

Operation Leopard

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).*

Scanning:

Operation Leopard directly addressed a significant rise in incidents of anti-social behavior, dwelling burglary and criminal damage within a small socially and economically deprived neighborhood. Public confidence in the police was falling, a large proportion of the community were affected by the actions of few. Meetings between the Police and Stakeholders, (including the main housing provider and the local council) identified the need for a multi agency approach. The community was consulted in a number of ways, including a direct and to the point survey. This allowed a baseline to be established, concerns of the community to be raised and tackled.

The gaining of community intelligence was a massive benefit in assisting with targeting the right offenders and locations involved. A wide cross section of the community was reached, including young people and people from minority groups.

Analysis:

Essex Police N.I.M. Tasking meetings resulted in the highlighting of a persistent hot spot for anti-social behaviour for the force. This was located within the priority crime ward of Vange, Pitsea. Tactics used, including covert surveillance, increased PCSO coverage, posters, community surgeries and improved partnership working were still failing to reduce these crime types.

Analysing the community intelligence gained from survey's, indicated that we were focussing in some cases, on the wrong offenders.

Response:

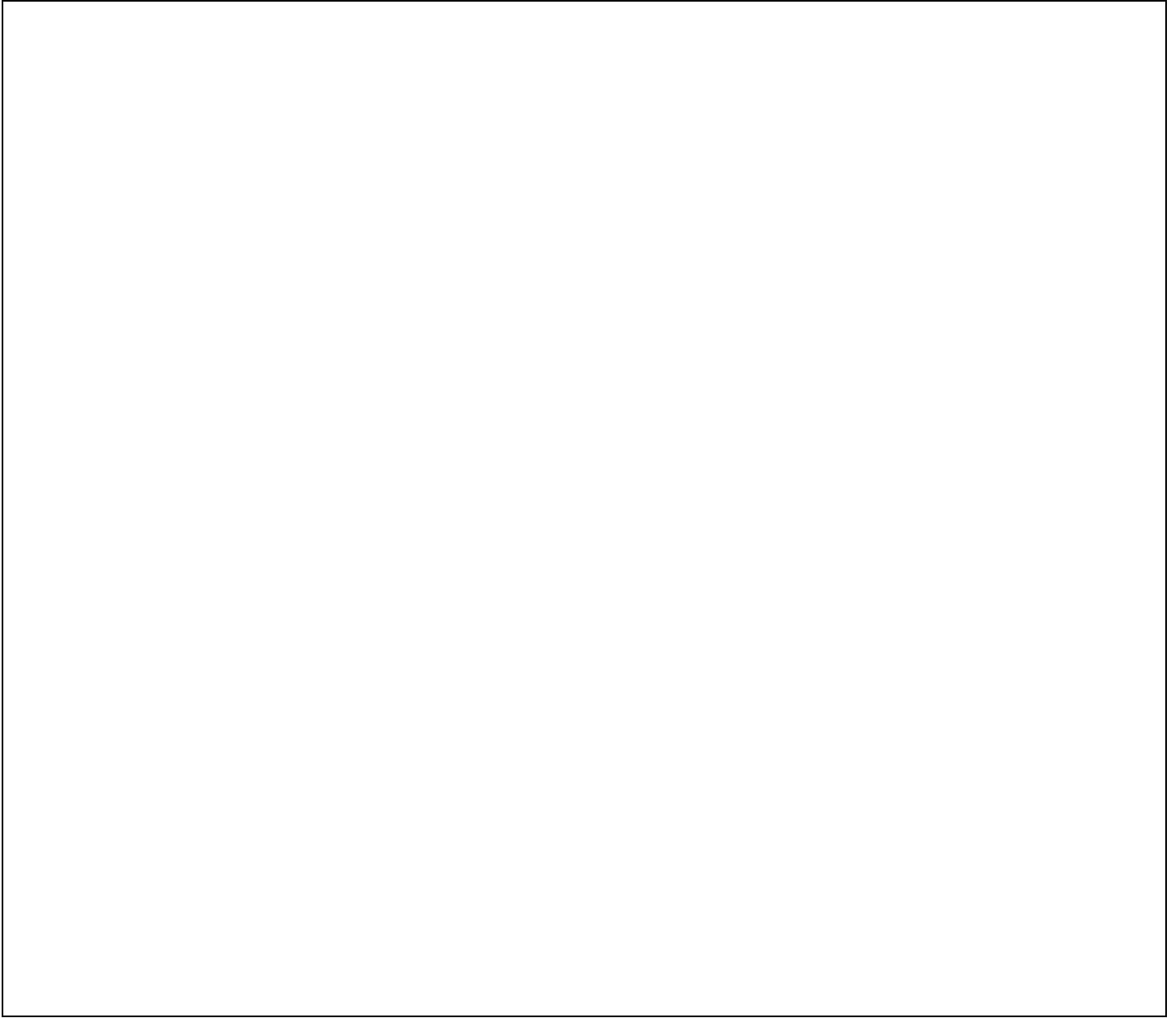
The community intelligence allowed us to profile fifteen core offenders who were responsible for offences and disruption to achieving quality of life for residents. (Only two of these were recorded as persistent offenders).

The dynamic and unusual approach of using Forward Intelligence Teams was taken. These teams carried out overt surveillance, in company with community officers. The fifteen were in turn followed from their home addresses, informed that their behaviour was unacceptable and that they would be video recorded.

The local housing provider has allowed the local officers to have a room within a property on the estate. This was used as a youth 'drop in' clinic, as well as a base within the estate to work from.

Assessment:

No crime or ASB was reported during either phase of the operation. The months following the operation witnessed a greatly reduced level of reported incidents. The local housing provider has agreed to fund an Operation Leopard each month for one year. Monthly evaluations and continued consultation and direction will be taken from both the community and partner agencies. Each Leopard deployment has resulted in there being no reported crime.



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 12.

Scanning:

Unacceptable levels of antisocial behaviour, dwelling burglary and damage to people's cars and properties created a force wide hot spot for Essex Police, located in one particular location within the priority crime ward of Pitsea.



Community Surgeries were carried out on the estate, where members of the community could drop in and voice concerns with A/PS Gav Brook. A rise in discontent from locals attending matched the statistical data that demonstrated a consistent rising trend for offences that concerned the public the most:

1. Anti Social Behaviour resulting in an increased fear of crime and reduced feeling of safety
2. Damage to motor vehicles

A/PS Brook consulted with the local Council and local housing provider for the estate to ascertain if reported incidents of damage matched police data, in order to gain an accurate picture of incidents that have occurred but have been unreported directly to the police. This supported police data in there being a rise in incidents of damage within the neighbourhood.

It was clear that although the community surgery was achieving good community engagement, this method wasn't reaching out to a realistic cross section of the community. (Those attending were not young people or people from minority groups).

In order to establish an accurate baseline of community concerns, fears and perception of crime in addition to the communities perception of the local police and the service that they deliver, a community survey was carried out by PCSO's and A/PS Brook. Two hundred residents were randomly visited and agreed to be interviewed by the officers.

Analysis:

Data from police analysts, local council and local housing provider was triangulated, providing an accurate picture of the rising amounts of reported incidents in relation to ASB, Criminal Damage and Burglary.

The base line community survey showed that:

1. Public confidence in the police was low
2. Fear of crime was heightened
3. Quality of life within the neighbourhood had started to decline

Data, witness and forensic opportunities failed to identify persons responsible. Police intelligence indicated that two prolific and priority offenders lived within the estate, however, it was realised that the scope and size of the area of the problem was beyond the capabilities of these two persons alone.

An additional strong benefit of the community survey was the gathering of community intelligence, especially from those that wouldn't usually talk or approach the police with their concerns.

This resulted in fifteen, (mainly young people), being identified as being the core offenders and persons responsible for a reduction in quality of life. It was identified that the problems experienced had been growing due to an influx of 'hangers on' to the main group, in the form of other young people joining the 'gang' as time progressed.

Previous methods for the area were tried; including the use of all of Pitseas PCSO's being used/patrolling just in the sector of Vange. This allowed an intensified presence of high visibility policing according to identified hot spots.

Despite an initial minor increase in offences, this had little effect on reported crime.

Covert methods were used to try and follow suspects that the police believed were responsible for crimes. This also failed to reduce crime within Vange.

What has been tried in Vange before?

- All 19 PCSO’s in Pitsea have previously been directed purely onto the Vange ¾ estate during their duty times providing a high level of Hi Visibility Policing
- All Pitsea Police Officers have been informed of the problems and APT has been directed to patrol the area between 2200hrs – 0100hrs. NST to patrol when the opportunity arises.
- Covert patrols have been carried out during day time and evenings to obtain intelligence on possible suspects on the estate.
- Leaflets have been posted through all residents doors advising them of the ongoing trends.
- Posters have been displayed in the flat blocks, car parks and bin sheds educating residents on the problems and how they can assist the police.
- SW Tactical Team has performed overnight surveillance on the area and/or possible suspects.

Crime Trends

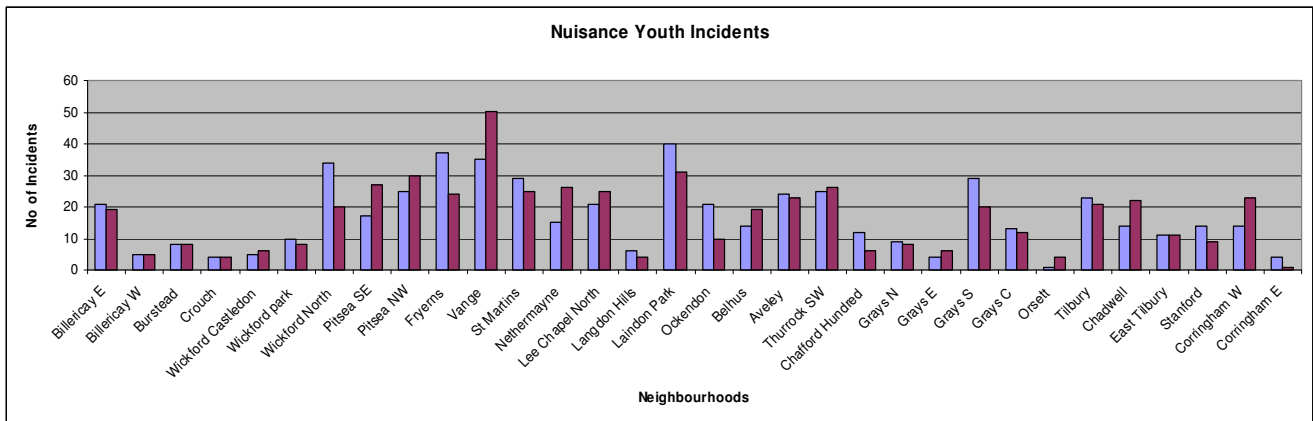
From the beginning of December 07’ to mid January 08’ Vange witnessed a dramatic increase in crimes, taking the total well over target and to an unacceptable level. The main areas are:

Criminal Damage

- 34 Criminal Damage related calls in the last month
- 28 of these incidents were recorded as Criminal Damage
- 18 of these incidents occurred within the Vange ¾ Estate
- 6 of these incidents occurred on SWANSTEAD
- These incidents seem to be evenly split between overnight when victims are sleep and during the day when victims are not home.
- The majority of these offences are vehicle based

Burglary

- 15 Burglary related calls in the last month
- 14 of these incidents were recorded as Burglary
- 10 of these incidents occurred within the Vange ¾ estate
- 4 of these incidents occurred on SWANSTEAD



The above chart demonstrates that out of all of the wards within Basildon & Thurrock, the relatively small ward of Vange witnessed the highest rate of youth related anti social behaviour prior to the operation.

Response:

A new approach

Forward Intelligence Teams, (FIT), are traditionally used for the **overt** filming of protests and large events with potential for public order offences. Operation Leopard enhanced existing high visibility policing methods with Forward Intelligence Teams. This was for the role of overt surveillance on the Vange estate against an identified core of offenders.

Officers were briefed daily on the previous day's actions and about contacts made with the fourteen named subjects. The FIT officers were equipped with video and stills cameras, with the intention of actively following the fourteen subjects named through community intelligence. The addresses of the fourteen were called upon and the intentions and reasoning behind the operation was explained to them.

The FIT officers, accompanied by local officers, patrolled the estate and followed the named members through the day and night, (including their associates).

The first phase of the operation ran for four consecutive days and nights. During this period sixty stop checks were carried out on the group and their associates. Stop searches were carried out and four arrests were made, (Of associates of the 15 core group).

Research on individuals within the core group of fifteen shows that they are in the category of being not in education or employment. Continued work by A/PS Brooks between local schools and the Council is assisting in getting at least two of the group back into education. Alternative activities are for young people in general for young people are being discussed and progressed. A youth 'drop in' has been created between the police and local council. The local housing provider has allowed a satellite police office within the estate, to improve community engagement. This was organized by A/PS Brooks

Assessment:

At the conclusion of the second phase, 200 further surveys were carried out with the same residents as before, (as far as possible). These showed a rise in public confidence, both in the police and in feeling of safety within Vange.

Reported crime for the ward of Vange for this period fell to **zero**. Analytical data showed an overall reduction in offences for the months following the operation.

This method of using FIT officers was a 'first' for Essex Police and indeed, possibly nationally. The local and national media reported extremely positively about the operation, with very supportive comments from local residents. This has subsequently attracted interest from numerous other police forces.

Sustaining the success

The area of Vange has witnessed a continued overall reduction in crime and of ant-social behavior following operation Leopard, compared with unacceptable levels before the operation.

A second identical Leopard operation, phase two, has recently concluded, three weeks after the initial phase. This has also resulted in their being **no reported crime** throughout the duration of the operation.

Local partners have agreed to fund a Leopard operation each month for a year to enable sustainability. This will require careful resource planning and constant evaluation of community intelligence, making sure that the persistent trouble makers within a ward are the ones who are targeted and brought to account for their behavior.

Leopard has clearly been successful within the priority crime ward of Pitsea, with increased public confidence and a reduction of reported crime.

The operation has been replicated in other neighboring policing divisions with a far lesser rate of success compared with the pathfinder Leopard. Closer examination of these replicated operations indicates that the FIT were utilized with local officers, but used as extended resources to a basic and traditional HVP operation.

The key failings would appear to be:

- No community consultation/surveys to set a baseline and to identify through the community, the persons responsible for high volumes of crime and nuisance
- No persistent following/contact with core offenders, but just focusing on actual locations identified as ASB hot spots by Police analysts.

Results

1. A total of **400** face to face consultations with Vange residents.

VANGE PUBLIC PERCEPTION ~ ESTATE AVERAGE **BEFORE** OPERATION

2. 60 stop checks were carried out during the operation.
3. 5 stop and searches were carried out.
4. 4 arrests were made of associates of the fifteen subjects.
5. Further community intelligence was gained on the subjects and their associates.
6. Strengthened partnerships with other agencies.
7. Increased public confidence in the police service, reduced fear of crime.
8. Disruption of criminal activity – No reported crime for the Vange ward throughout the duration of the operation. (No rise in displaced crime within neighboring wards).
9. A method of good practice achieved.
10. Positive publicity for SW Division and Essex Police.
11. Continued partnership funding for twelve more operations within Vange.

National interest in Leopard

Other Essex divisions

- Operation Leopard is currently being used by Eastern Division

Other Forces interested

Operation Leopard attracted policing interest from:

- Merseyside
- South York's
- Cheshire
- Cambridge shire

Media interest

Operation Leopard attracted media interest from:

- The Sun News Paper
- The Daily Mail
- The Daily Mirror
- Essex Radio
- The Richard & Judy Show - declined
- The Evening Echo
- Interest from Panorama documentary - pending

All articles were positive. Some contained quotes from residents, stating that they supported the operation and that it was greatly needed in the area.

| | No Answer | 1 (or Yes) | 2 (or No) | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|-----------|------------|-----------|-------|-------|--------|
| Do the Police provide a good service? | 11.7% | 54.8% | 33.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| How safe do you feel walking on the estate during the day? (1=unsafe, 5=very safe) | 1.3% | 10.8% | 12.7% | 24.8% | 22.3% | 28.1 % |
| How safe do you feel walking on the estate during the night? (1=unsafe, 5=very safe) | 2.0% | 47.5% | 17.2% | 18.4% | 5.6% | 9.3% |
| Have you been a victim of crime since you lived on the estate? | 0.0% | 57.9% | 42.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| How do you rate your quality of life? (1=poor, 5=excellent) | 0.3% | 24.6% | 22.6% | 33.2% | 12.5% | 6.9% |

THE DIFFERENCE - BEFORE & AFTER SURVEY

VANGE PUBLIC PERCEPTION ~ ESTATE AVERAGE **AFTER** OPERATION

| | No Answer | 1 (or Yes) | 2 (or No) | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|-----------|------------|-----------|-------|-------|--------|
| Do the Police provide a good service? | 5.7% | 69.5% | 24.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| How safe do you feel walking on the estate during the day? (1=unsafe, 5=very safe) | 0.0% | 12.7% | 3.6% | 28.7% | 26.6% | 28.5 % |
| How safe do you feel walking on the estate during the night? (1=unsafe, 5=very safe) | 0.0% | 48.1% | 14.2% | 17.9% | 12.5% | 7.3% |
| Have you been a victim of crime since you lived on the estate? | 0.0% | 55.0% | 45.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| How do you rate your quality of life? (1=poor, 5=excellent) | 0.0% | 20.2% | 11.7% | 39.9% | 16.1% | 12.1 % |

| | No Answer | 1 (or Yes) | 2 (or No) | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|-----------|------------|-----------|-------|------|-------|
| Do the Police provide a good service? | -6.0% | 14.8% | -8.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| How safe do you feel walking on the estate during the day? (1=unsafe, 5=very safe) | -1.3% | 1.9% | -9.1% | 3.8% | 4.3% | 0.4% |
| How safe do you feel walking on the estate during the night? (1=unsafe, 5=very safe) | -2.0% | 0.6% | -3.0% | -0.6% | 6.9% | -1.9% |
| Have you been a victim of crime since you lived on the estate? | 0.0% | -2.8% | 2.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| How do you rate your quality of life? (1=poor, 5=excellent) | -0.3% | -4.3% | -10.9% | 6.7% | 3.6% | 5.2% |