

**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
Northern Regional Office**

**Follow-up/Monitoring Visit to Middlesbrough
Cleveland Constabulary**

BCU Inspection Conducted – December 2002

Follow-up Visit Conducted – June 2004



Follow up/monitoring visits to inspected BCUs

Middlesbrough BCU – Cleveland Constabulary

| Date of Inspection | Lead Inspector on revisit | BCU Commander | Date of final report | Date of monitoring visit |
|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Dec 2002 | Ch Supt Simon Willsher | Ch Supt Mark Braithwaite | Feb 2003 | June 2004 |

1. Significant developments since the original Inspection (e.g. boundary changes, changes to management team, increase/decrease in strength)
 - Since the original Inspection there have been significant Force-led changes that have impacted on the BCU's capacity to act upon the recommendations made in the report. These have been borne in mind when assessing activity against the recommendations.
 - In April 2003 Cleveland Police undertook major restructuring (referred to locally as the 'Change Programme') into a functionally based policing model, with the response and crime investigation functions coming under central control. This was reversed in October 2003 with response functions returning to district command, followed by CID in April 2004.
 - The change programme significantly hampered the BCU's development in operational terms, particularly on the role of the community based problem solving officers (COPS). These officers effectively became a second level response and were unable to perform their core function of problem solving. Middlesbrough is only at the early stages of recovery from this detrimental impact on community policing.
 - In early 2004, a large financial deficit was identified in the Force's budget. The resultant recovery programme has put the BCU under strict financial restraints and has further impacted on the BCU's ability to respond to the recommendations.
 - There have also been changes to the senior management team (SMT), with a new district commander arriving in October 2003; a new detective superintendent (crime manager) in March 2004, the reintroduction of the chief inspector rank (two posts) in May 2004, and an increased workload for the personnel and development manager to cover two BCUs (Middlesbrough and Langbaugh). The District Commander aspires to have a community inspector in place for each of the four community areas that make up the BCU. This is a positive approach to improving the community focus of the BCU, when combined with other ward based plans that were outlined to the reinspection team. **The outcome of these proposals will be awaited with interest by HMIC.**
 - After a period of change and upheaval it is hoped that a period of relative stability will allow the SMT to develop and gel and for the BCU to develop along clearly led lines.

2. Performance

| Performance Indicator | Performance 2002/03 | Performance 2003/04 | % Change from 2002/03 to 2003/04 | Family group average for 2003/04 | The BCUs ranked position in BCU Family 4 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Recorded crime per 1,000 population | 209.13 | 185.59 | -11.26% | 162.24 | 21 st |
| Recorded crime detection rate | 20.99% | 20.22% | -0.77 pp | 23.72% | 23 rd |
| Domestic burglary per 1,000 households | 47.75 | 37.62 | -21% | 33.3 | 21 st |
| Domestic burglary detection rate | 8.9% | 9.8% | 0.9 pp | 14.03% | 22 nd |
| Robberies per 1,000 population | 6.53 | 5.82 | -11% | 3.99 | 23 rd |
| Robbery detection rate | 14.6% | 15.3% | 0.6 pp | 19.18% | 23 rd |
| Vehicle crime per 1,000 population | 46.72 | 32.37 | -31% | 26.28 | 22 nd |
| Vehicle crime detection rate | 5.6% | 5.8% | 0.1 pp | 9.12% | 23 rd |
| Violent crime per 1,000 population | 26.75 | 30.22 | 13% | 30.95 | 18 th |
| Violent crime detection rate | 45.4% | 40.6% | -4.8 pp | 46.95% | 23 rd |

- At the time of the original Inspection Middlesbrough had suffered increases in recorded crime in the 2001/02 recording period compared to the previous year. The increase in detections over the same period in each crime category exceeded this increase. From April 2002 to the Inspection in December the BCU saw a fall in all the main priority crime areas (except violent crime).
- During 2002, the levels of domestic burglary showed a downward trend. The rate of reduction slowed during 2003, but record a 21% drop year on year (2002/03 to 2003/04). There has also been a rise in detections, most notably in early 2004. Detection levels remain below the BCU family average but are seen as improving.
- At the time of the Inspection concerns were expressed about the robbery levels. These peaked at the end of the 2001/02 reporting period and were at a level significantly above the family average. The overall trend during 2002/03 was downwards, although a significant rise was again recorded in the early months of 2003. In response to a less severe rise in early 2004, the BCU formed a robbery squad to address the issue on a short-term basis. This has now developed into a wider proactive crime team addressing all crime types. This illustrates the BCU responding to its changing crime demands. During 2003/04 the BCU saw an 11% drop in robberies and an increase in detections. The volume of robbery and detection levels is seen as improving from a poor position compared to the family average.

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- The volume of vehicle crime continues to show a generally downward trend. Comparing 2002/03 to 2003/04 a 31% drop is recorded, but only a 0.1% increase in detection levels. The BCU remains above the BCU family and Force averages for recording and below for detections.
- The Inspection report showed a relatively low violent crime figure for 2001/02 – it ranked 8th in its family – but with a below average detection level. However, steep rises were encountered during the year partly due to the impact of NCRS. The rise slackened during 2002/03 but shows a 13% rise for 2003/04 compared to 2002/03. There has also been a disappointing decline in the detection rate to around 40% from the 58% level in 2001/02 (it should be noted that the family average has also fallen to 47% in the same period).
- Overall it is encouraging to note the declines in all crime categories during 2003/04 despite the upheavals the BCU went through with the change programme. The exception is with violent crime and the BCU is **encouraged to continue to develop a response to this trend.**
- The level of repeat victimisation on the BCU remains a concern. At the time of the initial Inspection the repeat rate for domestic burglary stood at 22.2%, in 2003/04 it stood at 15.3%. This remains above the Force average (13.59%) and the BCU family average of 13.77%¹. The reinspection team is also concerned at the 62% repeat domestic violence rate. There is also a 25% repeat location rate for incidents of disorder. These rates could illustrate the failure of problem solving to be embedded and may provide some guide to the success of the planned implementation of it.

¹ Out of 22 BCUs with submitted data on the Crux Matrix System. Middlesbrough are included in this group as they have not submitted the repeat figures for 2003/04.

3. Inspection Recommendations

Action taken by the BCU refers to the action plan submitted to HMIC following the Inspection and the reported progress made as per the last update held by HMIC Northern Office dated 30 June 2003. Measurable impact is the findings of the reinspection team and contains note of new activity undertaken since the last action plan update.

| Recommendation 1 | |
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| <i>That the BCU puts in place a structured awareness raising programme in relation to COPS teams to improve working relationships and understanding of their role, the status of COPS officers and problem solving skills of staff across the BCU.</i> | |
| Action taken by BCU | Measurable impact |
| <p>ACTION: Programme of attachments and input via probationer focus groups TIMESCALE: Ongoing PROGRESS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All probationers receive input in COPS role on arrival. Multi-agency team building programme in February 2003 to ensure awareness of role of COPS. • COPS core groups role enhanced (Partnership problem solving). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reinspection team was disappointed to find little measurable evidence of activity against this recommendation. • What activity has been undertaken has failed to break down a perceptible 'silo' mentality and there is a prevailing feeling amongst all operational groups of 'fire fighting.' Officers themselves seem disillusioned with the pressure they are under, one stating, "quality of service has gone due to quantity of service." • Response officers have little comprehension of the role and remit of COPS officers. COPS officers themselves expressed frustration at their inability to devote time to problem solving due to the demands placed on them to deal with 'lower graded' response calls. • A quantitative performance regime is having an impact on COPS officers' ability to pursue problem solving due to the need to demonstrate measurable performance indicators. • Most probationers are attached to COPS teams once out of the tutor unit and this is applauded as a means of cross-fertilising the roles of COPS and response. However, closer regard should be given to the longer-term needs of the community |

and the impact 'mentoring' has on more experienced COPS officers. There is also a possible issue over insufficient supervision of the probationary constables as traditionally supervision of COPS officers is lower due to experience levels.

- There was a one day multi-agency training day conducted, although staff interviewed had no recollection of it. This was not a sufficient response to achieve the aim of the recommendation. Partner agencies interviewed expressed a willingness to be involved in any new programme put in place.
- Following the original Inspection all response officers received a 10 minute input on the COPS role from the DTO. This has had no obvious lasting benefit.
- It was disappointing to discover that the COPS core group meeting system has recently stopped due to a lack of committed attendance. The local authority expressed a desire for the system to return if fully supported as a means of developing localised problem solving, joint enforcement activity and information sharing (in addition to the 'AIM' meetings – see recommendation 4). **HMIC would concur with this sentiment**
- The BCU has commenced a programme of problem solving training that should address some of the above issues (see recommendation 2).
- **The SMT is urged to revisit the marketing of the COPS role to all staff and ensure that steps are taken to improve COPS abilities to carry out their core role.**

| Recommendation 2 | |
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| <i>That the training needs of police staff in relation to problem solving, information sharing and inter-agency working are identified and met through a structured training and development programme.</i> | |
| Action taken by BCU | Measurable impact |
| <p>ACTION: Multi-agency training programme implemented TIMESCALE: Immediate PROGRESS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint local authority/police problem solving training delivered in February 2003 to all COPS officers over two days. • Outside trainer to be employed, to be repeated to capture new officers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the time of this recommendation the term ‘police staff’ was only in reference to police officers but the context should now be seen to include ‘support staff’. • Training was provided as part of the multi-agency day noted under Recommendation 1. This wouldn’t appear to have been very impactful on staff; none of those interviewed had any recollection of anyone who took part at the time. • The Force change programme was very disruptive on the ability of the BCU to instil a problem solving culture. The BCU needs to recover from this position. • There is a recently commenced programme of problem solving training for all staff, which should lead to the embedding of the concept. The reinspection team have two concerns over this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The pressures placed on COPS officers as already discussed. ○ The ‘sheep dip’ approach to the training, with no mandatory action plans for participants. • It is essential that the problem solving training is focused, with a clear objective for what it is trying to achieve. It is strongly urged that the make up of classes is wide ranging to enable appreciation of individual roles and experience to be utilised. Partners should also be invited to get involved with the training. |

Recommendation 3

That a review of the Special Constabulary in Middlesbrough is conducted and implemented by the BCU to ensure this resource is most effectively utilised in line with Force and local priorities.

| Action taken by BCU | Measurable impact |
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| <p>ACTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force working party established under head of personnel and development. Integration of the Special Constabulary into the regular Force, with the removal of special constable supervisory ranks. It is proposed that the special constables will be supervised by regular officers. • Special constables being deployed within community policing teams in order to fit in with the change programme, which separated response and community policing. • To create the role of special constable co-ordinator who will be responsible for admin work involved and for liaising with special constables on their availability and the areas of deployment. The post holder will be a special constable. • To establish the recruitment and selection targets, initiatives and processes required. • To identify and address the training requirements for such roles in a more responsive and flexible way. • It is important that the special constables themselves are fully involved in the progression of these proposals. <p>TIMESCALE: Ongoing PROGRESS: Review continuing under chair of Force personnel/development manager. Proposals presently subject of consultation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCU's ability to respond to this recommendation was hampered by a Force working party to review deployment of the Special Constabulary Force-wide. This group has now been dissolved and there remains some confusion over outcomes. In relation to the specific action points raised the following can be stated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisory ranks have been retained. • No deployment (other than ad hoc) has occurred with COPS teams. • The co-ordinator was temporarily appointed but the post was quickly abandoned. There may be willingness amongst the special constables for this to be reinitiated. • Recruitment has occurred. • Training should be identified via PDRs but those interviewed appear to be unaware of this process. • Consultation appears to be an issue (see following). • At the time of the reinspection there was an establishment of 22 special constables, the majority of whom were described as active. • A number of issues regarding the working of the Special Constabulary at Middlesbrough were brought to the attention of the reinspection team. These were fed personally to the District Commander. They covered areas such as lack of consistent training; poor utilisation; poor integration and deployment with regulars. |

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| | <p>poor communication linkages; and some supervisory issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reinspection team was also concerned at the regular Wednesday night deployment of the special constables as a whole group, with no specific targeting or intelligence-led deployments. The reason for this seems historical and linked to training (which is reported to be sparse). The SMT should review this practice. • The special constables did express their commitment and good working relationships with regulars but the reinspection team urge the District Commander to urgently review the way special constables are utilised on the BCU if their morale and enthusiasm is not to be detrimentally affected. |
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| Recommendation 4 | |
| <i>That the process of performance review meetings within the BCU is formalised and developed to focus further the work of each team towards BCU priorities.</i> | |
| Action taken by BCU | Measurable impact |
| <p>ACTION: Refocus on MPR meetings and also personal development action plan and tutorials are to include activity linked to district performance targets. TIMESCALE: Immediate. PROGRESS: Refocus on performance culture/management.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCU has a robust MPR process in place with all staff aware of performance measures and team targets. All staff seem to appreciate the need for the system, although some of the quantitative measures placed on COPS teams could be deflecting them from their core role due to supervisory pressure (see Recommendation 1). • The MPR process is only at the initial stages for detective officers and whilst some performance data has previously been kept, the system is subject to ongoing identification of appropriate performance measures. • The BCU is awaiting the 'trickle down' of the new electronic PDR system. These will have action plans linked to performance |

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| | <p>targets and are to be encouraged. The reinspection team is aware that the implementation forms part of the ACC led MPR inspection process for the BCU and expects this to drive full implementation quickly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reinspection team was satisfied that this recommendation has been fully acted upon. |
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Recommendation 5

That, following appropriate consultation with and guidance from Force headquarters, the BCU implements a comprehensive briefing or training process to ensure all staff have a full understanding of the relevant parts of the Home Office Counting Rules and National Crime Recording Standards. This should be followed by regular monitoring and review to ensure the highest standards are maintained.

| Action taken by BCU | Measurable impact |
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| <p>ACTION: Programme of monitoring and review implemented. Programme of training in place. TIMESCALE: Immediate. PROGRESS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training has been delivered to all units in the district including CID in March 2003. • Updated presentation will also be made available on the district intranet. • Further awareness training commencing 30 June 2003. • Monitoring in place. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a Force level audit of NCRS compliance carried out on a regular basis. The BCU has a member of staff in place who also carries out this function as part of other duties. • Training has been conducted and is reinforced as required. • The reinspection team was satisfied that this recommendation has been fully acted upon. |

Recommendation 6

That an evaluation programme is put in place in relation to ongoing initiatives within the BCU, in order to better inform policing tactics and resource allocation decisions for the future.

| Action taken by BCU | Measurable impact |
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| <p>ACTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of all costed operations to be submitted by lead officers – Immediate. • Review of 'what works' locally – Immediate. • Family 4 and CDRP best practice seminar - September 03. • Amended bidding process for costed operations - Programme in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system is now in place for all operations to be subject to detailed costing and approval via the SMT. • The BCU does carry out some good practice scanning from elsewhere in the Force, but is encouraged to do this more regularly and make use of tactical guides such as those published by ACPO. |

place.

PROGRESS:

- Bidding process linked to tasking and co-ordinating in police operations.
- Costed and evaluated.
- Training analysis of CDRP conducted.
- Family 4 BCU conferences in place.
- Sharing of best practice and performance review adopted Force-wide.

- The reinspection team was very interested in the partner-led active intelligence mapping (AIM) meetings that are held weekly in the Town Hall. This impactful meeting is attended by partners with a crime and anti-social behaviour interest and examines issues on a ward basis. The emphasis is very much 'here and now' and whilst not witnessed by the reinspection team accountability is said to be rigorously managed.
- HMIC looks forward to the further development and refinement of the process. However, concern is expressed over some areas of AIM activity.
- The AIM would seem a 'pseudo' NIM partnership T&CG meeting. Whilst not wishing to deflect the meeting from its anti-social behaviour focus, it would seem appropriate for the meeting to become more aligned to the workings of the NIM.
- Currently the NIM focus of the BCU is very much to priority crimes – despite anti-social behaviour being on the current control strategy. Whilst recognising the crime levels the BCU is faced with, some further alignment of the control strategy and NIM driven activity to the objectives of the AIM may be a means of starting to improve the alignment.
- The AIM meeting is currently using data that is based on date of report, not occurrence. This combined with a lack of detailed analysis could cause a 'knee-jerk' reaction to problems and deflect activity away from where it may have most impact.
- The reinspection team received anecdotal evidence that taskings are being given to COPS teams at

the AIM, which is then presented to NIM analysts for analytical justification. This shows a breakdown in intelligence-led policing. There is some justification for a NIM analyst to be part of the AIM meeting.

- The AIM meeting is now responsible for tasking the COPS teams. Whilst the focus is community, the weekly tasking emphasis could be adding to the deflection of COPS officers away from problem solving (which by its nature tends to be longer-term). This needs to be monitored.
- Despite these reservations the reinspection team was very encouraged by what they heard about AIM and many of the issues had already been identified by the SMT who are working to address them. **HMIC will monitor its further development with interest.**

Suggestions made during the initial Inspection

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| 1. | That supervisors make additional effort to ensure that good work is recognised both formally and informally and valued. | There is a strong culture of reward for good performance with both verbal and written feedback being given. |
| 2. | That the management team extend the visibility rota to include non-operational units within the BCU. | All members of staff saw the SMT as visible and approachable. The visibility of the SMT was generally described as good, including at the outlying stations. The personnel and development manager did express concerns with her two site responsibility but showed willingness to be adaptable according to needs. |
| 3. | That the 'agreed specific areas of activity' in the action plan are set so as to be straightforward to monitor and a regular review system is in place for these plans. | The reinspection team was shown current examples of these plans. Whilst the principle is to provide ownership, it is questionable how much they drive activity. Because they are in differing formats comparisons are difficult. They also seem unaligned in the main to the control strategy. It is suggested that the system needs revision. |
| 4. | That the district develops information sharing further with the local authority to allow wardens to have carefully controlled access to useful intelligence such as photographs. | Information sharing is structured with all parties sharing information in a controlled manner. Some lower ranks still express concern over what can and cannot be shared. The BCU is looking to put a generic protocol in place. |
| 5. | That a clear focus is maintained to ensure sickness trends continue to improve and sickness absence levels are brought in line with Force and BCU family averages. | Action complete. The BCU has a robust process in place with absence discussed at the weekly SMT meeting. |
| 6. | That the BCU puts steps in place, above and beyond the introduction of the new PDR system, to ensure that every member of staff has SMARTS performance objectives that are directly | The new PDR system is now being rolled out. The SMT is confident that supervisors have received sufficient training for this suggestion to be achieved. |

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| | linked to Force and BCU priorities. This will assist in focusing the efforts of all staff towards improving BCU performance. | |
| 7. | That the BCU undertakes further analysis of its robbery problem in order to identify what additional action needs to be taken to reverse current trends. | Action complete. (See performance section) |

4. Monitoring Assessment and Follow-up Action

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| Have all recommendations been accepted and acted upon? | In part |
| Has the remedial action/implementation plan led to demonstrable improvement? | In part |
| 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 Inspection 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

- Middlesbrough BCU has undergone some challenging times since the original Inspection took place. The reductions achieved over the last 18 months are extremely creditable in these circumstances.
- Overall the reinspection team was disappointed to find a lack of credible evidence of improvement with regard to recommendations 1 and 2. The SMT needs to review these recommendations and ensure that the current problem solving training does meet these needs and that some awareness training is carried out to improve knowledge of the role of COPS. This should be combined with recognition of the pressures all staff are under and a seeking to breakdown some of the silo mentality that is still evident.
- The BCU needs to assess its demands and where resources are currently positioned to make best and most efficient use of them, whilst reinforcing a problem solving approach. The current round of training may begin to address this but it needs commitment to the processes and an avoidance of shorter-term measures to produce quantitative performance measures.
- Resolution of recommendation 3 has been disrupted by the Forced review. The SMT needs to move on from this position rapidly if the motivation of this group is not to wane.
- The reinspection team were very encouraged by the AIM process and **Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary looks forward to reviewing its continued development.**
- Overall the reinspection team was satisfied that the new SMT has the drive and vision to take the BCU forward and anticipate that the BCU will continue to improve if given time and stability.