

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 **Town Centre Violence**

Name of force/agency/CDRP: **Cleveland Police Force**

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) **D. Brunskill**

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s) **Stockton District Commander, Supt**

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s)

**Stockton Police Station
Cleveland Police
Thistle Green
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TZ**

2. Summary of application

Town Centre Violence

Stockton is a popular location for people looking for an evenings entertainment with 57 pubs and clubs situated in the Town Centre area. It is an extremely busy entertainment area with some patrons travelling from as far away as Newcastle and Leeds on coach trips.

In March 2004, a problem profile was produced which showed that, whilst violent crime was occurring throughout the district, the main concentration was in the Town Centre. Violence offences accounted for 30% of all offences in this area and 12% of all violence offences in the district. Crimes occurred mostly in the High Street and surrounding area with core times over the weekend between midnight and 3 a.m.

Stockton Borough Council had also identified a number of unlicensed taxi drivers and Police identified assaults by some of those drivers on lone females.

The force analytical systems and data warehouse were researched to find details of offences between 01/01/02 and 31/12/03. The Criminal Intelligence System, PNC and crime recording database were used to research details linked to offences.

The results of the research showed significant increases in the district in 2003 compared with 2002.

- Assault occasioning actual bodily harm from 336 to 928 (176% increase)
- Common Assault from 549 to 1024 (87% increase)
- Assault on Constable (Police Act 1996) from 32 to 78 (144% increase)
- Having a blade or point in a public place from 21 to 40 (90% increase)
- Threats to kill from 17 to 33 (94% increase)
- Wounding with intent to do GBH from 40 to 71 (78% increase)

Stockton Police, Stockton Borough Council and the Primary Care Trust were part of the Stockton Violence Reduction Group reporting to the Safer Stockton Partnership (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership). A multi-agency approach was adopted to address the problems of violent crime in Stockton and a number of initiatives were introduced namely:

- Road gating
- Installation of barriers and "Taxi shelters"
- Operation 'Tranquillity' – A high visibility Police operation
- 'Three Strikes' policy
- 'Think B4U Drink' campaign
- Pubwatch
- Community Dispersal Order

Since the introduction of the project there has been a reduction in violent crime and pedestrian safety has improved.

3. Description of project

Introduction

Stockton Town Centre is reputed to have the widest High Street in England. As well as the High Street shopping area there is an indoor shopping area, the Castlegate Centre, and a newly developed outdoor shopping area, Wellington Square, all interconnected within a relatively small area. Within the High Street and surrounding area there are 57 licensed pubs and clubs offering late night drinking and fast food outlets which attract a high number of visitors to the town centre.

Most licensed premises closed within a relatively short time scale discharging a high number of people onto the High Street within a short space of time. Many of these people then congregated in Yarm Lane at the southern end of the High Street where the vast majority of fast food outlets are situated. Two private hire car offices are also based on Yarm Lane. Hackney taxis also used this location as a pick up point and that part of Yarm Lane due to the volume of people and taxis eventually became impassable to other vehicles.

Normal policing appeared to be having little effect and it was clear that a partnership approach would be the best way to deal with the problem. Stockton Violence Reduction Group had been in place for some time, its remit being to deal with the problem of violence throughout the district; its membership included representatives from the Police, Stockton Borough Council and The Primary Care Trust.

After the initial scanning and analysis of this problem, it was decided to tackle this issue by means of a problem solving project.

The aim of the project was to reduce violent crime by 20% over a period of one year. This was seen as realistic and achievable within the time limit set.

Scan

Violent crime is a long standing problem common in all Town Centres and night time economy areas with the traditional response having been to provide extra policing at core times.

The introduction of National Crime Recording Standards revealed the true extent of the problem as all violent crime was now recorded, e.g. previously there would be no record of a drunken complainant who was asked to return when sober and failed to do so, or victims of assaults who refused details or declined to make a complaint.

Violent crime became a focus after being highlighted in Strategic and Tactical Assessments. A problem profile was prepared researching offences occurring between January 2002 and December 2003 which showed violent crime was committed mostly at weekends between midnight and 3.00 am and identified a hot spot in Stockton Town Centre.

Between 1st January 2002 and 31st December 2005 there were 11732 crimes of violence in the district under 66 offence type headings. Ten types accounted for 94% of all recorded violent crimes. The chart in Fig 1 details those offence types.

Offence

003/01 - Threats to kill	167	1.40%
005/01 - Wounding with intent to do GBH	287	2.40%
008/01 - Wound or inflict GBH with or without weapon	205	1.70%
008/06 - Assault occasioning actual bodily harm	5352	45.60%
008/11 - Possess offensive weapon without lawful authority or reasonable excuse	205	1.80%
104/23 - Assault on constable (police act 1996)	293	2.50%
105/01 - Common assault and battery	3280	28%
125/11 - Fear or provocation of violence	163	1.40%
125/12 - Harassment, alarm or distress	888	7.50%
195/94 - Harassment (protection from harassment etc)	176	1.50%
Total	11016	94%

Fig 1

In addition to the offences shown in Fig 1, there were 6 murders, 11 attempted murders and 2 cases of manslaughter.

The graph at Fig 2 shows the growth over the last four years with a trend line depicting the rise in violent crime in Stockton Town Centre.

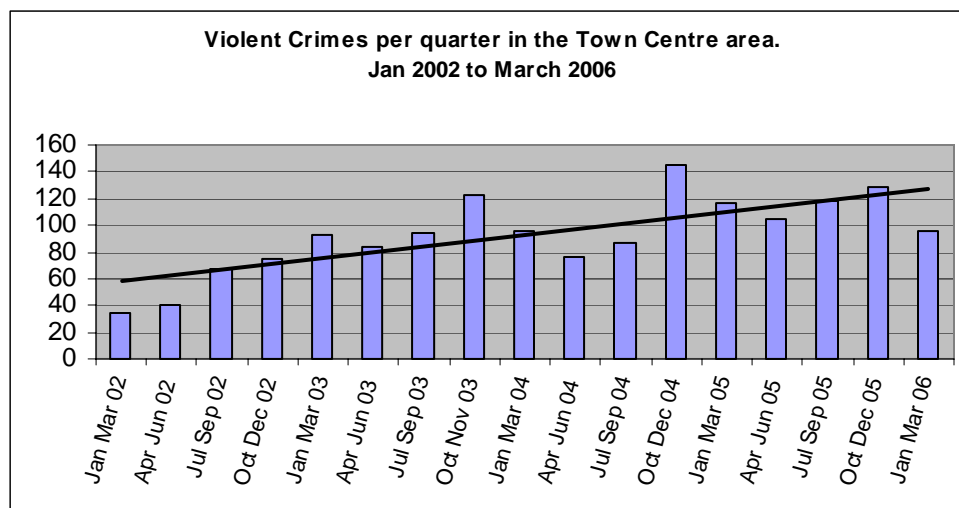


Fig 2

Stockton Police District Licensing Unit keeps records of all of the licensed premises in the district, including opening hours, licensee details and the capacity of each premises. Customer capacity figures held by the Licensing Unit indicated that there could be as many as ten thousand patrons in the town centre pubs and clubs.

The area of Yarm Lane that attracted most police attention is a 50 metre length of road at the southern end of the High Street where there are seven fast food outlets and two taxi hire companies.

Whilst figures relating to the medical treatment of criminally injured persons are collected by the Accident and Emergency department of the local general hospital, they have not been considered due to the unreliability of information. Ambulance callout figures have also not been considered as they are a recent innovation and would not allow for a comparison with time periods prior to the introduction of the Problem Solving Process.

Analysis

There are 57 licensed premises in Stockton High Street along with a number of late night fast food outlets. At the southern end of the street there are two night clubs that closed at 2.00 am (under the new hours allowed by the Licensing Act 2003 both now close at 4am).

Yarm Lane is a road adjoining the southern end of the High Street. The part of Yarm Lane that attracted most police attention is the first 50 metres off the High Street where most of the late night fast food outlets are situated along with two taxi offices. There is a cluster of two night clubs and 15 pubs within 50 metres of Yarm Lane. This is a magnet for customers gathering after the clubs have closed, buying food and waiting for taxis.

This caused congestion every Friday and Saturday night due to the number of people gathering in such a relatively small area. Taxis would not carry passengers with food, resulting in subsequent delays to crowd dispersal.

Within the area to the southern end of the High Street and in Yarm Lane, over 65% of the crimes occurred between 8:00 pm and 3:00 am, reinforcing the perception that alcohol was a contributing factor.

The most common offence was Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm, followed by Common Assault. Over the research period these two offences alone accounted for 78% of all violence offences.

The problem profile showed that 60% of all suspects of violent crime were aged between 10 and 29 years old, whilst 30% of the victims were aged between 10 and 19 years. Genders were fairly evenly split although domestic related offences showed the victims to be mostly women between 31 and 40 years. Core time analysis indicated that most violent crime occurred during licensing hours.

Research figures highlighted the locations and times for violence offences. A number of points are identified as being a contributory factor to incidents of violent behaviour.

- Patrons leaving nightclubs gathered in this small area to buy food and then obtain transport home. Taxi drivers would not carry passengers with food so people ate their food in the street before leaving in a taxi. This caused congestion in Yarm Lane that led to an increase in the risk of pedestrian traffic accidents. Fights over taxis were also a regular occurrence.
- Known offenders regularly caused trouble. Many were known to licensees and police alike and caused trouble inside the licensed premises as well as outside on the street.
- One of the effects of the excess consumption of alcohol is to remove inhibitions, and on occasion causing people to act completely out of character.
- Many people did not appear to consider the effect of alcohol upon themselves, nor the effect of their behaviour upon others. Education relating to alcohol consumption would be as important as enforcement of legislation.
- Stockton Borough Council had identified that there were a number of illegal taxi operators which was considered a potential danger for patrons as these could not be regulated.

Response

A Problem Solving Project was registered in November 2004 to address the increasing and unacceptable level of violence. It was accepted that it was not possible to eradicate the problem entirely as violence is an established long term problem in every town centre in the country.

However, a 20% reduction in total offences of violence was seen as realistic and achievable. This target was set for one year with a proviso to review and extend if necessary.

Preventative measures were introduced to reduce the risk of injury to patrons leaving night clubs and improve their safety whilst travelling home. Enforcement measures were designed to allow police to be more proactive. Intelligence

Crowd dynamics played a big part in generating trouble in this area. When people were standing in a group trouble developed and spread very quickly. With the introduction of metal barriers along these paved areas people had to form an orderly line, thus the excuse for queue jumping was eliminated and the potential for trouble reduced.

It became apparent very soon after the construction of the barriers that trouble was less likely to start or spread as each person queued relatively orderly and had contact with fewer people in line than they would in a crowd. Much of the policing of the line was self generated and the door staff from nearby premises were on hand to assist.

3. Operation 'Tranquillity' – a voluntary scheme where late night licensed premises and food retailers contributed financially towards the cost of additional policing in the town centre. Officers were provided and deployed throughout the district with four in the town centre. The relevant times were from 10.00 pm until 3.00 am on Friday and Saturday night and 10.00 pm until 1.00 am on Sunday night. Their remit involved high profile patrols and visits to licensees in their premises.

The operation was considered sufficiently important and successful that when the pubs, clubs and fast food outlets extended their hours under the Licensing Act 2003, the relevant patrol times were extended to accommodate the changes.

4. 'Three Strikes' policy – a policy designed to address persistent offenders. Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) are sought on individuals responsible for causing nuisance or fighting in the Town Centre area. People coming to the attention of police on two occasions for any violence offences were sent a warning letter and monitored for six months. If they offended again within that time an application would be made for an ASBO. The District provides two full time police officers to work with the local authority Anti Social Behaviour Team monitoring perpetrators of anti social behaviour throughout the district. These officers are based within local authority premises together with the rest of the anti-social behaviour team. The "three strikes" policy is administered by one of these officers.

5. 'Think B4U Drink' campaign - an awareness campaign designed to target the public with an alcohol misuse message. The campaign was launched in October 2005 in 20 licensed premises across the district with messages on beer mats, bar posters, washroom posters, branded T-shirts, bar runners, window stickers and get home safely taxi cards. There was also a 4 minute DVD repeatedly projected onto the side of a lorry in the Town Centre showing the problems encountered during the social drinking hours. A number of assaults in town centres had been captured on CCTV and these were shown on the DVD along with material aimed to raise peoples' awareness of the consequences of drinking. The advertising side of the scheme has been extended to include taxis, public transport and local supermarkets.

6. Violent Crime Unit - a dedicated Unit formed by Stockton Police to investigate violent crime. Offences within the Town Centre Hot Spot are prioritised and dealt with by this unit.

7. Pubwatch – a system that allows licensees to meet quarterly. The meeting is chaired by a police officer from the District Licensing Unit. It provides a platform where problems and issues can be aired and solutions suggested. Pubwatch has been in place in the district for many years and is considered good practice. The established partnership working meant there was a mechanism in place to contribute towards combating violence.

The meetings also give the licensees a feeling of solidarity and support for their actions against problem patrons. One of the most powerful sanctions the Pubwatch has is a ban that can be imposed on regular troublemakers. Once a ban is imposed it can last for any period of time, decided by the Pubwatch meeting, up to and including a lifetime ban, and has the effect of preventing the troublemaker from entering any licensed premises in the Pubwatch area.

Recipients can appeal to the Police licensing officer; such appeals go forward to the next Pubwatch meeting where a final decision is made.

The bans imposed by Pubwatch are usually adhered to by even the most cynical recipients.

The effectiveness of the Yarm Lane Gating, Taxi Barriers, Think B4U Drink Campaign and Operation Tranquillity would be shown by monitoring any change in the number of offences in Yarm Lane and the southern area of the High Sreet.

The 3 Strikes policy is monitored by the local authority Anti Social Behaviour Team who have the responsibility for sending the letters of warning and initiating action to obtain ASBOs when required.

Pubwatch meetings take place on a three monthly basis and licensees may report problems at these meetings but any information gathered by licensees in the interim can be reported directly to officers of the District Licensing Unit who maintain regular communication with all licensees.

Assessment

The three strikes policy has been in place for a number of months and letters have been sent to 60 people in the Stockton Town Centre area. Only two of those people have chosen to ignore the warnings and have progressed to a full ASBO, it appears that the warning letters are having a positive effect.

The launch of the "Think B4U Drink" campaign was so successful that, in November 2005, Stockton Council was nominated the "Most Responsible Local Authority" in the Responsible Drinks Retail Awards and after winning the Tyne Tees Region Pubwatch Category in the Morning Advertiser Best Pub Awards 2006, the campaign was short-listed in the National Finals in February 2006.

The campaign was also Highly Commended in the Community Safety Section of the Association of Town Centre Management Board awards.

The "Think B4U Drink" campaign has also been aired on radio where it is estimated 89% of the available population will have heard the message, the approximate reach of population being 707,332 and those with car access being 524,032.

There are 30 people on Pubwatch bans barring them from licensed premises in Stockton. Four of these are lifetime bans and there are a further four people from a neighbouring sub-district who are banned from all licensed premises throughout the district following assaults on police officers. Licensees have also reported to the District Licensing Unit that they have observed more couples using their premises indicating that people feel safer and are more willing to take their partners out in the town.

From the beginning of the project in November 2004, violent crime continued to rise, as was anticipated due to the presence of additional officers into the environment. Offence levels eventually began to reduce once the measures had taken effect, and the target to reduce violent crime by 20% was achieved and exceeded. Qualitative feedback from licensees has been complimentary and many have reported changes to their client bases with an increase in couples attending their premises together with a more relaxed environment.

In the Town Centre in 2004 there were 220 Assaults Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm and 48 Common Assaults. Of these, 101 occurred in the final quarter of the year, twice as many as in each of the three previous quarters. In November 2004 the Yarm Lane Gates were put into operation. This measure had a positive effect on the number of recorded assaults taking place. In the following year there were between 71 and 80 similar crimes per quarter with a further reduction in the first quarter of 2006 to 53 crimes, the second lowest for the last 3 years.

The graph in Fig 4 shows the number of offences per quarter from October 2004 to the end of March 2006.

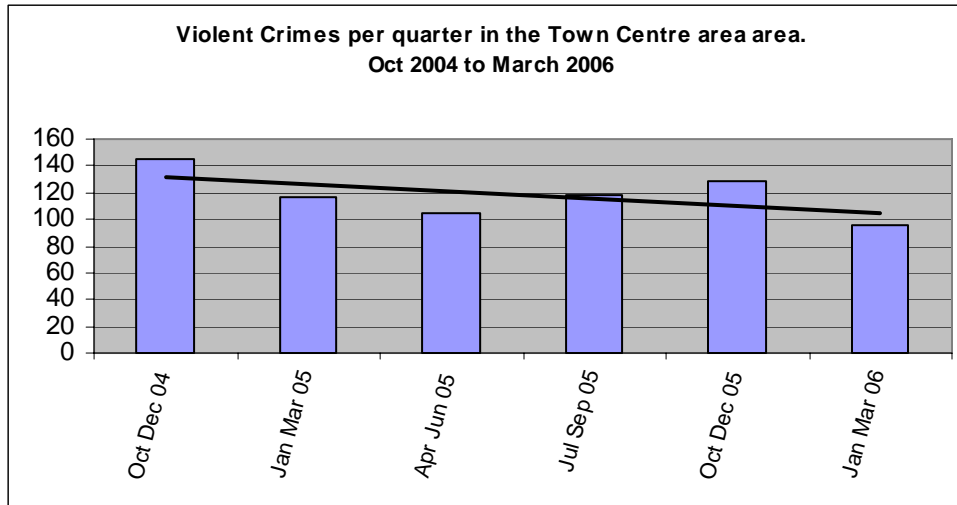


Fig 4

Sustainable solutions in place include the construction and installation of the gates in Yarm Lane and the taxi rank barriers, partnership funding provides for extra policing at specific times. The "Think B4U Drink" campaign is gaining a lot of local media attention, it is being looked at by neighbouring districts and its continued success may result in its adoption by other forces.

The objective of the project was to ultimately reduce violent crime levels and to make Stockton Town Centre a safer place for those working and socialising there. It is believed this objective has been achieved. The project is continuing with the introduction of new and more challenging targets set by the local Partnerships for the 2006/7 financial year.