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**DEVELOPING THE RUC'S 'POLICING IN PARTNERSHIP' STRATEGY
- PRACTICAL PROBLEM-SOLVING IN PORTRUSH**

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ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY'S FORCE WIDE, PROBLEM-ORIENTED, COMMUNITY-POLICING STRATEGY

Introduction

The RUC's ongoing development of a Force-wide, **problem-oriented** community-policing strategy, currently piloted at various sites, is a classic example of a police service, and individual officers, tackling root causes of province-wide and locally based problems with the intention of finding lasting solutions rather than repeatedly returning to them.

This Tilley Award entry demonstrates that we have:

- comprehensively **scanned** the policing environment, in the widest sense, to identify problems likely to be faced;
- **analysed** the complex characteristics of Northern Ireland's divided society within which the police service operates;
- consulted and worked with the community to **devise solutions and responses** to difficult problems; and
- implemented responses with the clear intention to **assess** their **impact**.

Two levels of problem solving: Force Strategy and Local Initiatives

This submission is presented at two levels. The RUC plays a critical role in the peace and reconciliation process - providing an effective, efficient and acceptable police service to all. Our vision entails a holistic policing strategy which addresses

community and police relationships and, at the same time, effectively solves crime and local quality of life problems. This submission, therefore, at the macro, corporate level describes the first 18 months developing our 'Policing in Partnership' strategy which is centred around decentralised, local problem-solving.

At the other, micro, level the second section of our submission describes the first year of a local problem-oriented policing approach. The 'Portrush Project' demonstrates our belief that successful implementation of community policing not only solves local problems but, also, enhances police/community relationships. The success of this pilot project provides conclusive evidence.

Summary

The title of the project is 'The RUC's Policing in Partnership Strategy - Practical Problem Solving in Portrush'.

The problems addressed are: 'How to choose a policing strategy for a divided society?'; and 'How to reduce crime and enhance police/public relationships in Portrush?'

The evidence used to define the macro-level problem **relates to the political context and current policing debate in Northern Ireland while at the micro level the evidence relates to local crime figures and public fears and attitudes.**

The response at the corporate level was to identify the component parts of a comprehensive problem-oriented policing strategy. Locally the response was to resource and implement problem solving initiatives.

The impact of Force strategy will be measured by long term indicators including levels of confidence, acceptability, representativeness and community participation.
However, at the local level measures are more specific eg local crime figures, problems solved, and public satisfaction.

THE RUC'S 'POLICING IN PARTNERSHIP" STRATEGY AND THE 'PORTRUSH POLICING INITIATIVE'

INTRODUCTION

For some 18 months an RUC project team has been developing the force's overarching Community Policing Strategy which concurs with Professor Goldstein's statement, that "community policing without problem solving is merely community relations". Therefore, the RUC's vision of policing in the future is centred around local, joint problem solving. The mechanism to deliver this will be appropriately trained, supported and resourced community beat officers, empowered to work with the community and other agencies using a variety of problem solving tools and supported by force-wide organisational and operational strategies.

Although originally not conceived as a specifically 'problem-oriented policing' project, at an early stage, the team, headed by Chief Superintendent Stephen White, assisted by Inspector Sue Millar concluded that the strategy's success will depend on the quality of problem solving achieved. The core principles of POP are now central to the strategy and its implementation. The SARA model has widespread applicability to the policing systems envisaged in Northern Ireland and, already, in pilot sites around the province, officers have received training and are implementing the approach. However, during extensive research, the team has examined variations and refinements of problem solving models for applicability to the unique Northern Ireland context.

A recent HMIC inspection commended the project team for its energy and vision agreeing that the whole basis of community policing would be through problem solving and a neighbourhood approach embracing consultation, accountability and partnerships.

In January 1999 Force Command approved the philosophy, principles and concept of the overarching force strategy, however, until the "Patten" Commission reports its conclusions, a full implementation plan, involving major cultural, structural,

operational and organisational change, cannot be launched. The component parts of this change strategy have been identified (see appendices) and preparations are in place. However, at this stage, initial implementation is taking place by way of pilot projects such as the Portrush scheme.

Before describing that particular scheme the overall 'Policing in Partnership' strategy is summarised to highlight how it constitutes "good practice" in developing force-wide problem-solving strategies.

OBJECTIVES

In November 1997 the RUC formed a Community Policing Project Teani initially to enhance the Force's partnerships and to examine policing strategies appropriate to Northern Ireland's "post-ceasefire" political and social context.

The nature of the problem facing the RUC could, perhaps, best be described as attempting to develop methods of responding to incidents with a more proactive, community-based, approach while, at the same time, retaining the capacity to deal with terrorism and public disorder.

Space restrictions prevent detailed descriptions of the issues facing the police service in Northern Ireland, however, deep divisions in society have, along with the role of, the police being perceived as a political issue, caused tensions in relationships between the police and sections of the public.

Despite a sustained campaign of armed violence and periodic extreme civil disorder, officers of the RUC have never lost sight of the fact that their role is to serve all the diverse communities living in Northern Ireland. This is reflected in the organisation's publicly stated aim:

'To provide a high quality, effective police service to all the people of Northern Ireland. We will work to achieve this in partnership with the community and co-operation with other agencies.'

The complex task facing police strategists is to identify and address, as a priority, issues critical to the successful realisation of this aim.

Therefore, before describing a specific example of our problem oriented approach in practice, the process of arriving at our force-wide philosophy, strategy and our community policing model is outlined. At its core, and the Portrush initiative, are the principles and philosophy of community policing - based on the sincere belief that to be effective the police should, as a priority, consult with and take account of the wishes of the public in determining and evaluating policing policy and practice, and, collaborate with the public whenever possible in solving local problems.

IDENTIFYING AND DEFINING THE PROBLEM

The RUC Chief Constable, recognising that community policing was the "golden thread" that linked all policing activities, established a small (2 person) team, headed by a Superintendent (Stephen White) reporting to an Assistant Chief Constable (Tim Lewis) in charge of Operations. They were tasked with designing a strategy that would draw together all the RUC's departmental policies, practices and procedures into a holistic, integrated approach which would embrace community policing philosophy and practices as its central theme. This was the nature of the strategic problem.

Stephen White is now a Chief Superintendent, Head of the RUC's Community Affairs Branch, however, major steps have been taken to avoid community policing **being** perceived as the sole preserve of community affairs teams (see appendices).

To aid in the identification of the problem and to prioritise actions a number of key activities occurred, including:

- A 'Policing our Divided Society' project was established - 15 diverse, operationally experienced police officers, with 4 leading community relations practitioners, have conducted a major research and dialogue project - with funding from the Northern Ireland Office, and the US government.
- A scan of international best practice was carried out - involving desk research and field trips to examine all aspects of organisational and operational problem-solving.
- Countries visited included South Africa, USA, New Zealand and GB forces eg Leicestershire and Cleveland.
- Chiefs, and former Chiefs, of Police were consulted (including several who worked with Professor Goldstein) eg Baltimore City, Baltimore County, NYPD, Boston, Atlanta.
- Academic and specialist assistance has been sought eg local universities' criminologists and political scientists; project manager completed Masters dissertation on community policing at Cambridge supervised by Trevor Bennett and Janet Foster; there has been regular exchange and liaison with the COPS programme in Washington; community policing institutes visited and training materials gathered eg at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Boston etc.
- Community and inter agency groups in Atlanta, Baltimore and New York were visited, who work with police to identify and solve local problems.
- Political and community groups were consulted, and, submissions to the political talks process, and the Patten Commission, researched.
- Stakeholder analyses and strategic planning workshops.

(The above is by no means an exhaustive list of actions.)

ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSES

While legislation*, rules and policies can be prescriptively introduced, there must be clarity of purpose, true understanding, and ownership for success. With this in mind the project team embarked on a series of initiatives throughout 1998 and continuing to this present time, aimed at bringing the organisation on board at each stage of the strategy's development. These initiatives included an extensive stocktake of the existing police and community partnerships. This was not only a base line to work from but also an acknowledgement of the extent of ongoing problem solving and community police work. This reassured operational officers and managers that this was not an attempt to 'reinvent the wheel' and also provided a mechanism for sharing good practice. The project team have been sensitive ensuring that they were not perceived as discounting all previous work. For instance, the commander responsible for the area in which the nominated project is sited has worked in close partnership with the Headquarters project team.

A series of seminars initially directed at senior and mid management were held both in operational locations to take the message out into the organisation. This raised awareness and encouraged debate. Key speakers including police and community practitioners from USA and England, introduced an international and national perspective with a fruitful sharing of experience. Organisational change was the topic of a number of workshops facilitated . by specialists as a planned approach to the management of change is critical.

Using the SARA model and recognised strategic planning models the following conclusions were made about "the problem" of policing Northern Ireland and appropriate responses.

NB. The Crime and Disorder Act does not apply in Northern Ireland and only since April 1999 has there been a published annual polic plan with NIO and Police Authority objectives. Devolved budgeting to the police in Northern Ireland has only just been introduced.

The main issues facing the RUC were identified as * :

- Policing a divided society
- The evolving political climate
- The level of terrorism
- Public order and parades
- Finance and resource issues
- "The Patten Commission" - and to what extent we can move forward while awaiting its report.

The information gathering and consultation process was immense and the analysis of findings at one stage involved recognised experts in strategic planning using "Journeyman" software.

Our overall goal was identified as:

- The further development of effective problem-solving partnerships, and,

Our strategic priorities were recognised to be:

- Ensuring that the police are, and are seen to be, fair and effective;
- Improving police and community engagements and partnerships at all levels; and,
- Choosing and implementing appropriate styles of policing ie An RUG Community Policing Model based on local joint problem solving.

¹ NB. The appendices attached to this report illustrate the extent of work completed in the development of the Strategy including published handbooks and guidelines and the work still required.

Some gaps in our organisation were identified - an important one was the absence of a comprehensive and systematic problem-solving approach involving local community beat officers. To develop and provide problem solving resources a developmental training programme based on the findings of a Training Needs Analysis, carried out by independent consultancy, was introduced - not only for community beat officers but for ALL police officers thus dispelling any notion that community policing was either a soft option or a specialist duty. The programme explores community policing philosophy and its application in Northern Ireland with an emphasis on problem, solving with the community, encouraging officers to enhance their role as problem solvers and partners. This has opened up the debate on community policing among street officers and innovative local problem solving schemes tackling crime and disorder have been initiated in some places traditionally difficult to police. The training programme continues to develop and Steps have been taken to introduce community policing philosophy and problem solving in ALL training courses. This has been complementary to the long established Community Awareness Programme, attended by all officers, which heightens awareness of the diverse communities living in Northern Ireland. It is also underpinned by the development of a comprehensive human resource strategy entitled 'Enabling Excellence' which addresses the training, equality and performance appraisal aspects of community policing.

Realising from the offset that an integrated strategy required ownership and commitment from all organisational departments, the Project Manager pulled together a Policy Co-ordinating Group. Participants were functionally placed as strategists within their own departments and specialist fields. This further enabled the formulation of 'Policing in Partnership' the RUC's strategy for Policing with the Community.

'Policing in Partnership' has linked together all strategic goals under one overarching strategy so that in the pursuit of any goal, whether it concerns crime or enhancement of victim support, the protection of communities from terrorism, maintenance of public order or the improving of police and community relationships, the principles of community consultation and collaboration must be applied. Guidelines for police managers have been supplied and the Project Team provides support and a network of best practice whilst not interfering with operational autonomy.

SUCCESS OF OUR APPROACH

The foundation blocks are in place*, but this is an evolving strategy because communities - especially in the often volatile, Northern Ireland, environment do not stand still. 'Policing in Partnership' has been designed to be flexible - for example we have not been prescriptive about which problem-solving model to use.

'SARA' and the "crime triangle" are proving useful but the 'SECAPRA' (Security, Safety, Ethics, Client, Acquiring and Analysing, Partnership, Response and Assessment) model has particular applicability to our situation.

At the macro level, for our problem solving approach - which we believe is close to that advocated by Goldstein (with the involvement of local officers, bottom up problem identification and solution finding, regular assessment and accountability of responses and close involvement of the community and other agencies) success to date has been measured, amongst other things, by complimentary and supportive responses by eg Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Police Authority for

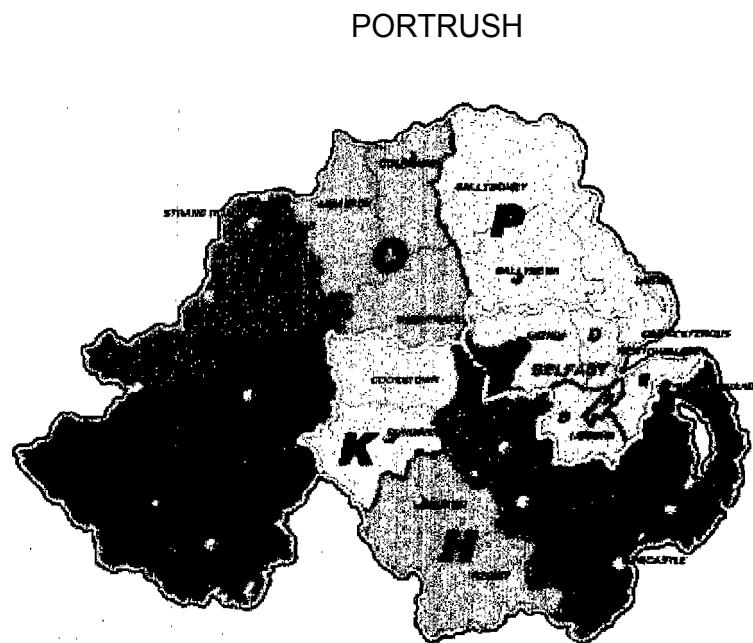
Space restrictions inhibit exhibition of our quality of life survey, structured problem-solving checklist, and community beat profile - instruments which we are adapting from various sources and are piloting in various sites.

Northern Ireland, the HMIC, the Police Federation for Northern Ireland, and a wide range of political and community representatives. However, as the second half of our submission shows, success is critical at the local level if a community policing, problem-oriented approach is to prosper.

THE PORTRUSH PILOT PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

Portrush is the premier seaside resort in Northern Ireland. Its population of 50,000 swells to some 100,000 during peak holiday times. Portrush by Northern Ireland standards is a comparatively 'normal' place to police although two beat officers were murdered in the town's Main Street. Despite this appalling tragedy local police continued to provide a responsive service to the local community, however, the style of policing was failing to fully meet their needs and expectations.



(MAP OF NORTHERN IRELAND SHOWING LOCATION OF PORTRUSH)

In 1997 and early 1998 (during terrorist ceasefires when public expectations of policing increased) lack of confidence in the local police in Portrush became apparent - community representatives articulated the perceptions that "through lack of interest or inability' the police were failing to deal with problems impacting on the quality of life of local residents especially in the Glenmanus and Dhu Varren housing estates.

These complaints coupled with the impetus provided by the strategy being formulated by the Community Policing Project Team prompted police managers to

re-examine their approach to policing Portrush. The area was designated the first pilot project for the Force's community policing model centred around local problem solving.

OBJECTIVES

To address the *concerns* an Inspector (John Kinkead) was placed *in charge of* Portrush and station strength increased by four Constables. Their local commander recognised that the problems as identified could not be tackled by police alone.

Underlying causes and associated issues were identified and explored through joint "problem identification forums" involving:

- Local councillors
- Rural Housing Estates project
- Chamber of Commerce
- Portrush Community Development group
- Portrush Regeneration
- Local police

These forums were the catalyst for what was to become a vibrant community consultation and problem solving body entitled the "Portrush Action Plan".

At the first meeting the main problems were identified as:

- abuse and supply of drugs
- anti-social behaviour and associated crime
- housing issues

Community representatives responded positively to the initiative which was seen as an important first step towards rebuilding **public** confidence. However, two local authority housing estates, Dhu Varren and Glenmanus, were areas of specific concern. Residents from the estates had not attended consultations and the Inspector personally invited respected and well established community leaders within the estates.

A public meeting was convened and three residents from each estate were nominated to sit on a residents' group. The Inspector met the residents' group and at the first encounter had to take criticism of the policing in the estates as the residents vented their frustrations.

It was clear that police methods, in responding to incidents, were required to be more proactive and problem-oriented to regain the confidence and support of the residents.

The long term objectives of the Portrush project are those identified by the force's "Policing in Partnership" strategy ie:

- to reduce crime and the fear of crime;
- to improve quality of life for residents (in the Dhu Varren and Glenmanus estates);
- to increase declining public confidence in the police;

and this was to be delivered by visible police patrolling, community consultation and problem solving partnerships.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

The Inspector identified two well known and proactive police officers (Constables Adrian Clarke, Derek Hemphill) who were appointed as the Community Beat Officers

dedicated to the two estates. The Inspector introduced the officers to the residents' group highlighting their role and priorities.

The local police and residents, in partnership, and with the support of the Headquarters Community Policing Project, looked beyond Portrush for other agencies who could also offer support and help to the residents' group eg:

- Northern Ireland Drugs Co-ordinating team;
- + Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
- Department of the Environment;
- Coleraine Borough Council;
- Northern Ireland Community Safety Centre;
- Coleraine Rural Housing Project; and

the Eyres Monsell Tenant's Association (formed in response to similar policing and social problems and a vibrant example of a police and community partnership) a contact established when visiting Leicestershire Constabulary to examine problem oriented policing.

The Inspector and the CBO's were keen that the residents' group would develop the confidence to eventually make these contacts but, understanding that the first steps needed help and guidance, they assisted the residents' group in the early planning.

The Inspector analysed the crime trends and quality of life issues impacting on the two estates initially using information technology via:

- The RUC "command and control", system identified immediate crime trends in the two estates and current criminal activity therefore identifying possible future targets.

- The RUC'S " Saturn" management information system was used to identify cumulative occurrences of crime throughout the two estates over measured timescales for comparison purposes, and to identify developing crime trends.

From the analysis of this information backed up by community consultations specific, identified problems were targeted:

- Drugs
- Criminal damage
- Anti social behaviour

IMPLEMENTATION

The Inspector, the CBO's and the community forums set goals for the first six months:

1. The formation of a joint partnership with NIHE, CBC, Dhu Varren and Glenmanus Residents' Group to formulate joint strategy (now established).
2. Distribution of qualify of life survey (completed).
3. Proactive police approach to address identified problems (achieved with notable success).
4. The formation of a localised crime management team involving Portrush Community Beat, CID, local Crime Team and Criminal Intelligence Officer (achieved).
5. To increase the Community Beat to four officers (achieved).

These goals were specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and within a timescale as, otherwise, the initiative would flounder by either raising community expectation to unrealisable heights or through inability to manage too much too soon.

As a result of information gathering and analysis other strategies were put in place:

- implementation of a shift pattern of CBO's to provide visible policing during key times;
- identification and targeting of persons suspected of involvement in supply of drugs, ordinary crime and properties used;
- high visibility beat officers interacting with the residents of the estates dealing with all calls for assistance, and enquiries, taking full policing responsibility for the area;
- high profile overt search operations with mobile support units, to glean intelligence and disrupt the supply and purchase of drugs, also providing reassurance to the community;
- use of specialist technical support unit to provide evidence and intelligence of drugs offences;
- useful informants were established increasing the arrest rate and seizures of drugs;
- use of media to highlight successes with joint co-operation with community leaders.

After the initial short term impact, training for the CBO's and guidance from agencies, within and outside the organisation, were obtained:

- formal training and briefings from the Regional Intelligence Unit in handling of intelligence and informants;
- joint operations and sharing of intelligence with Drugs Squad and Criminal Investigation Department;
- training problem solving techniques and tactics were provided by Headquarters Community Policing project, with reference to 'best practice' as espoused by HMIC, ACPO and Home Office.

- In order that the CBO's were clearly identifiable by the community within the estates both officers distributed personal calling cards and a newsheet highlighting crime issues and crime prevention pertaining to the areas and persons of contact which could be of assistance.

At an early stage housing issues were identified in the two estates eg blatant abuse of tenancy agreements. A partnership was established with the local Housing Executive. A process of consultation and joint problem-solving was established to tackle:

- criminal damage;
- complaints of drugs supply (from Housing Executive properties);
- burglary
- vacant properties and high rates of requests for rehousing;
- decline of estate
- sub-letting.

As a result the two CBO's have provided evidence of sub-letting and of persons supplying and purchasing drugs resulting in nine incidents of residents being reported with a view to termination of their tenancies. Also a project to remove graffiti from properties was commenced in partnership with Glenmanus and Dhu Varren Residents' Group and Housing Executive.

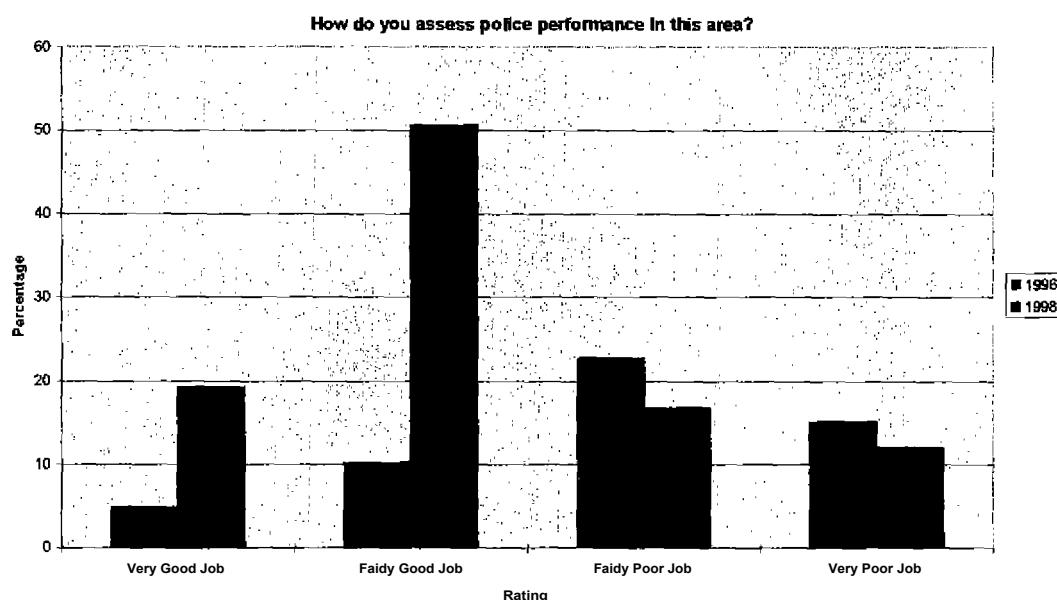
Throughout the project an ongoing process of crime management and analysis has been maintained which informs operational planning meetings.

SUCCESS

In December 1998, three months after the introduction of CBO's, a quality of life survey was distributed The return, of 60%, showed that the estates' population

comprised of: 73.5% female, 74.6% Housing Executive occupied, 32.5% in employment, 31.3% retired.

Results were compared with a survey carried out by the Portrush Community Group in 1996 which found 37% were satisfied with policing. In December 1998 69.85% were satisfied with the level of policing in Dhu Varren and Gienmanus estates. This survey will be revisited. (Space restrictions prevent more detail being presented.)



In an attempt to enhance the quality of service to victims of crime a call back system was introduced in March 1999. CBO's would liaise with Investigating Officers and call personally with the injured parties to provide reassurance and to facilitate contact with relative agencies who may assist.

Facilities were lacking for residents, and through a partnership initiative a children's playground was provided and a community house leased and furnished jointly, establishing a focal point for community consultation and ventures. A surgery by CBO's is to be initiated in the near future.

Architectural redesign of the estates is also ongoing taking into consideration crime prevention and the regeneration of the areas, with a previous block of flats used by drugs dealers to be demolished and redeveloped.

As an education process the two CBO's, in consultation with the Crime Prevention Officer and Community Affairs Team, have visited the four schools covering the areas identifying themselves as being dedicated to the estates.

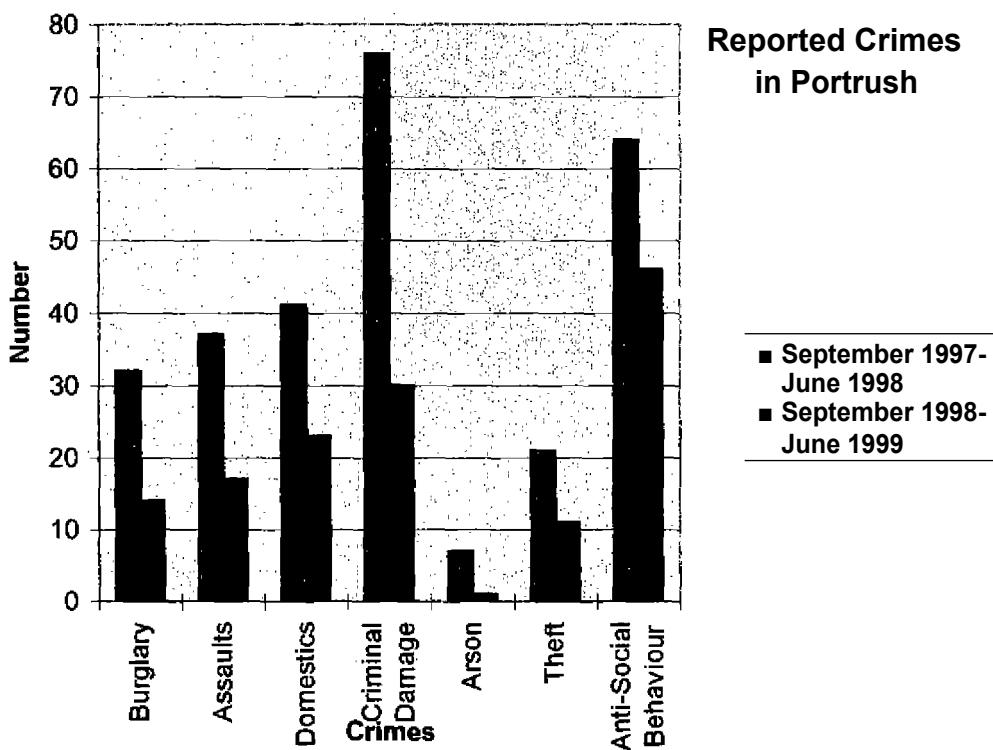
In summary, the CBO's have been extremely successful. The five goals set in September 1998 were achieved within the six months given framework. A further seven goals were set for the period March 1999 to August 1999 and a further two CBO's were appointed to widen areas of responsibility.

The new targets are to:

- establish anti-crime network for guesthouses;
- establish regular newsheets with residents/community associations;
- divide station area into sections of responsibility;
- establish anti-shoplifting/crime network;
- establish a surgery within Dhu Varren/Glenmanus community house;
- introduce call back system for injured parties.

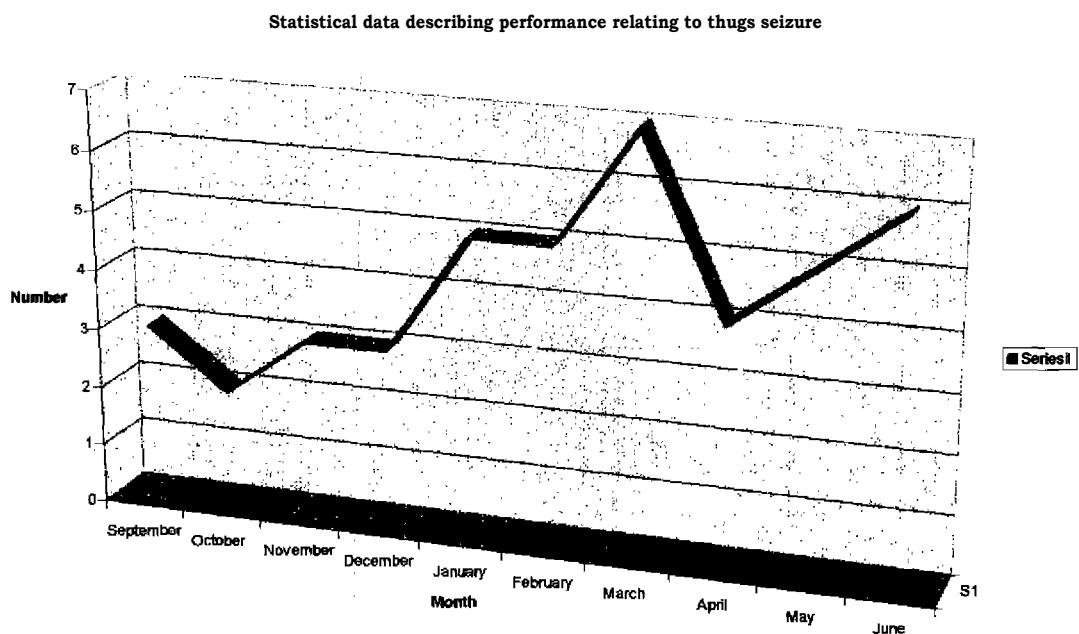
In only nine months since the introduction of CBO's into the two estates an analysis of the crimes reported and detections made indicates a very marked improvement.

The two CBO's management and use of sensitive "source information" has significantly increased the number of search and arrests, successes in addressing ordinary crimes such as burglary, criminal damage and of drugs seizures.



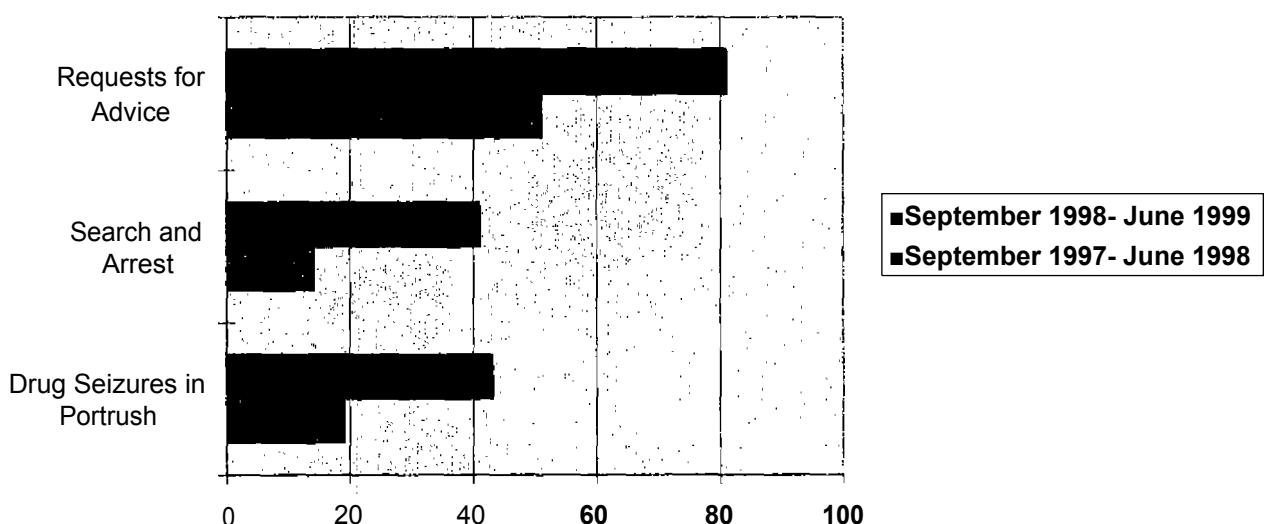
At present three of the major persons suspected of involvement in the supply of drugs remain on remand awaiting trial, for possession and intent to supply.

A significant decrease in the supply of drugs within the two estates has also been achieved.



However, during one such protracted operation one of the CBO's and his wife were subject to intimidation at their home and respective places of work. The information was that the officer was to be shot whilst on foot patrol within one of the estates, and his house attacked. A co-ordinated search operation was carried out resulting in two persons arrested, two firearms and drugs seized.

And, as expected in any successful community policing initiative, the number of incidents reported to police has increased significantly which reflects public confidence in police ability.



A minor but significant indicator is the increase in the number of residents reporting vacant properties to the CBO's for short periods of absence.

In conclusion, feedback from the community and their representatives indicates a positive outlook with renewed ownership of the estates and an improved sense of security and wellbeing.

The Portrush Project is now taking a proactive, analytical, and informed response to systematically identified or anticipated community problems.

It is clearly displaying innovative ways of dealing with problems beyond simply police enforcement and arrest.

Appendices

As per the entry requirements the following 10 pages of supporting documents are included.

Pages

- Reduced copy of the RUC Policing in Partnership booklet - produced to raise awareness and provide an explanation to all police officers involved in implementing and managing the community policing/problem oriented scheme.
- iv-v Copy of suggested guidelines for setting up problem oriented community policing pilots.
- vi Printout of Powerpoint presentation explaining RUC 'Policing in Partnership' Strategy.
- vii Copies of newspaper cuttings - Portrush publicity before and after scheme.
- viii-x Copies of letters of support for scheme - Vice Chairman of the Police Authority for Northern Ireland, secretary of Dhu Varren and Glenmanus residents committee, local resident (JP), local parish priest, local borough council - an alderman and a councillor..

Supplementary

- xi Copy of enclosing letter from Chief Officer.
- xii Copy of forwarding letter from project contact person.
- xiii Details of project contact person.