

**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary  
Northern Regional Office**

**Follow up/Monitoring visit to Northern Area  
Cheshire Constabulary**

**BCU Inspection conducted – March 2005**

**Follow-up visit conducted – March 2006**



Reinspection of Northern Area BCU  
Cheshire Constabulary

**Northern Area BCU – Cheshire Constabulary**

<b>Date of Inspection</b>	<b>Reinspection Team</b>	<b>BCU Commander</b>	<b>Date of Final Report</b>	<b>Date of Monitoring</b>
March 2005	Chief Superintendent R Trounson & Chief Inspector T Done	Superintendent J Clayton	October 2005	March 2006

**1. Significant developments since the original inspection (e.g. boundary changes, changes to management team, increase/decrease in strength)**

**BCU Structure**

At the time of the original inspection, Warrington was an individual and distinct BCU. In April 2005 it was amalgamated with the Widnes and Runcorn areas of the former Halton BCU, under the banner of the Force-wide programme called 'Taking Control', to form the new Northern Area of Cheshire Constabulary.

The change was prompted by the need to increase capacity, improve public confidence and reduce the fear of crime by targeting policing activities at neighbourhood level through the National Intelligence Model.

Covering a compact area of approximately 261 square kilometres and serving a residential population of some 312,000 people, Northern Area has a budgeted strength of 567 police officers and 125 police staff.

Intelligence-led, citizen-focused neighbourhood policing units (NPU), comprised of uniformed officers, investigators, police community support officers and members of the Special Constabulary, are the key service delivery arm of the new structure.

**Management Team**

A new management team structure, headed by a chief superintendent, was introduced with the new Northern Area. The structure is divided into two branches, operations and support, each headed by a superintendent and supported by:

- two uniformed chief inspectors;
- a detective chief inspector;
- a human resource (HR) manager;
- a training manager;
- a finance manager; and
- a performance and services manager.

The Area Commander has been in post since September 2005, however, three members of the current management team held posts within the area prior to being appointed to their current roles. Their presence has provided continuity and the whole management team is to be congratulated on achieving extensive change with minimum disruption to morale and performance.

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## 2. Performance Summary

### Crime Data - Crime Performance Table

The table below shows the supporting 12 months of data:

Performance Indicator	Feb 04 to Jan 05	Feb 05 to Jan 06	% Change	MSBCU Group mean	The BCU's ranked position
Recorded crime per 1,000 population	104.92	109.69	4.55%	116.03	7 <sup>th</sup>
Recorded crime detection rate	24.79%	25.78%	0.99 p.p.	26.57%	10 <sup>th</sup>
Domestic burglary per 1,000 households	11.15	13.05	17.06%	15.77	4 <sup>th</sup>
Domestic burglary detection rate	24.86%	21.06%	-3.80 p.p.	16.89%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Robberies per 1,000 population	0.71	0.69	-2.26%	0.98	4 <sup>th</sup>
Robbery crime detection rate	15.84%	27.31%	11.48 p.p.	26.96%	5 <sup>th</sup>
Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population	13.67	14.50	6.08%	17.06	5 <sup>th</sup>
Vehicle crime detection rate	11.04%	13.10%	2.06 p.p.	11.26%	5 <sup>th</sup>
Violent crimes per 1,000 population	20.90	23.38	11.84%	23.94	8 <sup>th</sup>
Violent crime detection rate	56.44%	50.14%	-6.30 p.p.	53.02%	13 <sup>th</sup>

Note) This data is not validated and therefore is only provisional.

Appendix A shows iQuanta charts up to January 2006.

Summary – Below is a Boston Box showing a performance summary for the Northern Area BCU over the same time period as in the above table and showing performance against the MSBCU group:

<p>Good – Getting Better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robbery per 1,000 population</li> <li>• % Robbery detected</li> <li>• % Vehicle Crime detected</li> </ul> 	<p>Good – Getting Worse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total Crime per 1,000 population</li> <li>• Domestic Burglary per 1,000 households</li> <li>• % Domestic Burglary detected</li> <li>• Vehicle Crime per 1,000 population</li> <li>• Violent Crime per 1,000 population</li> </ul> 
<p>Poor – Getting Better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % Total Crime detected</li> </ul> 	<p>Poor – Getting Worse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % Violent Crime detected</li> </ul> 

### In Summary

Boundary changes mean that comparisons between current and past performance can only be made by collating baseline data from the previously separate constituent geographic elements and measuring it against composite data from the new Northern Area. This shows mixed results:

- While crime in all key categories except robbery has increased in the period under consideration compared to the previous 12 months, crime rates are generally lower in the Northern Area of Cheshire than in most other BCUs in the

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most similar force (MSF) group. The exception is violent crime, in which Northern Area is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of the 15 forces.

- Detection rates for total crime, robbery and vehicle crime have improved in the Northern Area – particularly in the case of robberies – but those for dwelling burglaries and violent crime have fallen. To put these results in context, Northern Area’s detection rates for dwelling burglaries, robbery and vehicle crime are higher than the most similar BCU (MSBCU) group mean, whilst those for total crime and violent crime are lower.

This mixed picture indicates that there is scope for further improvement. While the monitoring team acknowledges improvements to local tasking and co-ordinating, it feels that better use could be made of incident analysis and performance development review (PDR) to achieve a greater understanding of problems and trends, and to focus both individual and team activity.

**Type of Detection Method**

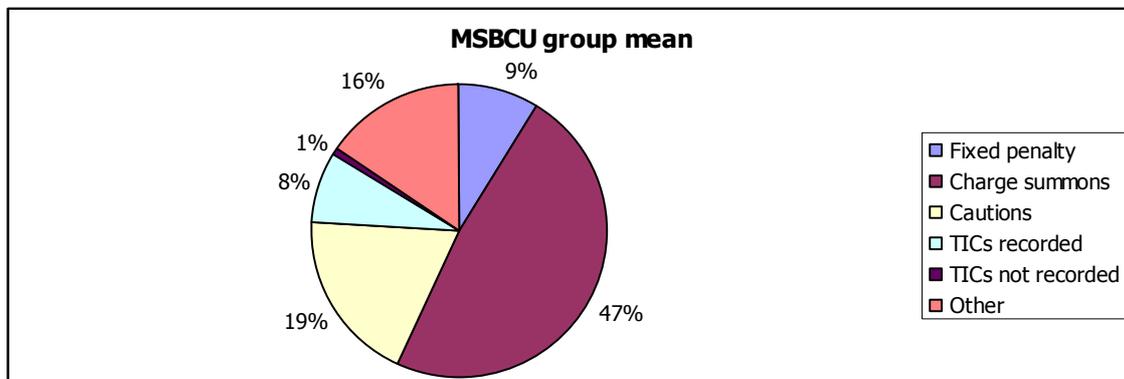
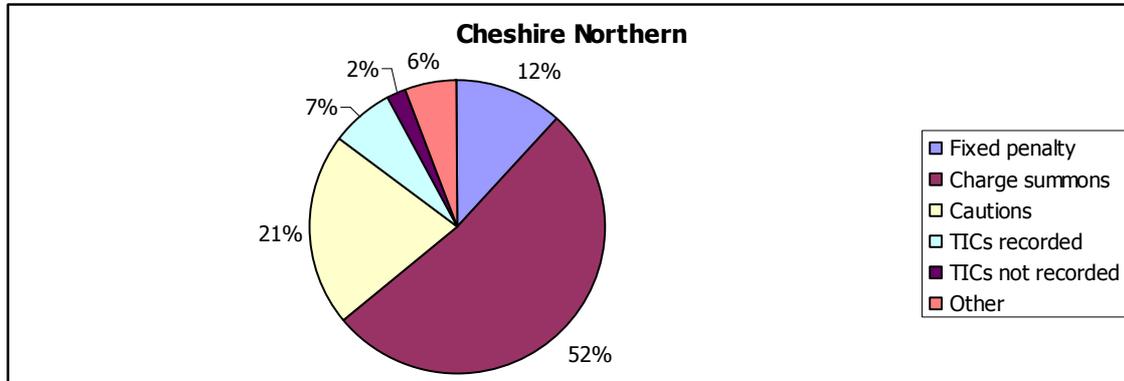
The table below shows the type of detection methods in Northern Area BCU for the 12 month period February 2005 to January 2006 compared to the MSBCU group:

	Number of Detects	No of Fixed Penalties	Number of Charged/ Summons	Number of Cautions	Number of TIC (recorded)	Number of TIC (not recorded)	Number of Other Detects	% of Other Detects
<b>Total Crime - NORTHERN</b>	8843	1064	4597	1875	619	197	491	5.55%
Total Crime - MSBCU Ave	6355.07	562.60	3039.73	1220.73	490.33	52.27	989.40	15.57%
<b>Domestic Burglary - NORTHERN</b>	357	1	168	27	135	11	15	4.20%
Domestic Burglary - MSBCU Ave	228.20	0.53	113.73	11.80	82.20	3.13	16.80	7.36%
<b>Robbery - NORTHERN</b>	59	0	50	7	1	0	1	1.69%
Robbery - MSBCU Ave	54.47	0.00	46.47	1.40	2.27	0.07	4.27	7.83%
<b>Vehicle Crime - NORTHERN</b>	594	1	255	61	227	36	14	2.36%
Vehicle Crime - MSBCU Ave	395.80	0.13	167.67	25.87	174.40	5.33	22.40	5.66%
<b>Violent Crime - NORTHERN</b>	3665	516	1991	850	10	2	296	8.08%
Violent Crime - MSBCU Ave	2616.47	262.93	1176.87	542.73	4.47	0.33	629.13	24.05%

*Please note: The MSBCU group is out of 15 BCUs.*

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Pie charts showing the percentage of the types of detection method used for total crime can be seen below for the time period used above:



It is worthy of note that the BCU had 2,488 more detections overall than the MSBCU average and charged, summonsed or cautioned over 2,200 more persons during the period under consideration. Indeed, since the original inspection the BCU sanction detection rate has overtaken the average for the MSBCU group. The monitoring team congratulates everyone in the BCU for their contribution to this achievement.

### 3. Inspection Recommendations

<b>Recommendation 1</b>	
<p><b><i>Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends the introduction of development for first line supervisors to ensure that they are clear about their supervisory responsibilities in relation to issues such as PDR, bail monitoring, NCRS compliance, discipline and domestic violence monitoring.</i></b></p>	
<b>Action taken by BCU</b>	<b>Measurable Impact</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The management team is developing a philosophy for policing within the BCU which reflects Force values and the expectations of 'Taking Control'. 'Putting People First' is intended to provide local context to ensure role clarity and accountability in support of 'Taking Control', the BCU control strategy and staff development. Clearer guidelines, standard operating procedures and local targets focus supervisors on their responsibilities to reduce crime and increase sanction detections.</li> <li>• Following the Force restructure, dedicated training days have been introduced within BCUs to develop teams and individuals, and update staff on changes to policy and legislation. Specific training events for supervisors include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ two leadership workshops for sergeants to clarify roles and responsibilities in the light of 'Taking Control'; and</li> <li>○ sickness management.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Further sessions on hate crime, Smartwater and the victim codes are intended.</li> <li>• The management team resolved to progress PDR using a paper based system in the absence of an effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The monitoring team found a high level of role clarity among supervisors whom they met, but no direct evidence that 'Putting People First' is providing that focus or underpinning supervisors' development. Clarity derives from 'Taking Control', standard operating procedures and a well embedded performance culture based on local crime and detection targets. <b>The Commander is advised to crystallise his vision of 'Putting People First', secure understanding and support from area managers, market awareness throughout the BCU, and incorporate its strategic aims within the performance management framework.</b></li> <li>• Sergeants, to whom the monitoring team spoke, articulated benefit from the training sessions on leadership and sickness management to their understanding of their supervisory responsibilities. The constables, whom the monitoring team met, did not express such strong endorsement for the training sessions they receive. The area training manager proposes to improve current arrangements by focusing more on quality of service issues, tailoring themes to meet clients' specific needs, and introducing more flexibility in training delivery, for example through the development of computer-based packages. <b>The Commander is advised to ensure that training themes are relevant, timely and appropriately delivered to all recipients.</b></li> <li>• The monitoring team found strong evidence of a drive within the BCU to make the PDR process work. Some 70% of PDRs have been</li> </ul>

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<p>Force electronic system, with a view to ensuring that all staff have work-related objectives that support priorities in the area control strategy. These objectives are intended to focus staff on their key responsibilities and are underpinned by a performance management framework of targets and accountability meetings. PDR submissions are collated by the HR manager who intends to carry out quality assurance checks.</p>	<p>completed in the current year, but the scope of objectives and their compliance with SMART principles is more limited. The targets on which objectives tend to be focused are exclusively quantitative and the monitoring team did not find a correlation between the concepts of quality, reassurance and responsiveness implicit in the 'Putting People First' philosophy and the reality that performance is measured by crime and detection figures. <b>The monitoring team would advise that targets should be broadened to include quality of service issues, and that PDR quality controls should be implemented without delay to ensure that staff are focused specifically in support of area priorities and standards, and not merely pointed in a restricted direction.</b></p>
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**Decision**

The monitoring team found a high level knowledge and understanding among supervisors of their roles and responsibilities, and evidence that efforts are directed to achieving key targets in relation to reducing crime and increasing sanction detections. The recommendation is therefore considered complete. **Performance is likely to improve, however, if the management team's vision for 'Putting People First' is crystallised in a set of strategic objectives, indicators and targets that reflect both qualitative and quantitative priorities and which are underpinned by:**

- **SMART PDR work objectives;**
- **relevant and timely development; and**
- **regular accountability meetings.**

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<b>Recommendation 2</b>	
<b><i>Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the tasking and co-ordinating pre-meeting be discontinued.</i></b>	
<b>Action taken by BCU</b>	<b>Measurable Impact</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The pre-meeting has ceased. All business has moved to the daily and fortnightly tasking and co-ordinating (T&amp;C) meetings.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The management team is no longer separated from the more detailed discussions and decisions of T&amp;C.</li><li>• Staff in the area intelligence unit have more time to address other demands.</li></ul>

**Decision**

The monitoring team's assessment is that there has been significant progress and measurable impact in relation to this recommendation and it is considered complete.

**Recommendation 3**

***Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the approach to tasking is reviewed by the senior management team and that the tasking and co-ordinating meeting is reconfigured to ensure: problem/target profiles are highlighted; tactical options are identified; specific tasks are appropriately allocated; policing activity is monitored; and problem/target profiles are routinely updated to evidence the impact of policing activity.***

Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime reduction and sanction detection targets have been set for key priorities in the area control strategy in order to measure improvement, focus activity and determine progress.</li> <li>• Fortnightly level one T&amp;C tactical meetings are held in a more suitable environment and normally video conferenced across the new area, to maximise participation while minimising cost and disruption. Meetings focus on driving business through target and problem profiles. There is clear accountability and actions are both recorded and reviewed.</li> <li>• Daily T&amp;C meetings are video conferenced across the new area bringing together representatives of all sectors at minimum cost and disruption. The agenda focuses on the control strategy priorities. Action in support of area and local profiles is scrutinised, and actions are recorded and reviewed.</li> <li>• Action at NPU level is focused through crime and detection targets, and area and local problem profiles. Profile records are managed on a widely accessed electronic database (PROMS) and actions are scrutinised at T&amp;C meetings.</li> <li>• Funding is being sought to appoint a performance research officer to assist in the analysis of the impact of local policing activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The monitoring team found the daily and fortnightly T&amp;C meetings to be dynamic, inclusive and focused on area priorities and related profiles, but saw little evidence that options, decisions and resource deployment are informed by analysis. <b>Analysis is the key to understanding problems and trends and making best use of resources.</b> The senior management team advised that the appointment of a senior analyst is imminent, and will allow a greater and more mature analytical capability.</li> <li>• There is a well established culture of focusing activity through an easily accessed electronic profiles database (PROMS) which is monitored through the T&amp;C process.</li> <li>• The monitoring team found strong and consistent evidence of a well-embedded performance management culture in which staff efforts are directed to achieving key targets for reducing crime and increasing sanction detections. <b>The perceived emphasis on quantitative targets is a frustration for the constables and community support officers. This could be addressed through the 'Putting People First' agenda, allowing them to focus more on quality and reassurance.</b></li> </ul>

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**Decision**

The monitoring team attended one daily and one fortnightly tasking and co-ordinating group (T&CG) meeting. The T&CG meeting was also attended by representatives of the National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) who had been invited by the Chief Constable to advise on the development of the National Intelligence Model in Cheshire Constabulary.

While the monitoring team considers that there has been significant progress and measurable impact in relation to this recommendation to render it complete, any advice from the NCPE team will be crucial to securing further improvement. **From the management team's own acknowledgement there is clearly scope to improve analysis with a view to achieving a greater understanding of problems and trends, and making better use of resources.**

#### 4. Monitoring Assessment and Follow-up Action

Have all recommendations been accepted and acted upon?	Yes
Has the remedial action/implementation plan led to demonstrable improvement?	Yes
Has performance in relation to national/local targets improved? If not, are the reasons for deterioration understood (e.g. transition to NCRS) and being addressed?	Yes
Have any problems arisen since the inspections that are likely to affect performance and merit further scrutiny by HMIC?	No
Other than notification of monitoring outcome to regional office (lead staff officer), is any further action required by HMIC Inspection team – e.g. contact with PSU?	No

#### 5. Conclusions

The monitoring team is satisfied that the recommendations made following the BCU inspection in March 2005 have been addressed.

A number of suggestions were also made in the initial inspection report. The monitoring team has examined the BCU response to these suggestions and is satisfied that action has been taken to address them.

A mixed picture of performance indicates that there is scope for further improvement. While local tasking and co-ordinating processes have improved and there is a well-embedded performance culture based on crime reduction and detection targets, better use could be made of incident analysis and PDR to achieve a greater understanding of problems and trends, and to focus both individual and team activity. Translating the 'Putting People First' philosophy into strategy is a critical first step in establishing a comprehensive point of reference to guide activity and measure performance.

The monitoring team would like to thank the BCU Commander and all staff for their warm welcome and assistance during the visit and congratulate the management team on achieving extensive change with minimum disruption to morale and performance.

Chief Superintendent Robin Trounson and Chief Inspector Tim Done  
Staff Officers to HM Inspector of Constabulary