



European Crime Prevention Award
and
EUCPN Best Practice Conference 2010
Project Entry Form

The theme for this year's European Crime Prevention Award and EUCPN's Best Practice Conference is ***"A secure home in a safe community, through prevention, community policing and restoration"***.

According to this theme, the projects may focus on:

- the protection and the feeling of being protected against crimes (e.g. domestic burglary, computer crime, domestic violence, theft, itinerant groups, ...)
- the protection of the surroundings in the pursuit of a secure home (e.g. the prevention of nuisance, neighbourhood mediation, camera surveillance, environmental design, community workers, community guards, ...).

The list is not exhaustive. The projects may address any question relevant to this year's theme.

Please complete the attached form (the boxes are expandable). Note that the last point is for a one-page description of your project.

As we intend to compile a visual presentation of the entries, we kindly ask you to provide material for this (videos, photos, leaflets, etc)

Entries should be in English, but may be accompanied by a version of the entry in the national language if wished. Each country may enter one project as its ECPA entry and up to two other projects to be presented at the conference. Projects should be submitted only through the National Representatives. The full ECPA rules can be found at www.eucpn.org

Deadline for entries is **October 15th, 2010**.

Send your entry or entries to: eucpn@ibz.eu .

If you have any questions, please contact Anneleen Van Cauwenberge at eucpn@ibz.eu .



ECPA/BPC 2010

Please answer the following questions in English.

1. Is this your country's ECPA entry or is it an additional project? (Only one ECPA entry per country plus up to two other projects.)

This is the United Kingdom's ECPA entry.

2. What is the title of the project?

Park Life – Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in Open Spaces

3. Please give a short general description of the project.

Parklife was a project initiated as a result of the analysis of the London Borough of Merton's 2005 Annual Resident's Survey, which identified Lower Morden ward as having the second highest fear of crime in the borough, despite having the lowest level of actual crime.

A public consultation exercise with residents and local young people found the cause to be King George's Playing Field, a park situated in the centre of the ward. A broken down fence allowed access to the park via non-secure, privately owned alleyways. There was increasing youth disorder in the park and in the streets around it, as it had become a focus for the gathering of local youths to drink and smoke cannabis. The quiet residential streets in the vicinity became awash with graffiti. A park ranger living in a tied house in the park was subject to frightening victimisation.

Funding was acquired through the formation of a resident-owned "Friends of King George's Park" group to replace the fence for the 1.5km perimeter of the park with a 2.7m high ultra-modern variant. Resident Action Groups were formed around existing Neighbourhood Watches and alley gates installed. These Resident Groups were given Incident Diaries in which to record anti-social behaviour, as there was an issue with under-reporting. Intelligence gathered from these diaries led to the identification of a cannabis factory next to the park, which was selling drugs to the young people on the park. This was raided and an arrest was made.

Diversion and engagement of the youths in the park took place, led by the Safer Neighborhoods Police team but with assistance from youth outreach workers, and "Reclaim the Park" events took place, including several youth football tournaments organised by the local police team. A youth club was established in the park buildings for the benefit of local young people.

The Park life project was innovative in its approach due to the emphasis placed on community involvement and the partnership working with both residents and the private sector. Using situational crime techniques and significant improvements to the security of the park, the outcome has resulted in reduced concerns about crime and an improved quality of life for the local people living in the area.

4. Please describe the objective(s) of the project.

The core aim of the project was to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in the park and the local vicinity and to provide an improved quality of life for local residents, so that they could enjoy the park and feel safe in the area they lived. To ensure we were able to monitor the impact of the partnership-led interventions and assess changes in perception in the area, a

number of key objectives were set and base line figures established early on in the project. These figures were regularly monitored at project group meetings by the Safer Merton team.

1. Reduce fear of crime of local residents in Lower Morden by 5%

This objective was set so that levels of fear amongst residents could be monitored and kept central to action undertaken as part of the project. The data for this objective was obtained from the London Borough of Merton's annual resident's survey.

2. Reduce the number of call outs to the Police from the park and vicinity by 10%

Whilst there were actually a relatively low number of offences being committed in the park and its vicinity when compared to other areas of the borough, we felt it was important to monitor levels, so that any peaks in crime could be addressed quickly.

3. Reduce graffiti callouts by 10%

A large amount of the issues in the park were environmentally related. A clean-up of the park was a key element of the response so it was essential that reports were monitored to ensure the graffiti did not re-occur and that any persistent taggers were identified.

4. To hold two community events in the park

The project's focus was around the residents who lived in the area. By setting an objective to provide two community events it was hoped that it would increase social capital, so residents would build relationships with both their neighbours and agencies working in their area, resulting in a happier, more secure community.

5. Install four alley gates in the surrounding alleyways

Intelligence from local residents suggested that access to the park once it had been closed in the evenings was a big problem and a source of a lot of their concerns. Setting an objective to try and make access more difficult was fundamental to the success of the project. This allowed the creation of defensible space, through which illicit use of the park could be nullified.

5. How was the project implemented?

Analysis and definition of the problem

For the project to be successful, it was essential that the problems in the Lower Morden area were carefully identified and analysed thoroughly. Lower Morden is a quiet residential ward on the southwest edge of the London Borough of Merton. It had the lowest levels of recorded crime in the borough. Despite this, Merton's 2005 Annual Residents' Survey identified that fear levels of both crime and anti-social behaviour (henceforth ASB) amongst Lower Morden's residents were the 2nd highest in the borough (out of 20 wards).

A focus group with local residents, a survey of young people living in the area and feedback from the local Safer Neighbourhood Police Team provided reinforcement to the findings of the survey and led to the initiation of the project in June 2006 with the objective of reducing the fear of crime. The consultations identified the main cause of fear to be associated with issues of youth disorder in the local park - King George's Playing Fields (henceforth KGPF). The partnership was concerned that fear levels were likely to increase if the problems were not addressed.

In the initial phase of analysis, police and partnership analysts looked at calls to service for ASB and disorder in Lower Morden. The analysis showed that whilst these were concentrated on the perimeters and in roads with access to the park, there was little reporting of *actual* incidents within the confines of KGPF. This led the group to question whether the park might be a centre for unreported ASB and disorder and, if it was, who was committing the offences?

Needing to go beyond drawing conclusions based purely on analysis of reported crimes, it was recognised that data needed to be collected from a broader cross-section of stakeholders and agencies. The tracking of graffiti offences within the park proved the first major breakthrough as this demonstrated high levels of criminal damage within the park itself that were going unreported beyond the London Borough of Merton's Enforcement Team

Although superficial conclusions drawn from the graffiti statistics might point to young people perpetrating the crimes, it was the valuable input of the local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) that allowed for the compiling of more precise profiles of those in the park. The SNT patrols revealed important information, not only regarding the age and gender of those they engaged in the park, but also allowed for geographical variables to come into play. Indeed, the SNT team reported that they repeatedly engaged groups of 13-18 year olds via stop and searches carried out within the park itself; a proportion of who were local to the ward, but a significant number of whom stated they were from the neighbouring borough of Sutton, the border of which is within a few hundred metres of KGPF.

Contact was then made with colleagues from Sutton CDRP who explained that the parks immediately within their borders all had far tighter restrictions on young people congregating. Particularly significant was the fact that Sutton has a Parks Police service that patrols its 43 parks. We concluded that at least some of those in the park after hours were Sutton young people who were being displaced into KGPF, as it was relatively secluded, close to Sutton's borders and allowed for easy access.

Of the young people that the SNT engaged who stated they were from Merton, some were local to Lower Morden, but officers repeatedly found that young people from the adjacent St. Helier ward were amongst those in the park. The significance of this emerged when the young people often stated that the dispersal zone in place in St. Helier was leading to them being displaced and KGPF was a convenient and isolated location. Significantly, a high proportion of the young people from both Lower Morden and St. Helier identified that there was no diversionary provision in the immediate vicinity for them to attend; the closest youth club was two miles away and had had to reduce its activities due to funding cuts.

Whilst this information allowed the partnership to begin to construct a picture relating to the movement of young people in and out of the park, there was still a gap in information relating to actual incidents within the park. The park was being locked up at dusk or 9pm (whichever was sooner), but young people were entering the park through the alleyways running round it and over the broken fence.

This led the partnership to assess how information regarding incidents might be collected. It was concluded that given the high levels of insecurity amongst residents, it would be beneficial to contact the Key Individual Network of residents on a weekly basis over a period of three months to ascertain ongoing issues.

As more interviews were carried out, it was noted that the immediate aftermath of the weekend revealed particularly high levels of dissatisfaction and anecdotal reporting of young people causing disorder to both the ranger and local residents. However, this could simply be explained that residents were more likely to witness disorder, as they were present for a much greater proportion of the day. Regardless, this was still impacting on their feelings of insecurity and negative perceptions of their area.

The difficulty was to quantify this anecdotal data in a way that allowed for the sort of detailed analysis that would allow firm conclusions to be drawn. The partnership decided that a two-stage approach was required. Firstly, Environmental Visual Audits (EVAs) of the park were taken at key times. It was noted that littering and graffiti levels were higher on Mondays than later in the week.

The second stage involved the partnership pulling together a Key Individual Network of 20 residents (recruited from the local Neighbourhood Watch) whose homes backed directly onto the park. On the basis that residents were more likely to record incidents in a diary or verbally rather than phone the local SNT or dial 999, the group were given Incident Diaries and re-interviewed using set questions (relating to ASB/disorder, graffiti, and their times and locations within KGPF) following EVAs. The park was divided into sections, and residents were asked to roughly map areas where they witnessed groups of young people congregating.

The most significant findings of the research revealed there were high levels of ASB/disorder within the confines of the actual park after 9pm despite the fact that the park was closed (the gates locked) at dusk. Access to the park was through side alleys that ran around the southern and eastern border of the park.

This led to the question of how groups of young people were gaining access to the park late in the evening/night. The EVAs supported the conclusion that the poor state of the perimeter fencing was a major contributory reason. Access to the park was allowing for groups to congregate after closing, where alcohol was being consumed leading to many of the incidents highlighted by residents, the ranger and analysis of calls to the police.

An unexpected result from the residents' testimonies was the high concentration of groups in one particular area of the park - the south-eastern corner. Conclusions were initially drawn that groups convened there as it was the most isolated part of the park, furthest away from the main road, and where the perimeter fence was in its worst state of disrepair. It subsequently emerged that residents had reported the possibility of a cannabis dealer residing in the vicinity and so whilst the initial conclusions were certainly feasible, a new variable was introduced.

Making changes

The partnership adopted a flexible approach that divided up responses into three strands: short, medium and long-term, with each strand running through the Problem Analysis Triangle (victim-offender-location).

Short Term

- Police to work with the Graffiti Team to identify the taggers
- Use posters to encourage use of the youth shelter in the basketball court
- Residents Association Representative and Police to work on enhanced reporting with residents and parks staff
- Safer Merton Analysts to analyse resident's incident diaries
- Leisure Facilities Team to chase up crime and graffiti reporting and to install a new bin and notice board for the park, clearly defining the parks opening and closing times

Medium Term

- Police to publicise arrests, make appeals for information, obtain positive identification for the young people in the park and to look into how volunteer park warden schemes had worked in other areas.
- Look into the possibility of using the Community Bus to provide diversionary activity
- Residents Association Representative and Alleygate Co-ordinator to complete the Alleygate Scheme in Aragon Road.
- The Graffiti Team to investigate the possible use of covert CCTV
- Leisure Facilities Team to investigate the planning issues in Aragon Place, adjoining KGPF, which allowed constant access.

Long Term

- Investigate wider provision of youth services in the area.
- Alleygate Co-ordinator and Graffiti Team to organise a community clear up once the alleygates were installed.

It was essential to get buy in from all partners involved to ensure that actions were completed and the project lead was responsible for the ongoing monitoring of the project. It was also essential that local residents were involved at every stage of the project. Ultimately one of the key aims of the project was to reduce their concerns and worries about crime in the ward. By having residents involved, they were able to bid for funding from a private sector company for assistance in erecting the fence around the perimeter of the park.

6. Were partners involved in planning and/or development and/or implementation of the project? If so, who were they, and what were their roles?

Safer Merton is the Community Safety Partnership in Merton. Partnership working is very much the essence of the work that is undertaken. Much of the work carried out by the core team is undertaken in partnership with both statutory and non-statutory partners and, where appropriate, private sector organisations.

Safer Merton coordinated the Parklife Project. By centrally coordinating multiple responses and agencies, the group sought to accentuate the use of professional experience in the relative areas and avoided duplication of work or action. At the same time, this permitted agencies to share critical information on what might initially have been assumed to be unrelated issues and initiatives. This served to not only direct the timings and locations of enforcement activities and patrols but also monitor project content and delivery. Below are the key agencies that were involved in the project and their responsibilities and roles.

- LBM Environmental Enforcement Team – were responsible for monitoring the number of graffiti related callouts and clearing up the existing graffiti in the park and the surrounding area.
- LBM Parks Team – ensured damaged play equipment in the park was repaired and made fit for purpose.
- Safer Merton Officers and ASB (anti-social behaviour) Team – carried out ongoing analysis to measure the impact and scale of the problem, through looking at police reports and ASB incident diaries that were maintained by residents living in the local area.
- Safer Neighbourhood Team – conducted regular patrols in the park, engaged with the young people and other residents using the park
- Local Residents – fed intelligence through to the Police and ASB Team, which helped to piece together the problem, and helped to close down a cannabis factory in the area.
- Alleygate Officer – sought permission from residents backing onto the park to ensure that the alley gates could be installed to reduce easy access into the park.
- Viridor Waste Company, who contributed towards the cost of the perimeter fencing.
- LB of Sutton, shared intelligence
- LBM Youth services provided detached youth workers to engage with the young people and to start up and run the youth club in the park.

7. How did you build in plans to measure the performance of the project? Has the project been evaluated? How, and by whom?

Evaluation and performance was built in from the very beginning of the project. Objectives were established at the beginning and monthly updates fed back to the multi-agency

partnership group, not only on the identified objectives, but also on the progress and/or barriers. The project itself concluded in October 2007 when the partnership was brought together to analyse the outcomes and measure success versus the established objectives.

The Safer Merton Analyst and Safer Merton Partnerships Officer undertook the evaluation. The first stage of the evaluation was a quantitative assessment of the area. Information and data was collected from across the partnership, ranging from police recorded figures graffiti complaints and number of ASB reports. The second stage was a qualitative assessment through a second public consultation whereby residents were spoken to and asked their views on the project and interventions.

Academic research was also utilised to assess the overall impact of the interventions and to ascertain if displacement had occurred. Displacement test analysis devised by Bowers and Johnston (2000) was used to measure this. Home Office research on the cost of crime was also used to try and ascertain added cost savings from having undertaken the project.

In 2010, a further brief evaluation has been undertaken to assess if the project has had a sustainable benefit to the area. This has involved speaking with the relevant partners who have continued to work in the area and by examining the latest fear of crime levels and ASB reports.

8. What were the results? How far were the objectives of the project achieved?

The first and most noticeable outcome was the fear of crime index fell sharply. Comparing 2005 when 75% of residents expressed insecurity around crime, the figure fell to 58% in the 2007 annual residents' survey. As far as graffiti was concerned, the number of call-outs to the Council fell dramatically from 140 in 2005-06 to 86 in 2006-07, a significant drop of 38.6%. This is a saving of £27,130 according to Cost of Crime figures.

A reduction of 10% in incidents in the park and surrounding area was also achieved, with the number of incidents falling by 16.8% from 107 to 89 (comparing the evaluation period in 2006-07 and 2007/8). More recent analysis of incidents actually occurring in the park revealed there were only three incidents in the park during the summer of 2009 compared to 14 in the summer of 2006.

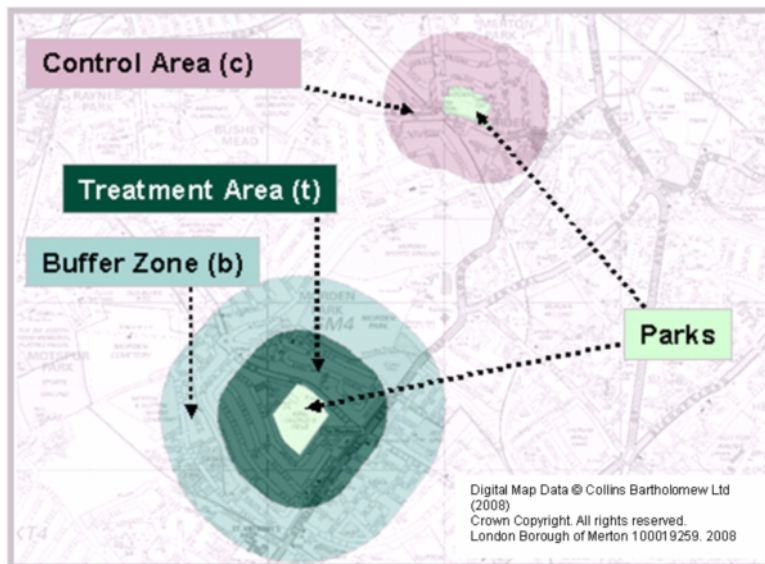
The replacement of the fence, alleygates and the holding of community cohesive activities were also achieved. The fence around the park was entirely replaced and six alleygates put in place to block off easy access areas. The four community events that were held over 2006-07 served to instil a level of communal confidence and satisfaction in the achievements of the partnership, as well as develop social capital and provide a sense of ownership of the park by local people.

We were very keen to ensure that no displacement took place. We measured this by adopting the displacement test analysis devised by Bowers and Johnson (2000). This helped us assess displacement by looking at three areas - the test area (KGPF), a buffer surrounding the test area and a control site (Mostyn Gardens, a similar park in a different part of Merton).

1. Looking at the change in number of crimes for two six-monthly summer periods, post and pre intervention: We can see there was a reduction of **18 crimes**. This is the **Gross Effect**.
2. To see if the reduction was due to the interventions, we looked at the change in King George's treatment area and compared it to the control area in Mostyn Gardens, a similar park a short distance away. A positive result would suggest that the reduction

was due to the interventions. The final figure was **0.5** suggesting the interventions had a positive effect.

3. Whilst the interventions may have had an impact on the reduction of crime, it was important to see if this had caused displacement or diffusion of benefits into other areas



To measure this, buffers were created around King Georges and compared to crime figures from the control area, Mostyn Gardens. This provided a figure of 0.38, which indicated that there had been no displacement and a diffusion of benefits occurred.

4. Finally it was important to see what the total effect of the response or interventions were. To do this we looked at the effect of the interventions in King Georges and then looked at the level of diffusion. A positive figure using the formula below would mean that the interventions have been effective in reducing the crime levels in King Georges.

$$\text{Total Net Effect} = [KGPF \text{ before}(\text{Mostyn after}/\text{Mostyn before}) - KGPF \text{ after}] + [\text{Mostyn before} (\text{Mostyn after}/\text{Mostyn before}) - KGPF \text{ after}]$$

The figure for the work in King Georges was **98.94**, which indicated that interventions were **effective**

At a statistical level the objectives were exceeded, however, some of the positive outcomes the project produced were not so tangibly quantifiable. For example, levels of satisfaction with local statutory services (principally the police and council) needed to be maintained for the medium-long term benefits of the work to show through.

Therefore, the partnership decided that in the six months after the closure of the PSP, a further series of in-depth consultations were needed. The group of residents that formed the incident-recording group were re-assembled and interviewed at length. The feedback was extremely positive with 100% (20 out of 20) stating that they felt crime and ASB were “Much” or “A bit” better since the erection of the fences and alleygates, with 60% (12 out of 20) saying it was “much” better. In addition, 100% said they felt the installation of the alleygates had improved their quality of life “a great deal” or “a fair deal”, with 70% (14 out of 20) saying it was “much” better.

3 years on...

The Parklife project was predominantly carried out during 2006 and 2007 but it was important for the partnership to know if the project had actually had a sustained benefit to the local area. Interestingly, more recent figures from the 2009 residents survey indicate that fear of crime in the area has continued to fall, with 43% of the residents questioned being fearful or very fearful of crime in the Lower Morden Ward.

Feedback in 2010 from the Safer Neighbourhood Team showed that local residents are still benefiting from the measures that were put in place and still talk about what they feel was valuable improvements to the area. The project has had a long-term effect on the surrounding area and more residents are keen to have alley gates installed, which can at times be difficult for the council to implement due to reluctance or difficulty obtaining permissions from the home owners.

One local resident noted that even now, they are still noticing the impact the project had on the area, particularly in relation to the quality of the local environment and the behaviour of young people in the area, which has improved considerably.

The youth club that was set up as a result of the project continues to function. Although they had some initial difficulties with some of the young people who attended they have watched the club grow become a real source of provision for local young people. The Detached Team, who initially ran the club, ensured that the Borough's youth service took over responsibility for the continual provision of the youth club.

9. Are there reports or documents available on the project? In print or on the Web? Please, give references to the most relevant ones.

- <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=10841733>
- Tilley Award DVD that was made about the project (we have several copies)
- Tilley Award Presentation which was made at the Problem Oriented Partnerships Conference in 2008
- Before and after photographs of the park

10. Please, write a *one-page* description of the project:

Despite recording the lowest levels of crime for the London Borough of Merton, the 2005 Annual Resident's Survey identified that levels of insecurity and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) amongst Lower Morden's residents were the second highest in the borough. There was a concentration of incidents recorded on the perimeter of the King George's Playing Field and on the roads used to access the park.

Interviews with residents and the park ranger revealed that incidents peaked at weekends, though residents were not reporting these to the police. The partnership decided to put into place a means to gather evidence about incidents in the park, using environmental visual audits. They also assembled a group of local residents who lived closest to where the incidents occurred in the park who received diary sheets to complete, recording any incidents they were aware of, and were interviewed following the environmental visual audits. Residents were asked about the details of incidents, and to identify locations where incidents took place.

Contact was made with neighbouring Sutton CDRP and it was found that parks in Sutton were subject to much tighter restrictions on congregations of young people, and also benefited from a dedicated Safer Parks team. Sutton's tighter restrictions were displacing

young people from Sutton into Merton. Young people reported that the dispersal zone in the Green Lane area of St Helier ward was causing them to move into King George's Playing Field to avoid being moved on. They also reported that there were very few organised activities for them in the local area.

The research and analysis revealed high levels of ASB were committed by young people in the park after 9pm, despite the fact that the park gates were locked at dusk. Community intelligence showed that most young people were using a side alley to access the park once the gates had been locked, and that the poor state of the perimeter fence also meant they could gain access through various gaps.

The partnership put in place diversionary schemes for young people. The Safer Merton Partnership, working with the local Youth Club, put a bid in for the Youth Opportunities Fund, a national funding scheme for youth facilities, to redevelop the youth club and employ extra staff. This bid was successful and police, residents and young people worked together to redevelop the layout and design of the facilities, including the acquisition of furniture and to plan the programme of activities for young people. A team of outreach youth workers also worked with the young people who were hanging around in the park, to gain their confidence and encourage them into the diversionary activities that were on offer.

All parties agreed that effort should be concentrated on getting the fence repaired. The council department responsible for repair work could not raise the necessary funds, so the partnership initially provided 50 per cent of the required funding in order to lever in further funding from Viridor, the local waste-management company who would also benefit from a reduction in rubbish levels in the area. The new fence was installed in March 2007.

Local residents contacted the local alley-gating coordinator to arrange a consultation to gather support for the installation of six alley gates that would restrict access to the park in locations where there were high rates of criminal damage. The alley gates were successfully installed.

This initiative had the added effect of bringing the local community together and building a sense of cohesion among residents. Community days were organised in the park, involving a range of local services including the London Fire Brigade and Metropolitan Police Service dogs section. There was a football tournament for the young people.

Ongoing monthly reviews took place on the work within the park, and the initiative concluded in April 2007. Findings from the evaluation showed that fear of crime fell 17 per cent, callouts for graffiti fell 39%, and incidents fell by 16.8%. Continual assessment of social capital in the area confirms that local residents remain positive three years since the end of the project.