



# Home Office

## Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

### Tilley Awards 2008 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, within the stated word limit and ensuring the file size is no more than 1MB. Failure to do so will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to [tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Alex Blackwell on 0207 035 4811.

#### **Section A: Application basics**

1. Title of the project: Window of Opportunity
2. Key issue that the project is addressing e.g. Alcohol related violence: Theft by housebreaking and sneak-in thefts

#### **Author contact details**

3. Name of application author: PC Mark Anderson
4. Organisation submitting the application: Fife Constabulary
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7. Telephone number: 01592 418645

#### **Secondary project contact details**

8. Name of secondary contact involved in the project: PS Eric Anderson
9. Secondary contact email address: Eric.Anderson@fife.pnn.police.uk
10. Secondary contact telephone number: 01592 418503

### **Endorsing representative contact details**

11. Name of endorsing senior representative from lead organisation: Sup't Ian Bease
12. Endorsing representative's email address: Ian.Bease@fife.pnn.police.uk
13. For all entries from England & Wales please state which Government Office or Welsh Assembly Government your organisation is covered by e.g. GO East Midlands:

**14. Please mark this box with an X to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry** (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):

**Section B: Summary of application** - *In no more than 400 words use this space to provide a summary of your project under the stated headings (see guidance for more information).*

#### **Background:**

In June 2007 a number of houses within the Pitteuchar area of Glenrothes were being targeted by a determined housebreaker. Six break-ins were reported initially, although within a matter of weeks the number had more than trebled. Council houses with aluminium-framed windows were being targeted due to a flaw with the window locks. Just as alarming was the fact that all of the victims of these break-ins were elderly.

#### **Objectives:**

From the outset the objectives were clear :

- Apprehend the perpetrator
- Educate and reassure the elderly tenants and residents
- Secure the vulnerable properties

#### **Key Problems:**

- Densely populated precincts endemic to Glenrothes prove problematic to police as the numerous paths and vennels offer ideal escape routes for perpetrators of crime.
- The council owned properties were fitted with their original aluminium framed windows which offered little resistance to intrusion.
- All the victims of these crimes were elderly.
- Identifying the correct partners.

#### **Responses:**

The team identified the relevant partners and set about tasking them relative to their expertise. The first objective was to apprehend the perpetrator. This would still leave the properties vulnerable to further break-ins so the project needed to achieve more.

Each council house in the target area with residents over the age of 60 received a visit from a Home Security, and Home Safety Advisor. They completed an individual form outlining which security devices it required. The details were thereafter transferred onto on a spreadsheet which was used as a reference at the time of fitting the devices. The surveys were coupled with visits from Fife Council Housing staff who identified which windows required new locks fitted to them. These details were also added to the

spreadsheet. Every resident also received security advice and relevant information leaflets, documents and relevant contact details of local services.

**Conclusion:**

More than 100 homes were visited within six weeks of the first meeting. New window locks were designed and produced to fit all designs of aluminium-framed windows. However, the greatest success was securing £460,000 which led to the installing of new PVC doors, windows and porches to all the houses in the targeted streets. This venture has now been extended to a neighbouring precinct which was suffering from similar issues. It has also led to a change in Fife Council procedures which now considers security as a priority when renovating or building domestic premises.

**State number of words: 400**

**Section C: Description of project** - Describe the project in no more than 4,000 words. Please refer to the full guidance for more information on what the description should cover, in particular section 11.

**Scanning:**

Glenrothes is a New Town developed by the then Glenrothes District Council in the late 1960s. It was designed to accommodate an ever increasing population which is currently in the region of 50,000. It has fulfilled its purpose by attracting residents from throughout Scotland, although the majority of residents originate from the west of Scotland. The design of the town, which was seen as revolutionary for its time, comprises of densely populated precincts each linked by numerous paths and vennels which provide easy access for pedestrians who can walk through the length and breadth of the town without crossing a road.

At the time of their construction the Council houses and flats were fitted with aluminium framed windows. Although deemed fit for purpose at the time of fitting, 40 years on, the security they offered no longer withstood modern criminal practises. The problem lay specifically with the design and integrity of the locking mechanism. The 'half moon' lock could effectively be turned from its locking position to unlock by sliding a knife or similar implement between the two panes of glass. This enabled the windows to be opened from the outside. Without exception, each window that had its security overcome was on the ground floor.

In June and the beginning of July 2007 it became apparent that houses in a precinct in the south of Glenrothes were being targeted by a determined housebreaker. Careful analysis indicated that they were exploiting a design fault in the window lock. Not only were they targeting the houses with these locks, they were targeting the houses occupied by elderly residents. Six break-ins took place in a matter of three weeks with the number more than trebling over the following weeks. More alarming was the fact that each of these crimes was linked not only by geography but by the age of the victims. Every house that had been broken into was occupied by an elderly resident, and each time the security had been overcome it involved the inadequacy of the security provided by the aluminium-framed windows.

The knock- on effect of these crimes was that panic and fear became rife amongst the residents, and in particular the elderly. Due to the close proximity of the crimes word spread rapidly about the thief who was clearly targeting the elderly members of the community.

Again analysis indicated that some elderly residents were lying awake in their beds whilst being aware that someone was rummaging about inside their home. Incidents like this merely exacerbated the concerns experienced by what would be regarded as the most vulnerable residents in that area.

All in all, 20 housebreakings took place in this precinct over a 16-week period.

Following the scanning process it was decided that three objectives would be set in order to address this alarming trend.

## **Objectives**

### **1. Identify and apprehend the perpetrator**

The initial objective was clear. The person responsible for carrying out these crimes would have to be identified and apprehended. This on its own however would not eliminate the opportunity for the crimes to reoccur as the houses and residents would still find themselves vulnerable to intrusion. This particular area of responsibility lay firmly with the police.

### **2. Educate and reassure the elderly tenants and residents**

The second objective was designed to enhance the sustainability of the project. Target hardening was one method of implementing the security measures, however they would be worthless if the residents failed to look after themselves and their properties. It was decided early in the implementation of this project that personal visits from security and safety advisors would be beneficial not only in educating the residents, but also in instilling confidence and reassurance.

### **3. Secure the vulnerable properties**

This objective was to prove far more problematic. A permanent solution was required to prevent this perpetrator, or indeed any other potential thief from overcoming the security of these windows. Who would be responsible for taking this aspect of the project forward, and which partners should be brought on board?

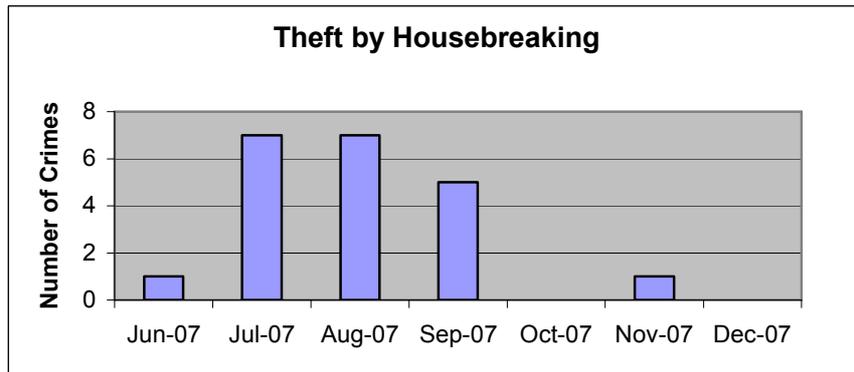
The Community Safety Officer and Community Constable, who had originally identified the issue, decided to meet with the Local Area Housing Officer to discuss the issue in an attempt to formulate a plan with regards to securing the windows. This meeting quickly identified the need to bring other services to the table. The list of partners grew to include;

- Area Housing Officer
- Locality Manager
- Development Officer
- Housing Improvements Office
- Improvements Co-ordinator
- Home Security Advisor
- Home Safety Advisor
- Head of Maintenance and Improvements
- Gardiner Window Systems
- Community Safety and Crime Reduction Officer
- Community Officer

**Analysis:**

As stated previously it quickly became apparent through studious analysis of crime figures that a pattern was developing in housebreakings in the south side of Glenrothes. Not only was the perpetrator using the same methods to force entry into each house, but houses identified as being occupied by elderly residents were being targeted. The simple fact was that these homes were easy targets. A number of factors surrounding the structural integrity of the house coupled with the vulnerable residents meant that an effective solution had to be expedited before the impact of the crimes took a more sinister turn.

By the time the group held their first meeting at the end of August 2007, 15 housebreakings had already taken place.



The number of crimes rose to 20 before the perpetrator was apprehended. The graph also illustrates that only one further crime took place in the area in the following three months. On this occasion a plant pot was thrown through a window in order to gain access to the house which was clearly a different modus operandi (m.o.) from that used in the previous crimes. To date there has not been a re-occurrence of a crime similar in nature to those highlighted in this report.

Having clearly identified the three objectives the team set about identifying and tackling the issues by adopting the methodology of the Problem Analysis Triangle; Victim, Offender, Location.

- Victim

Without exception each and every victim was elderly. This created a number of issues for the team. The perpetrator was not only targeting the vulnerable properties, they were targeting the vulnerable residents too. Target hardening the homes would be futile if the residents were incapable of ensuring that the security measures put in place were used.

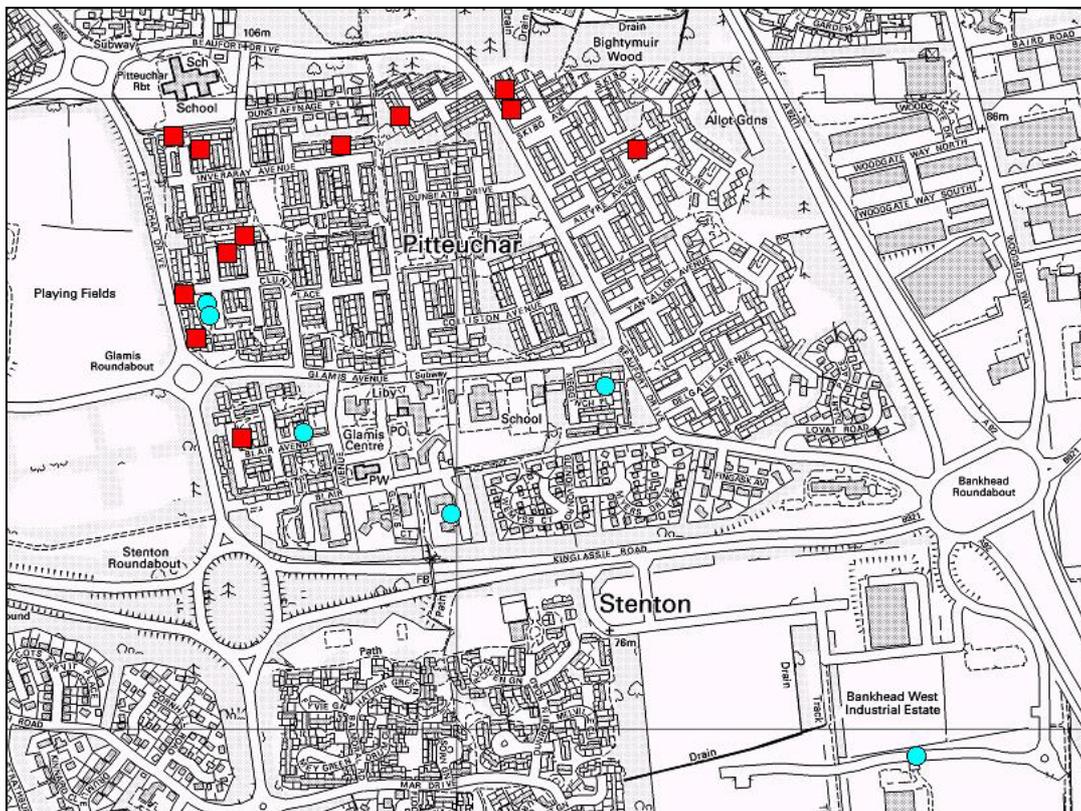
- Offender

The m.o. for the majority of the break-ins was the use of a simple tool to rotate the half moon lock securing the windows. A number of the crimes included sneak-in thefts which resulted from windows being left insecure. However there were enough similarities to suggest that one person was responsible for the crimes. The majority of crimes resulted in the loss of monies, jewellery, purses and handbags. All of the property stolen could be easily carried and concealed by one person and could also be sold on or used with ease. They all took place in a small geographical area and within a relatively short timescale.

- Location

All of the crimes took place within one precinct in Glenrothes, and without exception the houses concerned were all fitted with aluminium framed windows.

HB Crime Locations in Pitteuchar Area of Glenrothes



Key

Red squares = HB crimes committed between 01/06/2007 and 31/08/2007

Blue dots = HB crimes committed between 15/10/2007 and 31/12/2007

This map provides a snap shot of HBs which took place in the Pitteuchar area before the implementation of the initiative and in the time leading up to its conclusion at the end of December. All of the blue dots indicate crimes such as attempted break-ins and sneak-ins. Only one of them relates to a break-in to a house as highlighted in the earlier graph, and as stated this was as a result of a different m.o. The others show break-ins and sneak-ins to sheds and garages. None of these crimes mirrored the crimes the group targeted and none of them took place in properties visited by the team.

Analysis was also carried out in respect of the windows themselves. It transpired that there were in fact three different types of 'Planet' aluminium framed windows. Each design required a different lock to secure it. Due to the age of the window frames the locks that were required were no longer manufactured and required to be designed and made from scratch. This led the group to the funding issue. Monies would be required to pay a company to design and supply the locks. This part of the initiative would require sustainability to ensure that locks could be replaced for years to come as and when they were required.

**Response:**

An initial meeting was held comprising of representatives from Fife Community Safety Partnership, Fife Council Housing Improvements, Fife Council Officer Improvements Co-coordinator, Locality Area Officer, and Fife Constabulary Community Safety and Community Policing Departments. This meeting was designed to establish the most effective method of driving the project forward and solving the issues identified. Taking into account the three objectives, the team was able to assign members of the team according to their specific roles and areas of expertise.

**Victim**

With respect to the victim, or in this case the victims, it was decided that a Home Security Advisor accompanied by a Home Safety Advisor would attend each house occupied by a resident aged 60 years or over. However due to the magnitude of the task and the sense of urgency, additional advisors were brought in to assist. This task was effectively cut in half by the placement of a further Safety and Security Advisor. The reason for this decision was to expedite the surveys to minimise the risk of further break-ins to the residents.

Prior to their visit, a letter was sent out to each resident which would explain the visit and its intentions; preventing any 'cold' calling to the most vulnerable of our residents. The checks carried out in tandem would serve to highlight any shortfalls with regards to safety and security. The Advisors would attend each house with a pro-forma assessment sheet with the results of each visit thereafter logged on to a data spreadsheet. This spreadsheet, which was updated daily, provided an accurate record of each house visited and the specific works required to be carried out. The Advisors' visits also provided a personal touch and allowed the residents to voice any concerns regarding their safety and security to an expert. The intention was to offer practical and relevant advice on an individual basis effectively boosting morale and confidence.

**Offender**

In relation to the offender the objective was straightforward: they were to be apprehended and brought to justice. This was achieved relatively quickly, although unfortunately only after 20 houses were broken into. As the PAT Triangle indicates, capturing the offender is not the complete solution to the problem. The weaknesses and vulnerability of the houses and the residents was still an important issue. Once the offender was freed, it would be feasible for them to return and re-commence their crime spree or indeed pass their knowledge onto others to commit further crimes using their specific m.o.

**Location**

In respect of the houses themselves and with the possibility of further criminal activity in mind, the team used the information gleaned from the assessment sheets in order to establish what was required to ensure their security. The Fife Community Safety Partnership agreed to fund security items such as dummy alarm boxes, external security lights, door chains, door viewers, and door locks. However, although the items funded were functional standard safety and security devices, they were not able to help secure the old aluminium window frames. The old, unsuitable windows, central to the whole problem would require a more specific solution.

The solution to this part of the problem lay with Fife Council. The structural integrity of their buildings was being called into question which meant that outside agencies were unable to derive a solution. The locks had been 'fixed' in the past as and when they were reported by residents but at no time had a new lock been supplied that was fit for purpose. The main issue was that due to the age of the windows there was no stock left to supply new locks, and the original company responsible for their manufacture now ceased to exist. Funding to pay for new locks and sourcing a company to design such a lock was one of the main remits of the group. A new and effective lock for the windows was key to the success of this venture.

This part of the project was overseen by the Housing Improvements Officer and Improvement Co-ordinator. They linked in with the Area Officer by requesting details of residents and the types of properties they lived in. It was the responsibility of the Team Manager for Maintenance and Improvements to seek funding for this part of the project.

The SMART model formed the basis for our progress. We had established clearly defined specific objectives and identified the relevant agencies and partners to carry out the specific tasks required to drive the initiative forward. The success and impact of the initiative could be measured in a number of ways;

- The completion of the work as identified through the analysis of each property.
- The effectiveness of the work carried out.
- The reactions of the residents in the houses identified as vulnerable.

A very tight timescale for the project was set: one month from the initial meeting in August 2007, to the completion of all the surveys which exceeded 100, and the securing of funding and design of replacement locks by December 2007. The group rose to the challenge and gathered momentum; being acutely aware that every week that passed meant more houses were at risk of being broken into. All the surveys and the upgrades in relation to the security measures required were carried out in the given timescale and as planned.

A company to design the new locks was required as there were no original replacements in stock. After contacting large manufacturing companies the length and breadth of the country, a local company, Gardiner Window Systems, were contacted and agreed to undertake the task. Working from original templates they managed to develop and manufacture the three designs required to secure the three different designs of windows. This was no mean feat in itself. The fact that they completed the task in a matter of weeks to ensure their availability during the initiative was remarkable.

Progress was continually measured and assessed by those undertaking the tasks. This played an essential part of our success as it meant any problems or issues that arose were quickly identified and resolved. The project planning and monitoring was central to ensuring that the project ran within the time constraints.

Meetings tended to have just a few relevant representatives from each partnership, requiring only those people involved in the specific area being discussed to attend. This was successful on two counts: smaller meetings were more focused, and no-one was invited to attend unnecessary meetings. The regular meetings kept everyone informed and up to date with proceedings. When certain services were not required to attend meetings they were kept apprised via e-mail. This meant that the meetings were short and concise with only urgent or current matters to discuss. Any decisions made for tasks and duties were discussed at meetings and those best placed to implement were appointed. There were occasions when services crossed boundaries to assist when time schedules and constraints became too arduous. Police officers regularly found themselves carrying out administration duties as well as organising meetings and sourcing funds. Similarly, the Development Officer took on a leading role in respect of setting tasks and liaising between the numerous services.

With regard to corporacy, there were clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each of the services involved in this venture. However it was also recognised at a very early stage that the objectives could not be met in their entirety if they had not pulled together effectively.

Our progress was not completely without problems. A few weeks into the project the group encountered reluctance from Fife Council representatives to assist with funding the purchase of locks for windows identified as faulty through security checks. Initially the team had asked for £12,000 to be allocated to the initiative from an existing Tenants Improvement Grant Scheme run by Fife Council. This request was denied due to amount of monies requested as well as the perceived ramifications of re-directing money from this account to another initiative. Concerns were raised that if the budget was depleted by such an amount that it would not cope with a potential influx of applications from eligible tenants.

Several meetings were held in a bid to persuade Fife Council to assist with the funding, but despite asking for ever decreasing sums of money the team were denied at every turn.

It was decided as a group that the position Fife Council was taking was intolerable. They were effectively landlords to their tenants and had a responsibility to ensure their security. Prior to this stage of the initiative the team had invited heads of services within Fife Council to meetings to discuss possible avenues for funding, however it was became apparent that they did not have sufficient authority to make the decisions sought by the team for what was regarded by Fife Council as an external project.

Rather than inviting more and more service heads to future meetings, a decision was taken by everyone to have a letter drafted and sent to the Head of Housing Services. It was agreed that this task would be undertaken by the Glenrothes Sub-Division Chief Inspector, who had been kept apprised about the progress of the initiative from its inception.

The letter outlined the intentions of the initiative and the reasons for its inception. However it was also indicated the frustration felt by all of the partners at the apparent reluctance of housing representatives within Fife Council to appreciate their responsibilities. The partner's roles and responsibilities were identified in the letter indicating that the police had a defined role in relation to the apprehension of the offender, whilst the other partner agencies had committed time and resources to carry out surveys and supply and fit various security measures. The letter further indicated that as landlords the council had a responsibility to provide what could only be described as basic security measures for its tenants, especially as its most vulnerable tenants were being targeted as a result of its failings. The feelings of the team were relayed quite vociferously stating, "It is incumbent upon Fife Council to provide adequate security for the homes of its tenants". The letter also requested a reply by return.

A week later a further meeting was held and was attended in person by the head of housing. On this occasion he informed the team that he had not appreciated the magnitude of the problem and had not been informed of any of the prior meetings. This meeting was to culminate with the offer of £460,000 towards the improvement of the security of the houses in the streets affected by this crime spree.

The group had now effectively received funding not only for replacement locks, but they were now able to fund new PVC multi lock doors, windows and porches for three entire streets.

This would effectively eradicate the opportunity for the crimes described earlier to occur again.

In order to facilitate the renovations the timescale clearly had to be adjusted. In the interim, the short term solution was to fit the newly manufactured locks to the windows previously identified as vulnerable to intrusion by the surveys. An implementation programme was developed whereby requests for locks could be forwarded by partner agencies who had identified vulnerable residents in communities within Fife.

Such was the success that further funding has been approved and the upgrading programme has now been extended to a neighbouring precinct.

## **Assessment:**

Assessing the effect of this venture was relatively simple. There were three clear objectives set out from the start:

- Apprehend the perpetrator
- Educate and reassure the elderly tenants and residents
- Secure the vulnerable properties

If we look at the initial objective, identifying and apprehending the perpetrator was relatively clear cut. There were however issues with this part of the initiative as there were with all aspects of it.

The team did not know who they were looking for as the profile and m.o. were unique. The thief had identified a weakness in the structural integrity of the windows and was exploiting it. From a scenes of crimes perspective, tool marks were difficult to identify against the metal frames and the relative ease with which the locks could be over come left little for forensics to find.

The geographical area was also difficult to police with the precinct offering innumerable escape routes and opportunities to hide from main arterial roads. After many hours of diligent enquiry and protracted intelligence led police patrols the perpetrator was identified and apprehended. As a direct consequence the break-ins ceased. Further incidents were reported locally over the following weeks and months although only one related to a break-in to a house. This incident bore no resemblance to the crimes dealt with in this initiative and proved to be an isolated incident.

Assessing the crimes after the conclusion of the initiative indicated that housebreakings in the Pitteucher precinct had ceased but had not led to a displacement of such crimes to other areas within Glenrothes.

The surveys carried out at the beginning of the initiative identified individual security weaknesses within each house. These weaknesses were rectified by installing the security devices mentioned earlier in the report.

The fact that expectations were exceeded by securing £460,000 which allowed the team to transform entire streets rather than individual locks on windows and doors, is testament to the tenacity of the group. It would be unrealistic to expect every house in Fife to receive the same upgrade, however we have already secured funding for a second precinct.

There is also a plentiful supply of locks which can be fitted to the houses of vulnerable residents identified by the partner agencies. This proactive referral system is encouraged as it is designed to prevent crime occurring, and residents having to suffer the trauma of a particularly invasive crime.

We have also ensured that Fife Council will take cognisance of any security issues when either upgrading or constructing houses. Security shortfalls identified in this report will now be addressed as part of a new policy by Fife Council following the success of this initiative.

The victims themselves were a very important part of the initiative. They were being systematically targeted and their fear and loss of confidence was overwhelming. Following the safety and security surveys a number of the residents were revisited to gauge their response. Without exception they were delighted and embraced every aspect of the initiative. Confidence was restored and a sense of pride re-instilled. Even though their homes had been secured they had also been educated in a number of simple security measures including dealing with 'cold callers' at their doors and problems relating to bogus crimes and distraction theft.

The success of the project has proved difficult to publicise outwith those directly involved in its implementation and delivery. The vulnerability of the windows was a weak point that everyone was reluctant to publicise. If the information in this report became available in the public domain then it would be conceivable that criminals could exploit it for their own gains.

This project surpassed all expectations. All of the objectives were met and exceeded. The security improvements were carried out on time, whilst the reactions of the residents were overwhelming. Without exception they all embraced the initiative and stated that a sense of well-being and pride had returned to the entire community. Their own fears had diminished and confidence had been restored.

**State number of words used: 3,998**

**Section D: Endorsement by Senior Representative** - Please insert letter from endorsing representative, this will not count towards your word or 1MB size limit restrictions.

**Checklist for Applicants:**

1. Have you read the process and application form guidance?
2. Have you completed all four sections of the application form in full including the endorsement from a senior representative?
3. Have you checked that your entry addresses all aspects of the judging criteria?
4. Have you advised all partner agencies that you are submitting an entry for your project?
5. Have you adhered to the formatting requirements within the guidance?
6. Have you checked whether there are any reasons why your project should not be publicised to other police forces, partner agencies and the general public e.g. civil or criminal proceedings pending in relation to your project?
7. Have you inserted your project name as a footer note on the application form? Go to View-Header and Footer to add it.
8. Have you saved you application form as a word document and entitled your message '**Tilley 08 entry (followed by project name in brackets)**' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please email it to [Tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk). One hard copy must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice & Communication Team, 4th Floor, Fry Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF and be received by 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008.