

Gloucestershire Constabulary

Operational Services

September 2005



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Best Value Review Inspection Report

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 By virtue of Section 1(1)(d) of the Local Government Act 1999, all police authorities in England and Wales are required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the function of policing is exercised within their force area, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 Under the act authorities must conduct reviews of their functions and publish a programme of Best Value reviews (BVRs). Whilst it is clear the police authority has the legal accountability for Best Value, the Chief Constable is constitutionally personally responsible for operational service delivery. Consequently, authorities and chief officers will have to work together to ensure that BVRs make a significant improvement to service delivery.
- 1.3 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is charged with the responsibility of inspecting BVRs within the police service. The resulting reports are 'public' documents, and in every case a copy will be forwarded to the Secretary of State, the chair of the police authority and the chief constable or commissioner of the force concerned.
- 1.4 Reviewing authorities must demonstrate that they have challenged why and how a service is being provided; compared their performance with others; embraced fair competition to secure efficient and effective services; and consulted with local people, customers and stakeholders.
- 1.5 The purpose of independent inspection, and thus of this report, is to:
 - enable the public to see whether Best Value is being delivered
 - enable the inspected body to see how well it is doing
 - enable the Home Secretary to see how well Best Value is working
 - identify failing services where remedial action may be necessary; and
 - identify and disseminate good practice
- 1.6 Her Majesty's Inspector's assessment of the effectiveness of Gloucestershire Police Authority's Best Value arrangements feeds directly into HMIC's Baseline Assessment methodology, specifically into the assessment for Resource Management and Performance Management and Continuous Improvement. Similarly, this assessment of Operational Services will also be used to inform

the assessment of various aspects of operational policing. Baseline Assessments of all 43 forces in England and Wales covering 26 operational organisational activities will be published in October 2005 and can be accessed from the HMIC web pages, <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/hmic.htm>

2.1 Summary of Judgements

2.1.1 At the time of the inspection Her Majesty's Inspector judged the service as **Fair** and the prospects for improvement as **Promising**.

2.1.2 Strengths include:

- Strategic clarity through Vision 5 – a 'five year plan' of which all staff have awareness and understanding;
- All police officers and police staff within operational services department have a current PDR;
- An embedded performance culture within the Constabulary with which all staff seem to be comfortable;
- The department head being held accountable by the Chief Constable at the performance improvement conference along with BCU commanders;
- Systematic and intelligence led delivery of operational services;
- A clearly understood regional protocol for mutual aid for specialist operational services including firearms; and
- A clear evidence of professional management and planning for major events and contingencies.

2.1.3 However, some important aspects require further attention:

- A need to address all issues raised in the HMIC review of the implementation of the Home Office code of practice on the police use of firearms and less lethal weapons;
- Examination of the way in which officers are recruited, trained and deployed into firearm duties;
- Some succession planning for firearm instructors;
- Management, destruction and record-keeping of seized weapons;
- Inadequate accommodation provided for the dogs unit; and
- The 1:15 supervisory ratio for the dogs unit needs to be re-examined.

2.2 Best Value Arrangements of Authority

2.2.1 The Police Authority sets the Best Value Review programme and, through its audit committee, maintains involvement at all stages of reviews. Two members of the Authority are assigned to each

review; wherever possible these members have either an interest or experience in the area being reviewed. It is evident from interviews with members of the Authority assigned to the operational services BVR that they would have benefited from training in what was expected from their role in this review. Her Majesty's Inspector concurs with this view and urges the Authority to ensure that its members are effectively briefed on their role and understand what is expected. At an operational level the research and writing of the BVR reports is carried out by the Constabulary's Best Value team.

- 2.2.2 Terms of reference for reviews are considered by the chief officer group (COG) for formal Constabulary ratification before being referred to the audit committee of the Authority for approval. Regular meetings are held between the head of the Best Value team and the authority member who is the lead officer for Best Value to monitor progress. Quarterly reports and position statements are presented to the audit committee by the Best Value team.
- 2.2.3 Recommendations and options for change are considered by COG before being presented to the full Authority. A chief officer is given ownership of each service improvement plan, and regular position statements are prepared for the Authority.
- 2.2.4 Since this review was carried out the original BVR timetable set by the Authority has been subject to considerable change following a relaxation in the Government requirement to review all services within a five-year period. A risk assessment approach now leads to an annual programme that supports strategic priorities. Organisational assessment, consultancy, post implementation monitoring and evaluation are all proportionate to the benefits arising from the BVR. The annual strategic assessment of organisational developments assists in identifying key risks and step changes required driving progress and performance improvement. This revised approach to Best Value reflects comments made by Her Majesty's Inspector in the Inspection of the Cotswold and Stroud BVR and were approved at the Authority's Audit Committee meeting on 31 March 2004.

2.3 Acknowledgements

- 2.3.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary wishes to thank the members of the Constabulary and Police Authority who facilitated the inspection and who generously set aside time to speak to Inspectorate staff. The inspection would not have been possible without their assistance and contribution.

3. Contextual Background

3.1 Force Structure

3.1.1 Gloucestershire Constabulary serves the county of Gloucestershire, comprising six local authorities. Gloucester is the main administrative centre and the largest town is Cheltenham. Situated at the northern edge of the south-west region of England, Gloucestershire covers an area of 1,025 square miles, including large areas of outstanding natural beauty. However, despite its image as a rural idyll, significant pockets of deprivation exist within the county, with 13 wards in the top quartile nationally for deprivation. This factor has a significant impact on overall performance. The total population is 564,559 (2001 census); the minority ethnic population amounts to approximately 3% of the total population (16,077), most of whom live in Gloucester.

3.1.2 The Constabulary Headquarters is currently situated in Cheltenham, although it will move to a new-build site at Quedgeley, Gloucester in December 2005, allowing centralisation of headquarters functions. The chief officer group consists of the Chief Constable, a Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) and two assistant chief constables (ACCs) with responsibility for operations and corporate services respectively. A police staff director of resources holds the finance, personnel and administration portfolios. The Chief Constable, Dr Timothy Brain, has been in post for four years, having previously served as the DCC in the county for three years. DCC Craig Mackey was previously ACC (operations) in the Constabulary. ACC Mark Polin former holder of the corporate services post, now holds the ACC operations post. The vacant ACC (corporate services) post has recently been filled. The Police Authority Chair is in his third term of office, having led the Authority for over six years. The Constabulary is made up of three divisions, which are each coterminous with two local authority areas. Each division is divided into inspector-led neighbourhood areas (INAs), within a geographic policing model.

3.1.3 The budget for 2004/05 was £92.02 million. The establishment as at 31 March 2005 was 1289 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers and 783.5 FTE police support staff (including traffic wardens and police community support officers PCSOs) supported by 146 special constables. It is important to note that not all of the full-time equivalent officers are available for deployment across the county as a number of these posts are specifically funded by the Home Office (independently of local council tax precepts) for royalty protection duties. In 2003/04, having received the lowest possible level of grant increase, the Police Authority secured a

Council Tax precept rise of 52%, following a 19% rise the previous year. In 2004/05 the Authority set a lower precept increase of 9.9%, due to the threat of capping. These rises were secured to maintain an efficient and effective policing service, with much of the investment going into improving armed response capability, crime investigation and forensic resources. Implementing this budget increase has presented new challenges, such as a doubling of the level of recruitment on the previous year. The Police Authority inherited negligible reserves and a run-down estate, which required significant investment. However, the number of buildings presented opportunities for rationalisation. There has been considerable investment in technology and intelligence personnel and infrastructure to support full implementation of the National Intelligence Model (NIM).

- 3.1.4 Gloucestershire Constabulary's geographical policing structure has been in place since 1998. Each INA is also coterminous within a district council, which facilitates effective partnership working at local level. On appointment in April 2001, the Chief Constable set out a clear vision for the Constabulary, known as Vision 5. The aim of this five-year plan is to become the most operationally effective police force in the country. Vision 5 sets out underpinning values and the five-year strategic aims. Each part of the plan has lead officers, applies to all areas of business and is complementary to the Police Authority's three-year strategy and local policing plan. The Police Authority fully endorses and supports Vision 5. A review of INA policing took place in 2002, the results of which reinforced commitment to this style of service delivery. INA boundaries were realigned with new local government ward boundaries to preserve the coterminous relationship with statutory partners. More sergeant and inspector posts in BCUs freed INA managers from providing extended 24-hour divisional cover, raising their profile in local communities.
- 3.1.5 Gloucestershire Constabulary is confident that Vision 5 fully takes into account current central government objectives and issues arising from the ongoing police reform programme. Much of the service improvement is made possible through the increase in the local authority precept in April 2004. Developments include: 60 PCSOs (providing additional patrolling reassurance); a dedicated source handling unit; additional resources for major and economic crime investigation; 29 additional detective constables; outsourcing the detention officer function, thus releasing police officers to operational front line duties; additional firearms officers to provide an extra armed response vehicle; and the civilianisation of scenes of crime officers with new police staff posts to support

administrative functions. These developments will position the Constabulary to achieve its *Vision 5* aim.

3.2 Service under Review

3.2.1 The project assignment brief identified that the department, which is led by a chief superintendent, encompasses a wide range of specialist units provide support to each BCU and the Constabulary overall. The department comprises of sections that provide specialist services such as: air support; armed response; contingency, emergency and major event planning; dogs; royal household protection; motorway policing; and traffic management. Air support which is provided by a consortium with Avon and Somerset Constabulary was subject to a separate BVR and not included in the operational services BVR.

3.3 Review Methodology

3.3.1 The review of the Operational Services Department took place between January 2003 and January 2004. A dedicated Best Value Review team undertook the majority of work, including the writing of the final report. In January 2003 the team became part of the performance and review department bringing about a more co-ordinated approach to change and a focus of Best Value towards service improvement. The scope and terms of reference for the review were prepared in consultation with the department commander, chief officers and the authority members. Senior staff were forwarded a copy of the draft document for observations and comment before it was ratified by the chief officer group, and presented to the Authority's audit committee for approval.

3.3.2 The resources used to conduct reviews were limited in comparison to some other forces and since the BVR have been increased so as to now comprise: a chief inspector, inspector, research and benchmarker, business and process analyst, review officer and an activity analyst. The workload for the individuals involved was significant and the final product extensive. In addition, unlike in previous reviews the Best Value team did not have access to an accountant who could have assisted in the costing of recommendations and this is no longer the case for subsequent reviews.

3.3.3 The review was conducted using a five-stage model, which had been developed following experiences in conducting early Best

Value Reviews. This produced a more succinct and focused process when compared to the previous seven-stage methodology. Clear guidance supports and informs those staff who are involved in reviews, with a comprehensive list of questions listed against each of the 'Four Cs' of Best Value.

- 3.3.4 Each of the specific functions identified at the scoping stage was examined. Once key issues and themes were identified, they formed the basis of focused consultation with key stakeholders and led to options for change and recommendations being presented in the final report.
- 3.3.5 In total, 42 recommendations and two options for change were identified, including both organisational and departmental improvements. These were firstly considered by the chief officer group, and a lead chief officer identified to be responsible for implementation of the subsequent service improvement plan. After presentation to the Chair of the Authority's audit committee and the lead members, the executive summary and implementation plan were formally ratified by the audit committee. The improvement plan is maintained by the Department Commander who informs the Best Value team of progress. The team provides quarterly updates to the audit committee, which in turn reports to the full Authority.

3.4 Inspection Methodology

- 3.4.1 This inspection was conducted on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspector Mrs Jane Stichbury CBE QPM and took 10 working days to complete. Prior to the report's publication, both the Authority and the Constabulary had the opportunity to comment on its factual contents and challenge the findings.
- 3.4.2 In the course of the inspection a wide range of documents was examined, including the Best Value Review and supporting papers, performance information, and other related information that provided a greater understanding of the service.
- 3.4.3 A number of structured individual and group interviews was conducted using the HMIC Best Value inspection protocol. They were designed to obtain a fuller picture of how the service is currently delivered, how it has developed recently and how those delivering and receiving the service view it. Information obtained during HMIC's Baseline Assessment of Gloucestershire has also informed this inspection. The manner in which the review was conducted and the likelihood of improvements flowing from it were also considered.

3.4.4 The following forces have been identified as being most similar to Gloucestershire in terms of demography, policing environment and other socio-economic factors: Cambridgeshire, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Norfolk, North Yorkshire, Suffolk and Warwickshire. When making comparisons in this report, the average performance in this group, known as the most similar force (MSF) group, will be used.

4. Judgement 1: How Good is the Service?

4.1 Are the aims clear and challenging?

4.1.1 Vision 5 is the Chief Constable's five-year strategic development plan for 2002 - 2007. It sets out a clear purpose, vision, and values underpinned by a ten-point plan for the Constabulary and comments have been made in paragraph 3.1.5 above. Full details can be found in the Constabulary's strategic plan through the following link:
<http://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/publications/1.html#e49026>.

4.1.2 Vision 5 now drives all policing activity in Gloucestershire towards the aim of being: *'the most operationally effective police force in the country'*. This initiative is being personally driven by the Chief Constable, supported by the Authority, and is reinforced throughout the Constabulary by the use of posters and literature in stations, aide memoirs for staff and a range of other media.

4.1.3 Ten strategic aims direct the Constabulary towards this vision; each aim has its own lead chief officer as 'champion'. Each BCU and department contributes towards the vision through their own divisional or departmental plans. These are reflected in the Local Policing Plan (LPP) full details of which can be found at <http://www.gloucestershirepolicingplan.org.uk/>. The operational services department plan has seven objectives expressly linked to the Constabulary's operational objectives and strategic aims from Vision 5. Each one has a lead named individual responsible for delivery and at least one measurable target.

4.1.4 Her Majesty's Inspector found that commitment to the principles of Vision 5 and a general understanding of its purpose and that of the department plan was present at all levels throughout the operational services department. Overall the aims are clear and understood by staff in the department whose performance, development and review (PDR) objectives are linked to the department plan. All staff within the department have a current PDR. Performance against targets is widely publicised and staff who were interviewed as part of this inspection were comfortable with this 'performance culture'.

4.1.5 Performance monitoring is embedded in the culture of the Constabulary. The ACC (operations) holds a weekly conference call with divisional commanders and the heads of CID and operations to review statistical and operational progress and priorities. The Constabulary operations conference, which incorporates the level 2 tasking and co-ordinating process, is held

fortnightly. These various processes help inform the monthly performance improvement conference (PIC), chaired by the Chief Constable, at which the Department Commander is held to account.

4.2 Does the service meet the aims?

4.2.1 Having considered the aims the Constabulary has set for the service Her Majesty's Inspector assesses how well it is performing against those aims. This includes an assessment of performance against specific standards and targets and the Constabulary's approach to measuring whether it is actually delivering what it set out to do.

4.2.2 Gloucestershire Constabulary has traditionally achieved good results in most areas of performance. The Chief Constable produces a quarterly report on the Constabulary's performance to the Authority that can be accessed by following the link to the Constabulary's [web site](http://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/publications/1.html#e217704).
<http://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/publications/1.html#e217704>.

4.2.3 Performance against the seven objectives in the department plan is reported upon on a quarterly basis. At the end of 2004/05 it is evident that a great deal of energy and activity had been put into ensuring the delivery of each objective.

- Reduce road traffic collisions, which result in death or serious injury.
 - Performance for April 2004 to March 2005 indicates that the overall number was reduced to 225 and under the target of less than 278.
- Ensure PDR process supports individual development.
 - All police officers and police staff, except those on long term absences from the department have a current PDR.
- Raise the profile of operational service department.
 - Whilst there is no numerical measure attached to this objective and is therefore not SMART a number of events have taken place to raise the profile of the department. It is evident from group interviews that these events have had a positive impact.
- Develop systems and processes to capture decision making during event or operation planning.
 - The draft system was tested during an operation and a number of changes have been made which will be trialled and reviewed before the year-end.

- To facilitate at least 50 ANPR operations.
 - Some 36 operations have been undertaken. The department has provided ANPR support at a number of major events and a recent murder enquiry. All three BCUs now have their own ANPR capability and a full time team will be in place by October 2005.
 - Implement a firearms review and codes of practice for police use of firearms and less lethal weapons.
 - Whilst the codes have been introduced progress still needs to be made in implementing the firearms review recommendations which include the deployment of a third ARV.
 - To review the number, content, construction and delivery of force contingency plans.
 - A number of actions have been completed and the objective met.
- 4.2.4 The department provides specialist operational support to BCUs in a systematic and intelligence-led manner. Resources are tasked appropriately and proportionately through the NIM process, making resource allocation transparent to all.
- 4.2.5 Across the Constabulary Gold and Silver incident commanders are properly trained for the role and are subject to regular re-accreditation by chief officers. However the HMIC review of the implementation of the Home Office code of practice on the police use of firearms and less lethal weapons, indicated a number of areas for improvement. In particular attention should be paid to the training of Bronze commanders, the re-accrediting of Gold, Silver and Bronze commanders, conducting community impact assessments after each operation and consider the involvement of community representatives in post incident procedures. There is a clear regional protocol for the supply of mutual aid for specialist operations, including firearm incidents. However, there is a need to build in more sustainable resilience in the Constabulary's own tactical firearm capability.
- 4.2.6 The Constabulary undertakes its own firearms training with a dedicated team of experienced and highly skilled firearms instructors. Some firearm instructors have more than 30 years service and a better system of succession planning is needed for this and other vital operational roles.
- 4.2.7 There is a need to review the way firearm officers are recruited, trained and deployed. The protection regime at the Royal Households is very resource intensive for trained officers drawn

from a limited pool of suitable candidates. The current posting policy is viewed by some potential applicant as a barrier and consideration should be given to reducing the minimum posting from twelve to six months in order to attract more candidates.

RECOMMENDATION

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that (a) a system of succession planning is put in place, and (b) the firearms recruitment policy is reviewed to enable sufficient resources to be recruited, trained and available for deployment.

4.2.9 During the inspection HMIC staff inspected the Constabulary's armoury and spoke to the armourer. It is evident that it is well managed and the post-holder is very knowledgeable and trustworthy. However, Her Majesty's Inspector has concerns about the management and destruction of seized weapons. Whilst the firearms unit inspector carries out an audit every six months of weapons contained in the armoury the record keeping of weapons destroyed is certified by the armourer at the point of destruction and is not witnessed.

RECOMMENDATION

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that a system is put in place where all weapons destroyed are witnessed by two persons and fully recorded.

4.2.10 Shortly after this inspection HMIC carried out a national review of the implementation of the Home Office code of practice on the police use of firearms and less lethal weapons. For Gloucestershire this indicated a number of areas for improvement which have been detailed in paragraph 4.2.5 above. Overall the Constabulary was graded 'Fair'.

RECOMMENDATION

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the Constabulary addresses each area for improvement identified in the review of compliance with the Home Office code of practice on the police use of firearms and less lethal weapons.

4.2.11 The small events planning team provides a very good service to the Constabulary. There is clear evidence that the management of major events such as the Royal International Air Tattoo and the

Cheltenham Gold Cup is thorough and effective.

4.2.12 One sergeant manages the dogs unit. This unit is well managed but the sergeant has 15 constables to supervise, and there is scope to introduce a second supervisor to provide better sergeant coverage. To minimise the additional cost this could be achieved from a more dynamic use of sergeants with the Operational Service Department. Food for dogs is prepared in the same kitchen as food and drinks prepared for officers and overall the accommodation provided for the dog unit staff is poor and requires replacement at the earliest opportunity.

4.2.13 The Constabulary has a centralised motorway unit and but has devolved other roads policing to BCUs. The department has responsibility for collision reduction and has already achieved its roads Collision Reduction (RCR) 2010 target and has set another more challenging target for collision reduction. During the first Baseline Assessment there was a need identified for the Constabulary, in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council, to explore ways of sharing near to 'real time' performance information on road collisions. A new collision recording system is now in place within the criminal justice department that should overcome this problem.

4.3 How does the service compare?

4.3.1 In the absence of consistent measurement of performance and costing of the services provided by the department it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons of efficiency and effectiveness. This is a problem surfaced by the review team on a number of occasions and it should be recognised that a great deal of effort was put in by the team to make some meaningful comparisons by benchmarking with others and this process was not repeated by HMIC. Notwithstanding this the tables at appendix A provide some contextual data upon which to benchmark the performance of the Constabulary. It is difficult to draw any conclusions from this data and it is produced for illustrative purposes only.

4.4 Overall Judgement

4.4.1 HMIC assessment on how good the service is was undertaken using the Baseline Assessment specific grading criteria. Extensive group interviews of service providers and users were undertaken during this inspection and the opinions of staff who use the services provided by OSD were universally supportive and praiseworthy. Many instances of how the department supports BCUs through the provision of specialist services were brought to

the attention of the inspection team. However, the HMIC review of the implementation of the Home Office code of practice on the police use of firearms and less lethal weapons indicated a number of areas for improvement and overall the Constabulary had been graded 'Fair' in that assessment. In view of the importance of firearms operations, account has to be made of that finding in the overall grading of this section. Therefore Her Majesty's Inspector regards the service provided by the operational support department as **Fair**.

5. Judgement 2: What are the Prospects for Improvement?

5.1 Does the BVR drive improvement?

- 5.1.1 Best Value legislation requires forces to demonstrate that they have considered why they provide the service under review and the alternative ways in which it could be delivered. Generic comments on the review methodology have been made earlier in this report.
- 5.1.2 This was a relatively complex BVR covering many aspects of specialist operational policing, which has produced comprehensive evidence to support its findings. This wide ranging review would probably not be considered by either the Authority or the Constabulary as an appropriate review to undertake today. Whilst the five stage process was adhered to it would have benefited from a more robust approach to project management. Although the Police Authority maintained involvement throughout the review, Her Majesty's Inspector queries whether given the specialised nature of the department under review, the Police Authority may have enhanced their perspective and responsibility as owners of the Best Value Process if additional external validation had been introduced particularly in the police use of firearms. The revised Best Value arrangements of the Authority are to be welcomed, in particular the more focused approach to conducting reviews in a shorter time period.
- 5.1.3 The BVR produced 42 recommendations and two options for change. A more comprehensive costing of options and recommendations, in particular funding the impact of centralisation of roads policing on current devolved budgets, would have been beneficial. Whilst this option was not taken up at the time it was being considered again at the time of inspection. It is important that particular attention is given to comprehensive costings of options and recommendations as the Authority may need to make informed decisions with significant financial implications in the future.

Challenge

- 5.1.4 Each of the seven areas of focus in the review was considered in terms of all the 'Four Cs' of Best Value, the main report being structured to present the findings in a well thought-out manner. Each was assessed as to whether it was a core policing activity - most were and there was little opportunity to consider alternative methods of provision. No services were considered suitable for outsourcing. Police authorities and chief officers have statutory

duties to provide operational policing services. In this BVR, challenge was mainly limited to how these core services might be delivered.

Consultation

5.1.6 The consultation element of this BVR was extensive and multi-dimensional. The terms of reference for the review identified the stakeholders for each of the seven areas of focus within the service, which included police officers, police staff and outside agencies but not members of the public. Each group was consulted in a variety of ways, including questionnaires to almost all staff in the division, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The review team pragmatically used data from other surveys conducted by the Constabulary, where appropriate, to avoid duplication of effort, and also drew on issues raised at Authority-led police and community consultation meetings.

Comparison

5.1.7 Comparative studies were carried out with other police forces. It was considered that the MSF group was not always the most appropriate to compare with. For example with the exception of Norfolk Constabulary none had a Royal Household protection commitment and many did not have a busy motorway. Therefore a decision was made to benchmark and compare with police forces that have a similar operational commitment. That having been said it was difficult for the BVR team to make effective and meaningful comparisons.

Competition

5.1.8 This element was closely linked to the Challenge component of the review and much of the service being provided was viewed as a 'given' by the team and members of the Authority. This stage of the BVR could have benefited from the involvement of a Best Value accountant. This post was vacant at the time of the review and as a result extensive costings for each of the seven areas focused upon was not undertaken. This should be seen as a missed opportunity.

Collaboration

5.1.8 The fifth unofficial 'C' with Best Value was not given much consideration at the time the BVR was carried out. Considering

the Authority and Constabulary's excellent track record on collaboration this was rather surprising but Her Majesty's Inspector is re-assured that this is no longer the case and collaboration is encompassed in subsequent reviews. Examples of collaboration elsewhere in the organisation include the tri-service control room, tri-service vehicle workshops and a joint venture with Avon and Somerset Constabulary to provide air support.

5.1.10 Her Majesty's Inspector is of the opinion that this BVR was well managed, effectively scoped and identified many of the key issues with scope for improvement.

5.2 How good is the improvement plan?

5.2.1 Best Value Reviews should produce an improvement plan that sets out what needs to improve, why, how the improvement will be delivered and when. It should contain targets that are not only challenging but are also designed to ensure the continuous improvement necessary to raise the level of service delivered, both in terms of cost and quality.

5.2.2 The service improvement plan contains some 42 recommendations and two options for change, which is a considerable number to consider and prioritise. Each is articulated in the plan within a matrix that includes an analysis of anticipated benefits and dis-benefits to the organisation and a measure of how to gauge its impact. Each is also linked to elements of Vision 5. When read alongside the executive summary of the BVR, this provides a concise but informative product that summarises the whole review and provides a basis for decision making. It also potentially assists with managing resultant change, as benefits and potentially negative aspects of each recommendation or option can be clearly articulated to those who might otherwise be unaware of the reasons for change. Her Majesty's Inspector considers this to be good practice.

5.2.3 Each recommendation contains a column titled 'target' but not all have identified targets and many have question marks where a numerical target should be. In addition few have costings attached to the recommendation and whilst all have been prioritised, those not costed make it more difficult for the Authority to determine how or when each recommendation can be implemented. Her Majesty's Inspector is re-assured that subsequent Best Value Review improvement plans have clear objectives, challenging targets to show the intended effect of each change and where

possible and practicable accurate costing attached to the implementation of each recommendation.

5.3 Will improvements in service be delivered?

- 5.3.1 Her Majesty's Inspector looked for evidence that the Constabulary will deliver what is set out in its improvement plan, for a record of management change accomplishments within the Constabulary and, where possible, within the service itself. The plan must have the necessary support from Authority members, management, staff, service users and other stakeholders.
- 5.3.2 The ownership of delivery of improvements ultimately rests with the head of OSD who has the delivery as a PDR objective. Each of the 42 recommendations has an owner who is held to account for delivery by the Department Head and also has a PDR objective linked to the delivery of each recommendation owned. Perhaps the most impactful recommendation relates to armed response where there is now a dedicated inspector post, there have been changes to firearms training, improved accommodation, and increased ARV capability from two to three units although this has in the past proved to be difficult to sustain. The Authority and the Constabulary have a long and proven track record of delivering performance improvement and Her Majesty's Inspector has no doubts that this improvement plan will succeed.
- 5.3.3 The audit committee of the Police Authority receives quarterly updates on progress against the recommendations. The Authority member responsible for this review feels that there is a need for a post implementation review to assess how effective it has been.

5.4 Overall Judgement

- 5.4.1 In coming to a judgement on the prospects for improvement, Her Majesty's Inspector has to assess the evidence within the review, its supporting documentation and that of the inspection. The judgement will be one of the following: excellent, promising, uncertain or poor.
- 5.4.2 There are some concerns about the lack of costed recommendations and measuring the outcomes of the review in terms of measurable targets for increased performance. However, taking into account the commitment of the Authority and Constabulary to ensure improvements are driven through, and the increased performance, notably in casualty reduction and effective event planning seen since the completion of the review, Her

Majesty's Inspector concludes that the prospects for improvement are **Promising**.

6. Recommendations

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that:

1. A system of succession planning is put in place, and the firearms recruitment policy is reviewed to enable sufficient resources to be recruited, trained and available for deployment. (see 4.2.8)
2. A system is put in place where all weapons destroyed is witnessed by two persons and fully recorded. (see 4.2.9)
3. The Constabulary addresses each area for improvement identified in the review of compliance with the Home Office code of practice on the police use of firearms and less lethal weapons. (see 4.2.10)

7. Good Practice

- 7.1 Good practice includes procedures, processes, methods of operational policing or partnership working, or technological solutions that significantly improve efficiency, effectiveness or quality of service.
- 7.2 There is clarity and commitment to the strategic plan, Vision 5, with a general understanding of its purpose amongst all staff. (see 4.1.4)
- 7.3 The Constabulary has worked hard to ensure that there is a near 100% compliance with PDR completion. PDR objectives are linked to the department plan and include personal development objectives too. (see 4.1.4).
- 7.3 The main report when read alongside the executive summary of the BVR, provides a concise but informative product that summarises the whole review and provides a basis for decision making. It also potentially assists with managing resultant change, as benefits and potentially negative aspects of each recommendation or option can be clearly articulated to those who might otherwise be unaware of the reasons for change. (see 5.2.2)

Appendix A

Providing Specialist Operational Support: Annual indicators							
Indicator	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/05	Change	MSF Ave 2004/5	National Ave 2004/5
Total number of operations involving the deployment of Authorised Firearms Officers for which the issue of firearms was authorised	165	185	127	176	38.6%	171.3	378.5
Operations where the officers have not commenced operations before being stood down	76	12	97	7	-92.8%	18.6	22.5
Roads Policing: Annual indicators							
Indicator	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/05	Change	MSF Ave 2004/5	National Ave 2004/5
Road traffic collisions resulting in death or serious personal injury per 100 million vehicle kilometers traveled (SPI 9a)	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.92	N/A	5.63	5.69
Road Traffic collisions resulting in death or serious injury per 1000 population	0.52	0.53	0.43	0.40	-7.0%	0.56	0.51