised in relation to selling eggs to youths as most of them ended up being thrown at resident's windows.

Off-licensed premises were targeted with a test purchase operation and offending staff were reported or cautioned. The impact of this operation caused a supermarket to alter its policy on the sale of alcohol following information received that a member of staff was supplying her son with it who in turn was supplying underage youths.

The legislation under section 30 Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 was studied and it was decided that an application would be made by the Team to have the five problem locations designated as such. The information obtained during the analysis was used to support the application and to prove that the problems were significant and persistent, occurred in public places and that members of the public had been alarmed, harassed or distressed by the presence of groups of two or more. The authority, the first ever in South Yorkshire was granted for the maximum 6-month period and the introduction of it was advertised in the local press for two weeks. The team designed metal signs that were required to be displayed in public showing that the area was so designated under section 30 and a number of paper application forms.

South Yorkshire Police adopted the work carried out by the team in relation to applying for and obtaining section 30 authorities as good practice and this facilitated successful applications by other teams.

The Section 30 authority gave the team the power to disperse groups of 2 or more whose presence had caused, was likely to cause or was causing harassment, alarm or distress to a member of the public and to remove those under 16 in those places without a responsible adult and after 9pm but before 6am to their home or other place of safety.

The many complainants welcomed the section 30 authority. However many youths did not like the prospect of such an authority existing for obvious reasons.

High visibility patrols were carried out by Police Officers and Community Support Officers in order to police the authority and take action where necessary. The effect of the authority was to have an almost immediate effect in reducing antisocial behaviour. The youths that came into the area from the adjoining villages stayed away and many believed that they all had to be home by 9pm. Officers engaged with the youths whilst on patrol and educated those who were misinformed by outlining what was acceptable behaviour and the reasons for the authority being granted.

Youth workers were tasked with on street consultation with local youths to find out what they wanted with a view to creating diversionary activities.

The Tasking Officer continued to inform the public and Councillors of the Team's work at the area forum meetings. Gradually as confidence in the Local Partnership Team grew public praise became commonplace and began to replace heavy criticism. The local people, the Councillors and the press welcomed information regarding the Team's work and in particular updates of any action taken concerning the issues raised by them.

It was decided that the progress of the operation would be reviewed after 2 months and after 6 months following the expiry of the section 30 authority and then after 12 months.

How Did Operation Bearing Function Within The National Intelligence Model?

Amongst many other aspects the National Intelligence Model focuses on four key areas of the tactical menu communication, intelligence, prevention and enforcement. It was clear that there was some overlap in these areas in addition to stand- alone aspects of each.

- ❑ The Joint Agency Meetings had elements of all four in them as intelligence was raised and preventative and enforcement measures resulted in a partnership approach.
- ❑ The section 30 authority was intended to be both preventative in terms of future conduct and enforceable for those who decided they wanted to breach it.
- ❑ Intelligence originated mainly from the consultation and engagement phase (communication) of the operation and was used to drive the prevention and enforcement methods.
- ❑ Preventative measures included ABC contracts, the involvement of youth workers, mediation, target hardening and intervention with local shops.
- ❑ Enforcement was mainly police driven as consisted of arrests, cautions and high-visibility patrols in the designated section 30 areas.

The analysis of the (community) intelligence was a driving force behind local Tasking and Co-ordinating for the Team.

Assessment

- After 2 and 6 months all residents, who were visited as part of the initial analysis and engagement phase, were visited again by the Community Support Officers. An update questionnaire regarding their views on the effectiveness of the section 30, whether they thought that the Team was effective and what additional measures they would like to see in place was completed. The results from the update questionnaires showed that 99% of residents were satisfied.
- There was also a 65% reduction in reports of antisocial behaviour for the same period, which was published in the local papers.
- There was some minor displacement to nearby streets but the same initial approach of engagement with the questionnaires enabled the Team to nip this in the bud before it became a problem.
- The computerised PPMS system enabled the Team to continually track the progress of the operation, with regard to the number of hours patrolled, the number of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts signed, the amount of community engagement, the amount of intelligence submitted, the numbers of arrests or people reported on summons etc. The information contained on the PPMS system was of value to the Tasking Officer when attending public meetings so that accurate updates could be given.
- The good practice in relation to the obtaining of a section 30 authority was adopted corporately by South Yorkshire Police and this was able to be applied to other locations e.g. Great Houghton, Athersley and Kendray.
- There were no arrests made as a result of the section 30 authority and only a handful of youths removed to their home address. This was success in it's own right as the right message had been put across and "offending" groups were exhibiting vastly improved behaviour. Large gangs no longer congregated in the hotspot areas.
- The operation saw the successful evolution of the now established monthly Joint Agency meetings.
- The processes involved throughout the operation formed the basis of a good practice guide that was written and

subsequently requested by another teams of officers within Barnsley District.

After 6 months the team held a public meeting with residents, the police authority, local councillors and it was filmed as part of a BBC documentary, Inside Out that was screened at peak viewing time. Tremendous positive feedback was received at the meeting. The team had achieved increased levels of confidence and public reassurance, accessibility and visibility in addition to maintaining the reduction in antisocial behaviour and improved quality of life. Statistics can only tell part of the story but receiving public praise in front of a television camera crew for broadcast to the public was worth more than a million statistics in terms of public reassurance, improved quality of life and confidence in local policing. This was really the icing on the cake for the Team and the people who mattered – the residents.

Extract from the Yorkshire Post Wednesday 13th April 2005

“Force aims to get to root of problems

Successful neighbourhood tactics to be introduced across whole county after trial run

NEW policing tactics are to be introduced across South Yorkshire following highly successful trials in Sheffield and Barnsley.....The scheme has already been working in Barnsley.....In the Bolton-on-Deerne area of Barnsley a neighbourhood policing unit was used to gather evidence for a curfew order to prevent gangs gathering, and allow police to move under-16s off the streets after 9pm. Neighbourhood police officers were also responsible for ensuring restrictions were obeyed once introduced, and have claimed a dramatic reduction in the problem of gangs of youths loitering and intimidating other residents in the area.....”