

**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary  
South of England Region**

**Inspection of North Somerset BCU  
Avon and Somerset Constabulary  
May 2005**



## **Executive Summary**

The inspection of the North Somerset Basic Command Unit (referred to locally as a District) was conducted on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary by Chief Superintendents Frank Sullivan and Peter Driver between 23 and 27 May 2005.

The potential for the Service as a whole to deliver better results in crime reduction and detection cannot conceal an inescapable fact - that performance between BCUs operating in similar policing environments and with comparable resources varies to a degree that is at times remarkable.

Leadership by BCU commanders is probably the single most important determinant of BCU effectiveness. The inspection seeks examples of leadership at all levels, and does not confine expectations to those holding certain roles. The inspection process is intended to help enhance performance whilst identifying and spreading potential good practice. The process of the inspection is tightly focused on leadership and performance, coupled with a pre-inspection analysis of key data and documents.

North Somerset District has a population of 191,400 and covers 145 square miles. The area's geography is a mixture of urban and rural. The BCU extends from the edge of Bristol and the river Avon in the north to the river Axe and the Mendip Hills in the south; from the Bristol Channel in the west to the Chew Valley in the east. There are four main towns within the BCU, each with a Town Council. Weston-super-Mare is one of the largest seaside resorts in the West Country with a significant number of day visitors and holidaymakers. The town contains two of the most deprived wards in the country, the Central and South Wards.

The BCU is divided into two District policing sectors. The Weston Sector has one police station, open 24/7; it also incorporates the BCU Headquarters. The Nailsea Sector has three police stations; Portishead, Clevedon, Nailsea as well as a functioning rural police house at Blagdon.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary is a force that has prided itself on its ability to reduce crime, and this commendable ability is reflected in the performance of the North Somerset District. Crime reduction is a field of activity which is often directly influenced by joint working with partners and the excellent partnership arrangements on the district are reflected in the BCU's healthy reduction in some key categories. Reductions of 19.50% in burglary dwelling and 17.80% in vehicle crime are both noteworthy; so it is disappointing that overall crime has increased by 3.17%, against the trend of a reduction in the Constabulary as a whole.

The overall increase in total crime will be largely due to the substantial increase of violent crime, up by 23.96%. It is of particular concern, as this increase in violent crime has been evident since April 2003. Significant increases in overall levels of violent crime took place in March 2003 and March 2004, with the average number of recorded offences increasing from 198 per month in 2002/3 to 296 in 2004/5, an increase of 49.5%<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Source – North Somerset BCU violence crime analysis

The substantial drop in detections for burglary dwelling (down 50%) is offset to a degree by a healthy reduction of 19.50% in offences. The view on the BCU was that the previous year had been particularly successful and many of the District's prolific offenders were serving custodial sentences. It is true that the BCU benefits from an effective prolific offender unit, which actually has a probation officer working within it, another example of healthy partnership working.

The BCU is coterminous with the local authority and this has assisted in partnership working. Partnership working is the strong suit of the North Somerset BCU. The DCT and the chief superintendent in particular, have been very outward facing and made great efforts in terms of partnership working. Two focus groups of various partners were interviewed and it was clear that the BCU Commander is considered to be very visible and positive, in terms of interaction with stakeholders.

The inspection team was particularly impressed with the local action teams (LATs) and the positive outcomes that have been produced. Those members of the LATs spoken to clearly understand the importance of providing solutions designed to suit the needs of their individual community. Many good examples were given of schemes which benefited local youths, and reduced anti-social behaviour.

In terms of crime performance, the BCU will need to focus its energy on violent crime reduction and turning around its performance on burglary detections.

## Recommendations

1. The BCU continues the good work it has commenced in identifying blockages in the crime recording system, and undertakes a 'process map' to identify short-term solutions as an imperative.  
(Paragraph 101)
2. The Force and BCU considers the introduction of a combined unit to address child protection, domestic violence, hate crime and registered sex offenders.  
(Paragraph 109)
3. The recently expanded DCT takes the opportunity to raise its visibility across the BCU by a programme of face-to-face visits.  
(Paragraph 136)
4. The BCU restates its vision and communicates it to all staff.  
(Paragraph 148)
5. The BCU strategically reviews the available resources to arrive at a more equitable division between resources and demand, taking into consideration the requirement to provide crime detection, response and reassurance.  
(Paragraph 161)
6. The BCU instigates a sickness & health-monitoring group at which a representative of the Force's occupational health team is a permanent member.  
(Paragraph 169)
7. A regular postings meeting should be established which monitors postings, and sanctions all significant moves such as across sectors.  
(Paragraph 170)
8. The Force should consider redeploying trainers to Districts, to enable a more effective response to local training needs.  
(Paragraph 173)
9. The BCU redesigns the method of examining staff performance and introduces a new 'balanced scorecard', incorporating best practice from elsewhere.  
(Paragraph 192)
10. Force Headquarters examines the blockages to having the town's CCTV monitoring room linked to the police control room as a matter of urgency.  
(Paragraph 196)
11. A definition of community safety should be promulgated to all police staff, particularly those with lead responsibilities, to identify actions and targets which will lead to the BCU achieving the Force's aims in that area.  
(Paragraph 199)

12. Custody staff receive refresher training after a set period, to be decided by the Force, and this is reinforced by regular custody ‘users’ meetings.  
(Paragraph 212)
13. At least one cell has CCTV installed, and more if possible, to monitor vulnerable detainees.  
(Paragraph 215)

## **Potential Good Practice**

Vehicle Crime CSI - the inspection team considers partnership funding for such a post as potential good practice, and its existence has contributed to the success of the BCU in terms of vehicle crime.

The inspection team considers the DNA/NAFIS unit to be an example of potential best practice.

The BCU has created a two-week skills enhancement programme offering development in crime investigation and is an area of potential good practice.

The devolvement of finance and personnel functions, with the necessary expertise to hand on the BCU, is considered good practice.

The inspection team considers the positive co-operation between the beat managers and the success of the LATs as potential good practice.

The crime reduction officers manage Prolific Young Offender (PYO) cases and final warning surgeries are operated by the custody unit using a restorative justice approach. The inspection team considers this potential good practice.

This is a useful presentation of management information for sector inspectors and sergeants at the TTCG, providing a focus on performance which the inspection team views as good practice.

The team was reassured to find senior officers fully engaged with partners at a strategic level, leaving operational staff to concentrate on performance delivery; this is good practice.

## Introduction

1. Between 23 and 27 May 2005, Chief Superintendents Frank Sullivan and Peter Driver carried out an inspection of North Somerset Basic Command Unit (BCU), (referred to locally as a District) on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC).
2. There are approximately 300 Basic Command Units (BCUs) in England and Wales and no two are alike. They vary in size from a little over 100 officers to a little over 1,000; some serve densely populated, ethnically diverse inner cities, while others cover vast tracts of sparsely populated countryside. What they do share are some key aims and objectives, specifically to work with partner agencies on reducing crime in their areas, and do so with integrity. Scrutiny of police performance has moved from aggregate force outcomes to the performance of individual BCUs, with the recognition that policing is essentially a locally delivered service. But BCUs are not islands; they operate within a framework of policy and support determined by Headquarters-based chief officer teams. The precise configuration of policing units and the balance of resources between HQ and BCUs varies across the 43 forces in England and Wales.
3. The focus on performance in reducing crime is likely to be relentless. Forces and police authorities, working with local authorities and other community safety partners, will need to raise performance outcomes year upon year. Indeed, the statutory regime of Best Value demands 'continuous improvement' and an array of sanctions exist if authorities fail to deliver this. The potential for the Service as a whole to deliver better results in crime reduction and detection cannot conceal an inescapable fact – that performance between BCUs operating in similar policing environments and with comparable resources varies to a degree that is, at times, remarkable.
4. Leadership by BCU commanders is undoubtedly pivotal in determining the effectiveness of a BCU. Without exception, staff in pilot site inspections wanted their management teams to be more visible and accessible. 'Leadership' is an intangible concept but we know that the majority of good leaders are made, not born, and so one outcome from BCU inspections should be a better understanding of the practical manifestations of effective leadership.
5. The HMIC report *Getting Down to Basics – The emerging findings from BCU inspections in 2001* highlights the fact that there is no single way of leading; an effective approach is contingent upon the situation and the individuals being led. The inspection seeks examples of leadership at all levels, and does not confine expectations to those holding certain roles. The more senior the role, the more outward-focused the post-holder needs to be. This has become increasingly evident in partnership settings, and inspections to date have identified a strong correlation between high-performing BCUs and effective partnerships.
6. In trying to make sense of the variations in operational performance, which exist – to differing degrees – in every force, a key ingredient is focus. The best performers focus the effort of all their staff through timely, dynamic local briefings that are supported by a well-managed intelligence system. They set

targets and make sure that staff are aware of them, they communicate results and celebrate success, and they hold individuals to account for how they have used their time and resources. The inspection process is intended to help enhance performance whilst identifying and spreading potential good practice<sup>2</sup> (Box A).

### **Box A – Aims of BCU Inspections**

**Promoting effective leadership.**  
**Disseminating potential good practice.**  
**Identifying inefficiencies.**  
**Providing pointers to enhance performance.**  
**Strengthening the capacity for self-assessment and improvement.**  
**Leaving behind a BCU management team that has learnt about itself and is even more committed to self-improvement.**

7. The inspection methodology is tightly focused on leadership and performance, coupled with a pre-inspection analysis of key data and documents. These documents, data and other BCU issues are explored through an initial meeting with the District Commander, and then a series of interviews, meetings and focus groups during the week of the inspection. The process is brought to an end with a verbal debrief, and outline of the key findings to the BCU Commander and her District command team (DCT).
8. A total of 24 structured interviews and focus groups were conducted. Apart from time spent at District Headquarters, a visit was made to a sector station, the custody suite and the inspection team attended a patrol briefing. The inspection team interviewed a total of 71 members of staff and members of the Special Constabulary.
9. This inspection took place as part of the five-year HMIC BCU inspection programme and the inspection team wishes to place on record its thanks for the co-operation and assistance provided by the BCU Commander and all her staff during the course of the inspection.

### **Force Overview**

10. Avon and Somerset Constabulary is a large force, covering the former county of Avon and the county of Somerset, some 1,855 square miles with a population of about 1.5 million. Its work is made more complex by the contrasting policing environments, including the diverse communities with several areas of deprivation in Bristol, the largest conurbation in south-west England. The county of Somerset, on the other hand, presents the policing issues associated with a sparsely populated rural area containing many small and medium-sized market towns.

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<sup>2</sup> Potential good practice is that considered effective but has to undergo formal external assessment and validation

11. There are six basic command units (BCUs), the commanders having a high degree of delegated authority to deliver policing services that meet the needs of their very different communities. Several Headquarters departments including operations, criminal investigation, communications, personnel and training, corporate development, and criminal justice support the BCUs. Following considerable growth, making full use of the Government's Crime Fighting Fund, police strength (full-time equivalent) had risen to 3,417 at 31 March 2004. Police staff strength had also risen, to 2,083, and there were 335 special constables.
12. The command team comprises the Chief Constable, the Deputy Chief Constable (whose responsibilities include corporate development and professional standards), a Director of Finance, a Director of Human Resources, and two assistant chief constables (territorial operations and specialist operations). The net revenue budget for 2004/05 is £242.9m. Net revenue expenditure per 1,000 population (£139k) was the second highest in the MSF group in 2002/03 but close to the average for provincial forces in England and Wales.
13. Since the appointment of a new Chair to the Police Authority in 2003, the corporate governance arrangements have been reviewed and improved. Formal structures and processes have been streamlined; and new ways have been found to increase members' knowledge of the Force, enabling them to engage more effectively in planning and performance monitoring.
14. Following a long period of crime reduction, in 2001/02 recorded crime began to rise, driven by an influx of crack cocaine into the Bristol area, and none of the Force's crime targets was achieved. A wide-ranging programme was set up to combat the immediate problems and to identify and tackle the underlying causes. HMIC was closely involved in these matters, in July 2002 referring the deteriorating position in the Bristol area to the Police Standards Unit. The Unit was able to offer advice and additional funding that was appropriately targeted at reducing street crime, burglary and drug activity and improving social cohesion in the Bristol area.
15. In 2002/03 total recorded crime fell by 3%, there were significant reductions in burglary dwelling and motor vehicle crime, and the 28% fall in robbery was the largest reduction amongst the ten forces participating in the Government's Street Crime Initiative. In most respects, these positive trends in combating crime continued during 2003/04, in spite of a rise in major and serious crime that drew resources away from tackling volume crime.
16. Police Authority support for a record level of precept for 2003/04 was a key factor in recent improved performance. Monthly tracking of the performance outcomes of each element of the additional investment has reinforced the performance culture that is increasingly evident throughout the organisation.
17. The focus on improving performance in the past two years has not deflected the Force and the Authority from pursuing longer-term strategic objectives. For example, good progress has been made towards creating a distinctive model of local team policing with constables as dedicated beat managers; improving public accessibility to policing services is being co-ordinated effectively through a

programme of change supported by substantial investment; and the Force has benefited from sustained priority given to forensic science support.

18. In spite of two years of improvement in performance, in comparison with the MSF group crime levels remain high and detection rates low. When viewed as a whole, performance against crime places the Force at the bottom of the group, even when taking account of the fact that Avon and Somerset has taken the lead in only counting 'sanction' detections (those that result in some judicial outcome for the offender). Outdated processes and computer support systems have hampered effective crime investigation; implementation of a new crime and intelligence system is planned in the coming year. In the meantime, continuing the drive to enhance investigation and supervisory skills in a young and inexperienced workforce is likely to be the best way to sustain performance improvement.

### **North Somerset BCU**

19. North Somerset District has a population of 191,400 and covers 145 square miles. The area's geography is a mixture of urban and rural. The BCU extends from the edge of Bristol and the river Avon in the north to the river Axe and the Mendip Hills in the south; from the Bristol Channel in the west to the Chew Valley in the east. There are four main towns within the BCU, each with a Town Council. Weston-super-Mare is one of the largest seaside resorts in the West Country with a significant number of day visitors and holidaymakers. The town contains two of the most deprived wards in the country, the Central and South Wards.
20. The BCU is divided into two District policing sectors. The Weston Sector has one police station, open 24/7; it also incorporates the BCU Headquarters. The Northern Sector has three police stations; Portishead, Clevedon, Nailsea as well as a functioning rural police house at Blagdon. The three Northern stations operate staggered opening hours; Monday – Friday between 0900 – 2000 and 0900 – 1800 at weekends.

### **Population**

21. According to the mid-2003 population estimates there were 191,400 people residing in North Somerset. In the twenty years between 1982 and 2002 the population of North Somerset grew by 16%, compared with an increase of 12.7% for South West region as a whole. The most recent figures for the ethnic population of North Somerset are from the 2001 census, which showed the population to be 1.38%. Population density of North Somerset averaged 507 people per square kilometre, compared with an average of 208, for the region and 380 people per square kilometre for England overall.
22. A quarter of the workforce is involved in tourism during the summer months. There is also increasing local economic and commercial activity through Bristol International Airport, Royal Portbury Dock and an intercity rail link through Weston-super-Mare.

## Significant Annual Events

23. North Somerset is host to a number of special events each year, all attracting large numbers of visitors and requiring significant police input. These include:
- The Orange Free Festival - held over a weekend each July at Ashton Court which covers an area of approximately 840 acres and receives 800,000 visitors each year, with a further 700,000 attending the special events.
  - The Bristol International Balloon Fiesta - Europe's biggest hot air balloon gathering, held over four days at Ashton Court in early August.
  - The North Somerset Show - an agricultural show, this is held annually on the August Bank Holiday.
  - ENDURO Motorcycle Race - an annual two-day motorcycle race held on Weston-super-Mare Beach and the Beach Lawns in mid-October attracting competitors from across the world.
  - Weston-super-Mare Carnival
  - Weston Wheels - this is a one-day event held on the old airfield on the outskirts of Weston, and is a legal car cruise attracting over 25,000 visitors.

### Weston Sector - Overview

24. Weston Sector is situated at the heart of the North Somerset BCU. The Northern and Eastern boundary of the sector abut the Nailsea Sector and the Southern boundary abuts the Somerset West BCU.



25. The town has grown rapidly in recent years, and now has a population of over 71,000. With significant levels of further development planned over the next five years, this figure is likely to move towards 91,000 by 2006.

### Nailsea Sector - Overview



26. The Nailsea Sector adjoins the southern boundary with Bristol and is about 110 square miles in size with a population 100,000. Geographically it extends from Blagdon in the south to Easton-in-Gordano in the north and from Kingston Seymour in the west to Dundry in the east.

27. The Sector is largely rural but also contains a number of sizeable commuter towns all within easy reach of Bristol (6 – 12 miles). Consequently, the Sector suffers from a significant level of crime from travelling criminals.

28. The Sector has 47 beats and 15 beat managers, two of whom are part time. There are also 16 PCSOs, 10 of which are based at Weston-super-Mare. There are 43 time-based officers working from the three principal towns' police stations of Clevedon, Portishead and Nailsea.

### **Establishment**

29. The total establishment of the North Somerset BCU comprises 234 police officers and 85 police staff; of those 21% (48) are female and 3% of police officers (7) work part time/flexible working. Twelve percent of police officers (28) are currently on restricted duties, which is a significant abstraction from normal operational duty.
30. In terms of police staff, 34% (28) are female and 44% of police staff (32) work part time/flexible working. Five percent of police staff (4) are currently on restricted duties. There is one female police staff member from an ethnic minority background.

### **District Command Team**

31. The BCU Commander joined West Yorkshire Police as a cadet and served in most areas of the Force in uniform and CID roles, reaching the rank of inspector in 1992. At the rank of sergeant in 1989 she was successful in securing a place on the Accelerated Promotion Course and was subsequently promoted to inspector. In September 1994 she transferred to Avon and Somerset Constabulary, reverting to the rank of constable to do so.
32. After a year as uniform constable/acting sergeant in South Bristol, she was promoted to detective sergeant in charge of the Force's car crime reduction team. Nine months later she achieved promotion back to the rank of inspector and spent a year as team inspector at Trinity Road Police Station in Bristol. The BCU Commander then served as detective inspector in charge of the Child Protection Team in Somerset. She was promoted to DCI at East Somerset in 1998 becoming a member of the senior management team and leading on the development of the new concept of Crime and Disorder Partnerships, and over the next two years became a fully accredited SIO.
33. In 2001, the BCU Commander was promoted to detective superintendent to head up the force Child Protection Team, and became a member of the force cadre of SIOs. She took up her current post as District Commander for North Somerset District in April 2003.
34. The superintendent operations joined the Constabulary in 1992 and began his career as a patrol constable at Redland Police Station in Bristol before serving as beat manager for the areas of Henbury and Brentry. He was promoted to sergeant at Bristol in 1997 and was subsequently posted as a custody sergeant at Staple Hill in South Gloucestershire.

35. After a variety of postings he managed the introduction of the Human Rights Act to Avon and Somerset in 2000. Upon promotion to inspector he was posted to Bath and North East Somerset as a uniformed inspector where he served as a critical incident manager with the functional responsibility of managing the intelligence department; later becoming the sector inspector for Bath.
36. Promotion to chief inspector in 2003 followed a period of project work, which continued with work for the Criminal Justice Department where he led on the introduction of Narrowing the Justice Gap, Statutory Charging, 'No Witness No Justice' and the Effective Trial Management Project as well as managing 400 staff within the administration support unit (ASU).
37. He joined North Somerset BCU in the newly created role of superintendent operations in April 2005. He is qualified as a silver firearms commander.
38. The BCU's detective chief inspector joined the Constabulary in 1991 and was posted to Bristol District (Southmead) where she performed uniform patrol duties. As a patrol constable she secured an attachment to the force Research and Development Department and was involved in a number of District and force level projects. In 1996 she secured a place on the Accelerated Promotion Course and was promoted to team sergeant at Broadbury Road in South Bristol in 1997.
39. As a sergeant she was also posted to the Chief Constable's Staff Office, the Corporate Communications Office and latterly to HQ CID as a detective sergeant where she was involved in developing the Constabulary's Child-Safe project. In 1999 she was promoted to uniform inspector on Central Bristol District. There she initially took on the role of personnel inspector and critical incident manager but was quickly identified to develop a management support team and business development unit. In 2000 she took on the role of sector inspector for the City Centre and Broadmead area of Bristol.
40. In 2002 she returned to the CID as a detective inspector within Central Bristol District. There she developed her SIO skills, managing a number of incidents of serious and major crime. Notably, a significant number of incidents related to Jamaican organised crime and violence associated with the supply of controlled drugs. She graduated from the Accelerated Promotion Course in 2001 and has since completed all modules of the Managing Serious Crime SIO course. In November 2003 she was promoted to her current post.
41. The chief inspector operations joined the Constabulary in 1979 and was posted to North Somerset District, Weston-super-Mare where he spent three years before transferring to the force support group. In 1985 he returned to North Somerset District and was promoted in 1990 to uniform sergeant at Yeovil on the East Somerset District. During his time there he moved to a detective sergeant's post at Frome.
42. In 1992 he moved to Headquarters joining the Project 7 Development and Training Team; this project being the forerunner of the Information System Department. During 1995 he moved into a detective sergeant's post at the National CID training school at Portishead where he delivered Foundation, Intermediate and SIO courses.

43. In 1997 he was promoted to uniform inspector on North Somerset District, Weston-super-Mare. On the reorganisation of the District he became the sector inspector for Weston. During this period he successfully completed a Community Safety and Crime Prevention course at the University of the West of England.
44. In 2001 he was promoted to operations manager at Yeovil, and in 2003 returned to his current position on North Somerset BCU. He is both a public order and Major Sporting Events Bronze /Silver commander.
45. The human resources manager joined the Constabulary in May 1996 as a clerical officer working in Personnel and Training, providing support on recruitment of police officers and police staff to the organisation. She was then promoted to personnel officer in May 1999, having responsibility for a team of five staff, providing guidance and support to three Districts along with three large departments. During this time she achieved her CIPD graduate qualification.
46. In March 2004, she was promoted to human resources manager for North Somerset District, where she has responsibility for providing professional support and guidance, which ensures the effective management and development of staff of the District within corporate policy, employment legislation and professional standards. She is also responsible for the management of the District resource unit.
47. The administration and finance manager joined the Constabulary as a clerk typist in the Civilian Personnel Department at Headquarters in Bristol in 1976. She moved to the Purchasing and Supplies Department as a clerk/assistant compositor in 1977 and remained in the department until August 1989 when she was appointed as deputy administration officer at Weston-super-Mare. She was promoted to District administration officer in June 1992.

## Performance

Crime Levels and Detections	April to March 2003/04	April to March 2004/05	% Change
Total recorded crime	16086	16596	3.17%
Number of crimes detected	2668	2749	3.04%
% Crimes detected	16.59%	16.56%	-0.13%
Total recorded crime per 1,000 population	84.03	86.69	3.17%
Total residential burglary	1046	842	-19.50%
Number of residential burglaries detected	266	133	-50.00%
% Residential burglaries detected	25.43%	15.80%	-37.89%
Total residential burglaries per 1,000 households	13.07	10.52	-19.51%
Total vehicle crime	2371	1949	-17.80%
Number of vehicle crimes detected	161	221	37.27%
% Vehicle crimes detected	6.79%	11.34%	66.99%
Total vehicle crime per 1,000 population	12.39	10.18	-17.84%
Total violent crime	3231	4005	23.96%
Number of violent crimes detected	886	1007	13.66%
% Violent crimes detected	27.42%	25.14%	-8.31%
Total violent crime per 1,000 population	16.88	20.92	23.93%
Total robbery	156	95	-39.10%
Number of robberies detected	38	20	-47.37%
% Robberies detected	24.36%	21.05%	-13.57%
Total robbery per 1,000 population	0.81	0.5	-38.27%

48. For the period April 2004 to March 2005 161,210 crimes were recorded by the Force and 16,596 by the BCU, representing 10.29% of the force total. When compared with the previous year, the Force showed a decrease in total recorded crime of 2.26%, the BCU an increase of 3.17%.

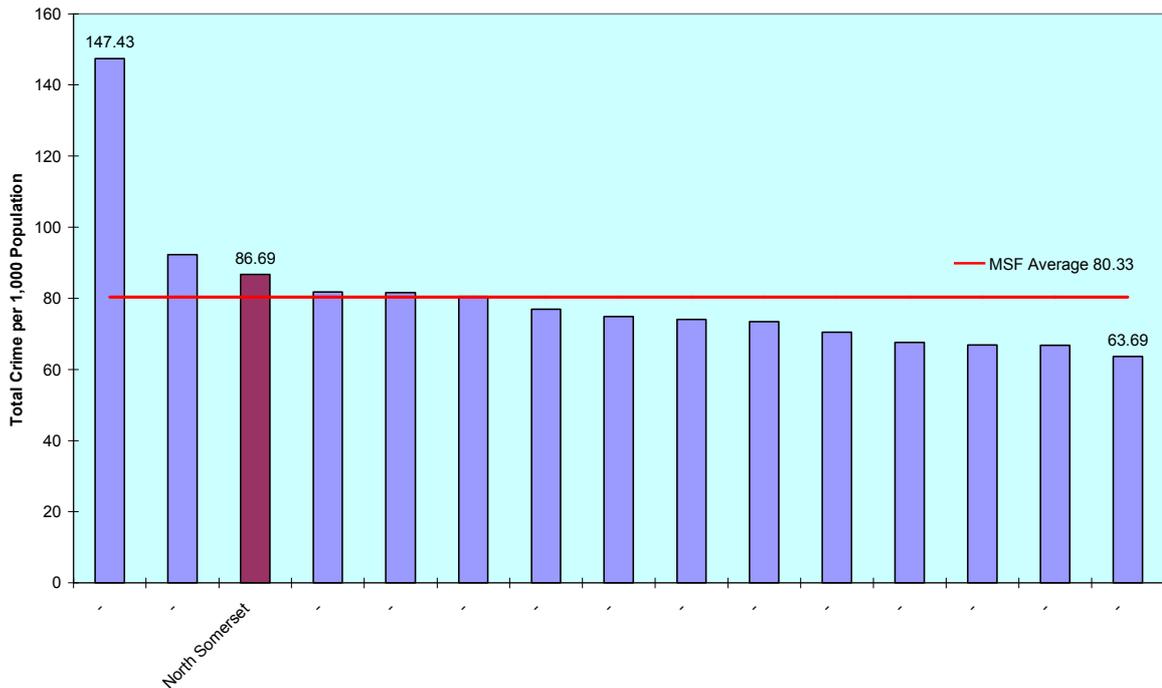
49. For the same period the overall force detection rate rose from 15.39% to 16.76% with the BCU decreasing slightly from 16.59% to 16.56%.

## Total Crime

50. For the period April 2004 to March 2005 total recorded crime **increased by 3.17%** when compared with the previous year. The BCU ranked **13<sup>th</sup> out of 15** for total crime per 1,000 population in its MSBCU group. The BCU is **above the MSBCU average** for total crime per 1,000 population. Projections based on the last six and 12 months data show the level of crime increasing, but projections based on the last 3 months data shows the level of crime reducing.

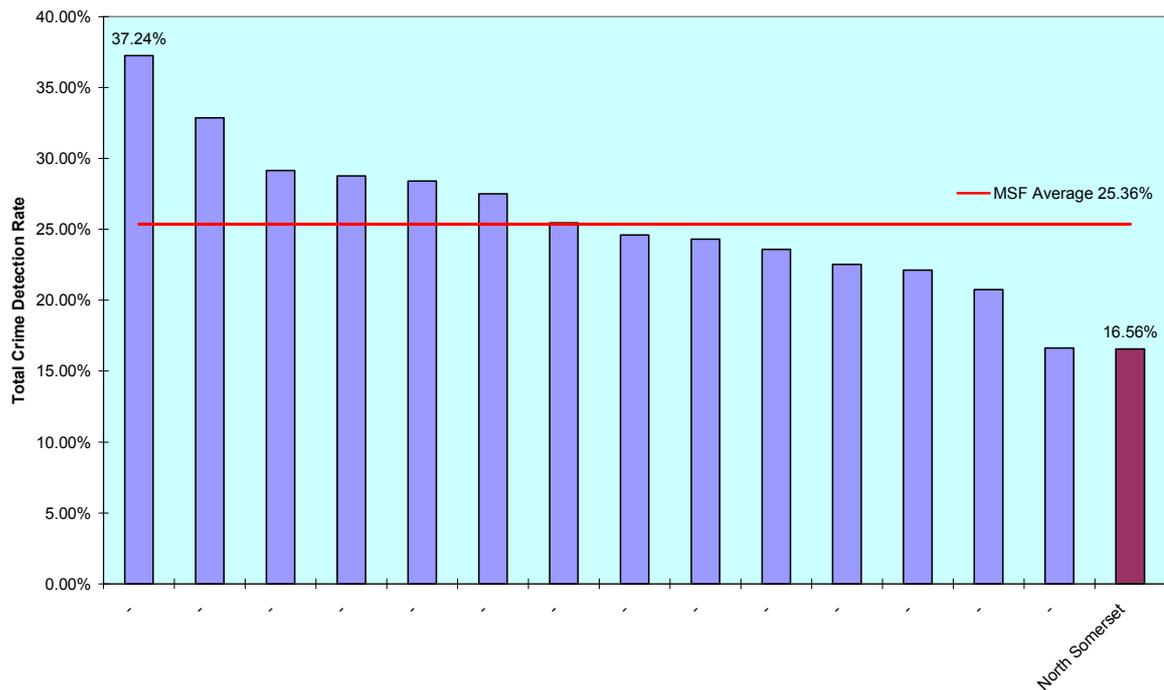
51. For the period April 2004 to March 2005, the actual number of crimes detected **increased by 3.04%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **16.56%** compared with **16.59%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **15<sup>th</sup> out of 15** in the MSBCU group. The BCU is **below** the MSBCU average detection rate. All projections show the detection rate.

**Total Crime per 1,000 Population April 2004 to March 2005**



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005  
(Only North Somerset BCU has been identified as the 2004/05 data has not been validated or published, this is in accordance with HMIC data release guidelines)

### Total Crime Detection Rate April 2004 to March 2005

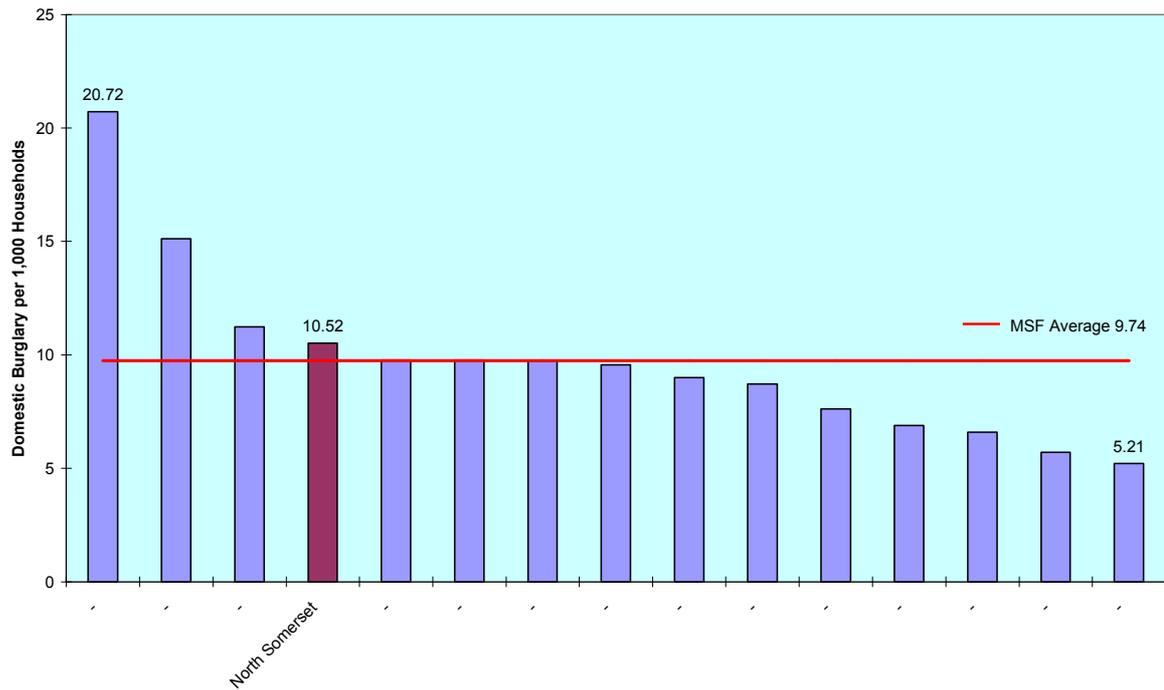


Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005  
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### Domestic Burglary

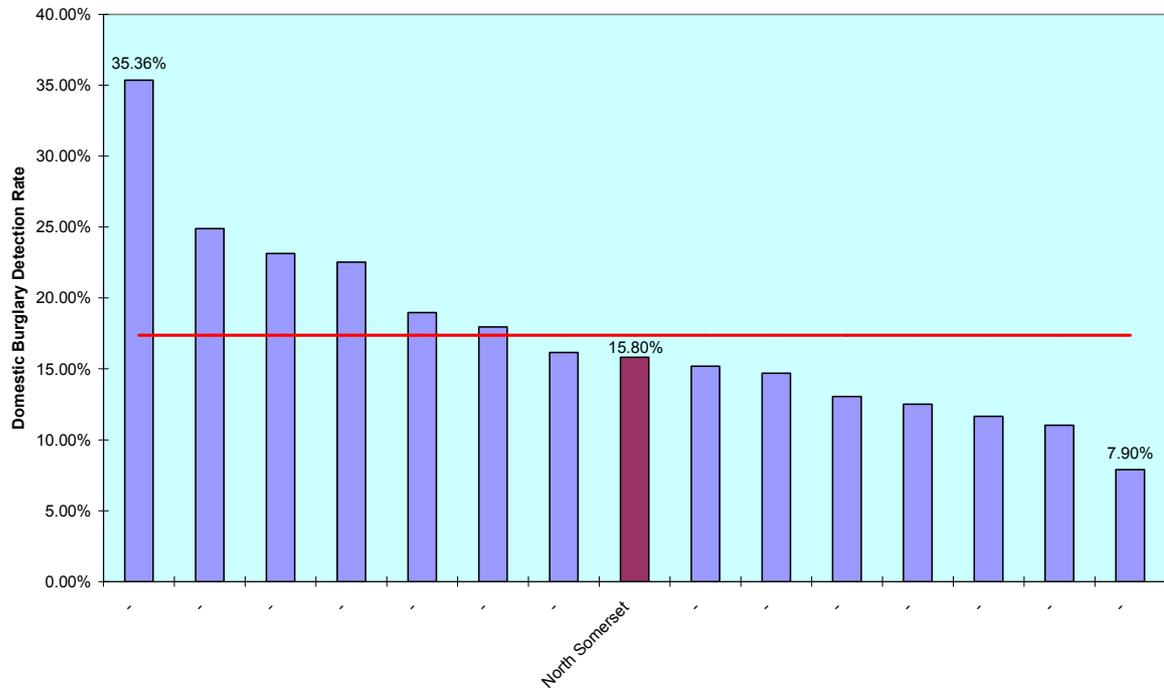
52. For the period April 2004 to March 2005, total recorded domestic burglaries **decreased by 19.50%** when compared with the previous year. The BCU ranked **12<sup>th</sup> out of 15** for domestic burglary per 1,000 households in its MSBCU group. The BCU is currently **above MSBCU average** for domestic burglary per 1,000 households. All projections show the level of crime **decreasing**.
53. For the period April 2004 to March 2005, the actual number of domestic burglaries detected **decreased by 50.00%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **15.80%** compared with **25.43%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **eighth out of 15** in the MSBCU group and is **below** the MSBCU average. All projections show the detection rate **decreasing**.

**Domestic Burglary per 1,000 Households April 2004 to March 2005**



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005  
 (Only North Somerset BCU have been identified as the 2004/05 data has not been validated or published, this is in accordance with HMIC data release guidelines)

**Domestic Burglary Detection Rate April 2004 to March 2005**

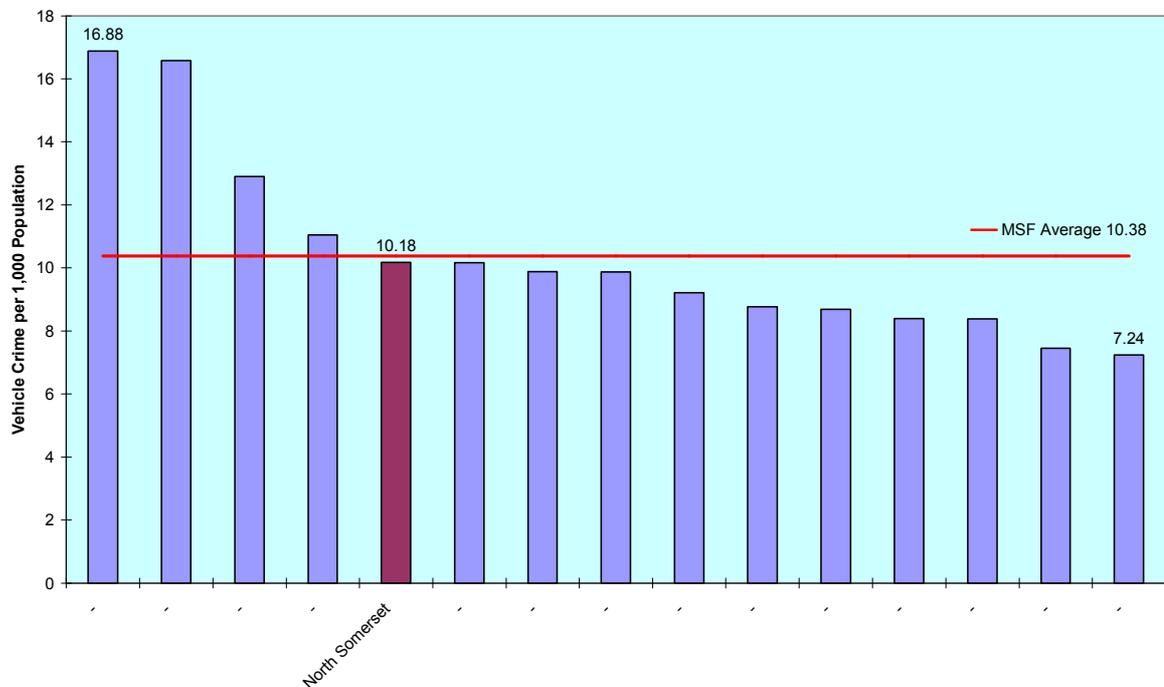


Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005  
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## Vehicle Crime

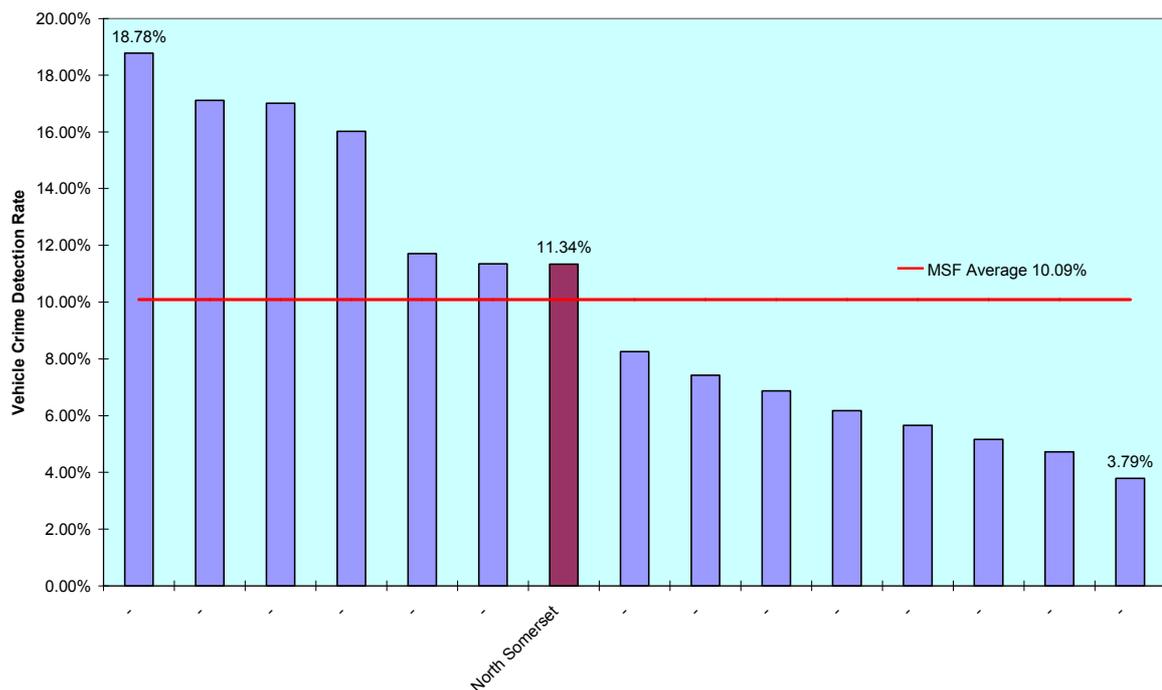
54. For the period April 2004 to March 2005 total recorded vehicle crime **decreased by 17.80%** when compared with the previous year. The BCU ranked **11<sup>th</sup> out of 15** for vehicle crime in its MSBCU group. The BCU is **in line with the MSBCU average** for vehicle crime per 1,000 population. All projections show the **level of vehicle crime dropping**.
55. For the period April 2004 to March 2005, the actual number of crimes detected **decreased by 37.27%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **11.34%** compared with **6.79%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **seventh out of 15** in the MSBCU group. Currently the detection rate is just **above** the MSBCU average. All projections show the detection rate **increasing**.

### Vehicle Crime per 1,000 Population April 2004 to March 2005



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005  
(Only North Somerset BCU has been identified as the 2004/05 data has not been validated or published, this is in accordance with HMIC data release guidelines)

### Vehicle Crime Detection Rate April 2004 to March 2005



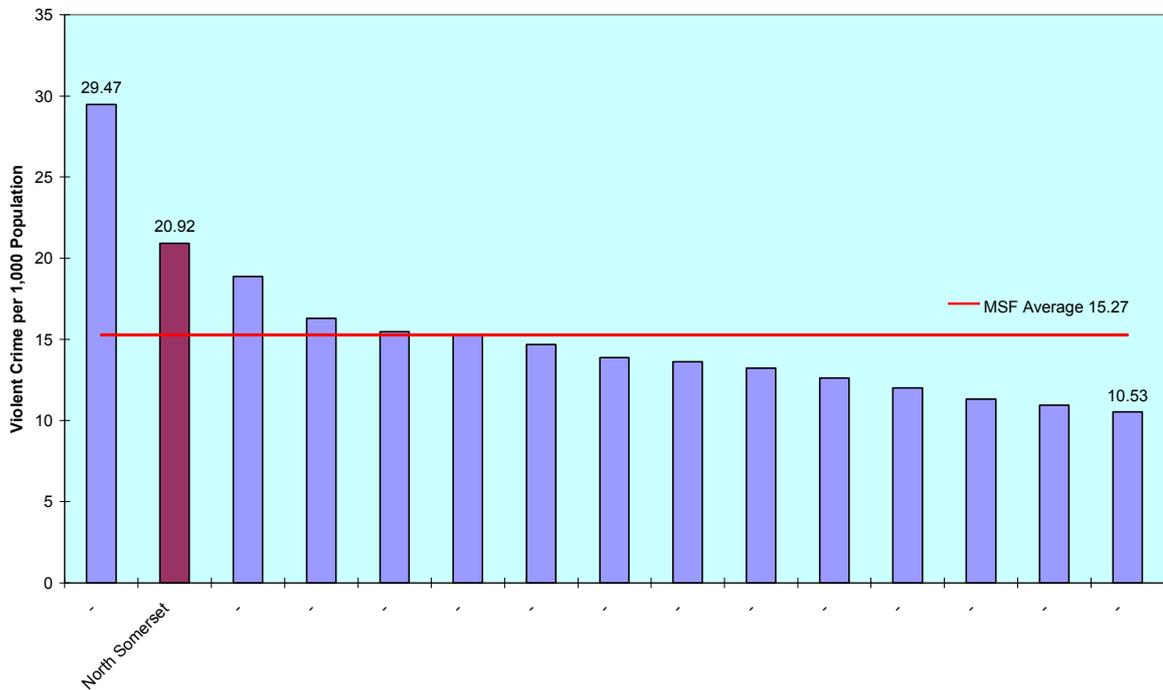
Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005

(Only North Somerset BCU has been identified as the 2004/05 data has not been validated or published, this is in accordance with HMIC data release guidelines)

### Violent Crime

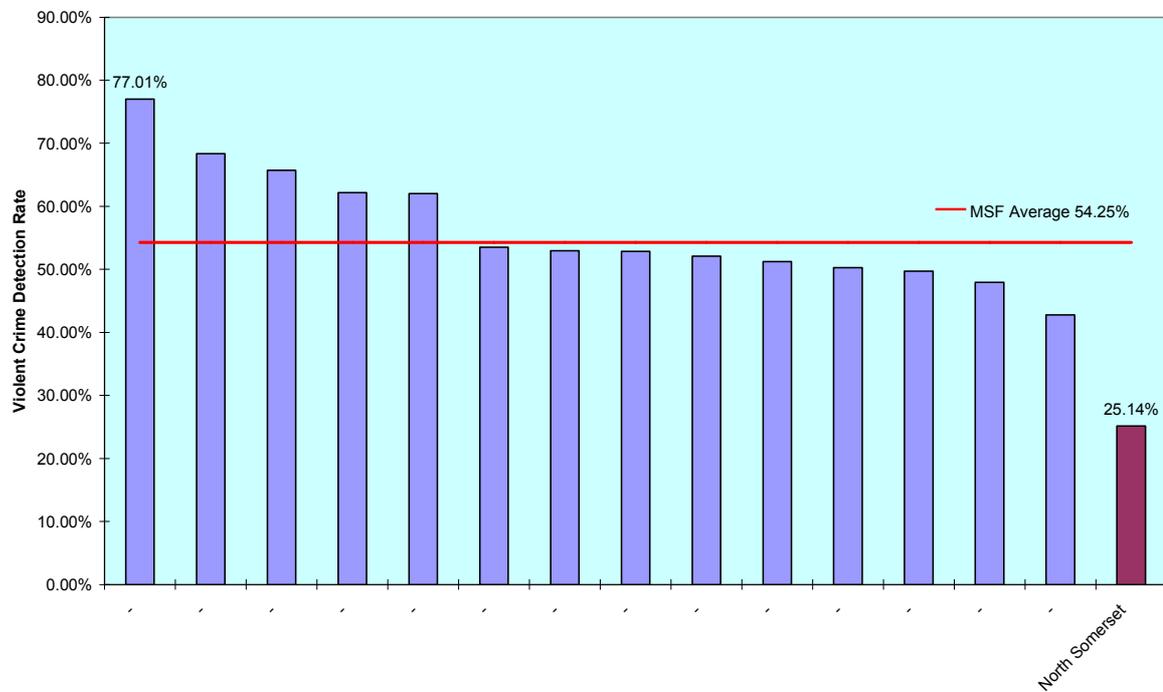
56. For the period April 2004 to March 2005 total recorded violent crime **increased by 23.96%** when compared with the previous year. The BCU ranked **14<sup>th</sup> out of 15** for violent crime in its MSBCU group. The BCU is currently **above the MSBCU average** for violent crime per 1,000 population. All projections show the level of violent crime **increasing**.
57. For the period April 2004 to March 2005, the actual number of crimes detected **increased by 13.66%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **25.14%** compared with **27.42%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **15<sup>th</sup> out of 15** in the MSBCU group. The detection rate is **below** the MSBCU average. Projections based on the last 12 months data show the detection rate **decreasing**, but projections based on the last three and 6 months data show the detection rate **increasing**.

**Violent Crime per 1,000 Population April 2004 to March 2005**



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005  
 (Only North Somerset BCU have been identified as the 2004/05 data has not been validated or published, this is in accordance with HMIC data release guidelines)

**Violent Crime Detection Rate April 2004 to March 2005**



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005  
 (Only North Somerset BCU have been identified as the 2004/05 data has not been validated or published, this is in accordance with HMIC data release guidelines)

## Conclusions

58. Avon and Somerset Constabulary is a force that has prided itself on its ability to reduce crime, and this commendable ability is reflected in the performance of the North Somerset District. Crime reduction is a field of activity that is often directly influenced by joint working with partners and the excellent partnership arrangements on the District are reflected in the BCU's healthy reduction in some key categories. Reductions of 19.50% in burglary dwelling and 17.80% in vehicle crime are both note worthy; so it is disappointing that overall crime has increased by 3.17%, against the trend of a reduction in the Constabulary as a whole.
59. The overall increase in total crime will be largely due to the substantial increase of violent crime, up by 23.96%. It is of particular concern, as this increase in violent crime has been evident since April 2003. Significant increases in overall levels of violent crime took place in March 2003 and March 2004, with the average number of recorded offences increasing from 198 per month in 2002/3 to 296 in 2004/5, an increase of 49.5%<sup>3</sup>.
60. The BCU is putting measures in place to combat this increase and the increase in detections by 13.66% is a positive indicator of activity, albeit, the overall detection rate for violent crime at 27.42% is still too low (up 2.28%). There is partnership activity taking place to build long-term solutions but the BCU needs to do more on the tactical front to turn the tide.
61. Detections overall are an issue for the Force at 16.76% and this is reflected on the BCU at 16.56% with no significant change from last year. Whereas the Force has shifted its position significantly, in terms of a completely new raft of performance measures, the same was not evident on the BCU at the time of the inspection.
62. The substantial drop in detections for burglary dwelling (down 50%) is offset to a degree by a healthy reduction of 19.50% in offences. The view on the BCU was that the previous year had been particularly successful and many of the District's prolific offenders were serving custodial sentences. It is true that the BCU benefits from an effective prolific offender unit, which actually has a probation officer working within it, another example of healthy partnership working.
63. The picture in terms of vehicle crime is much healthier, with a reduction of 17.80% and an increase of 37.27% in detections (161>221). Robberies have also seen a shift downwards with a reduction of 39.10%, in what was a relatively rare offence for the District in any case.
64. In terms of crime performance, the BCU will need to focus its energy on violent crime reduction and turning around its performance on burglary detections.

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<sup>3</sup> Source – North Somerset BCU violence crime analysis

## **Crime Investigation**

65. The criminal investigation department is lead by a detective chief inspector, assisted by two detective inspectors based at Weston-super-Mare. All have completed the Management of Serious Crime modules.
66. In 2003 the department grew by three detective constable posts as a result of support from the Crime Fighting Fund; one was assigned to the reactive team and two to the prolific offender unit.
67. The reactive CID officers are stationed across the BCU as follows;
  - Nine at Weston-super-Mare
  - Three at Nailsea and
  - One each at Clevedon and Portishead.
68. In addition there are two prolific offender detectives stationed at Weston-super-Mare, alongside the probation services officer, and one burglary investigation officer at Weston-super-Mare and one at Nailsea.
69. The DNA and NAFIS team comprises two uniform constables and, additionally, a dedicated MCSO vehicle crime investigator secured with Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) funding.
70. A skills profile of the CID is maintained and with the assistance of the BCU Human Resources Manager, resources are monitored and effort is made to retain adequate skills and experience profile within the department; for example the BCU secured five experienced transferee detectives in the last eighteen months to replace detectives pursuing lateral moves. These officers have also brought additional specialist skills to the department. One was an accredited financial investigator and one an acting DS from a dedicated hate crime investigation team.
71. At the time of the inspection there was one detective constable abstracted to Operation Crystal, a protracted murder enquiry in Bristol. Until recently two detective constables and a detective sergeant were abstracted to Operation Jubilant (conspiracy to commit burglary).
72. The caseload within the reactive CID team varies from month to month with a seasonal increase in the summer months due to the nature of the BCU as a seaside resort. The BCU has suffered a significant increase in the level of violent crime and sexual offences, both linked to alcohol related violence mainly in the town centre. The CID team caseload averages at between 10 and 14 live investigations per officer at any one time. Allocated caseload per team and resultant detection rates is examined at every BCU Performance Improvement Meeting. One of the reactive detective sergeants is the chaperone co-ordinator; ensuring sufficient trained chaperones are available for deployment to sexual offences and negotiating additional support through the major crime investigation unit.
73. The BCU has based two detectives within the prolific offender unit POU (see para 201) which enables the BCU to target prolific offenders at an early stage

with investigative resources. This is a positive investment of resources aimed at maximising sanction detections.

74. The BCU would expect to deal with an average of two incidents of murder per year. In August 2004 a category 'A' murder occurred at the Ashton Court Balloon Fiesta (Operation Jasmine) and a category 'C' murder occurred in Weston-super-Mare in February 2005 (Operation Juror). Both investigations were undertaken with support of the force major crime investigation unit (MCIU). A major investigation in to a series of nationwide commercial burglaries has just been completed, following the discovery of a warehouse containing in excess of £1 million of suspected stolen property in Weston-super-Mare in early 2004 (Operation Jubilant).
75. There are a large number of people in Weston-super-Mare on Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) and the BCU claims there are more per head of population than anywhere else in the UK. Consequently the area suffers a disproportionate number of drugs related deaths, a significant proportion of which are investigated as suspicious deaths. This can be a big drain on detective resources with little in terms of positive outcomes.
76. The DCI and DS Crime Management Unit (CMU) recently completed a review of crime management and investigation standards. Personal visits were made to every uniform team sergeant and all outstanding crimes and work control systems were examined. It was found that not all team sergeants actively managed the investigative workload of their teams. A number of named suspect enquiries were not progressed appropriately within a reasonable time and team sergeants had limited guidance and support from inspectors in undertaking these functions.
77. As a result of this review, training of all uniform teams was undertaken and a quality assurance role for all inspectors was developed. Every team sergeant has an assigned quality assurance inspector. The five Critical Incident Managers (inspectors), along with the two detective inspectors and community safety inspector, fulfil this function for the five shift teams at Weston- super-Mare and three stations on the Nailsea Sector. Additionally, specific training was delivered to all uniform staff in December 2004, utilising practical investigative prioritisation exercises taken from the ICIDP detective training course.
78. The force Professionalising the Investigation Programme (PIP) which is a national initiative, has now delivered investigative standards training to all uniform sergeants, tutors and acting sergeants within the BCU. Feedback at the conclusion of these training sessions has led to a further review of the supervisory set up across the Nailsea Sector, led by superintendent operations.
79. All investigation reports are subject of quality assurance by CMU crime screeners, utilising the ISO 9002 Q marker system. The BCU has further developed the ISO Q markers to assess performance in crime recording and initial investigation according to BCU targets. The Q markers developed within the BCU have now been adopted force-wide. In particular a Q marker was developed to assess whether positive action is being taken by officers attending domestic incidents. As crime reports are officer specific, a monthly breakdown

of Q markers per officer is provided on the BCU intranet performance page. The aim is to use this information to identify and address poor performance and training requirements.

80. In addition, every month the DCI dip samples completed filed investigations, in particular domestic incidents. All hate crimes are reviewed by the DCI upon first report, before finalisation, and additionally at six weekly multi-agency case review panels.
81. The detective inspectors review Court summary documents (MG3 reports) completed under the statutory charging scheme monthly, when the charging decision is to take no further action. Additionally, the DCI meets monthly with senior lawyers responsible for the local charging scheme and lawyer feedback regarding investigative standards is a standing agenda item. By local arrangement lawyers will only offer charging advice when a supervisor endorses the MG3 reports.
82. A police bail (section 47/3) management system has been developed in conjunction with the local criminal justice team. A monthly breakdown of outstanding bail cases is provided within the intranet performance page and an e-mail template was produced for officers to inform the custody team of bail changes. Within a period of three months outstanding bail cases were reduced from over 150 to an average of 20 at any one time.
83. As part of a BCU *Offenders Brought To Justice* Delivery Plan the DCT have commissioned a thorough review of the crime management and allocation process. A review team, led by the detective inspector reactive, is working to develop processes to better support efforts to bring offenders to justice in a timely manner. It is the inspection team's view that under his leadership this review is likely to bear fruit.

### Successful Operations

84. There is a clear and widely understood system for securing support of other HQ specialist teams through the NIM Level 2 T&CG process. Through this process the BCU secured the support of both the MCIU and the Serious Crime Group (Force Targeting Team and Financial Investigation Unit) to assist with the progression of Operation Jubilant.
85. Operation Jumble in 2004, a proactive operation to target both open and closed drugs markets within the BCU, secured the support of Bristol's Operation Atrium and led to successful joint operations.
86. Operations Jute and Jabel in 2004, operations to target a drugs factory in a disused farm and importation of cocaine through Portbury docks, secured the support of the Serious Crime Group and Force Targeting Team.

## MAPPA

87. The DCI acts as chair of local Multi Agency Risk Conferences (Level two Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements - MAPPA). Support is provided by the HQ dangerous offenders unit and local CPT field intelligence officer. Offenders managed at MAPPA Level one are managed according to force policy and the BCU intelligence team have been recognised for their effective management of the ViSOR system and prompt action on intelligence packages. All packages requiring action are issued promptly to sector staff and their return closely monitored.

## Use of Forensic, DNA and other Scientific Techniques

88. The Government has invested heavily in the application of forensic science by police forces. The Police Science and Technology Strategy and DNA Expansion Programme demonstrate a firm commitment to improve the detection of crime by scientific method. This approach is being reinforced by the Police Standards Unit, which is currently working to improve the suite of national forensic science performance measures.
89. The HQ Scientific Support Team centrally controls the crime scene investigation (CSI) team situated within the BCU. There are seven bases throughout the Force and resources are deployed to incidents by a central resource unit. BCU CSI teams across the Force work the same shift pattern and deployments are according to demand rather than geographic base. Therefore abstractions at any one CSI base are, in theory, covered by deployment of CSIs from elsewhere.
90. At this time the force CSI team has five Crime Scene Managers, one of whom is based within the force training school. There are eight CSI team supervisors, one of whom is based at Weston-super-Mare, 33.5 CSIs, and 11 assistant CSIs. There are also seven clerical support assistants. At Weston-super-Mare there is a CSI supervisor, four CSIs, an assistant CSI together with an assistant CSI funded by local partnership funding to deal with vehicle crime and an administration assistant. **The inspection team consider partnership funding for such a post as potential good practice, and its existence has contributed to the success of the BCU in terms of vehicle crime.**
91. Following a Best Value Review, the force Scientific Investigations Department developed a central resource unit, to manage the workloads of CSIs throughout the Force. Demand management of local CSIs has been taken over by the unit, which monitors the force STORM communications system for incidents that require CSI attention then allocates resources appropriately. This might involve further contact with victims to assess if CSI attendance is actually necessary.
92. The DCI is able to align crime scene priorities through the local delivery plan and discussion with the unit supervisor. The supervisor also attends morning meetings, tasking meetings and consults with other managers.
93. The CSI supervisor is one of eight involved in a roster, which provides supervisory cover across the Force daily between 0800 and 2200 hrs. Locally the

CSI unit provides the same cover seven days a week. At weekends staffing is reduced to one CSI working between 0800 and 1600 hrs and the other 1400 and 2200 hrs. The assistant CSI works opposite the supervisor so there is always some additional cover. The administration assistant works 0800 - 1600 hrs from Monday to Friday and gives invaluable assistance to the busy CSIs.

94. There are usually two CSI supervisors on call for the Force overnight, one covering the North and one the South. All out of hours requests for CSIs are routed through the on call supervisor providing an element of screening before a CSI is actually called out.
95. The BCU pioneered the use of dedicated staff to deal with DNA and NAFIS packages. The North Somerset DNA & NAFIS team is made up of two uniformed constables and a dedicated vehicle crime investigator MCSO funded through local partnership funding. Results from this team appear to have made a significant contribution to the BCU's sanction detection rates.
96. In the year April – March 2005, 154 DNA/NAFIS packages were allocated to the team resulting in 89 arrests. Those not resulting in arrests comprised of multiple identifications for individual incidents, identifications relating to major incidents and a small number of offenders who remain at large. These 89 arrests have yielded 351 sanctioned detections, an average of 3.9 sanctioned detections per arrest. This equates to 12% of North Somerset's total detections for all crime and 69% of the BCU's detections for the priority crimes of burglary, vehicle crime and robbery. **The inspection team considers the DNA/NAFIS unit to be an example of potential best practice.**
97. CSIs contribute to the daily bulletin through shoe-marks and links to scenes. They administer a 'Shoeware Index system' which works well making a number of positive identifications. Shoe-prints are routinely taken on recognised 'print pads' from suspects in custody, these are then placed on the Shoeware system, which is coded thereby proving a searchable database against outstanding crime scenes etc. In 2003/2004 the BCU used an under-spend to employ a dedicated Linked Crime Co-ordinator. This individual was supported in developing and marketing an index of offender footwear impressions (the Sole Search Index). They provide an important conduit with the HQ linked crime unit and have worked upon a number of CSI projects, particularly supporting the dedicated vehicle crime CSI. Unfortunately budget restrictions have meant that this additional post could not be retained beyond April 2005, however the Sole Search index is maintained within the prolific offender unit and linked crime work is undertaken by our Criminal Intelligence Analysts.
98. The BCU based CSI supervisor attends T&CG meetings and is accountable for actions set at T&CG. Whilst HQ manages the CSI teams they are encouraged to fully participate in local NIM processes and, as a result of significant reductions in priority crimes such as burglary there is increased scope for proactive and targeted deployment of CSIs. For example the DCI has negotiated locally to ensure improved attendance at recovered stolen vehicles and the maintenance of a vehicle examination surgery, over and above the service provided by the partnership funded CSI.

## Crime Recording Practices

99. The crime management unit (CMU) based at Weston-super-Mare comprises a detective sergeant supervisor, three crime screeners (1 police staff, 2 constables) and three crime inputters, who are police staff. The CMU is the central repository for crime recording and plays an increasingly important role in not only administering crime but also guiding front line supervisors and investigating officers.
100. Crime complaints are passed to the CMU in a number of ways, mostly from telephone calls received from victims or paper records produced by officers attending crime scenes. These are screened for potential lines of enquiry then converted into electronic crime records by the inputters. If a crime is to be investigated further the original investigating officer or one selected by the sector team will receive back any original paper records created together with a crime action form, which provides limited guidance from the CMU. Front line supervisors are then expected to monitor their officers' crime investigations as well as provide further support and guidance where needed. Between 60 to 70% of all crime recorded by the BCU is screened out for filing on first submission, either due to an early successful detection or because no realistic lines of enquiry can be followed. This figure is consistent with a number of forces, who are committed to deploying finite resources more accurately towards serious crimes or priority volume crimes with positive lines of enquiry.
101. Recently the BCU discovered that it was taking up to five days to input a crime report on the system, with clear implications for the timeliness of reports from the system, and the impact that this would have on the T&CG process. It would appear that a great deal of the delay is caused by crime reports following a tortuous route from outstations to the CMU. The BCU should be credited with using the new management information system, Signals from Noise, to identify the problem but should not wait for the long expected IT system, Project Incline, to solve this pressing issue. The inspection team recommend:

### RECOMMENDATION 1

The BCU continues the good work it has commenced in identifying blockages in the crime recording system, and undertakes a 'process map' to identify short-term solutions as an imperative.

102. The opening hours of the CMU are generally between 0730 hrs and 1730 hrs. Weekend cover is not provided or perceived as necessary, with adequate access to paper and computer records available. The unit functions well and staff appeared motivated and keenly focused on performance.
103. Compared to other BCUs in Avon and Somerset, personal robbery has proved less of an issue, although it remains a priority crime that is closely monitored. Depending upon the nature and severity of each offence, crimes of robbery are allocated either to sector detectives or to the PCU to investigate. The BCU is helped by good intelligence at a local and force level courtesy of Operation

Atrium (a major initiative against street robbery) as well as many tactical options learned over recent years across the Force. For the period April 2004 - 05, the BCU saw a reduction in robbery of -39.10% from 156 in the previous year to 95. Although there has also been a large percentage drop in detections (47%) dealing with small numerical instances leads to dramatic percentage changes. The numbers involved are relatively small, with a move from 38 to 20 detections. With many tourists visiting the area the maintenance of a low robbery rate is a notable achievement for the BCU and its partners.

104. With the continued development of 'Project Incline' by the Force, a new approach to crime recording will inevitably mean changes to CMU roles and responsibilities.

### Domestic Violence

105. The inspection process requires a close examination of the local approach taken to investigating incidents of domestic violence. The BCU currently employs two full time domestic violence officers. The domestic violence officers are managed by the same detective inspector that oversees the work of the hate crime officer.
106. In June 2003, Avon and Somerset Area 'Domestic Incidents Strategy Group' published a service level agreement entitled 'Domestic Violence What You Can Expect From Us'. This is a live document and details a standard of service across key agencies including the police, Courts, Probation Service, Victim Support, Youth Offending Teams and Crown Prosecution Service. The document will undoubtedly be enhanced in the light of experience, as greater emphasis is placed upon the plight of victims of domestic violence. Local criminal justice agencies, in particular the police and Crown Prosecution Service are now taking a much stronger stance on issues such as partner on partner violence, repeat victimisation and victims declining to proceed. Such moves are to be applauded and should assist the BCU in improving local performance in a number of ways.
107. The inspection team found the local domestic violence officers to be extremely committed and capable. They maintain good links with numerous internal departments and external agencies. Similarly to the hate crime officer, the DVOs are very much involved in the supervision of all domestic violence incidents investigated on behalf of the BCU, whilst acting as a signpost service for victims; but in doing so they remain victim focused. The commitments of the DVOs are currently numerous, therefore without an increase in capacity they will not be able to takeover dealing with offenders, leaving these to less experienced team officers. They have limited administrative support, currently using an officer on restricted duties for that purpose.
108. At the time of the inspection there were moves to introduce a combined unit, incorporating the hate crimes officer and the child protection team (the latter which is currently centrally controlled) and to form what is often referred to in other forces as a public protection unit. HMIC supports this, having been the subject of a recommendation in a previous BCU inspection report<sup>4</sup>. This will

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<sup>4</sup> Bath & North East Somerset July 2003

enable the unit to move to an offender focus whilst providing additional administrative support.

**Table 1: Domestic Violence**

<b>Domestic Violence</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Number of Domestic Violent Cases Recorded	1,501	2,025	+34.9%
% Arrested where there was the power to arrest	37.2%	41%	+3.8%
Of those arrested % that were Partner on Partner Violence	97.8%	99.2%	+1.4%
% Repeat Offences in previous 12 months	26%	30%	+4%

109. Between April 2004 - 05 approximately 2,025 domestic violence incidents were recorded by the BCU. Of these incidents which were deemed to have been sufficiently serious for a power of arrest to exist, 41% resulted in such a power being exercised. This figure is an improvement on the previous year but is a little low in comparison with other BCUs. This is almost certainly because of there being a victim focus and not an offender focus by the specialist domestic violence team, leaving the active investigation to team officers. If a combined team is created as described above, the result will be an increase in the BCU's effectiveness in dealing with domestic violence; with an improved detection rate, a reduction in repeat victimisation, and more importantly, an improved service to the victim. Nationally 40% of all victims of murder have been subject of domestic violence by the offender previously and therefore the inspection team strongly urge the Force to increase momentum in this direction.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

The Force and BCU considers the introduction of combined unit to address child protection, domestic violence, hate crime and registered sex offenders.

**Hate Crimes**

110. In common with domestic violence, the inspection process requires a close examination of the local approach taken to investigating hate crime, which mostly includes racist and homophobic incidents. In particular the inspection team considers how seriously such crimes are treated on the BCU.

111. The BCU currently employs one full time hate crime officer, who is an experienced constable and has been in post since the role was created in February 2005. The hate crime officer is situated with the domestic violence officers under the supervision of the CMU detective sergeant. Part of the hate crime officer's role is to monitor and supervise the investigation of all hate crime incidents on behalf of the BCU, which includes:

- monitoring the submission of 119 racial/homophobic incident report forms;
  - chasing failed or poor submission of 119 forms by use of memos to sector inspectors;
  - ensuring all active lines of enquiry are pursued by investigating officers;
  - ensuring appropriate referrals are made to partner agencies, non-government organisations or support groups;
  - maintaining a close personal interest in the needs of victims;
  - exploring target hardening and crime reduction opportunities;
  - maintaining a close working relationship with victim support.
112. The hate crime officer is involved with, and has close working relations with numerous outside agencies, and attends a local drop in centre to increase his availability.
113. The hate crime officer acts as important quality check on all reports before they are personally scrutinised by the DCI. All hate crimes are reviewed by the DCI upon first report, before finalisation, and additionally at six weekly multi-agency case review panels. The fact that a member of the DCT personally vets such crimes is an important indicator of how seriously the BCU treats such matters.
114. In the year April 04 – March 05, 136 hate crimes were reported and this was a 58% increase on the previous year. It is believed within the BCU that a significant proportion of this increase is attributable to efforts to increase community awareness and encouraged reporting. The BCU has distributed 800 *True Vision* self-reporting packs across agencies, with another 300 on order, and gay liaison officers run a gay drop-in event at a local public house. The inspection team examined the figures and there was a large increase in incidents of low level harassment, which would have previously gone unreported as minor matters, which the hate crime officer is now actively encouraging victims to report to gain a true picture of the problem and support victims.
115. The DCI chairs a multi-agency case review panel six-weekly and sector deputies represent sector staff. Support agencies such as Support Against Racist Incidents and Somerset Race Equality Council also attend the panel and take an active interest in the progression of investigations. The community safety sergeant is required to maintain an awareness of incidents, ensuring that the NIM Tactical Assessment captures any community tension indicators.

### **Intelligence-Led Policing**

116. North Somerset BCU has adopted the National Intelligence Model (NIM) to drive its business. A Tactical Tasking & Co-ordinating Meeting (TTTCG), chaired by the BCU Commander, meets every fortnight and is attended by the District command team, sector inspectors, detective inspectors, and representatives from the intelligence unit, prolific offender unit, proactive team and crime reduction team. The CDRP Community Safety manager and the roads policing unit FIO also attend. The NIM process includes an 'actions' template, and action owners are required to report progress. The DI intelligence holds a pre-TTTCG meeting to review progress and develop intelligence-led bids for TTTCG support.

117. The inspection team attended a TTTCG meeting and found it well led by the Commander, addressing priorities and clarifying intelligence. The meeting decided the focus of BCU activity, received updates on current problems and was clearly driven by an effective intelligence input. The Tactical Assessment accurately reflected the control strategy and the meeting incorporated the CDRP strategy, as was evident in the bids from sector inspectors.
118. Whilst the TTTCG was well conducted, efficient and professional, the inspection team noted that the room was not large enough for the numbers in attendance, resulting in some key staff such as the crime analyst sitting on a desk at the back of the room. This is a common problem, but in the absence of a larger venue, the DCT should reconsider the attendance list for the TCG and limit the numbers of police staff to those who contribute such as the corporate development officer and the crime analyst.
119. The TTTCG is preceded by a performance improvement meeting (PIM) conducted as a separate meeting and attended by the same staff. The purpose of the PIM is to update staff on progress in key crimes and to highlight dips in performance so that action can be taken at an early stage. The PIM received information from the corporate development officer showing the number of crimes allocated to a team or unit and their finalisation methods. This was a useful presentation of management information for sector inspectors and sergeants, which the inspection team views as good practice. It is a useful context to the TTTCG, providing a focus on performance.
120. The PIM lasted about fifty minutes and received an impressive presentation from the BCU's corporate development officer. However, the TTTCG would be better served by a shorter PIM preceding it. As the BCU continues to develop a culture of continual review, those present at the PIM should be driven by performance data on a daily basis, allowing the meeting to concentrate on accountability and complete its business within half an hour.
121. The BCU has recently introduced a daily intelligence meeting at which uniform supervisors, duty inspector, CID and intelligence staff are present. The meeting is chaired by the intelligence detective sergeant who ensures that crime and intelligence matters in the previous 24 hours are reviewed and actioned. The focus is on maximising detections and ensuring outstanding named suspects and intelligence is acted upon in quick time.
122. The Intelligence Team comprises two criminal intelligence analysts, a local intelligence officer (LIO) and four field intelligence officers, one liaison officer dedicated to houses of multiple occupancy (HMO) (secured with partnership funding) and two dedicated source handlers.
123. The BCU has established a unique post of field intelligence officer HMO, who works in partnership with the local authority, dealing with the issues that stem from houses of multiple occupancy. The post, together with a dedicated planning officer within the local authority was kick-start funded from the Single Regeneration Budget. This initiative was a result of analysis of drug and alcohol fuelled crime in Weston-super-Mare. Analysis showed that Social Services

Departments in the South were sending their clients to the town for drug and alcohol treatment. Property owners rent houses to multiple occupants exclusively from this group. Treatment provision is inadequate and many individuals are not receiving the support or supervision they need. Analysis has linked this situation to levels of crime in the town. The resulting partnership initiative addresses drug and alcohol provision and has resulted in a reduction of 50 poor quality beds and a dramatic reduction in calls to the emergency services.

124. The Intelligence Team are responsible for briefing. In the Northern Sector, two stations at Portishead and Clevedon have recently reopened as 24-hour patrol stations. This is widely supported by communities and by members of staff. Previously, all staff were briefed from a dedicated briefing room at Nailsea, which was considered an example of good practice. The Intelligence Team provide a self-briefing package to the two outstations. The DCT is aware of the potential weaknesses in this style of briefing where self-briefing becomes no briefing. The inspection team acknowledge that the current situation has been carefully decided upon and reflects a commitment to effective front-line policing. The DCT would do well, nonetheless, to introduce an auditable process to self-briefing so that they can be confident that potential weaknesses are avoided.

#### Dedicated Source Handling Unit

125. The BCU operates a dedicated source-handling unit (DSHU) which is managed from the centre, and consists of two handlers (detective constables trained to Level 2/3) and one detective sergeant (trained to Level 3) and managed by the intelligence detective inspector who is trained as a controller to Level four. This unit is responsible for the management of covert human intelligence sources (CHISs) and this is strictly controlled by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). The DSHU produces bi-annual evaluation reports for the BCU and, in addition, systems are monitored by the authorities unit at Force Headquarters.
126. This unit appears to have been very effective, seizing drugs & money to the value of approximately £120,554.00 and the total value of property recovered is approximately £53,400.00.
127. A good example of the type of operation the unit has been involved in is Operation Jumble, which was set up to tackle the growing number of street dealers in Weston town centre. The source-handling unit supplied a large amount of intelligence for this operation, which resulted in a number of dealers being arrested. In total 33 drug users/dealers were arrested, 22 were for possession or supply of class A drugs. The total street value for drugs seized was £13,000. Source intelligence was not only supplied prior to Operation Jumble to determine strategy but also throughout the operation thus enabling the arrest teams to be deployed in quick time to intercept drugs couriers.
128. Two detective constables who deal proactively with prolific offenders and work alongside officers of the National Probation Service, staff a BCU prolific offender unit (POU). From focus groups, the inspection team has concluded that the unit has struck the right balance between preventing and deterring; catching

and convicting; and rehabilitating and resettling. Prison recall notices are promptly actioned and staff have close links with the intelligence unit, enabling up to date briefing and enforcement. At the same time, emphasis is placed on support to individuals so they can break free from their offending cycles.

129. The BCU has a pro-active District crime unit of one sergeant and six constables. Two additional officers are on six-month attachment. This unit has a surveillance capability and is managed by the Intelligence detective inspector. It is appropriate for the BCU, having drug-related criminality with Level two connections, to devote resources to surveillance in support of policing operations. The unit also works closely with the Intelligence DI and reacts to immediate intelligence when necessary. The inspection team is pleased to note that the unit is tasked by the TTCG. This ensures that tasking relates to BCU priorities and that outcomes are scrutinised.
130. Two criminal intelligence analysts serve the BCU, producing intelligence products for BCU priorities, such as problem profiles for violent crime in North Somerset, and supporting the TTCG. They have produced timely hot spot and offender packages for presentation at Level 2 TTCG. They also provide a research capacity for the BCU down to individual and micro beats. Intelligence products have been used to obtain partnership funding, such as a Field Intelligence Officer for HMO, described earlier. The unit therefore services the BCU's needs for operational, tactical, strategic and partnership intelligence.
131. The BCU operates a NIM compliant system of intelligence-led policing. It has analytical capability, joined-up working across its intelligence functions; its activity is directed by its intelligence and is implemented by its TTCG and briefing pack. There is a commitment to intelligence-led policing and the introduction of a daily intelligence meeting further demonstrates that the BCU understands the relationship between directed activity and improved performance.

## **Leadership**

132. The BCU has worked hard over the last few years to develop its community focus. The current commander has continued the drive begun by her predecessor and sits on a variety of partnership forums. She is the face of the BCU and is known and respected by her partners who were unanimously complimentary about the relationships she has developed. To a lesser extent, other members of the DCT have replicated this lead, for instance diversity forums and force level projects considerably occupy the DCI. The consequence of this 'outward – facing' approach is that DCT visibility within the BCU has suffered. Only the uniform chief inspector, having an operational role, is known to staff. A perception of remoteness is shared by uniform and CID officers.
133. The performance superintendent is a new post to the BCU. He is widely admired for his energy in visiting staff and selling the message of performance. His activity inevitably contrasts with what has gone before. He reports directly to force command on behalf of the BCU on performance matters. This position,

giving him apparent access to ACPO level, coupled with the leadership credibility which his visits have given him, pose challenges for command relationships. There is a risk that one person will quickly become the face of North Somerset DCT, be perceived to speak with the authority of force command, and for staff to look to that person alone for leadership. Senior leaders at force and BCU level are aware of the risk; however, on the BCU the method of avoiding it had not yet been decided. The performance superintendent post is a new one, but its introduction is already having an effect and therefore these issues should be resolved as soon as possible.

134. There are opportunities to strengthen leadership at first and second line management. The BCU's organisational structure to service geographical policing has produced an imbalance in the span of control amongst the inspector rank. There are two sector inspectors responsible for geographical policing. These post-holders are responsible for beat managers, response policing and their respective supervision. They are accountable for performance and for problem solving policing. Five inspectors provide Critical Incident cover for the BCU. They are responsible for immediate critical incident management and undertake a quality-control audit in file management, but are not responsible for those staff. There is a desire amongst this group to participate more fully in the management of the BCU. The challenge of how time-bound CIMs participate more fully in geographically bound accountability is not easy to resolve and is not a challenge exclusive to this BCU. The DCT is aware that this challenge is most likely to be overcome by flexibility and corporacy; and a Critical Incident Manager now has the portfolio of public consultation. Front line supervisors, who report to the two sector inspectors, are obliged to work largely independently, which distances them from the communication, consultation and support which accompanies more direct supervision.

### Internal Communication

135. The BCU uses a range of methods to communicate with its staff including e-mails, team briefings, meetings and notice boards. A recent innovation has been the District magazine 'Just J', which had a first edition in May 2005. These methods contain local news stories, successes and performance information. They demonstrate a desire to share information but do not provide the means to drive consultation and debate. Over a year ago, District Corporate Development Officers carried out an EFQM assessment of the BCU. It identified staff concern about feedback to management and a lack of face-to-face communication. In response the BCU promoted an open door policy and, alternatively, personal appointment with the BCU Commander. The Commander held a constables' forum and holds regular Staff Association meetings.
136. These changes are to be applauded; however, the inspection team found that staff are still eager for face-to-face communication. The DCT is undoubtedly keen to communicate with its staff but the methods chosen are reactive and require staff to take the first steps. The DCT is urged to raise its visibility across the BCU and to institute a programme of face-to-face visits. The performance superintendent has begun this process and staff hopes for visibility and communication have

been raised. It is a challenge that all members of the DCT must now meet if initial successes are not to be replaced by disillusion.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

The recently expanded DCT take this opportunity to raise its visibility across the BCU by a programme of face-to-face visits.

## External Communication

137. The BCU, consistent with its focus on community engagement, has well-defined links with the local media. The DCT have worked hard to create a positive image of the BCU by countering negative stories and promoting positive ones. It has been greatly assisted in this regard by a Headquarters Media Relations Officer who is dedicated, one day per week, to the BCU. His expertise is valued by the BCU in helping to identify good news stories and helping officers develop local-interest pieces for the media
138. There are also established relationships with local newspapers and radio, which circulate crime reduction messages. The local radio station has a weekly 'Crimestoppers' feature and regular features on incidents and crime levels. One particular officer has done much to bring on the BCU's profile in this way. Sector inspectors also have regular contact with local editors.
139. The BCU is successful in its media relations and is well placed to develop these avenues further, communicating its mission, vision and objectives and moving on to media management, promoting the BCU as a recognisable brand.

## Accountability and Performance Management

140. The BCU is accountable to the Force through a fortnightly Performance Improvement Meeting (PIM) and (Level two) Tactical Tasking and Coordinating Meeting (TTCG). It is also subject to quarterly inspection visits by an assistant chief constable. Performance is measured by fortnightly Performance Tables, monthly SPC graphs and the Force's Management Information System (ASMIS) report.
141. At BCU level, force procedures are replicated. There is a fortnightly PIM and a (Level one) TTCG. These are held on Monday, force meetings are held on Wednesday. Performance monitoring information is supplied by the District performance unit including IQUANTA data for MSBCU comparison; progress on the District Development Plan; and monthly incident data such as Sec. 47/3 bail lists, crimes with named suspect and TICs per month. Performance summary information is displayed on notice boards and is accessible to all staff via the intranet.

142. The PIM follows a regular format, covering call handling, response times, BCU and sector level crime and disorder statistics and force performance tables. This information is presented by the District performance unit that highlights significant variation from the norm and identifies developing trends. The District performance unit provides clear management information on which the BCU can act. It has already piloted 'Signals from Noise' software – an impressive programme that promises to be an important aid to track performance.
143. The BCU is therefore sighted on its performance; has the capacity to anticipate trends and take remedial action; and has a structure to manage performance. There is evidence of a developing performance culture on the BCU. At force level, performance is examined and those responsible are called to account. This is concentrating the minds of the BCU on performance and force systems of accountability have been replicated. Information is shared to staff on the intranet, targets are set via the Balanced Business Scorecard (BBS), notice boards are kept up to date and managers are required to explain current performance. In focus groups, staff understood that performance is important.
144. There is still more to be done, however, specifically in the area of performance ownership, which can be improved by increasing the emphasis on personal responsibility and reviewing the allocation of tasks.
145. Although staff understood the importance of performance, personal responsibility did not extend beyond a general acknowledgement that BCU performance is a product of individual policing effort. When exploring the causes of crime with managers, the inspection team encountered explanations that attempted to explain why a situation is as it is. For instance, there were a number of explanations offered for violent offences – that the figures do not reflect reality which is that Weston-super-Mare is very safe: that the solution is outside the BCU's control because it is caused by an influx of football fans visiting the Millennium Stadium: or that the problem will resolve itself in five years' time when the town had made its transition to a café society. The BCU's performance target for violent offences was not widely known. The inspection team would have preferred managers to concentrate on how identification of the cause signalled the correct policing solution, who bore managerial responsibility, and what target had been set for each operation. These circumstances did not persuade the inspection team that a performance culture is yet fully developed throughout the BCU. Nevertheless, the DCT is committed to improving performance and the introduction of a performance superintendent will, from the start seen already, greatly improve the BCUs capacity to develop further.
146. The current way in which responsibilities are apportioned is unlikely help the BCU achieve optimum performance. Reactive staff consider themselves responsible for response policing and they are assessed by such criteria as their attendance time. Beat Managers consider themselves responsible for community engagement and they are assessed by such criteria as their time on the street and schools attended. The BCU's policing doctrine in the past has been to emphasise community engagement as the means of crime reduction – and with considerable success. It is no surprise therefore that staff continue to focus on past methods as the key to success. Beat managers continue to engage with the community as

their contribution to performance. At present there is an over-reliance on response policing to deliver gains in detection. Pro-active policing is directed towards response policing resources who attempt to deliver these demands whilst attending to response policing. The challenge for the BCU is to identify crime-fighting strategies, and an enhanced ability to respond to intelligence led policing, without jeopardising the BCU's gains in community engagement (see Recommendation 5, para 161 on Demand Management).

147. The inspection team found a committed workforce in which the relationship between all members of staff is positive. For instance, uniform staff commented on the helpful attitude of the CID, and the CID showed an understanding of the difficulties under which young officers work. Front desk staff felt part of the policing team and all staff displayed a desire to do their job well. The BCU is commended for its willing, enthusiastic and positive-minded staff. The BCU recognises good work and is ready to seek it out and publicise it. There are several examples of staff whose achievements have received national and regional recognition, those achievements having been promoted by the BCU. This atmosphere is led by the BCU Commander who displays a genuine interest in good work and a desire to recognise those who do it. The system however relies on formal processes with their built-in delay. HMIC found staff were keen for informal recognition, such as a telephone call, direct from the DCT. Greater use of this practice is commended to the DCT, not only for its immediacy but also because the DCT can praise work that is worthy but not outstanding in a format that staff see as proportionate.
148. The inspection team were unable to find evidence of a shared vision amongst staff. Although officers and police staff could articulate their own vision of their role, it was a personal one. Beat managers were most readily able to express their sense of purpose. As the organisational culture moves to a more crime-fighting emphasis than before, it will become ever more important that all elements of the BCU understand a corporate vision and can therefore act their part in pursuance of it. The Chief Constable has agreed the force mission, vision and objectives and therefore this is the right time to restate the BCU's vision.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

The BCU restates its vision and communicates it to all staff.

### **Managing Demand**

149. The Force has two control rooms based at Portishead and Taunton, each using the STORM command and control system. Priority codes used by the centres are:
- immediate
  - prompt
  - routine
  - action by District
  - for information – not attended

150. During 2004 - 05 the total number of immediate urban incident logs for the BCU was 3230, a decrease of 5.9% over the previous year. The total of rural immediate incidents over the same period was 1056, an increase of 7.06% on the previous year.
151. The District aims to respond to immediate calls within 10 minutes in urban areas and 20 minutes in rural areas. The force target is for arrival within time in 75% of urban calls and 90% of rural calls per month. The BCU arrived within the target in 67.2% of urban calls (up 5% on the previous year) and 75.8% of rural calls (down 3.2%).
152. In September 2004, the BCU received software that significantly improves management information, including Demand management. This package is known as 'Signals from Noise' (SfN), so called for its capacity to identify performance messages from large amounts of data. Information on time, location and classification of calls, for instance, are highlighted when they display significant variation from the norm. This system has been used recently, in the performance year 04/05. The BCU has been able to analyse response times more deeply and, by changing the disposition of patrols and other operational practices, to improve its response times. There have been significant improvements in performance from November 2004, showing a consistent upward trend and with the BCU hitting its target for both rural and urban calls in February 2005.
153. The BCU uses a 2-2-2 shift pattern for its reactive uniform teams, and this was selected to maximise staff numbers to police the busy Friday and Saturday nights, which also provides an overlap period. Such a shift pattern can have other benefits in terms of a healthy rota for staff. The pattern was introduced in November 2004 after extensive staff consultation. The PCSOs also work a set shift pattern, which is aimed at maximising their visibility within the community. The special constabulary are aligned to sector and geographical areas.
154. The use of the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff as the temporary national stadium has also provided an additional policing challenge as Weston-super-Mare is a popular overnight base for travelling football supporters. The BCU has developed an extensive partnership response including entertainment centres and places offering accommodation, in order to prevent crime and disorder and thereby minimise the demand such incidents impose.
155. A District resource unit (DRU) is established to manage resources. It is responsible for internal demand such as additional resources for predicted disorder within the BCU; and for external demand at force or regional level such as the Bristol Balloon Festival and Glastonbury. The unit has been recognised for its partnership work with local courts in minimising abstraction for court hearings.
156. The majority of light duties officers are currently employed alongside operational teams as crime enquiry officers with a view to taking statements and expediting investigations. This is a sound operational practice as it keeps officers aligned to their colleagues' shifts and can reduce the burden on patrol officers.

157. All overtime incurred on the BCU has to be authorised by the duty inspector. A spreadsheet is maintained to ensure up-to-date information on over-time spent is available and monitored. Sector inspectors and detective inspectors are responsible for ensuring the over-time budget is kept on-target. The potential mismatch between those who authorise overtime and those who are responsible for it, is managed by communication and co-operation between inspectors.
158. The BCU has a dedicated call-handling unit, established in 2003 to improve call-handling performance for non-emergency enquiries, known as Operation Ease. The unit consists of police staff managed by a police staff supervisor. This unit is widely considered to have contributed to the effective management of non-emergency calls. In November 2005, the Constabulary is due to launch the force Contact Centre that will absorb this facility, with the intention of improving overall call handling.
159. The BCU has appointed one of the critical incident managers, (CIM) with the portfolio of public consultation. Part of this portfolio includes the responsibility to manage the Weston, Nailsea, Clevedon and Portishead police station front offices and the police staff that work within them. This enables a consistent and corporate approach across the District, and in 2004 the opening hours were extended across the District.
160. By Autumn 2005, the BCU will incorporate a criminal justice unit, devolved from a force unit, and expanded to consist of a prisoner handling unit, a case management unit and a custody unit under the leadership of a criminal justice inspector. Police staff have been recruited as case-builders. This is a force initiative already piloted on the Bath and North East Somerset BCU. It promises greater efficiency in case preparation and an increase in officer time for front-line duties.
161. Response to demand, despite the steps taken by the DCT, relies primarily on response teams. An increasing emphasis on crime fighting is also focused on response teams via the briefing system. There is therefore an over-reliance on one section of the BCU to meet demand and improve performance. The pressure for performance is unrelenting and so the pressure on response teams will only increase. Although response teams will attempt to reconcile the competing demands of response and pro-active policing, they are unlikely to be able to do so without strategic support. The BCU would benefit therefore from a strategic review of how it divides its policing responsibilities including those for crime detection, response and reassurance.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

The BCU strategically reviews the available resources to arrive at a more equitable division between resources and demand, taking into consideration the requirement to provide crime detection, response and reassurance.

## Self-Review and Learning

162. The BCU provides two types of training as part of its training strategy: essential and developmental training. Self-review and learning is a component of developmental training. A training user group (TUG) meets quarterly, identifying the needs of the organisation, the District and the individual. Training days are built into the shift pattern and the attendance rate is 91%. The BCU has created a two-week skills enhancement programme offering development in crime investigation. This programme was initiated and is run by the CID and is separate from CID attachment within the Probationary programme. **Its success, since recent initiation, owes much to the welcome and support offered by individual detective officers and is an area of potential good practice.** This, along with training provision such as training days for DCT and training for supervisors in managing investigations, demonstrate the BCUs commitment to providing the means and opportunity for self-development.
163. An important means towards self-development is the PDR process. Managers return PDRs on time in only 57.1% of cases. Focus groups have shown that the process carries little credibility and managers have not succeeded in demonstrating to staff that they hold personal development as a priority. HMIC is aware that the system has been changed but a cultural change is also required. The BCU is seeking Investors in People accreditation and has volunteered to undergo the Investors in People health check. Investors in People findings reflect those of HMIC and the document as a whole is commended to the BCU. The post of HR manager is a recent addition to the BCU and the inspection team is confident that this new position will strengthen the BCU's efficiency and effectiveness in HR management.

## Management of Staff

### HR Manager

164. The BCU has recently appointed a qualified human resources manager who is a member of the DCT, and these posts on each of the BCUs are a new innovation for the Avon & Somerset Constabulary. In the increasingly complex world of personnel management the requirement for access to professional advice for BCU commanders has never been more necessary. **The HMI considers the devolvement of finance and personnel functions, with the necessary expertise to hand on the BCU, as good practice.** However, there is only one sergeant responsible for duties management (a full time occupation on any BCU) and one part-time administration post available to support the HR manager. Most comparable BCUs would have at least an additional qualified personnel assistant to support the manager. As it is a relatively new post, the worth of which may not be fully appreciated yet, the need for additional support may not be fully made out but it is hoped that additional support will materialise overtime.
165. As these are new posts, it is helpful that all the new appointees meet on a regular basis, originally on a weekly basis but now monthly, to discuss issues and share good practice. The BCUs now reflect the Force's systems for recruitment and

good use is being made of PDRs when vetting applicants for posts. In addition, applicants have to submit a report detailing why they want a certain post, and explaining what skills and competencies they would bring. This professional overview of the appointment of staff is important in that it displays an even-handedness and transparency which will reflect the DCT's desire to treat people fairly and with integrity. This will then in turn be reflected in the organisational culture of the BCU and prevents unnecessary grievances over posting issues.

### Staff Appraisals

166. The BCU has an ambitious but achievable target of 90% return rate on officers' appraisals (PDRs) but to January had only achieved a return rate of 56.7% based on their own figures. The HR manager is very clear that this is not an acceptable figure and is determined to improve on this. This will be difficult with the lack of support staff available to her, and the inspection team will follow her progress with interest.

### Attendance Management and Sickness Statistics

167. The BCU analyses sickness using the Bradford scoring system, which is seen as best practice, and staff who are sick on three occasions or who accumulate 28 days sickness or more, are automatically highlighted. The Force's policy on sickness, first published in 1999, is currently being updated.

168. Appropriate cases are referred to the Force's occupational health team for review, but it was the view of several managers on the BCU that this team did not share the District's sense of urgency when attempting to resolve issues. Once all avenues of support have been exhausted and there is no improvement in sickness levels, a member of staff may have their right to self-certify withdrawn, and this has happened on one occasion in North Somerset, and other cases are pending. In total 12% of all police officers on the North Somerset District have been declared as non-operational by occupational health; officers which the BCU has to find useful employment for whilst managing the impact such a large abstraction has on operational policing. This taken together with the sickness levels, as displayed in Table 2 below, is far too high. Sickness has increased from approximately 11.5 days per officer in 2004, to 14.38 days in 2005. North Somerset has the worst sickness figures of any BCU in Avon and Somerset. The national target is to reduce sickness to 8 days per officer by 2006.

**Table 2: Sickness**

<b>Days Lost</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Police officers	2,708	3,366	+24.3%
Police staff	889	897	+0.9%

169. The issue of sickness is discussed at management meetings but does not have a meeting in its own right, in which solutions can be identified. To improve the management of sickness and to make best use of the expertise now available to the BCU, the inspection team recommends a monthly sickness management meeting be instigated chaired by the HR manager, with the duties sergeant

present. The BCU Commander or deputy should be in attendance for operational considerations, but importantly a representative from occupational health should be present. Such a meeting has been found to make a major contribution to the reduction of sickness on other BCUs, and without it the District has no hope of reaching the national target.

**RECOMMENDATION 6**

The BCU instigates a sickness & health-monitoring group at which a representative of the Force's occupational health team is a permanent member.

### Postings

170. The BCU's sector commanders have a large degree of autonomy and are able to move their staff around the sectors as they see fit. There have been some issues when staff have been moved between sectors, leading to problems that have been subject of discussion at DCT meetings. It was brought to the attention of the inspection team that there recently had been occasions when patrol shifts have been left without any officers qualified to respond to immediate incidents, due to local postings. It is important on behalf of the District Commander that an oversight of staff postings is maintained on the BCU, and the inspection team recommend that such a regular meeting be setup as soon as possible. This should involve the HR manager and the operational chief inspector. This meeting should review all postings and be the only forum that can approve significant postings such as those between sectors.

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

A regular postings meeting should be established which monitors postings, and sanctions all significant moves such as across sectors.

### Complaints

171. For the period April 2004 - 05 the BCU received a total of 64 complaints, an 11% reduction on the previous year. The HR manager and DCT in general, made it clear that complaints from the public are treated seriously, and such an approach is a positive and may in itself have contributed to this reduction.

**Table 3: Complaints Against Police Officers**

<b>Complaints</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>% Change</b>
	71	64	-11%

## Training

172. The BCU has a training users group (TUG) at which the two divisional training officers attend, together with an inspector who previously chaired the meeting and the new personnel manager. This group is intended to consider and prioritise all bids for training and match them against District priorities. As the BCU is heavily influenced by the summer season, no training takes place during June, July, and August, which sensibly balanced staff development against operational need.
173. The focus group of involved staff indicated that training was lagging behind demand and although some useful local training had been delivered, such as premises search training, and interview training skills, local needs appeared to be secondary to central requirements. This is not surprising as the training officers were Headquarters staff rather than District staff, and therefore are likely to take their main steer from the centre. It is the inspection team's experience that training provision is more responsive to local needs when the resources are owned locally. The TUG requires careful negotiation to maintain a balance between competing priorities, and the useful handover period between chairs has now come to an end. The new HR manager needs to assert her position as chair of TUG, with a responsibility to ensure the interests of the BCU are properly represented.

### RECOMMENDATION 8

The Force should consider redeploying trainers to Districts, to enable a more effective response to local training needs.

## Reassurance & Visibility

174. Anti-social behaviour blights local communities and damages community cohesion. It is important that this is recognised by the police and that they respond effectively, using a menu of options of which visibility is key.
175. Through analysis and profiling of hot spots, the BCU has successfully bid for SRB 6 funding of £40k over 3 years to conduct additional high visibility patrols and execute minor drugs warrants within the town centre of Weston (Operation Jigsaw).
176. In April 2005, there was a successful bid for an additional £30k of funding, to provide additional patrols to deal with alcohol related crime hot spot in the town centre. The BCU has also been successful in securing additional funding from NCIS, in order to implement policing operations on the District, as a result of major football matches being diverted to the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. These are some of the manifold examples of the success the BCU has had in obtaining additional external funding.

## Beat Managers

177. The BCU has invested heavily in this area over the last five years and to a degree at the cost of its reactive arm, but now has 36 beat managers covering the District. This includes the eight constables in the town centre team and four officers on the Neighbourhood Policing Team in the South Ward. Sector inspectors lead locally on community engagement with town and parish councils, residents associations and other groups.
178. The BCU is fully engaged in increasing reassurance and improving police visibility within the community and the District plan has the key themes of community engagement and public contact contained within it and lead officers have been appointed to manage these priority areas. Reassurance is clearly one of the key personal priorities for the BCU commander.

## Local Action Teams

179. A force-wide initiative, Local Action Teams (LATs) are central to citizen focus and problem solving across the BCU, and there are now 32 teams covering all the centres of population across the BCU. Beat managers support each one and a LAT coordinator has since been employed, through partnership funding, to support and encourage the development and provide practical support and guidance and sharing of good practice among ongoing schemes. Each LAT is made up of local people and stakeholders who wish to improve their local environment, as seen in other neighbourhood policing projects, and reflects the good practice of the National Reassurance Policing Project.
180. The inspection had the opportunity to interview a number of representatives from various LATs in a focus group, and was impressed by their commitment and understanding of the issues and problems in local areas. After the initial setup, they saw themselves very much as local problem-solvers and the need for police input was diminished, taking a more supportive role. Many good examples were given of schemes that benefited local youths, and reduced anti-social behaviour. The initiative to persuade local off-licences to raise the minimum age that they would sell alcohol displayed a real problem solving approach, without any need for police involvement. However, they saw the on-going positive and visible support of the BCU commander as important; and of equal importance was the continued support from their beat managers. The only apparent impediment to their continued success appeared to be uncertain funding.
181. This empowerment of local communities to solve their problems, with police support, is a visible indication of the BCU's commitment to neighbourhood policing, and reflects the best practice of the National Reassurance Policing Project. Importantly, it assists the community to determine local issues and priorities and once the visible signs of improvement are recognised by the removal of graffiti or abandoned vehicles, this builds a momentum towards success, as found by the inspection in North Somerset District. **The inspection team consider the positive co-operation between the beat managers and the success of the LATs as potential good practice.**

## Other Initiatives

182. The BCU has further enhanced visibility within the community through the introduction of:
- Beat surgeries across the sectors
  - Community contact vehicle
  - Exhibition unit, which can be utilised by CDRP partners and Neighbourhood Policing Teams
  - Redeployment scheme for staff on the Northern Sector
  - A Bobby van.

## Anti-social Behaviour

183. The BCU's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Co-ordinator has been in post since November 2003 and has assisted in the development of the force protocol on ASBOs, which is currently under review. The post-holder has also developed a training programme for all staff on his role, responsibilities and the current legislation. With the assistance of a Home Office grant, this training package was developed and delivered to over 200 Magistrates from across the force area at two training venues in Portishead and Yeovil.
184. In conjunction with another ASB co-ordinator ongoing training has also been given to communication operators on anti-social behaviour issues, to ensure these key individuals give the correct advice to callers and are better able to understand the District and force operational priorities in this area.
185. As well as visible policing, the robust use of legislation is important and the inspection team was pleased to discover 23 anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) current on the BCU, and six applications are pending court hearings. Good use was also being made of new powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and eight Dispersal Orders have been granted this year and currently there is one in operation on the South Ward beat. An application is being considered to extend the current order, which expired in April as despite high profile police intervention the problem has returned.
186. The proactive use of this legislation has contributed to the reduction of anti-social behaviour and enhanced community understanding and reassurance, as evidenced by a focus group of local community representatives.
187. A multi-agency anti-social behaviour panel has now been established for North Somerset, which meets every six weeks to discuss current and emerging problems and persons. The ASB Co-ordinator and the local authority Housing Manager (who has specific responsibility for ASB matters) jointly chair the panel. The group considers cases where an identified individual has been causing problems in the local community. A menu of options is considered to deal with the anti-social behaviour, and this normally includes support packages. The first step is often to attempt to get the individual to sign an acceptable behaviour contract (ABC), which is an acknowledgement of the detrimental effect their behaviour has had in a locale and contains an undertaking to desist. Research elsewhere has shown that these ABCs can be very effective, but if not the next

step is often an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO), which is enforceable by the courts. There have been 30 acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs); 23 juvenile, and seven adult issued during the period under review.

188. The partnership panel has enabled a much closer working relationship, making the exchange of information easier. There is now a greater commitment by the local authority to deal with anti-social related problems. There is also a willingness to use their own powers under various statutes to resolve issues rather than deferring to the police.

189. Anti-social use of vehicles off road has become an increasing problem in recent years. The BCU has developed a policy on the use of powers under the Police Reform Act 2002, to warn offenders and seize vehicles, which has been used to good effect.

### Promoting Public Safety

190. As part of the District plan 2004/5 the BCU introduced a 'balanced score card', referred to as BBS, and this contains measures in support of actions to increase the availability of police officers and staff to the public. The measures, targets and outcomes for 2004/5 are shown below:-

Measure	Target	Achieved 2004/5
% of Beat Manager absences (> 5 working days) covered by deputies	100%	35%
No of Beat Manager visits to Primary schools - % compliance with target	67%	48%
% of time Community Contact Vehicle arrives as per advertised time	100%	96%
Number of hours foot patrol per tour - team officers - % compliance with policy	100%	40%
Number of hours foot patrol per tour - Beat Managers - % compliance with policy	100%	42%
% time spent in community – PCSOs	100%	42%
Number of patrols at key times outside schools - % compliance with the policy	100%	53%
Number of Special Constables – increase	31 over year	30 (to Feb 05)
Number of hours worked by SCs each month	16 per officer	24 (to Feb 05)
Each Beat web page (51) to be updated once per month	Each page once per month	19
Reassurance letters to neighbours following drugs warrant executions - % of reassurance letters sent out	100%	100%
% of dwelling burglary victims revisited	100%	64%

191. The BCU missed by some way its BBS targets in relation to the activities of team officers and beat managers, all of which were designed to improve public contact under the 2004/5 plan. Although these results are disappointing, it is the first time that the BCU has attempted to measure these activities, and there was no background data against which to set a target. Data collection has been difficult and time consuming, and the product often incomplete. These issues are being carried forward into the 2005/6 DDP, and more robust methods of collecting data are being devised by the BCU and it is intended that the outcome for 2004/5 will serve as a baseline from which to make improvements.
192. The target setting and validation of data needs to be re-examined. The inspection team would question the integrity of some of the results, as it became clear on occasions officers merely tick a box on whether or not they have achieved a particular target, and no checks are carried out. One hundred per cent targets are the easiest to set and the most difficult to achieve and are not considered good practice. The inspection team support the principle of performance measures in this area and other forces use team evaluation with some success, such as Kent and Thames Valley. It is accepted that this was an early attempt at meaningful performance management, however, it is suggested that the North Somerset BBS be revamped completely, to make it less bureaucratic for staff and introduce an element of independent oversight;

#### RECOMMENDATION 9

The BCU redesigns the method of examining staff performance and introduces a new 'balanced scorecard', incorporating best practice from elsewhere.

### Neighbourhood Watch

193. The BCU has two Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) administrators, employed through partnership funding who provide support to existing Watch schemes, and encourage the formation of new ones. In 2004/5, the BCU aimed to achieve a net increase of three schemes per month (36 for the year), and actually achieved an overall net increase of 94 schemes. They now number 1194 schemes, covering 79,850 households.

### Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

194. The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act placed a requirement on the police, local authorities and other partners to develop strategies for the reduction of crime and disorder. These strategies are formulated and driven by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). In particular, statutory partnerships for each District of England and Wales must carry out and then publish an audit of crime and disorder in their locality, taking into account the views of those living and working in the area. The CDRP must then identify a series of priorities for action and consult widely regarding the strategy for dealing with these priorities. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships not only have a number of agencies included in their membership but also have to work closely with other agencies or

groups, such as Drug Action Teams (DATs), Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), Health and Education.

195. As North Somerset is a unitary authority, the district's DAT sits under the CDRP, with a dotted line to the YOT; and the CDRP's Community Safety Manager is also responsible for the DAT. This is a sizeable responsibility but the enthusiasm and knowledge of the CSDAT manager seems more than adequate for the task.
196. In line with the philosophy of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, the local authority targets resources in areas of greatest social need; for example youth centres are based in the areas of highest need and on the estates with crime problems. It has also spent £250,000 in upgrading the CCTV system in Weston-super-Mare. It is unfortunate that access to the police radio system has been removed from the CCTV control room. Representatives from the local authority laid a persuasive argument before the inspection team, that this lack of contact was in part responsible for the apparent unchecked increase in violence in the town centre. Although there may be correlation between the two, the causation of violent crime can have many facets. However, despite her best efforts, the BCU commander has not been able to resolve the issue, and the inspection team urge the Constabulary to resolve the matter as soon as possible:

**RECOMMENDATION 10**

Force Headquarters examines the blockages to having the town's CCTV monitoring room linked to the police control room as a matter of urgency.

197. The BCU is coterminous with the local authority and this can greatly assist in partnership working. Partnership working is the strong suit of the North Somerset BCU. The DCT and the chief superintendent in particular, have been very outward facing and made great efforts in terms of partnership working. Two focus groups of various partners were interviewed and it was clear that the BCU commander is considered to be very visible and positive, in terms of interaction with stakeholders.
198. Unusually, no reduction targets were set in the CDRP Strategy document: instead the document highlights a list of aims to be achieved by Strategic Development Teams (SDTs) led by key individuals from the member agencies. For example, the Vehicle Crime SDT had as one of its aims "Dealing with offenders who persistently commit vehicle crime". This rather vague aim has resulted in partnership funding to employ a Crime Scene Investigator (CSI) and Major Crime Support Officer (MCSO) dedicated to vehicle crime. Other aims include target-hardening the Council's car parks and reducing forecourt crime at petrol stations.
199. The inspection team commends the positive outcomes of this approach, but hard targets do generally assist in finding the path to success and visualise what success will look like. This is a matter for the CDRP, but officers on the BCU who fell under the umbrella of 'community safety' were unable to articulate what community safety should look like; and their responses to the question were

certainly diverse. Such a definition of what they are attempting to achieve does exist on the BCU, in a newly produced document, and the inspection team recommends:

**RECOMMENDATION 11**

A definition of community safety should be promulgated to all police staff, particularly those with lead responsibilities, to identify actions and targets which will lead to the BCU achieving the Force's aims in that area.

200. The inspection team was impressed with the amount of partnership activity which was too numerous to list in this report. The team was also reassured to find senior officers fully engaged with partners at a strategic level, leaving operational staff to concentrate on performance delivery; this is good practice.

**Prolific Offender Unit**

201. The Prolific and other Priority Offender Scheme is a new Government led initiative aimed at reducing anti-social and criminal behaviour.

202. The scheme has 3 complementary parts:

- Prevent and Deter - to stop people (overwhelmingly young people) engaging in offending behaviours and graduating into prolific offenders;
- Catch and Convict - actively tackling those who are already prolific offenders; and
- Rehabilitate and Resettle - working with identified prolific offenders to stop their offending by offering a range of supportive interventions. Offenders will be offered the opportunity for rehabilitation or face a very swift return to the courts.

203. The new strategy is intended to build on the existing Persistent Offender Scheme and will replace it. The new strategy allows local areas to identify and select offenders using the following criteria:

- the nature and volume of the crimes they are committing;
- the nature and volume of other harm they are causing (eg by virtue of their gang leadership or anti-social behaviour);
- other local criteria based on the impact of the individuals concerned on their local communities.

204. The scheme provides a new definition for a persistent offender, which enhances the existing concept but is more generic. This should identify those individuals who are the most prolific offenders, the most persistently anti-social in their behaviour and those who pose the greatest threat to the safety and confidence of their local communities.

205. The new strategy is CDRP led, with schemes set up to cover every CDRP in the country. The emphasis is upon a partnership approach, with Police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Prisons and Probation working together, under the co-ordination of Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJB), to effectively catch,

convict, monitor and manage such offenders either within the community or a custody setting and work towards rehabilitating them.

206. The basic proposition for the 'Catch and Convict and Rehabilitate and Resettle' strands is to develop a joined up approach, with all partners focused on the same group. This is to be achieved through the setting up of a 'Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) Scheme' in every CDRP area. Each local scheme will, based on intelligence, select the individuals who are causing the most harm to their communities and will ensure all agencies prioritise their resources on these offenders, with the explicit aim of putting an end to the harm which they are causing.
207. The prolific offender unit (POU) is an excellent example of such close working, and having a probation officer working at the police station alongside police officers has contributed to a positive working relationship, and overcome some of the friction that can occur between criminal justice agencies. Burglary dwelling is now at its lowest rate on the BCU since 1998. The POU has shown significant successes in engaging with prolific burglars and other prolific offenders. This coupled with the District DNA/NAFIS team (see para 96) and linked crime coordinator has had a significant impact.

### **Custody and Criminal Justice Department**

208. The Criminal Justice Department (CJD) is a centralised unit and provides custody, Viper identification and court case administration facilities for all BCUs and departments within Avon and Somerset Constabulary.
209. Weston-super-Mare has a custody unit on site consisting of 12 cells situated adjacent to the Magistrate's Court. The custody suite is staffed by seven fully trained custody sergeants and seven detention officers, and they are managed by a CJD inspector. These detention officers are directly employed by Avon and Somerset Constabulary, and the use of such staff is seen as good practice as it frees up constable posts that were previously used to act as gaolers. It is also advantageous to have seven teams of officers as opposed to the traditional single team per shift. This enables the unit to cover its own abstractions without impacting the BCU and adds an element of flexibility, enabling resources to be increased during peak times.
210. The North Sector consisting of three stations is a distance from Weston-super-Mare, which results in abstractions of officers to deal with prisoners. To alleviate this, the old cells at Nailsea have been refurbished and will be suitable for non-PACE prisoners (those that will be detained for less than six hours) and those returning on police bail.
211. There is no set tenure in the unit and sergeants stay in post as long as they wish providing they remain effective. This arrangement does have certain advantages in terms of retaining experienced staff but no refresher training is provided. Staff are updated on policy and legislative changes via e-mail, but there is no effective system to ensure that staff actually read the information, and the concept of

knowledge checks for staff do not appear to have been considered. One officer spoken to had been in custody for thirteen years without any kind of retraining apart from a myriad of e-mails. Nor do custody staff themselves have an opportunity to meet and share best practices.

212. The custody staff are the gatekeepers of the criminal justice system and the importance of their role should be reflected in the manner in which they are managed and trained. The inspection team therefore recommends:

**RECOMMENDATION 12**

Custody staff receive refresher training after a set period, to be decided by the Force, and this is reinforced by regular custody 'users' meetings.

213. The Crown Prosecution Service work on station to provide charging decisions together with criminal justice unit (CJU) sergeants as appropriate.
214. The custody unit received 4800 prisoners in 2004. All detainees and those answering police bail are managed with the assistance of the national computerised IT system. CJU staff provide management information on custody matters. This enables them to monitor and manage investigation times and outcomes of individual cases.
215. The facility is well managed and of good standard. There is extensive use of CCTV, which is considered good practice but at the time of the inspection, none of the cells were monitored, although at least one had been hard wired. The use of CCTV in the cell of a particularly vulnerable detainee is considered good practice and can be a life saving measure. Therefore the inspection team recommends:

**RECOMMENDATION 13**

At least one cell has CCTV installed, and more if possible, to monitor vulnerable detainees.

216. The BCU policy requires the production of detected crime reports by officers in the case following a decision to charge, thus ensuring detections are not 'lost'. All refuse charges and decisions to give police bail are endorsed by critical incident managers (inspectors).
217. Prolific Young Offender (PYO) cases are managed by the crime reduction officers and final warning surgeries are operated by the custody unit using a restorative justice approach. **The inspection team considered this to be potential good practice.**
218. Prolific offender profiles produced by the BCU are circulated to the custody sergeants fortnightly, following the District Level one T&CG meeting. The CJU inspector attends the T&CG meetings. Custody sergeants receive all District intelligence reports electronically on publication.

219. Court case administration is managed by the CJU Inspector and six members of staff, and their role is to build prosecution case files by means of direction and advice to the investigating officer, obtaining written evidence and by tracking the progression of cases in the courts.
220. CJU staff manage the Viper identification unit. There is provision for immediate access when detainees are in custody, when practical, and a booking system for detainees bailed.

### Prisoner Handling Unit

221. At the time of the inspection, the BCU was in the process of setting up a unit which will consist of a prisoner handling unit, a case management unit and a custody element, all under the management of the criminal justice inspector. Police staff have been recruited as case-builders who will obtain witness statements etc, thus freeing up police officers' time. The new unit will also see the introduction of the NSPIS Case product which will interface with NSPIS Custody Product and the Magistrates' Courts' IT system using an electronic case-file. The model was piloted and evaluated at the Bath and North East Somerset BCU, and will be rolled out across the Force. However, the BCU commander, mindful of North Somerset's poor detention rates, is taking steps to implement the unit early, and the inspection team applauds that decision.
222. There will be one police staff post, six constable posts (for 6 months to a maximum of two years) and three constable attachments of three months. The day-to-day running of the unit will be the responsibility of a sergeant under the management of the criminal justice inspector and the District detective chief inspector.
223. The supervisor and two of the constables in the unit will undertake the responsibility of the tutor unit, which is being folded in to the new unit to provide the necessary posts, and those officers will undertake the professional development and tutoring of probationers. Good coverage will be provided as it is envisaged that the unit work between the hours of 0800 and 2300 hours seven days a week. The 'cradle to grave' approach to prisoner handling and file preparation has been found to be the most effective on other BCUs, such as Brighton; and the use of officers on short attachments develops the officers' interview skills as opposed to deskilling them, which is sometimes the criticism of other prisoner handling units with permanent fixed staff.

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HMIC BCU reports represent a snapshot in time, ie when the inspection occurred. It is acknowledged that performance may have changed since the time of the inspection. Every effort is made to publish reports as soon as possible after inspection.