Implementing crime prevention schemes in a multi-agency setting: aspects of process in the Safer Cities programme

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Research Study 160

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by
Mike Sutton

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Foreword

The Home Office Safer Cities programme was launched in 1988 to reduce crime, lessen the fear of crime, and create safer cities in which economic enterprise and community life could flourish. It ran for seven years, establishing projects in 20 cities or boroughs.

The Home Office Research and Statistics Department conducted an impact evaluation to determine the extent to which Safer Cities was successful in reducing the risk of crime. The results of that research are contained in a separate report (Ekblom et al. 1996) It was also decided that we should understand more about where money was spent, how it was spent and what it was spent on. The findings of that research, and a number of recommendations, are contained in this report. They have considerable policy and practice implications for future partnership programmes and other community safety initiatives.

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Mike Sutton

Contents

		Page
Foreward		iii
Acknowledgements		iv
Summary		vii
1	Introduction	1
	Evaluating the Safer Cities Programme	3
2	The Preventive Process: influences on the type of data gathered and schemes implemented	5
	Influences on data gathered in the Safer Cities Programme	7
	Early emphasis on situational measures	13
	Co-ordinators' backgrounds	15
3	Gravitation towards offender-oriented schemes	19
4	Influence and tensions within the partnership approach	23
	Exemplar schemes	29
	Attraction to other funds	29
	Avoidance of other programmes	30
	Levering-in resources from other bodies	30
	The steering committee effect	32
5	Conclusions	37
	General	38
	Specific	38
	References	41
	Publications	45

Summary

This study was conducted as an ancillary to the evaluation of the programme's impact. It examines the influence exerted by different members of the Safer Cities (SC) programme, and the strains between them. It reports findings from interviews with co-ordinators and assistant co-ordinators, uses data from the programme's management information system and draws upon records of Home Office advice to co-ordinators.

The paper looks at the decision making process which determined where money was spent and on what type of crime prevention schemes. Some powerful influences were found to determine where money was assigned and the type of crime prevention projects funded.

A number of issues are identified, some of which seem to run contrary to the design of the Safer Cities programme. Overall, there was considerable variation between projects in terms of following both the 'rational' crime prevention method, and the partnership approach – which lie at the core of the Safer Cities programme design. Co-ordinators differed in several respects: some tended to concentrate spending in small areas, others spread resources more widely; opinions differed as to what constituted 'deserving' and 'undeserving' schemes; some were attracted to existing funds while others were not; areas with the very worst crime problems were avoided by some while others sought them out. Finally, there was a wide variation in the amount of levered-in funds obtained. If the implications of these findings are properly addressed, it should help in the development of crime prevention policy and practice. Future partnership programmes may then build upon the experiences of such pioneer programmes as Safer Cities.

Selection of preventive methods

Initially, there was a very strong bias towards using situational prevention, rather than offender-oriented schemes. There are several possible reasons for this:

- the area basis of crime profiles may have biased the perception of crime problems towards offences, not offenders

- data on offender residence were (and remains) very hard to get

- pressure for quick spend initially, and rapid implementation and demonstration of results encouraged co-ordinators to focus on situational methods.

  Subsequently, there was a shift towards offender-oriented methods which followed the relaxation of pressure for speedy results once initial schemes were under way

- there was no evidence that co-ordinators found situational approaches ineffective, but lack of 'what works' information, plus concern about possible crime displacement, led some to favour offender-oriented methods or those with a 'community' appeal.

Target selection

Spread

- Some co-ordinators and steering committees were concerned about targeting areas. They felt it would lead to inequalities, particularly if the more vociferous residents had undue influence. These co-ordinators favoured 'thin-spreading' of resources across the whole project area.

- Other co-ordinators were 'concentrators' – targeting resources in particular areas and wishing to make a mark with limited resources.

Avoidance of areas with worst problems

- In some cases, areas with the worst problems were avoided because it was judged by co-ordinators that schemes could not be given sufficient resources to make an impact.

- Some areas were avoided to prevent displacement of very public problems such as drugs or prostitution into other areas.

- Some projects avoided areas where residents had less capacity to help produce and implement suitable proposals for crime prevention. There was often no attempt to develop community structure or encourage key individuals to create a favourable context for prevention where it was perhaps most needed.

Deservedness of schemes

- There was a firm principle that car-park companies or pubs should pay for upgrading prevention in and around their premises.
- There was an avoidance of substitution. Schemes would not be funded if they would normally have been paid for by another agency or local authority.
- But in some cases it was seen as acceptable to fund strategic exemplars to encourage a local authority to follow example schemes.

Relationship with non-SC programmes (crime prevention or broader programmes)

Avoidance

- Some co-ordinators preferred areas untouched by other programmes. They felt better able to make a mark.
- Some co-ordinators felt SC resources, spent in certain areas, would be minuscule in comparison with funds from other programmes.
- Spending in areas already receiving funds from elsewhere was seen as politically difficult by some co-ordinators and steering committees.

Attraction

- Some co-ordinators targeted areas where other action was present, to try to capture resources and co-ordinate energy in areas with multiple problems.
- Some tried to attract other programmes to target their action in SCP scheme areas.

Development of local crime prevention policy

- A common theme underlies the issues of targeting and implementation listed above. As a consequence of the innovative nature of the programme, in setting up new local roles, co-ordinators and their steering committees appear to have been plunged into a kind of policy vacuum which they had to fill in their own way, by extemporisation. Not surprisingly, they developed a range of

inconsistent solutions, and sometimes constrained themselves unnecessarily by rigid principles.

- There is, therefore, a need for future partnership-based community safety projects to draw out the dimensions and alternative choices of local policy. This would cover the issues outlined above, and would empower and encourage co-ordinators and steering committees to adopt a more systematic approach to strategic decision making. To begin the process of policy development in this area it is recommended that workshops should be held – using input from experienced co-ordinators, SC members or managers.

1 Introduction

The Safer Cities (SC) programme was set up as part of Action for Cities, the Government's wider programme of co-ordinated action aimed at dealing with the multiple social, physical and economic problems of some of our larger urban areas. Phase I of the SC programme was launched in 1988. It covered 20 cities or boroughs and was wound up in September 1995. Phase II of the SC programme commenced in December 1993. Phase II is supervised by the Department of Environment (DoE) who will supervise and monitor contractors managing individual projects and, to date, covers 29 projects in England which are part of the Single Regeneration Budget administered by DoE; there are a further three projects in Wales funded and administrated by the Home Office. This report is concerned only with Phase I of the programme.

The objectives of SC were to reduce crime, to lessen the fear of crime, and to create safer cities within which economic enterprise and community life could flourish. Building upon experience from an earlier programme, the '5 Towns' initiative (Home Office, 1988; Liddle and Bottoms, 1994), the SC programme adopted a multi-agency 'partnership' approach to crime prevention.

SC formed part of the Government's Action for Cities initiative, which was established to reverse social and economic decline, and strengthen regeneration in some of the country's most hard-pressed urban areas (Home Office, 1990). In each of 20 areas – covering cities or boroughs – a local SC project was set up. The fact that SC initiatives were locally-based, reflects an understanding developed since the 1980s that crime is best tackled at local level. Each project was established with a locally recruited co-ordinator, appointed or seconded from a local authority, the police or other relevant agency. The Home Office met the salaries and overheads of each co-ordinator and a small team of assistants within each project. Each project was guided by its own local steering committee representing local government, police, probation, voluntary bodies and commerce. The steering committee was meant to set the priorities for the project and also oversee implementation of schemes.

A wide range of activities featured in the projects, including awareness-raising among citizens and local agencies, and the fostering of community

safety strategies in local government. But at the core of each project was the initiation of local preventive schemes - averaging 180 per project. These schemes were implemented on the ground by a variety of local organisations, invited to bid for funds. The schemes drew on grants from SC through the Home Office - up to £250,000 annually per project - and other local or national resources. Depending on the size of the grant sought, approval could be given by the project steering committee itself (for schemes under £500), or referred up successively to the Home Office and (if approved) Treasury. Altogether, SC initiated some 3,600 schemes at a cost of around £22 million of Home Office funding. With the addition of administration costs the cost was around £30 million. Taking account of money levered-in by co-ordinators from external sources (local authorities, police, charitable bodies and other Government programmes etc.), the total amount spent on SC Phase I exceeded £42 million.

Some schemes focused on the city/borough as a whole (e.g., through publicity campaigns and information initiatives such as crime prevention buses). Many schemes, however, focused on vulnerable individuals, groups of homes, particular institutions (such as schools and clubs), or localities (e.g., housing estates, car parks or city centres). This followed the understanding that most crime problems are local in nature and need local solutions.

SC preventive action was intended, by the programme's designers, to take the rational, problem-oriented approach developed within crime prevention over the last decade. This involves several steps:

- analysing crime data and related information to identify local patterns of crime
- setting objectives
- selecting appropriate preventive measures (tailor-made rather than off-the-shelf)
- implementing measures
- evaluating what had been done and making changes where necessary.

To take forward this problem-oriented 'preventive process' (Ekblom, 1988), co-ordinators were given a limited amount of training and support from professionals in the Home Office and elsewhere (few co-ordinators had much background in criminology).

Evaluating the Safer Cities Programme

Coming in the wake of the Government's Financial Management Initiative, the SC Programme was meant to offer value for money and be subject to rigorous evaluation.

Evaluation of SC has been conducted at a number of levels. Co-ordinators themselves were responsible for ensuring that at least a minimal assessment was made of each scheme for which they were responsible (this was part of the conditions of grant). What is now the Police Research Group in the Home Office evaluated a number of 'themes' such as SC schemes using CCTV in car parks (Tilley, 1993), or burglary (Tilley and Webb, 1994). They also conducted an assessment of the success which projects had in fostering local community safety strategies. This was to ensure co-ordinated crime prevention continued locally after projects closed (Tilley, 1992).

The Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate (RSD) focused on the performance of the SC programme as a whole. The main thrust of this evaluation looked at SC impact upon crime levels in the first 16 Phase I projects, between 1987 and 1992, using survey and recorded crime data (Ekblom et al., 1996).

For the SC impact evaluation, the main focus lay in determining the extent to which the presence of SC schemes, at the neighbourhood level, was differentially associated with falls in the numbers of crimes. While issues of process were therefore not central, it was thought that an understanding of 'co-ordinator effects' or 'steering committee effects' in determining where money was spent, how it was spent, and what it was spent on, would be vital for interpreting cause and effect. For example, it was important to know whether or not co-ordinators were assigning schemes to neighbourhoods in which there was already action from other Government crime prevention programmes such as Estate Action; or whether they were assigning action to areas on the basis of short-term 'highs' in crime, or more stable indicators. Such processes could mask or mimic impact effects: it would be hard to pick out SC impact in areas where other programmes were implementing crime prevention measures, and temporary 'highs' would by their very nature fall regardless of SC action. Therefore, semi-structured interviews, lasting around three hours per project, were conducted in 1994 with the co-ordinators of 12 of the 16 projects in the study (four projects had closed by this time), to throw light upon these assignment processes.

It should be emphasised at this point that the report relies heavily on co-ordinators' conceptions or reconstructions of what was done. Being major players, co-ordinators could not be neutral observers.

Before each interview began, co-ordinators were told that any 'sensitive' information they provided would be described in such a way that it could not be used to identify their city in the report. The level of detail provided was found to be richer than was originally envisaged. Many unexpected points emerged during interviews which are important for both policy and practice, and this information forms the main body of the report.

As supplementary data, scheme types and scheme funding were examined from the extensive database within the SC management information system. Home Office guidance to co-ordinators was scrutinised. There was also RSD's extensive experience of evaluating SC to draw upon. The information assembled sheds considerable light on the process of crime prevention in the SC programme and the way individual projects evolved over the period of study.

As this study is concerned with implementation issues it focuses mainly upon schemes. However, SC was obviously more than the sum of the schemes put into place: it established multi-agency collaboration, put crime prevention on local agendas and established exit strategies (Tilley, 1992).

Beginning with an examination of the limitations and biases of particular sources and types of crime data used by co-ordinators to inform planning and guide implementation, it is argued that different types of crime data will suggest different types of solution. The Home Office had some influence on what types of crime data were collected and what types of schemes were implemented, but there were also significant 'external' constraints. All these factors are looked at in some detail. Moving on to consider the dynamics of the partnership approach, differences between co-ordinators, steering committees and approaches to spending are examined in terms of their influence upon where SC schemes were located and what types of crime prevention activity were funded.

2 The Preventive Process: influences on the type of data gathered and schemes implemented

The need to collect relevant and reliable information on crime has been emphasised within ideal models of what is now known as *the crime prevention planning process* (Frisbie, 1982) or the *preventive process* (Ekblom, 1988). By analysing and interpreting this information practitioners can determine the places and problems most in need of particular crime prevention schemes and ensure that appropriate preventive methods are applied:

> *"Basic to preventing crime is understanding how and when it occurs. Programmes often fail not because they are bad programmes but because the problem has not been adequately identified. As a result, good programmes are sometimes matched with the wrong problem. For example a burglary prevention programme directed at single family dwellings would be misdirected if most burglaries occurred in apartment units. And because the nature and extent of the problem changes, it is necessary that crime analysis be done on an ongoing basis." (Frisbie, D. 1982).*

This systematic approach is based upon the simple concept that schemes should only be implemented in a particular place if they are both necessary and suitable (see Goldstein, 1979; Gilling, 1994). Goldstein – the originator of the problem-oriented approach to policing – recommended a crime specific focus with systematic planning, implementation and evaluation (Goldstein, 1979: 243,244).

Sources and types of data are particularly important as they have implications not only for the type of crime prevention method chosen but also where it is located:

> *"...if an area has a high offence rate but a low offender rate then this suggests that either the majority of offences are being committed by people from outside the area, or a small number of offenders are committing a large number of offences. On the other hand if an area has both a high offence and offender rate then this suggests that most of the offences in an area are probably being committed by those who live in the area," (Shapland et al., 1994:22).*

Different types of crime data can be used to identify problems that, taken at face value, call for specific types of solution. For example, information from the probation service, social services and the police about where offenders live (offender areas) can more readily be used to justify places where money should be spent on offender-oriented schemes. Police crime data can be used to pinpoint areas suffering from high levels of recorded crime such as burglary or car crime.

Particular types of crime, such as domestic violence and racially motivated threats, are known to be under-recorded and so analysis and interpretation of police data may not reveal the extent of problems in particular areas (Aye Maung and Mirrlees-Black, 1994). Similarly, levels of vandalism and disorder may not be adequately represented by police data – either due to lack of reporting, or police territorial boundaries not matching 'real' neighbourhoods (this is discussed in more detail below). Fear of crime can mean that people avoid particular activities such as using town centre car parks, or going into the town centre at night – although the crime statistics may show no particular problem because the perceived threat of crime has driven potential victims away. To cope with these limitations, household crime surveys, pedestrian surveys and records of local authorities can all be used to identify areas with particular problems (e.g., domestic violence, racially motivated violence and threats, fear of crime, levels of vandalism and disorder).

Influences on data gathered in the Safer Cities Programme

Rather than starting immediately with scheme implementation, co-ordinators in the first year of the SC programme were required to create a crime profile of their city/borough to provide a systematic and rational framework to guide spending decisions. At the same time, due to Treasury rules, they had to spend funds for which provision had been made, by the end of the first financial year. After these first-year 'bedding-in' pressures, co-ordinators had to address certain shortcomings in their existing crime profiles. Some of the initial weaknesses of early crime profiles combined with other factors to create a particular emphasis on the need to implement situational schemes. The reasons for these shortcomings, along with some imaginative approaches taken by the various co-ordinators and steering committees to deal with crime profile limitations, and the way their decisions affected the implementation process, are discussed below.

As said, co-ordinators were provided with guidance from the Home Office regarding the need to adopt a systematic approach to crime prevention planning and implementation. At the core of this was the requirement, spelt out in some detail, to create a crime profile of their area, consisting of recorded crime rates in each police beat of their city or borough. This was quite thoroughly covered in induction sessions for new co-ordinators.

Crime profiles had three main purposes: first, to identify high crime areas within a city; second, to identify particular types of crime to be targeted by crime prevention activity; and third, to act as a baseline against which future change could be measured for evaluation at the project and scheme level.

At a minimum, profiles were meant to utilise national Census data (on population) and police recorded crime at beat level (territories up to a few thousand households) to identify the rate of particular crimes per 100,000 population per year. Census data also had the potential to identify demographic characteristics of neighbourhoods with particular crime problems.

This was not meant, by the programme's designers, to be a one-off exercise: in time, more detail would be added, for example from local surveys, local authority departments, local hospitals, victim support co-ordinators, the probation service and schools.

Due to annuity pressure to spend the first year budget by early March, it was important to avoid delays in completing crime profiles. For this reason, the Home Office instructed co-ordinators that, for the first year, crime profiles should be based on the bare minimum of information – a decision which

stemmed from concerns about the time taken to produce profiles in the 5 Towns initiative.[1]

Crime profiles, as said, were needed to assist co-ordinators with two main financial considerations: where to spend SC money and what to spend it on. However, other issues tended to muddy the waters and additional considerations affected pursuit of the preventive process.

It would have been prohibitively expensive to build an initial picture of crime from surveying residents across a large area, such as a whole SC project. Realistically, local crime surveys can only be undertaken in areas where other sources (such as police statistics) have already indicated that crime problems exist. Although survey data is particularly sensitive to local concerns – and can measure both fear and the type of schemes residents wish to see implemented in their area (see, Hunter, 1978; Home Office, 1991: 22; Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994: 5-6) – surveys on this scale were not undertaken in the first year.

Reliance upon limited data was seen as unavoidable if schemes were to be implemented within a reasonable timescale. Indeed, Frisbie's ideal model of the crime prevention planning process (Frisbie, 1982) begins with: "Determine Data Needs and Sources" and recognises the need for practitioners to "... assess the availability and limits of existing resources to collect data". This same pragmatic approach was behind Home Office guidance to co-ordinators to complete initial crime profiles using police recorded crime data only.

In effect, co-ordinators were expected to put together basic crime profiles as soon as possible. This meant that spending decisions in the first year were guided by interpretation of police recorded crime data.

Any tendency towards procrastination was discouraged by a further policy which allowed co-ordinators who had spent their budget to 'mop-up' the annual underspend of those from other areas. This effectively created a climate of competition with some co-ordinators relishing the chance to have more funding, and others expressing bitterness about being penalised for local difficulties.

1 The review of the 5 towns programme concluded (Home Office, 1988, 13). "Production of each profile turned out to be a time consuming exercise and, by and large, the selection of target crimes and the shape of preventive schemes in each of the five areas did not appear to differ significantly from what would have resulted from the analysis of police statistics alone. While local surveys are important as a means of assessing residents' concerns about crime and the extent of unrecorded crime, the experience of the 5 Towns initiative suggests that projects which are time constrained and pressed for resources would do better to act initially on police statistics, which if necessary, can be supplemented by other information as the project progresses."

Despite directives from the Home Office to minimise delays, many co-ordinators faced quite a few problems in constructing their 'basic' crime profiles. Some SC teams experienced difficulties in obtaining usable data from police records. And though the original intention was for SC teams to construct their own profiles, most co-ordinators lacked the necessary resources and sometimes the skills: 13 of the 16 cities studied had to rely on extensive assistance from Home Office (RSD) researchers and statisticians.

Co-ordinators generally felt it would have been better if they could have developed a more structured and co-ordinated programme of prevention before implementing schemes in the first year. Some reconciled the need to spend money with the need to establish a strategy by awarding small contracts before the crime profiles were completed. One co-ordinator complained that he was summoned to the Home Office "...for assistance". Although he did not wish to spend money until an action plan was in place he felt compelled to "...slip small grants through to keep the Home Office happy".

After the pressures and constraints of the first year had eased somewhat, co-ordinators were able to collect data from different sources. However, considerable differences now arose between cities in terms of how co-ordinators identified areas to be targeted for action and the strategies they adopted to deal with crime and fear of crime. While some stuck more rigidly, or superficially, to the 'ideal' preventive process (which was never meant to be a 'cook book' slavishly followed: Ekblom, 1988: p1), other co-ordinators saw shortcomings in what they felt to be a narrow approach and adopted imaginative solutions to deal with them (discussed in more detail below). This issue has been identified by other studies of crime prevention programmes. Frisbie (1982) notes that such differences in approach are hardly surprising given:

> *"The difficulty of selecting appropriate crime prevention strategies is compounded by the diversity of crimes, offender methods, victim characteristics, and the environmental settings in which crimes occur. Further compounding the difficulty is the profusion of inconsistent opinions about which strategies are best."*

As said, the initial stages of the preventive process require that before preventive strategies can be devised, particular types of crime must be selected for action on the basis of police statistics, local surveys and the concerns of particular agencies. And it is necessary to determine whether local crime problems are a reflection of long-term 'problem' areas with notorious reputations, as opposed to mere temporary 'blips'. Depending on how it is used, crime data can have some repercussion on subsequent measurement of crime reduction. If, for instance, co-ordinators had

responded to sudden peaks in recorded crime, and assigned crime prevention activity accordingly, there was some cause for concern that the evaluation would attribute success to SC schemes in places where the short-term peak would (by its very nature) drop anyway, a so-called 'regression-to-the-mean' effect (Ekblom, et al. 1996).

Co-ordinators suggested that the regression-to-the-mean effect was not a cause for concern, as they generally assigned SC crime prevention activity to areas with entrenched high crime problems, often on the basis of 'area reputation'. Indeed, data collection and analysis was not sophisticated enough to have been responsive to short-term fluctuations in crime, co-ordinators often preferring to spend a lot of SC money in a few small 'problem' areas, rather than trying to track local changes in crime (discussed in more detail below).

Using police recorded crime data to determine where situational crime prevention measures should be implemented can be problematic when the smallest unit of geographical aggregation is the police beat. In one city the co-ordinator said that levels of crime, on a beat basis, were used to identify neighbourhoods where they should implement target-hardening schemes to reduce burglary levels. The problem was, that by deciding to target-harden a whole neighbourhood on a street-by-street basis, they inadvertently target-hardened the wrong streets. By chance alone, target-hardening was not done in the streets where victims lived, but in areas where (the co-ordinator subsequently discovered) offenders lived! This only came to light when the SC team closely examined data supplied by the community policeman – who brought them street by street updates of victimisation for monthly meetings. The SC team were three years into the project before they saw the picture. The co-ordinator said: "We learned from this: if people target-harden estates then it is not sufficient for them to work off the beat data. You need to more systematically address the question of which part of the estate should you start with and who you are aiming at." (see also Home Office, 1991: 21). In other words, it was a mistake to identify an area suffering from burglary problems and then arbitrarily begin to tackle the problem street-by-street.

Several observations from research on burglary and its prevention throw further light on targeting issues. Some focus on areas as a whole, others on individual dwellings at risk. It is worth first of all noting the area-level finding from the SC impact evaluation of domestic burglary schemes (Ekblom et al., 1996), that it is cheaper to prevent burglaries by spending a given amount of resources in areas where more were occurring. But in the absence of readily available street-level data, another method of targeting would have been to concentrate on individual victimised households so that scarce resources could be spent where most needed. This is because existing victims are now well-known to be at significant extra risk of repeat incidents (although this

did not receive wide exposure until Safer Cities had been running some years). Allocating resources to existing victims is certainly readily defensible as a 'fair' strategy. However, in many police forces, identification of repeat victims is not possible as a matter of routine from local crime data.

It is of course possible to combine both strategies by targeting high-risk victims within high-risk areas. This would make particular sense given the finding that repeat victims account for a greater proportion of incidents in high-risk areas (Trickett et al., 1995; Ellingworth et al., 1995; Farrell and Pease, 1994).

Another problem that is not directly identifiable from analysis of police recorded crime is *fear of crime* (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994) and avoidance behaviour. Fear of crime can affect people's lives and behaviour in many ways. One example of this was provided by a co-ordinator concerned with the reasons for high pedestrian fatalities in the town centre. He commissioned a survey of pedestrians and it transpired that they were avoiding subways, due to fear of crime, preferring instead to negotiate dangerous roads. This level of fear was greater than the small number of recorded subway crimes would indicate. Either the extent of pedestrian fear was not justified – and the real risks were small – or the incidence of crime was low because few potential victims were exposing themselves to risk (see Ekblom, 1988: 31). The co-ordinator adopted the same systematic approach advocated by the preventive process: collecting data on the pedestrian fatality problem, then analysing and interpreting the data to devise the best strategy to reduce the problem. The fear of crime problem in the subways was therefore stumbled upon by an alert co-ordinator, exploiting pure serendipity!

In the same city, the co-ordinator rejected proposals by the police to implement schemes in car parks where cars were being stolen. Because of the findings from the pedestrian survey he concentrated instead on the car parks that were being avoided. A survey of shoppers in the town centre revealed that the most convenient car parks in the city centre were being avoided through fear. As a result, crime prevention schemes were set up in these car parks so shoppers would be less afraid of using them.

Data were sometimes collected for exclusive use by one scheme, rather than strategic use across the project as a whole. In Hartlepool, the co-ordinator developed an imaginative approach to the shortcomings of the crime data. Here, elderly owner-occupiers were targeted because, unlike those living on council estates, they never received crime prevention help from the local authority and lived in areas with relatively low crime rates. Such areas would not have been prioritised by crime pattern analysis of police recorded burglary data. The scheme used victim support information to identify

privately owned houses that had been burgled, and SC resources were used to target-harden them against repeat victimisation. In both conceiving and implementing the Hartlepool Elderly Owner-occupier Burglary Prevention Scheme, the co-ordinator deliberately avoided slavish pursuit of the preventive process as a fixed routine because of the limitations of the data.

By way of contrast, in Rochdale a three-stage process was adopted which (1) 'zoomed-in' on crime problems, (2) located crime prevention workers in these areas, and (3) implemented target-hardening schemes on a response basis in the particular high crime areas where crime prevention workers were located (they relied mainly upon referrals from SC-funded crime prevention workers or Victim Support).

Crime pattern analysis of police-recorded burglary data provides particularly effective information to inform decisions about which areas within a city should be targeted for crime prevention expenditure, but it does not contain enough detail to reveal which (or indeed whether) particular households should be individually targeted. Police data are of course collected at the household level, but – for technical reasons and those of confidentiality – it is not always possible to make it available to co-ordinators except perhaps through arrangements with Victim Support, with the victim's consent.

Prevention programmes operate, of course, under conditions of finite resources and any decision to prioritise certain types of individuals rather than places, or one type of place rather than another, should not be based upon haphazard guesswork. Ideally, there should be a systematic basis for such targeting decisions. This is important, as it will help to ensure that priority is given to those individuals and areas most at risk of being victimised, which is important in cost-effectiveness terms (Ekblom et al., 1996). But, it has been shown that adherence to such 'ideal' systematic targeting was weakened by several factors: the pressure to spend before crime profiles were completed; limitations of police-recorded crime data, the unfamiliarity of some co-ordinators with the systematic approach of the preventive process; the need sometimes to step outside of the systematic approach and apply imaginative alternatives; and even arriving upon important crime problems by chance.

Whether the co-ordinators had difficulty in collecting and using the data well or whether they were aware of, and were trying to bypass inherent data limitations, there remained a large element of guesswork or 'flying blind'. The advent of geographic information systems able to link national Census data by enumeration districts (territories of around 200 households) with police data at address level may solve some of these problems. Another complementary solution to the problem of local targeting could be found by devising statistical models at the area and individual level to predict, on the

basis of readily available Census data (which covers all areas at the enumeration district level), the areas and types of individual across a given city most at risk of particular types of victimisation. This could complement purely individual level targeting based upon repeat victimisation, although it would need to draw on professional expertise.

Early emphasis on situational measures

As can be seen from Table 2.1, many more situational crime prevention schemes were implemented in the Safer Cities programme than other types of crime prevention activity.

Table 2.1
Total money spent by type of scheme

	Number of Schemes	Total Cost (£)	Average Cost (£)
Total Money spent by type of scheme			
Offender	613	3,054,000	5,000
Situational	1,575	8,497,000	5,400
Other	245	1,536,000	6,300

To some extent this reflects a movement away from long-term solutions to the problems of crime (Hope, 1985):

> *"Criminological research in the past has tended to concentrate on the search for long-term solutions to the problems of crime and to the conditions which create and sustain offenders' criminal identities and dispositions. This approach has a valuable contribution to make to a better understanding of the characteristics of crime and the circumstances in which it takes place; but 'solutions' have been difficult to find and the product of such research has been of little practical benefit to those who are trying to prevent or reduce crime in their own particular area."*

This general movement, and the reasons for it, was illustrated in the first year of Safer Cities when situational schemes were encouraged at the outset because they were seen as quicker to implement and more likely to impact upon crime as soon as they were in place. Offender-oriented schemes were mostly revenue funded (salaries) and sometimes it took time to recruit and get scheme workers in place. Despite these differences, there was little difference in the average cost of offender-oriented and situational schemes

(Table 2.1). Further, police crime data records the time and place where particular reported offences take place, such as addresses of burglary victims or car parks from which cars are being stolen. Therefore, preventive strategies based upon these data will be biased towards situational prevention, precisely because the information is about the *places* where recorded crime is happening most and not necessarily where offenders live or who they are (Baldwin and Bottoms, 1976). As Gilling (1994) succinctly puts it:

> *"This [police recorded] geographical information records the number of exploited opportunities in a given area – it says nothing about the nature of criminal motivations in that area, because the criminals do not necessarily live in the areas in which they offend. Thus, if the information is principally about exploited opportunities, it should come as no surprise that the methods which appear to offer the best prospect of preventive success are those of opportunity reduction – again the situational approach."*

This essential emphasis on situational crime prevention measures, in the first year of Safer Cities, was reinforced by further concerns that initial delay would result in loss of confidence in the ability of the programme to 'deliver the goods'. For the same reason, co-ordinators were discouraged, in the first year, from commissioning local surveys, which might have suggested alternative approaches (Home Office internal document):

> *"...to secure the confidence of the community in a project area there must be very early evidence of worthwhile activity. That will almost certainly mean the choice of some target-hardening type of crime prevention initiative which involves a lot of people and has a valuable effect. The commissioning of a crime survey will not have this confidence-building effect."*

In the 5 Towns initiative, co-ordinators had faced quite severe problems trying to secure extra resources to get schemes off the ground (Liddle and Bottoms, 1994). To alleviate effort on fund-raising, and consequential delay in implementation of schemes, SC co-ordinators were given more money than their predecessors. However, due to annuity pressures to spend SC money by the end of March, most co-ordinators said they felt pressurised to spend money "too quickly" in their first year of operation and that the easiest way to do this was to implement target-hardening measures, rather than other community safety initiatives (see also Tilley, 1992: 13). Initial fears that constructing crime profiles would be a difficult and lengthy process were confirmed. The delays involved here further heightened the pressure for quick action and hence the preference for situational measures. Attempts

to reduce implementation-lag influenced the overall predominance of situational crime prevention schemes.

Co-ordinators' background.

It is appropriate at this point to consider if the professional background of co-ordinators had any bearing on the type of schemes implemented in their project area. Previous studies have concluded that the professional background of those participating in multi-agency crime prevention programmes can influence the type of schemes implemented (Gilling, 1994):

> *"... agencies will seek solutions which square with their own conceptions of what crime prevention is about – typically social prevention for the probation service and situational prevention for the police."*

Tilley suggests that this was also the case in the SC programme (Tilley, 1992):

> *"...Safer Cities, coming from the Home Office, has been somewhat suspect to parts of probation on that account. More specifically, there was initial suspicion in some areas because of the perceived association of the Crime Prevention Unit in the Home Office with situational crime prevention. There were three elements to this suspicion. First, situational crime prevention seemed to blame the victim for failure adequately to protect him or herself from predation. Second, it disregarded the social conditions and motivations of the offender and those at risk of offending. Third, it formed part of a movement towards crime reduction through fortress creation, which was deemed socially undesirable."*

The sample is small but if the professional background of co-ordinators had any discernible influence on the type of scheme initiated, it was, if anything, in the opposite direction from what might have been expected from an interpretation of Gilling's and Tilley's findings (Table 2.2). While both Gilling and Tilley were writing about the alternative agendas of the agencies themselves, in the Safer Cities programme the co-ordinators had been appointed or seconded from such agencies and were effectively employed as civil servants.

Table 2.2
Percentage of annual Home Office grant spent on offender-oriented schemes

Co-ordinators' backgrounds (seconding body) and proportion of money spent on offender-oriented schemes	1989 - 90	1990 - 91	1991 - 92	1992 - 93
POLICE:				
Birmingham	46.1	20.4	32.9	33.9
Bradford	20.5	26.6	41.4	62.8
Salford	30.8	17.1	29.8	44.6
Sunderland	8.3	16.9	31.0	46.2
PROBATION:				
Coventry	11.8	18.5	12.2	11.6
Rochdale	27.3	3.6	12.9	14.4
T. Hamlets	0.8	0	10.0	12.5
Wandsworth	15.9	12.6	20.8	22.5
LOCAL AUTHORITY:				
Islington	0.5	21.9	37.2	3.7
Nottingham	2.4	35.0	22.7	32.3
SOCIAL SERVICES:				
Hartlepool	15.0	30.9	25.1	47.8
Hull	0	0.1	3.5	17.6
Lewisham	9.4	24.7	20.3	34.3
Wolverhampton	8.0	12.5	1.9	0.7
NACRO:				
Bristol	47.1	52.9	38.5	28.1
Wirral	6.4	22.5	39.9	41.9
OVERALL	13.8	21.4	25.2	30.2

Note
1 Two co-ordinators left (in 1992) and their replacements were seconded by different bodies: in Sunderland, a new co-ordinator came from Chamber of Commerce consultancy, and in Rochdale from the Local Authority

Other factors besides co-ordinators' professional backgrounds will have contributed to the pattern in Table 2.2 Explanations might include: co-ordinators trying out approaches favoured by professions other than their own; previous or subsequent saturation by one approach at city or neighbourhood level; steering committee influence; policies of

implementing schemes in areas funded by other programmes - coincidentally favouring particular scheme types; changes in project stuff, setting up offender-oriented schemes may take longer, and the level of co-operation and additional funding supplied by other agencies such as police and local authorities which might carry with it a bias towards particular types of scheme.

3 Gravitation towards offender-oriented schemes

The early emphasis on situational crime prevention measures resulted in their being the most frequently implemented type of activity. However, with each subsequent year of the programme, situational action showed a gradual decrease in terms of the money spent and number of schemes, while offender-oriented action grew (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1
Proportion of money spent on particular scheme types by year

	1989 - 1990	1990 - 1991	1991 - 1992	1992 - 1993
Offender	13.8	21.4	25.2	30.2
Situational	73.3	70.3	62.8	54.6
Other	12.8	8.3	11.9	15.1

Table 3.2 shows some rather dramatic variations between different Safer Cities, with three cities (Birmingham, Bristol and Rochdale) clearly spending less on offender-oriented schemes towards the end of the programme. Nevertheless, the general trend with the remaining 13 was to implement more offender-oriented schemes with each passing year. For some cities, this change stemmed from a marked shift in local policy.

In one city, the co-ordinator said that there had been an early preference for target-hardening. However, this changed because he said: "It was felt that target-hardening simply led to displacement." At the time of the interview (1994) the co-ordinator said that some 70 per cent of their money was being spent on revenue funding of "people-based schemes".

In another city, the co-ordinator said that at the start of the project target-hardening was the preferred approach. Then, over a period of time, there was a move towards "social schemes" – due to an easing of control by the Home Office and a preference for community development.

Perhaps the strongest feelings were expressed by the co-ordinator who said: "If I was given my time over again I would not spend money on target-hardening schemes".

This is a strikingly thought-provoking result, given that the situational measures adopted were subsequently found to have been cost-effective in reducing burglary (Ekblom et al, 1996):

> *"Target-hardening reduced burglary under all conditions. Purely community-oriented burglary action only worked in tandem with action against other crimes. The best combination was when all elements were present."*

Looking at why this change came about, there was certainly no evidence to suggest that co-ordinators actually found situational crime prevention schemes were not effective. Indeed, from the co-ordinators' perspective their own scheme evaluation centred far more upon evidence of effective implementation than of crime reduction. Where the move towards implementing more offender-oriented schemes was mentioned by co-ordinators it was mainly in terms of the co-ordinators' personal development into 'more rounded crime prevention professionals', 'seeing the wider picture' and tackling crime problems with a broader brush (see Laycock and Tilley, 1995). Although some co-ordinators believed situational crime prevention measures led to a degree of crime displacement, tackling the motivations of offenders was, in the main, described as a calculated counterweight to situational measures.

It is worth mentioning at this point that the Scottish Safer Cities projects also drifted away from target-hardening schemes (Carnie 1995):

> *"... there is evidence to suggest that Scottish Office officials were concerned that the drift towards community safety became too pronounced. Some unease existed about crime prevention money being spent on things such as fire safety and road safety. Greater intervention on the part of the Scottish Office may have left it open to criticism for being overly directive, but clearer guidance on the balance to be struck between crime prevention and community safety would have been helpful for co-ordinators."*

Table 3.2
Percentage of total SC money spent on offender-oriented schemes by Safer Cities team

	1989 - 1990	1990 - 1991	1991 - 1992	1992 - 1993
Birmingham	46	20	33	34
Bradford	21	27	41	63
Bristol	47	53	39	28
Coventry	12	19	12	12
Hartlepool	15	31	25	48
Hull	0	<1	4	18
Islington	1	22	37	4
Lewisham	9	25	20	34
Nottingham	2	35	23	32
Rochdale	27	4	13	15
Salford	31	17	30	45
Sunderland	8	17	31	46
T. Hamlets	1	0	10	13
Wandsworth	16	13	21	23
Wirral	6	23	40	42
Wolvrhmptn.	8	13	2	1
All	14	21	25	30

Some cities, such as Birmingham and Bristol, spent a much larger proportion of their budget on offender-oriented schemes. This was, at least in part, due to delays in creating their crime profiles and meant there was not the same in built bias towards situational schemes. However, in one city, a crime profile was never constructed due to the co-ordinator's reluctance to accept that police recorded crime data should be used to guide decision making at all. Here, the SC team relied solely upon local knowledge to decide where schemes should be implemented, and yet this city spent less than average on offender-oriented schemes in the first year. This suggests that, at the city level, early preference for situational schemes was not simply caused by limited crime profiles or Home Office policy: rather, there was a complex pattern of influence and tensions between Home Office policy, the preferences of SC co-ordinators and project steering committees. These issues are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

4 Influence and tensions within the partnership approach

The Safer Cities programme was designed to foster crime prevention activity by other local institutions and individuals; this approach applied to scheme implementation in particular. The main principles that might be expected to underlie decisions about where to implement action are the severity of crime, fear of crime, and the vulnerability of individuals and areas and their lack of power to do anything about it. However, as outlined above, there had been delays in completing crime profiles and limitations placed upon their initial comprehensiveness. And sometimes co-ordinators paid little attention to the profiles. Even where high crime areas (or areas otherwise in need) were identified, their selection for targeting was not always straightforward. Targeting criteria used by SC co-ordinators were actually more complex.

In some cities, rather than identifying and developing the potential of key individuals/groups to run particular schemes, co-ordinators simply responded to the scheme proposals that were submitted. In other words, they waited for communities to come to them with ideas rather than strategically 'pump priming' local people in 'problem' areas. This meant that areas with particularly high crime problems (sometimes the worst in the city) were not targeted for crime prevention activity because there was an expectation that schemes would only work if residents had an existing capability to 'pull themselves up by their own bootstraps'. Not only did some co-ordinators report an expectation that the local community should propose schemes to help their area but also that these schemes should from the start be workable and well thought-out solutions to local problems.

In one city, the SC team had selected priority areas but these were bypassed by the steering committee which had a policy of responding to the applications which were sent in rather than pro-actively targeting particular areas and developing the abilities of key individuals and organisations to submit them. In the first year the steering committee determined that they would fund mainly scheme applications from the Local Authority, Education Offices and churches. The co-ordinator described these schemes as: "fire-

fighting rather than trying to turn particular areas around". By the second year, however, things were different. One part of this city was described as "...an area characterised by guns, masks, hatchets and general disorder. There was an undercurrent of fear where victims and witnesses to crimes were afraid even to telephone the police. Some children in the area looked to successful criminals as role models. It was so bad that survey interviewers in the area were driven out." And yet, the SC team implemented a lot of target-hardening in the area, without waiting for local people to initiate the plans. In addition, they spent funds on providing a secure/separate waiting area at the magistrates' court so that witnesses of crime in the area would not be intimidated by suspected criminals (see Maynard, 1994).

In another city, the possibility that area targeting would lead to inequalities was considered. Here, the steering committee did not wish to approve funding for area targeting because it was felt that any decisions would be arbitrary and unfair: the less vociferous and least powerful would be overlooked while those better equipped to mobilise resources for their area would benefit. However, the co-ordinator worked to change this perception by reassuring committee members that all sections of the city could access Safer Cities money. After consultations with local groups, an area was targeted for quite extensive expenditure. However, it would seem that some of the committee members' fears were substantiated. The co-ordinator said she would have preferred to target a different, poorer area, which had more problems, but could not because "... the residents were unenthusiastic and did not have the same level of organisation and commitment in the community".

In another city, the co-ordinator chose an area because it had very high levels of burglary. However, funding was discontinued after the first year because: "There were few ideas coming from the community" and the SC team felt they could not impact on the area as it was too large for their budget. And again, the co-ordinator of another city explained why a notorious area was not targeted: "... because it was difficult to get crime prevention recognition in the community". Similar explanations were given by another co-ordinator, where a neighbourhood, described as 93 per cent Asian, had suffered from a spate of jewellery thefts from households with large dowries. Here the co-ordinator said: "We had difficulties getting the community to accept a Home Watch scheme, they didn't like the idea and so in the end nothing was done".

Hope (1985) notes the importance of identifying key individuals in the community who are capable of managing schemes on a day-to-day basis:

> *" ...local crime analysis ought not to restrict itself to the examination of crime patterns and trends – important though this*

is - but should also seek to identify the opportunities and constraints which relevant bodies and organisations face in implementing crime prevention initiatives."

Co-ordinators may be under pressure to implement schemes, and while nurturing individuals and groups in the community is expensive in both time and funds, such considerations have to be weighed against the consequences of choosing one area over another on the grounds of expediency. Some of the reasons why it is more difficult for residents in certain areas to organise 'acceptable' proposals for funding, or to be seen as effective practitioners, have been outlined by Crawford (1995):

"...the ability of certain interest groups to organize around and define, issues of crime is of paramount importance in attaining voice. The exclusion of disorganized interests impacts differently on the politically marginalised and socially disadvantaged: the unemployed, the homeless, black and lower-class youths and women trapped in abusive familial relationships. This process involves, in part, a redefinition of the participatory trappings of 'citizenship' in which the least powerful sections of society are being marginalised to the point of exclusion."

Certain SC co-ordinators were more pro-active and, having identified areas with particular problems, sought to elicit proposals for schemes from the community. One co-ordinator mentioned this as an additional consideration when deciding where resources should be spent, namely: "... knowing who in the area could produce the goods". On the other hand, as outlined above, other co-ordinators said that some particularly high crime areas were not targeted because no one in the community had any realistic proposals. When asked why a particularly notorious estate was not targeted, the co-ordinator said that it was simply because the residents were both "rude and lacking in social skills". The exclusion of certain interest groups has been outlined elsewhere (Crawford, 1995):

"The social processes of inclusion into these community partnerships clearly involve the exclusion of certain interests. Importantly, they involve a process of "social closure" as opposed to pluralistic competition. They exclude as well as include. Being organised is a prerequisite for any interest being represented. This raises implications for those interests which are not incorporated or cannot effectively be organised."

The reasons given for not targeting high crime areas varied sharply between different SC co-ordinators. As outlined above, they were sometimes avoided because it was felt that problems were so great that SC money would not be able to make an impact (see also Tilley and Webb, 1994). And in another city,

the co-ordinator explained that an area with a poor national reputation was not targeted because the schemes proposed by residents were inappropriate: "... residents wanted money to buy a camcorder so they could film drug dealers operating in their neighbourhood and use this to provide the police with evidence". The real reasons for not targeting this area were actually deeper and more complex than those given by the co-ordinator - illustrating the context of constraints and interests within which the co-ordinator had to operate: earlier interviews with the assistant co-ordinator suggested that there were problems associated with the possibility of displacing prostitution and drug related crime into surrounding areas (see also Crawford, 1995). Such places of crime containment have been described elsewhere as "fuse areas" (Barr and Pease, 1990):

> *"The term is used as an analogy to an electrical circuit, in which a deliberately weak point, the fuse, is included so that a power surge will have quite minor consequences. Similarly, one can choose to concentrate the crime in particular areas, limiting the number of areas that have to be controlled and making an obvious starting point for inquiries once an event has occurred."*

Most SC teams used crime statistics to identify high crime areas. However, different methods were adopted to justify where to target resources. Some used 'reputation' alone. One co-ordinator stressed that his city was a relatively small place and that relevant agencies knew where the problem areas were. Here, one particular area was selected for considerable SC funding because it suffered from a greater level of problems than police figures suggested. On the basis of Census information, it had the third highest rate of unemployment and the third lowest level of car ownership in the city. The co-ordinator suspected that low crime figures were due to under-reporting and said the belief was in fact endorsed by a local victim survey.

With finite resources, co-ordinators were faced with deciding, strategically, whether to concentrate spending and so attempt to 'turn an area around', or to adopt a more even-handed approach and spend money more thinly across the city. These decisions could not be made on the basis of crime pattern analysis alone, since they raised issues of both practice and policy. Some co-ordinators consistently favoured one approach over the other, referring to these alternative approaches as "targeted spending" and "thin spreading". However, most said they tried to achieve an even balance between the two approaches. Co-ordinators favouring the targeted spending approach, said they wished to see SC money make a discernible mark upon the crime problem in their city. Those who preferred thin spreading were particularly influenced by sensitive local political considerations, which were said to have determined either the need or desire to appear even-handed to diverse

interest groups. In one city, the co-ordinator tried to spread money thinly because he felt it "... would be unfair to show favouritism to any one area".

In another city, much of the money was spent on projects operating on a city-wide basis. The original co-ordinator was said to have laid down a legacy of long-term projects which effectively constrained other expenditure. The new co-ordinator said: "Even in the final year much of the budget was being soaked up by six or seven large, ongoing schemes." Although the new co-ordinator had wanted to stop all small grants and adopt a targeted action approach he had been persuaded not to do so by the assistant co-ordinator, who felt small schemes solved problems of jealousy.

Co-ordinators who preferred targeted spending, often aimed to 'turn around' particular streets or estates. In one city, crime statistics were used to find the most burgled street, and £25,000 was subsequently spent there on security window locks and mortice locks. Another city (albeit a relatively small one) spent more than half its entire project money on just three estates. The subsequent SC impact evaluation of domestic burglary schemes (Ekblom et al., 1996) found such intensive schemes were particularly cost-effective in high risk areas – reducing crime, fear of crime, other types of property crime and crime displacement to other areas.

A less concentrated form of targeted spending was adopted in one city, where SC money was spent within 10 police beats. Analysis of police recorded crime statistics revealed that these beats contained nearly all the crime in the project area. However, money was spent evenly within these beats and the co-ordinator said " ...this was not an attempt to turn any of the estates in these beats around". While on balance Ekblom et al. (1996) come down in favour of more intense action, such 'thin spreading' of resources can also be said to offer good value for money (Ekblom et al., 1996):

> *"...even the less intense action achieved an impact. So reducing scheme intensity (by reducing the spend per scheme, or increasing the area each scheme covered) would allow a greater coverage of areas and/or households."*

Sometimes it was difficult for crime prevention co-ordinators to 'strike out' against current crime prevention practice and to target resources on crime problems that were unrecorded. In one city, the new co-ordinator said that women's safety issues had "...not been properly dealt with by Safer Cities", and thought this might have had something to do with the fact that the steering committee and project team had previously been all male. This point is linked with Liddle and Gelsthorpe's (1994) explanation for why some crimes are targeted, often with particular approaches, and other crimes are not:

"The facts of crime will not make it obvious to a crime prevention group that they should intervene in neighbourhood x rather than y, unless they share assumptions about the seriousness of particular types of victimisation or the efficacy of intervention itself, and these things are not themselves decided simply by the collection of more sophisticated information... The thrust of policy in this sphere must arguably come from elsewhere, and information collection be harnessed to shed greater and more detailed light upon priorities which are themselves a result of consultation and political debate."

This is particularly important in relation to schemes aimed at preventing domestic violence (which accounted for 3.6% of specified SC funds) Lack of reporting by victims of domestic violence means it might be assumed to occur with similar frequency in all places (Smith, 1989) This makes it difficult to target particular places (see: Morley and Mullender, 1994). Indeed, where one project in particular sought to reduce domestic violence, all the schemes operated on a city wide basis and were either concerned with publicity or providing hostels for victims. Recent research suggests domestic violence probably does occur more often among particular sub-groups of the population than others (Mirrlees-Black, 1995) and so a case might be made for a more targeted approach. However, because the predominant aim in Safer Cities has been to prevent repeat victimisation by providing safe places for victims from wide catchment areas, opportunity reduction and diversionary schemes for potential offenders are rarely seen as the most appropriate approach to preventing domestic violence (Morley and Mullender 1994: 11). In light of what some co-ordinators have said about their gravitation towards offender-oriented approaches and/or preference for targeted spending, it seems that implementation policies can coincidentally affect choices in terms of what crimes to tackle and how to tackle them and that particular types of crime, such as domestic violence, may get overlooked.

Co-ordinators also distinguished between what they seemed to think of as "deserving" and "undeserving" schemes. In one city, auto-crime in car parks operated by one particular company was not targeted, because the co-ordinator thought it was an example of substitute funding: "...these car parks were too expensive and the company should be able to pay for their own security arrangements". Similar reasoning by another co-ordinator determined that certain 'hot spots' for car crime and violence should not receive SC funding – despite the wishes of the local police force – because they were centred around pubs: "... which, because of their commercial status, should do something about the problem themselves".

In one city, funding community football teams was discouraged because the co-ordinator said it was "... difficult to draw the line here between Youth

Service type work and crime prevention". The co-ordinator did not think "...football schemes are what the [Safer Cities] funds are about", because: "Safer Cities is not just about picking up the tab for someone else." Somewhat ironically, another co-ordinator who said he particularly favoured "... Youth Service type schemes" had a working policy of not supporting proposals by individuals (they only funded established organisations) and so could not fund locally organised football teams. In stark contrast to these cities, other co-ordinators were very passionate about the virtues of funding individuals, and small neighbourhood organisations – whether to set up local football teams to divert young people from crime or to install situational measures.

Perhaps more than anything else these examples illustrate the near-vacuum of local crime prevention policy and practice principles into which co-ordinators were thrown and which, through extemporising, they were required to fill.

Exemplar schemes

Where local authorities applied for funding, some co-ordinators adopted more flexible approaches towards the problem of avoiding "picking up the tab for someone else" (see Carnie, 1995: 23). One SC team funded extensive crime prevention work on just one car park to show the local authority how 'good schemes' could be implemented. Described as strategic/exemplar work, the aim was to do something only once and then persuade the local authority to follow their example. Using the same approach, they also funded the design of a burglar-resistant door for council houses. The local authority adopted the design and installed the doors in all their housing stock.

Attraction to other funds

Co-ordinators were also divided over the issue of implementing schemes in areas where other agencies were already spending money to prevent crime. In one city the co-ordinator adopted an underlying policy of preferring to spend SC money on new and diverse ideas across the city. However, this was balanced by keeping a small number of projects on which they could spend a lot. One such estate was chosen for action because it had not received any money in the past but was surrounded by two estates which had received money from other agencies. The co-ordinator said the residents in the other estate received SC action because their crime problems were ignored.

Other projects aimed to implement schemes in areas already targeted by

other programmes. In Hartlepool, the co-ordinator said he was: "...not just interested in responding to crime problems ...things in isolation have little effect". He wanted to deliver properly orchestrated packages and for this reason he wanted to "piggy-back" on existing projects such as the Urban Programme and Estate Action. The co-ordinator in Rochdale said few schemes were funded entirely with SC money. In Wolverhampton, the co-ordinator had a firm policy of implementing schemes in areas where action already existed. The thinking behind this was that if other areas had been properly targeted by the Urban Programme, all agencies would be looking to spend money in the same areas.

Avoidance of other programmes

In other projects, existing or proposed funding from other bodies deterred SC spending. The co-ordinator in Sunderland avoided areas receiving City Challenge money since SC money would be a 'drop in the ocean'. In one city, an estate which was adjacent to another receiving SC funding, was not targeted because Estate Action money was to pay for a complete refit of the estate and it was thought that this would overshadow smaller scale SC work. In another city, a particular area was avoided because it already had a major Estate Action programme of security measures. It was felt that spending money here would have been politically difficult.

The Wirral co-ordinator adopted a policy of not spending in areas with existing funds, but tried wherever possible to get existing funds for SC schemes. Nottingham adopted a co-ordinated approach by setting up a funders' forum comprising representatives from organisations such as the Local Authority, health service, City Challenge, Task Force etc. The aim was to look strategically across the region to avoid duplication of effort. In general, the Nottingham co-ordinator steered away from existing funds, unless it was as part of a co-ordinated approach. On balance then, slightly more co-ordinators shied away from existing funds than were attracted to them.

Levering-in resources from other bodies

The development of inter-agency co-operation is undoubtedly important to foster an effective long-term community safety strategy. It is probably also important (but perhaps not essential) for the implementation of effective crime prevention programmes, since those with more connections can probably lever in more outside resources.

Co-ordinators varied widely in terms of how much Home Office money they

succeeded in spending, and how much additional funding they levered-in from other sources (Table 4.1). On the whole, those who spent most SC money tended to generate more external funding – with three of the top five SC spenders also in the top five for levered-in gains. The association was even more pronounced for those who spent the least SC money: four of the bottom five SC spenders were also in the bottom five for levered-in gains. Quite what this means is not clear, but small measures of levered-in gains do not necessarily indicate poor performance. Indeed, Ekblom et al. (1996) found no special boost in effectiveness of burglary schemes associated with the inclusion of levered-in funds.

Possibly, some cities levering in large amounts of external funds were investing more effort in securing money for longer term community safety strategies. Some co-ordinators also sought to match Home Office funds with those from external bodies wherever possible. This may have influenced the overall finding that, in terms of broad types of preventive action, levered-in money was spent in much the same way as SC money (Table 4.2).

Table 4.1
Amount of SC and levered-in funds spent (1989 - 1993)

	Safer Cities		Levered-in
	£		£
Lewisham	1,195,759	Wolverhampton	1,792,268
Bradford	928,883	Sunderland	1,698,066
Bristol	894,864	Wirral	1,692,081
Coventry	879,573	Lewisham	1,318,822
Wirral	855,624	Bradford	1,105,612
Hartlepool	806,087	Nottingham	1,067,024
Rochdale	796,574	Hartlepool	939,404
Sunderland	774,052	Coventry	842,512
Nottingham	709,839	Rochdale	595,860
Hull	697,480	Hull	528,942
Islington	642,290	Bristol	245,563
Birmingham	628,915	Birmingham	191,678
Wolverhampton	595,950	Islington	177,033
Salford	496,704	Salford	162,867
Wandsworth	495,781	Wandsworth	79,810
Tower Hamlets	134,365	Tower Hamlets	19,405
Total	11,532,740	Total	12,456,947

Table 4.2
Safer Cities and levered-in funds by type of scheme 1989 - 92

Scheme Type	Safer Cities %	Levered-in %
Percentage of money spent by scheme type		
Situational	66	67
Offender	23	22
Other	11	11
Total Percentage	100	100

The steering committee effect

The SC programme design specified that each co-ordinator would be responsible to a local steering committee comprising representatives of local agencies and community groups chaired by a senior local official or member of a voluntary organisation. While the Home Office retained overall control of the Safer Cities Programme, it was envisaged that the local steering committee should normally set internal priorities, facilitate communication and oversee the implementation of measures against crime.

Thus the rational, problem-solving approach was meant to extend to steering committees. There is evidence to suggest that in many cases it did not. Or, at least, interviews with co-ordinators suggested there was a great deal of variation between projects in terms of the quality and the amount of steering committee influence (see also Carnie, 1995: 4-8). Steering committees had the capacity to influence decisions regarding where to target resources and the crime prevention methods used. Some co-ordinators said their steering committees were 'consultative'; others, which sought to control implementation issues as much as possible, were described as 'dominant', while the majority was extremely passive and more or less 'rubber-stamped' all proposals put before them. There were two cities where the co-ordinators described their steering committee as dominant, four consultative and six passive.

Dominant

In one city, the steering committee had been in place before the SC project team had been appointed. It was believed (by the assistant co-ordinator) that this led to problems with the steering committee seeking to dominate the co-ordinator. In this city, some steering committee members had applied for the co-ordinator's job when the Home Office was first recruiting and this was believed to have caused many problems stemming from professional jealousy. This was said to have led to schemes being forced upon the co-ordinator by a powerful minority. As a result, the SC team operated a rather

inefficient system whereby unworkable schemes were submitted to the Home Office so it, rather than the co-ordinator, would be blamed for rejection. This ploy to send unworkable proposals to the Home Office was described partly as a device to avoid personally discouraging local initiatives and partly as a way of avoiding further conflict with the steering committee.

In both cities with dominant steering committees, the committee insisted on seeing all proposals that came into the local SC office. In one of these cities, the co-ordinator only rejected schemes without putting them to the steering committee by using filtering criteria determined by the committee. In this way, some 60 - 70 per cent of proposals were rejected on the basis that the steering committee would not support them anyway. Once filtered in this way, only a small proportion of those put before the committee was then rejected. However, the co-ordinator said that after attending a conference on youth crime in 1993, the steering committee proposed to fund only social crime prevention, ruling that pure target hardening would not be considered. This led to their rejecting all target hardening proposals, which comprised 15 - 20 per cent of schemes placed before them - the most striking case of steering committee influence. The co- ordinator said:

> *"This conference played a key part in progressing towards the formulation of a community safety sub-committee and changed the attitudes of many decision makers away from one of tunnel vision. Now the Council are not just concerned with housing stock but are interested in community safety."*

Of course, it might be argued that such an *a priori* rejection of target hardening hardly constitutes a move away from tunnel vision! Indeed, Ekblom et al. (1996) conclude that at least for action aimed at preventing domestic burglary:

> *"It is best to go for a comprehensive strategy. This should combine action against burglary with action against crime in general. In particular 'community oriented' action against burglary should not be introduced alone."*

Consultative

In one city, some applications would be filtered out before going to the steering committee but only using criteria approved by the committee. All proposals put before this committee were accepted. However, some problems were reported from pressure by some committee members to fund what the co-ordinator termed "pet schemes". One of these was passed by

the committee even though the co-ordinator felt strongly that it could have been done more cheaply.

One co-ordinator revealed that few initiatives came from the steering committee, who looked to the co-ordinator to provide all the initiatives. However, committee members from the local authority and the police would often "work up" a particular scheme with the co-ordinator and then put the proposal before the committee with members thus involved declaring their interest.

In another city the co-ordinator said that the "steering committee had few personal axes to grind. Some projects emerged from the interests of the steering committee, others from the co-ordinator".

Passive

The Home Office publication: *A Practical Guide to Crime Prevention for Local Partnerships* (Home Office, 1993: 4) suggests that the best practice for steering committees is:

> *"... that the Chair adopts a problem-solving approach, in which members are encouraged to play an active role in identifying problems and finding solutions. This style is preferable to one which confines the Group's role to passively receiving reports from the co-ordinator and 'rubberstamping' his/her decisions."*

Of the 12 cities where co-ordinators were interviewed, half described their steering committees as either weak or as a 'rubber stamp' for co-ordinator recommendations (see also Carnie, 1995: 5). In one city, the co-ordinator thought the steering committee was " ...weak, too cosy, and just went along with whatever was put before them". He went on to describe it as: "... a rubber stamp, hand picked by the previous co-ordinator to agree with his ideas". Other co-ordinators gave similar descriptions. One said the steering committee: "did little more than formally approve the SC team's proposals". And: "The committee's own proposals were generally ignored". This co-ordinator also said that she was "...not entirely sure that such a diverse body of people could ever be a committee collective".

Elsewhere, a co-ordinator said: "Few ideas came from the committee." Here, there were no cases where the steering committee suggested schemes that the co-ordinator did not want to take up; nearly all schemes were developed by the SC team and then simply approved by the committee. In another city, the co-ordinator described the committee as merely reactive to his proposals. Here, the co-ordinator said he would often talk people out of

applying for funds for schemes and so they would never appear before the steering committee. Where dominant steering committees would have insisted on seeing all proposals or specified which type of proposals could be rejected by the co-ordinator, here the steering committee was so weak it was often by-passed altogether.

The co-ordinator in one city said that the steering committee had to be developed to the point where members felt able to advise the SC team. Much of this lack of drive was blamed on the weakness of the local authority (the LA was described as being: "...hung and capped and having no particular direction".). Other co-ordinators said they had to make their steering committees more functional: "The committee was very weak to begin with. When we (the SC team) put recommendations on bids and the committee passed these on the nod, we stopped putting on recommendations in order to encourage discussion of bids."

Powerful and dominant members of multi-agency partnerships, particularly co-ordinators, often determined not only where money was spent but what it was spent on. This has been identified as a problem in other studies of the partnership approach and has generated quite severe criticism (Crawford and Jones, 1995):

> *"Our research leads us to the conclusion that the manner in which inter-agency and inter-communal conflicts are presently managed in multi-agency forums increasingly resembles neo-corporatist arrangements for the administration of crime control, in which invisible and unaccountable discretion is the order of the day. In this context power differentials remain largely unregulated between agencies. This impacts upon local policy definitions of 'locality' and 'community' as well as crime 'problems' and their 'appropriate' social intervention. It results, we would suggest, in the prioritization of certain kinds of crime and forms of intervention at the expense of others that all but remain silenced."*

One question is whether centrally funded multi-agency crime prevention programmes should permit the degree of autonomy found among SC co-ordinators. On the one hand, locally 'owned' schemes – proposed and supported by key local players – may be easier to implement with better targeting of local problems supported by a high level of commitment and ability among those managing the scheme on a day-to-day basis. But, relying too much on existing organised groups to come up with adequate proposals may mean that those most in need of particular schemes will not always receive them.

Crime prevention programmes operate with finite resources and the

preference to fund locally proposed initiatives, complemented by motivated and capable people, should be balanced against a requirement to spend resources where they are most needed and using the most appropriate methods. In the future, co-ordinators adopting a systematic approach to crime pattern analysis, and the preventive process as a whole, will be empowered to make authoritative and informed decisions, jointly as necessary with other agencies, regarding what crime problems to tackle, the most suitable type of crime prevention schemes, and where they should be implemented.

5 Conclusions

The prime concern of the RSD evaluation of Safer Cities is with programme impact. The material resulting from interviews with co-ordinators, which comprises the main body of this report, was initially intended to be used to understand assignment processes and aid the interpretation of causes and effects. However, many unexpected points emerged during interviews with co-ordinators which were important in their own right.

Perhaps the most significant findings were the considerable differences between SC projects in terms of how they decided where to target crime prevention measures, how thinly to spread resources, which measures to adopt, and which crime types they should concentrate upon. These decisions were not always mutually exclusive: a policy formed for one could incidentally influence others.

It was not only the organisations represented on steering committees that determined how SC projects operated (see Tilley, 1992: 19; Shapland et al., 1994: 2), but also whether the committees themselves were powerful in relation to the co-ordinator. Ultimately, it appeared that half of the steering committees were described by co-ordinators as either weak or as "just a rubber stamp".

Until more is known about the effectiveness and displacement effects of situational measures, members of local crime prevention projects such as SC will most likely seek to balance the numbers of such schemes against offender-oriented measures, or possibly favour one over the other simply on the basis of preference. However, it should be noted that considerable in-roads have already been made by the Home Office evaluation of Safer Cities residential burglary schemes (Ekblom et al., 1996) which examines the impact and cost-effectiveness of different approaches to targeting and spending to reduce burglary at the local level.

This report on aspects of process raises more questions than it answers. Indeed, to do otherwise would have involved a research study fully focused on the implementation process. However, some recommendations follow:

General

- There is a need to set the right balance between local autonomy, professional crime prevention skills, and central guidance in programmes such as SC. This also applies to decisions regarding which crime problems are best addressed by particular crime prevention methods. Establishing 'good practice' and 'what works' guidance is important here (see Ekblom et al., 1996). More widely, the development of crime prevention as a professional discipline (Ekblom, 1994) is needed to provide a firm basis for both training and operations.

- It is necessary to develop policy dimensions on local targeting and implementation where it is unclear at present what the best approach is in particular local circumstances. This would empower future programmes to make decisions regarding how best to deal with: equity (targeted spending or thin spreading); 'deserving' and 'undeserving' schemes; attraction to other funds; avoiding places with very worst problems; funding individuals and organised groups, and levering-in external funding. One way of taking policy articulation forward would be through setting up workshops using experienced co-ordinators, programme members and (where applicable) central management to try to codify the alternatives of local policy choice.

Specific

- The development of good practice guidelines would enable co-ordinators to prioritise individuals and areas most at risk of victimisation. On the individual side, repeat victimisation is one concern which emerged late on in the SC programme. On the area side, given limited time and resources it is important to determine good practice concerning the degree of effort co-ordinators should devote to areas with high crime problems, where residents seem least able to help themselves. This should be weighed against targeting areas where local crime prevention activity is easier to establish and schemes can be more readily implemented.

- Crime prevention programmes, particularly those adopting the partnership approach, must find a balance between spending money quickly – invoking confidence and being seen as a mover and a shaker – with the need to collect proper data and to justify targeting particular areas and crime types. Again, the development of good practice guidelines are required.

- **Management information systems could supply useful feedback to co-ordinators regarding how their performance reflects both policy guidance and that of other co-ordinators in the same programme, provided that the system is capable of rapidly delivering quick and simple analyses of the data it contains.**

- **Steering committees should be carefully constructed and periodically monitored by central or regional management to avoid both the 'rubber stamp' problem and arbitrary rejection of particular crime prevention approaches.**

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