

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

**Inspection of Bedford County BCU
Bedfordshire Police**

July 2007



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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The effective management of change in the Police Service has become a fundamental requirement; and the pace of change is accelerating with advancements in neighbourhood policing, protecting vulnerable people and counter terrorism. The volume of change in Bedfordshire Police reflects this and in certain respects is even greater, as the Force attempts to improve a number of force and BCU processes simultaneously. It is against this background that the inspection of Bedfordshire County BCU was undertaken, and in recognition of the significant changes taking place, the inspection team attempted to restrict the number of recommendations made to those key areas that would assist the change process.

Performance

- 1.2 Bedfordshire Police have historically performed well in terms of crime reduction and is noted for high customer satisfaction rates. In more recent times the sanction detection rate has deteriorated and this is reflected on the Bedfordshire County BCU (here after referred to as Bedford BCU for ease of reference). As Bedford BCU has only existed since April 2006, when it merged with Dunstable BCU, it has proved difficult to obtain detailed comparative data. The charts elsewhere in this document are derived by aggregating historical data, as produced on iQuanta.
- 1.3 The Force has the second lowest recorded crime levels in its most similar family of forces (MSF) but has the lowest sanction detection rate at 20%. Bedford County BCU reflects the mixed picture of the Force and performs poorly in relation to sanction detections. For the period June 2006 to May 2007 Bedford BCU decreased crime by 2%, but sanction detections decreased by 3.5%, to 19%, and the BCU is below the MSBCU average and worst in its group. For the same period detections for burglary dwelling decreased to 8.6% but rose in volume by 7%. Vehicle crime has seen a small decrease in volume but an already low sanction detection rate dropped to 5%, the lowest in its group with long term projections predicting even further decreases.
- 1.4 The divisional leadership team (DLT) are undoubtedly working hard to improve performance and attempting to introduce a performance regime, but it was quite clear to the inspection team that the drive for performance was not consistent at inspector level. At that point there is a blockage preventing the message going any further, and supervisors stated that they did not feel that they were being held to account. The BCU is attempting to produce its own performance management framework but it would be more effective if the Force produced a standard framework throughout the Force.

Investigating Crime

- 1.5 Due to concerns about crime performance the Force requested the Police and Crime Standards Directorate (PCSD) review its crime management at Luton, which resulted in a BCU action plan being published in November 2006. It was decided to roll out the suggested improvements forcewide, key to which is the introduction of a volume crime management model (VCMM). This model is yet to be fully implemented, and performance continues to suffer as a result. Burglary dwelling and criminal damage have increased, as has repeat victimisation, and it would appear that some processes on the BCU differ as systems are yet to be harmonised across the newly amalgamated

BCU. There is a need to have a crime investigation improvement plan, as well as a new crime management model, that embraces all aspects of investigating crime such as training, persistent offenders and dealing speedily with outstanding named suspects. There were some issues concerning forensic management on the BCU, which they have attempted to address by the creation of a forensic management team (FMT) that shows promise. This is also a reflection of the manner in which the BCU is attempting to investigate crime generally, in small teams. There are islands of excellence operating on the BCU, but very much on their own. As VCMM has only been partially introduced, these teams are not effectively linked, and some crime specialist supervisors admitted that they did not know what some of the other teams did.

Communication

- 1.6 The merger of the two previous BCUs, the introduction of VCMM, reorganisation of corporate services and the introduction of MOPI, an intelligence-inputting unit based at Headquarters, directly affects police staff. A number of posts will be realigned and relocated, or reviewed in their entirety. This has had a negative impact on the morale of those staff directly affected, and has also caused serious concern to other staff, both police officers and support staff. Wherever the inspection team visited on the BCU the message was the same; deep disaffection with the manner in which the organisation has treated staff, compounded by poor communication. The DLT acknowledges that communication on the BCU could be improved but due to pressure to introduce many new systems and innovations, there has been inadequate time to consult with staff, and it is the inspection team's view that there could have been better support from the centre. Media managers are Headquarters staff that basically deal with the press and news agencies. There was little evidence of their impact on the BCU in terms of positive stories or getting the corporate message across. The need to improve communications on the BCU overrides all other considerations.

Neighbourhood Policing

- 1.7 The BCU has introduced sergeant led safer neighbourhood teams (SNTs) that are supported by a new sectorised structure known as inspector led neighbourhood areas (INLAs). The inspection team met some very positive and dedicated neighbourhood officers, who are supported by equally positive community support officers (PCSOs). Although considerable consultation did take place, partners indicated disquiet on how the introduction of neighbourhood policing was communicated and it was also made clear that the public in some areas felt disconnected from the decision making processes that defined the new neighbourhood areas. The new areas are merely based on wards, which were delivered as a fait accompli, and there are no neighbourhood action teams that one would expect to find. Although not wishing to dismiss some of the very good work that was taking place within neighbourhoods, the inspection team gained the impression that neighbourhood policing in Bedfordshire was simply a re-badged version of what went before, but with the addition of PCSOs. It would appear the weaknesses in neighbourhood policing are forcewide and not merely a BCU issue.

Leadership and Structure

- 1.8 The inspection team consider Bedford BCU to be well led and there is a strong DLT. There are tensions in terms of structure, both within the DLT and the BCU itself. The

merger of the two previous BCUs was introduced rapidly and the original project team disbanded by Headquarters before the merger was complete. This left the BCU to its own devices to an extent, and many staff indicated that they were not comfortable with the current operational structure. Response officers have large areas to cover and on occasions have to travel through adjoining ILNAs, that are operating on a different radio channel, to get to parts of their own areas. There is a plan to review areas and boundaries and this should take place at the first opportunity.

- 1.9 The ILNAs are managed by three chief inspectors on a district structure, the north and south districts being well defined but not so the Mid-Bedfordshire district. Reflecting the old BCU structures and constrained by serious accommodation problems, several units, such as CMU, operate on a north/south basis. In turn managers and staff operate on a north/south basis, with the Mid-Bedfordshire district “often forgotten about”. If the DLT wish to continue with the current structure, they should examine operating procedures to ensure they represent the three district structure, removing any management systems or cultural symbols of what went before. This would be assisted if departments at Headquarters stopped referring to J Division North and J Division South.
- 1.10 The superintendent crime and operations has responsibility for CID and critical incident managers, and is also BCU lead on performance. Superintendent partnerships has responsibility for the ILNAs that includes the response teams and SNTs. This structure works because of the personalities involved but could lead to tension, as one post holder needs to influence the resources of the other. With other changes taking place on the BCU, this may be the time to review the DLT structure, and reaffirm if it is felt that it continues to be fit for purpose.

Summary

- 1.11 It is crucial the Force makes clear decisions on the changes that are needed to introduce VCMM, MOPI and the new corporate services structure as a matter of urgency. Where these affect the posts of police staff members, these changes should be communicated as sensitively as possible. The Force has little time to waste on this matter before the concerns of the staff reaches a critical mass.
- 1.12 To improve sanction detections a better crime management model is needed, but the inspection team felt unable to make suggestions because of the pending decisions on which model of VCMM would be introduced. When introduced, a process map of relationships between other units and teams needs to be drawn up, and if necessary what has gone before may need to be dispensed with, to facilitate the freeing up of staff to enable the new model to be adequately resourced.

Recommendations and Good Practice

Recommendations

1. The DLT must urgently review the existing communications strategy and then introduce meaningful dialogue with all staff. If necessary this should be supported by additional resources from Headquarters.
2. The support offered to staff subject of ‘at risk notices’ should be reviewed by the Force. Access to an advice centre giving consistent guidance, and as far as possible, independent advice should be considered. Other best practice, such as a ‘most frequently asked questions’ web page could be set-up on the force intranet.
3. The need to introduce an effective crime management system is now critical. The Force and BCU need to implement a crime management model and introduce a programme to enhance the quality of investigation throughout.
4. Once a model has been introduced, existing units and their interdependencies should be reviewed, preferably by using a process map or equivalent process. The future of those units that sit outside the new model should be reviewed, in an effort to find additional resources to support other areas of critical business.
5. The DLT should review the structure of the BCU in light of experience gained from the BCU merger, and ILNAs realigned if necessary. The mechanisms for the management of the BCU should be reviewed at the same time, to ensure that it operates on a three district structure, and not the current ‘north/south’ divide. This may also be a suitable time to examine the divide of responsibilities within the DLT.

Good Practice

- The customer service unit has led to a number of improvements including the manner in which complaints are dealt with.
- The BCU operates an effective daily tasking meeting that is supported by a NIM tasking team. This is in line with the BCU’s vision of ‘dealing with today’s crime today’.
- The forensic management team (FMT) has an innovative approach with the inclusion of crime scene examiners, and early results are promising.
- The BCU has the ability to undertake full financial investigations for confiscation purposes through its dedicated economic crime unit (ECU) which is very much a positive strength.
- Officer and staff activity at ASB hotspots is recorded on the intranet based NIM folder system and activity is reviewed and reported on a daily basis by the Operational Performance Unit (OPU).

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Basic command units (BCUs) are a fundamental building block in the delivery of policing services. Aligned to communities, BCUs represent the local interface with the public and are therefore highly influential in the Police Service's aims to reduce crime and disorder, and to increase community confidence. BCUs vary in size and composition according to the areas they police. All share responsibility for the delivery of the national community safety plan as it affects them and, with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) colleagues, the delivery of the local community safety strategy (CSS) priorities. As such, individual BCUs will continue to be subject to increasing scrutiny of performance from both Government and local communities.
- 2.2 The range in performance outcomes between BCUs presents an opportunity for continuous improvement and to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of this tier of policing. A key ingredient of successful BCUs remains focus, with the most successful being those that maximise focus through effective leadership at every level. Such BCUs also have a performance management framework that strikes the right balance between holding individuals to account, and providing support for those in most need. The NIM will be fully embedded and mainstreamed throughout the BCU, driving all types of proactive intervention through the systematic and skilled interpretation of intelligence. Successful BCUs will also have a thorough appreciation and desire to meet the needs, wishes and expectations of their primary customer - the communities they police.
- 2.3 Following a five year rolling programme of BCU inspections, HMIC has since moved to a more intelligence-led approach whereby only a small number of BCUs are selected for inspection. This follows an examination of their relative performance within their MSBCU group, together with a detailed review of their self-assessment, which was completed as an integral part of the review process. All BCU inspections are now directly aligned to the Force Inspection frameworks and police performance assessment framework (PPAF) domains, and evidence gathered at the BCU tier can easily be used to help assess overall force performance.

Aims of BCU Inspection

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

- 2.4 The inspection of Bedford County BCU was conducted in July 2007. This report sets out the inspection findings, highlighting areas of good practice and making recommendations for improvement where appropriate. Her Majesty's Inspector thanks the officers and staff of Bedford County BCU for the co-operation and assistance provided to members of the inspection team.

2.5 The inspection of Bedford County BCU consisted of the following core stages:-

- Pre-visit data and analysis of BCU self-assessment
- Leadership Audit
- BCU Inspection
- Feedback to BCU
- Reporting

2.6 During the inspection a total of 36 structured interviews and focus groups were conducted, involving over 87 individuals and partnership agency representatives. An audit of crime files and staff PDRs were examined. Other than the BCU headquarters, two visits to other stations were made where additional staff were interviewed. A leadership audit was also conducted within the BCU.

3. Force Overview and Context

Geographical Description of Force Area

- 3.1 The area served by Bedfordshire Police covers the two-tier county of Bedfordshire and the Luton Unitary Authority, with a population of 573,800 comprising 236,974 households in 120 villages and towns. The county includes the urban areas of Bedford, Dunstable and Luton; smaller towns such as Ampthill, Biggleswade and Leighton Buzzard; and a large rural area. Local features and amenities include Woburn Abbey and Safari Park, Luton Town Football Club, Whipsnade Zoo and Luton International Airport. Bedfordshire contains some of the busiest roads in Europe, including a stretch of the national motorway network.

Demographic Description of Force Area

- 3.2 There is high black and minority ethnic (BME) representation, especially in Luton. Projected developments under the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM) and the East of England Plan identify Bedfordshire as an area for significant growth by 2021 (a 23% rise in the housing stock is projected). Future developments include major expansion of Luton International Airport and new tourist facilities (Centre Parcs and NIRAH).

4. The BCU Overview and Context

Geographical and Demographic Description of BCU Area

- 4.1 The Bedfordshire County BCU is coterminous with the area covered by Bedfordshire County Council and it covers an area of 119,208 hectares, with an estimated population of 406,900. The BCU works with three CDRPs, each coterminous with one of the three second tier district councils (Bedford Borough Council, Mid Bedfordshire District Council and South Bedfordshire District Council).
- 4.2 The BCU covers a diverse mix of urban and rural areas and the principal conurbations comprise of Bedford and the neighbouring town of Kempston, with a combined resident population of almost 100,000. Other main towns are Dunstable & Houghton Regis (population 51,000), Leighton Buzzard (35,000), Biggleswade (16,000), Flitwick (13,000), Sandy (11,000) and Ampthill (7,000) and the rest of the 165,000 population is spread across more than 100 rural parishes.
- 4.3 The ethnic diversity within Bedfordshire County is similar to that for England and Wales as a whole, and according to 2001 Census data, 88.9% of the population is white British, compared to 87.5% for England and Wales, but ethnicity data shows wide variations across the county. The most significant minority ethnic groups are Indian and White Other. According to deprivation indices, four wards within Bedford have areas among the 10% of most deprived areas in England and Wales.
- 4.4 Bedford has a significant night-time economy, with a large number of bars and clubs, with Dunstable having similar facilities but smaller in scale. Bedford is also a large commercial centre, with a significant number of daytime commercial and retail visitors.

Structural Description of BCU

- 4.5 The senior management team (referred to as the divisional leadership team on the BCU) comprise of the BCU commander, superintendent crime and operations, superintendent partnerships, a support services manager, and the ILNAs are managed by three chief inspectors on a district structure. The superintendent crime and operations has responsibility for CID and critical incident inspectors, and is also BCU lead on performance. Superintendent partnerships has responsibility for the ILNAs that includes the response teams and SNTs. The BCU is also supported by a detective chief inspector (DCI), chief inspector operations and a performance manager.

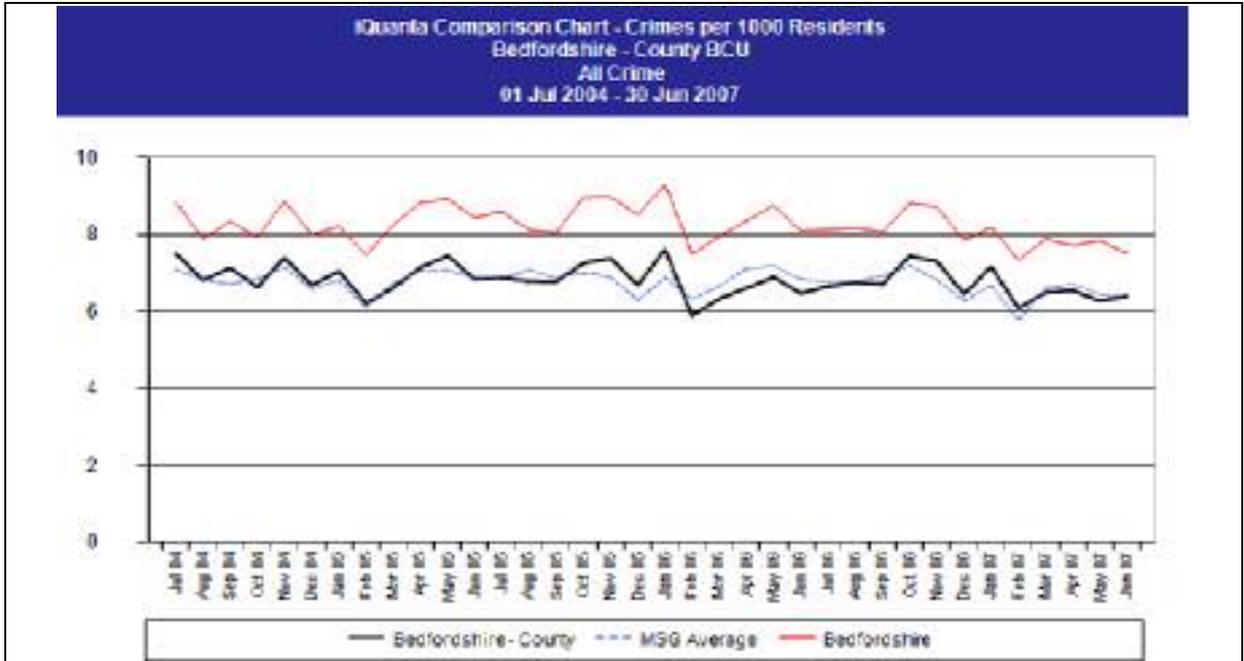
Bedford County BCU Establishment	
police officers	478
police staff	180
police community support officers	68
special constables	115

5. Bedford County BCU Crime and Sanction Detection Performance

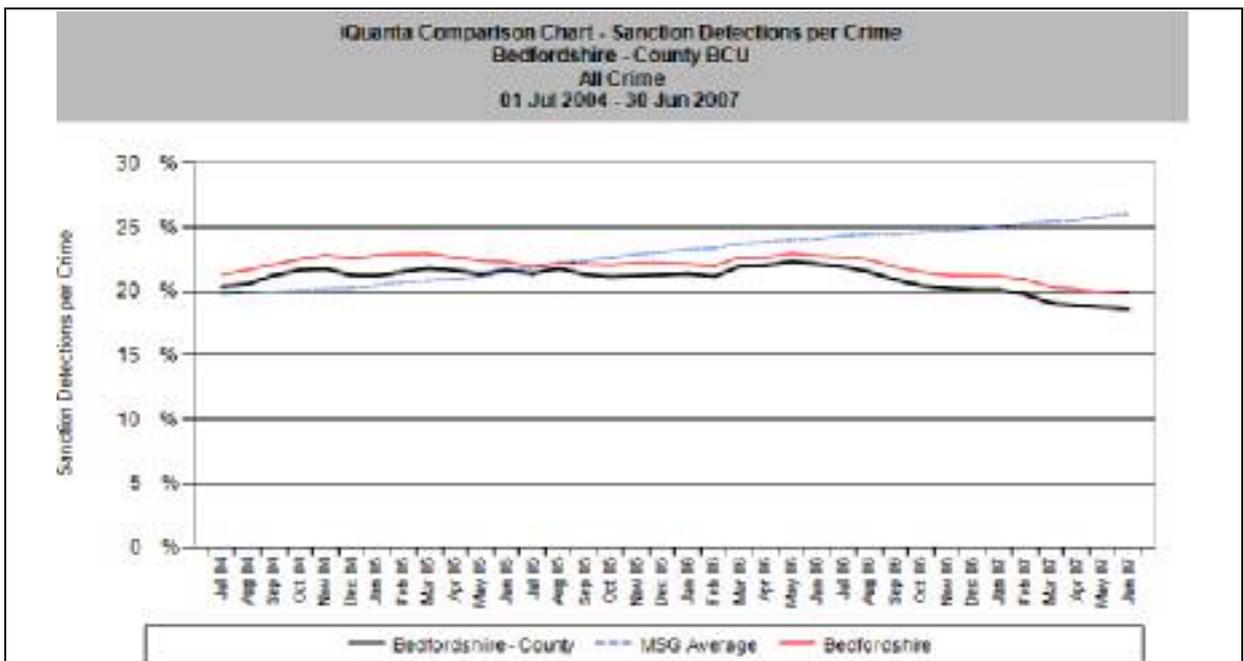
Because Bedfordshire County has only existed as a BCU since April 2006, there is not yet enough data in the Crime & PP data Warehouse to make a year-on-year comparison of force performance. The detailed percentage-change tables of index crimes and sanction detections have therefore not been drawn up for this report. However, there are graphs from iQuanta, derived by aggregating historical data for existing units, and these include less detailed percentage changes, which are used here.

Total Crime

5.1 For the year July 2006 to June 2007 Bedfordshire County BCU has had a **2% decrease** in the number of recorded crimes when compared to the previous year. Bedfordshire County is currently **in line with** the MSBCU average. Projection of 3, 6 and 12 months' data shows crime levels **decreasing slightly**.

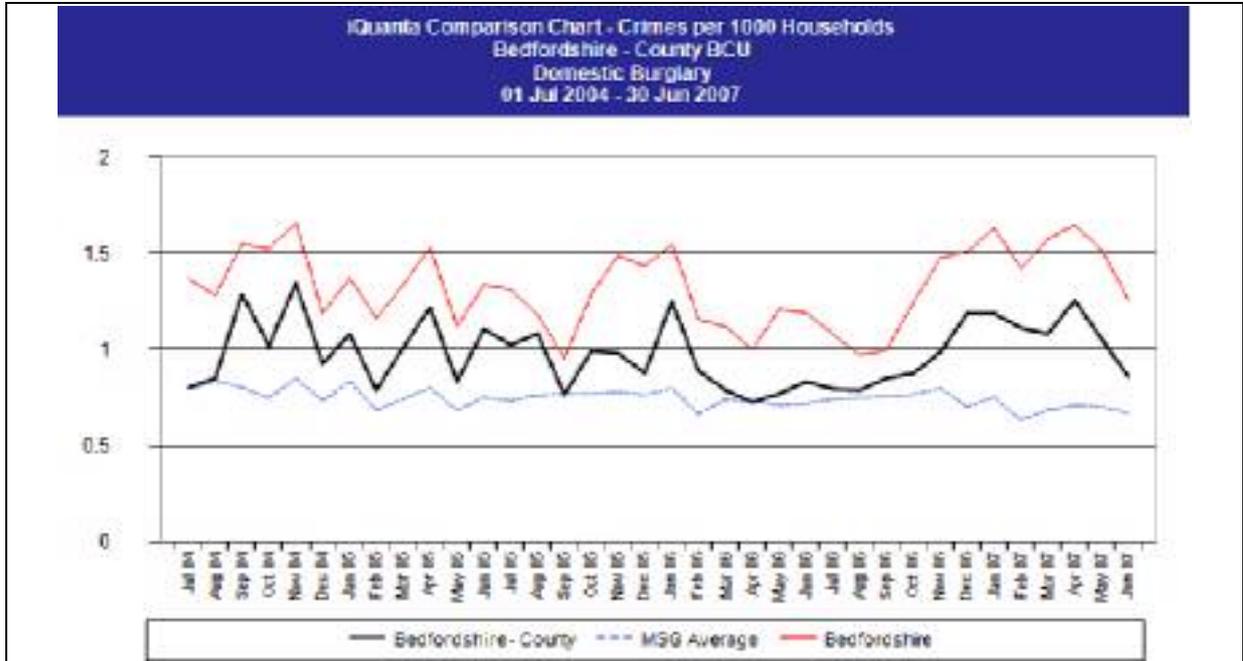


5.2 The sanction detection rate for the year July 2006 to June 2007 is **18.64%**, a **decrease of 3.5% points** on the previous year. Currently Bedfordshire County is **below** the MSBCU average, and is the **worst in its group**. Projections based on the last 3, 6 and 12 months' data show the sanction detection rate **decreasing**.

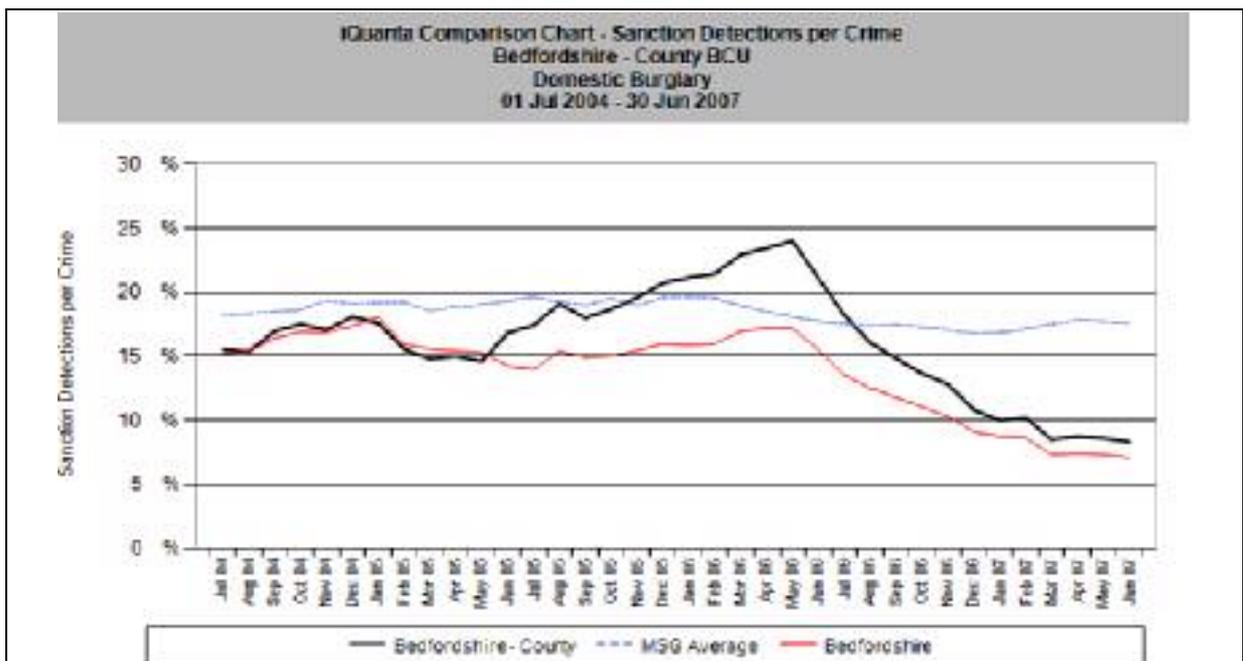


Domestic Burglary

5.3 For the year July 2006 to June 2007 Bedfordshire County BCU has had a **10% increase** in the number of domestic burglaries recorded when compared to the previous year. Bedfordshire County is currently **above** the MSBCU average. All projections show burglaries **increasing**.

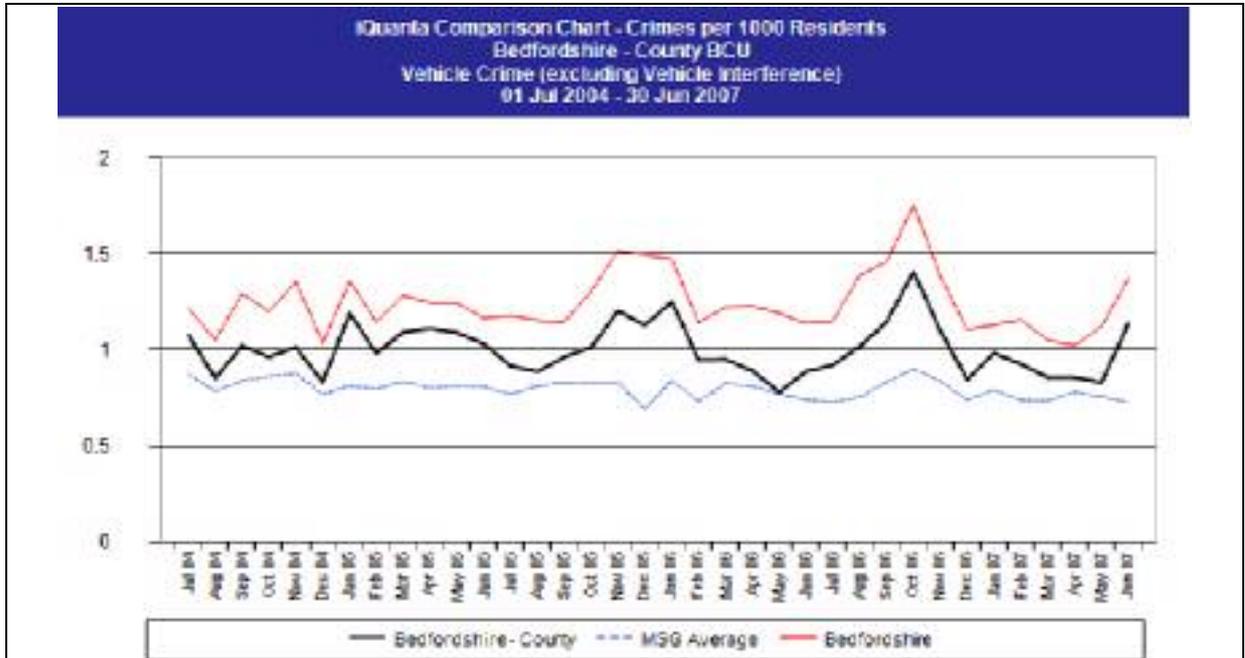


5.4 The sanction detection rate for the year July 2006 to June 2007 is **8.31%**, a **decrease of 12.7%points** on the previous year. Currently Bedfordshire County is **below** the MSBCU average, and is the **worst in its group**. Projection of 3 and 6 months' data shows the sanction detection rate **decreasing slightly**; projection of 12 months' data shows the rate **reaching 0 by May 2008**.

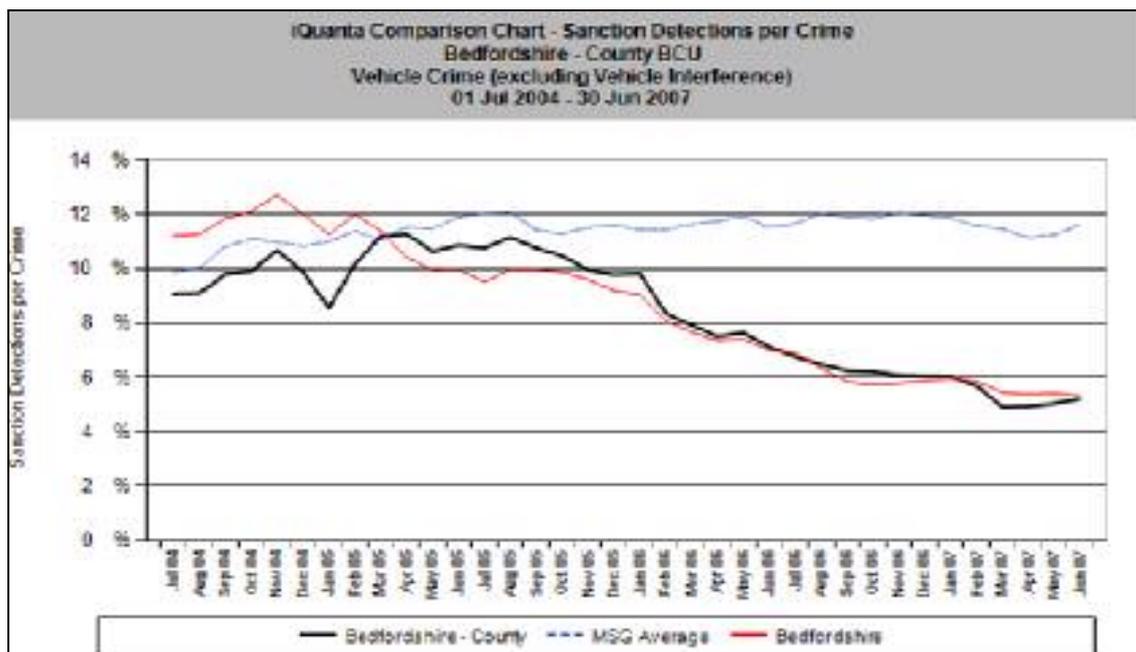


Vehicle Crime

5.5 For the year July 2006 to June 2007 Bedfordshire County BCU has had a **2% increase** in the number of vehicle crimes recorded when compared to the previous year. Bedfordshire County is currently **just above** the MSBCU average. Projections based on the last 3 months' data shows the number of vehicle crimes **increasing**; 6 and 12 months' projections show vehicle crime **remaining near the current level**.

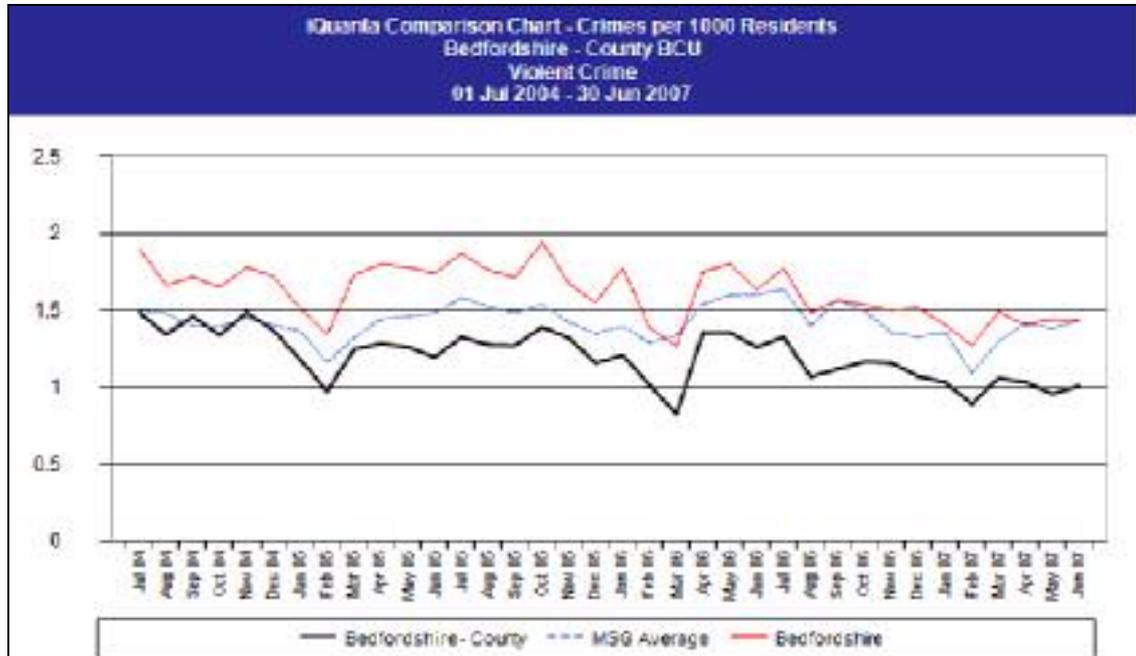


5.6 The sanction detection rate for the year July 2006 to June 2007 is **5.2%**, a **decrease of 1.9% points** on the previous year. Currently Bedfordshire County is **below** the MSBCU average, and is the **worst in its group**. Projection of the last 3 months' data show the sanction detection rate **increasing**; projections based on 6 and 12 months' data show the rate **decreasing**.

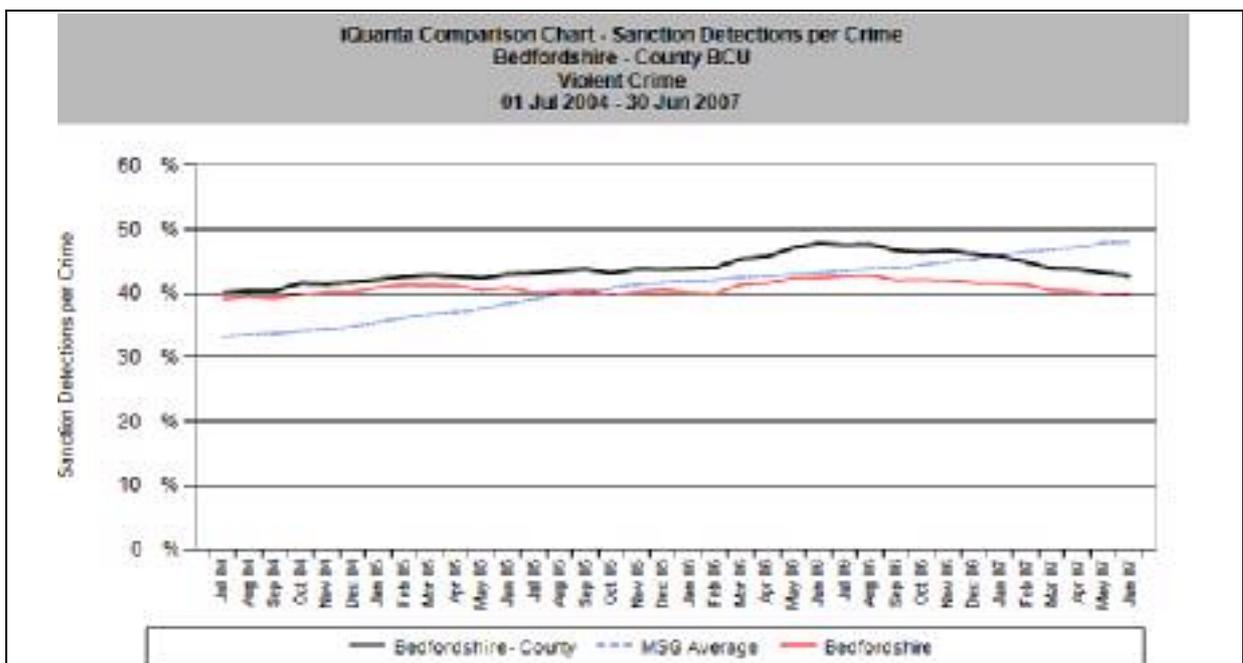


Violent Crime

5.7 For the year July 2006 to June 2007 Bedfordshire County BCU has had a **13% decrease** in the number of violent crimes recorded when compared to the previous year. Bedfordshire County is currently **below** the MSBCU average, and is the **best in its group**. All projections show the number of violent crimes **decreasing**.

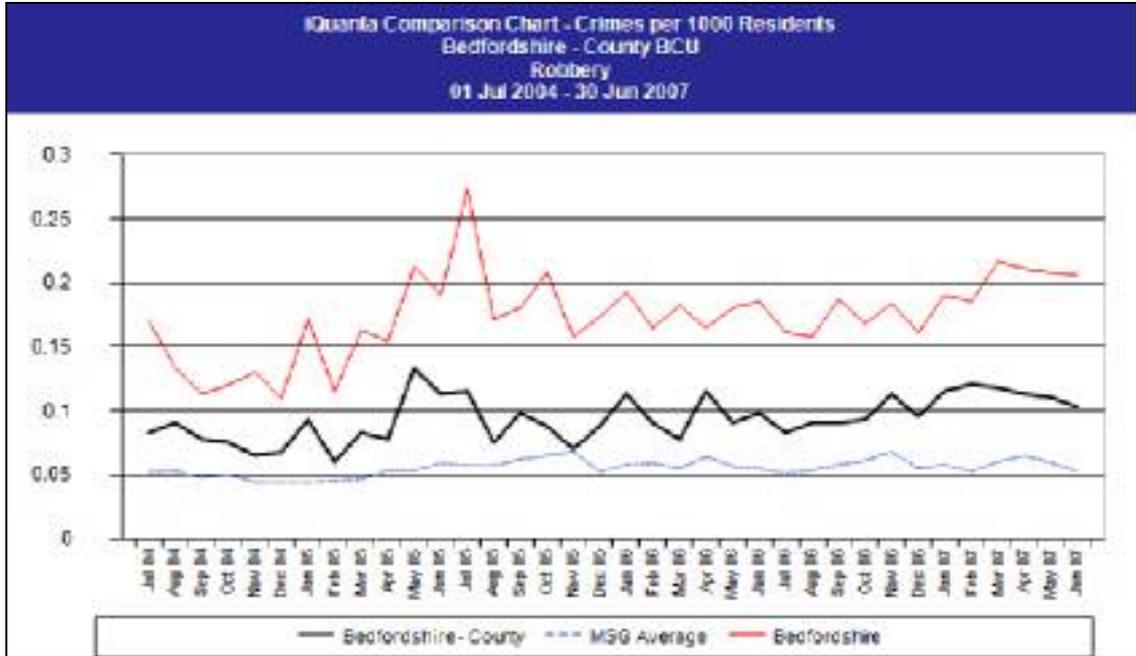


5.8 The sanction detection rate for the year July 2006 to June 2007 is **42.78%**, a **decrease of 5% points** on the previous year. Currently Bedfordshire County is **just below** the MSBCU average. All projections show the sanction detection rate **decreasing**.

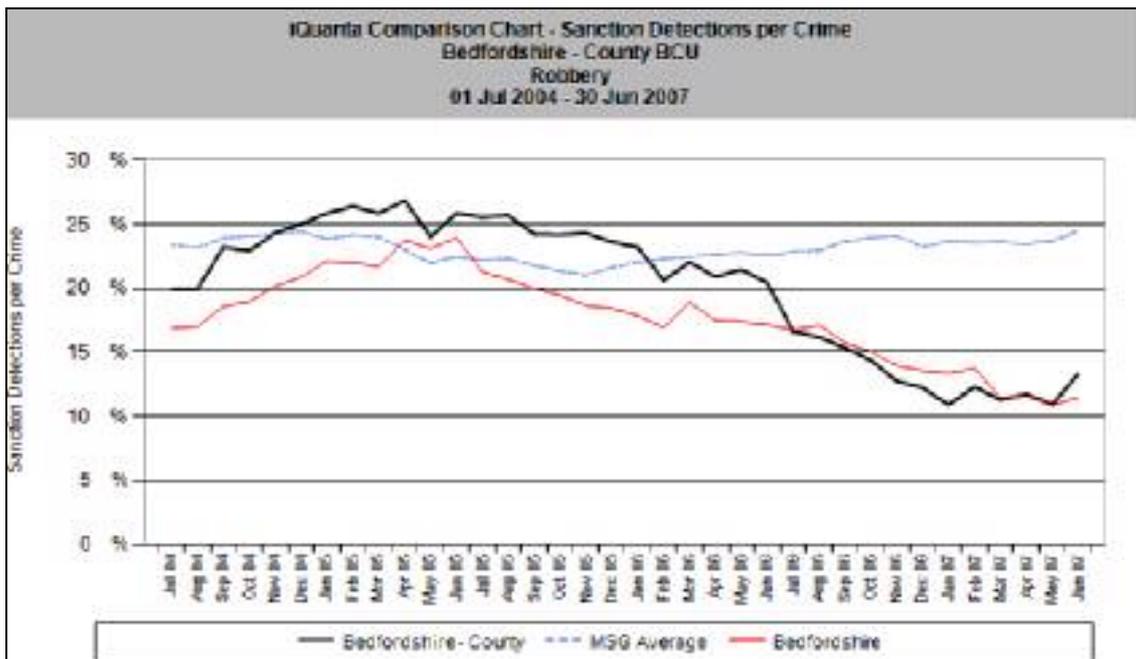


Robbery

5.9 For the year July 2006 to June 2007 Bedfordshire County BCU has had an **11% increase** in the number of robberies recorded when compared to the previous year. Bedfordshire County is currently **above** the MSBCU average. Projections based on the last 3, 6 and 12 months’ data show the number of robberies **increasing**.



5.10 The sanction detection rate for the year July 2006 to June 2007 is **13.31%**, a **decrease of 7.1%points** on the previous year. Currently Bedfordshire County is **below** the MSBCU average, and is the **worst in its group**. Projections based on the last 3 and 6 months’ data show sanction detections **increasing**; 12 months’ data show it **decreasing**.



6. The Leadership Audit

- 6.1 A critical attribute of successful BCUs is effective leadership. Leadership styles vary – some are highly transformational while others veer more towards transactional approaches. There is no ‘correct’ style because circumstances vary too, and good leaders attune their approaches to fit these circumstances. To try and explore the components of leadership and their relative impact on performance, HMIC has developed a leadership audit tool, the findings from which inform the fieldwork stage of the inspection to validate key themes. This is a developing tool that will become increasingly powerful as benchmarks are created from BCUs against which results can be evaluated.
- 6.2 The leadership audit explores leadership across the whole BCU, using the headings that are applied to force-level leadership. This is a development from the previous focus of BCU inspections on the leadership of the commander and senior management team.
- 6.3 The audit process comprised three phases: a questionnaire, circulated to about 200 staff by HMIC, focus groups with a representative cross section from officers and police staff, and one-to-one interviews with members of the SMT. The results from the questionnaire have been supplied to the BCU Commander and are summarised in Appendix B. The comments below are selected highlights augmented by issues arising during focus groups and interviews.

Summary of Audit Results

- 6.4 Sixty-six replies were received within the deadline date, approximately 33% of those asked.
- 6.5 Respondents were asked to answer 0-5 for all questions:-
- 5 This is an integral part of our culture and operation and can be regarded as best practice
 - 4 Yes this is recognised as the way we do business, and we achieve real benefits
 - 3 Yes this usually happens but it could be improved
 - 2 This happens occasionally but there is no consistency
 - 1 No - this doesn't happen
 - 0 Don't Know

*The term **all respondents** below equates to the number of people who replied with an answer (1-5) for that question, excluding those answering “0” (Don’t Know).*

The BCU has an appropriate structure which is aligned to the Force Strategy.

- 6.6 The majority of respondents responded positively to questions within this section. A high percentage (93.7%) consider that their role is clearly defined and contributes to the BCU and Force Strategy with a high proportion scoring the second highest score of four.
- 6.7 A similar proportion of respondents believe lines of accountability and responsibility within the BCU are clearly defined with slightly less considering that they are set objectives clearly related to their roles and experience. Over three quarters of all respondents believe that health and safety procedures are effective and make them feel safe in the workplace.
- 6.8 The question in this section receiving the lowest average score relates to resources being effectively managed within the BCU, including specific issues of demand and deployment. The second lowest scoring was given for BCU teams being balanced in terms of skills, experience and diversity. These results probably reflect recent major change with the introduction of SNTs, the formation of central units such as the MIT and loss of experienced officers to other forces, particularly the MPS.

The BCU has a performance culture with integrity.

- 6.9 A high percentage (85.7%) of all respondents believe that there is effective use of the NIM on the BCU and just over three quarters of all respondents considered that their managers demonstrated an interest in their performance and development.
- 6.10 About a third of all respondents gave a score of three (yes, this usually happens but it could be improved) to the statement ‘the BCU delivers an effective service to the community’. This probably reflects high levels of good will noted by the inspection team amongst staff – but also frustrations at not always being able to deliver the quality of service they would like.
- 6.11 For the statement ‘within the BCU good performance is recognised and rewarded’ there was a wide range of scores. Mechanisms are in place to reward good work but it was apparent from focus groups that not everyone was aware of these or thought that good work consistently achieved the recognition and reward it deserved.
- 6.12 Over half of respondents believe their managers ensure that maintaining integrity is more important than achieving good performance. There were a number of ‘don’t knows’ for this question and positive responses from females questioned were nearly 30 percentage points below that for males.
- 6.13 The BCU acknowledge that the performance culture is not well established at team and individual level, and this was apparent in focus groups and some interviews (**see Performance Management and Continuous Improvement**).

Diversity

- 6.14 Over ninety percent of all respondents believe that diversity is embedded within the BCU, specifically in terms of personal values and all areas of business including selection and appointment of staff.
- 6.15 Similar scores were achieved in response to the statement ‘fairness at work procedures can be used confidently by staff without fear of recriminations from managers’. This commitment to diversity was apparent throughout interviews and focus groups and is a real strength for the BCU.
- 6.16 Less than half of all respondents believe there is a commitment within the BCU to staff retention. The inspection team acknowledges that with police staff jobs currently under threat and the MPS actively recruiting, some resignations are to be expected. It is considered, however, that more needs to be done at force and BCU level to develop and implement a robust retention strategy (**see Recommendation 2**).

Personnel Management

- 6.17 A high percentage (85%) of all respondents believes that personnel issues are dealt with in a relevant and timely manner by their managers and a similar percentage said they have meaningful and regular contact with their managers.
- 6.18 About three quarters of all respondents said their managers made them feel trusted, valued and included with a similar number indicating they felt that their contributions are welcomed and valued.
- 6.19 Lower scores were achieved to questions seeking information about training and development of staff. Only one third of police staff and a similar number of females felt prepared for future changes – reflecting the current uncertainties on the division. Only half of the police staff and a similar number of females who responded to the questionnaire felt encouraged to learn by their managers although responses from males were more positive.
- 6.20 The BCU acknowledges that investment in training has not been a high priority for the Force and this was apparent in focus groups and interviews. From problem solving for SNTs to officer safety training, critical incident training to investigative skills, training was woefully lacking.
- 6.21 On a more positive note, a more structured training day for teams has been recently re-introduced. The opportunity exists within the PDR system to identify and address training needs and this is a major area for development (**see HR Management**).

Communication

- 6.22 Nearly 90% of all respondents believe that their manager communicates relevant information to them. A slightly smaller number believe that their manager responds positively to feedback from staff and that they are available when they need to talk to them.

- 6.23 Just less than two thirds of all respondents gave positive scores to the statement ‘I feel that, where appropriate, I am consulted on matters of policy and strategy’. A third of these, however, gave a score of three (yes, this usually happens but it could be improved). This was confirmed in focus groups where it was apparent staff felt aggrieved at what they perceive as a lack of consultation on major changes proposed at force level.
- 6.24 Whilst three quarters of male respondents believe that their BCU commander and SMT respond in a positive way to feedback from staff this dropped to half for all female respondents.
- 6.25 At a time of major change ensuring effective lines of communication, consultation and feedback mechanisms is essential. It was apparent from interviews and focus groups that communication is not an area of strength for the BCU and support from the Force has been limited. **(See Recommendation 1).**

7. What We Found

- 7.1 Following a review of the BCU's performance, the GL3 (Going Local 3) self-assessment, the findings from the leadership audit and other key documentation, HMIC conducted its fieldwork at Bedford County BCU. The inspection team sought to validate acceptable practice, and investigate and evidence both potential good practice and any areas for improvement (AFIs). This report does not, therefore, reiterate what is and should be happening on a BCU in terms of its core functional activities, given that these are detailed within the GL3 self-assessment process. Instead, the following section highlights areas against the force inspection frameworks that are evidenced by the inspection team as either particular strengths or opportunities for improvement against the core business of the BCU.

Citizen Focus

Fairness and Equality in Service Delivery

- 7.2 The BCU has analysed its demographic profile as part of the NIM strategic assessment process. The BCU has two community liaison officers (CLOs) who liaise and provide a first point of contact with minority groups. They produce a weekly community impact assessment (CIA) and a community intelligence briefing, as well as bespoke CIAs when required. The Force has an independent advisory group (IAG) that has established links with minority groups across the BCU. The IAG meets quarterly but more frequently if required, and it covers the six strands of diversity.
- 7.3 A range of data covering fairness and equality issues is included in the monthly performance booklet. Stop/search data, custody data, BME and white detection rates and BME and white satisfaction rates are all examined at the monthly performance focus group (PFG) and the equality and diversity programme board (EDPB).
- 7.4 The BCU promotes True Vision, which involves providing information packs to the public with information on how to report race/hate crime. These packs are available in all police stations and at key locations around the BCU such as schools, libraries and local authority buildings.

(* Indicates Strength or AFI identified by the BCU in their self assessment and ratified during inspection)

Strengths

- The level of reported hate crime on the BCU has fallen by 16% and is below the MSBCU average.*
- The BCU has dedicated community liaison officers who are helping to engender good relationships with minority groups across the BCU.*
- The BCU has robust performance review systems in place, which ensures that fairness and equality data is properly scrutinised.*
- The BCU has two dedicated detectives who investigate hate crime.*
- The BCU uses the NIM process to prioritise hate crime investigation.*

Areas for Improvement

- The BCU need to prioritise the completion of neighbourhood beat profiles that include analysis of the demographics of each area.*
- The reporting of hate crime, particularly homophobic crime is low and the BCU needs to be satisfied that hate crime is not being under reported.*

Neighbourhood Policing and Problem Solving

- 7.5 A neighbourhood policing project board is leading the Force's approach to neighbourhood policing (NP). Under the direction of the force project board the BCU is endeavouring to deliver the force neighbourhood policing strategy. The BCU has made use of national templates but other areas of best practice such as neighbourhood action groups are still under development. The BCU have consulted with CDRPs and other partners and communities, in an attempt to inform the determination of strategic priorities, but the results may not truly reflect community concerns, as consultation lent too heavily towards the local authorities. Hard to reach groups have been consulted, however there appeared to be a piecemeal approach. As part of the neighbourhood policing rollout more formal consultation structures and processes are being developed. Neighbourhood panels have been established in some areas of the BCU under stakeholder policing schemes.
- 7.6 BCU and CDRP challenge funds have been amalgamated and are used to support the delivery of neighbourhood policing. The neighbourhood teams are subject to performance management review by the superintendent community and partnerships, and the force NP project board is developing a neighbourhood performance management framework.
- 7.7 The Force has developed a NP engagement and communications strategy that the BCU has adopted for implementation and the Ringmaster system is used to gather and disseminate community intelligence. The BCU consider the use of Ringmaster as a strength, where as in fact it was never intended to gather community intelligence. It is being used as a stopgap, as there is a lack of a community intelligence gathering potential, and the BCU must ensure that analytical skills are developed in this area as soon as possible. The inspection team found little evidence of effective communication of neighbourhood policing across the BCU; for example no information posters were visible in any public area informing the public of what the Force or BCU was attempting to achieve.
- 7.8 The SCRIBE initiative is a GIS system that allows for sanitised crime and incident data to be available to ward level, which will be made available to the public via the Bedfordshire Citizone portal. Neighbourhoods have been defined by the BCU in consultation with partners, but it appeared to be focused upon the local authority wards rather than communities. The inspection team were informed that there was disquiet amongst local communities on how the neighbourhood areas were determined. Representatives from CDRPs also expressed concern about poor communication on neighbourhood policing objectives. Following divisional restructuring some areas are under review and the BCU should take this opportunity to enhance local consultation.
- 7.9 The inspector led neighbourhood areas (ILNAs) and safer neighbourhood teams (SNTs) have been aligned to beat areas and allocated named neighbourhood officers and

PCSOs. Neighbourhood officer posts are at full establishment with no current vacancies, which the inspection team consider a real achievement in light of all the other current pressures the BCU is under. An abstraction policy is in place for neighbourhood policing officers, although this is not yet being monitored, which is a weakness. Some neighbourhood officers have received training in the SARA problem solving technique but this was found not to be widespread. The inspection team formed the view that the BCU is very positive about NP but is also honest and acutely aware of its shortcomings, and has much ground to cover.

Strengths

- The implementation of NP on the BCU is directed by the force neighbourhood policing project board.*
- The BCU commander demonstrates a commitment to NP by his engagement with partners through established channels such as CDRPs and LSPs.*
- The BCU is demonstrating its commitment to NP policing by ensuring that all established beat manager posts are filled.*
- The SCRIBE initiative has been designed to contain all data necessary to enable statistical crime audit reporting by ward and sub-ward, both for internal use and for the public via the Bedfordshire Citizone portal.*

Areas for Improvement

- The BCU needs to develop ways of gathering community intelligence together with analytical support.
- Whilst the BCU has an abstraction policy for Neighbourhood Officers, no data is collected to measure compliance with the policy.*
- Not all NP Officers have received training in the use of problem solving methods.*
- The results of interventions/problem solving initiatives are not routinely formally evaluated.*
- The BCU needs to implement a structured community engagement framework in line with the model set at force level.*
- The BCU needs to develop a system for engaging partners in the NIM tasking and co-ordinating process.*
- The BCU needs to progress the production of neighbourhood profiles with partners.*
- Revised neighbourhoods and teams need to be subjected to public consultation.*

Customer Service and Accessibility

- 7.10 The BCU has developed its own communications strategy alongside the existing force level strategy, and officers are encouraged to make best use of the media whenever possible. The BCU has no dedicated media or communications personnel at their disposal, although there is a headquarters media officer based at Dunstable. It appears they undertake the traditional press officer role, responding to the media rather than being proactive.
- 7.11 The BCU is committed to meeting the standards set out in the ‘Customer Service Commitment’ and in the ‘Victims Codes of Practice’, and this commitment led to the creation of a customer services unit on the BCU. The inspection team considered the creation of such a unit as **potential best practice**. This unit has a webpage on the BCU

Intranet, providing guidance on time scales to respond to customers/victims, and this is reinforced in the BCU's Customer Service Handbook issued to all staff. The commitment to customer service is treated as a high priority on the BCU, reflecting the Force's stance, and is mainstreamed into policing activity, which should be considered as general best practice.

- 7.12 As part of the rollout of neighbourhood policing, the BCU is increasing its public accessibility in a variety of ways, including: mobile police stations, neighbourhood 'Cop Shops', the basing of PCSOs within the community (e.g. in local libraries), creating 'colour zones' in Bedford town centre patrolled on a rotation basis during business hours and introduction of white beat helmets to improve visibility. Community concerns and expectations are gathered during community/partnership meetings and forums, however there is no formal system to record or feedback issues raised.

Strengths

- The BCU has created its own customer service unit, which is considered **potential best practice**.
- The 'Media line' run by the force media officers works well and is valued by the local media.*
- The provision of 'Cop Shops', neighbourhood offices, usually old retail premises, is seen as an important part of making the police more accessible to the community.*

Areas for Improvement

- Systems for measuring performance against Customer Service Commitment/Victims Code of Practice need to be developed.*
- Formal systems of gathering/recording information in relation to community concerns and expectations need to be developed as part of a comprehensive community engagement strategy.*
- The Force/BCU should develop a neighbourhood policing estates strategy and should ensure that appropriate funding is available to deliver this strategy.*

Professional Standards

- 7.13 The Force has a professional standards department (PSD), centrally managed as part of the Protective Services Directorate, which deals with all cases of serious misconduct. The BCU has a customer service unit that provides a single point of contact for complainants and is responsible for managing the complaints process on the BCU. The BCU's customer service unit maintains a comprehensive database of complaints. Information is abstracted from the database and used in the monthly BCU performance report. Individual line managers can access more detailed information where necessary.
- 7.14 A quarterly 'health check' is carried out with the BCU, at which the head of PSD meets with the divisional commander and the customer service manager, to review complaints data. This analysis of the complaints profile on the BCU is informed by a comprehensive analytical report prepared by PSD covering complaints against all police officers, staff and special constables. The BCU is currently experiencing fewer complaints per member of staff than the rest of the Force; and it makes use of best

practice such as closer examination of complaints where the same member of staff has received three complaints in twelve months, and these are brought to the BCU commander's attention.

- 7.15 Training in dealing with local complaints and local resolutions is provided centrally to officers on promotion to inspector, and the customer care department has received training from PSD. Although it is felt that complaints are generally effectively dealt with on the BCU, there is an acceptance that some complaints that could have been dealt with by local resolution, are forwarded to PSD.
- 7.16 Information is made available to members of the public on the complaints procedure, including provision of Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) leaflets at all of the BCU enquiry offices and via a PSD page on the force website. Complaints can be made in person, by e-mail, fax and letter, but not currently by text.

Strengths

- The BCU has its own customer service unit that provides a single point of contact for complainants and ensures the process of handling complaints is standardised across the BCU.*
- The BCU has a quarterly health check with PSD.*

Areas for Improvement

- Increase the number of complaints suitable for local resolution that are dealt with by the BCU, in line with the Taylor Report.*

Reducing Crime

Volume Crime Reduction

- 7.17 The crime manager for the BCU is the detective chief inspector (DCI), and he has line management for the serious crime investigation team (SCIT), priority crime investigation team (PCIT), divisional intelligence unit (DIU) and prisoner handling units (PHUs). The BCU has the lowest recorded levels of violent crime amongst its MSBCUs. The Force is the second lowest in its most similar family of forces (MSF) for all crime but the lowest for sanction detections, at only 20%. Bedford County BCU reflects the mixed picture of the Force and performs poorly in relation to sanction detections. For the period June 2006 to May 2007 Bedford BCU decreased crime by 2%, but sanction detections decreased by 3.5%, to 19%, and the BCU is below the MSBCU average and worst in its group. For the same period detections for burglary dwelling decreased to 8.6% but rose in volume by 7%. Vehicle crime has seen a small decrease in volume but an already low sanction detection rate dropped to 5%, the lowest in its group with long-term projections predicting even further decreases.
- 7.18 The BCU has a daily tasking meeting to ensure that proactive interventions take place and it is effectively linked to the TTTCG. The BCU has a dedicated NIM tasking team that is used to implement agreed tactical options identified from the daily tasking meeting. The unit has very dedicated officers and appeared to be most effective within its remit, and the inspection team consider that a BCU having access to such a team is potential best practice.

- 7.19 The BCU follows a repeat victim policy that provides a tiered level approach for repeat victims of crime. However repeat victimisation rates for domestic violence have increased slightly from 43% in April 2006 to 49% in March 2007. The BCU community safety officer leads a nine strong crime reduction team based throughout the three local authority areas. The BCU utilises target-hardening techniques involving community and partnership organisations, such as the use of a ‘Bobby Van’ to target-harden vulnerable premises.
- 7.20 The BCU has introduced suspect managers and investigative coaches in an effort to improve sanction detections, and these members of staff carry out a review of outstanding crimes on a monthly basis, which includes the ethical recording and investigation of crime. However, an examination of the crime recording system revealed a large number of crimes with potential suspects (778). Last year Operation Yucca successfully reduced the backlog of outstanding crimes with named suspects, and this is to be commended but the BCU should consider ways of main streaming this kind of activity, rather than relying on special operations. The last National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) compliance audit for the Force graded compliance as excellent.
- 7.21 There is a need to have a crime investigation improvement plan, as well as a new crime management model, that embraces all aspects of investigating crime such as training, persistent offenders and dealing speedily with outstanding named suspects.

Strengths

- The BCU has the lowest level of recorded violent crime within its MSBCUs.*
- Robust use of NIM processes to tackle both ‘fast’ and ‘slow’ time interventions.*
- Dedicated NIM tasking team to undertake proactive interventions, which the inspection team consider to be potential best practice.*
- Use of dedicated decision makers and suspect managers to drive ethical recording and investigation practices.*

Areas for Improvement

- The need to introduce an effective crime management model is now essential (**see Recommendation 3**).
- The number of outstanding crime reports with named suspects needs to be reduced.
- Recorded crime levels for domestic burglary have increased.*
- Recorded crime levels for criminal damage have increased.*
- Repeat victimisation for both burglary dwelling and domestic violence has increased.*
- Crime prevention processes presently differ in the north and south of the BCU.*
- Control strategy crime areas do not currently have allocated owners.*

Investigating Crime

Managing Critical Incidents and Major Crime

- 7.22 The investigation of a serious crime during the initial period known as the ‘golden hour’ is managed by the BCU through its critical incident inspectors, and established protocols are followed. When required the newly formed major incident team (MIT),

part of the Protective Services Directorate, will take over management of the crime. Formation of the MIT and the Protective Services Directorate has contributed to minimising resource abstraction from the BCU, and the benefits to the BCU are clear and staff all welcomed the changes. Unusually, the MIT does not deal with all murders, leaving the BCU to deal with complex and complicated investigations without support, if they are considered ‘domestic murders’. This policy should be reviewed, as it cannot be considered as giving the best possible service to victims of domestic violence. On the other hand BCU resources are made available to assist the MIT where additional local resources or expertise are required.

- 7.23 Critical incidents are a standing agenda item at the daily tasking meeting. The weekly divisional leadership team (DLT) ‘burning issues’ meetings and the fortnightly tactical and tasking co-ordination group (TTCG) review the resilience of core policing teams to ensure that the BCU maintains its capacity to deliver against control strategy priorities. The force tasking co-ordination group meeting is held on a monthly basis and is the forum where cross BCU support can be sought. Informal daily links between crime managers across the Force also allow requests for support to be made. The BCU currently has four senior investigating officers (SIOs), who work on a forcewide call out rota. There are nineteen family liaison officers (FLOs) trained within the BCU.
- 7.24 The Force has adopted a definition of a critical incident, which has been heavily publicised throughout the BCU, together with the force policy relating to critical incidents and their management. There are five critical incident inspectors who cover the BCU on a 24/7 basis and who are fully trained in the procedures that need to be followed.

Strengths

- The Force now has a major investigation team which is helping to reduce abstractions from the BCU.
- The BCU has five fully trained critical incidents inspectors who cover the BCU on a 24/7 basis.*
- The BCU has sufficient resilience in the SIO role.*

Areas for Improvement

- The level of support to BCUs from the MIT in relation to domestic murders needs to be reviewed.
- The BCU’s training needs analysis and skills matrix needs to be refreshed to ensure resilience is maintained and succession-planning issues are appropriately addressed.*
- There are no formal documented collaborative agreements in place with the other territorial BCU*.
- Crime detections rates for violent crime are below the MSBCU average.*

Tackling Serious and Organised Criminality

- 7.25 The BCU has a number of specialist teams to tackle serious and organised crime. A NIM tasking team consisting of two sergeants and twelve constables delivers the proactive capability of the BCU. This team is dynamic and task orientated, and the inspection team witnessed an example of it being used to immediately respond to intelligence, which resulted in the arrest of a significant criminal. The tasking team has

a reputation for delivering results and operates in line with the BCU's vision of 'dealing with today's crime today'. A recently formed specialist crime unit, led by an experienced detective inspector, is used to run operations deploying specialist tactics or equipment, such as test purchase or decoy operatives. The BCU has an establishment of two detective sergeants and eight detective constables working as field intelligence officers (FIOs).

- 7.26 Each district has an officer who works with partners dealing with persistent and prolific offenders (PPOs) supported by a sergeant, and many of these PPOs have problematic drug habits. There were some excellent examples given of work undertaken by these officers, who have very positive working relationships with the Probation Service. Drug testing takes place at Bedford custody but not Dunstable, which is a significant gap. There is a perception that this situation encourages criminals to travel to Dunstable to commit crime, although the inspection team were unable to discover any specific examples. There are drug intervention workers operating from the custody suites, and an offender that indicates that they wish to change their life style and drug usage at Bedford can be prescribed alternatives, such as methadone within three days. This is known as 'being scripted' and the first step towards getting clean of illegal drug use. This is really excellent and will improve people's lives; not only the individuals involved but the communities in which they live as well. At Dunstable it can take eighteen months for an offender to be 'scripted', which is extremely poor, and taken together with the lack of funding for drug testing, is definitely having a negative impact on criminality in the area.
- 7.27 The BCU has its own limited level 1 surveillance capability within the NIM tasking team. The BCU also has its own technical support unit (TSU) officer who has strong links with the force TSU. The establishment of the MIT should lead to the increased availability of level 2 resources, access to which has been difficult in the past.

Strengths

- Dedicated NIM tasking team to undertake proactive interventions, which the inspection team consider to be **potential good practice**.*
- The newly formed specialist crime unit has enhanced the BCUs capacity to deploy specialist officers and equipment.*
- The BCU has invested significant resources into its FIO capability.*
- The Force's decision to implement a MIT will lead to a reduction in the abstraction of staff from the BCU and will increase the availability of Level 2 specialist resources.*

Areas for Improvement

- The variance in access to drug testing and treatment between Dunstable and Bedford needs to be addressed by those agencies responsible.
- A service level agreement may be considered to be helpful to enhance awareness in relation to the roles and responsibilities of specialist teams on the BCU.*
- There is a need to enhance the capacity of the BCU to access level 1 surveillance.*

Volume Crime Investigation

- 7.28 The BCU has a priority crime investigation team (PCIT) providing a particular focus on burglary dwellings and vehicle crime, with complex cases of volume crime

escalated to the serious crime investigation team (SCIT). The BCU has two prisoner handling units (PHUs), one based at Dunstable and the other at Bedford which although has a higher volume of prisoners, has the same number of staff. They are intended to process the majority of lower tier crime offenders, but at Bedford the lack of staff means that this does not happen, and the unit is not bringing in the dividends that it should. Uniform officers at Bedford believe that the PHU deals with few prisoners, which is probably not the case but this together with a number of other factors, is having an impact on morale. A review of staffing of the PHUs is required as a matter of urgency.

- 7.29 The BCU has the ability to undertake full financial investigations for confiscation purposes through its dedicated economic crime unit (ECU) which is very much a positive strength, and **potential best practice**. In addition, staff feel that the Force Protective Services Directorate provides invaluable expertise and support in this important area of business.
- 7.30 The BCU has an established crime management unit (CMU) managing and co-ordinating volume crime investigation. The CMU has suspect managers and investigation coaches (experts in the investigation of crime) who, in conjunction with first line supervisors, exercise a quality control function for screening crimes requiring secondary investigations. Uniform officers informed the inspection team that these officers were extremely useful in assisting them in the investigation of crime.
- 7.31 The Force's minimum standards for investigation (SOPs) are outdated and have been withdrawn. Revised SOPs are currently out in draft form for consultation. As an interim measure all investigative staff make use of the 12-point investigation plan. It would appear that crimes per officer have reduced by utilisation of CMS2 and the Web Reports database (current investigation workload is 4.8 crimes per officer). Web Reports appears to be an excellent and simple tool to use, and it is disappointing that some supervisors clearly did not use it.
- 7.32 Adhering to the Victims Charter has been a key driver for the BCU, with all respective supervisors having linked objectives within their PDR. However, there is room for improvement with satisfaction survey results for 2006/07 showing that 68% were satisfied with being kept informed (but above the force average of 64%). Increased effectiveness in the screening out of crime has improved with the implementation of CMS2 and currently stands at 43%, which is excellent. The force screening policy is presently under review with the development of VCMM.
- 7.33 Whilst race/hate crime figures are low (129 recorded crimes in 2006/07 with a detection rate of 33%), the BCU ensures that investigation of hate crime is prioritised through two dedicated detectives, responsible for overseeing the investigation of all hate crime within the BCU. Prioritisation of hate crime investigations is scrutinised through the daily BCU NIM meeting. The victims of racist incidents recorded a satisfaction rate of 79% for the BCU against a target of 75%.
- 7.34 Due to concerns about crime performance, the Force requested the PCSD review its crime management at Luton, which resulted in a BCU action plan being published in November 2006. It was decided to roll out the suggested improvements forcewide, key to which is the introduction of a volume crime management model (VCMM). This

model is yet to be fully implemented, and performance continues to suffer as a result. Burglary dwelling and criminal damage have increased, as has repeat victimisation, and it would appear that some processes on the BCU differ as systems are yet to be harmonised across the new BCU. As VCMM has only been partially introduced, these teams are not effectively linked, and some crime specialist supervisors admitted that they did not know what some of the other teams did. There are islands of excellence operating on the BCU, but very much on their own.

- 7.35 Once a crime management model has been introduced, the existing units and their interdependencies should be reviewed, preferably by using a process map or equivalent process. The future of those units that sit outside the new model should be considered with a view to finding additional resources to support other areas of critical business. A number of existing units such as the PHU and BRU, lacked accountability or a performance focus, unlike the NIM tasking team.

Strengths

- The BCU has the ability to undertake full financial investigations for confiscation purposes through its dedicated economic crime unit (ECU) and this is considered **potential best practice**.
- Adoption of suspect managers and investigative coaches to drive improved and timely crime investigations.*
- Accessible and structured support from Protective Services Directorate.*
- Both CMS2 and Web Reports Database are tools to facilitate effective management of crime investigation.*

Areas for Improvement

- The need to introduce an effective crime management system is now critical. The Force and BCU need to implement a crime management model and introduce a programme to enhance the quality of investigation throughout (**see Recommendation 3**).*
- Once a model has been introduced, existing units and their interdependencies should be reviewed, preferably by using a process map or equivalent process. The future of those units that sit outside the new model should be reviewed, in an effort to find additional resources to support other areas of critical business (**see Recommendation 4**).
- The staffing and management of the PHUs needs to be urgently reviewed.
- Supervisors should be required to use Web Reports to supervise outstanding crime reports and monitor team performance.
- Need to formulate minimum standards for both primary and secondary investigations of volume crime.*
- BCU needs to show further improvements towards adherence to the Victims Charter especially relating to satisfaction levels for keeping people informed.*

Improving Forensic Performance

- 7.36 The management and deployment of scenes of crime officers (SOCOs) is controlled by the headquarters based Scientific Services Department (SSD), part of the centralised Protective Services Directorate, and the crime manager provides the link between the BCU and the SSD. SOCOs are located on the BCU but the prioritisation of and attendance at incidents is controlled by the central Forensic Resource Management

Unit (FRMU). Procedures exist for the BCU to influence and prioritise this management and deployment. The BCU has taken steps to focus resources on forensic recoveries at volume crime scenes by employing crime scene examiners, who focus exclusively on forensic recoveries from auto crime scenes. SOCO attendance at residential burglary scenes is mandatory and in the period January – March 2007 97% of premises were attended, which is excellent.

- 7.37 There were some issues concerning forensic management on the BCU, and on 1st April 2007 the BCU introduced a forensic management team (FMT), consisting of a detective sergeant, two forensic researchers and two FIOs. The team ensures that all forensic opportunities are maximised. Systems are in place within the FMT to link forensic hits to intelligence and crime pattern analysis. Forensic hits are allocated, controlled and monitored via the FMT, which is responsible for ensuring forensic awareness is communicated to all staff, e.g. via the FMT Bulletin. The BCU, working with SSD, has recently compiled a street robbery forensic pack, to capture early forensic opportunities and maximise the hit opportunities, which it intends to launch with a Robbery/VAP initiative in July 2007, a copy of which all new officers receive. Early indications from the FMT are promising and the inspection team were impressed with the enthusiasm of staff involved, and consider such a unit as **potential best practice**.
- 7.38 Samples such as shoe marks, DNA (where appropriate), and fingerprints using Livescan are consistently taken upon arrest for all persons arrested for a recordable offence. All detained persons are PNC checked either prior to entry into custody or automatically via NSPIS. Error rates for DNA submission within the BCU are currently poor (at 28%). An action plan is being implemented to improve performance in this area. Livescan machines are checked by Phoenix operators to ensure there is no backlog. The BCU crime manager meets on a regular basis with the Head of Scientific Services to discuss performance issues, and the management of forensic opportunities is an integral part of the NIM process through daily intelligence, DTAG, and TTCG meetings.

Strengths

- A CSI attendance rate at burglary dwelling is excellent.
- The BCU has recently introduced a Forensic Management Team, which has ownership of the management of forensic hits across the BCU, which is considered **potential best practice**.*
- The BCU has employed two volume crime scene examiners.*

Areas for Improvement

- Error rates for DNA submission within the BCU are poor, at 28%.*
- Performance data in relation to forensic performance is not mainstreamed within the BCU. No data relating to forensic performance is included in the BCU's Performance booklet.*

Criminal Justice Processes

- 7.39 The BCU had two criminal justice units (CJUs) but as of April 2007 these have been reconfigured to operate under line management of the force criminal justice superintendent. One CJU is based at Greyfriars police station, Bedford and serves the

north of the county. The other is based at Luton and serves the south of the BCU, as well as the Luton BCU. The CJUs are Glidewell Units, operating the statutory charging system. Witness care units that comply with No Witness No Justice guidelines are incorporated in the CJUs. The BCU has a gatekeeper system in place providing officers with advice to ensure the threshold test is met prior to Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) consultation, and CPS advocacy is located at both designated police stations. CPS staff are available to officers during office hours at Bedford and in mornings at Dunstable police station.

- 7.40 Force figures for 2005/06 show 33.54% of trials were cracked or ineffective. Performance during 2006/07 has improved, with March 2007 figures being 26.62%. Due to the way that court areas and CJUs are structured data performance for the BCU as a whole is not readily available. This will be addressed as part of the CJU restructure.
- 7.41 The CJU has responsibility for warrant administration. The warrants officer based in the OPU works closely with the administrator to ensure that the PPO and PYO warrants are fast tracked. The BCU has reduced the number of outstanding warrants from 270 in February 2007, to 247 in April 2007.
- 7.42 There are two custody suites within the BCU, each with its own establishment of custody officers, civilian detention officers (CDOs) and assistant custody officers (ACOs). The BCU is currently reviewing the resources within these units to ensure that the principles of the ‘Safer Detention Manual’ are adopted and the unit has suitable resilience. Drug tests where offenders are charged for a trigger offence (Bedford only) were completed in 91% of cases in 2006.
- 7.43 Staff in custody suites work a different pattern from other officers and this appears to be primarily to address the needs of those staff rather than the BCU. This is something that should be reviewed as part of a review of issues around custody performance, and how it should support the performance of the BCU.
- 7.44 The BCU’s prisoner handling units (PHUs) process prisoners arrested by uniform officers. In 2006 over 12,500 arrested persons were processed within the BCU. The PHUs are intended to process the majority of these offenders, but at Bedford the lack of staff means that this does not happen, and the unit is not bringing in the dividends that it should. Uniform officers at Bedford believe that the PHU deals with few prisoners, which is probably not the case but this together with a number of other factors, is having an impact on morale. A review of staffing of the PHUs is required as a matter of urgency.

Strengths

- The BCU CJUs are formatted on the Glidewell model.*
- Witness care units within the CJUs focus on prioritising support for victims and witnesses by vulnerability.*

Areas for Improvement

- There should be a review of custody, and how it should support the performance of the BCU.
- The staffing and management of the PHUs needs to be urgently reviewed.

- The management of bail needs to be improved.*
- Opportunities to carry out intelligence interviews should be maximised.*

Promoting Safety

Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- 7.45 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) 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.
- 7.46 The superintendent community and partnerships is the BCU lead for reducing ASB. Objectives and priorities are determined via the Community Safety Strategy, the BCU NIM control strategy, and issues arising from NIM problem profiles. The inspection team were impressed with the recent criminal damage problem profile, which appears to be having results. Accountability for ASB reduction is through the district chief inspectors. There are dedicated ASB co-ordinators for each of the three CDRP areas who ensure that tactics such as warning letters, ABCs, ASBOs, dispersal orders and seizure of motor vehicles are widely used in consultation with partners.
- 7.47 Hotspots of anti social behaviour are flagged by the NIM process and tactical plans developed and resources allocated as necessary. Officer and staff activity at ASB hotspots is recorded on the intranet based NIM folder system and activity is reviewed and reported on a daily basis by the operational performance unit (OPU). The inspection team considered this to be **potential best practice**. The BCU has a weekly community intelligence briefing covering the three CDRP areas, and a weekly community impact assessment (CIA) is completed by the community cohesion team and more detailed CIAs produced as required.
- 7.48 The BCU currently has 115 Special Constables who during 2006/07 contributed over 49,000 hours to policing. The Special Constabulary maintain its own database of activities and operational inputs, and plays a key role in policing the night time economy and for assisting with the policing of major events. A force review of the Special Constabulary has been completed and at the time of the inspection was under consideration.
- 7.49 There are currently sixty eight PCSO posts on the BCU, with a small proportion of funding provided by external sources, including parish councils and the Bedford BID. PCSOs are integrated into SNTs and are used as an integral part of tackling ASB.

Strengths

- There are three ASB co-ordinators supporting the three CDRP ODGs.*
- There are currently 68 established PCSO posts on the BCU, with some funding provided by external sources, including parish councils and the Bedford BID.*
- The BCU currently has 115 Special Constables who during 2006/07 contributed over 49,000 hours to the policing on the BCU.*

Areas for Improvement

- The BCU would benefit by having a centrally held database for recording ASB intervention and outcomes.*
- Evaluation of ASB initiatives needs to be formalised.*
- The implementation of a structure that clearly aligns the Special Constabulary to SNTs needs to be considered*.
- A formula for allocating beat managers and PCSOs should be introduced.*
- Problem solving training needs to be made available for all relevant SNT staff.*
- Compliance with the abstraction policy for beat managers should be measured.*

Protecting Vulnerable People

- 7.50 Strategic and operational control of child abuse, missing persons and domestic abuse is centralised in the public protection unit (PPU). The PPU is headed by a DCI and is accountable through a chief superintendent, to the Head of the Protective Services Directorate, who is the DCC. The PPU and BCU command teams have agreed a quarterly review and feedback process.
- 7.51 The investigations for missing persons across the Force are led by BCUs, with PPU providing specialist advice for vulnerable missing persons. The missing persons procedure was revised in December 2006 and sets out the recording process, risk assessments, tactical options, supervisory responsibilities and review requirements. COMPACT, a dedicated missing persons IT system, was introduced forcewide in November 2006. There was some confusion on the BCU as to how supervisors can access this information and this needs to be rectified.
- 7.52 The Force is currently reviewing its existing domestic abuse investigation policy to ensure compliance with the Victims Code of Practice and ACPO domestic violence guidance. A joint protocol with Social Services has been developed detailing partners' roles and responsibilities. Domestic abuse units are sited on BCUs. The crime system flags domestic related incidents and links to the command and control system through the domestic abuse booklet number, with checklists electronically available to call-handlers. The Force is introducing 'O4', a new crime recording facility that will allow risk assessments to be input directly onto the crime system, allowing for more effective supervision and information sharing with Social Services.

Strengths

- The creation of the PPU will lead to greater professionalism and provides accountability for child abuse, and domestic abuse investigations to ACPO level.*
- COMPACT missing persons system appears to be an efficient system that facilitates missing person investigations.*

Areas for Improvement

- The BCU needs to clarify access procedures for supervisors to the COMPACT database.
- More intrusive supervision at the time of the domestic violence incident would help ensure compliance with the positive action policy.*
- There is no set number of interview tapes that are required to be monitored.*
- The PPU does not currently provide dedicated domestic abuse cover 24/7, though this is currently being examined.*

Providing Assistance

Contact Management

- 7.53 Contact Management is the responsibility of a centralised call-handling centre (CHC). Currently the CHC is exceeding the national standard response time targets (over 94% of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds and 93% of non-emergency calls answered within 30 seconds). Ease of contact satisfaction levels regularly exceeds 90%.
- 7.54 All CHC staff have received critical incident management training and have regular training days focusing on functional and service delivery training. Incidents are monitored live and post event to ensure compliance against force policy, NCRS and NSIR and customer satisfaction. Performance data shows approximately 83% of immediate incidents being attended within the set times. Performance data is broken down to ILNA areas and reported in the monthly BCU performance report. Crime reports are routed to a centralised crime recording unit (CRU).

Strengths

- The Force is exceeding national call handling response time targets.*
- Regular meetings take place between CHC and BCU management.*
- CHC recruitment in advance which improves resilience and service delivery.*
- CHC is compliant with both NCHS and the First Contact Thematic.*

Areas for Improvement

- No data is available to measure performance in dealing with routine incidents, e.g. average time incidents are open.*

Providing Specialist Operational Support

- 7.55 The BCU has five trained firearm incident commanders (FICs). Pre-planned firearms operations have a structured and fully documented debrief, which includes any identified developmental needs. Spontaneous firearms incidents include a ‘hot’ debrief with the FIC and call-handling inspector, and the lessons learnt from debriefs are incorporated into FIC and firearms training.
- 7.56 The BCU has an existing skills matrix covering the core operational roles, however following BCU amalgamation and the forming of the MIT, the BCU is in the process of refreshing its training needs analysis. The chief inspector operations has recently attended the advanced public order commanders course.

Strengths

- The BCU has five experienced FICs.*

Areas for Improvement

- A programme for testing contingency plans at BCU level needs to be considered.*
- A training needs analysis needs to be conducted and a skills matrix for the new BCU needs to be developed as soon as possible.*

Strategic Roads Policing

- 7.57 The strategic road policing unit is managed centrally within Protective Services, headed by a superintendent, and is part of the Protective Services Directorate. A comprehensive road policing strategy endorses the national strategy principles for roads policing. The Bedfordshire and Luton Casualty Reduction Partnership (BLCRP) strategy attempts to address casualty reduction through education, enforcement and engineering. Further consultation takes place with special interest groups such as Victim Support and the IAG.
- 7.58 Casualty figures have declined year on year since 2000 and the road policing performance targets are well on course to be exceeded, and quality and timeliness targets for investigation and submission for fatal collision files are being achieved. The BCU's TTCG makes bids for road policing resources, using the NIM process, and each meeting is attended by the local intelligence officer for roads policing. Bedfordshire Police have fully implemented the recommendations of the ACPO Road Death Investigation Manual, and a dedicated collision investigation unit (ten officers and two staff) deals with all life threatening and fatal collisions in Bedfordshire.

Strengths

- Centralised strategic and operational control with specific ACPO accountability.*
- Comprehensive roads policing and partnership strategies encompassing national principles.*
- Road casualty targets consistently met with a year-on-year improvement.*

Areas for Improvement

- The BCU would benefit from increased frequency of ANPR deployments on its main arterial routes and within tactical hotspot areas.*

Resource Usage

Human Resource (HR) Management

- 7.59 The BCU manages human resource issues through a well structured series of meetings, the principle ones being the monthly personnel meeting, the training and development board, the sickness and welfare meeting, and finally the bi-monthly health and safety meeting. The BCU is supported by two personnel officers who provide advice and support to managers and staff. The BCU maintains an intranet site with a dedicated human resource page, which gives managers and staff quick and easy access to guidance on a wide range of HR issues. As part of a review of performance information, HR data including sickness absence and information on timeliness of PDR completion is regularly scrutinised.
- 7.60 The Force operates an IT based personal development review (PDR) system, linked to the integrated competency framework. The inspection team examined a number of PDRs on the system and found it surprisingly user friendly, particularly in comparison to many in other forces. PDR Performance data is regularly circulated throughout the BCU and final PDR submissions are subjected to an audit process. Department heads are held to account for the timeliness and completeness of yearly PDR submissions.

The PDR system is linked to the promotion process and the allocation of training courses. However, speaking to staff it appears that there is merely a requirement to have two completed PDRs attached as part of the promotion process, and little notice is taken of the PDRs themselves.

- 7.61 A recent dip sample of the previous year's PDRs by the BCU showed that 75% of PDRs were completed on time and nearly 90% had performance related objectives. The inspection team examined a smaller example but, being the current year's PDRs, a true comparison cannot be made. The inspection team found that a number did have performance objectives but few were SMART, and many were not countersigned by a second line manager, losing a valuable opportunity to quality assure the evidential context of the PDR.
- 7.62 For the year 2006/07 police officer sickness was 4.05% hours lost as a percentage of total hours (against a target 4.0%) and for police staff the level was 4.59% (target 3.6%). Sickness absence data is reported on a weekly basis and it was found to be subject of scrutiny at a variety of BCU level meetings.
- 7.63 Good performance is recognised in several ways, including BCU commander's congratulations and the Chief Constable's recognition and meritorious award scheme, and the inspection team were given several examples of when these have been awarded. An instance of spontaneous congratulations was witnessed, which was clearly not staged for the inspection team's benefit, yet officers still complained that good work was not recognised. There may be a number of factors resulting in this view. Firstly, morale was generally low due to resource pressures and significant organisational changes; secondly, some members of the DLT were relatively new and were yet to fully make their mark; thirdly, the BCU is now geographically very large and staff have an unrealistic expectation in terms of visibility, based on having access to two BCU commanders previously; and lastly, inspectors are not relaying the correct messages to staff. The Force may wish to consider other ways of recognising good work such as the Hertfordshire Constabulary 'Everyone can make a Difference' scheme. This involves presenting individuals with a pin to wear when a letter of appreciation has been received, and is very popular with staff.
- 7.64 The merger of the two previous BCUs, the introduction of VCMM, reorganisation of corporate services and the introduction of MOPI, an intelligence-inputting unit based at Headquarters, directly affects police staff. A number of posts will be realigned and relocated, or reviewed in their entirety. This has had a negative impact on the morale of those staff directly affected, and has also caused serious concern to other staff, both police officers and support staff. Wherever the inspection team visited on the BCU the message was the same; deep disaffection with the manner in which the organisation has treated staff, compounded by poor communication.
- 7.65 Many police staff complained about the manner in which they were informed that they were at risk of redundancy, and the examples presented to the inspection team were compelling. The support offered to staff subject of 'at risk notices' should be reviewed, and this may overcome some of the misconceptions that the staff have about the underlying aims of the organisation, which are not positive. Access to an advice centre giving consistent guidance, and as far as possible, independent advice should be

considered. Other best practice, such as a ‘most frequently asked questions’ web page could be set-up on the force intranet.

Strengths

- The BCU is supported by qualified personnel officers.*
- The BCU operates an easy to use IT based personal development review system, linked to the integrated competency framework.*

Areas for Improvement

- The support offered to staff subject of ‘at risk notices’ should be reviewed (see **Recommendation 2**).
- Properly established staff forums would assist with the two way flow of communication on the BCU.
- The Force may wish to consider other ways of recognising good work such as the Hertfordshire Constabulary ‘Everyone can make a Difference’ scheme.
- A regular and robust PDR audit process needs to be introduced.*
- The BCU skills database should be refreshed as soon as possible.*
- The BCU should consider some form of staff survey as a method of feedback on a range of issues, including confidence in the PDR system.*

Training, Development and Organisational Learning

- 7.66 The Force has a training and development service (TADS), which controls all aspects of training delivery. TADS hold the training budget and training is allocated to the BCU following applications and a needs analysis. The BCU has a divisional training and development board (DTDB) chaired by a superintendent, who attends the force level training priorities steering group.
- 7.67 The BCU has two professional development units (PDUs) for the training of student officers, which from April 2007 came under the direction of TADS.
- 7.68 All inspectors are encouraged to take part in the NPIA Core Leadership Development Programme, and chief inspectors and above, the Senior Leadership Development Programme. The PDR system is seen as the vehicle for managing the training and development needs of individuals and all managers are encouraged to ensure that their staff have career development plans in place. An examination of PDRs showed that this was not always the case.
- 7.69 Response teams have dedicated training days, which provide an opportunity for team training as well as bespoke learning opportunities for individuals; however there are no systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of these training days.
- 7.70 Debriefing is expected to be part of normal policing operations, and documented debriefs take place after all major events, such as the Bedford River Festival and the policing of the World Cup 2006. However, there is no formal system in place for ensuring that routine debriefing takes place and that learning is cascaded throughout the BCU.

Strengths

- The BCU has a divisional training and development board which meets monthly.*

- The Force is a pilot site for work based assessment for promotion to sergeant and inspector and the BCU has a number of managers who have been trained as A1 assessors.*
- A protected learning strategy is in place; agreement is reached through the training priorities strategy group as to which e-learning or distance learning will qualify for protected learning time.*

Areas for Improvement

- The lack of training and development was a key issue raised in the leadership audit interviews and focus groups during the inspection.
- No systems are in place to measure the use of the response teams training time.*
- No system is in place to ensure that debriefing takes place and that learning is cascaded throughout the BCU.*
- The BCU should consider putting in place a formal learning and development strategy, which would for example specify what training staff in certain positions should have.*

Race and Diversity – Internal Organisation

- 7.71 The Force has strategies and policies in place designed to assist in the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce. These include an ethnic minority recruitment strategy, a race equality scheme, and a disability equality scheme. The Force operates a well established grievance procedure and is committed to a range of initiatives including ‘Breaking Through’ and the ‘Gender Agenda’. Action plans for ‘Gender Agenda’ and ‘Breaking Through’ are being progressed by the Force’s diversity manager. The Force has a dedicated diversity and equality intranet site and the force IAG has representatives from all six diversity strands. In November 2006 the BCU were awarded the Royal National Institute for the Deaf ‘Louder Than Words’ charter mark.
- 7.72 Data on retention and progression of minority staff is also collated, as is data from exit interviews and any trends and patterns highlighted. Analysis is carried out within the BCU to identify under-representation within specific units and applicants from those groups are actively encouraged. Initiatives such as ‘taster days’ have been implemented, for example recent taster days for female officers to apply to the NIM Team.
- 7.73 External partners and community representatives are part of the BCU’s equality and diversity delivery board, where fairness and equality performance data is reviewed. Specific objectives surrounding diversity are mandatory on all PDRs. In 2006 all staff were required to complete a computer-based diversity training package.

Strengths

- The BCU has introduced its own equality and diversity delivery board.*

Areas for Improvement

- There appears to be a lack of BCU level data available to managers and staff, e.g. BME attrition rates from the BCU or departments within the BCU.*
- The BCU should consider how useful information on the management and outcomes of grievances could be fed back to managers.*

- The BCU should carry out a PDR audit to ensure that staff have meaningful race and diversity objectives in place.*

Managing Financial and Physical Resources

- 7.74 The support services manager (SSM) has responsibility for managing the BCU's financial and physical assets. The SSM is a full member of the DLT, reporting directly to the BCU commander. The BCU resource management team (RMT) is responsible for operational efficiency and effectiveness through deployment of appropriate resource levels. The RMT is line managed through the operational performance unit (OPU) with the superintendent operations having overall responsibility.
- 7.75 In the financial year 2006/07 the BCU had a 1.5% over spend, which it was required to carry forward. The 2007/08 budgets have been reduced in response to the saving requirements of the Force, as well as the impact of the creation of the central MIT and PPU. The BCU devolves the control of certain account budgets, and overtime budgets are devolved to chief inspectors. The BCU utilises a variety of force computer systems to manage the deployment of resources. Principle systems are the duty management system (DMS) and the 'efinancials' finance system, both running alongside the operational information system (OIS).
- 7.76 The current variable shift pattern for patrol staff was devised through analysis of supply and demand, intending that resources would be matched to demands, which resulted in overlapping shifts on Friday and Saturday nights to cover night-time economy policing issues. This would appear to be good practice and the same principles should be applied to custody staff, who work a twelve hour shift system based on their preferences rather than the needs of the BCU. A forcewide review of patrol officers' shift patterns is planned for later in the year. In other respects the BCU is effective in matching its resources to demand, as evidenced by Operation Bedsafe, a specific plan to draw officers from non response functions to provide high visibility policing in the town centre on Friday and Saturday evenings. This is good practice but has slipped of late and needs re-energising. Response officers repeatedly complained of too many staff in offices not supporting them at critical times.

Strengths

- The BCU has a significant devolved budget.*
- The BCU is devolving budgets to chief inspectors and heads of department.*
- The BCU operates a variable shift pattern for patrol officers.*

Areas for Improvement

- There should be a review of custody, and how it should support the performance of the BCU, particularly in relation to shift patterns.
- The BCU should consider providing training and development opportunities for budget holders in financial management.*
- The BCU should carry out a formal review of its 12-hour shift patterns to ensure operational effectiveness is being delivered and that no significant welfare or health issues are being identified.*

Information & Communication Technology Management

7.77 The Force has invested in its IT strategy and a number of systems that have potential business benefits have been delivered. New systems include CMS2, now with the ‘Webs’ intranet-based performance management tool. NSPIS Case and Custody has been rolled out at one of the BCU’s custody suites. BORIS is a system that ensures intelligence and other source systems can be interrogated under the one-search facility. A warrants management system is now also operational. Blackberries are in use across the BCU and the Force is in the process of rolling out these devices to all operational officers. The BCU has some video conferencing facilities in place, but coverage does not extend to the north of the County.

Strengths

- The Force has invested heavily in its IT strategy and this is clearly benefiting BCU performance.*

Areas for Improvement

- It may be beneficial to provide training in project and change management skills to key BCU personnel.*
- Update local IT equipment inventory and consider what can be done to assess usage and maximise benefits.*
- Unlike several other forces Bedfordshire police does not have an integrated Intranet-based performance management and reporting system to provide users with timely on-line operational and performance data and reports.*

National Intelligence Model (NIM)

7.78 The BCU divisional tactical assessment group (DTAG) meets every two weeks, looking at tactical assessments compiled by the BCU’s analysts. DTAG brings together specialists from prevention, intelligence, and enforcement to produce tactical plans for each priority area, which are then considered by the TTCG. The BCU has an intranet based NIM tasking folder system that records activities and inputs in relation to each tactical plan. The BCU runs a series of daily meetings culminating with the daily briefing chaired by superintendent operations. The daily meetings scrutinise performance against NIM priorities and tactical hot spots and targets. The inspection team attended most of these meetings and they were found to be well run and clearly influenced the management of the BCU in a positive manner.

7.79 At present the district chief inspectors set tasks for the CDRPs through the operational delivery groups (ODGs), which occur every six weeks. Partners meet at strategic level through the responsible authorities group (RAG) which reviews performance across the three CDRPs within the BCU. Tactical responsibility for individual CDRP performance is managed through the ODGs. The BCU has three stakeholder policing project areas where local groups actively engage in problem solving activities in partnership with the police. The BCU recognises that it lacks a parallel TTCG process within the CDRP structure and ways to rectify this are being explored. The BCU may wish to consider district tasking meetings to involve partners and to reinforce the three district structure (see **Recommendation 5**).

- 7.80 The BCU employs a team of analysts who produce the six monthly strategic assessment and the fortnightly tactical assessment, as well as problem profiles and other bespoke analytical products commissioned by the TTCG. The BCU has recognised that whilst analysts produce level 1 and 2 intelligence there is a gap relating to quality of life issues, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour. As a result funding has been secured from the ‘Safer and Stronger Communities Fund’ for two CDRP analysts, which is strongly supported by HMIC.
- 7.81 A detective inspector heads the divisional intelligence unit (DIU) that produces daily intelligence briefings reflecting TTCG agreed priorities, accessible to all staff via the intranet. All intelligence is placed on the Memex intelligence system, which is accessible to all staff. All main operational records, including intelligence reports, are accessible and searchable through the BORIS management information system. The DIU has a recognised shortage in research capability and this is to form part of an ongoing force level review of the management of intelligence. The BCU has recently run a significant operation (Op Index) targeting Class A drug dealers using a range of covert tactics, including test purchase operatives, and as a result a number of significant dealers received substantial custodial sentences.

Strengths

- There is an effective daily tasking meeting and all meetings are well chaired.
- The BCU has robust NIM structures in place.*
- The establishment of its own TSU officer with associated equipment independent of the force TSU.*
- The intranet based NIM folder system, which enables managers to measure performance relating to each tactical plan.*

Areas for Improvement

- Recognised lack of analytical support for quality of life issues, criminal damage, and anti-social behaviour.*
- Lack of dedicated research capability within the DIU.*
- The BCU recognises that it needs to implement a tasking and co-ordinating process that fully engages with CDRPs, and should consider district tasking meetings.*

Leadership and Direction

Leadership

- 7.82 The BCU commander encourages line managers to empower their staff and establish a learning, rather than a blame, culture which was evident during the inspection. The inspection team formed the view that this was a well led strategic DLT, that was dynamic and demonstrated qualities of leadership throughout its membership. Lines of accountability are primarily based on chief inspectors with geographic or functional responsibilities. Accountability for performance is achieved through a series of meetings, including the fortnightly tasking and co-ordinating meeting and a monthly performance focus group (PFG) chaired by the BCU commander.
- 7.83 The BCU covers a large geographical area encompassing several satellite stations, and all DLT members make concerted efforts to visit all stations regularly. The DLT

acknowledges that communication on the BCU could be improved but due to pressure to introduce many new systems and innovations, there has been inadequate time to consult with staff, and it is the inspection team's view that there could have been better support from the centre. Media managers are Headquarters staff that basically deal with the press and news agencies. There was little evidence of their impact on the BCU in terms of positive stories or getting the corporate message across.

- 7.84 There is considerable unrest amongst police staff as a result of organisational changes and morale amongst uniform staff, particularly response officers, was low. There was a view (articulated on more than one occasion) that the organisation was keeping staff in the dark and many felt that this was deliberate. If the DLT wishes to take the staff forward to face the many challenges ahead, the need to improve communications is paramount and overrides all other considerations. However, as many of the staff concerns were of an organisational nature, the DLT cannot do this on their own, and need support from Headquarters (**see Recommendation 1**).
- 7.85 The DLT should review the structure of the BCU in light of experience gained from the BCU merger, and ILNAs realigned if necessary. The mechanisms for the management of the BCU should be reviewed at the same time, to ensure that it operates on a three district structure, and not the current 'north/south' divide. This may also be a suitable time to examine the divide of responsibilities within the DLT. The current structure works because of the personalities involved but the mix of responsibilities in the portfolios of the superintending ranks could cause tension. The DLT may wish to review these portfolios whilst examining the BCU structure; and change or reaffirm as it sees fit (**see Recommendation 5**).

Strengths

- The DLT exhibits dynamic leadership and strategic thinking.
- The BCU has had consistency of leadership in that the BCU commander has been in post since 2004.*
- The BCU has a positive meeting structure in place which influences performance.*

Areas for Improvement

- The DLT must urgently review the existing communications strategy and then introduce meaningful dialogue with all staff (**see Recommendation 1**).
- The DLT may wish to review the portfolios of the superintendents (**see Recommendation 5**).
- The BCU need to develop a robust process to ensure the PDR process is being fully utilised to drive performance.*
- The BCU should consider implementing some form of 360% feedback for its staff.*

Performance Management and Continuous Improvement

- 7.86 The BCU management is acutely aware that performance in terms of sanction detections needs to be improved and this is being treated as a priority area for improvement in 2007/08. To facilitate this, the Force is introducing a crime management model but has been tardy in its implementation, which includes rollout of new standard operating procedures (based on PCSD best practice), improved role and responsibility definition, improved process control and a training programme. There is

a considerable amount of work involved. There is also a TIC working group intended to improve sanction detections performance. During the past two years the BCU has focused on victim satisfaction, which has seen overall satisfaction increase from 81% in 2005/06 to 84% in 2006/07.

- 7.87 A performance and audit department with a manager and three staff reports directly to the BCU commander. Performance reports, published monthly on the BCU Intranet, include individual data. Beat managers regularly communicate performance summaries to community and parish meetings. Monthly performance reports are provided to each CDRP. A full suite of public satisfaction measures is incorporated within the performance review process and reflects the importance paid to this area of business by both the BCU and Force. Performance against PPAF domain targets and MSBCUs is highlighted. The BCU encourages use of the intranet based Webs system to assist officers, staff and supervisors to manage their crime workload. The inspection team found this to be a simple and potentially very useful tool, which was not being used effectively by some supervisors.
- 7.88 The BCU organisational development and audit officer conducts reviews and audits, which are based on priority areas identified through the performance review cycle, or as required when new processes are introduced. Audits have recently been conducted in custody management and stop and search. Completion of monthly audits of section 18 searches has led to a significant increase in the number of searches being carried out.
- 7.89 The BCU commander chairs a monthly performance focus group meeting, with mandatory attendance for chief inspectors and equivalents and above. Performance variations between teams are identified and challenged, and this was found to be the case when the inspection team attended a meeting. Deviation from target and poor performance trends are identified and action planned, whilst good performance is formally recognised both at the meeting and through BCU commander's congratulations, Chief Constable's Commendation and the new recognition and meritorious award scheme.

Strengths

- Comprehensive performance management data is available across the BCU down to sergeant/team level.*
- Within the Force the BCU performance management processes have been identified as good practice and the general processes have been adopted by the Luton BCU.*
- The intranet based NIM folder system provides an excellent tool for managers to ensure the focus is maintained on tactical hotspots and targets.*
- Officers with high workloads on CMS were identified and personal advice and support provided by experienced Detective Officers.*
- The BCU has sought advice and assistance from the PCSD and the Home Office with a view to improving its crime management processes and its detection performance.*

Areas for Improvement

- Better use could be made of the performance information available, particularly within teams.

- Whilst there is clear evidence of accountability for performance at inspector level the BCU needs to ensure it is embedded in all areas of business.*
- A process of fully documented performance reviews needs to be embedded throughout the BCU.*
- Given the detection performance of the BCU, the setting of detection targets for individuals and teams needs to be considered.*
- An action plan needs to be implemented to ensure that all PDRs have performance related PDR objectives and that regular documented reviews are taking place.*
- Introduce a more effective performance management framework.*
- Increase the momentum in terms of implementing a crime management model and Safer Neighbourhood Team Performance Indicators.* (**see Recommendation 3**).

HMIC Going Local 3 – BCU Inspection

Appendix A – GL3 Notional Contract

Purpose

This document follows an HMIC inspection of Bedford County BCU in Bedfordshire Police, which was conducted in July 2007 and sets out the action required by the BCU together with the improvement outcomes required. It is between the HMI, the BCU Commander and his/her ACPO line manager.

Action Required

BCU inspection reports published by the HMIC contain both recommendations and areas for improvement. Save for exceptional circumstances rendering the implementation of recommendations impossible or inappropriate, the implementation of recommendations is a given. Areas for improvement are highlighted to assist the BCU and are intended to allow the BCU discretion and flexibility on how it responds.

For Bedford County BCU, the HMIC requires that the following recommendations be implemented.

1. The DLT must urgently review the existing communications strategy and then introduce meaningful dialogue with all staff. If necessary this should be supported by additional resources from Headquarters.
2. The support offered to staff subject of ‘at risk notices’ should be reviewed by the Force. Access to an advice centre giving consistent guidance, and as far as possible, independent advice should be considered. Other best practice, such as a ‘most frequently asked questions’ web page could be set-up on the force intranet.
3. The need to introduce an effective crime management system is now critical. The Force and BCU need to implement a crime management model and introduce a programme to enhance the quality of investigation throughout.
4. Once a model has been introduced, existing units and their interdependencies should be reviewed, preferably by using a process map or equivalent process. The future of those units that sit outside the new model should be reviewed, in an effort to find additional resources to support other areas of critical business.
5. The DLT should review the structure of the BCU in light of experience gained from the BCU merger, and ILNAs realigned if necessary. The mechanisms for the management of the BCU should be reviewed at the same time, to ensure that it operates on a three district structure, and not the current ‘north/south’ divide. This may also be a suitable time to examine the divide of responsibilities within the DLT.

Improvement Outcomes

The implementation of recommendations and areas for improvement should ultimately lead to improvement in BCU performance. It is therefore essential that this notional contract include expectations as to future performance that are firmly linked to force and

BCU priorities.

It is acknowledged that there will be occasions when circumstances change beyond the control of either the Force or the BCU Commander whereby the implementation of certain recommendations or improvement outcomes is rendered unrealistic and void. Account will therefore be taken of these factors when the HMIC revisit is conducted within the timescale described herein.

BCU Revisit and Review

Bedford County BCU will be revisited in six months to determine whether this notional contract has been fully discharged. The HMIC will make an overall assessment that will fall within one of the following four options:

- 1) Fully discharged;
- 2) Partially discharged with further revisit scheduled;
- 3) Fully or partially discharged with aspects voided;
- 4) Not discharged with PSU referral.

Appendix B

Leadership Audit – Staff Survey results

Key to Scores:

5 = This is an integral part of our culture and operation and can be regarded as best practice

4 = Yes this is recognised as the way we do business, and we achieve real benefits

3 = Yes this usually happens but it could be improved

2 = This happens occasionally but there is no consistency

1 = No - this doesn't happen

0 = Don't Know

The BCU has an appropriate structure which is aligned to the Force Strategy		0 scores	1 scores	2 scores	3 scores	4 scores	5 scores
Q01	My role is clearly defined and contributes to the BCU and Force Strategy	1.54%	1.54%	4.62%	24.62%	41.54%	26.15%
Q02	I am set objectives which are clearly relative to my role and experience	0.00%	1.54%	15.38%	26.15%	36.92%	20.00%
Q03	Lines of accountability and responsibility within the BCU are clearly defined	3.08%	1.54%	7.69%	35.38%	44.62%	7.69%
Q04	Resources are effectively managed within the BCU including specific issues of demand and deployment	6.25%	26.56%	15.63%	31.25%	14.06%	6.25%
Q05	Throughout the BCU teams are balanced in terms of skills, experience and diversity	7.69%	16.92%	16.92%	40.00%	15.38%	3.08%
Q06	The health and safety procedures on the BCU are effective and make me feel safe in my workplace	3.08%	7.69%	15.38%	24.62%	36.92%	12.31%
The BCU has a performance culture with integrity							
Q07	My manager demonstrates an interest in my performance and development	0.00%	9.23%	13.85%	20.00%	27.69%	29.23%
Q08	I receive the development I need to perform my role	0.00%	7.69%	18.46%	24.62%	29.23%	20.00%
Q09	Within the BCU, good performance is recognised and rewarded	4.62%	13.85%	27.69%	27.69%	20.00%	6.15%
Q10	Innovation is promoted and supported on the BCU	6.15%	13.85%	23.08%	32.31%	20.00%	4.62%
Q11	On the BCU there is effective use of the National Intelligence Model - resources/tasking/coordination	3.08%	1.54%	12.31%	24.62%	43.08%	15.38%
Q12	BCU managers ensure that maintaining our integrity is more important than achieving good performance	7.69%	10.77%	27.69%	27.69%	20.00%	6.15%
Q13	The BCU delivers an effective service to the community	4.62%	7.69%	18.46%	35.38%	24.62%	9.23%
Diversity							
Q14	Diversity is embedded within the BCU, specifically in terms of personal values and all areas of business including selection and appointment of staff	6.15%	1.54%	6.15%	20.00%	47.69%	18.46%
Q15	Fairness at work procedures (e.g.: grievance or appeals) can be confidently used by staff on the BCU without fear of recriminations from managers	15.38%	1.54%	7.69%	20.00%	46.15%	9.23%
Q16	My manager's decisions in respect of operational issues are consistent	4.62%	3.08%	10.77%	24.62%	41.54%	15.38%
Q17	My manager's decisions in respect of disciplinary issues are consistent	18.46%	3.08%	6.15%	16.92%	43.08%	12.31%
Q18	My manager to solves problems effectively	4.62%	4.62%	10.77%	18.46%	40.00%	21.54%
Q19	My manager inspires me with confidence	1.54%	13.85%	9.23%	24.62%	27.69%	23.08%
Q20	Sickness and welfare are effectively managed within the BCU	12.31%	13.85%	10.77%	20.00%	33.85%	9.23%

Q21	Managers deal effectively with bullying	37.50%	3.13%	3.13%	14.06%	31.25%	10.94%
Q22	Abstractions from duty - other than sickness - are effectively managed within the BCU	10.77%	18.46%	13.85%	35.38%	20.00%	1.54%
Q23	There is a commitment within the BCU to staff retention	9.38%	29.69%	17.19%	26.56%	14.06%	3.13%
Personnel management							
Q24	I have regular and meaningful contact with my line manager	0.00%	13.85%	1.54%	13.85%	38.46%	32.31%
Q25	My manager demonstrates a genuine interest in me	0.00%	10.77%	12.31%	15.38%	32.31%	29.23%
Q26	I feel that my contributions are welcomed and valued	1.54%	6.15%	18.46%	20.00%	29.23%	24.62%
Q27	My manager makes me feel proud of the service we deliver	1.54%	10.77%	15.38%	27.69%	30.77%	13.85%
Q28	My manager makes me feel trusted, valued and included	0.00%	7.69%	12.31%	20.00%	36.92%	23.08%
Q29	Training and development is allocated on the BCU according to need	7.69%	10.77%	15.38%	32.31%	27.69%	6.15%
Q30	I am encouraged to learn by my manager	0.00%	16.92%	12.31%	24.62%	36.92%	9.23%
Q31	I feel prepared for future changes	7.69%	20.00%	23.08%	23.08%	18.46%	7.69%
Q32	Coaching and mentoring is available to me if I need it	16.92%	20.00%	15.38%	16.92%	24.62%	6.15%
Q33	Personnel issues are dealt with by my manager in a relevant and timely manner	7.69%	9.23%	4.62%	24.62%	43.08%	10.77%
Communication							
Q34	The BCU Commander & Senior Management Team has a high profile within BCU	1.54%	10.77%	16.92%	35.38%	32.31%	3.08%
Q35	My manager communicates relevant information to me	1.54%	4.62%	6.15%	29.23%	41.54%	16.92%
Q36	I feel that, where it is appropriate, I am consulted on matters of policy and strategy	4.62%	16.92%	13.85%	33.85%	21.54%	9.23%
Q37	My manager is available when I need to talk to him/her	0.00%	6.15%	6.15%	20.00%	44.62%	23.08%
Q38	The BCU Commander, Senior Management Team are available to staff at appropriate times	10.77%	10.77%	18.46%	20.00%	33.85%	6.15%
Q39	The BCU Commander and SMT respond in a positive way to feedback from staff	18.46%	6.15%	21.54%	29.23%	23.08%	1.54%
Q40	My manager responds in a positive way to feedback from staff	6.15%	6.15%	12.31%	18.46%	43.08%	13.85%

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.