



**A REVIEW OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
POLICE'S CAPACITY AND
CAPABILITY IN TACKLING MURDER
AND OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES**

BY

**HM INSPECTOR OF CONSTABULARY
DENIS O'CONNOR CBE, QPM**

4th APRIL 2005

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report responds to the Home Secretary's invitation to review urgently Nottinghamshire Police's capacity and capability in tackling murder and other serious crime, following Chief Constable Steve Green's comments that the force was struggling to cope after a recent upsurge in the number of murders.

1.2 Central to this work is an obligation to contextualise the issues and the review was framed by the following questions:

1] How extraordinary is the major crime challenge (specifically in respect of murder) facing Nottinghamshire Police?

2] How effectively is the Force dealing with this demand?

3] What are the issues in relation to the Force's resources and what options are available, including enhanced collaborative working?

1.3 Since being identified as an underperforming force real progress has been made by Nottinghamshire Police on reducing volume crime, tackling drug trafficking and reducing shootings, all areas where the force had performance problems. This has not been the case in relation to murder and organised crime, both of which have grown, notably in Nottingham, and which surged sharply in January 2005. In particular, the number of murders has increased by nearly 30% in the last year. It is not uncommon for metropolitan forces to face simultaneous pressures in relation to serious and volume crime, however it is unusual for this to happen in a force of Nottinghamshire's size, where there is less resilience and pro-active capability than in larger forces.

1.4 Nottinghamshire's de facto policing strategy is based upon controlling volume crime and detecting major crime. It has been increasingly successful in relation to the former, where significant improvements in performance management have been a major contributor to the success against volume crime. However, it is also clear the emphasis upon 'detecting' major crime is too passive and the Force needs to move to a **"control and protect"** strategy. In particular, the processes that have underpinned the successes against volume crime have yet to be developed for serious crime. This limits the Force's ability to prevail on this aspect of policing and the same rigour now needs to embrace serious crime, with appropriate use of National Intelligence Model (NIM) Level 2 and Level 3 disciplines¹.

¹ The NIM identifies three levels of criminality. These are:

Level 1: Local issues - usually crime, criminals, anti-social behaviour and a concomitant need for reassurance - that can be managed within a Basic command Unit (BCU).

Level 2: These are cross-border issues; usually the actions of organised criminality, major incidents and events affecting more than one BCU and potentially across boundaries into neighbouring forces. This can also include issues of wider public disquiet, notwithstanding that the original incident might otherwise be categorised as 'Level 1'.

Level 3: Serious and organised crime, terrorism or other extremist activity operating on a national or international level. This can also include major incidents, events and other issues of widespread

1.5 The greater part of the problem facing the Force lies in the City of Nottingham, but as the recent Audit Commission report, published in March 2005 shows, apart from police performance, partnerships have been inadequate to the task. Albeit unintentionally, the Force has contributed to some of these problems. Some of its media statements are seen by key partners as a source of conflict and as damaging to the City.

1.6 Whilst resources have increased in the past four years by 18%, the Force has been stretched in financial and human terms by the surge in major crime; in financial terms, £2 million of the projected overspend for the year 2004/05 can be attributed to resources applied reactively to murder. My overall conclusion in respect of the resources available to the force is that, while they are and will remain an issue, they are not at the heart of the problem which the force faces which is more about how to structure and utilise resources, skills and expertise to best effect. Nevertheless, if the seconded ACPO officer whom I recommend be appointed were to make a case for further resources as part of improving the force's approach to tackling Level 2 crime then that would obviously need to be considered. The Force is not, however, overwhelmed and where they have sought outside support, the numbers have been tiny². The Chief Officer team have commenced looking at the opportunities to change the Force's mix of resources and there are real opportunities to develop partnership with the City and to benefit from the skills national agencies can bring to disrupt and incapacitate organised crime.

1.7 In terms of direction, control and coordination this new focus on getting to grips with murder and serious crime will require strengthened commitment and leadership from the Chief Officer team. Specifically, this will need to include: greater clarity of responsibilities amongst the ACPO team and between Basic Command Units (BCUs) and headquarters; a thorough review of resource use including efficiency in dealing with murder; a shared plan to win; and the development of a genuine team approach. Furthermore, this will also need to be matched by parallel developments within the police authority to develop stronger corporate governance arrangements around major and organised crime.

The Way Forward:

1.8 Nottinghamshire Police has already benefited from very substantial PSU and HMIC support, which had a particular focus on burglary, robbery and vehicle crime and was where the force also had major performance problems. In light of the reported comments by the Chief Constable in the media, the recent surge in murder, the problematic relationship with some partners and the specific issues raised by a recent review commissioned by the Chief Constable, it is clear that more intensive support will be needed if the force is to move forwards.

1.9 This enhanced support should include: wider implementation of the National Intelligence Model and the handing over of areas of operation to the National Crime

national concern, often with national media coverage, that can seriously undermine confidence on a wider scale.

² Just 16 people are drawn from external forces. This equates to 0.2 of total staff

Squad (and other constituent elements of the planned Serious and Organised Crime Agency); the immediate secondment, to the Force, of a Chief Officer with expertise in dealing with serious criminality to increase the capability and capacity of the Nottinghamshire ACPO team; a comprehensive review of resource use in relation to murder and Level 2 matters (some immediate considerations for more efficient use of resources have been identified in this report); development of a medium term Force strategy (with a specific focus on preventing murders); and the provision of high level Critical Incident training, the appointment of a professional Director of Human Resources; a review of the accommodation for the murder investigation teams including the murder incident room utility; and enhanced partnership working in Nottingham City (including support to the new BCU commander and the development of a press protocol for partners).

Recommendations

1.10 In particular it is recommended that:

1] The Chief Constable, in liaison with Mr William Hughes, the director designate of SOCA, creates capacity and reduces risk by agreeing a comprehensive operational resolution of the current most serious organised criminal enterprises by SOCA (designate).

2] A senior, experienced ACPO officer³, with ready access to expert resources, be seconded, with immediate effect, as ‘Strategic Advisor’ to the Chief Constable in:

- **rationalising responsibilities and accountabilities at Force, HQ CID and BCU level;**
- **identifying any opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Force’s response to murder, including prevention and reduction;**
- **reviewing whether the balance, mix and use of resources across police functions is the most efficient and effective to meet current challenges.**

HMIC will facilitate this secondment, which should be for an initial period of three months. The projected start date is 11th April.

3] The Chief Constable, with the support of PSU, develop a medium term plan for the Force including a preventative strategy for murder and serious crime and a Level 2 performance management framework.

4] The Chief Constable makes the necessary arrangements to ensure the provision of Critical Incident training for key senior post holders and key partner agencies.

5] The Police Authority and the Chief Constable, with the support of the PSU:

³ It is suggested this post is funded by the Home Office.

- **appoint a professionally qualified Director of Human Resources at Chief Officer level; and**
- **review the efficiency and effectiveness of the current accommodation provided to major inquiries and identify options for improvement commencing this financial year.**

6A] The Chief Constable and the Home Office Delivery Manager for Nottingham secure an operational partnership agreement, based upon a common understanding of the full range of the criminal challenge in the county, together with a shared ambition and operating approach – starting with the City itself.

6B] The PSU ensure that the Nottingham City BCU commander is provided with national best practice to enhance city partnership activity with support from Government Office East Midlands.

1.11 In progressing the above recommendations the ACPO Homicide Working Group have offered to provide expert, experienced and specialist support to the Force.

1.12 Nottinghamshire Police has been the subject of very substantial PSU and HMIC support and attention for a significant time. Success at Level 1 and Level 2 is not an ‘either/or’ equation, the Force must deliver on both simultaneously. These recommendations are a minimum set of proposals to move the organisation forward for the benefit of the people of Nottinghamshire.

1.13 Whilst I am satisfied the Chief Officer team are displaying will and determination in addressing the issues I have raised, the critical nature of my recommendations are such that is my intention to re-visit the Force in three months. My continued confidence in its ability to improve will be dependant upon seeing signs of significant progress against these recommendations.