

**Inspection of Southern Area BCU  
Warwickshire Police  
June 2005**

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1. The inspection of the Southern Area Basic Command Unit (BCU), Warwickshire Police was carried out on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary by a staff officer for BCU inspections, Mr Stephen Griffiths assisted by Chief Inspector Terry Kellaher between 20 and 24 June 2005.

## **Force and BCU Overview**

2. Warwickshire Police covers the County of Warwickshire and is a relatively small force with the second lowest police revenue budget net requirement (£73.89m for 2004/2005) in the country after The City of London. The county and police force is at the heart of the West Midlands region surrounded by eight other police forces.
3. The county of Warwickshire has an area of 764 square miles with a population of 505,860 in some 210,000 households and there is a minority ethnic population in the county of 22,352 (4.62%); all figures are as at 15/01/2004.
4. Force headquarters is at Leek Wootton, Warwick and the command team comprises the Chief Constable, deputy chief constable, two assistant chief constables (having the portfolios of operations and support) and a director of finance. Establishment for the Force is 1010 police officers, 595 police staff, 44 community support officers, 5 traffic warden posts and 181 special constabulary officers.
5. On 1st April 2002 the Force was re-structured into two BCUs covering five districts areas and each district is coterminous with a district council.
6. The subject of this report is the southern area or BCU which covers the large geographical area of south Warwickshire and a population of approximately 247,900. The area is administered by Warwickshire County Council, Warwick and Stratford district councils and a network of parish councils. The area consists of three main towns of Leamington Spa, Warwick and Stratford upon Avon with a number of variable sized villages ranging from Wellesbourne (population 6,773) to Admington (100). A majority of the area is rural in nature. The BCU consists of two police districts, which are coterminous with Warwick District Council and Stratford District Council.
7. The area includes Coventry airport which is now a fully licensed international airport and a number of major A roads pass through the area, together with the busy M40 / M42 motorways.
8. Warwick District Council principally covers the three main towns of Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth, which have a combined total area of some 28,000 hectares with a population approaching 125,000 people. It has nationally identified areas of deprivation yet also has large rural aspects.
9. The district has the highest non-white, ethnic make up in the Force (the Indian ethnic group accounts for 4.1%) with a current total, (but growing) of 7.1% non-white.
10. The District has a lively through put of visitors and tourists because of the 'Spa' status of Leamington, Warwick Castle (approx. 8 million visitors a year), Kenilworth Castle and Warwick racecourse.
11. Recurring issues for the district are those caused by the night time economy in particular Leamington, which has a high concentration of licensed premises and has recently been designated as 'saturated' by the local authority under the 2003 Licensing Act.

12. Stratford district covers an area of 378 sq. miles making it the largest district by area in Warwickshire. Employment is varied with agriculture and tourism playing important roles in sustaining the local economy; this has helped to create a rich well-balanced blend within the local district communities. These communities are characterised and made up from well-established market towns, historic buildings and attractive villages making the area a popular tourist attraction to visitors.
13. The district is seeing widespread development of large new housing estates and expanding local industry with office type accommodation being built throughout the district. The population currently around 115,200 is expanding at a high rate with many new families being attracted to the district due to the local affluence within the area.
14. The town of Stratford is world famous for one of its past residents – William Shakespeare. Within the district there are a number of properties all having connections with the Bard, each is preserved and plays a major part in the local economy. Millions of tourists visit Stratford every year from all around the world, and over 17% of jobs in the district rely on their presence.
15. Recurring issues for the district are anti-social behaviour, violence and the night time economy. Fear of crime plays an important part with it being disproportionately high given the relatively low levels of crime.
16. The BCU strength at the time of inspection stood at 295 police officers, 78 police staff and 40 special constabulary officers (see later text). The total BCU budget for the financial year 2004/05, was £14.05 million.
17. A chief superintendent, based at Leamington Spa police station, commands the BCU assisted by a superintendent (operations), a detective chief inspector, two chief inspectors (districts), a divisional personnel manager and a finance manager (collectively known as the senior management team – SMT).
18. Throughout this inspection there was evidence that the BCU is progressive in areas covered by national initiatives such as automatic number plate recognition (ANPR), the tackling alcohol related violence initiative, police community support officers (PCSOs – the first Force to utilise them outside London) and dispersal orders. The BCU is to be congratulated for its involvement in these issues.

## **Performance**

### **Crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs)**

19. The area policed by the BCU encompasses the two areas of Warwick and Stratford district councils and both fall within Warwickshire County Council.
20. In accordance with the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, the two district councils, together with other main partners, which include the BCU and Warwickshire County Council, produced their third crime reduction and community safety strategy for the period 2005/2008.
21. The three main aims of both the Warwick District Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (2005-08) and the Stratford District Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (2005-08) are:
  - Reduce Violent Crime (particularly alcohol-related town centre violence)
  - Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour
  - Reduce Fear of Crime (perception versus reality).
22. Not only are the three main aims identical, but the inspection team was informed that both CDRPs have similar specific objectives to achieve the three main aims with comprehensive

performance evaluation. In addition, constituent agencies often work together and meetings for the two CDRPs have been rationalised where there are similar attendees. Overall there is an intention to move towards joint strategic and tactical groups, which is likely to occur within the next 12 months and already, one post holder collates all possible funding stream opportunities for both CDRPs.

23. The BCU commander is vice chair of both CDRPs, which affords him considerable strategic influence and he describes overall relationships as “strong and productive”. There appeared to be close working relationships between the BCU and CDRPs and the inspection team was impressed with the two full time community safety co-ordinators employed by the CDRPs. Both were able to give considerable evidence of tactical partnership working, for example the Warwickshire retail crime partnership (system of retail premises linked by radio and monitored by CCTV); pub-watch – 46 members in 2 schemes (Warwick and Stratford) and operation Tranquillity. This is a recent campaign to reduce abuse towards retail shop staff, which in particular targets prolific offenders. The BCU supplied the inspection team with full and impressive details of the above initiatives, together with others, which have not been included in this report to enable reasonable brevity.
24. The CDRPs have a local authority employed officer responsible for coordinating efforts to obtain anti social behaviour orders (ASBOs) who was able to evidence an information/training package for that topic. Police community staff were able to detail good relations with partner agencies including the agencies responsible for housing and probation services.
25. Consistent and strong praise was heard from partner agency representatives for the staff of the BCU in terms of their engagement and commitment to partnership working. A quote recorded by the inspection team was: “The Southern BCU is not afraid to trial things, such as the local partnerships”. Particular mention was made of the commander and it was pointed out that the engagement of the police had increased since his arrival on the BCU. Mention was made of his and other command team members’ willingness to “front up public meetings” and “the commander’s continuity in post is requested”. Other quotes were “Can’t remember a time where we have wanted to move forward and not had full support from David (commander)”. Other individual staff of the BCU were also mentioned by name and it was evident that very positive co-operative working relationships had been forged between the various agencies.
26. Despite the positive comments above, the inspection team found several issues relating to partnership working that the BCU commander may wish to consider:
  - ❖ A concern by BCU staff that the new licensing legislation has been slow to be “picked up on” with a weakness in staff knowledge. This may be a perception that needs consideration as it was apparent that the BCU has made progress and is currently writing a policy, with responsibility for licensing to be placed within the BCU intelligence unit to provide an intelligence led approach. HMIC welcomes this development.
  - ❖ Uniform sergeants felt that working with partnership agencies was the domain of community beat officers (CBOs) only. They felt that generally, reactive officers would, quote – “not have a clue regarding partnership processes”. They felt that the local authority was progressive. The sergeants themselves had little knowledge of the work of the BCU’s community safety team and it is clear that there is a need for a marketing of the shared responsibility of partnership working and a clarification of the role of the community safety team with sergeants.
  - ❖ This rather silo thinking was also highlighted in that CBOs felt that they had to “find their own community contacts” and made no mention of a BCU community safety team that may be able to assist them in their role.
  - ❖ Officers were frustrated by the lack of support and understanding from some of the larger retailers. They spoke of a feeling of being used more and more to combat store theft when in fact their remit is much wider. They also felt that the courts do not fully support their efforts in relation to prolific priority offenders (PPOs) and this appeared to be an issue of some concern for them.

## Performance against operational targets

27. The vision of Warwickshire Police is to make Warwickshire “*the safest place to be*”. Southern area BCU priorities for 2005/2006 towards the vision are to deliver improved performance and greater public reassurance with particular regard to reducing all crime (with particular emphasis on domestic burglary and vehicle crime); increasing the sanction detection rate for all crime (with a particular emphasis on domestic burglary, vehicle crime and violent crime) and increasing the number of offenders charged, reported or cautioned for **supplying** of heroin and cocaine; charged, reported, cautioned for **possession** of heroin/crack cocaine.
28. Overall comparative performance information for 2005/2006 was not available at the time of the inspection, but comparative performance for this BCU against operational targets is available for 2004/2005 and is detailed below in several tables, charts and commentary. This information is useful to indicate how the BCU is likely to perform in some of its current priority areas.
29. BCU performance data is available for all BCUs throughout England and Wales. To allow useful and fair comparison of certain performance indicators, similar BCUs are grouped together into ‘most similar groups’ (known as MSBCU) based, in general, on similar socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Figure 1, below, shows BCU performance in relation to crime reduction from April 2004 to March 2005 compared with the same period last year.

*Figure 1 Crime Reduction Performance (April 2004 to March 2005)*

<i>Crime type</i>	<i>Number of offences</i>	<i>Offence per 1000 pop/h 'hold</i>	<i>MSBCU family average</i>	<i>Rank in MSBCU family</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Total Crime	17471	72.46	80.01	6 out of 15	<b>-4.50%</b>
Domestic <sup>1</sup> Burglary	922	9.00	10.02	8 out of 15	<b>-20.24%</b>
Robbery	109	0.45	0.53	8 out of 15	<b>-29.68%</b>
Vehicle Crime	2447	10.15	9.86	11 out of 15	<b>-4.71%</b>
Violent Crime	2975	12.34	15.95	2 out of 15	<b>-3.82%</b>

*Source – Home Office data*

30. It can be seen that year on year total crime has fallen by 4.5%. Trend analysis indicates that the fall in crime has been constant both in the short and long-term and Southern area BCU is reducing crime at around the same rate as the MSBCU average. At the end of 2004/05 Southern BCU was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the MSBCU group.
31. Details for specific crime areas are:
- Domestic burglary has fallen by 20% year on year and the reduction has been consistent throughout the last 12 months with the BCU improving at the same rate as the MSBCU average. Southern BCU’s level of domestic burglary is just below the MSBCU average and for the full year 2004/05 Southern BCU was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of 15 in the MSBCU group.
  - Robbery levels have fallen by almost 30% from the previous year and are below the MSBCU average. The BCU has made significant reductions throughout 2004/05 and the BCU is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in the MSBCU group. Robbery is not a high volume crime in southern Warwickshire and it is therefore more susceptible to large percentage changes.
  - Vehicle crime has fallen by over 4% year on year and current trends indicate that the fall in crime has been constant both in the short and long-term. Southern BCU is reducing vehicle crime at about the same rate as the MSBCU average. However,

<sup>1</sup> Domestic burglary figures are calculated per 1000 household as opposed to population

vehicle crime remains above the MSBCU average and at the end of 2004/05 the area was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in the MSBCU group.

- Violent crime levels are below the MSBCU average and have fallen by 3.82% from the previous year, but the latest trend data indicates that violent crime may now be rising slightly. Over the last year the MSBCU average has continued to rise and Southern BCU remains below the MSBCU average ranked 2 out of 15 in the MSBCU group.

32. Figure 2, below, shows BCU performance in relation to crime detection from April 2004 to March 2005 compared with the same period last year.

*Figure 2 Crime Investigation Performance (April 2004 – March 2005)*

<i>Crime type</i>	<i>Total detections</i>	<i>Detection rate (%)</i>	<i>MSBCU family average</i>	<i>Rank in MSBCU family</i>	<i>% pt Change in detection rate</i>
Total Crime	4804	27.50%	28.57%	11 out of 15	<b>+0.80% pts</b>
Domestic Burglary	326	35.36%	17.20%	2 out of 15	<b>+12.00% pts</b>
Robbery	31	28.44%	31.91%	12 out of 15	<b>+4.57% pts</b>
Vehicle Crime	392	16.02%	10.75%	4 out of 15	<b>+4.06% pts</b>
Violent Crime	1850	62.18%	60.02%	5 out of 15	<b>+2.53% pts</b>

*Source – Home Office data*

33. It can be seen that year on year the total crime detection rate has remained relatively stable rising by 0.8% points and is below the MSBCU average. Long term trends suggest that the detection rate has been improving over the last six months whilst the most recent data suggests that this improvement has now levelled out.
34. Details for specific crime areas are:
- The Southern BCU has, for the full year 04/05, the second highest domestic burglary detection rate and has improved by 12% points year on year. The detection rate of 35% is well above the MSBCU average of 17%.
  - The robbery detection rate has risen by 4.6% over the last 12 months, yet remains slightly below the MSBCU average. For the full year 2004/05 the area was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of 15 in the MSBCU group. Again these figures relate to a relatively small number of offences.
  - The vehicle crime detection rate has risen by over 4% points year on year and is above the MSBCU average. The BCU is currently detecting 16% of all vehicle crimes whilst the MSBCU average is 11%. Southern BCU is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of 15 in the MSBCU group.
  - Year on year, the violent crime detection rate has risen by over 2.5% points and is currently above the MSBCU average, fifth highest in the MSBCU group. The trend of the violent crime detection rate suggests that the rate of improvement is now starting to slow.
35. Overall the Southern area is to be congratulated for recording significant reductions in crime for last year (2004/05), together with a slight increase in the overall detection rate (0.8%) and some significant increases in specific offence categories.
36. The inspection team was informed that the BCU is apparently on track to deliver offences brought to justice targets and there is an action plan in place to deliver overall sanction detection rate targets. An example from that action plan is that a sergeant will specifically focus on priority offenders in custody to ensure all detection opportunities are taken.
37. The BCU has a devolved revenue budget for 2004/05 of approximately £11,9M, an increase of 4.4% on the previous year, but variations in the initial allocation due to resource changes cannot be controlled by the BCU. This potential variation of the devolved budget is causing uncertainty for the BCU senior management team (SMT) and making directorship of the BCU difficult to say the least. The commander is concerned that he has to take on more police

officer recruits than he would wish. This situation has led to a position in which he has limited control over the financial constraints that this places upon the BCU budget.

38. The inspection team noted that the situation has been recognised by chief officers, with an overspend for 2003/2004 'written off' by the Police Authority and a review ordered by the new DCC. Unfortunately the overspend is once again building up and is projected to be £187k for 2005/2006.
39. The inspection team was given evidence of the impact of recovery measures instigated by the BCU such as loss of police staff posts and would concur with the BCU commander's view that performance is holding up but would question how long that situation can be sustained. One quote heard by the team was "people will muck in but there is a limit".
40. The inspection team must point out that during the Northern area inspection in May 2004, the HMIC team was informed that the Chief Constable was instigating a review into devolved budgets. As a result no recommendation on this topic was formulated by HMIC at that time. However given the impact on the BCU outlined above, it must be recommended that the BCU commander should, as soon as possible, seek to achieve a position of devolved revenue budget certainty for his BCU.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

**It is recommended that the BCU commander should, as soon as possible, seek to achieve a position of devolved revenue budget certainty for his BCU.**

#### **Accountability mechanisms and performance management**

41. The BCU commander has very regular formal and informal contact with chief officers. He is directly accountable to the ACC (operations) and personal development review (PDR) objectives relating to BCU performance are set for him. Current PDR objectives are sanctioned detections; citizen focus; devolved budget plus other personal issues. He describes having good working relations with chief officers using terms - "very supportive"; "force directors are inclusive" and comments that the Chief Constable "has worked hard to raise morale". The Force holds a weekly meeting of chief superintendents with the two assistant chief constables (operations and support). There is also a quarterly review of performance using Iquanta data (data available nationally on the performance of police forces) in addition to what is described as "regular open dialogue". The inspection team was not made aware of a wider examination of the performance of support units.
42. Internal to the BCU, performance is reviewed at management meetings. One such meeting is where the commander meets with the superintendent (operations), and the personnel and finance managers every Monday. Although not raised as an issue by anyone during inspection, the commander may wish to consider if the weekly command team meeting exclusion of the district chief inspectors is appropriate. There is a more formal senior management meeting every month and attendance includes the commander, superintendent (operations), DCI, district chief inspectors, personnel manager, finance manager and the media relations officer. The media relations officer is an SMT member but does not direct resources.
43. There is a broader management team meeting every six weeks, which are minuted and follow set agendas.
44. The BCU commander or superintendent is not prescriptive in how individual staff and/or teams are held to account for performance and specific arrangements are left to individual commanders to monitor and drive their team's performance. Despite the lack of a formal

mechanism below chief inspector level the inspection team was satisfied that there was a regular and robust review of performance by the superintendent and respective team leaders.

45. The superintendent operations is held to account by the commander cascading PDR objectives from his PDR. He in turn holds district commanders accountable on a daily basis by a daily meeting (for example they can be set a target of maintaining an average of 2.2 burglaries per day; daily arrests figures and specific detection rates).
46. Other specific points on accountability were:
  - NIM plays a part with the T&CG meeting (see later for more detail) ‘touching on a performance update’. Daily tasking meetings examine district performance as outlined above.
  - Community teams, CBOs and beat managers feel accountable to the local public via public meetings.
  - There was clear accountability within the CID, with all staff understanding what they are accountable for.
47. Individual sanctioned detections per month targets are set for all operational officers, but this has caused some concerns amongst reactive staff and is worthy of consideration in that they feel their work in arresting the suspect does not count towards individual performance target achievement.
48. The inspection team was pleased to note that the BCU has set aside two days in September for leadership ‘away-days’. The SMT, inspectors and sergeants attend and it indicates a commitment to developing leadership.
49. A system for the recognition of good work is in place, allowing the SMT to identify such work from various sources and includes the identification of the “top 10” performing staff who in the week prior to inspection received BCU Commander commendations. The inspection team was pleased to see an awards panel making decisions regarding rewards and last year Stratford won the National Probationer of the Year award.

## Reassurance and Visibility

50. In its “Southern Area policing priorities and style” document for 2005-2006, the BCU sets out how it intends to take forward reassurance including the development of community policing crime fighting teams and community local action teams. The BCU currently has 50 community beat officers (CBOs) and the recent resource review challenged this number, but the present view of the SMT is to continue with the CBO programme. The BCU wants to develop the role further – into more of a crime-fighting stance with younger officers. The problem solving work is co-ordinated by action plans for the four community teams that mirror council wards working alongside identified councillors at Stratford district. Warwick district has one such team at Brunswick that is acting as a pilot for that District. The teams include special constables and police community support officers (PCSOs).
51. The inspection team met, in the main, a very enthusiastic and positive group of PCSOs who appeared well integrated and appropriately tasked.
52. The SMT has recognised some developments are required for PCSOs and a current review is being conducted and led by headquarters staff. The BCU commander may wish to consider points raised with the inspection team:
  - Some inconsistencies in their use in that some were clearly part of a team whilst others were a little more detached.
  - It would appear that even some community sergeants, who are their team leaders, are unsure of the role of PCSOs and further marketing may be needed.

- There are inconsistencies in their training. Some ongoing training was being provided via the supervisor at Leamington, whilst some felt that ongoing training needed to be improved.
  - Other officers are not aware of their role and there is a lack of deployment on occasions by the communications room.
  - They were inconsistent about recording details on STORM (computerised command and control system) about incidents they encountered.
  - There were some inconsistencies in the recognition of good work.
  - Problems with not enough uniform and difficulties with uniform procurement.
  - PCSOs themselves do not see the need for a separate supervisor role and are confused about who is their boss.
  - Overall there is a need for some form of communication meeting/structure to raise the issues and ensure consistency across the BCU.
53. The BCU media liaison officer attends morning daily tasking and provides good press coverage to weekly papers. There is a small demand from HQ for her work and results are awaited (apparently for some time) from a recent review. The SMT's view is that they would like the post holder to be more proactive, but it is apparent that currently there is great demand of a reactive nature that is limiting her pro-activity.

### Intelligence-led policing

54. The BCU produces a strategic assessment and control strategy in accordance with the National Intelligence Model (NIM) and the NIM is followed by the BCU for its Tasking and Co-ordinating (T&CG) with meetings held on a fortnightly basis, chaired by the superintendent (operations).
55. It is clear that a substantial amount of BCU activity is driven through the NIM and that CDRP plans are taken into account when setting the strategic direction of the BCU. The inspection team attended a well-managed T&CG, chaired by the superintendent (operations). Incomplete actions were challenged and tasked out for an update to be brought to the next meeting. There was CDRP representative involvement, which was positive. However there were no bids for resources from attendees through the chair of the meeting and new targets were adopted without discussion, but it does appear that a pre T&CG meeting process resolves that aspect. District commanders attend the meeting, but no sector inspectors were in attendance. Overall it was a positive T&CG meeting, well run and clearly contributing to directing resources within the BCU.
56. The inspection team noted the following positive aspects to dealing with intelligence on this BCU:
- There were encouraging comments on the outputs from the dedicated source handling unit with positive views regarding the new detective inspector's influence.
  - There was evidence of 'hot tasking' of intelligence providing results for the BCU.
  - There was praise for the skills and services of the analysts.
  - There is not a BCU proactive resource task-able at T&CG meeting, but the superintendent (operations) stated "we are blessed with chief inspectors who understand the needs of the BCU".
  - District proactive teams were formed on an ad-hoc basis as and when there was an identified need, but are now formed on a more permanent and structured basis.
57. The following is evidence of the need for development in relation to intelligence:
- Detective constables feel that intelligence packages are not regularly available to enable proactive work by them.
  - BCU staff described intelligence as being mainly about drugs to the exclusion of other offences.

- Uniform constables outlined the need for quality intelligence.
- There are variations in how briefings occur. Supervisors stated that important tasks were given to staff verbally and results “picked up” the following morning at the daily meeting. There was agreement that this was not satisfactory.
- The apparent lack of use of the force intelligence management system (IMS) and there is no management information available on intelligence log submissions.
- The BCU intelligence unit has suffered high level of abstraction and is distributed to two sites, which reduces resilience.
- BCU intelligence staff are spending a high proportion of their time sanitising logs.
- BCU intelligence staff reiterated the above aspects and impressed the inspection team with their openness about the issues.

58. It must be recommended that the BCU commander ensures the most appropriate systems are in place for relevant intelligence gathering and handling on the BCU, which includes the provision of relevant packages; proper briefings; appropriate staffing levels to handle intelligence and an ability of staff to use the IMS for submission of logs, interrogation of the system and feedback to officers on logs submitted.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

**It is recommended that the BCU commander ensures the most appropriate systems are in place for intelligence gathering and handling on the BCU, which includes the provision of relevant packages; proper briefings; appropriate staffing levels to handle intelligence and an ability of staff to use the IMS for submission of logs, interrogation of the system and feedback to officers on logs submitted.**

#### Crime Investigation and recording practices

59. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) profile for the BCU consists of three detective inspector posts (DI), one in intelligence and one at each district, with detective sergeants (DS) and detective constables (DC) posts also at each district.
60. The detective chief inspector has an area focus and links with the superintendent (operations) to oversee performance of the BCU on crime matters. The post does not line manage DIs.
61. Detective inspectors are line managed by district chief inspectors and they meet with them every morning. It is apparent that the two territorial DIs have a good relationship with each other and good relations with their respective sector inspectors. Good relationships between CID and other staff were also evidenced, for example, sector inspectors particularly praised CID support as “excellent”. BCU uniform staff described CID staff as being prepared to “go beyond what is expected” and there were other very positive comments regarding the support available to front line officers – particularly from Stratford CID. There was evidence of CID and uniform staff working closely on drug operations and the inspection team was told of a crack house being targeted after only three days of opening due to uniform/CID liaison.
62. The inspection team heard positive comments regarding the role of the prisoner processing unit that consists of a DS plus 10 constables. The unit is apparently delivering the majority of BCU detections and there was praise for the skills and enthusiasm of the sergeant. The focus is on prolific offenders and the unit has produced some good TIC (offences taken into consideration by offenders charged with other offences) results. The unit deals with a significant volume of detainees and working with the force criminal justice unit is proving to be a strong partnership. Another significant strength is the interaction with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the sergeant in charge of the unit stated – “I value the relationship”. Increasing resource availability and minimising abstraction from the team could

develop the unit's initiative. Another positive aspect was the attachment of probationer constables who apparently found it extremely beneficial, but these attachments are reducing due to resource demand. It was felt that opportunities to develop officer skills were therefore being lost.

63. A DS is currently responsible for a pilot to challenge /support officers to achieve a resolution even in cases that are not suitable for a formal charge. There is an identified awareness/training need for staff to understand that there are other resolutions than a charge to achieve a detection, for example fixed penalty notice or caution. It was felt that this gate keeper role could be extended to provide 16hrs cover for the BCU.
64. The good relationships with CPS and the prisoner processing unit contrasted with pre-charge advice problems outlined by other officers. Some officers expressed concern with the level of cases where the CPS had decided there was insufficient evidence to charge. There was a perception that this may be due to a desire to meet performance targets. This perception may be due to a lack of understanding of the way CPS decides whether or not to proceed with a case. This perception needs consideration by the BCU commander.
65. BCU staff believe that level 2 support for crime enquiries (enquiries that cross BCU boundaries) from HQ was poor, particularly the provision of a covert surveillance capability.
66. The inspection team met a generally positive team of a sergeant and six officers (although only five in post) that provide ANPR facilities for the BCU. The officers are satisfied with their equipment provision and are able to focus on their core role with minimum abstraction. The sergeant however is regularly called to cover other roles (over 25% of his time). The unit does not have any directed deployment strategy and it is left to the sergeant to decide which one of the three identified sites the unit covers at any particular time. There is no involvement in the T&CG process and staff state they have very little involvement with BCU management although the sergeant states he does have access to the SMT if necessary. The staff of the unit felt that the leadership skills shown by the sergeant are far in excess of that required. They were concerned that should he ever leave post, the unit would suffer. There is also an issue around vehicles for the unit being 'end of life' or fleet vehicles that are unsuitable for the environment.
67. The inspection team was told that some IT software packages are cumbersome. The crime recording system is cited as an obvious problem and of concern to just about all staff. They state there are data inaccuracies; system is ineffective; details have to be inputted from paper and any search capability is limited. BCU analysts spend approximately 50% of their time on collecting data from the various systems before they commence the work that requires their skills. There were positive comments regarding crime desk staff being helpful but held back by the poor system. They were concerned that they have to constantly chase officers at the end of the month for crime reports and the situation is getting worse.
68. The Force HR computerised system is described as good but is resource intensive. The BCU has bid for an extra half post and was awaiting an update at the time of inspection.
69. Sergeants told the inspection team of their frustration of the blanket policy of attendance at all reports of vehicle crime, which had not been rationalised to them. They assumed it related to quality of service and increased detection issues, but pointed to some public criticism that officers were wasting their time visiting their particular crime.

#### Use of forensic, DNA and scientific techniques

70. A forensic audit was introduced by HMIC as part of a force or BCU inspection from January 2002 to ensure a standard approach to the evaluation of scientific support services, the effective use of resources and to identify good practice. The methodology of the inspection of

Southern area BCU was to examine the management and recording of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) samples, fingerprints and the procedure of monitoring and dealing with crime scene identifications as well as identifying any links to the intelligence system and crime analysis.

71. For this BCU, the inspection team examined the creation of target packages and the monitoring of them until arrest. Presently a notification of a forensic identification (DNA or fingerprint) is made to the HQ Forensic Development Unit. A brief intelligence package is produced that contains offender details; forensic details; results of a PNC check and results of intelligence systems checks. If the identification is a BCU priority crime, an email is generated to the BCU. BCU staff are then able to dictate how much work is carried out on the package or that it should be dealt with in 'quick time' to facilitate arrest.
72. The package (hard copy) is then forwarded to the BCU crime desk DS who allocates it to the most appropriate resource. Arrest deadlines have been recently introduced and at this time are priority crimes 5 days and non priority crimes 14 days. Progress is monitored by a spreadsheet held by the crime desk DS and at the T&CG meeting.
73. The inspection team was very impressed with the proposed new forensic outcomes tracking system (F.O.T.S) being developed together with Avon and Somerset and Gwent police forces. It should deliver electronic packages that will be developed and with the officer in the case within minutes of notification of an identification. The packages will be comprehensive and include analysis results. There will be an ability to monitor package progress in 'real time' and provide Home Office statistical returns.
74. The inspection team examined the process for ascertaining if a DNA sample is required from a prisoner. The process is that when a prisoner is presented to the custody sergeant, a direct link from the computerised custody system (NSPIS) to the PNC identifies if a sample has already been taken. At the time of inspection the BCU was taking part in a trial of taking DNA samples from all prisoners arrested for a recordable offence regardless of outcome. This trial had just started and had not been evaluated.
75. The BCU used to take DNA samples only from those persons arrested for 'trigger' recordable offences such as burglary. This situation was due to technical problems with inputting data onto PNC for those persons released without further action.
76. The force judicial service department, at the request of HMIC, conducted an audit of persons arrested in April 2005 to ascertain if all possible opportunities to take DNA samples were realised. The results showed that whilst the 'trigger' offence policy was being adhered to, 12 persons in one week arrested for non trigger offences did not have a sample taken despite an opportunity to do so. This equates to approximately 550 missed opportunities per year for the South alone.
77. The BCU is strongly urged, through judicial services, to ensure that every opportunity is realised to take DNA samples and find a long-term solution to the present technical problems.
78. The storage arrangements and continuity of DNA samples once taken was generally sufficient. The inspection team was pleased to note that there are plans to provide secure storage in a lockable freezer with a tamper/temperature alarm and that continuity records are under review as presently the BCU does not record that DNA 1 samples are removed from freezer and by whom. At present samples are collected twice per week, which is adequate.
79. The inspection team met a very enthusiastic group of scenes of crime officers (SOCOs). They are a Force resource but based at Leamington Spa. They are tasked by an incident tag list on 'STORM' (computerised command and control system) and stated that they are appropriately 'hot tasked' by radio if an incident is notified whilst they are out of the station. They currently attend all vehicle crime which they state is "demanding". They described their vehicles as

good (being replaced soon and will be liveried to support high visibility). There are some issues for them:

1. They described officer crime scene awareness as, quotes - “not very good”; “based on what they see on TV” and identified a need for further training.
2. They believe that there had been deterioration in crime scene preservation. They stated that they used to have probationer constables on attachment, but this stopped several years ago because of a lack of front line resources.
3. They stated that they did not have the capacity to further market themselves, but there are however some inputs to probationer training.
4. Accommodation and storage facilities were described as poor with a small office and examinations occurring on staff desks. Storage space is also limited. SOCO staff interviewed felt that being HQ staff they were perhaps at the back of the queue for accommodation.
5. They have no access to IMS but stated that this was coming. They stated that they were able to input intelligence through liaison with intelligence staff or CID, although this was not confirmed by the units concerned.

### Managing demand

80. The Force has recently performed a best value review of resource deployment and has instigated a resource allocation formula (RAF). Application of the RAF during a review of resources in 2004 has led to a restructure for the BCU in terms of uniform officer deployment. There are now teams of response officers working out of each of the two districts who apparently maintain a 24 hour division-wide response capability and there are community policing teams (CPT) in various areas of the BCU. The creation of a new sergeant post for the CPTs signals the BCU's commitment to this approach and dividends have been seen in areas such as Studley, Lillington, Packmores and Brunswick, where the introduction of CPTs has, according to the BCU, reduced demand.
81. Initiatives such as the 'Enhanced policing initiative' and flexible working arrangements by all staff, including the application of a single crewing policy, help manage demand. The enhanced policing initiative provides uniform officers to deal with town centre problems during the evenings at the weekend. Most officers work in non-response or office jobs as a norm and it is unlikely that many of them would patrol in uniform in their usual roles.
82. The Force operates a cadre uniform patrol inspector scheme that provides force-wide cover on a 24/7 basis. They provide control room leadership and a management overview of BCU response resources including support for those officers ranging from normal management issues when no sector inspector is available, to critical incident management. They are also allocated specific roles when not acting as a control room or critical incident inspector such as directorship of the roads policing unit (RPU) and other projects in support of the division. There would appear to be good interaction with sector inspectors and a policy that cadre inspectors call on sector inspectors after two hours of dealing with a critical incident is rarely implemented.
83. The inspection team met special constabulary officers who portrayed themselves as very enthusiastic and a professional unit who obviously enjoy their role. They were able to relate to being used in a range of roles and in some innovative ways for example working with community teams, being trained as response drivers and used to review CCTV evidence. Uniform sergeants spoke highly of the BCU Special Constabulary, were particularly praiseworthy of the special officers at Alcester, but were concerned that numbers are apparently reducing. It is obvious that the specials are well respected by colleagues on the BCU and spoke of receiving regular thanks and recognition for their work.
84. Given all the above features and the constant theme from this BCU of lack of resources it was so disappointing to hear that the current establishment is around 40 with about a 60% effective

contribution from that number. BCU special officers were themselves able to point to possible initiatives to enable increasing and retaining an effective establishment such as the appointment of a full time co-ordinator and more flexible training. The Force will be aware that nationally there are many initiatives used that will increase this very valuable resource at little cost. A BCU review lead by the support inspector into the Special Constabulary is welcome.

85. A consistent theme from staff on this BCU, including management level is one of not enough resources for front line duties. Despite issues raised with the inspection team which indicate efforts to manage demand, the following dictates consideration for an overall strategy to manage demand:
1. Sector inspectors described reactive staffing levels as critical.
  2. The BCU resource meeting is held once per month and examines sickness levels, abstractions and staffing issues. It is clear that district commanders believe that they need to constantly defend their resource levels to prevent further abstractions from headquarters and other departments. They operate a 25% abstraction rate but this can go up on occasions to nearer 70%. The BCU has recently taken resource issues to ACPO in order, quote - "to see how the pain can be shared amongst support functions" and to focus on the recuperative/restrictive duty issues highlighted later.
  3. There is a consistent and fairly high level of open incidents across the BCU (20 to 30 for one district are apparently not unusual). Staff interviewed believed that there were occasions where the police response to the more routine enquiry was not as prompt as they would have liked due to demands upon them.
  4. It would appear that often 'rest day' overtime is spent to achieve minimum staffing levels and the inspection team encountered this being done during the inspection visit.
  5. Managers state that pro-activity has come at a cost to reactive teams and other officers believe that a review of policing style needs to take place. Until recently resources were placed into pro-activity but now they feel the priority is to resource the CPTs only. They believe that the Force needs to strike a balance. They also believe that a review of all the Force and BCU support functions needs to take place to ensure that all staff are still working to force objectives and if not are returned to frontline policing.
  6. At present the BCU has to force or persuade officers to take on the community beat officer (CBO) role and they are often only in post a short time. This is generally a great contrast with other BCUs the inspection team has visited. There was an acknowledgement of the need to attract people to the role. There is a CBO training course but there was some concern over the value of the course currently being delivered.
  7. It is clear that prisoners have to be conveyed large distances which in turn is impacting on resource levels left on sectors.
  8. When asked about the resource allocation model, staff perception was that it only applied to front line officers; to them, the only science was the number of incidents/population etc with no sophisticated analysis of performance management or community requirements, just a response to political pressure.
  9. The inspection team was told of a lack of sergeants and hence direct supervision (a supervision review two years ago apparently reduced the numbers).
  10. Reactive sergeants stated that they are often working under the minimum staffing levels and feel that CBOs try to deal with quality of service issues but, quote "keep getting battered for performance".
  11. Success for a reactive team was described as "keeping the lid on".
  12. Reactive staff spoke of high reactive demands but commented "It's not all bad – we are short of resources – but wouldn't change the shifts".
  13. It is clear that beat support units suffer high abstraction rates to backfill reactive demands.
  14. The above-mentioned situation with the Special Constabulary.
  15. Community sergeants estimate that they spend 50% of their time covering reactive shifts. Community sergeants stated that there was still some work to do within their teams to build CBOs into team players and not just focusing on their particular beat.

- There are some variations in the CPTs – some work together as a team and some work different shifts and hence the team ethos is more difficult to build.
16. Although a force resource any demand strategy needs to take account of the support available from the RPU. RPU's current abstractions are compounded by the fact that authorised firearms officers (AFOs) are trained on rostered rest days and recover the time as and when. This means that when the unit has more than minimum strength, people request time off. The overall way cover is provided also seems inefficient as day cover is provided by one area base with night cover provided by the second area base. An area outside the base providing cover is generally not patrolled unless an incident draws the unit to that area.
  17. Front office staff are completing functions usually performed by other departments that are closed out of office hours or due to sickness or abstractions. Whilst this may be appropriate they felt that there was often a lack of consultation or notification that functions or duties need to be covered. Front office staff were also concerned that police issues or complaints were referred to them when there were insufficient reactive staff to deal with them.
  18. Officers perceive that there are not enough vehicles and sergeants stated that a lack of vehicles prevented more single crewing.
86. Whilst the inspection team appreciates the BCU had been through a month of intensive training for the new radio system (Airwave), the issues raised are more long term and considering all the above features, the inspection team must advocate that the BCU commander considers an overall strategy to manage demand, which includes promotion of the Special Constabulary.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

**It is recommended that the divisional commander introduces a strategy to manage demand which includes increasing the numbers of what is already an effective Special Constabulary.**

## **Leadership**

### **BCU Management team**

87. The BCU commander has 29 years service and has been in command at Southern area BCU since 2001. He joined the Warwickshire Police in 1975 and has served in various parts of the force area including being staff officer to the Chief Constable, strategic development at headquarters, uniform roles in various ranks throughout Warwickshire and head of force operational support.
88. The Superintendent (operations manager) joined Cheshire Constabulary in 1978 and carried out various roles including duties with the force firearms support unit. He transferred to West Mercia Constabulary in 1994 on promotion and again on promotion to Warwickshire Police in 2001. He took up his current post in July 2003.
89. The detective chief inspector (DCI) has 18 years service, the first seven of which were with Lancashire Police. He joined Warwickshire Police in 1994 as a sergeant and has served in various parts of the force area including being staff officer to the Chief Constable. He has been performing the role of area crime manager as a chief inspector since 2004.
90. The chief inspector (Stratford district commander) has been in post since September 2003, having previously served as a chief inspector as head of community safety. He joined

Warwickshire Police in April 1980 and has served in many units of the Force including being a firearms officer.

91. The chief inspector (Warwick district commander) has been in post since November 2003, having previously been in the role on a temporary basis for six months from July 2002. He joined Warwickshire Police in 1986 and has served as a uniform officer in various roles and as the force training manager as a chief inspector.
92. The area personnel manager initially joined Warwickshire Police in May 1989 as an administrative manager and following a period in private industry, returned to the Force in November 1998. She became the Southern area personnel manager in September 1999 and is also assists with force level HR work for example reviewing force personnel policies as part of a team.
93. The area finance manager is a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and has worked in the public sector in various areas of the country including London and Surrey. She joined Warwickshire Police as finance manager for the Southern area and judicial services in 2002 from Surrey County Council.
94. The senior management team has the direct services of an inspector in the post of strategic support inspector. He joined Warwickshire Police in 1977 and has served in all main stations in the south of the force area.
95. The inspection team was told that all members of SMT feel able to fully contribute to strategic and tactical decisions and the current team has been together for about 18 months. It is obvious that this has brought about stability, which has been contrasted by BCU staff to the previous situation of several temporary post holders.
96. There are indicators of the need for consideration of some overall structural change on this BCU:
  1. The inspection team rarely encounters an added tier of command in any current BCU (the only one for this inspection team being the Northern area BCU in this Force). All possible barriers to the demise of the sub-division of the BCU structure have been overcome in other areas and could be models for this BCU. It is usual to see some resource efficiencies with a flattening of the command structure and the potential for such efficiencies can be clearly identified in this report.
  2. The above described aspects about intelligence and the inspection team has seen sophisticated community safety bureau structures in other BCUs which include the community safety team and intelligence unit, helping ensure that community intelligence is gathered via valuable inter agency links. The need for a community safety bureau style approach linked to intelligence was highlighted in terms of the BCU's approach to the new licensing act. We heard of an example where an officer has recently established a pub watch scheme with no interaction/support/guidance from a licensing expert.
  3. Lack of resources in community safety was a general view and the lack of knowledge of the role has been raised earlier in this report.
  4. The above described situation with managing demand and the changes that may be necessary to facilitate that requirement.
  5. Ideally, BCU staff would like one more youth inclusion officer as at present one post covers the whole of Warwickshire. It is appreciated that this is a force resource at present, but BCU staff have received some negative feedback through lack of resources in this area.
  6. There are different structures on the districts to deal with issues – burglary is one example – there is a burglary team on one district (Warwick); with offences dealt with by 'normal' CID at Stratford and the two areas are within ½ % detection rate of each other. However the inspection team was convinced by officers' comments that the quality of service received by a victim of burglary is different between districts with a more consistent service provided by the dedicated team.

7. The likely integration of the two CDRPs must be a factor to consider in terms of the retention of two districts for this BCU. In effect, the BCU could have two district chief inspectors at the joint CDRP meeting referring to different district approaches to the same issue, when the two CDRPs will have a joint, identical approach.
  8. The inspection team heard extensive evidence that the current district structure duplicates meetings (including daily and two-weekly T&CG meetings), gives different levels of service and obviously requires more resources than one integrated BCU (a chief inspector post could be saved as minimum).
  9. The BCU commander and superintendent operations see the value of a dedicated unit to strategically review performance. Quote - “we need a performance analyst – that is the way to go”.
  10. Many staff referred to a BCU proactive capability and rationalisation of resources as a result of the scrapping of districts could give that unit and head it with a DI.
  11. There is evidence throughout this report of current structures not quite ‘hitting the button’ in terms of messages being conveyed to staff. There were several examples of staff unaware of issues and decisions for example the non replacement of specific staff to assist balance the budget had not be rationalised to staff.
  12. There appears to be no overall planning for administrative logistics for the division. Staff refer to people being moved to Leamington to form a squad or current squad numbers are increased and there is no plan for the necessary office space. The inspection team was told that office space at Stratford seems more plentiful. There was evidence of a lack of clarity in terms of the general administrative roles for vehicle maintenance, health and safety and building maintenance. Roles appeared to be within separate departments at HQ.
97. It is recommended that the divisional commander seeks to increase strategic effectiveness and effective operational resources by a change in the BCU’s structure with particular reference to the added tier of command that exists in this BCU.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

**It is recommended that the BCU commander seeks to increase strategic effectiveness and effective operational resources by a change in the BCU’s structure with particular reference to the added tier of command that exists in this BCU.**

98. Building stock of the BCU is seen as adequate by staff, but re-decoration was given as a current requirement. Front receptions are described as good. There are some pending building developments – in November 2005, Leamington moves to another building to facilitate the creation of a new Criminal Justice centre, to be opened in 2008.
99. The BCU commander can shape resources but has a very limited capacity to influence the overall number of resources and his ability to succession plan is limited. He is able to move staff around the BCU but not able to have input on promotion, which is done at headquarters.

#### **Self-review and learning**

100. The BCU provided the inspection team with details of several items which indicate the BCU’s commitment to self review and learning. Some of these issues are listed below:
- The command team have undertaken a Myers-Briggs analysis to help gain an understanding of their impact upon others.
  - For operational style development, police officers on the command team undertook a half-day session to understand interactions and motivation.

- In the past the BCU has undertaken an internal self inspection leading to a development action plan.
- Two evaluations of proactive capability have been carried out on the Warwick district twice in 18 months.
- The BCU lead the force first line supervision review. The BCU reviewed STORM closure codes for the Force which lead to improved performance.
- District action plans (via Sergeants' Forums) exist to help lead improvement.

101. Notwithstanding the good work already undertaken, the inspection team considers the basis for development of this BCU lies with the five recommendations, together with issues for management consideration contained in this report.

### Complaints against Police

102. Note to reader – BCU comparative data (MSBCU) and data provided by the BCU is being analysed at point of draft and will be included within the final report.
103. Whilst not an excessive figure, last year there were four internal grievances raised by staff and there is one being dealt with so far this year. Grievances may be an indicator of organisational health and the inspection team was told of the perception that the organisation is now challenging individuals who were previously in a comfort zone, which is to be seen in a positive light. One view is “people aren’t used to it and they think they are being treated differently”. The BCU commander may wish to reassure himself of the circumstances around the grievance situation.

### HR and diversity issues

104. BCU staff considered that they had excellent support from the current command team and praised them in general for their visible management and good communication. Particular mention was made of senior officer visible leadership via the Enhanced Policing Initiative (EPI). There was consistent praise for the SMT accessibility and open door policy, which extended to non-BCU staff, for example the youth inclusion officer was enthusiastic regarding his access to BCU line management and SMT. Police staff members interviewed felt valued by their team line management but were not sure if they were valued by senior managers because posts alongside them are taken away or not filled, they believe for financial reasons. (The financial aspect has been discussed earlier).
105. Several staff did not know why gaps in the police staff structure are not being filled and they stated that they just continue struggling with a continuous backlog of work. Those who attend the area consultation meetings (mentioned later) understood the full rationalisation and the SMT may have assumed that consulting with the attendees communicates the issues to the whole of the area. The inspection team evidence is that this is far from the case, even though the meetings are minuted.
106. Regular minuted formal consultative group meetings are held, which include Unison, Federation and other groups. Consultation style included the commander writing to all staff thanking them for last year’s performance and informing them of this year’s objectives. Staff liked the ‘Link Feedback’ system (intranet based consultation mechanism), but stated –quote “nothing gets answered”. The BCU has an internal newsletter posted on the Intranet every Friday and staff value its content. In other BCUs the press officer has constructed such documents utilising their relevant skills and removing the work from other officers. This is an issue that the commander may wish to consider.
107. The submission compliance rate for personal development review (PDRs) was 91% and clearly a considerable amount of work is involved in achieving this high level of performance.

There is a significant and robust process in place implemented and managed by the personnel manager. This seems to work with a final intervention if necessary by the divisional commander who has shown excellent support for the process. All PDR are quality assured by the Personnel Manager and if there is no direct link to area priorities, the PDR is returned for attention. All PDR's examined during the inspection were found to be focused on delivering performance objectives against the area plan (but see comment later on non crime objectives).

108. There were differing views from staff on the (PDRs) process. One supervisor was positive about the process in that she uses it to focus on quality of service and saw it as an opportunity for one to one discussions with her staff. This individual was the first to align policing objectives other than crime issues to PDRs. All police staff interviewed had had a PDR at some stage but there was a general feeling that it is done because it has to be done and some staff did not have a current PDR. It is generally felt that PDRs are completed as a performance indicator for the Force as opposed to a development process for the individual as training and development is rarely provided through the PDR process. Any PDR recorded needs are rarely met according to staff.
109. The current system is electronic although officers /staff are required to print off the forms to circulate them around appropriate supervisors and obtain signatures, which causes delays in submission. This will change in the near future with a new, more manageable and user friendly system upgrade.
110. The BCU rightly advocates that staff are allocated courses or attachments if they will be for the benefit of the BCU and individual. However, BCU staff saw attachments as impossible to achieve and it is perceived that there is a bar on attachments unless absolutely critical and that attachments are being refused due to abstraction rates on the front line. The commander may wish to consider marketing the rationale as described to the inspection team.
111. The inspection team heard mixed messages about Health and Safety. One view was that Warwickshire Police has not embraced Health and Safety, which was countered by being given details of the training that took place as a result of some compliance notices. There was a view that some managers took a proactive stance towards Health and Safety and this was countered by the view that some managers apparently consider that H&S issues are not in their domain and "should be dealt with by Health & Safety people". The BCU commander may wish to assess these mixed messages and establish the current situation with health and safety on the BCU and take any relevant action.
112. The BCU area training officer (ATO) was impressive with his enthusiasm, but there are issues for this BCU and Force on the subject of training:
  1. BCU staff consider that the Force needs to ensure that the training plan contributes to the policing plan and is not just a skills builder. The PDR system and completion of a yellow form is the mechanism to bid for individual training. HQ provides the vast majority of this type of training and therefore the yellow form goes to HQ training administration with just a supervisory signature. Training is prioritised by means of a league (line). If the need goes below the line it does not get done. The overall strategic training requirements for the BCU do not appear to be catered for within this system. HQ drives the process, but HQ training department is not responsible for the BCU's performance.
  2. Staff perceived that some officers are applying for and getting courses to 'tick boxes' for special priority payments (SPPs) and that in most cases they are not likely to use some of the skills they receive from the training. The inspection team understands that this situation is closely monitored and this perception may be emanating from a historic position but is worthy of consideration.
  3. Training to support BCU performance identified by managers has to be agreed by a training board and then provided by the area trainer. Although there were some good examples of that type of training, this provision can sometimes be difficult in that there are no prescriptive training days, resource availability is difficult and the provision of equipment and rooms is adhoc.

4. There is a great emphasis on distance learning, but this type of training is considered inappropriate by BCU staff for the vast majority of cases. It may be that this is because such inputs are not as effective as traditional training or that staff resist such training because extra effort is involved.
  5. Some views of staff were that the organisation currently does not develop its staff only maintain current skill levels or delivery mandatory training. Police staff were particularly critical of the training that they receive and believe that they were bottom of the pile when it came to allocation. As a consequence PDRs are not as valued in this respect.
  6. Uniform sergeants believe that training was – quote “in a mess – developmental needs are identified but not provided”. Constables described training as poor.
  7. Police staff met could not remember having any training other than mandatory training such as diversity training for, as they put it “over five years at least”. They were certainly not supportive of self-learning packages. This situation may emanate from the comments in paragraph 110 (training delivered that meet BCU and individual needs) but is worthy of consideration.
  8. There is other evidence of lack of training discussed previously in this report (crime scene awareness).
  9. Overall the inspection team has to comment that it has experienced much greater levels of resource commitment to divisional training in most other BCUs.
113. It is recommended that the BCU commander considers a proper training provision for the BCU with the relevant HQ commander/director and ensures - the overall strategic training requirements for the BCU are catered for; appropriate resource level including facilities; developmental needs are provided and the level of police staff training is reviewed.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

**It is recommended that the BCU commander considers a proper training provision for the BCU with the relevant HQ commander/director and ensures - the overall strategic training requirements for the BCU are catered for; appropriate resource level including facilities; developmental needs are provided and the level of police staff training is reviewed.**

114. BCU staff have undergone CRR training and the BCU follows the force strategy for diversity issues. The BCU has established a Race & Religion Review Panel.
115. Family friendly policies were evident within the BCU with staff feeling free to seek part- time employment, job sharing opportunities, career breaks and compassionate leave.

#### **Attendance management and sickness statistics**

116. For 2003/04 data shows the BCU to have performed very well in terms of sickness with 6.63 days lost per officer for that year compared with the MSBCU average of 9.72, and 10.6 days lost per police staff member compared with the MSBCU average of 10.73. The BCU has provided sickness statistics that indicate that to the end of March 2005, the BCU achieved a rate of 8.14 days per police officer against a force target of 9.5 for 2004/2005. For police staff the figures were 15.85 days per staff member against a force target of 10.8.
117. During inspection it was obvious that the BCU has a robust approach to absence management balanced with being prepared to be flexible and accommodate needs. The approach is to “monitor, monitor, monitor” and “we challenge absence”. Sickness is monitored at a structured area absence management meeting, which takes place on a monthly basis and is

based around the force attendance management policy. The meeting results in a significant number of actions (normally in excess of 30 per meeting) including memos to line managers for staff who have hit various 'trigger points', referral to occupational health, meetings with district commander/sector inspector and area personnel manager to consider further action or the withdrawal of the right to self certify sickness. The BCU commander may want to assure himself of the reasons for the increase in police staff sickness for 2004/2005 and that the good work of the area absence management meeting is able to put the BCU back on track.

118. The BCU commander may also wish to consider the issue of recuperative and restricted duties. BCU supervisory and managerial staff are readily aware of a culture that needs challenging. It was said "people believe they have a right after long term sickness absence to recuperative or restricted duties". Managers and supervisors state they have to challenge the FMA (force medical advisor) on occasions and believe that the approach is unbalanced with too much thought for the individual and too little for the service. Sector inspectors stated that there is a reoccurring theme of the FMA supporting fully what officers require with little consideration of the organisation. It was clear that other managers also believed this point of view and believe sickness management issues are masked by restricted and recuperative duties. In the view of the inspection team it is often that medical decisions cannot be fully discussed with supervisors and managers due to confidentiality reasons and this may be relevant in this case, but this perspective detailed by some managers needs to be examined and communicated.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The inspection team would wish to thank the command team for the warm welcome and provision of facilities to carry out the inspection. All staff and members of other agencies met by the inspection team reacted very positively to the process and are thanked for their co-operation. The inspection team would like to make particular mention of the liaison officer assigned by the BCU who did an excellent job of drawing together the necessary documentation, helping prepare the programme and was very flexible and adaptable for the inspection visit. The officer was a credit to the BCU and Force in the role he took on for HMIC.

The Southern area (BCU) covers the large geographical area of South Warwickshire, the majority of which is rural in nature and there is a population of approximately 247,900. There are 3 main towns of Warwick, Royal Leamington Spa and Stratford upon Avon with significant smaller towns and a number of variable sized villages. The BCU has significant seasonal increases in population due to the tourist trade with Warwick and Stratford being internationally renowned.

The area has excellent road and rail links (along with Coventry airport) and whilst this has benefits for the area's economy and tourism its close proximity to urban areas such as Birmingham and Coventry coupled with its easy access brings with it significant challenges in travelling criminality.

The area has recorded significant reductions in crime for the last year (2004/05). Overall crime is down by 4.5%, and there are impressive reductions in both burglary dwelling and robbery (20.24% and 29.68% respectively). Crime detections are good with a slight increase in the overall detection rate (0.8%) and increases in the detection rate of all KPIs and significant increases in burglary dwelling (12%). Violent crime detection rates are high at 62.18% (2/15 MSBCU). Overall the Southern area is to be congratulated for this performance level.

Flexibility in and certainty of budgetary provision generally supports good performance. The situation with this BCU is that the potential variation in the vacancy factor of the devolved budget is causing uncertainty and making direction setting of the BCU difficult to say the least.

Central to combating crime and anti social behaviour is the issue of intelligence and capability of staff to easily record and share information. The BCU commander should ensure all possible intelligence is being captured and it is put to best use by the BCU.

In order to deal with several issues about demands on resources, the commander should implement an overall strategy to manage demand, which includes enhancement of the Special Constabulary. Work is required on their recruitment and retention to further enhance the good service they currently provide the BCU.

This BCU has the potential to increase its effective operational resources by a change in its structures.

Staff of this BCU have experienced a lack of training and the overall strategy for training appears to be flawed. The commander is advised to seek a training provision appropriate to the needs of his division.

At this time the BCU is providing an effective policing service, but the HMIC inspection team considers that its continuation may be dependant on attention being paid to some key areas, which are:

- Achieving certainty of revenue budgetary position.
- That all possible intelligence is being captured and it is put to best use by the BCU.
- Implement an overall strategy to manage demand.
- Increase strategic effectiveness and effective operational resources by a change in BCU structures.
- Appropriate training.

## Summary of good practice

- Throughout this inspection there was evidence that the BCU is progressive in areas covered by national initiatives such as automatic number plate recognition (ANPR), the tackling alcohol related violence initiative, police community support officers (PCSOs – the first Force to utilise them outside London) and dispersal orders. The BCU is to be congratulated for its involvement in these issues.
- The CDRPs have a local authority employed officer responsible for coordinating efforts to obtain anti social behaviour orders (ASBOs) who was able to evidence an information/training package for that topic.
- The inspection team heard positive comments regarding the role of the prisoner processing unit which consists of a DS plus 10 constables.
- The inspection team was pleased to note that the BCU has set aside 2 days in September for leadership “away-days”. The SMT, inspectors and sergeants attend and it indicates a commitment to developing leadership.
- The inspection team was very impressed with the proposed new forensic outcomes tracking system (F.O.T.S) being developed together with Avon and Somerset and Gwent police forces. It should deliver electronic packages that will be developed and with the officer in the case within minutes of notification of an identification. The packages will be comprehensive and include analysis results. There will be an ability to monitor package progress in ‘real time’ and provide Home Office statistical returns.
- Special constables were able to relate to being used in a range of roles and in some innovative ways for example working with community teams, being trained as response drivers and used to review CCTV evidence.

## Issues for management consideration

- The BCU commander may wish to consider:
  - ❖ A concern by BCU staff that the new licensing legislation has been slow to be “picked up on” with a weakness in staff knowledge. This may be a perception that needs consideration as it was apparent that the BCU have made progress and is currently writing a policy, with responsibility for licensing to be placed within the BCU intelligence unit to provide an intelligence led approach. HMIC welcome this development.
  - ❖ Uniform sergeants felt that working with partnership agencies was the domain of community beat officers (CBOs) only. They felt that generally, reactive officers would, quote – “not have a clue regarding partnership processes”. The sergeants themselves had little knowledge of the work of the BCU’s community safety team and it is clear that there is a need for a marketing of the shared responsibility of partnership working and a clarification of the role of the community safety team with sergeants.
  - ❖ This rather silo thinking was also highlighted in that CBOs felt that they had to “find their own community contacts” and made no mention of a BCU community safety team that may be able to assist them in their role.
  - ❖ Officers were frustrated by the lack of support and understanding from some of the larger retailers. They spoke of a feeling of being used more and more to combat store theft when in fact their remit is much wider. They also felt that the courts do not fully support their efforts in relation to prolific priority offenders (PPOs) and this appeared to be an issue of some concern for them.
- Although not raised as an issue by anyone during inspection, the commander may wish to consider if the weekly command team meeting exclusion of the district chief inspectors is appropriate whilst they continue as an element of command.

- Individual sanctioned detections per month targets are set for all operational officers, but this has caused some concerns amongst reactive staff that the work they complete (because they 'hand the prisoner on' to other officers) will not be counted as an individual detection for themselves.
- The SMT has recognised some developments are required for PCSOs and a current review is being headed by headquarters. The BCU commander may wish to consider points raised with the inspection team:
  - ❖ Some inconsistencies in their use in that some were clearly part of a team whilst others were a little more detached.
  - ❖ It would appear that even some community sergeants, who are their team leaders, are unsure of the role of PCSOs and further marketing may be needed.
  - ❖ There are inconsistencies in their training.
  - ❖ Other officers are not aware of their role and there is a lack of deployment on occasions by the communications room.
  - ❖ They were inconsistent about recording details on STORM (computerised command and control system) about incidents they encountered.
  - ❖ There were some inconsistencies in the recognition of good work.
  - ❖ Problems with not enough uniform and difficulties with uniform procurement.
  - ❖ PCSOs themselves do not see the need for a separate supervisor role and are confused about who is their boss.
  - ❖ Overall there is a need for some form of communication meeting/structure to raise the issues and ensure consistency across the BCU.
- The BCU commander may wish to consider that increasing resource availability and minimising abstraction from the team could develop the prisoner processing unit initiative. Another positive aspect was the attachment of probationer constables who apparently found it extremely beneficial, but these attachments are reducing due to resource demand. It was felt that opportunities to develop officer skills were therefore being lost.
- The good relationships with CPS and the prisoner processing unit contrasted with pre-charge advice problems outlined by other officers. There are clear vacuums between what some officers consider adequate grounds for charging and the CPS response. This perception needs consideration by the BCU commander.
- The BCU commander may wish to consider the issues outlined in this report about the ANPR team.
- The BCU commander may wish to consider that the inspection team was told that some IT software packages are cumbersome (difficult to navigate through).
- The BCU commander may wish to consider that the sergeants told the inspection team of their frustration of the blanket policy of attendance at all reports of vehicle crime, which had not been rationalised to them. They assumed it related to quality of service and increased detection issues, but pointed to some public criticism that officers were wasting their time visiting their particular crime.
- The BCU commander is strongly urged, through judicial services, to ensure that every opportunity is realised to take DNA samples and find a long-term solution to the present technical problems.
- The BCU commander may wish to consider some issues for SOCO:
  1. They described officer crime scene awareness as inadequate and identified a need for further training.
  2. They believe that there had been deterioration in crime scene preservation. They stated that they used to have probationer constables on attachment, but this stopped several years ago because of a lack of front line resources.

3. They stated that they did not have the capacity to further market themselves, but there are however some inputs to probationer training.
  4. Accommodation and storage facilities were described as poor with a small office and examinations occurring on staff desks. Storage space is also limited. SOCO staff interviewed felt that being HQ staff they were perhaps at the back of the queue for accommodation.
  5. They have no access to IMS but stated that this was coming. They stated that they were able to input intelligence through liaison with intelligence staff or CID, although this was not confirmed by the units concerned.
- The BCU commander may wish to consider why several staff did not know why gaps in the police staff structure are not being filled and they stated that they just continue struggling with a continuous backlog of work.
  - The BCU commander may wish to reassure himself of the circumstances around the grievance situation.
  - The BCU commander may wish to assess the current situation with health and safety on the BCU and take any relevant action.
  - The BCU commander may want to assure himself of the reasons for the increase in police staff sickness for 2004/2005 and that the good work of the area absence management meeting is able to put the BCU back on track.
  - The BCU commander may also wish to consider the issue regarding recuperative and restricted duties.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that the BCU commander:

- Should, as soon as possible, seek to achieve a position of devolved revenue budget certainty for his BCU.  
(Paragraph 40)
- Ensures the most appropriate systems are in place for intelligence gathering and handling on the BCU, which includes the provision of relevant packages; proper briefings; appropriate staffing levels to handle intelligence and an ability of staff to use the IMS for submission of logs, interrogation of the system and feedback to officers on logs submitted.  
(Paragraph 58)
- Introduces a strategy to manage demand which includes increasing the numbers of what is already an effective Special Constabulary.  
(Paragraph 86)
- Seeks to increase strategic effectiveness and effective operational resources by a change in the BCU's structure with particular reference to the added tier of command that exists in this BCU.  
(Paragraph 97)
- Considers a proper training provision for the BCU with the relevant HQ commander/director and ensures - the overall strategic training requirements for the BCU are catered for; appropriate resource level including facilities; developmental needs are provided and the level of police staff training is reviewed.  
(Paragraph 113)