

Lancashire Constabulary



# OPERATION RESTORE

*Crime & Disorder Reduction  
Category*

PC 2244 Peter Eccles  
Central Division  
Lea police Station  
783, Blackpool Road  
Lea, Preston  
Tel: 01772 209441  
Fax: 01772 209432

E-mail: [peter.eccles@lancashire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:peter.eccles@lancashire.pnn.police.uk)

Endorsed By: Chief Constable Paul Stephenson

## **Project Objectives**

Documentary evidence clearly showed a decline on the Howarth Road estate during the past decade. Data from relevant agencies confirmed this.

Howarth Road estate was developed during the late 1930's, the property types are broken down as follows: 47 three-bed houses, 20 bed-sits and 20 one-bed flats. The social make up of the estate was changing in that younger tenants, who were more transient in their life style, were replacing older long-term residents. All these types of issues linked together formed the basis of the reported decline.

It became clear following discussions with partner agencies that clear objectives needed to be set in order to adequately tackle crime and disorder patterns on the estate. This would lead to a framework whereby community confidence could be restored to enable them to function more independently. With approximately 45% of the total housing stock on the estate being flats or bed-sits, it was acknowledged that the issue connected to transient tenancies would be difficult to eliminate. This was further compounded by better quality housing association rental properties available within a two-mile radius of the estate.

No previous concentrated work to counter these problems had taken place in a partnership format. Realistically the objectives were to disrupt the offenders in both criminal and anti-social terms and to reassure the community, thus leading towards increased community confidence and empowerment. Specific criteria was set so that the designed model could be viewed in terms of successful reductions within crime and disorder and the formulation of an exit strategy. Meticulous planning commenced during a 4-month period allowing clear focus on aims and objectives. This planning allowed internal Police departments and partner agencies to clearly develop an implementation date well in advance. Examples of those units used at this stage included, Police intelligence unit, Air support unit (photography), drugs teams, community beat managers and communications / media departments. In terms of agency planning support involvement included Preston City Council departments, local councillors one of whom was the current Mayoress and a former long term resident of the estate. Wider consultation was conducted with other agencies involving, health and youth services. Further research work was undertaken by the originating officer on the Internet to determine any good practice or initiatives.

## **Definition of Problem**

The problems had been defined as follows:

- Drug Dealing - residents openly selling drugs from addresses on the estate to callers both on foot and in vehicles.
- Youth Related Anti-Social behaviour / Crime - local youths running around the estate during the day and at night. They were responsible for verbally abusing residents, kicking footballs against peoples homes, damaging void properties, street lighting and garden walls. Writing Graffiti on occupied and unoccupied dwellings.

In order to tightly define the problem, all available Police data was used to confirm the problems. This included crime statistics and incident statistics, which were also viewed in cluster formats. Intelligence reports were viewed identifying nominal targets and specific addresses. Youth referral scheme reports were viewed in order to confirm youth sub-criminal activity on the estate. The Youth Referral Scheme is a process whereby persons of 17 years of age or under can be the subject of a referral. Officers are required to obtain full details of the referred person, parents and school. An incident log has to be created as a cross reference and officers are given guidance on when to issue a referral. A referral must be issued when an officer warns a youth about their "criminal" and "non criminal" activity. This starts a process of letters issued by the Multi Agency Problem Solving Team. There are three stages to the process culminating in a group intervention panel addressing the individual's behaviour. This early intervention is aimed at diverting individuals away from criminal activity. Preston City Council housing department supplied data on the types and number of dwellings, numbers of void properties and numbers of complaints and types. The Lancashire Constabulary POP database was scanned and any similar related projects were viewed in order to ascertain any good practice. Environmental scanning was conducted in the form of visual audits. Having been scrutinised the defined problems formed the basis for effective planning. Local information was received from local councillors via the residents, which confirmed their concerns to be as follows:

- Concerns regarding drug dealing on the estate where many young children live.
- Concerns about gangs of youths roaming the streets at all hours intimidating the elderly residents and causing damage to property.
- The lack of maintenance on the estate by the local authority, allowing the estate to appear run down.

All the elements of the P.A.T. triangle were addressed, overhead aerial photography and Police computer mapping systems assisted in defining the location and identifying hot-spot areas and target addresses for drug warrants (see appendix 1).

Offenders were identified through the use of the divisional intelligence unit. They were tasked in advance through the National Intelligence Model, and completed a thorough audit of the estate using all available means.

Victims were identified through available data, both in terms of individuals and organisations. These victims included individual residents and Preston City Council.

Further analysis was carried out with Lancashire County Council youth services. They were consulted with regard to any initiatives or activity being conducted by them impacting on the youth of the estate. This proved useful to the Police as it was quickly established that there was in fact no youth provision services currently available.

Consideration was given by the Police to embark on public consultation by questionnaire method. However, concerns that the disruptive elements on the estate could be forewarned of potential forthcoming Police operations made this a non-viable option.

The root cause for the defined problems was found to be a breakdown in the confidence of the community. Over a period of several years there appeared to be a growing sense of isolation felt by the community with regard to coordinated support being provided by statutory agencies. This was reflected in terms of some under-investment from Preston City Council affected by budgetary constraints. There had been a lack of consistency from the Police with regard to a designated beat officer. There was a lack of community cohesion as no one person or agency was steering the issues forward in terms of ownership. This left the community feeling vulnerable, isolated and apathetic to their plight. Furthermore there was no effective partnership link between the statutory agencies and the community. These factors led to the development of the restore model.

## **Responses to Problem**

Having defined the problem through the scanning and analysis process, it was clear what specific responses were required. These needed to be structured in a systematic and coordinated manner. The planning team who had met on numerous occasions whilst defining the problem agreed on the appropriate mechanisms for targeting the problems.

The agreed response interventions were as follows:

- Maintenance of inter-agency coordination.
- Targeting and disruption of drug markets on the estate.
- Community reassurance strategy.
- High visibility Police patrolling.
- Positive Police intervention with local youths.
- Tackling environmental decay.
- Removal of graffiti.
- Restore community links/community association.
- Exit strategy.

### **Maintenance of inter agency coordination:**

During the planning stages it was agreed that all partner agencies would maintain daily contact with regards to updating both positive and negative issues. This allowed the operation to remain focussed and be adapted if necessary.

### **Targeting and Disruption of Drug markets:**

Having received and viewed the full intelligence unit's documentation relative to the estate, two addresses were clearly identified to target in relation to drug activity. Drug warrants under the misuse of drugs act were obtained. These were executed in a simultaneous method on day one of the operation by operational Police units. These units included two Police support unit serials, drugs dog, sector community beat managers and headquarters imaging unit. Also present were invited local councillors, Police Communications Media Officer and members of the local and national media. These actions were designed to reassure the local community that positive action was being taken.

### Community Reassurance Strategy:

Immediately following the execution of the drugs warrants, sector community beat managers commenced the reassurance strategy. All addresses on the estate were visited and the Operation Restore leaflet (see appendix 2/3) was delivered. Part of the strategy was to engage the local residents and alleviate any concerns about the mornings events, and also inform them of the objectives of the operation as a whole. Local media representatives who had observed the events began interviewing Police Officers and residents regarding the events. Local radio stations carried out live broadcasts relaying the events. The local newspapers reported the days events as headline features (see appendix 4).

### High Visibility Police Patrol:

Following on from the reassurance strategy the local Community Beat Manager together with departmental colleagues commenced two weeks of high visibility patrol on the estate. This period allowed uninterrupted focussed patrolling on the estate between the hours of 10am and 10pm. Officers were aligned to work in pairs and a briefing package was delivered. External funding had been obtained to allow officers to work specifically on the operation.

On completion of their daily tour of duty officers completed a daily analysis form, and electronic entries were recorded on the Lancashire Constabulary Slueth database, under targeted patrol section. A summary form of all Police activity during this period was completed (see appendix 5).

### Positive Police Intervention with Youth:

All officers engaged on the operation were encouraged to interact with local youths, particularly those identified through the analysis process. Any youths who were found to be acting in a sub criminal manner were placed on the Lancashire Constabulary Youth Referral Scheme. This system helped to confirm the identity of the three main youth offenders. With the assistance of Preston City Council Housing and Legal department three Acceptable Behaviour Contracts were obtained against the three main offenders and their families giving strict guidelines to the child regarding their future conduct on the estate, and the consequences of any breach to both child and parent (see appendix 6&7).

Efforts were made by the Police to engage the Lancashire County Council youth and community services with regard to providing adequate youth provisions for the estate. This was met with a negative response due to budgetary and staffing constraints.

### Tackling Environmental Decay:

In line with the service level agreements, council staff entered the estate immediately following the execution of the drugs warrants. They began to undertake the following works:

- Skips placed at identified locations, for use by local residents to assist in clearing rubbish from gardens and houses. Each skip was initially filled within 1 hour. Replacement skips were delivered on a daily basis free of charge.
- Grounds maintenance staff began work on all open areas and communal gardens, cutting back hedges, bushes, grass, and replacing broken down fences and repairing damaged walls, removing any potential ammunition.
- Tree canopies were cut back and raised to improve natural surveillance, in line with crime prevention techniques.
- Street lighting was improved with lamps replaced new for old. This was in conjunction with the tree canopies being raised.
- General property repairs were carried out to tenanted properties both internally and externally. Void properties were renovated to the required letting standard.
- Street cleansing was conducted on the roads and pavements of the estate on a daily basis, this was instead of the normal two weekly period.
- "Broken windows theory" used, all damaged windows were replaced on tenanted properties and on void properties presentable coloured tin covers placed over vulnerable windows.
- In line with force policy, rota garages removed abandoned or illegally maintained vehicles. This disrupted the activity of the criminal elements on the estate.
- For the two-week period the role of the estate caretaker was changed so that he was designated solely to the estate whereby normally he covers more than one estate.
- Graffiti on the estate was mainly centred around the void properties, flats and bed-sits where there was most criminal and anti-social activity. A clean up operation commenced and all graffiti was removed on day one. A small amount of anti Police graffiti reappeared at one location the following day, in response to the Police actions. This was immediately removed and a further contingency measure put in place whereby covert surveillance cameras were set to observe the area. No further graffiti has since occurred.

### Restoring Community Links

Building on the information contained in the Reassurance strategy document delivered to all addresses on the estate, the Community Beat Manager and local Councillor Mayoress Jean Al-Serraj actively canvassed support for a Community Association. Preston City Council Tenancy Support department provided further assistance with regard to this. Initial meetings were scheduled and attended by residents, housing officials, councillors, tenancy support workers, Police and youth workers. These meetings clearly outlined the roadmap leading to the successful formulation of a Community Association based in a designated property on the estate.

### Exit Strategy:

The strategy was based upon the following criteria:

- o Reduced demand on statutory agencies.
- o Normal service levels resumed by agencies.
- o Communication routes between agencies and residents improved.
- o Successful formulation of Community Association and Neighbourhood Watch Group.

### Plan Costings:

The operation was funded through money obtained from the Street Crime Initiative. £2000 was made available to allow extra Police resources to conduct the high visibility reassurance patrols. This allowed normal Policing to be maintained throughout the division. The operation did not incur any other costs to the Police. Preston City Council housing department incurred no additional expenditure resulting from this operation. In effect the residents benefited from planned works being brought forward.

### Review Mechanism:

Operation restore was designed to be an adaptable model, able to respond to changing circumstances. From conception the operation was aligned to the POP methodology. Utilising the daily analysis sheets and electronic data system (sleuth) a review process was conducted whereby Police and Council operations could be adapted. An example of this was the installation of surveillance cameras to counter the graffiti problem.

### Systematic Problem Oriented Partnership Approach:

Operation restore has been formally recognised at Divisional and Force level as being good practice. It reflects the principals of the Take, Hold, Change and Exit Philosophy. To date the model has been used within the division on 5 separate



occasions on different estates, all with reported successes. It has therefore proved to be a transferable model which can be adapted to fit any situation.

## **Evaluation**

### **Success or Failure?**

The identified problems outlined earlier in relation to the Howarth road estate, have been dramatically reduced. In capturing the Police data the three streets which make up the Howarth Road estate (Howarth Road, Hamer Road and Worden Road) were individually analysed.

The Policing operation commenced on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2002. This was the start date of the response stage actions. This date was used to benchmark data and show comparison statistics assisting the evaluation process. Data capture ended on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2003. Data from the same period the previous year was captured for comparison. All crime and incident data was captured in relation to these dates. The data captured is shown below.

	<b>CRIMES</b> 18/11/01 25/01/02	<b>CRIMES</b> 18/11/02 25/01/03	<b>INCIDENTS</b> 18/11/01 25/01/02	<b>INCIDENTS</b> 18/11/02 25/01/03
<b>Howarth Road</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Hamer Road</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Worden Road</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>03</b>

As the table illustrates reported crime on the estate was significantly reduced. Reported incidents rose slightly, **however** this can be explained as follows. During the high visibility Police patrolling stage officers self generated work accounts for more than the increase in incidents. Examples of these incidents are:

- o Issuing of Youth Referral Forms.
- o Removal of abandoned vehicles.
- o PACE 1 searches.
- o Execution of warrants.

- Issue of fixed penalties.

Some of these examples are illustrated in appendix 5.

Data received from Preston City Council housing department using the same time periods showed the following:

- Number of void properties fell from 13 to 8.
- Emergency call outs of Council staff fell from 5 to 2.
- Neighbour nuisance reports fell from 6 to 0.

Prior to the operation there was no identified community group or facilities on the estate. In line with the structured exit strategy, Preston City Council has given a building on the estate to the newly formed Community Association. The building is a ground floor flat in the centre of the estate and it has been handed over to the community. It is to be used by the community as a fully functional venue for community events. It will also be utilised by City Council officials, Community Beat Manager and Police Community Support Officers as a base for holding community surgeries. The building has been provided at no cost to the Community other than utility costs.

Alongside the Community Association a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme has been launched covering the estate.

### **Does the Evaluation show success or failure.**

Based on the objective evidence shown above, it appears that the operation was a success due to the fact that the problems had been eliminated or reduced. This is due to the interventions by partner agencies.

In terms of subjective evidence in respect of the community, the feelings of safety and the perceptions of the problems needed to be tested. To do this a questionnaire was compiled and handed to all residents attending one of the public meetings held after the impact phases of the operation. The returns showed that the respondents felt that their situation had neither improved greatly nor deteriorated greatly (see appendix 8). Given that approximately 40 questionnaires were handed out and only 14 returned demonstrates an apathetic attitude within the community towards events occurring in their community. In response to this however the formulation of the Community Association demonstrates a willingness by a significant number of residents to become involved in the improvement of their quality of life issues.

A further example of public feedback came in the form of a letter received from Preston City Councillor, Mayoress Jean Al-Serraj (see appendix 9).

### **Can any lessons be learnt?**

During the evaluation process all components of the operation were tested to check how they had functioned. It was found that they had all functioned correctly and that

no components had broken down. Although it is believed that future operations would benefit from the use of a questionnaire being sent to the residents. This would have to be done in advance possibly 6 to 12 months, and would allow a proper evaluation of the communities objectives and concerns. This would ensure the operation encompasses the community's objectives and not to be solely based around Police and City Council objectives.

As this was the first time Operation Restore had been tested there is no way of knowing whether the benefits will be long term. It is therefore envisaged that the full evaluation process outlined above will be repeated 12 months after the operation started to ascertain the longevity of the operation.

### **Conclusion.**

This operation has been a success from its planning stages through to the implementation of the exit strategy. The benefits of extensive early planning allowed for a smooth transition between each stage. The formation of strong partnerships with regular dialogue kept the operation moving forward.

The operation is now recognised as good practice and is on a database allowing all members of the constabulary access to the model.

The model of restore could be viewed as a mannequin that can be dressed up to suit any other geographical area. This can be proved as the Operation Restore model has been used on 5 separate occasions in different areas.

### **PC 2244 Peter Eccles.**