

**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: **DITCH THE DEALER**

Name of force: **Lancashire**

Name: **PC 2423 Dave Johnson
Community Beat Manager: Fishwick**

Email address: **David.Johnson@lancashire.pnn.police.uk**

Full postal address: **Fulwood Police Station
87 Watling Street Road
Fulwood
Preston
PR2 8BQ
Lancashire**

Telephone number: **01772 209542**

Fax number: **01772 209532**

Name of endorsing senior representatives(s): **Acting Deputy Chief Constable Mr Adrian McAllister**

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s): **Acting Deputy Chief Constable – HQ Corporate Services Directorate**

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s): **Lancashire Constabulary, Police H.Q., PO Box 77, Hutton, Preston, PR4 5SB**

2. Summary of application

Scanning

Merrick Avenue is a desirable residential area situated at the tip of the Fishwick ward of Preston close to a private golf club. It has excellent links to the motorway and is largely populated by working families/retired people. Information from CRIMESTOPPERS indicated that the resident of 15 Merrick Avenue was dealing drugs. The fact that this had not been highlighted at previous PACT (Police and Communities Together neighbourhood Policing meetings) indicated that people living close to Merrick Avenue were not being represented.

Analysis

Discussions with local residents identified a 'Neighbourhood', and residents were given the opportunity to express their concerns at localised PACT meetings. Investigations revealed that elderly residents had been threatened, residents were afraid to leave their homes at night and parents did not allow children to play outside. This was due to the repeated presence of Class-A drug users visiting Merrick Ave to buy drugs. At its peak residents indicated that over 165 instances of drug dealing and ASB were occurring monthly. Consultation was conducted with the property landlord and a full interrogation of Police Data Recording Systems was carried out. Further analysis revealed the drug dealer to be a 6ft 20 stone career criminal with convictions spanning 3 decades, however, other drug users would smoke or inject substances at a neighbouring location causing criminal damage & ASB. The community was living in fear. From analysis, a set of objectives were devised aimed at sustainable change:

- Ditch the Dealer (provide support)
- Increase police accessibility
- Improve neighbourhood communication
- Develop a localised reparation program
- Prevention of dispersal

Response

- Closure Order & ASBO (national 1st)
- Termination of tenancy
- Support package for drug dealer – counselling, housing & advice
- Development of satellite police station
- Enhanced neighbourhood policing family – street wardens, PCSO's & volunteers
- Street briefings, newsletters, rotation of PACT
- Media campaign
- Reparation by Youth Offending Team & Probation
- Coordinated social landlord working – shared waiting list & suspension policy

Assessment

- Breach of ASBO & Closure – Nil
- Complaints from residents 100% reduction – with regard to drugs
- Increased public reassurance
- Elderly residents out at night, Children playing safely in street
- Development of Friends in Fishwick Area (FIFA residents association)
- Ongoing reparation program throughout Preston
- Launch of sub regional housing group & Taskforce
- Highlighted by Lancs Constabulary & Home Office as best practise.

3. Description of project

SCANNING

Overview of the problem

Scanning: Overview of the problem

Merrick Avenue is situated in the Fishwick ward of Preston; the properties in this area are predominately attractive post war semi detached houses. The area comprises of approximately 150 mixed tenure properties. The majority are privately owned, Community Gateway Association managing around 50 houses in the immediate locality. The area is made up principally of white families with a low percentage of benefit dependency and a number of older residents many of whom live alone.

The demographics of the area present low demand for service providers such as the police and CGA. The majority of resources are focused on the nearby Callon and Farringdon Park estates, also within the Fishwick ward. These two areas are within the top 2% of Deprived Communities throughout England and Wales (according to the Government Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2005).

It appeared to the Police that residents of Merrick Avenue (and the surrounding area) were only contacting them if they had been a personal victim of a crime.

However, in January 2005, CRIMESTOPPERS received an anonymous message as follows:

“15 Merrick Avenue is dealing drugs”.



Despite local police officers monitoring police data systems, there had been no indication from statistics that there was drug activity in the area and this was a surprise to local police officers.

The monthly neighbourhood Policing meeting (Police And Community Together) was being held at a community centre situated in the middle of the Fishwick ward (approximately 1 mile from Merrick Avenue). Although it had been deemed a success due to its large attendance, scanning of previous minutes indicated that residents of Merrick Avenue and the surrounding area were not being represented.

Early scanning showed that the Police and the Community Gateway Association were working with local people identifying neighbourhood boundaries that the community recognised. Prior to analysis, it was recognised that in order to understand problems encountered on a local level, neighbourhoods within the ward needed to be established.

In order to decipher the CRIMESTOPPERS message from Merrick Avenue, it was decided that the best

way to engage local residents would be to provide a PACT meeting at a neighbourhood location. A meeting was arranged at Fishwick Hall Golf Club. Although it may appear that this action was a response, it was essential to enable us to analyse information from local residents.

ANAYLSIS

Identification of the problem

Analysis: Identification of the problem.

The first PACT meeting offered an opportunity for residents to express their concerns vocally in a local neighbourhood location. The meeting was very well attended with 67% of local residents expressing their strong views with regard to local issues. The first half of the meeting was heated but once residents had vented their anger it proved to be an invaluable exercise and enabled the analysis stage of the POP to be completed effectively.

Analysis is recognised to be an extremely important part of the SARA process. Professor George Kelling from America states *“that prolonged problem analysis should precede any response or action”*, he also goes on to say that *“this process may go on longer than the actual actions or responses would take”*.

Though little statistical data to study it is worth bearing in mind the following statement,

“The police at all times should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police are the only members of the public who are paid to give full time attention to the duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interest of community welfare” (Sir Robert Peel 1829).

It was recognised as imperative to continue to liaise closely with the people of Merrick Avenue to encourage empowerment. The initial PACT meeting held at Fishwick Golf Club, despite being a painful experience, acted as an effective evidence gathering exercise and officers were able to hear first hand how Merrick Avenue was spiralling into decline, and how Signal Crime had lead to an atmosphere of fear.

Engaging the community was pivotal to any future actions, and with a view to maximising analysis, local officers created a victim centred plan for the analysis. This included, door to door surveying, leaflet drops, posters, telephone interviews, one to one meetings at the local housing office (satellite police station) and street briefings.

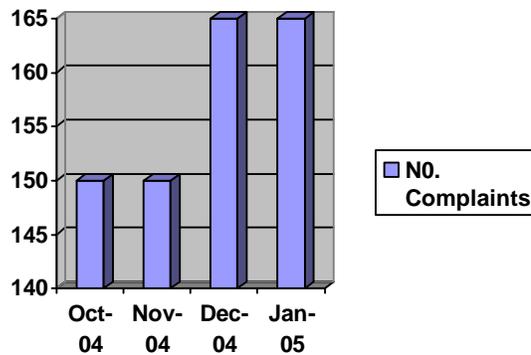
The information received was with regard to drug dealing at 15 Merrick Avenue, but in addition to drug dealing, it became apparent that the behaviour of drug addicts visiting the area to buy drugs had led to a total breakdown in communication between local residents and service providers.

One elderly resident (who had lived on the street for 55 years) had been threatened with violence by a drug user, and this information, despite being well known in the neighbourhood had not been reported to either police or the Community Gateway Association. Instead, like 'Chinese whispers' the information became distorted and exaggerated. This Signal Crime led to local residents changing their every day routine. Parents would not allow their children to play outside, elderly residents were too afraid to walk their dogs at night and some residents were considering selling their houses and leaving the area.

A signal crime is any criminal incident that causes a change in the publics behaviour and/or beliefs about their security for example open drugs dealing

15 Merrick Avenue was a rented property managed by a company called Link Accommodation. Highlighting their responsibilities and sharing information with them was to prove critical in the analysis. From the outset, it was established that whilst the Community Gateway Association had received no complaints from residents in the locality, Link had received a number of calls in relation to suspicious activity. Despite their best efforts, the allegations of drug dealing could not be substantiated, and Link gave the occupant a warning under his Tenancy Agreement. Details of residents, who made the initial complaints to Link, were followed up by police, and statements were taken as required.

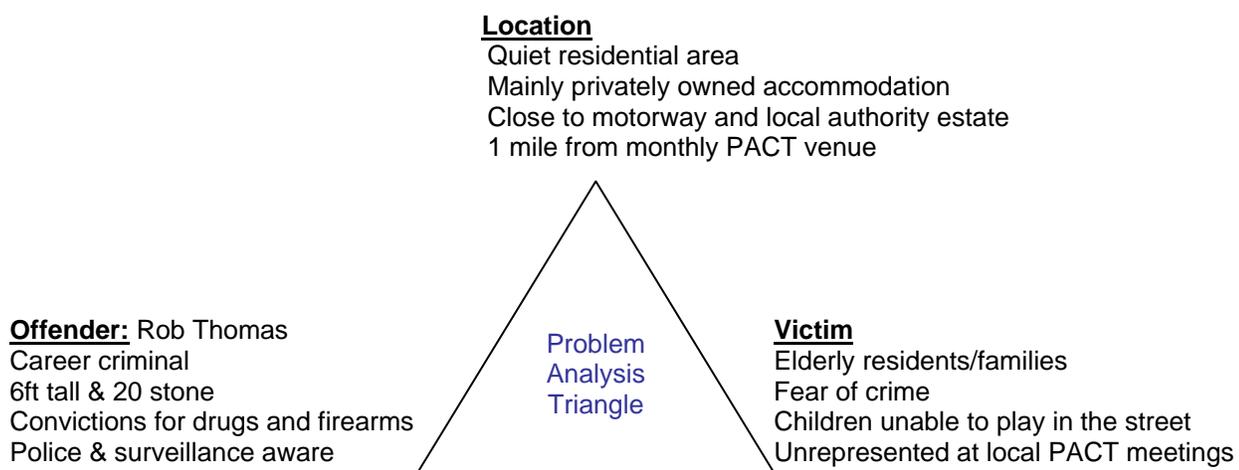
Whilst there was little statistical data available at this stage of the investigation, information from residents at the initial PACT meeting provided the complaint figures for drug dealing and associated ASB:



Residents highlighted the following examples of ASB at 15 Merrick Ave as being common occurrences between Oct 04 and Jan 05:

- Drug dealing
- Constant visitors during day & night
- Gangs of youths loitering abusing residents
- Loud music
- Doors slamming throughout the night
- Threats of violence to passers by
- Vehicles attending throughout the day and night
- Damage to properties and vehicles

Utilising the Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT), and the Routine Activity Theory developed by Cohen and Felson (1979) and Felson (1994), provided the basis for our approach.



Location: 1

Merrick Avenue is situated at the northern most point of Fishwick ward. It was built in the 1930's on an elevated position overlooking the River Ribble. Due to the scenic location, it is a popular residential area, particularly with families. Fishwick Hall Golf Club was developed in the 1970's, and Merrick Avenue

continued to flourish as a popular residential area.

- Accessible to the M6 motorway less than half a mile away.
- Traditional 3 and 4-bedroom semi's with gardens to both front and rear
- Average value around £200k.
- Majority of houses are privately owned.
- 50 properties managed by the Community Gateway Association
- 15 Merrick Avenue privately rented (via Link Accommodation)
- CCTV system (installed by the occupant at 15 Merrick Ave) overlooking the front elevation



Features of location: 2

Analysis revealed that whilst drugs were being bought from the occupant at 15 Merrick Avenue, the immediate area did not lend itself to drug taking, as there were very few quiet, private deserted areas. Drug users made a short 2-minute walk to use their drugs on Crummock Road.

Crummock Road is a cul-de-sac situated in an adjacent ward in the centre of the Farringdon Park estate:

- Close to the local primary school and nursery
- 48 self-contained flats
- Subject to serious criminal damage
- Residents bullied by youths
- Divisional Hot Spot for ASB and criminal damage
- Residents moved out of the area
- CGA unable to reallocate flats
- Frequent reports of arson

Features of the Victims

Due to Signal Crime, residents constantly changed their every day routine.

- Elderly residents afraid to leave houses at night
- Parents not allowing children to play out in street
- Residents considering relocating
- Residents considering vigilante action

Due to the features of the occupant of 15 Merrick Avenue, residents were very reluctant to provide statements or attend court to provide evidence. This highlighted a genuine fear of crime, and was initially counter productive.

Interviews were carried out with local residents:

Margaret – Neighbour on Merrick Avenue



Question: “How did it make you feel living near to a class “A” drug dealer?”

Answer: “We seriously considered selling our house”

Features of the Offender(s)

Drug users visiting Merrick Avenue were at the root of the Signal crime and ASB.

- White youths
- Street Workers
- Aged 15 to 35
- Unemployed
- Disregard of law & order

This information backs up the research done by J.Oerton and colleagues in 2003, recognising the link between crime and drug use.

Features of the Offender

Drug dealing was at the heart of the Problem Analysis Triangle, the individual carryout the dealing was

Rob Thomas dob 08/12/55:

- Intimidating appearance
- 6ft tall
- 20 stone
- 30 yr Criminal record
- Previous convictions
 - drug dealing
 - firearms



RESPONSE

What we did to address the problem?

In order to respond appropriately we set ourselves a number of objectives. It is important to recognise that a partnership approach is key to delivery of success:

Objectives

1. Ditch the dealer (provide support)
2. Police accessibility
3. Effective neighbourhood communication
4. Reparation
5. Prevention of Dispersal

1. Ditch the dealer

We based our responses on the wishes of the community and in the words of Irene (aged 87),

'GET RID OF HIM FOR GOOD!'

Having considered various forms of criminal, civil and housing legislation, whilst recognising the reluctance of residents in attending court it was decided that the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 would meet the objective requirements in order to **Ditch the Dealer**.

Evidence Gathering:

A partnership approach to evidence gathering was adopted, with local officers, Community Gateway employees, Link and Preston City Council Street Wardens working in partnership, sharing resources and proactively gathering information.

Search Warrant:

This information allowed police to obtain a search warrant in accordance with The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. As expected, the execution of the warrant provided sufficient evidence to charge Thomas with a Class A drugs offence.

Closure Order:

Section 2 of the ASB Act 2003 allows a court to make a Closure Order for up to 3 months if it is satisfied that each of the following is applicable:

- The premises in respect of which the Closure Order is made has been used in connection with the unlawful use, production OR supply of a class a drug.
- The use of the premises is associated with the occurrence or disorder or serious nuisance to members of the public.
- The order is necessary to prevent the occurrence of such disorder or serious nuisance.

The warrant identified the fact that 15 Merrick Avenue had been used in connection with the use of Class A

drugs, whilst community evidence, statements and intelligence read in open court by the police on behalf of residents proved that serious nuisance had occurred in the locality, and that a Closure Order was necessary.

Due to a successful police application, 15 Merrick Avenue became the first subject of a Closure Order in Preston.

The Closure Order effectively removed Rob Thomas from 15 Merrick Avenue for 3 months, providing some welcome respite for fearful residents.

Termination of Tenancy:

Michael S.Scott recognised, *'the police should take the initiative in redistributing responsibility for addressing public safety problems'*.

Anticipating concerns from residents, Link acting on police advice was able to enforce a Termination of Tenancy on 15 Merrick Avenue.

This measure prevented Rob Thomas from returning to 15 Merrick Avenue, and contributed significantly to the increase in public safety.

Anti-Social Behaviour Order

When devising the project objectives, local officers highlighted a loophole in the government legislation namely the Closure Order (Section 2 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003).

Whilst it was clear that a successful Closure Order application would remove Rob Thomas from 15 Merrick Avenue, there was nothing within the application to prevent him from moving into another rental property on that street. Should this occur, the community would not only lose faith in the law, but also with the local officers, which is not acceptable.

To combat this serious loophole, the police (using community evidence, statements and intelligence), successfully applied for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order.

Sec 1 of the ASB Act 2003 allows a court to make an ASBO if it is satisfied that each of the following is applicable:

- The person in respect of the ASBO has acted in an anti-social manner since the commencement of the act.
- That such an order is necessary to protect relevant persons from prevent further anti-social acts.

The prohibition obtained prevented Rob Thomas from, *'entering or being present on the ward of Fishwick'*, for duration of 3 years.

Although using a combination of a Closure Order and ASBO was a national first, it not only prevented Rob Thomas from returning to the policing area, but more importantly it met the requirements of the community, immediately lifting the possibility of repercussions or witness intimidation.

Ditch the dealer (provide support)

Whilst dealing with Rob Thomas from an enforcement point of view it was important to acknowledge his long history of drug problems. From the outset of this process Thomas was given information with regards to support networks that were available in the local area. He was also given counselling whilst in police custody by Drug and Alcohol Services.

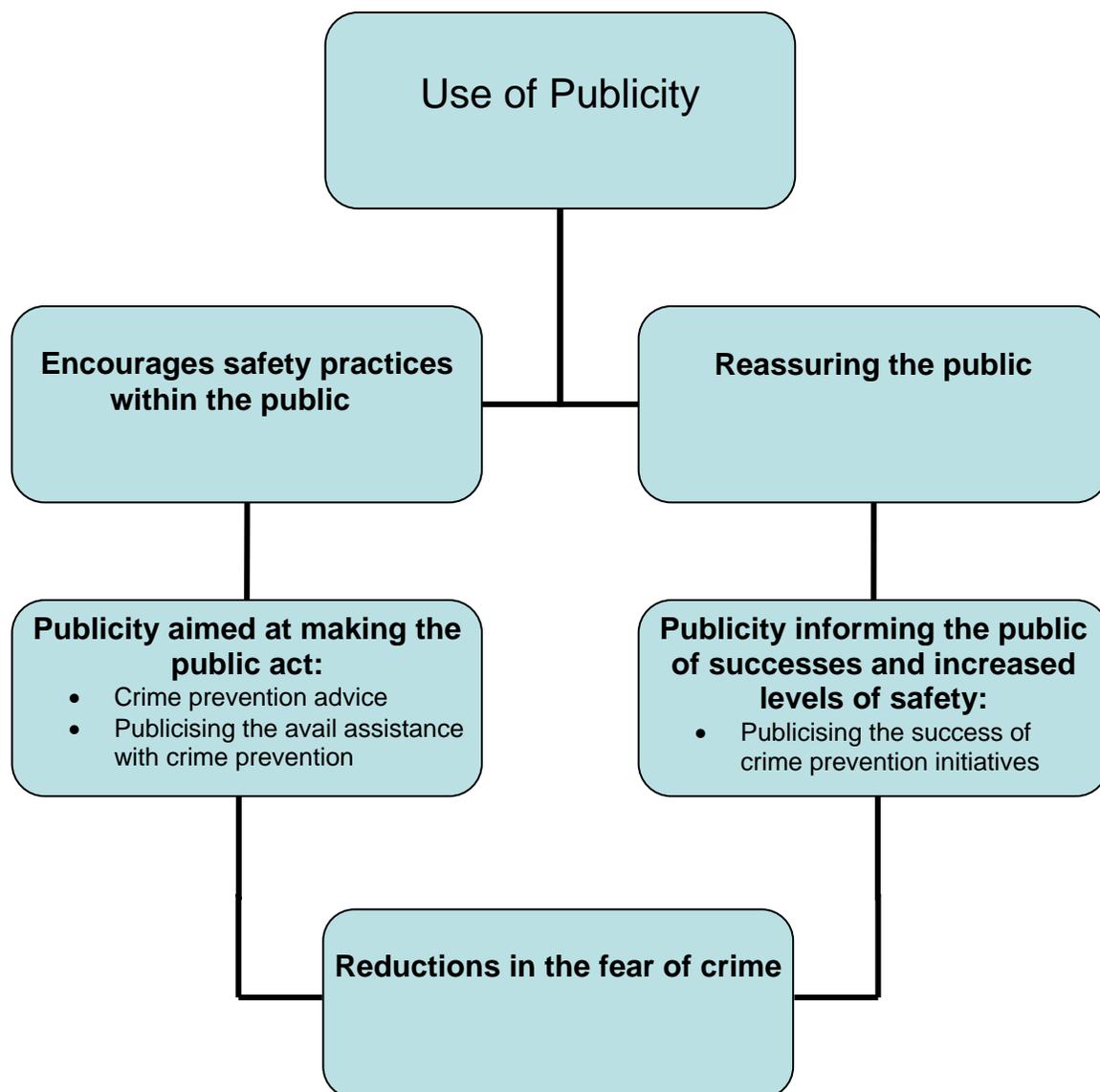
It was important that Thomas understood the legal process that could lead to him losing his home and limiting his movements in the local area. Local officers explained all aspects of the law, and the options available to Rob Thomas, he was also encouraged to seek legal advice at an early stage.

When the Closure Order was imposed, Rob Thomas was given relevant housing advice to avoid him becoming homeless.

As a final assist to Thomas, C.G.A. provided the removal service necessary to facilitate a smooth move for him away from Merrick Avenue.

In addition to supporting Rob Thomas, it was crucial not to lose sight of the victims. Taking into account changes in everyday routine caused by Signal Crime, a detailed reassurance campaign was initiated. Elements of this campaign included: high visibility patrol by local officers, PACT meeting (also attended by a CPS representative), the offer of one to one counselling by Victim Support. The widespread usage of publicity acted as a mechanism to reduce the fear of crime.

Adapted from: The different mechanisms associated with publicity – Kate Bowers & Shane Johnson.



2. Police accessibility

Having broken down the initial barriers between the Police and local community, high visibility by local officers was important to sustain the relationship.

The Neighbourhood Policing meeting is now rotated within the ward to 3 neighbourhoods identified by the communities. This gives the opportunity for residents to attend a meeting in their immediate locality.

City Council Street Wardens, the newly appointed PCSO, Special Constables and Community Volunteers were also used on the area to promote the wider Police family. All were encouraged to highlight the importance of Neighbourhood Policing and to make local residents aware that they are key to the success of the Fishwick Team.

3. Effective Neighbourhood Communication

To ensure that all information and activity is feed back to the Community the following methods were used:

- Newsletters/Leaflet Drops/emails from Police and Community Gateway
- Posters
- Accountability at PACT
- Street Briefings/Informal Neighbourhood Gatherings
- Local Media campaign
- Taskforce
 - C.G.A. is a recent stock transfer from Preston City Council housing department. The ethos of the organisation is a tenant led and tenant empowered association. In order to achieve this, working with residents & service partners, local neighbourhoods have been established. These have been developed into Local Community Areas. There is 1 Taskforce per LCA with representation from each of the local neighbourhoods. The Taskforce's have direct influence on capital expenditure, policy and strategic directions. Enabling community members to directly influence decision-making.

4. Reparation

The majority of offenders identified as drug users lived on the Farrington Park estate, it was strongly felt that they should take responsibility for the damage caused particularly on Crummock Road. A new partnership was developed between residents, the police, C.G.A., Preston Youth Offending Team and the Probation Service. This resulted in the harnessing of the readily available labour market, which is transforming Crummock Road.

Whilst offenders in the criminal justice system could be used for reparation, other offenders were made subject of further Anti-Social Behaviour Orders with relevant geographic prohibitions.

5. Prevention of Dispersal

- Create Preston Registered Social landlord co-ordinated working group
- Set up sub regional group to:
 - Develop shared waiting list providing one stop house for social housing
 - Develop shared suspension policy to prevent landlord hopping and "problem" tenants moving round

ASSESSMENT

Achieving Objectives

Assessment – Achieving objectives

1. Ditch the Dealer

Successful combination of a Closure Order and an Anti-Social Behaviour Order in a national first ensured:

- Rob Thomas left 15 Merrick Avenue for good
- Prevented from returning to the surrounding area for 3 years.
- To date no reported breaches of Closure Order or ASBO.
- To date Thomas has not been arrested, or come to police attention anywhere in the UK
- Taking the offender out of PAT - 100% reduction in complaints about drug dealing.

Ten offenders identified as buying drugs from Rob Thomas have been dealt with by way of ASBO, banning them from the area.

During February, March, April and May 2005 there have been no reports from any residents with regard to drug dealing activities.

1. Ditch the dealer (provide support)

Due to the support provided Rob Thomas is:

- Currently drug free
- Engaging in drug programmes.
- Living in private rented accommodation with housing support
- Currently suspended from all RSL's waiting lists in Preston
 - Important to note he is suspended not excluded giving the opportunity for regular reviews of circumstances enabling entry onto waiting lists when references can be provided showing sustained good conduct in current tenancy.

Speaking to Rob Thomas, he recently reflected on his plight and we quote:

"It brought tears to my eyes, & I never want to go through that again"

"I would rather have gone to prison"

2. Police accessibility

The future of Neighbourhood Policing is in localisation. Recently, funding was obtained to modify the local Community Gateway Housing Office to allow shared occupancy with the local policing team. The office is situated within the heart of the ward, and will act as a Satellite Police Station.

In addition to police officers, the ward now benefits from the usage of PCSO's and a number of Police Volunteers. One of the volunteers lives on Merrick Avenue.

PACT meetings are now rotated throughout the ward to not only promote Neighbourhood Policing, but also to avoid the Merrick Avenue problems (ie lack of representation).

3. Effective Neighbourhood Communication



- Neighbourhood watch
- Friends In Fishwick Association – local tenant & resident group formed
- Established C.G.A. Taskforce

4. Reparation



Hard labour as offenders clean grot spot



Due to the success of the partnership involving the Youth Offending Team and the Probation Service, the initiative is currently being rolled out throughout Preston.

Members of YOT and Probation regularly attend PACT meetings throughout Preston in order to identify future areas for development.

A service level agreement has been established with Lancashire County Council to continue and expand scheme

5. Prevention of Dispersal

- Established sub regional group of all RSL's in Preston
- On Target for summer launch of shared waiting list for all social housing in Preston
 - One stop shop for housing
- On Target for summer launch of shared suspension list
 - Prevention of landlord hopping

Assessment of the Victims:

Question: **“How are things now?”**

Answer: **“Things are back to normal and its our Avenue again”**



- Safe environment
 - Fear of crime eradicated
 - Recent visual audit identified elderly residents now walk on Merrick Avenue at night
 - Parents now allow their children to play outside.
-
- FIFA -
 - residents have formed a resident's association named Friends In Fishwick Area
 - FIFA meets monthly and discusses ways that members of the community can collectively improve the area and solve problems
 - Taskforce
 - Members of FIFA represent neighbourhood on local community area Taskforce
 - Directly influencing decision making regarding policy and expenditure in area
 - Capital Investment achieved
 - Successful bidding for external funding
 - Empowered community – created from success and confidence

Exit Strategy

Partnership
Reparation
Ongoing
Commitment
Enthusiasm
Empowerment
Delivery

..... finally Merrick Avenue handed back to the community

Appendix 1

Terms of reference

Internet:

www.communitypolicing.org
www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk
www.crimereduction.gov.uk
www.opsi.gov.uk
www.together.gov.uk
www.tasbit.co.uk
www.homeoffice.gov.uk
www.popcentre.org
www.bbc.co.uk

Publications:

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
Handbook of Policing: Tim Newburn
Crime Reduction and Problem-Oriented Policing: Willan Publishing
Handbook of Crime Prevention and community Safety: Nick Tilley

Appendix 2

KEY PARTNERS

Community Gateway Association: Sue Roach

Link Accomodation: Kelly Ginley

Preston Youth Offending Team: Dave Bradley

Preston Probation Service: Lynne Nolan

Preston Drug and Alcohol Services: Lynne Melton-Jones

Victim Support: Andrew Stainton

Lancashire Evening Post: Emily Bradshaw

Lancashire Constabulary Force Solicitor: Niamh Noone

Lancashire Partnership Against Crime (LANPAC): Ian Groundwater

Fishwick Ward Councillors: Sharon Riley & Harold Parker

Fishwick Hall Golf Club: Jim Davis

Lancashire County Council youth Services: June Killeen

Brockholes Wood Infant School: Allison Hickson

Friends In Fishwick Area: FIFA