

*Reinspection of Oldham BCU
Greater Manchester Police*

**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
Northern Regional Office**

**Oldham BCU
Greater Manchester Police**

**BCU Inspection Monitoring Revisit
June 2006**



Oldham BCU – Greater Manchester Police

	Date of Inspection	HMIC Inspectors	BCU Commander	Date of Final Report
Full BCU Inspection	December 2004	Chief Superintendent Shannon	Chief Superintendent Bentley	December 2004
BCU Revisit	June 2006	Chief Superintendent Mayhew	Chief Superintendent Ball	June 2006

1. Background

Almost 220,000 people live in the 142.5 square kilometres in the north-west of Greater Manchester that makes up the Borough of Oldham. They live in communities that vary from the densely populated urban areas to the west of the town, to the rural, moorland villages to the east. Fourteen per cent of the population comes from the black and minority ethnic communities.

Oldham has six identified townships - Chadderton, Royton and Shaw, Uppermill and Lees, Failsworth, Oldham West and Oldham East. Each has a 'township' inspector whose responsibility it is to consult with local communities, monitor potential crime hotspots and ultimately reduce crime. Township inspectors lead teams of safer neighbourhood sergeants and police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) and special constables to work closely with the community and partners in addressing signal crime and other quality of life issues.

Oldham Division has, with the local community, identified the following priority crimes:

- burglary;
- street crime;
- hate crime;
- violent crime; and
- anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance.

2. Significant developments since the original inspection.

The BCU is going through a period of considerable change.

- **Senior Leadership Team** Chief Superintendent Caroline Ball replaced Chief Superintendent Bentley as the BCU Commander in September 2005. Chief Superintendent Ball's previous experience includes working within the Public Order, CID and Performance Units of the Force.

In March 2006, the BCU superintendent post, vacant at the time of the original Inspection, was filled by Stephen McGrath who has experience working within the public order, CID, internal affairs and performance units of the Force. The filling of this post is an important development to the operational performance of the BCU. It had been left vacant for some considerable time due to the preference of a previous BCU Commander to have just one of the two superintendents' posts filled.

Superintendent Stuart Harman moved from the operations role into operational support within the BCU.

Two of the three chief inspector posts have seen changes of personnel. DCI Peter Giles and chief inspector Stephen McGarry have joined the BCU. They are both experienced officers of 25 years and 26 years service respectively.

The human resources manager and divisional finance and administration manager complete the senior leadership team and the post holders remain unchanged.

- **Financial Management:** At the time of the Inspection in 2004, Oldham was one of three pilot sites in Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for greater financial devolution. It now operates a fully devolved model.
- **Estate:** The BCU's HQ building is under refurbishment and staff have had to be temporarily relocated to various stations at different times. This is disruptive and has required one member of police staff working as the project manager over an extended period. The refurbishment is due for completion in December 2007.

Neighbourhood Policing/Partnerships: Oldham is Greater Manchester Police's pathfinder BCU for neighbourhood policing, known locally as 'Safer Neighbourhoods'. This promotes five essential elements:

- public confidence in choices and solutions;
- visible control;
- targeted working in accordance with the National Intelligence Model (NIM);
- joint action with the police, public and other agencies all tackling a problem together; and
- dedicated resources.

Safer Neighbourhoods is embraced by each of the six 'townships'. Each ward has an establishment of two constables and three PCSOs. The number of sergeants varies depending on the nature and demand of a particular township. The number of PCSOs has increased by 24 since the original Inspection, to 60. This is the highest number of PCSOs within any BCU in the Force. Oldham Council currently funds 19 PCSO posts.

A safer neighbourhoods and partnership working unit (SNPU) has been developed from the community affairs department. The unit is led by an inspector (local authority liaison officer) and has a general remit of dealing with diversity, partnership and youth issues. It comprises the following staff:

- two sergeants (one being the drugs co-ordinator);
- two community race relation officers – one constable/one police staff;
- a final warnings officer – constable;
- three schools and youth liaison officers – constables;
- an 'on track' officer – constable;
- a school based police officer – constable; and
- three hate crime staff.

Response Policing: Response officers are now line managed by the PACE (response) inspectors. There has been some reduction in response officers (to 172) in order to establish several new units on the BCU. The rationale for creating the new units (see below) is to release response officers' time and allow

them to provide an improved quality of service to the public. Work is being undertaken to better locate response officers to smaller outlying townships in order to give a sense of ownership and improve morale.

Prisoner processing unit, evidence review unit and file build unit: These units were established in January 2006 to improve detection rates, the quality of investigations and file preparation.

The prisoner processing unit (PPU) replaced the post arrest support team and now deals with all Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) statutory charge scheme offences with the exception of Section 4 public order offences. The unit is staffed by two sergeants and 25 constables, five of whom are accredited detectives. The unit services the division from 0700 hrs to 0100 hrs daily. Safeguards are in place to ensure effective officer development and avoid skill loss of operational staff through secondments to the unit.

The evidence review Unit (ERU) dictates initial enquiries needed by an arresting officer before they are allowed to handover a case to the PPU. The ERU is also responsible for ensuring an appropriate evidential package is available before a person is circulated as 'wanted' on the PNC. The unit comprises a police staff supervisor, a sergeant, three constables and two detectives and provides a 24/7 service.

The file build unit replaced the divisional file squad. The unit consists of a sergeant and 10 constables, an increase of seven constables compared to the previous structure. They deal with all correspondence from the CPS and the courts as well as overseeing the completion of files of evidence. The purpose of the file build unit is to prepare and improve the quality and timeliness of the files so reducing the burden on uniformed officers. The file build unit deals with all pre-charge scheme offences that have been processed through the PPU.

Public protection investigation unit (PPIU): The BCU is developing a PPIU headed by a dedicated detective inspector which includes:

- child abuse investigation unit (detective sergeant and four detective constables);
- domestic violence unit (a sergeant and five constables);
- video interview unit (five constables); and
- Operation Helena (investigation into the sexual exploitation of children).

Burglary/Robbery Unit: A burglary/robbery unit was formed in January 2006 to increase detections and reduce reported crimes in the key crime areas of robbery and burglary. Ninety percent of the work is directed towards proactively targeting offenders for burglary dwelling with the remainder of resources concentrated on street robbery and offences of burglary other than a dwelling.

The BCU Commander intends to review the success of these units later in the year before determining whether they should continue in this form.

Performance Management

The management information unit (MIU) consists of two police staff, an inspector and a constable. Timely performance data is now available including daily performance information regarding reduction and detection of priority crimes.

*Reinspection of Oldham BCU
Greater Manchester Police*

Individual teams (response, safer neighbourhood and CID) are provided with performance data each month covering a wide range of performance areas – sickness, outstanding performance development reviews, arrests, detections, house searches conducted, etc. This information is also utilised by the superintendent and chief inspector (operations) to conduct 10-weekly performance review meetings with individual team leaders.

The unit collates and analyses performance data and prepares a monthly GRIP presentation for all managers within the division. This is given by the chief superintendent with the overall aim of looking holistically at the division identifying good practice and areas for improvement.

The unit is also responsible for ensuring the division maintains compliance with NCRS. Failures are reported directly to line managers. The compliance rate has significantly improved as a consequence.

3. Performance Summary

Oldham BCU is grouped with 14 other 'Most Similar' BCUs:

Force	BCU
Cheshire	Cheshire Northern
Cleveland	Hartlepool
Essex	Basildon
Essex	Thurrock
GMP	Bolton
GMP	Bury
GMP	Rochdale
GMP	Tameside
GMP	Wigan
Gwent	Newport
Lancashire	Pennine
Merseyside	St Helens
Northumbria	Gateshead
West Yorkshire	Calderdale

Crime Data - Crime Performance Table

The table below shows the crime performance data for the latest 12-month period (May 2005 to April 2006) for Oldham BCU compared to the previous year and to its MSBCU group.

Performance Indicator	Performance May 04 to April 05	Performance May 05 to April 06	% Change	MSBCU Group mean	The BCUs ranked position
Recorded crime per 1,000 population.	109.13	111.11	1.81%	109.86	7 th
Recorded crime detection rate	24.10%	23.73%	-0.37 p.p.	27.17%	14 th
Domestic burglary per 1,000 households	22.59	22.17	-1.87%	15.48	15 th
Domestic burglary detection rate	10.06%	10.76%	0.70 p.p.	16.71%	13 th
Robberies per 1,000 population	1.93	1.95	0.95%	1.21	14 th
Robbery detection rate	20.14%	20.89%	0.75 p.p.	25.12%	13 th
Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population	14.91	18.63	24.91%	16.32	12 th
Vehicle crime detection rate	7.06%	6.34%	-0.72 p.p.	11.75%	14 th
Violent crimes per 1,000 population	21.34	20.58	-3.58%	22.81	6 th
Violent crime detection rate	54.44%	48.65%	-5.79 p.p.	54.80%	14 th

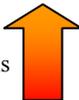
Note: This data is not validated and therefore is only provisional

*Reinspection of Oldham BCU
Greater Manchester Police*

The BCU is showing a deteriorating performance in relation to crime reduction, with the exception of violent crime and burglary dwelling (3.6% and 1.9% reductions respectively). Similarly, detection rates are deteriorating in three of the five areas under consideration and there are only marginal improvements in the other two (domestic burglary and robbery detections).

The BCU is now in the bottom three positions for seven of the 10 indicators compared to the performances of the other 14 BCUs forming the MSBCU group and this is of concern.

The Boston Box below indicates the performance summary for Oldham BCU over the same time period and shows performance against the MSBCU group:

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

Consideration of trend data indicates, that for the three-month period to May 2006 compared to the previous three months all crime categories increased as follows:

	Increases in Crime March – May 2006
Total Crime	9%
Domestic Burglary	8%
Robbery	14%
Vehicle Crime	12%
Violent Crime	21%

The large increase in violent crime over the last three months (21%) belies the one area where the BCU appears to be performing well compared to the MSBCU group i.e. when based on 12-month data. The BCU has undertaken extensive National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) training of staff between 21 March 2006 and 18 April 2006. Since completion of that training NCRS compliance has improved considerably (believed to be 80-90% compliance compared to approximately 30% compliance previously). The BCU has identified significant increases in harm violence against the person, violent crime and robbery since that training. Once full year affects of improved NCRS compliance are apparent, Oldham BCU is likely to demonstrate a poorer performance compared to the MSBCU group.

The BCU has suffered from a large number of persistent and priority offenders (PPOs) released from prison recently (30 PPOs since January, 2006) and, although considerable work has been undertaken on intervention with partners and

*Reinspection of Oldham BCU
Greater Manchester Police*

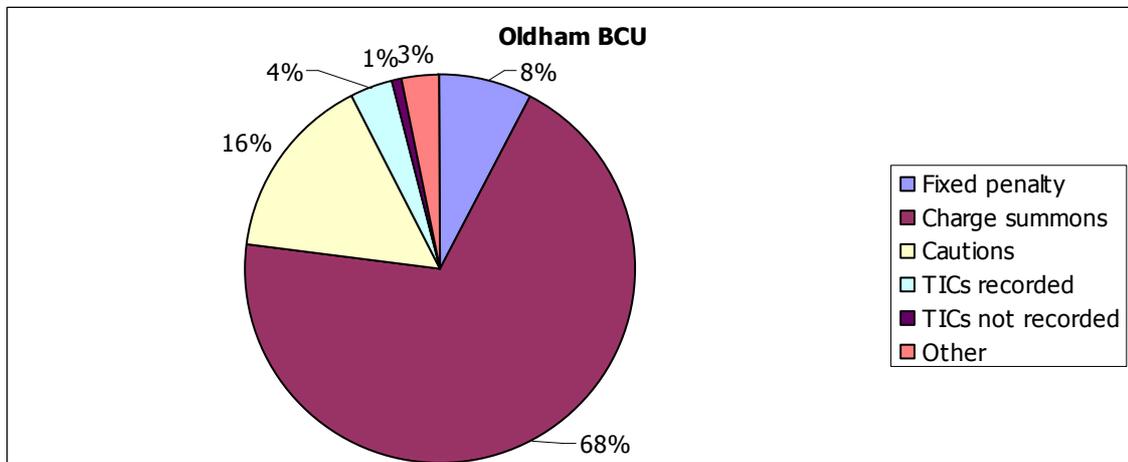
intelligence-led enforcement, this has had a considerable impact on crime levels in the area during the last six months.

Type of Detection method

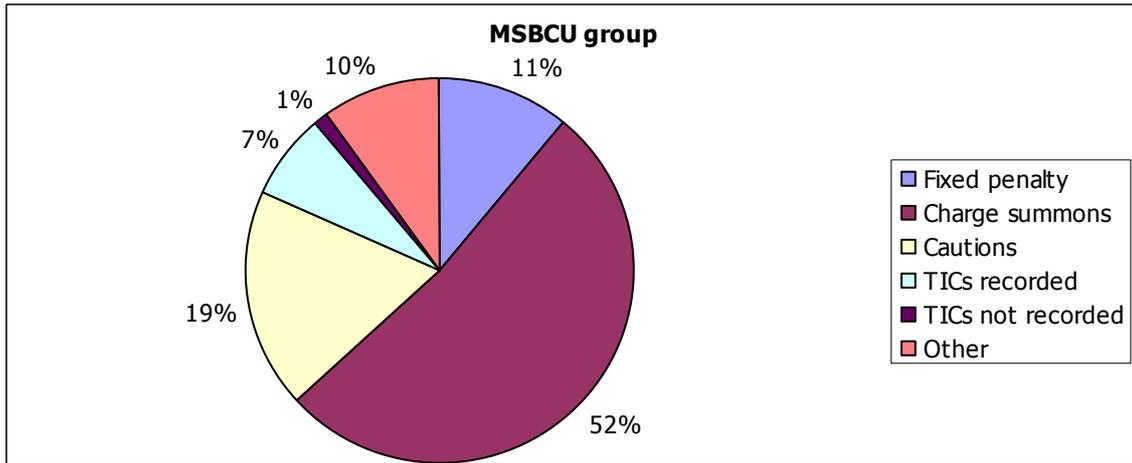
The table shows the type of detection methods in Oldham BCU for the latest 12-month period (May 05 to April 06) compared to the MSBCU group:

	Number of Detects	No of Fixed Penalties	Number of Charged/Summons	Number of Cautions	Number of TIC (recorded)	Number of TIC (not recorded)	Number of other detects	% of Other Detects
Total Crime – OLDHAM	5756	448	3981	897	205	55	170	3%
Total Crime - MSBCU Ave	6176	693	3205	1143	455	54.44	625	10%
Domestic Burglary – OLDHAM	214	0	144	12	45	7	6	3%
Domestic Burg - MSBCU Ave	217	0.41	125	9	66	5	13	6%
Robbery- OLDHAM	89	0	82	1	6	0	0	0%
Robbery - MSBCU Ave	59	0	52	1.7	2.1	0.2	3	5%
Vehicle Crime – OLDHAM	258	0	192	11	47	1	7	2.71%
Vehicle Crime - MSBCU Ave	395	0.2	172	27	174	4.6	17.3	4.4%
Violent Crime – OLDHAM	2186	268	1503	304	6	0	105	4.8%
Violent Crime - MSBCU Ave	2469	326	1284	475	4.5	0.6	378	15.3%

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



Reinspection of Oldham BCU
Greater Manchester Police



The BCU charges/summons consistently more offenders than the MSBCU mean in all crime categories but tends to caution less, have fewer fixed penalty notices issued and has fewer TICs. As a consequence, Oldham is 11th out of the 15 BCUs in its group for sanction detections per crime at 23.03% compared to the group mean of 25.75%. Oldham is 13th in the MSBCU group for domestic burglary sanction detections at 10.46% and 7th out of the 12 divisions in Greater Manchester Police.

3. Inspection Recommendations

Recommendation 1	
<p><i>Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that a more structured approach is required to enhance SMT visibility. This should include regular visits by the BCU SMT members to all police stations on the BCU and to operational briefings. Members of the SMT should also undertake more frequent patrol with junior officers.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<p>The BCU Commander and other members of the SMT regularly visit all police stations and departments within the BCU. There is a structured programme in place to ensure that this occurs. Key messages are identified in advance for promulgation by the SMT and feedback loops/process are in place to give specific responses to staff and capture recurring themes to inform BCU Commanders 'broadcast' type communications.</p> <p>HR 'surgeries' regularly take place across the BCU that are overseen by the head of HR. A detailed programme of weekly surgeries is available to staff on the BCU intranet site. Staff are able to raise any issues of concern at these surgeries and receive either immediate feedback or are subsequently contacted depending on the nature of the matter identified.</p> <p>A communications strategy was delivered for the introduction of the PPU.</p>	<p>During the revisit, positive feedback was evident regarding SMT visibility and obvious interest in staff and work related issues taken by the BCU Commander, in particular. It was mentioned several times during focus groups that the Commander is able to quickly address staff by their first names which made them feel valued and part of the team.</p> <p>The HR manager was cited by most staff as visible and supportive – the HR surgeries being valued by those staff interviewed.</p> <p>During an earlier visit to the BCU in March 2006, there was some disquiet amongst response staff regarding the loss of response officers to create the PPU. During this revisit there was a much clearer recognition and understanding of the benefits of the PPU and how the SMT is developing the BCU. In addition, a number of those interviewed referred to 'Team Oldham' – supporting a greater team approach than had been apparent to the inspection team previously.</p>

Recommendation 2	
<i>Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the BCU SMT reviews its approach to communication. The SMT should structure internal communication processes and provide effective opportunities for constructive feedback.</i>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<p>The original Inspection identified that sergeants and particularly inspectors on the BCU did not have a routine forum at which they could contribute to the development of the BCU. The BCU Commander has introduced a GRIP process into the BCU and part of that agenda covers BCU development issues as well as specific performance improvement.</p> <p>In addition, the BCU Commander has introduced three-monthly development days to fully engage 1st and 2nd line managers in BCU development.</p> <p>The BCU has also undertaken a communications audit to inform an internal communications strategy.</p> <p>The original Inspection indicated that more formal/structured meetings were needed between the SMT and staff associations, lesbian and gay staff association (LGSA) and black and asian police association (BAPA). Appropriate meetings are now in place. Staff associations meet with the BCU Commander and the superintendent (support) has developed a diversity group meeting within the BCU.</p>	<p>Sergeants and Inspectors feel fully involved in the development of the BCU and expressed the view that they are better consulted than previously. The three-monthly development days are valued and it was clear during interviews that there is a strong understanding of the policing philosophy and values of the SMT.</p> <p>Equivalent police staff members felt less included and this is worthy of further consideration.</p> <p>Staff associations confirmed the improvements to consultation and this is leading to a greater understanding of the challenges facing the BCU and a willingness to support the SMT.</p>

Recommendation 3	
<i>Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the BCU SMT conducts a risk assessment to determine minimum operational staffing levels, taking into account temporal and geographic issues on the BCU, and establishes effective processes to ensure these levels are maintained.</i>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<p>The original report identified the need to improve the tasking mechanisms and duties of management. The major issues concerned the numbers and availability of response and safer neighbourhoods officers and whether they were being deployed effectively against demand.</p>	<p>The inspection team considers that there is still improvement needed in respect of resource management. Several examples were provided by staff during the revisit, of where duty planning had been less than effective. The SMT has addressed this through the</p>

<p>The SMT has taken the following action:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Risk assessments are being used to establish appropriate staffing levels according to demands; ii) The Prisoner Processing Unit deals with the majority of prisoners arrested by response officers effectively reducing officer abstractions from patrol; iii) There has been work undertaken in co-operation with HQ communications regarding incident management and reduction in incident queues. The BCU has introduced a 'FWIN (Force wide incident number) Busting' arrangement (officers nominated to deal exclusively with outstanding operational calls for service i.e. command and control incidents known as FWINs). This reduces the additional demands placed on operational staff as they start their tours of duty which otherwise makes it difficult for them to do anything other than attend one incident after another. iv) Improvements have been made to resource management to better align staffing levels to planned incidents. An additional post has been identified for this unit and, as a short-term measure, a sergeant on recuperative duties is undertaking this role. v) Absence management policies are being actively pursued (including the HR surgeries) in an attempt to improve officer availability. vi) Guidance has been promulgated on the use of safer neighbourhood officers in accordance with the graded response policy to ensure more effective deployment. 	<p>provision of an additional post and more effective processes that should bring necessary improvement.</p> <p>The Prisoner Processing Unit is established and is valued by operational officers who recognise the benefits of being able to return quickly to operational duty.</p> <p>The FWIN busting arrangement has reduced the number of outstanding incidents that need to be attended by response officers from approximately 100 at any one time to 10–20. It is acknowledged by the SMT that this is a short-term resolution to the problem and that longer-term arrangements are needed (for example, better demand management without deployment of officers and possibly an effective appointments systems) to improve incident management and provide effective, timely service to the local community.</p> <p>Police officer absence rates remain a concern for Oldham BCU showing a 9% increase per officer for the last nine month period compared to the same period last year. Sickness rates are just above Greater Manchester Police rates and MSBCU mean rates at 75.60 hours lost per officer. Police officer sickness across GMP area fell by 22% over the same period and Oldham is now placed 9th of the 12 BCUs in the Force and 7th of the 12 MSBCUs where data is available.</p> <p>By contrast, police staff sickness is commendable with the BCU being placed 1st in the MSBCU group and 2nd in the Force at 46.6 hours per staff member.</p> <p>The guidance promulgated in respect of deployment of safer neighbourhood officers is understood by supervisors and staff and grade 3 and 4 incidents now constitute the bulk of such deployments in accordance with the policy.</p>
---	--

Recommendation 4	
<p><i>Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the BCU re-examines the structure and function of the operational planning unit (OPU) and the BCU level tasking processes to ensure that tasking across the BCU is directed by the OPU in support of the control strategy.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<p>The original Inspection identified following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The numbers and make up of daily tasking meetings were questioned; - no meaningful tasks were allocated at that meeting; and - there was need to review and evaluate tasks and properly identify emerging threats and initiate appropriate action. <p>Since that time, there has been some restructuring of the OPU and the daily tasking meeting is structured on NIM principles and processes.</p> <p>Monitoring processes for checking the completion of tasks and managing 'SARA' initiatives are housed within the OPU.</p>	<p>The daily tasking meeting was witnessed during the revisit. The inspection team was concerned that the thrust of the meeting was predominantly to review activity over the last 24 hours and discuss successful operations. This provided the vast majority of the discussions during a meeting that lasted almost an hour.</p> <p>There was little proactive tasking undertaken (and this was mainly to safer neighbourhood officers), intelligence supporting tasking and direction of staff was limited and there was little consideration of the volume crime causing the greatest problem to the BCU (vehicle crime) nor to protecting vulnerable people. Rather, the meeting only dealt with issues identified as strategic priorities within the strategic threat assessment.</p> <p>Predictive analysis of hotspots and those individuals causing the greatest problems was limited in nature and the reinspection team considered that there was a lack of clear ownership at 'township' inspector level within the process and that the BCU did not appear to have the capability for agile proactive tasking.</p>

4. Monitoring Assessment and Follow-up action

Have all recommendations been accepted and acted upon?	Yes
Has the remedial action/implementation plan led to demonstrable improvement?	In some areas
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?	No. Issues are being addressed
Have any problems arisen since the inspections that are likely to affect performance and merit further scrutiny by HMIC?	Performance has deteriorated and is of major concern.
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?	The BCU has been flagged by the PPSG. An action plan is required to address outstanding issues/ performance and the BCU will be considered for an early inspection under the HMIC GL3 process.

5. Conclusions

- The monitoring team is satisfied that two of the four recommendations have been fully addressed. These relate to command team visibility and communication/consultation arrangements. Considerable work and effort has been expended in this area.
- Resource management and utilisation of duty planning has been improved and the appointment of an additional member of staff to duty/event planning will further assist.
- Action to address the recommendation centred on OPU performance and intelligence-led proactive policing is less convincing and requires further work if the performance of the BCU is to significantly improve.
- Police officer sickness rates are of concern, although the BCU is undertaking considerable work to address this problem.
- Performance has deteriorated since the original Inspection and this, in part, is due to better compliance with NCRS. Whilst this helps to explain why a comparison of its own past performance is not favourable, it does not explain

why other BCUs in the MSBCU group are out performing Oldham. The release of a large number of PPOs simultaneously on the BCU and concerns expressed by a number of officers during the revisit that those attending local court are invariably released on bail (often to reoffend) are issues that the BCU Commander is vigorously addressing with partner agencies.

- The BCU has a converter arrangement in place, supported by analytical research in order to maximise opportunities for detection. Sanctioned detection rates remain lower than the majority in the MSBCU group although the BCU charges and summonses considerably more than the group's average. Consideration should be given to increased use of fixed penalty notices, cautions and offences taken into consideration (TICs).
- The BCU Commander acknowledges the support received from HQ departments particularly regarding the policing of possible public disorder associated with the night-time economy and supporting level 1 crime reduction and detection initiatives. Whenever possible the division has been supported by police officers who would normally be allocated to level 2 responsibilities.
- An action plan is to be developed by the BCU Commander to address the issues raised in this revisit report and this will be monitored by HMIC. Early consideration will be given to the BCUs inclusion in the new GL3 BCU inspection process commencing in October 2006.
- Without exception all staff whom the monitoring team met were extremely positive and supportive of the BCU. The monitoring team would like to thank the BCU Commander and her staff for their warm welcome and assistance during the visit.

Chief Superintendent Kevin Mayhew
Staff Officer to HM Inspector of Constabulary