

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: **Gold Zone Sefton**

Name of force/agency/CDRP: **Merseyside Police**

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)
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Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s)
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Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s)

**Merseyside Police
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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.

In 2004 South Sefton Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) made funding available to lead Residential Social Landlords (RSL's) to enable them to tackle issues of concern to residents of five of the most deprived areas covering three police neighbourhoods Litherland, Bootle and Crosby. The two Wards Derby and Linacre encapsulate those neighbourhoods. It was decided that the RSL's would fund an initiative call '**Gold Zone**'. This involved five police officers being dedicated to policing the identified deprived wards.

All partners agreed the project would run in accordance with the principles of 'Reassurance Policing'. They agreed the objectives/outcomes that would support re-building the communities through rigorously engaging with them, thereby increasing confidence and satisfaction.

Each neighbourhood identified three priorities to be tackled. The information was gained from the community at quarterly meetings. The **Gold Zone** officer would report progress at the next meeting and give the community an opportunity to change priorities. Information obtained from the community was supported by data from all agencies involved in the project. Governance groups were established to ensure compliance, identify progress and best practice.

A dedicated **Gold Zone** analyst worked with **Gold Zone** officers and colleagues from the Local Authority Neighbourhood Planning Unit to analyse data. Deprivation factors and other relevant information were mapped onto the community information to identify hotspots and trends in order to inform a robust response.

Analysis identified a number of anomalies such as residents being more concerned with the discarding of drugs paraphernalia rather than the dealing of drugs, and that a high proportion of abandoned vehicles previously requiring a police deployment were in fact people parking their cars near to train stations to travel to work.

A menu of responses was established, including Operation Trio, which was developed to deal with the main community problem, anti social behaviour (ASB). Through Trio we engaged with the community to reduce various elements of ASB including the nuisance use of vehicles, litter, criminal damage, rowdy gathering and also impacted on drug misuse (which included securing three crack house closures) through the use of ASBOs, acceptable behaviour contracts and community engagement.

The analysis showed decreases in terms of crime and disorder, 40% Litherland, 33% Crosby and 26 % Bootle, but more importantly, substantial increases in community satisfaction and confidence that was widely reported and resulted in the **Gold Zone** receiving two local awards and being short listed for the national Public Servants award.

3. Description of project

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

Background

Sefton is a metropolitan borough in North Merseyside. It was formed on 1 April 1974, from the former county boroughs of Bootle and Southport, along with the borough of Crosby, the urban districts of Formby and Litherland and part of West Lancashire Rural District.

The area is split into two distinct communities North and South. The North contains the more affluent communities of Southport Ainsdale and Formby. The South contains the more economically/socially-deprived communities of Bootle, Litherland and Maghull.

In the South of the borough the port of Liverpool handles some 20% of all imports and exports to/from the North West. There has been a general decline in the south of the borough as a result of the impact of technology within the docks.

The two wards Derby and Linacre (covering the five neighbourhoods) involved in the initiative are located around the docks and associated industries, and border onto Liverpool City Centre.

Most of the housing stock which was once owned by the local authority is now managed by Residential Social Landlords (RSL's), and consists of terraced housing with entries running down the back of them.

- Sefton is ranked 85th out of 354 areas in the UK in terms of deprivation indices where 1 is the most deprived and 354 the least
- 8 of the 22 wards within Sefton fall within the top 10% of the most deprived wards in England and Wales
- 6 of the 22 wards are within the top 50% of least deprived wards

Linacre is the most deprived ward within Sefton in terms of income and child poverty. In terms of employment, based on 'Employment Deprived', Linacre is placed at 19th in the Country. The picture is the same for education and housing. Linacre is the most deprived ward within Sefton with an overall ranking in England and Wales of 56th, (out of 8,414 wards nationally).

Derby is one of eight in the top 10% for deprivation. The deprivation includes income, child poverty, education, housing and employment. Derby and Linacre are both placed in the top 10% in terms of health deprivation and unfortunately both rank in the top quartile for health deprivation in England and Wales, both wards suffer from economic and social problems, which are long-standing.

In November 2004 South Sefton Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) funded lead RSL's to enable them to tackle issues of concern to the residents. A brief survey identified that community safety, including the fear of crime and anti social behaviour were elements that repeatedly arose.

Discussions took place between Merseyside Police, Sefton's Community Safety Team and South Sefton HMRI regarding the development of a South Sefton response to public reassurance utilising a problem solving approach. The result was the appointment of the 5 police officers. The initiative was called **Gold Zone**, and started in January 2005.

The partners in the project agreed the following objectives:

- The community must be able to access local policing through a named point
- The community must be able to set their own priorities
- All interventions were to be jointly effected with the community and other agencies
- The solutions to problems were to be sustainable and include feedback from the community

The overall outcome for the project was agreed as:

The community must be confident that we understand the issues and will robustly work with them to provide sustainable solutions.

Project Detail

It was decided that Officers' shifts would reflect the needs of the community, this meant that the set shift pattern that officers were accustomed to became far more flexible with officers varying their shifts and rest days regularly. It was also agreed that they would not be abstracted for other duties, such as the policing of special events. This would not only ensure continuity of service provision, but would achieve the first of the objectives to enable the community to access policing through named points.

Each RSL developed a governance group that met quarterly and was attended by the various partner agencies e.g. police, fire service, housing department etc. The governance meeting was used to assess progress in line with the **Gold Zone** objectives, to ensure that all partners were fully engaged with the activities that were taking place, to review ongoing initiatives and to share best practice. An acting sergeant and an acting inspector managed the team.

In order to ensure that the officers for each **Gold Zone** were able to effectively address the communities issues, they, along with the RSL leaders were given training in the following:

- Anti social and criminal anti social behaviour legislation
- Intelligence – NIM, warrants, confidential sources
- Problem solving – signal crime, SARA and PAT models

As the project progressed and the communities' priorities changed, officers attended other non-police training courses e.g. refuse removal and identification, which was used to great effect as can be seen later in this document.

Overall the **Gold Zone** initiative has proven to be hugely successful. Many operations were conducted with the main thrust being Operation Trio.

Operation Trio was developed to ensure that we dealt with community concerns, in the most impactful and effective way. Trio covered the three main neighbourhoods within the Gold Zone areas, those of Litherland, Bootle and Crosby.

Scanning

In order to achieve the second objective, of enabling the community to influence their priorities a series of consultation events were arranged. These included surveys, interviews and, most successfully pre arranged community meetings. Each neighbourhood was leafleted by volunteers/PCSO's to inform the community of the time and place of the meeting. The **Gold Zone** Inspector chaired each meeting. People were asked to identify three priorities, which they believed if dealt with by the police/partner agencies, but more importantly with them as a community, would improve their quality of life. It was agreed that action taken around the three priorities would be reported on three months later. Research was then conducted by a dedicated analyst to gather information from other sources in relation to each of the priorities. The research included information from police systems, the Neighbourhood Planning Unit (NPU) at the Local Authority and other agencies. In order to encourage the community to provide information every meeting concluded with a short presentation on the benefit of Crimestoppers with marketing material being made available. During the first 12 months of the programme there was a 10% increase in Crimestoppers information. Each officer developed a registered confidential source and key individuals became an overwhelming source of community intelligence.

“ I know they are dealing but I am not bothered about that. I just don't want the kids in the street being stuck with dirty needles.”

The priorities varied little between each quarter, except for some seasonal variation. For example in anticipation of school holidays **Gold Zone** Two Linacre had 'youths causing annoyance' for each of their three priorities, such as the impact of poor behaviour from young people on holiday from school in previous years.

An analysis of the public choices over the first 12 months of the projects showed that the issues fell broadly into the following categories

- Anti social behaviour – generally young people
- Car crime - which varied from stealing cars to inconsiderate parking
- Drugs – which varied between paraphernalia being found in alleyways etc to actual dealing in drugs from premises

As well as the 3 public priorities agreed each quarter, as the confidence of the communities grew so too did the demand to solve other minor short-term problems.

“If they only took our cars it wouldn’t be so bad but they burn them as well”

Analysis

The **Gold Zone** had both a dedicated analyst and the NPU as data sources. All data obtained from the scanning was shared between resources to determine hot spots for anti social behaviour. The NPU compared the police obtained data with data in relation to other deprivation factors.

Anti Social Behaviour

The result of the analysis not only identified hotspots, but also identified the most prominent types of anti social behaviour and contributory factors. For example, it became apparent that young people were obtaining alcohol from local stores and drinking in local parks and streets. Further analysis of data from the NPU and the community identified the following issues:

- Total lack of facilities for young persons to occupy their recreational time
- Mistrust of any authority figure which includes Police, Youth Workers, Wardens etc
- Despite efforts made by the various agencies, there was a core group of young people who would not participate in any sort of supervised activity
- Lack of consultation with young people to understand their needs and problems
- Lack of qualitative enforcement action
- Permissive and offending behaviour of licensees and members of public who purchase alcohol

Criminal Damage, Litter and Graffiti

An analysis of criminal damage identified two key issues that related to crime reporting issues as opposed to actual incidents of crime. Firstly, the percentage of criminal damage reported within the Linacre and Derby ward was 5% higher than the other ward within the **Gold Zone** area. The damage was being caused to residential property owned by the RSL’s. Further analysis, jointly undertaken by the **Gold Zone** staff and RSL’s identified that a high percentage of damage reported was committed by the residents who were damaging their own property to gain access because they had either lost or forgotten keys. The HMRI’s reporting procedure required that damage was reported to the police before the damage was to be repaired free of charge. This policy encouraged those people who would arrive home drunk and unable to find their key who then forced the door/window causing damage. Application of the National Crime Recording Standards required that the incident be recorded as crime.

A second issue related to a sudden and unexplained increase in the volume of criminal damage caused to bus shelters. The **Gold Zone** area is well serviced by buses and as a result has a high proportion of bus shelters. The analysis identified that the bus company for the area, Merseystravel had altered its recording process for damage to bus shelters and was individually recording each single issue e.g. scratches to the Perspex, ripped timetables etc. This resulted in a 30% increase in recorded criminal damage.

Graffiti was a problem in the vast majority of the **Gold Zone** area and ranged from paint spraying of lampposts and walls to daubing of shop fronts and void properties. The analysis did not identify any patterns or hot spots, but did identify that areas close to late opening shops had a higher percentage of graffiti in comparison to other areas. As the shops were a central part of the community focus it was decided that the response to this issue would concentrate in this area

Vehicle Nuisance

The key issue here related to vehicle abandonment. Times, dates and locations were identified and when analysed it became apparent that the majority of the vehicles were being parked by people who were using nearby trains to commute to work. Analysis also identified that the number of calls in respect of abandoned vehicles were inaccurately represented in that either one person would report a vehicle being abandoned on numerous occasions or many people would report a single vehicle. This gave the appearance that there were large numbers of vehicles being abandoned when in fact there were comparatively few.

When data from the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service was utilised as part of the analysis phase it became apparent that number of 'truly' abandoned vehicles were frequently subject to damage and subsequently set on fire. On a number of occasions this had occurred close to residential properties.

Drugs

A high profile undercover drugs operation concluded in late 2004. The result was that there were no major drugs dealers operating in the **Gold Zone** area. Analysis via Crime stoppers and informants showed that low level or street dealing was taking place on a frequent basis in the **Gold Zone** area. The drugs involved consisted mainly of cannabis with lower levels of class A drugs being dealt. Once again there were no hotspots or specific times or days involved. The drugs were brought from areas outside of the **Gold Zone** both by vehicle and by foot. There was also some evidence of public transport being used.

Despite the fact that there was obvious drug dealing taking place, the analysis of public information indicated that the community was more concerned with the abandoned syringes and other drugs paraphernalia that may be picked up by children. This was mentioned time and time again at local meetings and was re-enforced by one woman who stated, *"I know they are dealing but I am not bothered about that. I just don't want the kids in the street being stuck with dirty needles."* This was a powerful message that led to a specific initiative in response to community concern.

Response

In order to address many of the issues raised, the **Gold Zone** Inspector created a menu of options for staff to deploy dependant upon the problem being addressed.

Anti Social Behaviour

Targeted patrol – officers performed high visibility patrolling both on foot and on pedal cycles in conjunction with officers from the Special Constabulary and Police Community Support Officers. The officers patrolled the areas that were identified by the community and confirmed by the NPU as hot spots for ASB. In order to prevent the sale of alcohol to children a dedicated operation, Ballanoid, was developed to tackle the issue. Officers used covert tactics such as plain-clothes observations and CCTV to deal with the issue. Analysis of issues such as litter, carrier bags, tins and bottles identified offending premises, which then became subject of the operation. Ballanoid was supported by a high profile media campaign jointly led by senior officers and RSL's.

Target hardening funding provided by Riverside Housing was used to carry out work on some premises suffering from incidents of youths causing annoyance (YCA) the funding was used to fit railings to the walls of the premises to prevent the local youths sitting around and causing annoyance.

“At a public meeting one woman said that although she was afraid of being seen there she had to come and say what a wonderful job the officer was doing”

As a result of youth disorder in the vicinity of a lamp standard the RSL's funded a new style pavement – stipple pavement, which without spoiling the appearance and character of the area discouraged the local youth congregating because it was uncomfortable to stand on.

Truancy sweeps were regularly conducted with the Education Welfare Officers and local schools. One of the issues highlighted here was the identification of children not recorded within the education system.

Criminal Damage, Litter and Graffiti

Operation Spotlight, a multi agency approach to refuse, graffiti and breach of vacant properties was initiated last year. This initiative ran for three months and dealt with many of the community issues identified through a survey of local residents.

Working together with environmental health PCSOs delivered letters to all Linacre residents warning of health hazards and anti social nature of dog fouling. They highlighted that dog fouling was environmentally unfriendly and warned of potential penalties. RSLs provided funding for 'poop scoop' bags (biodegradable), which were given out to dog owners. Patrols identified offenders who received advice and anyone who failed to comply were reported to dog wardens for prosecution

A problem with damage to vehicles and dwellings by youths throwing stones from the railway was identified. After walking along the length of the track and identifying four points where the fence was damaged and youths were getting through, Rail track was contacted who subsequently repaired the fence. A letter drop to houses overlooking the railway asked for extra vigilance and provided contact numbers to report any trespassers on the line.

Various one-day clear up events took place involving local caretakers and communities. One example of this was a small park at the rear of terrace property, which was overgrown and used as a rubbish tip. The residents, assisted by local wardens and caretakers, set out to 'blitz' the area. The RSL provided materials to assist with the redevelopment e.g. providing benches, paint, plants and shrubs. There was an official opening of the area, which was renamed 'The Secret Garden' by the residents from the terraced houses.

To improve security and reduce crime to 'void' property the RSL's provided reinforced Perspex rather than steel plating. This also improved the appearance of the environment. The **Gold Zone** officers/PCSOs also worked alongside the RSL's, Council Cleansing Departments and the community to clear up streets that had been identified by the community and 'street caretakers', as hotspots for dumping of rubbish and other environmental waste. As mentioned earlier, **Gold Zone** staff were given specialist training to ensure that their work complied with health and safety legislation and that they were able to supervise members of the community who participated.

There are numerous examples of working with partners and the community to address incidents of graffiti and litter removal. On several occasions young people were reported for offences of graffiti and were encouraged to assist in its removal. Attached is a sample of newspaper articles highlighting four particular initiatives when members of RSL's, local authority, local traders' groups and Scottish Power assisted residents in the removal of graffiti and waste. In one article in the Liverpool ECHO dated 21.9.5 MP's Louise Ellman Frank Field, and Bob Wareing were shown joining local Councillor Joe Anderson in supporting the initiatives.

Vehicle nuisance

One of the biggest complaints related to mini motorbikes and quad bikes causing annoyance. A leaflet drop was carried out explaining the problem and the relevant legislation. An article in the Bootle Times, aimed at the parents supported this. This was followed by school talks to the young people riding the bikes. Finally we visited local outlets that were selling the bikes to ensure that they were aware of their obligations in pointing out the legislation to people before they bought the bikes. All this was done in conjunction with enforcement where bikes were seized and offenders summonsed. The **Gold Zone** used two police officers that patrolled the area on quad bikes. In response to a complaint of a quad bike being used dangerously, the two quad bikes worked with the dedicated officer, stopping the offender. The offender was taken home and spoken to with their parents and reported them for the appropriate offences but also encouraged the parents to identify an area where the bike could be used lawfully and without causing a nuisance.

In relation to vehicle abandonment the **Gold Zone** Inspector developed an initiative with the Local Authority whereby a local garage would remove reported abandoned vehicles within the hour of being reported by the **Gold Zone** officer.

In respect of untaxed vehicles the **Gold Zone** worked with an external agency to either clamp or remove the vehicles identified. The information highlighted by this process was used to develop a policy to ensure that abandoned vehicles were identified and removed as quickly as possible to prevent risk to persons or property from fire.

Drugs

A variety of responses were developed. One was the clean up days when paraphernalia was removed from alleyways and parks. Another was a local park with students reportedly smoking 'splifs' at lunchtime. As well as issuing fixed penalties the officer attended a local college and addressed the students with their tutors. The officer spoke not only about criminal behaviour but also health issues and the impact their behaviour had on local people who were unable to use the park at lunchtimes. This had the required effect and the officer has been invited back several times to give similar presentations.

Officers used the community intelligence to direct their response towards drugs' issues and undertook to respond to information in the shortest possible time. On one occasion they executed 29 drugs warrants, which ensured maximum exposure. The raids were supported by leaflets to houses in the area and HVP conducted by Special Constables and PCSOs both reassured people but also requested that any drugs issues be reported to the police via Crime stoppers and that the police would take positive action. Appropriate press releases were also arranged.

As a result of the proactivity of the **Gold Zone** three 'crack' houses were closed. One of those was the first private 'crack house' closure in the country. As a result of this information it was decided that the issue would be approached in two ways. Firstly by encouraging the community to report drugs misuse via Crime Stoppers or via the RSL's and then acting swiftly upon such information once it had been collaborated.

"It has gone lovely round here recently. Theres no drinking going on at the moment".

Assessment

Operation Trio led to a reduction in anti social behaviour of 40% Litherland, 33% Crosby and 26 % Bootle, whilst maintaining high compliance levels with NCRS (as highlighted by recent Audit commission).

However the most impactful result was in terms of reassuring the communities and increasing confidence and satisfaction.

When we first organised the public meetings there was a lot of scepticism about the initiative. However as time went on this scepticism developed into standing ovations at some of the meetings. One example in November 2005 was led by Councillor Doreen Kerrigan, *"The work you have done here is outstanding, the old and the young can go out now without worrying about their safety, you have turned out grot spots into crime free areas, we applaud you"*.

Below is a list of comments made by different members of the community and on behalf of the community

"Since the Gold Zone officer has been on the Estate there has been a massive drop in stolen cars and gangs hanging around the corners has drastically reduced. We now feel that we can sleep better at night knowing that there is someone out there guarding our homes and cars. Without this as tenants we would be forced from our homes as it was getting that bad. We only hope that this is not just a one off approach from the Gold Zone Officer and he is allowed to stay on the Estate for a long period of time and do the job that has proven a valuable asset to Merseyside Police." (Jim Brown Chairman of Orrell/Klondyke Committee June 2005).

"Since the Gold Zone started my daughter has been able to go outside and play, she is a lot happier, the police meetings are very good and we learn a lot from them. It would be better if more people from the area came along and had their say too." (A local mother interviewed by the Bootle Times May 2005).

“WOW. Our Gold Zone officer is getting himself known around the area. You can see the difference now after a few weeks, the gangs are being moved all the time and some of them are being locked up for breach of bail. We have waited a long time for this to happen and I hope that this works out for all of us and we have a better summer than what we did last year. Best money that ever been spent.” (Extract of an email from neighbourhood website Feb 2005.

Attached are a sample of letters and newspaper articles and a DVD congratulating the work of the staff.

Merseyside Police Public perception survey for October – December 2005, produced analysis which demonstrated that confidence in Merseyside Police is not only affected by socio economic factors, crime rates and fear of crime but that we can positively impact on confidence by tackling the issues that we know drive it e.g. understanding community issues, dealing with these issues and dealing with minor crime. The survey revealed that the impact of the **Gold Zone** was linked to a higher than average confidence in Merseyside Police.

The team won the Chief Constables award for “Most significant contribution to neighbourhood policing”, and the HMRI/Newheartlands Champions award, and have been short-listed for the Public Servants of the year award for Uniformed Services.

Overall the initiative has proven to be a success, all of the objectives were met the overall outcome was achieved and subsequently the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund have agreed to fund 11 officers to carry out this work in South Sefton for a two year period.