

Tunnel Vision Project – Derby, Derby Community Safety Partnership re: Criminal damage/Fear of crime

The context

In 2004/05 criminal damage was a high volume crime showing a static trend against reductions in other crimes. Criminal damage was therefore a priority for us. Detailed analysis showed a diverse problem – but with potential for targeted activity. We, with our partners devised a range of projects – Tunnel Vision being one we are most proud of.

Scanning:

The subway under the A52 in Spondon, (known as The Tunnel) was highlighted by police, local residents groups/panels, landowners, schools/youth groups and the wider community as a hotspot for graffiti, rubbish and vandalism, primarily by young people.

Analysis:

Derby Community Safety Partnership brought together services and local residents:

- Derby City Council (environmental and youth services)
- Youth Offending Service
- Police
- Derby Homes
- Methodist Homes
- West Park School
- AMSCOTT (manages the subway on behalf of the Highways Agency)

Problems included the environment of the location – overgrown bushes, poor lighting and blank walls encouraging graffiti and anti social behaviour amongst young people. This has turned the subway into a 'no go area' for residents due to fear of crime.

Response:

A partnership approach was developed engaging all responsible agencies and local residents - especially young people to be part of the solution.

Work included:

- Remove graffiti
- Cut back shrubs and trees
- Upgrade street lighting
- Remove rubbish
- Install CCTV
- Involving local residents

To develop ownership and responsibility, young people from the school, youth club and restorative justice programme designed and painted a colourful mural in the subway which was then coated with anti graffiti paint.

They were helped by local residents and agency workers, including elderly residents of nearby sheltered accommodation who served regular refreshments.

Assessment:

Tunnel Vision has led to:

- reduced vandalism and anti social behaviour
- reduced maintenance costs
- no complaints at local forums
- sense of ownership and responsibility
- improved community cohesion
- reduction in fear.

Whilst this project is a success in its own right, the partnership approach, commitment to tackling criminal damage through targeted and specific interventions and the involvement of local people has been the key achievement. Since January 2007 criminal damage in the city has been steadily reducing. Between 2007 and 2008, criminal damage fell by 13.7%. Importantly, in Spondon, the neighbourhood where the Tunnel Vision project took place, saw a reduction of 17.7% during the same period.