



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

**Follow up/ Monitoring visit to North and East Devon BCU
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary**

BCU Inspection Conducted - February 2004

Monitoring Visit Conducted - August 2005

Date of Inspection	HMIC Revisit Inspector	BCU Commander	Date of final report	Date of monitoring visit
2 nd – 6 th February 2004	Chief Supt Peter Driver	Chief Supt Colin Terry	May 2004	3rd August 2005

Introduction

There are approximately 300 basic command units (BCUs) in England and Wales and no two are alike. They vary in size from a little over 100 officers to a little over 1,000; some serve densely populated, ethnically diverse inner cities, while others cover vast tracts of sparsely populated countryside. What they do share are some key aims and objectives, specifically to work with partner agencies on reducing crime in their areas, and to do so with integrity. Scrutiny of police performance has moved from aggregate force outcomes to the performance of individual BCUs, with the recognition that policing is essentially a locally delivered service. But BCUs are not islands; they operate within a framework of policy and support determined by headquarters-based chief officer teams. The precise configuration of policing units and the balance of resources between HQ and BCUs varies across the 43 forces in England and Wales.

The focus on performance in reducing crime is likely to be relentless. Forces and police authorities, working with local authorities and other community safety partners, will need to raise performance outcomes year upon year. Indeed, the statutory regime of Best Value demands ‘continuous improvement’ and an array of sanctions exist if authorities fail to deliver this. The potential for the Service as a whole to deliver better results in crime reduction and detection cannot conceal an inescapable fact – that performance between BCUs operating in similar policing environments and with comparable resources varies to a degree that is, at times, remarkable.

The purpose of the revisit process is to monitor the progress of the BCU against the recommendations and action plans produced following the full BCU inspection. This report concerns itself with that monitoring process. It is not a further inspection report and makes no further recommendations.

Methodology

Apart from analysis of information prior to, during and after the revisit, a number of interviews and focus groups were held during the inspection. The senior management team (SMT) and the analyst manager were interviewed and focus groups were held with neighbourhood beat managers (NBMs), police community support officers (PCSOs), response sergeants, neighbourhood team leaders and sector inspectors. A member of the inspection team attended the BCU's fortnightly tasking and co-ordinating meeting. The revisit concluded with feedback to the BCU Commander.

Significant developments

At the time of HMIC's original inspection, the BCU operated two Information and Intelligence Management Units (IIMUs) to the north and east of the BCU at Barnstable and Exmouth. Since then, both IIMUs have merged into one, operating from the BCU headquarters in Exeter. Positioning the IIMU at headquarters has been a deliberate policy, providing support to intelligence-led policing at the heart of the BCU and close to the senior management team. It has also eliminated the separation of IIMU functions which occurred in the past whereby strategic and tactical analysis were undertaken by two analysts in different locations.

The BCU is piloting an initiative in which all response policing Sections within North Devon are under the umbrella of one management team. It is part of the Constabulary's Crime and Incident Review, aimed at creating 'the right infrastructure and business processes for crime and incident management that meet both customer needs and deliver quality investigations'. Three specific sergeant roles have been assigned covering visible leadership outside the station; proactive tasking and actionable intelligence; and operational support. This last role includes duty planning, crime workload and allocation of units to incidents. This pilot project only began on 18th July 2005 and it is too early to assess results. Initial findings over the first two weeks show that open OIS incidents fell from 57 pages (171 logs) to 39 pages (117 logs). This initiative, albeit very recent indeed, is worthy of note given the importance of deferred incident logs to the BCU's performance – as described later in this report.

Original Recommendations

The BCU inspection report of February 2004 made four recommendations:

1. The BCU reviews the current implementation of the National Intelligence Model (NIM) to include the production of more timely tactical intelligence products, tactical tasking arrangements and the availability of seven day per week briefing.
2. The BCU develops an integrated internal and external communication strategy.
3. The BCU develops an integrated reassurance strategy utilising police officers and extended police family.
4. The BCU engages with the centre to act without delay to resolve the appropriate and timely management of deferred incident logs.

The initial report also drew attention to two areas for management consideration and these were subject to formal action planning alongside the recommendations. They are:

5. The BCU review the current management structure in relation to the superintendent (deputy) post.
6. The BCU review the current arrangements for the management of the Special Constabulary, to encompass elements of leadership, integration, training and deployment.

Performance Table

Crime Levels and Detection	July 2003 to June 2004	July 2004 to June 2005	% Change
Total recorded crime	36,895	35,470	-3.86%
Number of crimes detected	11,483	11,165	-2.77%
% Crimes detected	31.12%	31.48%	1.14%
Total recorded crime per 1,000 population	81	77.72	-3.86%
Total residential burglary	1,531	1,373	-10.32%
Number of residential burglaries detected	315	193	-38.73%
% Residential burglaries detected	20.57%	14.06%	-31.68%
Total residential burglaries per 1,000 households	7.74	6.95	-10.21%
Total vehicle crime	4,314	3,870	-10.29%
Number of vehicle crimes detected	570	532	-6.67%
% Vehicle crimes detected	13.21%	13.75%	4.04%
Total vehicle crime per 1,000 population	9.45	8.48	-10.26%
Total violent crime	7,765	7,869	1.34%
Number of violent crimes detected	4,422	4,532	2.49%
% Violent crimes detected	56.95%	57.59%	1.13%
Total violent crime per 1,000 population	17	17.24	1.35%
Total robbery	154	129	-16.23%
Number of robberies detected	38	41	7.89%
% Robberies detected	24.68%	31.78%	28.80%
Total robbery per 1,000 population	0.34	0.28	-17.65%

Performance

Total Crime

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 total recorded crime **decreased by 4%** when compared with the previous year. For the most recent quarter (April to June 2005) the BCU ranked **9th out of 15** for total crime per 1,000 population in their MSBCU group. The BCU is **just below** the MSBCU average for total crime per 1,000 population. Projections based on the last 3, 6 and 12 months' data show the level of total crime **decreasing**.

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 the detection rate **increased by 1%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **31.5%** compared with **31.1%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **6th out of 15** in the MSBCU group. The BCU is **just above** the MSBCU average detection rate. Projections based on the last 6 and 12 months show the detection rate remaining at the current level, but projections based on the last 3 months data show the detection rate **increasing slightly**.

Domestic Burglary

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 total recorded domestic burglaries **decreased by 10%** when compared with the previous year. For the most recent quarter (April to June 2005) the BCU ranked **7th out of 15** for domestic burglary per 1,000 households in its MSBCU group. The BCU is currently **in line with the MSBCU average** for domestic burglary per 1,000 households. Projections based on the last 3, 6 and 12 months' data show the level of crime **decreasing**.

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 the detection rate **decreased by 32%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **14.1%** compared with **20.6%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **12th out of 15** in the MSBCU group. Currently the detection rate is **below** the MSBCU average. Projections based on the last 3 and 12 months data show the detection rate **decreasing** but projections based on the last 6 months data show the detection rate **increasing slightly**.

Vehicle Crime

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 total recorded vehicle crime **decreased by 10%** when compared with the previous year. For the most recent quarter (April to June 2005) the BCU ranked **7th out of 15** for vehicle crime in its MSBCU group. The BCU is **in line with** the MSBCU average for vehicle crime per 1,000 population. Projections based on

the last 3, 6 and 12 months' data show the level of vehicle crime **decreasing**.

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 the detection rate **increased by 4%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **13.7%** compared with **13.2%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **5th out of 15** in the MSBCU group. Currently the detection rate is **in line** with the MSBCU average. Projections based on the last 3, 6 and 12 months data show the detection rate **increasing**, with projections based on the last 3 months data showing the greatest increase.

Violent Crime

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 total recorded violent crime **increased by 1%** when compared with the previous year. For the most recent quarter (April to June 2005) the BCU ranked **8th out of 15** for violent crime in its MSBCU group. The BCU is currently **just below** the MSBCU average for violent crime per 1,000 population. Projections based on the last 12 months data show the level of violent crime remaining at the current level, but projections based on the last 3 and 6 months data show the level of violent crime **decreasing**.

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 the detection rate for violent crime has **increased by 1%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **57.6%** compared with **56.9%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **7th out of 15** in the MSBCU group. The detection rate is **in line** with the MSBCU average. Projections based on the last 3 and 6 months data show the detection rate **decreasing very slightly** but the projections based on the last 12 months data shows the detection rate **remaining at the current level**.

Sickness

Days Lost	2003/04	2004/05	% Change
Police Officers	5.56	7.12	+ 30%
Police Staff	10.1	8.69	- 14%

The force average for Police Officer sickness in 04/05 is 7.65. The force target for 04/05 is 8.9. BCU figures for 02/03 show police officer sickness at 10.85. The rise in police officer sickness during 2004/05 can be seen against a backdrop of substantial reduction and remains under the force target.

The force average for Police Staff in 04/05 is 10.02. The force target for 04/05 is 12.1. Figures for 02/03 show police staff sickness at 7.59. The BCU's appreciable reduction in police staff sickness has not yet achieved a return to 2002/03 levels, but is significantly under the force target.

MSBCU sickness data is now calculated in hours. The BCU's comparator is therefore shown below.

Hours lost to sickness	2004/05	MSBCU Average
Police Staff	61.52	77.54
Police Officers	68.60	83.27

Complaints

	2003/04	2004/05	% Change
Complaints per 1,000 officers	279	416	+49%
% of complaints substantiated	4.8%	2.4%	-2.4%

The actual complaints recorded for these two years are 187 and 287 respectively. The number of complaints received in 2002/03 was 252. Complaints are monitored at force and BCU level and data is analysed to identify trends. The actual figures for substantiated complaints are 9 and 7 respectively.

Recommendation	Action taken by the BCU	Measurable Impact
<p>NIM: that the BCU reviews the current implementation of the NIM to include production of more timely tactical intelligence products, tactical tasking arrangements and the availability of seven day per week briefing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two IIMUs have been merged into one • IIMU is located at the BCU headquarters and close to the Senior Management team • IIMU is no longer organised by geography • A plan for 7 day per week working has been prepared • Current negotiations have secured 6 day per week working • A force-level review of the NIM has been undertaken • Sector inspectors are held accountable for action from the TTCG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IIMU better integrated into the TTCG process • IIMU intelligence products reflect BCU priorities • NIM is well understood by staff in focus groups • TTCG directly affects NBM activity and performance monitoring by supervision • Information is quickly processed into intelligence product for team briefing
<p>Communication: that the BCU develop an integrated internal and external communication strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 10 point plan has been adopted as part of the BCU business plan • A BCU marketing and communication officer post has been established • Internal communication messages are highlighted at SMT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local policing issues are regularly published in local newspapers • Focus groups considered themselves to be up to date with BCU issues

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A BCU magazine is e-mailed to all members • Inspectors undertake cascade briefing • A media relations officer is assigned to support the BCU from HQ resources • The SMT is represented on the force-level e-mail user group • NBM supervisors compile weekly press releases and a press book is maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is consistently delivered • Focus groups considered that e-mails were less numerous and more pertinent
<p>Reassurance: that the BCU develop an integrated reassurance strategy utilising police officers and the extended police family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An action plan has been developed covering visibility, access and marketing • Visible presence has been adopted as a key reassurance tactic for NBMs • The ‘MOSAIC’ initiative assesses reassurance needs of vulnerable groups • NBM beat book introduced • Pilot site for the National Reassurance Policing Model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A performance target of time on the street has been set for NBMs • Clearer links are being made between lifestyle and the best tactics for reassurance • 126 NBMs are deployed on the BCU

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force reassurance strategy has been adopted by the BCU • PCSOs have been redeployed to work within NBM teams 	
<p>Deferred Incident logs: that the BCU engage with the centre to act without delay to resolve the appropriate and timely management of deferred incident logs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Operational Support Unit operates in Exeter to manage deferred incident logs • A pilot initiative in North Devon manages deferred logs • Force level projects are resolving obstacles to availability and accessibility • The Resource Allocation Unit is piloting crime allocation practices 	

Monitoring Assessment & Follow-up Action

NIM

The BCU has benefited from work carried out at force level following a thematic review of the implementation of NIM. A force steering group has ensured a unified approach and better integration between NIM processes and products.

The Intelligence and Information Management Units (IIMUs) have been amalgamated into a single unit under one inspector. Analysts within the IIMU provide timely and relevant intelligence products, complementing the work of sector researchers.

The BCU has refined the fortnightly tasking and co-ordinating group (TCG) meeting which is now a dynamic process, driven by accurate and fresh intelligence. The inspection in February 2004 identified a lack of consistency in the two-tier meeting process. To address this, the BCU has introduced consistency in timing and structure to the meetings between geographic chief inspectors and their sector inspectors which

precede the TCG. Chief inspectors gather information to update the TCG and to request bids for resources. At the conclusion of the TCG, sector inspectors receive an e-mail informing them of the results of the meeting and detailing their tasks for the next fortnight. Sector inspectors direct their staff accordingly.

It was clear at the TCG meeting that the strands of intelligence, enforcement and prevention are addressed in a systematic and efficient manner. Analysis of performance against control strategy crimes was effective with resources being deployed appropriately. Intelligence products drove the meeting and the chair's dynamic style ensured that it remained focused and forward thinking. The tactical tasking arrangements from the TCG are reliant on sector inspectors tasking staff from an e-mail they receive. The robust accountability process within the TCG ensures that this mechanism works. The BCU now conducts a daily tasking meeting, reinforcing the SMT's focus on performance, tasking staff directly from the meeting.

Focus groups with PCSOs and uniform sergeants confirmed that staff receive timely and relevant briefing products and there has clearly been significant progress in this area. The BCU would benefit from improving the quality of information received by NBMs, particularly prison releases and analytical information on crimes on individual beats. The BCU now provides staff with intelligence briefings six days a week and is working to remove the remaining obstacles to seven day per week working.

Actions taken by the Force and BCU have fully addressed the Inspection Report's recommendation.

Communication

Team leaders are focused on their communities and clearly understood the value of communication. They were alert to issues of local interest and used the press book as a means of collating local stories. With the assistance of a force media officer, the BCU effectively communicates with its communities.

The BCU communicates effectively with its staff. The focus groups felt informed about events and this had developed into a feeling of inclusion in the management of the BCU. There was a sincere desire on the part of the BCU commander and his staff to share information. The commander's consultative style has no doubt helped to promote the satisfaction expressed by focus groups.

The action plan prepared by the BCU relies heavily on the appointment of a BCU marketing and communications officer as the means to implement it. Eight out of the ten actions in the BCU's business plan, such as the development of a communication strategy, are the responsibility of this postholder. The inspection team was disappointed to find that the post had not been filled, although at the time of the inspection a selection process was underway. No interim measures had been put in place. The action plan

therefore is underway but the results have not yet been achieved.

Reassurance

There is a clear emphasis on reassurance policing, such as in the priority given to it by the SMT and the intelligence-led problem solving conducted by NBM. The BCU reports that for August 2005 NBM patrol time exceeded the target (at 71% of duty time). PCSOs, who previously operated as a group from one location, have been integrated into neighbourhood beat teams. This structural change will help to integrate the extended police family as recommended.

The BCU's action plan is based on its adoption of the force's reassurance strategy. This strategy is a thorough one, highlighting five key elements and four key themes. The BCU is capable of delivering HMIC's recommendation by adopting this strategy, but on inspection, the team found that staff were unaware of it and there was little evidence that the contents of the strategy had been integrated into the BCU.

The BCU has an integrated reassurance strategy document, reassurance policing is taking place but the impact of integration has not yet been felt.

Deferred Incident Logs

The BCU has worked with headquarters to try and resolve the obstacles to better demand management. The BCU Commander has played an active part in the Force's Accessibility Project and BCU staff have piloted an Officer Support Unit (OSU) at Exeter to trial alternative methods of managing incident logs, largely by desktop resolution. Although the trial is complete the BCU has retained its OSU in an effort to manage demand. The inspection team notes the willingness and commitment of the BCU Commander and his staff to resolve this problem.

In February 2004 the inspection team observed that it was commonplace to have as many as 100 unresourced logs on a supervisor's terminal during busy periods. On the day of the follow up visit the BCU had 405 live logs, 138 of which related to Exeter (the inspection team is pleased to note that the BCU claims a 40% reduction in deferred open logs since the inspection). Whilst the majority of logs did not require direct attendance by a police officer this still represents a significant barrier to efficiency and good performance. Although the introduction of an OSU has brought some relief, it does not represent a sustainable solution.

Management Considerations

The BCU has reviewed its management structure, particularly in relation to the superintendent (deputy) post. Although inclined to retain the post for the benefit of command resilience, new developments have influenced SMT decision-making. A 'New

Devon Local Area Agreement' has been established and this incorporates areas within the two Devon BCUs. A partnership superintendent role has been formed to represent both BCUs and this position has been staffed by using the deputy post.

The BCU has reviewed arrangements for the management of the Special Constabulary, consequently leadership, integration, training and deployment have been enhanced. The operations superintendent now holds the portfolio for the Special Constabulary. Rank denominators are the same for the Special Constabulary as for regular officers and a Special Constabulary superintendent is in charge and sits as a member of the SMT. Special constables have been realigned to neighbourhoods and now work with the neighbourhood policing teams. A trainer has been appointed for the Special Constabulary and a training plan adopted.

Conclusion

All the recommendations including the two management considerations, made at the initial inspection have been accepted and action has been taken. The reinspection team found an SMT keen to address the issues facing it and open to new ideas. There are gaps in its achievement to date such as integration of a reassurance strategy, or completion of the BCU's plan for an integrated communication strategy. The team believes that the steps currently underway are capable of completing HMIC's recommendations. In the case of deferred incident logs, current advances are disappointing but it is not for want of trying by the BCU and the Force. Current major initiatives at force level plus local action such as the Geographic Supersection described earlier, testify to the seriousness with which this matter is being addressed, but its early resolution is crucial if the BCU is to maintain its momentum for performance improvement.

HMIC should continue to monitor outcomes through regular liaison between the Force and the regional office. The inspection programme for England and Wales will begin again from April 2006. Where this BCU should be placed within that programme should depend on results, particularly in managing demand.

The reinspection team would like to thank the BCU Commander and his team for their welcome and assistance throughout the inspection process.