

## 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](mailto: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 Rushden & Higham Ferrers Nightbus Scheme

Name of force/agency/CDRP: East Northamptonshire Community Safety Partnership

Name of one contact person with position/rank (this should be one of the authors): Terrie Watson  
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Name of endorsing senior representatives(s)

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s) Chief Superintendent Andy Dickson

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s)  
Wellingborough Police Station  
Midland Road, Wellingborough  
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## 2. Summary of application

In no more than 400 words please use this space to describe your project. Include details of the problem that was addressed a description of the initiative, the main intervention principles and what they were designed to achieve, the main outcomes of project particularly in relation to the problem, evidence was used in designing the programme and how the project is evaluated.

The project began as a result of the Police and the East Northamptonshire Community Safety Team receiving increased number of complaints regarding alcohol related criminal damage in Rushden High Street and Higham Ferrers. A situation and environment study was undertaken by the police and crime trends within these areas were identified by using the National Intelligence Model (NIM).

A multi-agency working group was set up and an action plan developed based on a holistic and multi agency response, as policing on its own would not resolve the many issues related to alcohol abuse. The East Northamptonshire Community Safety Partnership, a partnership between the district council, the county council, the police, health, probation and fire service, looked at ways of reducing the impact of alcohol related violence on the local community. It became apparent from research undertaken that there were certain peak times and flashpoints that exacerbated the problem. One example being insufficient access to transport after closing time which was flagged up as a real issue. Lack of adequate numbers of licensed taxis, as well as a lack of provision of a late night bus service had impacted on increased numbers of violent offences.

In order to address this the night bus scheme covering Rushden and Higham Ferrers was established in December 2004. The scheme was originally set up as part of a package of measures to deal with alcohol related violence and criminal damage in the High Street in Rushden. The other measures that were introduced at the same time as the night bus scheme included the setting up of pub watch schemes, a binge drinking campaign aimed at the 18-24 year old age group and also increased police operations at strategic times and locations.

There has been a significant reduction in alcohol related violent crime since the introduction of the nightbus. Although it would be wrong to assume that the reductions in crime are purely as a result of the night bus scheme it is safe to assume that the scheme has played a contributory factor in reducing specific types of crime in specific locations.

Those community members surveyed as well as the local police have backed this campaign.

It also appears from both anecdotal evidence as well as newspaper reports that the scheme has been welcomed by residents in both towns. A recent article on the night bus, published in the Evening Telegraph on 27 September, entitled 'Timely night bus was just the ticket', expressed the views of one lady who together with her friend had enjoyed a night out in Rushden. Having not booked a taxi in advance, and leaving the pub at 11 pm she went to book a taxi but was told that the earliest time a taxi would be available was 12.30 am.

She and her friend decided to walk the two miles home as the wait for the taxi was too long. In the High Street in Rushden they chanced upon the night bus and knocked on the door to be greeted by a friendly smile and welcome and for £1.00 each she and her friend were able to board the bus and return home safely. She was extremely pleased with this fantastic surprise and mentioned the scheme was run by the local council and that it was a present from heaven.

Current academic research indicates that enforcement alone is not sufficient to make the night time economy of any town vibrant. Other measures such as provision of for example, transport and other adequate night time economy infrastructure is essential to impact on crime and violence. I have included a quote from research conducted by Portsmouth University in May 2005 which may be of interest to you:

*"Evidence from CDRP research confirms that the primary problem generated by the NTE is the complete absence of effective transport out of town and city centres in many NTE areas. A major cause of alcohol -*

*related disorder was found to be not 'rogue licensees' but the amount of time spent waiting for taxis home and the competition to hire the few taxis available [Loveday and Tedstone 2001]. Club users have commented on regularly witnessing fights usually incited by the lack of taxis and the length of time spent by hundreds of people waiting for transport out of the entertainment area [Loveday and Tedstone 2001:33]"*

The cost of the night bus scheme which includes the provision of a security guard to accompany the driver is in the region of £28k a year.

### **3. Description of project**

Describe the project following the guidance given in no more than 4000 words

#### **Rushden and Higham Ferrers Nightbus**

This project was implemented as a direct response to rising levels of violent crime and criminal damage and concerns raised by local traders culminating in a two page spread in the Evening Telegraph in March 2004 under the banner 'Traders count the cost in town shattered by jobs'.

Violent crime and criminal damage accounted for 44% of all recorded crime in East Northamptonshire during the period March 2003-April 2004. Criminal damage accounted for 28% of all recorded crime and the concentration of criminal damage offences reported was predominantly in Rushden North, Rushden East, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough.

Violent offences accounted for 992 or 16% of all recorded crime. This represented a slight increase of 5.86% or 58 crimes on the number recorded in 2002-2003.

The wards of Rushden East, Rushden North and Irthlingborough accounted for the highest number of reported offences of violence in the period April 2003-March 2004. Peak offending times were identified as Friday and Saturday between 10pm and 1am

Of the total number of violence offences reported 43% were committed on the High Street in Rushden. In view of the fact that there is a large concentration of licensed premises in this area this may account for the high figure.

Following the upward trend in criminal damage and alcohol related violence in both Rushden and Higham Ferrers a holistic multi-agency response to tackling these issues was required. A situation and environmental profile of Rushden was undertaken. Police operations such as 'Operation Nelson' and 'Operation Quaister' have been undertaken to tackle the issues from an enforcement point of view however it was felt this was only short term and a more long term approach was necessary to impact on this problem. The approach, based on the results of the profile, included:  
the setting up of pub watch schemes in both Rushden and Higham Ferrers,  
consideration to be given to alleygating of hotspot rat runs in Rushden,  
General clean up operation in Rushden to make the area more attractive to the night time economy and also to dissuade further acts of vandalism, i.e. eliminate the 'broken windows' syndrome  
Identify areas that require improved lighting especially in view of the new CCTV system which was rolled out in May 2005.

#### **Launching of the 'Make a Start – Drink Smart' campaign**

Provision of a night bus to provide transport for pub clientele to enable the safe and quick passage out of towns to avoid groups gathering at flashpoints and causing disorder and violence.

Consultation with local residents was undertaken by means of a survey, copy of the survey is attached, to establish the type of night bus service required, the areas to be covered and costs. A route was established following a survey of demand and analysis of information on peak offending times with one pick up point and 26 drop off points. The agreed fee of £1.00 per ticket regardless of length of journey was also established.

Negotiations with a number of travel companies was undertaken – not one of the larger companies was interested in providing this type of service, however, a smaller family run business was happy to provide the service. The service included the provision of a 25 seater minibus, driver and security guard to ensure the safety of the passengers as well as the driver.

The night bus has now been running since 10 December 2004 and celebrated its first anniversary on 10 December 2005. In the last twelve months there has been a marked reduction in the number of violent crimes in both Rushden and Higham Ferrers. This is based on comparative figures supplied by the Police from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005 to 31 January 2006

Crimes occurring 01 January 2005 to 31 January 2006. Between 2200hrs Fri - 0200hrs Sat and 2200hrs Sat - 0200 Sun.

2004							
	GB H	AB H	C.Assault	Threat s	Ass.Police	Harassment	CrimDam
Higham Road		1					8
High Street	4	24	2	3	1	14	37
Newton Road		6	1				4
Queen Street		5			1		5
Wellingborough Road		3				1	5
	<b>4</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>59</b>

9  
8  
5  
1  
1  
1  
9  
1  
2  
5

2005							
	GB H	AB H	C.Assault	Threat s	Ass.Police	Harassment	CrimDam
Higham Road		3					3
High Street	5	21	2			4	21
Newton Road		4			1		10
Queen Street					1		2
Wellingborough Road		4	1				3
	<b>5</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>39</b>

6  
5  
3  
1  
5  
3  
8  
8  
5

Non crime Incidents for same time periods but with all streets aggregated:

	Distrurbances(Classifications 300,315,335,340,350,370,371,376,390,330)
<b>2004</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>41</b>

The figure indicates a **32% reduction in violent crime** for the period January 2005 to January 2006. Although the night bus scheme cannot take credit on its own for this reduction it is safe to assume that the scheme, alongside the binge drinking campaign, the setting up of pub watch schemes and special police operation have all contributed to this pleasing reduction.

It also appears from both anecdotal evidence as well as newspaper reports that the scheme has been welcomed by residents in both towns. An article on the night bus, published in the Evening Telegraph on 27 September, entitled 'Timely night bus was just the ticket', expressed the views of one lady who together with her friend had enjoyed a night out in Rushden. Having not booked a taxi in advance, and leaving the pub at 11 pm she went to book a taxi but was told that the earliest time a taxi would be available was 12.30 am.

She and her friend decided to walk the two miles home as the wait for the taxi was too long. In the High Street in Rushden they chanced upon the night bus and knocked on the door to be greeted by a friendly smile and welcome and for £1.00 each she and her friend were able to board the bus and return home safely. She was extremely pleased with this fantastic surprise and mentioned the scheme was run by the local council and that it was a present from heaven.

### **Funding**

Initially the scheme was run as a 6 month pilot. Funding was secured from the Home Office, and the police. Following evaluation of the scheme over a twelve month period which yielded a reduction in alcohol related crime the local authority has allocated funding to continue the scheme for a further two years until 2008. Both Rushden and Higham Ferrers town councils had been approached with reference to contributing to the scheme. The major brewery chains were also contacted with a view to obtaining some form of sponsorship.

Currently the Partnership is looking at expanding the service to increase the number of pickup and drop off points as well as extending times and days when service is provided. A survey of local residents and licensees will be undertaken and discussions held with the service provider to ensure the feasibility of providing an extended service.