

Tilley Award 2006

Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the Guidance. Please complete the following form in full and within the word limit. Failure to do so could result in disqualification from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to Tricia Perkins; patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

All entries must be received by noon on Friday 28th April 2006. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Tricia Perkins on 0207 035 0262. Any queries regarding other aspects of the awards should be directed to Michael Wilkinson on 0207 035 0247 or Lindsey Poole on 0207 035 0234.

Please tick box to indicate whether the entry should be considered for the main award, the criminal damage award or both;

Main award

Criminal Damage Award

Both Awards

1. Details of application

Title of the project "Operation Mettle"

Name of force/agency/CDRP: Cumbria Constabulary; Carlisle City South

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Position and rank of endorsing senior representative Assistant Chief Constable

Full address of endorsing senior representative

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2. Summary of application

In the Summer of 2005, the incidents of crime and disorder in a small area of Carlisle, centred on Leabourne Road, rose to unacceptable levels. Residents of the area, expressed their concerns through the local residents group, and a multi-agency response was designed to combat the issues.

Analysis supported the concerns of local residents, with the highest demand on agencies being calls in relation to disorder and criminal damage, although other more serious crimes were also occurring within a very small, defined, area.

The Police response was contained within Operation Mettle, but key partners were the Carlisle Housing Association (CHA), the Currock and Upperby Residents Association (CURA), the local Councillors together with private developers Carol and Jim Grant.

The initiative was designed to reduce calls for service, criminality, and disorder and so improve the quality of life for the residents in that area. The focus was on ensuring longer-term stability in an area that had repeatedly caused problems for the various agencies over a number of years.

The main intervention principles were as follows;

- Environmental site improvements to ensure the area did not remain a focus of criminality
- Providing support to residents to ensure they had the confidence in all agencies in dealing with the problems.
- Appropriate interventions with those responsible for the problems to ensure the reduction in offences, calls for service and general disorder.

From the peak time of problems in September 2005, when the police received in excess of 70 calls for service in the area of concern, the figure has fallen to below 40 calls in February 2006. This represents a reduction of 48%.

The key to designing the programme was a meeting of agencies with local residents and tenants held on 27th September 2005. Ongoing progress was gauged using incidents created on the Police Command and Control system and through the Carlisle Housing Association complaints system.

The project was evaluated through feedback at the CURA meetings, through the complaints made to the CHA and through the monitoring of the Police Command and Control system. The Constabulary's Information Management Section conducted a comprehensive analysis.

3. Description of project

Leabourne Road is a relatively short stretch of residential housing, located at the heart of the Upperby Ward of Carlisle. Upperby is ranked as the most deprived Ward in North Cumbria and the highest-ranking Ward in Cumbria not eligible for Neighbourhood Renewal funding.

The area of Leabourne Road has long been recognised by local agencies as one of concern. Previous attempts to try and resolve the ongoing problems had been made through informal meetings of local councillors, agencies and residents. The heart of the problem, however, that had remained unresolved was an area of undeveloped land on Leabourne Road, which attracted environmental problems together with associated disorder and vandalism. This land had several different owners and this had created difficulties in progressing improvements to the area. As a result, nearby houses were difficult to let, and the street contained several 'void' houses and a number of 'problematic' families.

Scanning

Problems in this particular area had tended to follow a fairly 'cyclical' pattern. In the Summer of 2005, the Cumbria Fire Service indicated that they no longer felt able to answer calls in the area, unless accompanied by a police patrol, due to problems from local youths. Residents of Leabourne Road became increasingly vocal at the meetings of the Currock and Upperby Residents Association (CURA). Analysis of police incident logs, however, revealed that the number of calls for service in the area had steadily risen from May 2005. This resulted in a special meeting being arranged for the residents on 27th September 2005, so that they had a dedicated opportunity to detail to concerned agencies the extent of the problems they were facing. This meeting had to be arranged away from the area, as the residents feared reprisals from local youths.

Analysis

Table to show the incident type of incidents in the Leabourne Road 150 metre boundary area in years 1 and 2

Incident Type	Year 1	Year 2	% Change
Rowdy/Nuisance Behaviour (Anti-Social Behaviour)	224	301	34%
CRIMINAL DAMAGE (Crime)	80	99	24%
Suspicious Activity (Public Safety)	66	49	-26%
THEFT & HANDLING STOLEN GOODS (Crime)	44	42	-5%
Malicious Communications (Anti-Social Behaviour)	20	24	20%
OTHER NOTIFIABLE OFFENCES (Crime)	13	15	15%
BURGLARY (Crime)	5	20	300%
Vehicles (Anti-Social Behaviour)	8	10	25%
Animal-related problems (Anti-Social Behaviour)	5	9	80%
Firearms (non-notifiable) (Anti-Social Behaviour)	2	1	-50%
Hoax Calls to Emergency Services (Anti-Social Behaviour)	0	3	Unable to calculate %
Street Drinking (Anti-Social Behaviour)	0	2	Unable to calculate %
Hate Incidents (Anti-Social Behaviour)	2	0	-100%
Noise Nuisance (Anti-Social Behaviour)	0	1	Unable to calculate %
Substance Misuse (Anti-Social Behaviour)	0	1	Unable to calculate %
Grand Total	469	577	23%

The date range used for this report covers the year of 01/03/05 to 28/02/06 and is compared with the same time period for last year (01/03/04 to 28/02/05). These periods are now referred to Year 1 and Year 2.

By far the most calls for service related to rowdy or nuisance behaviour and this fact was also backed up by the data held by CHA. Calls relating to criminal damage were, by far, the highest crime concerns although a big increase in burglaries (of sheds and garages) was also identified.

Response

The police response was captured under Operation Mettle, initially a high profile initiative using local officers, PCSO's and a small allocation of overtime allowed through the Tasking and Co-ordination Group. Carlisle Housing Association made a similar commitment to addressing the problem, financially through the engagement of 'The Surveillance Group', a private company that specializes in evidence gathering. However, the full extent of all agencies responses are better summarized as follows;

Victim

The meeting held on 27th September 2005 graphically demonstrated the fears that some local residents held. Indeed, the meeting had to be arranged away from Leabourne Road to ensure the attendance of a many of residents. Whilst almost all the residents were able to detail specific incidents of crime and disorder that they had witnessed and several were able to name offenders, none of those present were prepared to make statements to police for fear of reprisals. CHA issued diaries, and provided instruction on recording details of incidents to be used by Housing Staff as 'professional witnesses'.

Primarily through the pro-active use of PCSO's and Housing Staff, direct reassurance was then provided to the residents.

Location.

It became apparent that local Developers Jim and Carol Grant were interested in purchasing the vacant land on Leabourne Road in order to build a number of low cost houses. It was immediately recognised that this represented a possible long-term solution to the problems that the land attracted. Local councillors were engaged to work with the Developers to ensure as smooth a process as possible. Similarly, the police made early contact and provided support and reassurance. Arrangements were made for Neighbourhood Watch to be promoted as integral to the development, as well as embracing the current residents, who undertook to oversee the site development.

The site development also represented a 'threat' in that there would be certain environmental downsides to ongoing work in the area. A site meeting was held between CHA, Carlisle City Council, the Police and councillors. Agreement was reached for pro-active street cleaning through the course of development work. CURA arranged a 'Clean Up Campaign' for the Leabourne Road Site, where residents volunteered to undertake a day of community action.

The Developers undertook to secure the site properly and the police Architectural Liaison Officer provided advice in this regard.

CHA took a pro-active approach in respect of the existing void properties, and those that became void, as a result of their actions in dealing with certain tenants (see below). This entailed maintaining the outer appearance, fencing and gardens, until suitable new tenants were secured. It became apparent that the properties that became empty during this period were in need of total renovation. The CHA runs a scheme whereby local unemployed persons work with their tradesmen to learn the skills necessary to help secure employment. Both these properties were scheduled for renovation under the scheme, to take place in conjunction with the private site development.

Offenders.

Local residents were able to name most of the local offenders, which was corroborated by CHA information and police intelligence. These offenders fell into three broad categories;

- Problematic tenants
- Suspected drug dealing
- Local youths responsible for minor damage and anti-social behaviour

It became clear from the observations of residents on Leabourne Road that many of the problems emanated from two adjacent properties owned by CHA. One resident being extremely vulnerable, attracting unwelcome attention from local youths and one household being extremely chaotic, with little parental control in evidence. It was immediately recognised by CHA that neither tenancy's were suitable to be maintained in that area.

Steps were taken to resolve the issues at both addresses. An alternative tenancy was offered to the first, whilst eviction proceedings were initiated in respect of the second (although the tenant moved out voluntarily, avoiding the need for litigation).

Drug dealing was strongly suspected from another address on Leabourne Road and the police and CHA continued to gather intelligence to support enforcement action. This was a key objective for The Surveillance Group, who were contracted to operate over a four-day period. However, in the days before this period, a domestic dispute between the occupants resulted in a permanent separation, and whilst the 'drug dealer' moved out to another part of town, the female tenant relinquished her tenancy. This effectively ended the associated issues and represented a positive outcome for the remaining tenants. However, video footage was obtained of incidents of anti-social behaviour, which were valuable in furthering the ABC and ABSO work against a number of individuals, as documented below.

Analysis revealed that problems of rowdy and nuisance behaviour were by far the biggest problem in the area. By far the biggest contributor to this problem was youths from adjacent streets coming onto the street, attracted by the chaotic environment, and engaging in anti-social behaviour.

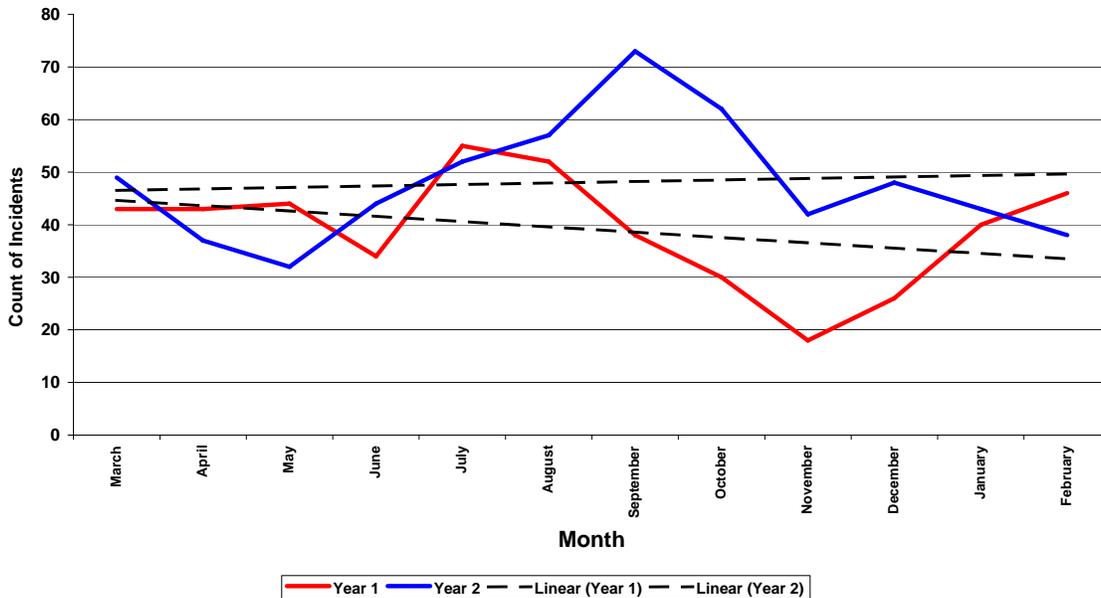
Spearheaded by the work of the two PSCO's attached to the area, a period of intensive interaction was undertaken with the main offenders identified. Many of these youths attended the local Pupil Referral Unit at the Gillford Centre and strong links were developed with Centre Staff and the pupils. This included working closely with the Educational Welfare Office. In December 2005, the Unit wrote to the Area Commander, commending the work of the PCSO's and reporting on the dramatic change in the pupil's behaviour.

Enforcement action was unavoidable in a number of cases. This ranged from Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, an Anti-Social Behaviour Order, and court action in a number of cases (one main offender receiving a custodial sentence). Instances of criminal damage were also dealt with by way of formal reprimand.

The CHA Manager and local Police Inspector undertook joint interviews of parents of youths identified as offenders in the area. This represented a direct approach to ensure that parents exercised their responsibilities, with the threat of CHA commencing proceedings for breach of tenancy if the behaviour continued. Progress of each individual case was monitored through regular meetings between CHA staff and the police.

Assessment

Timeline comparing incidents in years 1 and 2 in the Leabourne Road 150 metre boundary area

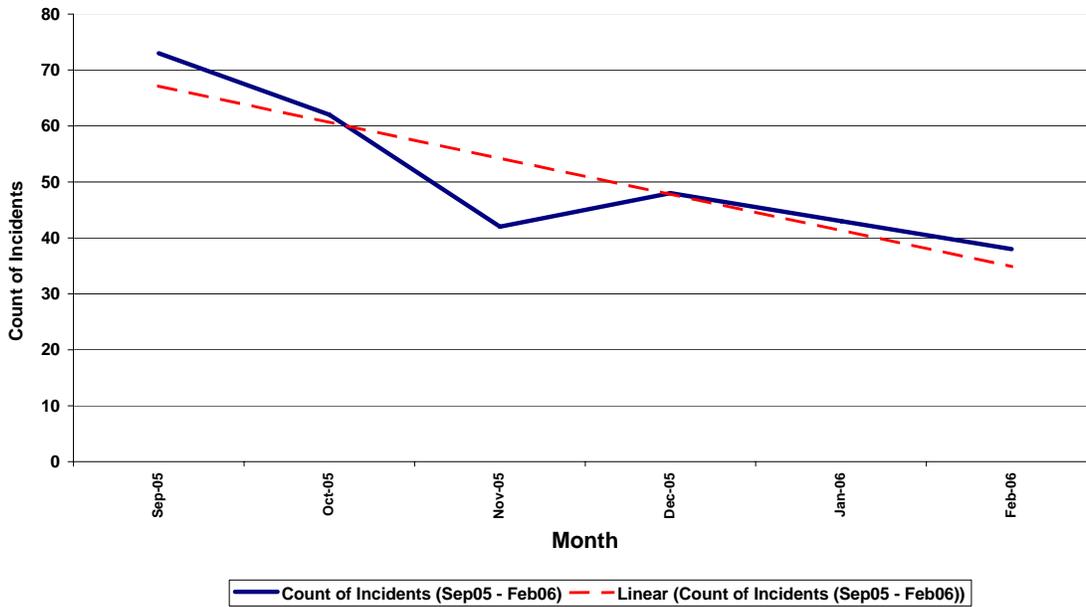


Whilst the direct comparison between Years 1 and 2 in Figure 1 reveal a 23% increase in reported incidents as defined by incident type, this is a reflection of the peak experienced in September 2005. The same figures reveal a fall in incidents since this peak that currently stands at a 48% reduction in calls for service.

Table to show the count of incidents by incident type in the Leabourne Road 150 metre boundary area between Sept 05 and Feb 06

Category and Group	Sep-05	Oct-05	Nov-05	Dec-05	Jan-06	Feb-06	Total	% Change Sept05 to Feb06
Rowdy/Nuisance Behaviour (Anti-Social Behaviour)	32	40	29	24	15	25	165	-22%
CRIMINAL DAMAGE (Crime)	17	12	5	11	11	6	62	-65%
Suspicious Activity (Public Safety)	9	1	0	6	4	1	21	-89%
Malicious Communications (Anti-Social Behaviour)	2	5	5	1	3	1	17	-50%
THEFT & HANDLING STOLEN GOODS (Crime)	4	1	3	2	2	3	15	-25%
BURGLARY (Crime)	5	1	0	1	5	1	13	-80%
OTHER NOTIFIABLE OFFENCES (Crime)	2	1	0	0	1	0	4	-100%
Animal-related problems (Anti-Social Behaviour)	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	0%
Vehicles (Anti-Social Behaviour)	1	0	0	2	0	0	3	-100%
Hoax Calls to Emergency Services (Anti-Social Behaviour)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	Unable to calculate %
Noise Nuisance (Anti-Social Behaviour)	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	Unable to calculate %
Substance Misuse (Anti-Social Behaviour)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	Unable to calculate %
Grand Total	73	62	42	48	43	38	306	-48%

Timeline showing the count of incidents in the Leabourne Road 150 metre boundary area between Sept 05 and Feb 06



CHA figures in relation to housing complaints demonstrate a similar picture, although their records do not enable a numerical figure to be produced.

CURA reports support the same theme. Indeed, the residents of Leabourne Road continue to attend the CURA meetings and report on a much-improved situation in their neighbourhood. Work has also now commenced on the building site, with the prospect of eighteen, low-cost, houses enhancing the area further.

The majority of the 'costs' of this response to Leabourne Road were borne by the respective agencies within their normal operating framework and seen as 'core business. CHA paid a fee of £4000.00 to The Surveillance Group, although their work covered a wider remit than simple Leabourne Road. The initial allocation of police overtime was £452.70 (including on costs).