

Lincolnshire Police's summertime plan

Implementation of a Summertime Policing Plan (STPP) in Lincolnshire coastal towns to prevent crime and protect people from harm.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Independently evaluated
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Violence against women and girls Public order offences Special operations
Organisation	Lincolnshire Police
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Region	East Midlands
Stage of Implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	April 2023
Completion date	November 2023
Scale of initiative	Local

Aim

The aim of the STPP is to:

- provide a holistic problem-solving approach to address the increase in population to the coastal district in Lincolnshire
- manage seasonal demand and the associated criminality
- ensure a secure and pleasant environment for locals and tourists

Intended outcome

The STPP intends to see a reduction in:

- burglaries
- violence against women and girls (VAWG) offences, particularly in the night-time economy (NTE)
- knife crime and serious violence
- reports of missing children

The STPP intends to see an increase in:

- multi-agency and partnership working
- public trust and confidence in policing
- applications of problem solving approaches and evidence-based policing

Description

The STPP 2023 was created to address the seasonality of visitors to the Lincolnshire coast, predominantly in the coastal towns of Skegness, Ingoldmells and Mablethorpe. With a resident population of 21,128 (according to 2021 census data) the influx of over 4 million visitors each year puts a strain on all local services. The STPP plan is a direct response to increased tourist activity and the associated rise in public safety issues.

With over 250,000 visitors per day, with many staying overnight in one of the 37,000 caravans across 300 sites, plus hotels, and bed and breakfast accommodation, the impact is immense. This is felt across the partnership agencies and wider community, and services struggle to meet with demand.

The force worked closely with Process Evolution (an organisation that works with police services to optimise resources and respond in the most efficient and effective way). They helped Lincolnshire Police understand its demand, and specifically the impact of tourism within the coastal district. Their work has been important to provide a firm evidence base of the demand.

The Process Evolution report highlighted a 37% increase in demand for the coastal district during the summer months, this further translated into a 29% increase in crime demand. It also helped to identify shortcomings in staffing models, providing several alternatives to meet with the recurring seasonal demand.

Serious violence, knife crime and homicide crimes were a real concern during the summer months and was reported on nationally. This gave the Lincolnshire holiday resorts a general feeling of being unsafe, particularly around the night-time economy.

The force worked closely with the University of Lincoln in the scanning phase and commissioned an independent literature review to better understand the visitor demographic, and wider visitor economy. The report helped us apply academic learning and theory into our policing approach.

The STPP was underpinned by three areas that align with our force priorities:

- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) – the force aims to prevent harm before it happens and lessen the impact when it does.
- Protect people from harm – working with the community to deliver a series of initiatives to make people feel safe and protect them from harm.
- Help those in need – working with partners to identify vulnerable people in the community and provide a high standard of care.

How the plan is delivered:

- Engage – being in the right place at the right time in the heart of the coastal communities.
- Listen – listen to the views of the coastal communities, setting priorities across the district in consultation with the public, dealing with the things that really matter in the area.
- Inform – communicate by engaging face-to-face and across online platforms.
- Work together – seek out opportunities for multi-agency and partnership working and offer community participation in policing initiatives.

There are several initiatives and operations used in the plan to cover the three main areas to make the coastal areas safer:

- The force has worked closely with partners to reduce ASB, this has involved issuing Community Protection Warning Notices (CPWN's), Unacceptable Behaviour Warning Letters (UBWL's) and Community Behaviour Orders (CBO's). A Joint Diversionary Panel (JDP) gather weekly to discuss youth offending and apply an educational and reparational approach to keep young people out of the criminal justice system.
- Using dispersal orders has been found to be effective for incidents in the NTE and ASB.
- Operation Songlark – led by the local neighbourhood policing team, supported by proactive and specialist investigation teams, aimed to trace offenders quickly, recover stolen property and bring offenders to justice. The neighbourhood policing team conduct high visibility engagements in caravan parks and engage with owners as part of Caravan Park Watch to provide crime prevention advice.

Protect people from harm:

- Operation California – in the NTE working with the licensing team, licensees and local councils to provide education around drink spiking and resources at premises to prevent spiking.
- Caravan Park Watch – this has been running successfully for several years and work is underway to launch hotel watch.
- Operation Atlantis – working closely with HM Coastguard, the Royal Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and East Lindsey District council (ELDC) to reduce lifeguard incidents and rescue operations.

Helping those in need:

- For VAWG, [StreetSafe](#) is a site where people can report the times and locations when they have felt vulnerable or unsafe.
- Ensuring officers are accessible to all of our community, continue to communicate through social media and considering how to reach and be more visible for those who are in hard to reach areas.

Lincolnshire Police are building on the successes of the STPP 2023 and are considering the learning identified in the evaluation by the University of Lincoln, to apply to the East Coast Policing Plan 2024.

Evaluation

An evaluation of the Summertime Policing Plan 2023 was conducted by academics at the University of Lincoln. They employed a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods.

The qualitative aspect consisted of four focus groups and twelve interviews with several stakeholders, including: police officers, senior leaders, managers, police community support officers (PCSOs), community beat managers, local council partners, wellbeing staff, and organisational partners. It also included analysis of feedback from four continuous professional development days to understand response officers' perceptions towards the effectiveness of the STPP in improving policing practices and the impact on individual officers.

The quantitative part involved comparing police and crime statistics for 2022 and 2023. Key metrics included crime rates and response times. The evaluation also looked at how the initiative was implemented.

Findings from the evaluation:

- A positive effect was observed on the relationship between Lincolnshire Police and partner agencies that helped build trust and enhance buy in.
- Effective leadership was key to the STPP success. This enabled a collaborative environment and a good working relationship between police and partner agencies. Police and stakeholders reported on the enthusiasm and drive from the chief inspector leading this project.
- There was a disconnect between community police officers delivering the plan and officers working in other departments, such as the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and response teams. STPP officers felt officers in other departments did not buy into the plan and therefore did not support it. It was suggested in the future for more consultation and collaboration between different departments.
- Officers felt that the STPP was prioritised over their regular duties and relied on officer goodwill and flexibility as their workloads increased. This also led to concerns around ongoing relationships with the local community were becoming neglected, this was also reflected by comments from local partners.
- Some officers also reported that they felt the STPP over-prioritised tourist related issues and not significant local problems, such as shoplifting, which shop owners had reported was a large concern.
- The STPP largely had positive effects on officer wellbeing. The plan emphasised a sense of purpose which benefited overall moral. Wellbeing staff were involved during CPD days and did

activities such as distribute wellbeing bags to promote self-care practices. The wellbeing offer, such as the van, needed improvements to reach its full potential. There were some concerns around the change in shift patterns and long commutes, although officers had voted for the change in shift patterns.

- There was an issue with understaffing, and the shortage was perceived as a barrier for the full effectiveness of the STPP and all the initiatives involved.
 - This influenced staff fatigue as officers had to cover shifts on overtime due to staff shortages. There was a rise in incidents involving police vehicles where vehicles were damaged, potentially due to staff fatigue as many officers reported they had long commutes on top of shifts due to the geographical spread of Lincolnshire.
 - Some events within the summertime policing plan were cancelled due to staff shortages. It was reported that this may reduce trust and confidence due to not delivering the events that they had advertised.
- The communications and advertising around the STPP were effective in reaching a wide audience. There were some concerns around the digital-first approach with certain groups for example the elderly, so officers directly engaged with these groups using tablets during events.

Overall impact

The evaluation examined certain operations that were part of the STPP and used crime statistics, stakeholder feedback, and implementation to assess effectiveness.

Operation Songlark which focussed on reducing caravan burglaries reported a:

- reduction of 32% in all recorded offences
- significant decline of 28% of all burglaries
- reduction of 52.8% of caravan burglaries

Operation California targeted recreational drug use in the NTE by using technology that detects substances and knife arches that are metal detectors. Feedback from officers was mixed as some reported the drug detection technology was quick to use but had some concerns around reliability. Officers also reported mixed views about knife arches, some found them effective and reported positive receptions to them, whilst others preferred hand-held detectors. Reported public perceptions were largely positive with an appreciation of the visible police efforts in improving

safety in the night-time economy.

Operation Coastline aimed to increase safety in the night-time economy focussing on violent crime, high harm assaults such as grievous bodily harm, knife crime, and violence against women and girls (VAWG). Serious violent crime data was compared for July and August in 2022 and 2023. There was an increase in serious violent crime in July 2023 compared to July 2022, but a decrease in August 2023 compared to August 2022. Crime data for high harm assaults and knife crime showed a year-on-year decrease from 2019 to 2023. Further improvements on the metrics used to assess impact of VAWG initiatives is required.

Operation Atlantis aimed to improve coastal safety and emergency response efficiency.

Lincolnshire Police worked with HM Coastguard, National Coastwatch Institution, RNLI and East Lindsey District Council. Analysis of lifeguard incident data comparing 2022 and 2023 showed a:

- 31% decrease in overall incidents requiring lifeguard intervention.
- 38% decrease in rescue operations.
- 31% decrease in aided incidents (where assistance was provided).
- 6% increase in general assistance provided.
- 50% reduction in casualty care requirements.
- 69% decrease in minor first aid.
- 96% decrease in search operations.

St Johns Ambulance initiative in Skegness aimed to provide prompt medical response, reduce demand on local services and provide a safe space for vulnerable individuals in the night-time economy. The initiative was well-received by volunteers, club staff, local business owners and the public. St Johns ambulance provided clinical and non-clinical support and their demand increased during the later part of the night, highlighting the crucial timing of this initiative.

Learning

Partnership working

- The strategic, research-driven approach to the development of the STPP has been highly effective and welcomed by partners. This approach could be beneficial in other policing areas.

- Working with partners could be further developed by improved defining and assigning of roles to assist the police to focus on core policing duties, while partners increasingly manage complementary aspects of the STPP.
- The strategic, research-driven approach could be extended to other geographic areas, potentially increasing the overall impact and success of the plan across different regions and communities.

Strengthening internal relationships

- Wider participation and inclusive consultation across various teams in the planning stage of the 2024 policing plan could foster greater buy-in among front-line officers and enhance the range of information available for decision-makers.
- There are some workforce issues around scheduling conflicts and resource allocation that should be appropriately identified and resolved.

Regular recalibration

- All strategies require regular recalibration. The evaluation recommends that the focus be on the balance between tourist-based demand and local residents.
- The STPP may need to adapt to a reduction in the local Neighbourhoods team by streamlining objectives and operations. Less critical tasks may be able to be passed to partner organisations.

Wellbeing

- Minor adjustments to the wellbeing offer, such as resolving staffing and provision issues around the wellbeing van, could have a disproportionately beneficial effect on officer morale.

Staffing

- A review of the 10-8-12 staffing model is recommended in consultation with officers. There are strengths of the model, but fatigue from long shifts and commutes is a significant issue, and officers may have effective suggestions as to how this issue may be improved. A change to this model, or an alternative shift pattern may lead to better overlap, reduced fatigue and an increase in police presence when and where it is most needed.
- A review of the management of overtime is recommended to ensure staff are not overburdened and have sufficient time to rest and recuperate between shifts. This approach should balance the need for additional staffing during emergencies with the wellbeing of the officers.

The force will continue to work with local authority partners to address the deeper deprivation challenges within our coastal communities, not only securing national funding but being innovative and playing our part in improving the offering to our communities.

The success of the STPP 2023 and learning identified will be applied to the East Coast Policing Plan 2024 to further improve our response to the increased demand during the summer months.