GOLDSTEIN AWARD 2007.

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MIDDLESBROUGH'S THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE INITIATIVE.

INTRODUCTION.

This initiative is led by Middlesbrough Police and is assisted closely by its partners. The objectives of the initiative are to reduce offences of theft from motor vehicles by an initial 10%, bring offenders to justice effectively & expeditiously, to raise detection rates and to raise public awareness by encouraging crime prevention. The initiative was set up to tackle the problem both on a short term impactive basis, as well as the medium and long term sustainable ideal.

Middlesbrough is the largest town within Cleveland Police forces area.

In April 2006 Middlesbrough Police, through its analytical crime monitoring processes, identified an increasing trend in the problem of thefts from motor vehicles within the Policing district. Comparative figures for the first quarter of 2006 to 2005 showed an increase of 17.6%, a total of 735 reported crimes, of these crimes the main 2 items of property stolen were car stereo's / cd players and satellite navigation systems.

In response to this analytical work a problem profile was initiated, with the main hot spots identified. Crimes were broken down and both offender and victim profiles were established. Key points were drilled down further with a view to improving response by maximising forensic potential, focussing intelligence etc.

A 'quick fix' solution, Operation Anvil was developed for a 'priority' area which was identified as the central area of the town, this enabled the district to begin to tackle the identified problem immediately, but in a controlled and effective way whilst working towards developing an impactive and sustainable solution. Anvil established the base for partnership working within this project linking in with the local Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).

Anvil developed into Operation Hassocks, Hassocks was to be the catalyst for the long term success of the initiative. Hassocks initiatives included the setting up of an 'action group' which meet on a regular monthly basis, community initiatives, enforcement, crime prevention and intelligence awareness all done with an emphasis on partnership working.

This operation has been running for 12 months (from the scanning stage) and an evaluation of its success shows that since the beginning of the operation there has been a 28.1% reduction in reported crimes of theft from motor vehicles, against the figure set which prompted this initiative. A complete analysis is documented in this application.

THE PROBLEM.

SCANNING.

Middlesbrough is the largest town in the Cleveland Police area. It holds 26% of Cleveland Police areas population, meaning that 144,408 people are resident in the borough, which with a population density of 199 per hectare, is almost three times the force average, and seven times the national average. The University of Teesside occupies a site in the central area of the town and has a student population in excess of 10,000, some of which arrive to study from abroad. Middlesbrough has a Premiership football club which adds to the town's population during match days. The town centre comprises a large quantity of quality shopping facilities, which attracts people from outside the Middlesbrough area, as well as pubs, clubs and offices which span across the whole of the town. When taking everything into account the additional commuting and visitor figures can massively swell the town's population on a daily basis.

In late April 2006, It was identified, after initial work carried out by Police analysts, that Middlesbrough district had an escalating problem with vehicle crime. Specifically thefts from motor vehicles, and in particular thefts of satellite navigation systems, car stereos and mobile phones both from cars and business vehicles. Through the scanning process, figures produced suggested that this was not a 'passing' problem but a problem which was growing and affecting all areas of the town. Crime in relevant categories had gone up by 17.6% compared with the same period the previous year, showing an increase of 110 crimes.

Analysis was conducted which resulted in a problem profile being developed and produced highlighting in detail the problem, problem locations and other notifiable factors regarding the crime trend.

ANALYSIS.

Analysis showed that incidents were taking place throughout the town from late morning through to late evening with 'peaks and troughs' at varying times throughout the day. It had also been identified that an increase in offences would occur during the time of Middlesbrough football clubs home matches. The crimes were targeted predominantly towards newer vehicles such as 'reps cars' whose occupants had left items on display. These items were most likely to be electronic devices such as lap tops, car stereos, satellite navigation systems or mobile phones. There was also an influx of offences against delivery vehicles with mobile phones and satellite navigation systems being the items of choice.

Nearly all of the offences were initiated by either of the following means: -

- Smashing of a window,
- Bending of a door by a screwdriver or similar instrument,
- · Entering an insecure door.

The locations of the incidents varied around the town, although we were able to pin point certain streets and areas around 'out of town' shopping arcades and within designated car parks, two of which were within the central area of town and had clearly become hotspots. Further analysis was done on these locations and it was established that the surrounding environment was a contributory factor (high shrubs which had not been cut back, so much so that the shrubs had blocked out CCTV cameras view).

Offenders were opportunistically looking for cars to break into, in situations where they were less likely to get caught such as areas where there was coverage from overgrown foliage and easy access and exit points. Therefore we needed to reduce these factors, to create a deterrent for the criminals and put them in fear of being caught. There had also been a perception that a degree of apathy existed towards this type of crime, against that of crime types which were perceived as being a more serious crime type such as house burglary. This apathy was noted from both the public and Police, these opinions needed to change.

Through both the scanning and analysis phase, it was identified that the Police's own procedures needed to be re-evaluated, as the detection rate for bringing offenders to justice for like offences was extremely low averaging at just 5%, but often falling below. Offenders needed to be identified and targeted to include the handlers where the stolen goods were being passed too.

Procedures needed to be developed and updated to enable us to meet our objectives, this needed consultation and partnership working.

New impetus was needed, and a series of sustainable actions formed to tackle the growing problem.

RESPONSE

Based around the initial analytical work an 'operation planning team' consisting of the District Chief Inspector for crime, District Inspector for intelligence, Problem Solving Coordinator and Senior Analyst was formed and initial objectives were set out to tackle the offence of theft from motor vehicles, these were:

- To reduce reported offences of thefts from motor vehicles by 10%, working from annual figures.
- To double current detection rates for thefts from motor vehicles.
- To maximise use of forensic evidence gathering with reference to thefts from motor vehicle offences.
- To maximise partnership working.
- To develop & undertake a thorough crime prevention strategy with reference to thefts from motor vehicle offences.
- · To target known car crime offenders.
- · To develop a media strategy.

From the information produced within the problem profile a highlighted area was identified and targeted. Operation Anvil was initiated to target the central ward of the town, an area

known as Gresham, because it had been highlighted as having one of the largest problems in the town for thefts from vehicles.

In the short term Anvil ran for 6 weeks from 3/7/2006 until 14/08/2006. It provided:-

- An influx of targeted high visibility Police & PCSO patrols which included patrols from the forces mounted section, and by street wardens, all of which took place during peak offending times.
- Partnership working began with the Housing association and local authority
 enforcement teams who targeted possible offenders, in relation to tenancy breaches.
- Local media were used and regular bulletin's were produced and publicised to show and inform the public about the successes which were occurring within the highlighted ward.
- A presentation was made by one of the Districts Detective Inspectors to the area
 CDRP, to inform them of the operation and to develop a multi agency response.
 Partners were encouraged to offer ideas and to input intelligence via the CDRP, when coming across incidents during there working day.

This approach paid dividends as intelligence from our partners including Street Wardens and Enforcement officers increased notably as a result. Anvil helped to reduce overall crime in this area and stabilised theft from motor vehicle offences, as this crime category didn't increase in the Gresham area whilst Anvil was in operation.

Once Anvil was underway further work commenced to develop a medium to long term strategy to tackle thefts from vehicles. As a result Operation Hassocks was set up. This was to be the catalyst to progress the initiative across the whole town. It was to be the ongoing process which the district were going to develop and use to tackle the problem of thefts from vehicles in the medium and long term. After initial Police analysis work on the problem was completed, it was taken to a multi partner meeting, and an action plan was created with actions being allocated. This meeting was one of the major successes of the initiative and formed the backbone to its success. It helped to focus everybody in attendance, and it was also able to attract the right people from our partners who were all eager to make it work.

Progress meetings were arranged and are still an integral part to the ongoing progression of the initiative.

The longer term responses to the problem are discussed in the following sections:-

- Identify the top 20 auto criminals in the district and inform officers.
- Create in depth target profiles, both on suspects and locations.
- Promote an intelligence led approach to tackling thefts from vehicles.

By the beginning of September the district top 20 offenders had been developed based on current intelligence. This was to be a constantly updated top 20, based on current data and intelligence. Despite the top 20 being designed to tackle the thieves, on going work was being conducted in relation to the handlers of the stolen property utilising up to date intelligence into key hot spot areas of offending. This was also backed up by analysis which the newly dedicated car crime intelligence officer and analyst were collating on a daily basis. This intelligence was passed to the officers on daily patrols via daily briefings and also by integrated TV monitors which showed up to date intelligence, constantly throughout the day directly to the parade room.

Ongoing work was conducted to develop and identify good practice and incorporate it into the district strategy.

- Develop & Conduct Sting operations.
- Enforcement.

After consultation with other Police forces a number of 'sting vehicle operations' were developed. Initially to get these operations off the ground unmarked Police vehicles were fitted with cameras and satellite navigation systems (the sat' navs' had been loaned to us from tracker). These devices had been identified as one of the 'hot items' stolen, the operations initially ran daily and targeted intelligence generated hotspot areas. Since the turn of the year these operations have ran on average 4 times a week, a success rate of 73% from the operations (a total of 35 arrests), over the last quarter has now been achieved. A local car hire firm also assisted the operation by offering additional cars, to enable the operation to run

continuously. The police forces technical support team were asked to provide additional support staff, as the extra sting vehicles needed to be 'kitted out' and kept in service. After a period of training, 3 extra staff were allocated.

As this was being undertaken consultation with local and national companies had been taking place with sponsorship being offered from companies such as Garmins, producers of satellite navigation systems, who promised to supply batches of satellite navigation systems free of charge to act as bait for our sting vehicle operations. Tesco and Asda also agreed to assist and promised to supply uniforms and a van each to be used in the same type of operations (Just prior to Christmas 2006, Tesco and Asda supplied a home delivery van each along with delivery uniforms, for use in the operations).

Within weeks of the operation running intelligence had been received which subsequently led to partnership working with E-Bay and local Advertising magazines to develop intelligence on a previously known handler and the sale of stolen satellite navigation systems. This in turn led to an investigation on this handler, resulting in charges being brought and further financial investigation. The partnership working with these partners is ongoing and is developing to take on board other possible offenders.

Consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service (cps) also took place to inform them of the initiative and to agree a suitable protocol in dealing with offenders falling within the relevant crime category. This was in order to get offenders dealt with effectively and expeditiously.

Develop and create a crime prevention plan

High visibility patrols in identified hot spots had already begun with the inception of Anvil, and were to continue within the Hassocks strategy. Consultation between Police and Street Wardens and the passing of intelligence relating to hot spots was solidified. Consultation was also undertaken with our local CDRP who along with the council agreed to fund £15k worth of smart water kits which we targeted towards both residents and daily commuters into Middlesbrough to mark vulnerable property. This funding was topped up to £20k with funding granted by the Police Standards Unit, Crime Prevention Officers were utilised to distribute the

kits to members of the public at various locations throughout the town. The kits were both suitable for vehicle and home use and were supplied and registered free of charge. To date the initiative has supplied over 1000 smart water kits. Further funding has already been promised for this coming year from new and current funding partners.

Crime Prevention Officers engaged with numerous employers within the town (example Middlesbrough Council and the University campus). They agreed for crime prevention talks to be conducted with staff and their members, to warn them of the risks.

Publicity signs were constructed both permanent and semi-permanent and were erected at various points within hot spot areas of the town, posters were also put up in many local public accessible buildings, flyers and business packs were also distributed around the town.

Hot spots were visited in company with local authority crime prevention officers (in particular the 2 town centre hot spot car parks) and remedial Crime Prevention action was agreed and subsequently conducted (trimming of bushes, clearing of surrounding areas, installing suitable obstacles to prevent free exit, update CCTV and look at the possibility of security). Portable CCTV was also used in hot spot areas to improve visibility, and guardianship over areas.

Contact was made with Middlesbrough football club who worked with us to input relevant information on to their web site, so travellers into the town for matches would have the opportunity to find out which were the car parks to avoid. Crime prevention trailers were also situated within the area of the stadium to inform supporters of the risk of thefts from their motor vehicles.

Develop a property checking system.

As part of the crime prevention plan involved smart water, it was imperative that we were in a position to identify stolen items (should they be stolen) that were coated with the smart water product. We contacted a company specialising in UV lighting products and arranged for £1000 worth of UV lamps to be purchased in order to provide_uniformed officers with a key ring style UV light, to inspect property which had been seized or found.

Work was also conducted with a view to educating the local second hand sales retailers, to encourage them to examine property bought by them, with ultra violet light. Advice was also given on the best way of reporting anything that came into their possession which is suspect. Further advice was given regarding the increase in thefts of electrical items such as satellite navigation systems.

Co-ordinate our problem solving approach with partners.

The multi partner meeting had proved a massive success and was an excellent co-ordination tool which has ran through the centre of this initiative. These meetings are arranged on a monthly basis and designed to gather and co-ordinate responses and work on any new ideas which may push the initiative forward. The meeting has also proved to be a good catalyst to pool resources and explore different funding options together with our partners. The initiative also became an agenda item in both the Middlesbrough area Problem Solving Groups and the Reducing Crime Group, both of which are integral sub-groups within our local CDRP and attract many partners, this enabled further consultation with partners to hear from different areas of the community gaining valuable information, enabling further intelligence led work to develop. Work was also carried out jointly with our CDRP to look at the viability of a Park and Ride initiative in the town, this idea is still being considered.

Develop our Forensic response.

It was identified that our 'forensic hits' for theft from motor vehicle offences was poor. This was mainly due to the fact that capacity issues meant that it was never a high priority for scenes of crime officers to attend such crimes. This had to change to help make the impact we were aiming for, therefore a forensic strategy for this crime within Middlesbrough was developed. This strategy was aimed at supporting investigating officers and District Criminal Investigation departments to detect and reduce crime by the effective use of scientific techniques and forensic intelligence. This strategy guided officers in best practice and pledged a more comprehensive response by scenes of crime officers to specified crime. Furthermore a dedicated scenes of crime officer was tasked to cover any calls to vehicles parked within Middlesbrough football clubs vicinity during match days (as this was constantly

on the location target list). A more thorough crime scene assessment was agreed on, which would greatly increase the chances of gaining the amount of relevant evidence to detect and prosecute. Any intelligence gained during crime scene assessments was fed back through the intelligence office for further dissemination. Since it's inception in early September 06, forensic 'hits' alone have led to 24 auto crime arrests.

· Develop a high profile media campaign.

Initially the media campaign was based on an impactive response, hard hitting to capture 'hearts and minds'. TV and the local newspapers were used to inform the public what was happening and both were also used for updates. As the project developed, the campaign changed highlighting what offenders are looking for and how to prevent thefts from vehicles. Regular updates were issued to the media to keep the public informed.

Advertising space was supplied for suitable awareness information to be fitted into the council ran illumination advertising boards, which are located throughout the town, subsequently information was placed on these boards highlighting the crime problem along with crime prevention advice.

Costings

There was a large funding requirement from the outset due to the amount of new and specialised equipment needed to progress the initiative. Due to this, the initiative needed to be built on a strong partnership working ethos which also needed a flexible approach. This solid foundation was attained early on, funding for essential items which the operation was designed on was quick to be realised and further partnership working ensured that the operation would be workable. However the initiative needed staff to enable it to progress, partners including street wardens and Local Authority Enforcement Officers assisted without any additional cost to there organisations, their deployment adjusted to target the relevant areas. Police used additional resources through overtime, the operation was set a budget from the BCU budget, and this was carefully managed.

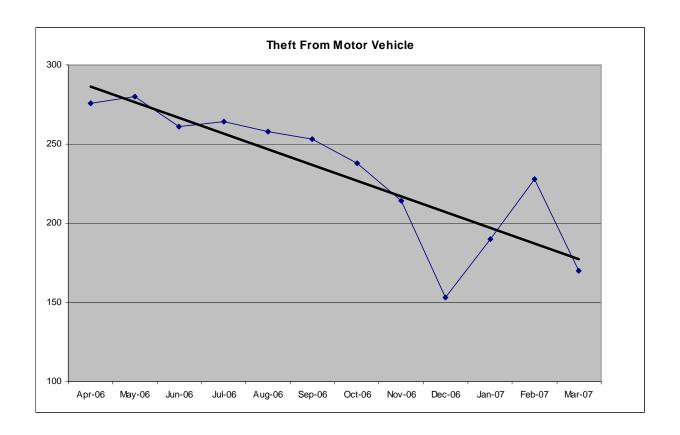
ASSESSMENT.

This operation has been running for 12 months (from the scanning stage) and an evaluation of its success shows that there has been a notifiable impact made during this time. The analytical statistics were achieved using the same research methods as initial analysis undertaken at the beginning of the operation.

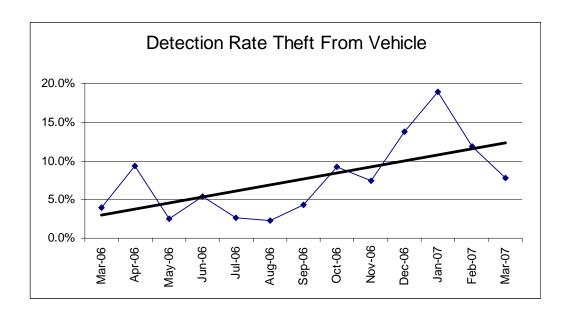
Since the beginning of the operation Police recorded figures demonstrate the following:-

- A drop in reported incidents of thefts from motor vehicles by 10.5% against the figures for the corresponding period of the previous year (2005-2006)
- The initial target of a 10% reduction has been met.
- There has been a total reduction of 297 crimes over the period, indicating 297 fewer victims.
- There has consequently been a saving of thousands of pounds through cost of repair and replacement of stolen items.

In addition to these figures, since the beginning of the operation there has been a 28.1% reduction in reported crimes of theft from motor vehicles, against the figure set which prompted this initiative (see graph below).



Further to this we have been able to increase our detection rates for thefts from motor vehicles from an average of 5% to a much improved 14.5% over the last quarter, which is another initial target reached (see below graph).



Reflecting back to our initial objectives :-

- To reduce reported theft from motor vehicle offences by 10%. TARGET MET a total reduction of 10.5% has been made.
- To double detection rates for thefts from motor vehicles offences. TARGET MET
 the detection rate has more than doubled from an average of 5% to 14.5%, over
 the last quarter.
- To maximise use of forensic evidence gathering. TARGET ACHIEVED forensic strategy written, since it's inception in early September 06, forensic 'hits' alone have led to 24 auto crime arrests.
- To maximise partnership working. TARGET ACHIEVED partners have taken an
 active role throughout and all are kept up to date.
- To develop & undertake a thorough crime prevention strategy. TARGET
 ACHIEVED plan designed funding secured.
- To target known vehicle crime offenders. TARGET ACHIEVED an updated top 20 was produced which changed according to intelligence as a direct result from the intelligence received, 55% of all detections were from the target list.
- To develop a media strategy. In excess of 12 articles in local TV and newspapers publicised the operation achievements.

The project has also been associated with a diffusion of benefits to wider crime types. This initiative has helped to have an effect on reducing other auto crime offences such as theft of motor vehicle. This is due to a variety of reasons which include, increased publicity and the fact that the criminals have become aware of the Police crackdown on auto crime, Crime Prevention advice, and the environmental changes. These have all had a significant part to play in creating a substantial effect on the fear of being caught.

Throughout this operation partnership working has been developed with new working relationships established and solidified. During the initiative there have been over a dozen partners assisting in varying ways from small private companies, to the local CDRP, all

assisting valuably with intelligence, funding, developing new ideas, equipment, personnel as well as energy and enthusiasm.

Problems have been encountered along the way, which the project has learnt from, these include:-

- The Police technical support officers initially could not assist us quick enough (due to capacity issues), to kit out our sting vehicles. This slowed down our turn over for these operations. This was however remedied by the addition of staff, but took longer than we had anticipated.
- Sharing information between agencies on our top 20 target list was another problem, again this was overcome with confirmation of a protocol which was already in existence, purely aimed at information sharing.
- Educating people in the collating of information linked in with the SARA model was
 initially a problem and some information was lost. This was rectified as people
 became comfortable with what information was required to be recorded so accurate
 assessment could be conducted.

This initiative is an ongoing operation. The monthly meetings have been scheduled to take place for the remainder of the year and beyond that. Funding for further equipment is being sought with all partners looking forward to the future, believing further in-roads can be made.

As such new targets will soon be set for the continuing improvement of the initiative, and further developments are being discussed with improved sting vehicle operations being set to incorporate new state of the art equipment.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

FORENSIC STRATEGY

Operation HASSOCKS

Strategy owner: Senior SSO Andy Williamson

Crime Series/Intelligence owner: DCI Sellers

SIO/OIC: N/A

Crime Scene Co-ordinator: N/A

Crime Scene Manager: N/A

Contact details:

Strategy owner: x1496

Crime series/intelligence owner: x3315

SIO/OIC: N/A

Review date: Ongoing

<u>In relation to</u>: MIDDLESBROUGH AUTO CRIME ACTION GROUP.

<u>Aim</u>

The aim of this forensic strategy document is to support Investigating Officers

and District Criminal Investigation Departments to detect and reduce crime.

Assist in the successful prosecution of offender(s), by the effective use of

scientific techniques and forensic intelligence. Particularly to target specific

crimes ensuring positive and rigorous scene examinations coupled with timely

and effective submissions.

Background

The Middlesbrough District has been highlighted as having a particular

problem with theft from motor vehicles. This district is responsible for 45% of

this category of crime for the Force area and the problem is show a trend of

rising still further. The Police Standards Unit have invoked an action plan

within Middlesbrough district to address this issue.

The Middlesbrough Auto Crime Action Group has been created as a focus and action group. The group is chaired by DCI Sellers and its members have been selected from various departments who can share in the problem solving.

The initial target areas are the Newhaven and North Ormesby wards.

Middlesbrough Football Club match days have also been identified as problem times due to the high influx of visitors and vehicles into the area.

The items stolen range from Compact Disc players, Satellite Navigation Systems and mobile phones though anything of value on view could be a target.

Middlesbrough District Local Intelligence Office is to generate an offender target list which will initially contain the details of 20 individuals.

The target areas are libel to change from time to time as will the offender target list. Middlesbrough LIO will notify the relevant members of the team when these changes take place.

Tasking

The fact that a crime trend has been identified provides opportunity to become proactive in respect of sample recovery in order to build a comprehensive picture of the offences and potential offender(s).

It is important that the scenes are identified to Scientific Support as soon as possible so that the possibility of seizing potential forensic evidence is maximized.

Once a scene has been identified, Control Room will inform the Forensic Intelligence and Dispatch Office (FIDO) who will access the scene and, if there is a realistic chance of obtaining forensic evidence, task a Scientific Support Unit (SSU) to attend. If a Crime Scene Assessor attends the scene and identifies a forensic issue they should request the attendance of SSU via FIDO.

A dedicated Scientific Support Officer (SSO) will be available on Middlesbrough Football Club match days. This unit will also be tasked through the FIDO unit in the same manner as above.

Forensic Strategy

The following additional trace evidence and forensic issues will be considered when examining scenes which are identified as part of this crime problem. If available and suitable the following relevant evidence/samples will be obtained by Scientific Support personnel.

- 1. Fibre tapings from the point of entry and/or seats.
- 2. Casts of any visible tool marks.
- 3. Control Glass sample will be take where appropriate.
- 4. Type of any glove mark identified, consideration given to 'lifting' the mark.
- Consideration should be given to contact DNA (FSS 555 Kit) from suitable areas within the vehicle. Care should be taken to isolate this are to the suspect only.
- 6. Detailed consideration for use of chemical treatment of items from inside the vehicle.

The above measures are to be in addition to a standard TFMV scene examination which includes the recovery of DNA, fingerprint and footwear evidence.

All LOCARD entries and submissions should be identified as an Operation HASSOCKS task.

Staff and Resources

As per normal shift rosters except Middlesbrough Football Club match days.

On Match days it has been agreed that a dedicated Scientific Support Officer will be available to examine vehicles under this operation. This will be done on overtime with authorization from DI Riordan.

Time Scales

Strategy to be reviewed at the bi-monthly meeting of the Middlesbrough Auto Crime Action Group.

<u>Delivery</u>

On completion of any examination to which this strategy applies, full consultation will be required between the Scientific Support Unit and the Investigating Officer (s) to maximize the benefit of any evidence or intelligence recovered from the scene. A submission strategy will be prepared where applicable in consultation with the SIO.

<u>Suspects</u>

Middlesbrough LIO is to circulate a target list and update as appropriate.

Health and Safety

All Scientific Support operations and examinations will be undertaken in

accordance with current health and safety legislation and Cleveland Police

force policies and instructions. All personnel are to:

a. Ensure that they do not carry out any actions that will put

themselves or others at risk.

b. Ensure that prior to commencing an examination of a crime scene

they carry out a risk assessment.

c. Ensure that they use/wear Personal Protection Equipment, where

appropriate.

Other Considerations

Scientific Support upon receipt of the target list will compile a Forensic History

on the suspect targets to assist the investigators in developing an interview

strategy. The lists and history will be updated as appropriate by Scientific

Support.

Andy WILLIAMSON

Acting Scientific Support Manager

4th September 2006

LETTER FROM SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE:-

Historically, Middlesbrough has suffered from high incidents of car crime, particularly thefts from motor vehicles. Operation Anvil, and subsequently Operation Hassocks, was developed as a multi- agency approach to tackle this difficult category of crime.

Prior to this initiative thefts from motor vehicles were on the increase whilst sanctioned detections were on the decrease. Thankfully, due to partnership working this trend has reversed and we are now achieving some significant successes in our fight against car criminals.

To ensure the effectiveness of these operations, Middlesbrough Police have had to think laterally and utilise previously untried techniques. This included the use of sting vehicles supplied by local retailers, which were kitted out with satellite navigation systems supplied by Garmins, in the full knowledge they would be stolen. These systems, which were coated with smart water prior to their deployment, have proved too tempting for local car criminals and have

resulted in a number of localised operations with over 40 people arrested to date.

Operation Hassocks, which has superseded Operation Anvil, is an operation with a long term goal to reduce by half the number of such thefts in the Middlesbrough area.

I fully endorse this application and commend the staff from all agencies for the significant results they have achieved to date.

Chief Inspector SELLERS.

Middlesbrough Police Office,

Bridge Road West,

Middlesbrough.