

## EUCPN Good Practice Description 2003

### United Kingdom Project example – Theft of/ from vehicles

#### **Project title: Metro Centre Gateshead Project**

#### **Overview**

The Metro Centre Gateshead project aimed to combat vehicle crime in a major shopping centre in the North East of England. It was initially based on short-term enforcement-based action comprising a high profile police and security patrol, covering the crime hot spot areas and using a mix of overt and covert surveillance techniques. In a second more strategically problem-oriented phase, this action was extended and complemented with a mixture of environmental improvements that were aimed at reassuring the public about the safety of the parking and alerting vehicle owners on the site to take responsibility for safety of their vehicles. The focus on continuous improvement and adaptation through deliberate building of a partnership-based, public-private crime management capacity was a key feature of this project.

#### **Interventions involved in the project:**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Principle</b>	<b>Involved in implementation</b>
Existing	1. CCTV infrastructure	Reassurance, Surveillance, Deterrence	Centre management
Phase 1 (short term)	2. Use of decoy police cars	Deterrence, Restricting resources to offend	Police, Security company
	3. Use of police surveillance sweeps	Surveillance, Deterrence, Intelligence gathering	Police, Security company
	4. Media advertisement of new interventions	Reassurance, Deterrence, alerting Preventers	Centre management, Police, Security company
Phase 2 (long term)	5. Repainting of car park stairwells, lighting repairs	Environmental design, planning and management, Deterrence	Centre management
	6. Tracking the criminals in the CJS	Offender exclusion	Police, Security company
	7. Enclosing suspected offenders in car park	Perimeter access/ security, Surveillance	Police, Security company
	8. Patrolling the stairwells	Surveillance, Deterrence, Offender removal, Reassurance	Police, Security company
	9. Systematic/enhanced patrolling	Surveillance, empowerment of Preventers, Deterrence, Reassurance	Police, Security company
	10. Enhanced CCTV surveillance	Surveillance/ Deterrence	Police, Security company
	11. Deterring shoplifters at the peak times for vehicle crime	Deterrence; Management of police/ security resources	Police, Security company, shops
	12. Exclusion of persistent offenders	Offender exclusion, Deterrence	Police, Security company, Centre management, Crown Prosecution Service

**Results of project:** Following the short-term interventions, there were 38% fewer thefts **of** vehicles in the Metro Centre than expected, and 76% fewer when these were augmented with longer-term interventions in Phase 2. Taking displacement/ diffusion of benefit into account, **net** reductions in vehicle crime in the whole of Gateshead that were attributable to the project action were estimated at 4% in Phase 1 (where it was reduced by apparent displacement), but 24% in Phase 2 (increased by diffusion of benefit). Thefts **from** vehicles also went down, with no sign of displacement. Conservative estimates were a 27% reduction in this offence type in Phase 1 and a 46% reduction in Phase 2.

## **Project description – the 5Is**

### **1. Intelligence**

#### **Background**

The Metro Centre in Gateshead is one of the largest shopping and leisure complexes in Europe. It currently provides free parking for an average of 20,000 cars a day. The Centre attracts 30 million visitors a year, equivalent to over 20 million vehicles using the centre in that time.

According to the 2001 Census, the age group most at risk of offending in Gateshead – the 15-24 year olds – is comparable to the national proportion across England and Wales. The largest minority ethnic group (Indian) consists of under 1 per cent of the population of Gateshead; the unemployed account for just over 5 % of the population, again very close to the national figure.

#### **The crime problem that the project aimed to prevent**

During 2000 there was a sharp increase in reports of vehicle crime. 470 offences of theft of and from motor vehicles, together with 59 other crimes (damage to motor vehicles and motor vehicle interference) were recorded by the police over 12 months.

#### **Evidence of the crime problem**

Initial evidence of the crime problem came from police recorded crime statistics, as described above. Following concerns about rising crime in the Metro Centre, the three main organisations interested in crime in the Centre (Northumbria Police, Capital Shopping Centres, St. James Security) met to consider the crime issue. As a result of these discussions the police sent out surveys to every reported victim of vehicle crime that had occurred within the Centre's parking areas between August 2001 and February 2002. A major section focused on *victim, offender and location*. This enabled them to locate the crime hot spots within the Metro Centre. For example theft **from** vehicles was concentrated in one particular location in one of the multi-storey car parks throughout the day and evening, mainly involving CD players and alloy wheels stolen from small hatchback cars.

The project itself developed more advanced, partnership-based approaches to gathering and analysing information – see under Section 4 on Implementation.

#### **Offenders**

According to the offender profile maintained by the police, 10 persistent offenders appeared responsible for the majority of the vehicle crime at the Centre. All were unemployed men in their twenties who were habitual criminals who followed a cycle of offending, custody, and release. They worked alone or in teams of two with one exception who was linked to a larger team of offenders. All the offenders travelled between either city centre, town or out of town parking areas. However *intelligence interviews* revealed that they had preferred places of activity based on criteria such as soft targets (no security measures), time bands (knowing where a section of the public will habitually park vehicles for periods of three hours or more) and proximity to public transport. These offenders all appeared to have a drug dependency. They lived within a 25km radius, in council housing estates or rented accommodation in areas of high unemployment.

## Victims

In most cases the victims of vehicle crime were found (by survey) to be visiting leisure facilities such as cinema, restaurants, bowling etc. Other victims worked at the Metro Centre itself. Analysis established that they were being targeted due to the need to park near to their intended destination. This identified the 'Routine Activities' factor of *time bands* within the parking areas where the bays were favoured by the victims due to their convenience. It emerged that the offenders were aware that there was a less likely chance of being disturbed between 1100 hrs and 1500 hrs where there was staff parking, and 1900hrs and 2300hrs where visitors were parking for the cinema etc. Most victims were discovering the crimes at the end of their day, usually around 2300 hrs. This was problematic for them in arranging alternative transport home. There was also the problem of *seasonal crime*, such as Christmas and winter sales. These victims were found to have a pattern of shopping, placing goods into their vehicles and returning back to the Metro Centre to continue shopping or for a meal.

### Significant consequences of the crime problem

*Individual victims* were sometimes affected quite strongly – for example, at Christmas, if they had just purchased, and lost, sentimental presents for their families. The car crime had also led to negative publicity against the Metro Centre. Obviously it was necessary to maintain public reassurance in a retail trade environment which relies upon revenue taken by the businesses based in the centre. Failure to establish safe conditions would have a detrimental long term effect on this environment. Concern about vehicle crime could also effect the morale of *employees* working at the Centre. Such was the size of the Centre that failure to control the vehicle crime problem (both real and perceived) could ultimately have a major adverse impact on *local economy and employment*.

*Local police resources* were also heavily burdened by the numbers of crimes leading up to the new year 2001. This in turn was drawing officers away from the surrounding communities.

### Significant consequences for further offending

The Metro Centre could be said to have provided both a guaranteed yield of stolen goods and a training ground for vehicle-crime offenders. The car parking environment provided a wide range and number of vehicles on which to prey. If undetected, the criminal could exploit this to test different offending techniques, which would in turn lead to a focussing and refining of offender knowledge. Preventing vehicle crime at the Centre was therefore of strategic importance in crime prevention in Gateshead. Evidence gathered during offender interviews and forensic examinations of attacked vehicles revealed that certain makes and models of car were being targeted. Some manufacturers fit universal radio/cd players, or the door locks on other models can be compromised by a criminal entry procedure. This in turn indicated the sharing of theft intelligence among offenders before attending the area.

### Immediate causes of crime, and risk factors <sup>1</sup>

#### Target Enclosure

The Metro Centre was a crime attractor, its parking areas being full of stealable vehicles, with stealable contents and fittings. In terms of the tactics of offending, the multi-storey car park was at risk due to the multiple entry points which made it easy for offenders to enter and exit. Surveillance of the parking lot also proved difficult when the car park was full – due to the layout, one group of cars would obscure the view of others.

#### Wider environment

The location of the Metro Centre car park adjacent to the outer ring road of Gateshead and junctions of other major roads, offers further routes for access and escape. Vulnerabilities in enclosure and environment both of course reflected a troublesome tradeoff between security and convenience, in that the Centre and its car parks gave easy access to legitimate users and offenders alike.

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<sup>1</sup> using the Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity – [www.crimereduction.gov.uk/learningzone/cco.htm](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/learningzone/cco.htm)

***Offenders' presence/ criminality/ Resources for offending***

There was evidence from arrest/court records that criminals were reoffending at the Centre whilst on bail, and that prolific offenders were involved. The Metro Centre is close to Gateshead, Newcastle and Sunderland and the offenders were generally from deprived communities within these areas. Access was by road and rail, with travelling time as little as 10 - 15 minutes. Offenders were also able to exploit the environment by carrying out reconnaissance in vehicles at peak times to avoid attention.

***Offenders' perception and decision making***

There were indications that the parking areas were used as environments for drug consumption; they also suffered from graffiti/vandalism. These two offending types are viewed (according to Broken Windows theory) as precursors for both lowering the perception of safety/ public pride in the area and for indicating that the areas are not patrolled. Hence the presence of these two activities indicates to other criminals that vehicle crime in the parking areas may well be easy to commit and to escape detection.

**2. *Involvement - general*****Partnership**

Outlined more fully in the sections below, the main collaboration on the project took place between St James Security guards (the resident security company for the Centre), Capital Shopping Centres (managers of the Centre) and Northumbria Police. The partnership was proactive involving steering meetings, joint working and training and collaboration on the analysis of the problem. There was a deliberate attempt to build a *collective crime management capacity* (see the main Section 4 on Implementation). This project has transferrable issues of good working practice involving commercial businesses, private security companies and the police force tackling vehicle crime in car parking areas.

**3. *Intervention***

Interventions are **how the action works**: the practical **methods** and the **principles or mechanisms** that underlie them and interrupt or weaken the causes of criminal events. This section describes one prior intervention that was in place before the current project; then some short-term, enforcement-based interventions implemented during and after Phase 1, and some wider interventions which aimed for longer-term impact, implemented during Phase 2.

**Prior Interventions****Existing Intervention 1**

**Method:** CCTV infrastructure

**Principles:** Reassurance, Surveillance, Deterrence.

The existing CCTV system was felt to be inadequate. At the start of the project it was questioned whether the cameras had been placed to give adequate surveillance of the parking areas. Also CCTV images at the onset of the study were not being systematically reviewed in real time – so that offences were being under-detected using the surveillance equipment. A further complication of the CCTV equipment was that its placement was too high to capture offenders stealing cars from the car park. The offenders were aware that if they wore hoods/caps and lowered the sunvisors in the car, these *countermeasures* would obscure the view of their face on leaving the car park in a stolen vehicle. Image quality was also affected by bright headlamps.

**Short Term Interventions****Short term Intervention 2**

**Method:** Use of decoy police cars

**Principles:** Deterrence, Restricting resources for offending

The decoy car was a (realistic) imitation police car which served to deter offenders from offending, through increased **perception of risk**. The method was also intended help to reduce the offenders' **familiarity** with the area where they were perpetrating the offences – thus it would restrict their **resources** for offending. *Implementation:*

- *Targeting* – locations at risk (secondary) with the decoy car placed where the offending hotspots had been located initially through the victim survey. Since these were the offenders' chosen sites for offending, any **displacement** should be to less favourable locations and should leave a net reduction in crime.
- *Monitoring and adjustment* – targeting was revised through day-to-day intelligence on crime patterns, important to do given the highly mobile nature of the offending.
- *Input of funds, equipment and human resources* – this obviously included purchasing the car and converting its appearance.

#### ***Involvement:***

- *Partnership* – This was a joint strategy formulated by the *Police* along with the *Security* team on site and based on intelligence from both partners. The *Police* funded, placed and maintained the decoy vehicles.

#### **Short term Intervention 3**

***Method:*** Use of Police surveillance sweeps

***Principles:*** Surveillance, Deterrence; Intelligence gathering

There was a short-term burst in surveillance of the parking areas by the police in Phase 1. In Phase 2 this was extended and increased, using both overt police presence (in low crime areas) and plain clothes (in high risk areas).

#### ***Implementation:***

- *Targeting* – The surveillance was targeted on areas at risk (secondary) identified through the survey and day-to-day intelligence. It was aimed at apprehending offenders in general (primary).
- *Monitoring and adjustment* – targeting was revised through day-to-day intelligence on crime patterns, sensible given the highly mobile nature of the offending. Surveillance and arrest allowed the police to gather *intelligence* on the offending techniques of those apprehended on the Metro Centre site, to further inform strategic and tactical planning. This was done by observing offenders and creating intelligence on a *database*. *Body mapping forms* were used by both police and security to record details of clothing; *intelligence interviews* also indicated target areas. Police and security also worked together to create *deliberate displacement* towards an area of covert police patrols. There was also an examination of *offender countermoves and reactions*: steps were taken in the final police operation to co-ordinate intelligence to try and track cross border *displacement* of offenders across three police areas.
- *Input of funds, equipment and human resources* – A team of four Police officers worked for periods of time linked to crime activity, four hours per day at peak times over fifteen days.

#### ***Involvement:***

- *Partnership* - This intervention involved both the *Police* providing the manpower and time to carry out short term surveillance of the parking areas and *St James Security* providing additional support and offender intelligence.

**Short Term Intervention 4**

**Method:** *Media advertisement of new interventions*

**Principles:** *Reassurance, Deterrence, alerting Preventers.*

A media strategy was initiated to co-ordinate newsworthy stories between Police and Capital Shopping Centres. The aims were to ensure positive release to promote the success of the initiative, and to *reassure* car park users that the relevant agencies were intensifying their response to crime (this would also alert them to act as *preventers* by securing their cars and contents in view of the risk); and send a *deterrent* message to the offenders of the determination to prevent and detect, who would perceive elevated risk.

**Implementation:**

- *Practical details* – The tasking and coordinating group met with media liaison officers from both Northumbria Police and Capital Shopping Centres to agree a media release strategy. In addition a representative of Northumbria Police and CSC were available for media interviews, both live broadcasts and prerecorded. Seasonal crime trends and crime prevention advice were subjected to a programme of release dates.
  - *Targeting* – This was aimed at the general public both as potential users of the Centre, and as potential offenders. Local news media were contacted through the Police press office.
- Monitoring and adjustment* – The strategy arose from the weekly tasking and co-ordinating group's discussions and as a result of the initial interventions implemented.

**Involvement:**

- *Partnership* – This was a joint strategy implemented by all three partners – *St James Security, Capital Shopping* and the *Northumbria Police*
- *Mobilisation* – the *local newspapers* were mobilised as crime preventers. In turn, they alerted the *car park users* as preventers, to secure their vehicles and contents

**Long Term Interventions**

**Long Term Intervention 5**

**Method:** *Repainting of car park stairwells and lighting maintenance*

**Principles:** *Environmental design, planning and management; Deterrence*

The stairwells in the car park were repainted and cleared of used drug detritus as part of a reassurance process for the public. The cared-for appearance of the environment was intended to increase the perception by offenders that the area was attended, and thus of higher risk to them.

**Implementation:**

- *Practical details* – The auto crime security team took responsibility for the monitoring and reporting of repair. Areas were inspected daily and repaired within 24 hours.
- *Targeting – Locations at risk (Secondary)*. Implementation focussed on high risk areas identified in the victim survey – one particular level of the multi-storey car park, and the stairwells, which were deemed to be at risk from vandalism and drugs abusers.
- *Monitoring and adjustment* – the location of the high-risk areas was established from the weekly tasking and co-ordinating groups, coupled with information from the surveys and observations by the security staff.
- *Inputs of funds, equipment and human resources* – Lighting repair was budgeted against ongoing service costs. Repainting stairwells totalled £500.

**Involvement:**

- *Partnership* – Action was implemented and funded by *Capital Shopping*, with hotspot location clarified through *Police* victim surveys.

### **Long Term Intervention 6**

**Method:** *The courts – using bail restrictions and remands in custody*

**Principles:** *Offender exclusion; Deterrence*

In this criminal justice-based intervention, prolific offenders were identified by the police and the Metro Centre security workers, and tracked through the Criminal Justice System. Offenders had strict conditional bail restrictions applied to them requiring them to keep clear of the Centre, or there was a request to magistrates for a remand in custody. This excluded these offenders from the Centre, including of course the parking areas, before their trial was completed.

#### **Implementation:**

- *Practical details* – The police officer in charge of the criminal case also attended court, to add strength to the bail/remand application.
- *Targeting – Offenders*. The intervention was targeted at both known convicted (tertiary) criminals and potential (secondary) criminals. Prolific/ repeat offenders were identified by the police and the Centre security workers, by investigating criminal justice system records of those arrested for offending in the Centre.
- *Monitoring and adjustment* – The intervention worked in a manner which made it responsive to prolific/repeat vehicle offenders and worked on actively building police and security company's knowledge of these as they emerged.
- *Input of funds, equipment and human resources* – extra costs in court attendance, prisoner accommodation costs.

#### **Involvement:**

- **Partnership** - *St James Security* guards originally located and passed on offenders to the *Police*, from there the *Police* tracked the offenders through the criminal justice system. *Magistrates* (at their discretion) granted bail restrictions/ placed accused prisoners on remand.

### **Long Term Intervention 7**

**Method:** *Enclosing suspected offenders in the car park*

**Principles:** *Perimeter access and security, Law enforcement/ Offender removal, Surveillance, Deterrence; Recovery of property*

This method, named 'the Net', involved closing down a multi-storey car park if suspicious activity was reported by members of the public, security or police. The original idea was that offenders normally travel into multi-storey car parks in cars. A block of the car park would in the least recover the car they arrived in together with any property or forensic evidence. It showed promise in the apprehension of offenders and recovery of stolen items. The first time it was tried, two men were arrested in a car which contained property from five other thefts from vehicles.

#### **Implementation:**

- *Practical details* – By careful planning, the Net involved minimal disruption to legitimate users of the car park. Police and security mobilise quickly and co-ordinate to close down the car park by bringing traffic to a halt. In pairs, they systematically search all levels, feeding results back to the Police supervisor. During this process other motorists are advised of a short delay 'for training purposes' so as not to promote fear of crime. A five-level car park can be searched in around five minutes before reopening. The procedure is now practised regularly, the security team can now perform this procedure on their own should the police be off site.

- **Targeting – Offenders: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary.** This intervention was targeted at all levels of offenders – those who were opportunistic first time offenders who were picked up on CCTV; offenders who may be involved in crime other than vehicle crime and attracted the attention of the security guards; and known repeat vehicle crime offenders.
- **Inputs of funds, equipment and human resources** – To run the Net the minimum number of resources was twelve. Two to arrange closure and two officers per floor (mixture of Police and security).

***Involvement:***

**Partnership** – This intervention relied on co-operation between the *Security* staff sighting and enclosing the offenders at the Metro Centre and the *Police* in feeding offender information and apprehending the offenders.

**Long Term Intervention 8**

**Method:** *Patrolling the stairwells*

**Principles:** *Surveillance, Deterrence, Offender removal, Reassurance*

Along with the repainting mentioned earlier (Intervention 5), regular patrolling of the stairwells was implemented to deny car park offenders their use as an escape route, and to protect them from being a site for other kinds of crime – drug abuse, damage, anti-social behaviour. Arrests were also made.

***Implementation:***

- **Targeting** – Implementation focussed on areas at high risk (secondary) from this misuse/abuse, as described above.
- **Monitoring and adjustment** – the location of the high risk areas was established from the weekly tasking and co-ordinating groups, coupled with information from the surveys and observations by the security staff.

**Inputs of funds, equipment and human resources** – Two security officers were given daily responsibility for the patrol. This would normally take thirty minutes during the day at peak times.

***Involvement:***

**Partnership** – Patrolling was undertaken by *St James Security*, with the stairwells identified as a hotspot from the *Police* victim survey

**Long Term intervention 9**

**Method:** *Systematic and enhanced patrolling*

**Principles:** *Surveillance, empowerment of Preventers, Deterrence; Reassurance*

Patrolling by the security staff was enhanced through systematic deployment. This was augmented by the use of training and upgraded technology as aids to empower preventers: electric *patrol vehicles* to cover more ground in the Centre and to get to incidents faster, and handheld *camcorders* to capture evidence of the offence as it took place. These aids were also intended to alert offenders to the increased risk of detection and to reassure the public – messages which were amplified through high visibility *graphics* on the patrol vehicles. The patrols were additionally supported through a direct *radio link to the police*, who could then be rapidly alerted to offences/ offenders in specific sectors of the Centre and reinforce the response. Since the survey revealed that most crimes were initially reported to Centre Security staff, it was decided to increase their *crime scene management* skills.

***Implementation and Involvement – empowerment:***

- **Practical details**



- *Deployment strategy* – Security would deploy in teams of two, one acting as an observer/communicator and the other the evidence gatherer. A patrol strategy was agreed between Police and Security, ensuring that resources were targeted against areas of predicted demand based on crime pattern analysis and historic incident management. A system of Police and Security officers keeping each other notified of their location prevented everyone being in the same place. Daily and weekly briefings by Police also ensured that security had access to intelligence and information. The tasking and coordinating group agreed in advance the number of resources available, any shortfall allowed requests to be made for additional aid in the form of Special Constables (fully-trained part-time volunteer police officers) and provision of overtime for full-time officers.
- *Training and briefing* security staff to identify and to tackle vehicle crime (training in terms of generic crime prevention skills, offender recognition, modus operandi, crime scene management including preservation of forensic evidence; weekly briefing on offenders/suspects).
- Staff were issued with *metal detectors* to allow safe stop and search procedures by avoiding pin stick from needles as well as aiding the recovery of tools used in vehicle crime.
- *Targeting* – This intervention focussed on general offenders (primary), known offenders (tertiary); and targets (people and cars) and locations that were high-risk (secondary).
- *Inputs of funds, equipment and human resources* – Purchase of the 2 patrol vehicles – modified electric golf buggies (€19000), 2 handheld camcorders (€1600) and metal detectors. Design and production of graphics for the buggies. Police time for training security staff.

### **Long Term intervention 10**

**Method:** *Enhanced CCTV surveillance*

**Principles:** *Surveillance, Deterrence, Empowerment of Preventers, Reassurance*

A management review of the current fixed CCTV system and monitoring procedures suggested improvements. The Metro Centre introduced a *CCTV tape viewing procedure*, which was followed whenever an offence was reported, to catch offenders as they escaped, and to help identify them for subsequent investigation and prosecution. The CCTV system was enhanced by the provision of staff who acted as an *evidence gatherer and a proactive viewer*. This proved very successful in identifying offenders and providing circumstantial evidence. Digital still cameras and binoculars also improved *evidence gathering*. Covert cameras were added which were resistant to offenders' anti-surveillance countermeasures; and *automatic number plate recognition* equipment was used to facilitate detection, primarily for *non-payment of road tax*. The overt cameras were also intended to *reassure* the public.

#### ***Implementation:***

*Practical details* – CCTV cameras were repositioned and upgraded to digital. Extra cameras were installed in vulnerable areas. A security officer was given the responsibility for *viewing* the monitor screens. They were *trained* how to operate equipment and had access to a *target file of suspects* to make their role productive. All training was provided in house. This training was cascaded to the rest of the security team (10) to provide a round the clock capability. The resource implication for this was normally one officer per day between the peak times.

*Targeting* – This intervention was targeted at offenders in general, although security staff were familiarised with the facial appearance of repeat vehicle crime offenders (tertiary).

*Inputs of funds, equipment and human resources and their sources* – The DVLA (national driver/vehicle licensing authority) supplied automatic number plate recognition equipment; Barclaycard provided covert cameras. The resource implication for the camera monitoring was normally one Security officer per day between the peak times.

**Long-term intervention 11**

**Method:** *Detering shoplifters at the peak times for vehicle crime*

**Principles:** *Deterrence; Management of police/security resources*

Crime pattern analysis indicated an increase in vehicle crime during the last hour of trading. By agreement with the police the Metro Centre tenants now invoke a 'deter' policy during this time. This reduces the load of shop theft arrests and allows Police and Security to focus on crime prevention outside rather than in.

**Implementation:**

*Practical details* – The deter policy could simply be a shop's sales or security staff approaching a potential shop thief and speaking to them ('Can I help you?'); more explicitly involve the security staff standing near the suspect and speaking to Police via radio in a way which discourages theft; escorting them from the Centre.

*Targeting* – Suspects in general (primary) usually received the lighter-touch response; known thieves subject to exclusion orders (see intervention 12 below) were ejected.

**Long-term intervention 12**

**Method:** *Exclusion of persistent offenders*

**Principles:** *Offender exclusion, Deterrence*

All persistent offenders were subject to *exclusion orders* by the Metro Centre.

**Implementation:**

*Practical details* – The procedure was as follows. A member of Security personally serves the order on the offender, in the form of a letter of ban. This is recorded on CCTV. Police officers ensure that there is no breach of the peace while the offender is asked to leave. Prosecution files are marked 'Metro Centre exclusion order' – indicating that at all subsequent court hearings, bail conditions restricting the offender returning to the area are requested. This avoided the frustration of conditional bail lapsing without Police knowledge. Exclusions last between 12 and 24 months.

*Targeting* – Persistent offenders (tertiary).

*Inputs of funds, equipment and human resources and their sources; Outputs.* Formal exclusions totalled approximately fifty offenders at the cost of €64 each. This covered legal expenses and administration. The cost for the letter of ban was under €8 but apparently still very effective.

**Involvement** – *partnership:*

Police, Metro Centre and Crown Prosecution Service agreed the procedure.

#### **4. Implementation - general**

##### **Building a crime management capacity**

Implementation of the individual methods described above was coordinated and given strategic direction through a more general implementation capacity, under the Metro Centre Safer Shopping Scheme.

- The Security company and Capital Shopping set up a *team* dedicated to controlling vehicle crime. Security staff were provided with training by Northumbria police in respect of forensic awareness, problem solving, patrol strategy, offender awareness. This training continues and ensures a strong sense of team work by all with the common purpose of prevention and public reassurance. The team takes responsibility for different geographical car parks. Working with Northumbria police the team benefits from a high profile which also aids motivation.

- The Police created and filled a new position of *vehicle crime community crime beat manager*, to focus entirely on this project. The manager applies the *problem-oriented* approach, and arranges for '*intelligence interviews*' with those arrested, to reveal motives and methods of offending in order to guide preventive action. They ensure best practice is applied to the *reporting and recording* of crime, the investigation of crime, the *arrest and interview* of offenders, the quality of *remand and conditional bail applications*. They maintain the *offender profile database* to ensure accurate, relevant and current information. They maintain *intelligence links* with surrounding Police intelligence units. They link in with *other partners* such as prison release officers, local authority, restorative justice teams, housing, Crown Prosecution Service. The manager also facilitated the first *Anti-Social Behaviour Order* for an offender involved in vehicle crime in a retail environment. (The ASBO, imposed by the courts, restricts the activity of a persistent offender who has proved to be particularly dangerous to the public for a period of four years). They also prepare pre-arrest portfolios which enable other officers to investigate offences, conduct interviews and be in a position to spend only a short time on administration procedures when submitting prosecution files.
- All partners created a joint capacity for *forensic* work. Following revelation by the survey of the unreliable preservation/ use of forensic information from stolen/ damaged vehicles, not only were security staff trained in evidence preservation but a policy was agreed with the Centre which offered the victims free transport home in exchange for their consent to leave the vehicle in a secure area for forensic examination.
- A collective *tasking and co-ordinating group* (involving police, Centre security and Capital Shopping) met weekly, and adopted a problem-oriented approach – receiving appropriate training (initial and refresher). It also ran the media strategy. **Most of the key initiatives which have produced long term impact have come from this group.**
- In order to *share information and intelligence* a *protocol* was established (subordinate to that of the North East Retail Crime Partnership). The protocol is *registered* with the UK Data Protection Registrar and has a policy of *insurance*. All members are signed up to an agreement of confidentiality. A target file of photographs is produced in compliance with the Human rights act. The target files are numbered and a audit system ensures their distribution, security and destruction. Weekly and monthly meetings ensured all members were briefed with accurate, relevant and current information.
- A *protocol* was also developed for where Security staff spot a suspicious vehicle and request a *registration check*. Depending on whether there is any criminal intelligence on the vehicle, the Police simply radio the answers 'negative' or 'positive', in the latter case attending the location. This system avoids Security staff having to observe vehicles unnecessarily and makes their patrols more efficient. More importantly it allows them to carry out vehicle checks whilst avoiding problems of data protection. The procedure is recorded and stands up to audit for security.
- The vehicle crime beat manager now interrogates all sources of information held on the *offender profile database*. The database uses the criteria of offender, victim and location. It also identifies three key areas in relation to offenders, Method, Motive and Opportunity. The information is gathered from intelligence interviews, crime pattern analysis, prison release schedules, witness statements, and alibi rebuttal procedures (visiting home address of offender following immediate report of crime to negate any future alibi of whereabouts).
- The need to establish an *offender profiling system* required the provision of extra computer equipment. The 2 additional terminals allowed police officers to have access to the information and also to carry out proactive measures such as Police National Computer, local intelligence searches, crime pattern analysis. Additional information became available such as inventory lists to assist searches of buildings for stolen goods, thorough Modus Operandi descriptions which gave officers reasonable grounds to arrest suspects. The computer system is presently being provided with

further funding to facilitate information exchange to surrounding petrol stations. This is partly to prevent the *refuelling of stolen vehicles*.

- *Targeting* – in general this was strategically planned to ensure patrol and camera cover for times and places of peak risk (secondary).
- *Monitoring and adjustment* – Patrolling deployment was based on the crime intelligence gathered from the original victim *surveys*, and *daily returns* on incidents and offenders.

#### **Inputs of funds, equipment and human resources and their sources**

- The tenants of the Metro Centre funded 10 additional security guards dedicated to tackling vehicle crime, better quality uniforms, CCTV equipment upgrades, purchase of 2 hand held camcorders, 2 electric patrol vehicles, metal detectors.
- Increased police time resources spent on surveillance in the Centre, planning, training and briefing security staff, publicity graphics for patrol vehicles.
- Increased management time from Capital Shopping, who also funded the vehicle crime beat manager's post.

#### **Outputs of the project**

Little quantitative information is available on the increases in patrolling coverage etc actually achieved, but

- 10 prolific offenders had been arrested and received sentences by May 2003.
- Prior to the project the detection rate for vehicle crime at the Metro Centre was approximately 11-14%. It has now reached 35%. 79 autocrime offences were detected between January 2002 and September 2003 – these include 8 thefts without owner's consent, 2 thefts of motor vehicles, 60 thefts from motor vehicles and 2 cases of 'vehicle interference'. (Some of these were done retrospectively, through analysis of Modus Operandi etc.)
- The Metro Centre Safer Shopping Scheme involved the partnership of 160 business outlets. Crime prevention forums and community meetings totalled some 100 per year.
- The project provided forensic awareness to 60 security guards in addition to the dedicated auto crime team.
- The deter policy ensured that two police officers were able to provide high profile preventive patrols on a daily basis during peak times.

## **5. Impact**

### **Impact evaluation**

An independent evaluation of limited scope was conducted by the Home Office for this project description, as described below.

#### **Impact evaluation design**

A simple retrospective impact evaluation was done, based on police recorded crime data. This was a nonequivalent control design, using three concentric areas and three time phases. The **areas** were the Metro Centre itself, the rest of Gateshead (excluding the Metro Centre), and the rest of the Northumbria Police force area (excluding Gateshead). The latter was used to indicate general background falls in vehicle crime, which were then filtered out arithmetically; the rest of Gateshead was used in similar fashion initially to indicate any local geographic displacement from the Metro Centre.

The **time phases** were Phase 0 (all of 2000, before any action was taken), Phase 1 (January 2001-February 2002, when short-term, reactive measures were taken) and Phase 2 (March

2002-August 2003, when the full suite of longer-term actions were added, generated by the problem-oriented approach).

This evaluation has many limitations. Nevertheless, a clear *prima facie* pattern of results emerged. The patterns of changes in vehicle crime over the 3 phases and 3 areas were statistically highly significant ( $p < .0001$ , 2-tailed, 4df, for both theft of and theft from vehicles).

### **Impact evaluation results**

*Theft of vehicles/taking without owner's consent* – Following the short-term interventions, there were 38% fewer thefts of vehicles than expected (on the basis of changes in the rest of the Northumbria Police area in the Metro Centre) during Phase 1 (equivalent to 72 fewer incidents than expected). There were 76% fewer thefts of vehicles (158 fewer incidents) when these were augmented with longer-term interventions in Phase 2.

There was some evidence of **displacement** to the rest of Gateshead during Phase 1, but not during Phase 2, when diffusion of benefit may have occurred instead (ie the action in the Metro Centre may have also reduced crime in the rest of Gateshead). Taking displacement/ diffusion of benefit into account, **net** reductions in vehicle crime in the whole of Gateshead that were attributable to the project action were estimated at 4% in Phase 1 (34 fewer than expected – ie displacement may have halved the 72-incident reduction achieved in the Metro Centre itself), but 24% (221 fewer than expected) in Phase 2.

*Theft from vehicles* Thefts from vehicles also went down, with no sign of displacement. Conservative estimates were a 27% reduction in this crime type in Phase 1 (69 fewer incidents than expected relative to a local, independent background fall in Gateshead) and a 46% (130 fewer) reduction in Phase 2.

Interestingly, retail crime in the Metro Centre reduced substantially over the same period as the vehicle crime project (by over 50% according to an unchecked claim). This raises a number of possibilities on cause and effect which cannot be pursued here. However, it is important to note that retail and vehicle crime did not decrease because of a fall in the number of customers using the Centre – in fact, these increased over the project period. Whether this increase can be attributed to the improved crime situation is not possible to determine with the information currently available. But it is possible.

### **Process evaluation**

Performance of the Metro Centre tasking and coordinating group is being studied by Leeds University.

### **Authorship**

This project description was produced by Andrew Kent and Paul Ekblom, Home Office, with the substantial assistance of Sgt Alan Parks, Northumbria Police.