

CONFERENCE ON CRIME AGAINST INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

BIRMINGHAM 18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008

ATTENDANCE

Approximately 150. A great majority were police, council, police authorities, security firms etc. Relatively few were active business owners or managers.

SPEAKERS

Member for Crime reduction V. Coaker MP  
W.M. Regional Business Forum Mr M Cherry  
Police: A.C.C. R.Beale (Staffordshire Police)  
Shadow Member for Business J.Djanogly M.P.

PRINCIPAL SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

1. How can C D R Ps reduce crime against business.
2. E Crime and fraud
3. Retail and hospitality crime
4. Industrial estate crime, rural crime and metal thefts
5. Vehicle and fuel crime

GENERAL COMMENTS

Considerable un-reporting of crime by business victims reasons given :  
Cannot devote time

Police fail to understand or to take such crime seriously  
Recovery of stolen goods or convictions very rare.

Insurance extremely expensive and difficult to obtain, reluctance to jeopardise no  
claims records. Sometimes police involved merely to obtain a crime number.

Perceived shift of attention by criminals from (well protected) domestic properties to  
more vulnerable business premises. More lucrative gains from business premises, particularly  
metals.

Metal thefts are regarded as the category suffering highest increase. Police do not  
seem to attach appropriate importance to it (Merica police have received training in it also  
their project "Live Wire" has lead to 175 arrests). Suggestions were made that plain clothes  
police and PCSOs should visit scrap yards and look for inappropriate deliveries eg. new  
copper stock, roof lead and manhole covers. It should be made law (as in the U S A) that  
scrap yards should NOT be allowed to pay cash for metal deliveries.

Walk- in crime affects some factories particularly in warm weather with many doors  
open. Thefts of cash, handbags etc were caused by sneak thieves who wander about industrial  
premises generally claiming (when challenged) that they are seeking employment.

Shops and hotels suffer considerable problems of shoplifting and cash thefts.

Computer crime and online fraud not particularly prevalent, counterfeit crime causing minor problems.

Rural crime is a serious problem notably travellers and their perceived involvement in the theft of plant, machinery and fuel.

Many suspicions were expressed that foreign criminal gangs were responsible for many forms of crime in the rural and industrial areas.

Vehicle crime seems to be on the increase with thefts of heavy vehicles, their cargo or fuel. An increasing number of HGVs are foreign owned and driven by non-English speakers. Cargos commonly delivered to and from our distribution centres can be valued in millions, consequently, they are a tempting prospect to organised criminals. A vehicle might also carry £1,000 worth of easily pilfered fuel.

It was felt that greater attention should be given to vehicle security also pressure should be placed on the distribution centres to provide secure all-night parking of vehicles as many (Magna Park) fail to do so.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Views expressed by the many participants suggested that crime could be reduced by attending to the following recommendations :-

- a. Closer interaction between police and the business sector
- b. Greater use of technology (cameras, tracking devices, marking systems) these might be made more widely available by the B I D Scheme.
- c. On line incident reporting
- d. Close scrutiny of scrap metal yards
- e. Arrange specialist training for police in identifying metals, also vehicles, plant and machinery in order to assess their values, ease of theft and methods of disposal.
- f. Better co-operation between neighbours on the industrial estates
- g. Gating or security checking on major industrial estates
- h. More warning signs (to deter walk-in thieves)
- i. Require police to publish more detailed performance indicators to reveal their attention to crime against industry and commerce.
- j. Lobby politicians to reinstate the business vote in order to give greater prominence to their interests.
- k. Avoid the term "business crime" (which can mean businesses engaged in money laundering, VAT carouselling, producing counterfeit goods, corporate fraud etc). It would be more meaningful to use the term "crime against industry and commerce"