

**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
London and the East Regional Office**

**Inspection of Islington BCU
Metropolitan Police Service
March 2005**



Introduction

1. There are over 300 basic command units (BCUs) in England and Wales and no two are alike. They vary in size from over 1000 officers to just under 100; 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 in reducing crime and disorder in their areas, and to do so with integrity. Scrutiny of police performance is shifting from aggregate force outcomes to the performance of individual BCUs, recognising that policing is essentially a locally delivered service.
2. The focus on performance in reducing crime and disorder is likely to be relentless. Forces and police authorities, working with local authorities and other community safety partners, will need to raise their game year after year. Indeed, the statutory regime of Best Value demands 'continuous improvement' and an array of sanctions exist if authorities fail to deliver this.
3. In trying to make sense of the variations in operational performance that exist – to differing degrees – in every force, a key ingredient is *focus*. The best performers focus the efforts of their staff through timely, dynamic local briefings that are supported by a well-managed intelligence system. They set targets and make sure that staff are aware of them, they communicate results and celebrate success, and they hold individuals to account for how they have used their time. Ministers have decided upon a nationwide rolling programme of BCU Inspections that focus on performance and leadership, intended to help enhance performance and spread good practice (Box A).

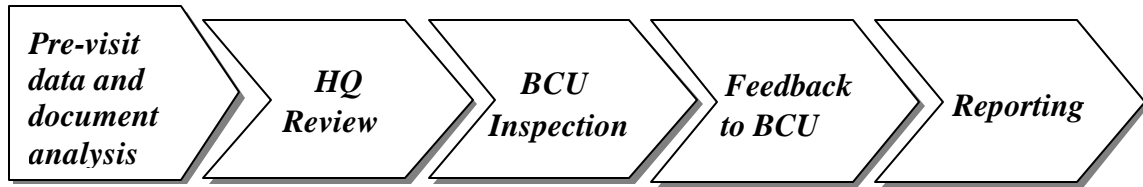
Box A – Aims of BCU Inspections

- **Promoting effective leadership.**
- **Disseminating good practice.**
- **Identifying inefficiencies.**
- **Providing pointers to enhance performance.**
- **Strengthening the capacity for self-improvement.**
- **Leaving behind a BCU management team that has learnt about itself and is even more committed to self-improvement.**

4. An Inspection of Islington BCU in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) was conducted between 28 February – 4 March 2005. This report sets out the Inspection findings, highlighting areas of good practice and making recommendations for improvement where appropriate. HM Inspector thanks the officers and staff of Islington BCU for the co-operation and assistance provided to members of the Inspection team.

Methodology

5. The Inspection of Islington BCU consisted of the following stages:



6. During the Inspection a total of 16 structured interviews and 14 focus groups were conducted involving over 119 individuals. Other staff members and partnership agency representatives were interviewed during the ten visits to workplace settings. Senior representatives from the London Borough of Islington (LBI) were also consulted in addition to some key strategic partners that included senior representatives from the LBI, the London Fire Brigade, the youth offending team (YOT) and Probation Service. In addition, the Inspection team was pleased to have been accompanied by a chief superintendent from Wiltshire Constabulary on a short attachment to HMIC. Two BCU audits were conducted: the management of forensic science submissions and an audit of staff appraisals.

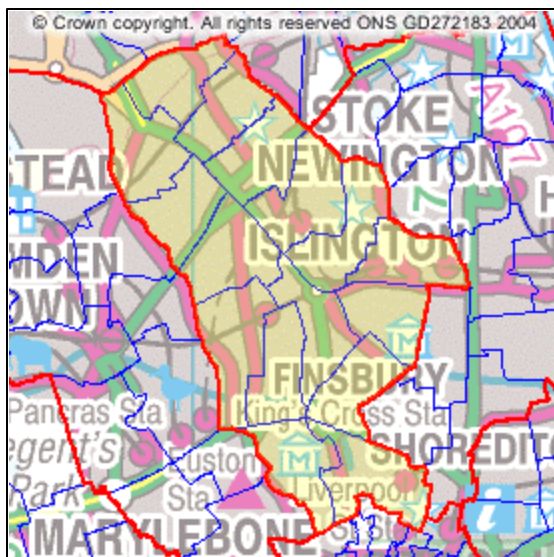
Force Overview

7. The MPS is the largest and most diverse police force in England and Wales with approaching 45,000 officers and support staff; it is responsible for the policing of Greater London. Territorial policing (TP) of the Force area is divided into 32 metropolitan boroughs, each of which has a borough-based policing model. TP is commanded by an assistant commissioner (ACTP), based at New Scotland Yard and assisted by four 'link' commanders, each of whom has specific oversight of a number of boroughs together with policy portfolios for the MPS.
8. Serious crime support is provided by specialist operations (SO) and, in addition, numerous separate directorates exist to augment and support aspects of territorial policing of the boroughs (eg the directorate of professional standards). The corporate centre can call on borough resources to deal with ceremonial occasions and major incidents, (eg anti-terrorism patrols as a result of incidents such as 11 September 2001). The impact of the increased anti-terrorism patrols across London since that terrorist attack has been the subject of corporate evaluation by the MPS.
9. The working relationship between Force HQ and BCUs was examined as part of the 2002/03 HMIC Inspection of the MPS conducted between 2 - 13 September 2002. This is commented upon in the report of that Inspection. In addition, the working relationship was also examined during the HMIC baseline assessment of the MPS conducted during October 2003 and reported upon in June 2004.
10. The MPS celebrated its 175th year in 2004.

Islington BCU

11. LBI covers 5.75 square miles. It has 16 electoral wards that are divided between two parliamentary constituencies (one north and one south). The borough sweeps north from the city, through fashionable Islington, to the thriving shopping area of the Nag's Head and Archway beyond. It borders the surrounding boroughs of Hackney, Haringey, Camden and the City of London.
12. Islington BCU is responsible for the policing of Arsenal Football Club, whose current home is Highbury with a capacity of 38,200. A new stadium is at an advanced stage of construction in Ashburton Grove with an expected capacity of 60,000; it should be completed by April 2006. The club has a significant impact upon the whole borough on match days, which can now be any day of the week.
13. Events held in Finsbury Park (located in Haringey BCU) have a considerable influence on the north sector due to the public transport sites situated nearby. The north end of the borough has seven underground stations – Finsbury Park, Farringdon, Caledonian Road, Holloway Road, Archway, Tufnell Park and Arsenal. There are also British Rail stations at Finsbury Park, Drayton Park, Upper Holloway, Crouch Hill and Canonbury. The south end of the borough has the Angel (Underground), King's Cross (Thameslink) and Highbury and Islington (both Underground and British Rail). Islington has two prisons, Pentonville in Caledonian Road and Holloway in Parkhurst Road.

14. Islington has a large number of licensed premises that attract residents, tourists, commuters and students. This transient population has an impact on police resources by increasing public disorder, drug-related offences and other opportunist crime such as theft and robbery. Situated close to King's Cross, Islington suffers from a high level of prostitution much of which has been displaced into the borough by the extensive development at King's Cross. Prostitution impacts on other crime levels as it often results in allegations of rape, assault and theft.



15. The residential population is 181,000 people. This equates to a population of approximately 118.3 people per hectare, making Islington the second most densely populated borough in Britain. This, coupled with the transient population, illustrates the policing challenges. The recent national census (2001) also shows that Islington has an above average 20–39 year old population. Of the resident population, 56.6% (60.6%) are employed, 5.8% (3.4%) are unemployed, 3% (2.6%) are students and 7.8% (13.6%) are retired¹. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) states that Islington had 82,281 households in 2001². Of these, one person households and lone parent households with dependent children are higher than the England and Wales averages, as are those rented both from the council and housing associations.

Demographics³

16. The following table shows the ethnic groups within LBI⁴:

¹ England and Wales averages in brackets

² Source: ONS Neighbourhood statistics website

³ Source: ONS neighbourhood statistics

⁴ Source: ONS neighbourhood statistics & London Borough of Barnet website

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Percentage of Resident Population in Ethnic Groups	Islington	England
White	75.4	90.9
Of which White Irish	5.7	1.3
Mixed	4.1	1.3
Asian or Asian British	5.4	4.6
Indian	1.6	2.1
Pakistani	0.5	1.4
Bangladeshi	2.4	0.6
Other Asian	0.8	0.5
Black or Black British	11.9	2.1
Caribbean	4.9	1.1
African	6.0	1.0
Other Black	1.0	0.2
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	3.3	0.9

17. The following table shows a breakdown of religions for Islington:

Religion	Islington	England and Wales
Christian	54.2	71.8
Jewish	1.0	0.5
No religion	23.7	14.8
Religion not stated	10.1	7.7
Hindu	1.0	1.1
Muslim	8.1	3.0
Buddhist	1.0	0.3
Other Religions	0.4	0.3
Sikh	0.3	0.6

18. The following table shows a breakdown of household types in Islington:

	Islington	England and Wales
One person households	44.1	30.0
Pensioners living alone	11.7	14.4
Other All Pensioner households	3.0	9.4
Contained dependent children	23.7	29.5
Lone parent households with dependent children	9.4	6.5
Owner occupied	32.2	68.9
Rented from Council	35.6	13.2
Rented from Housing Association or Registered Social Landlord	13.6	6.0
Private rented or lived rent free	18.6	11.9

Police Buildings

19. The following police buildings are located on the borough:

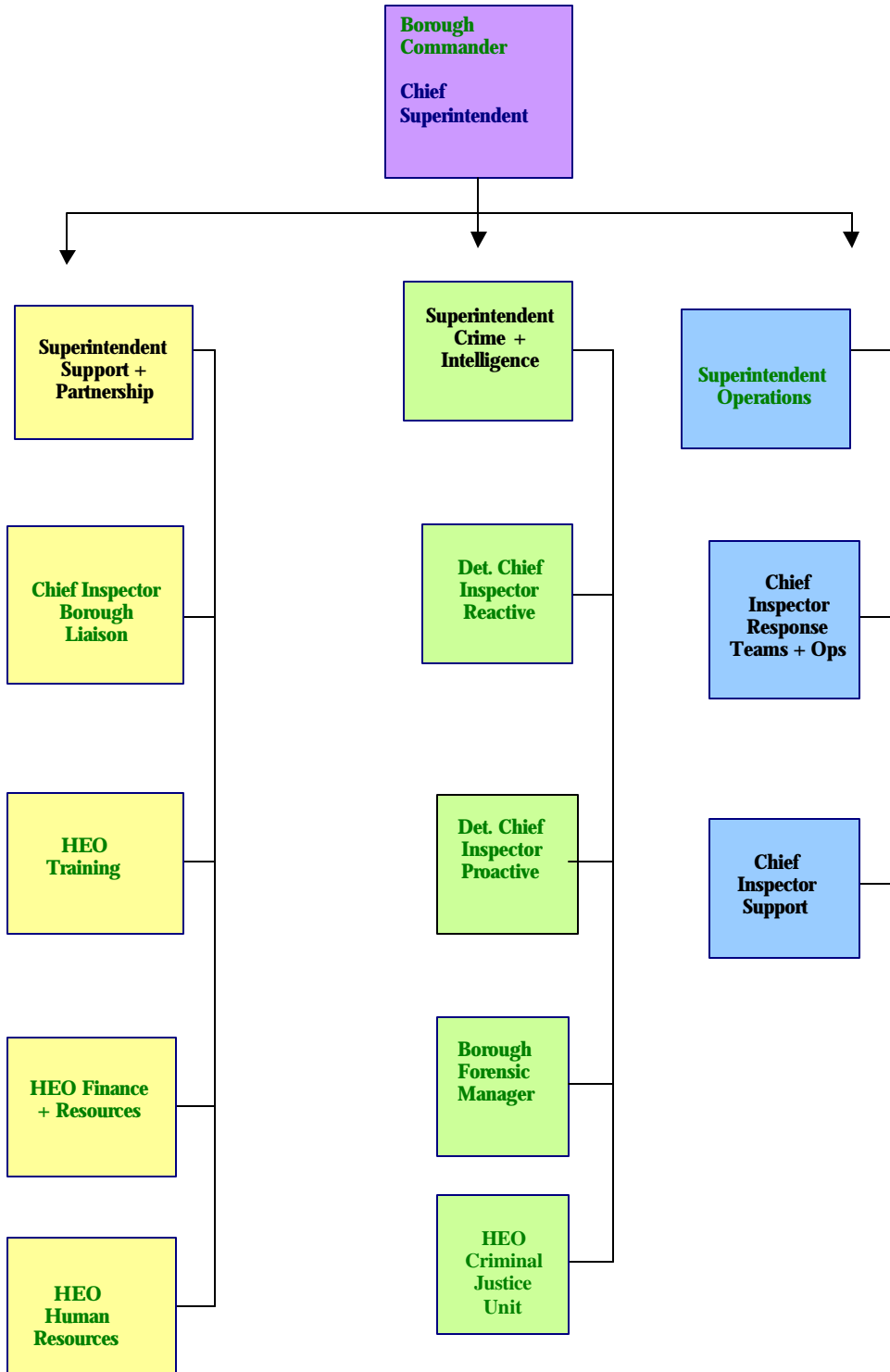
Police Station	Opening Times to Public	
Islington	Every Day	24 hours
Holloway	Every Day	24 hours
Highbury Vale	No Reception Facility	
Archway	No Reception Facility	

Islington BCU Senior Management Team (SMT)

20. The BCU is led by its BCU Commander who is a chief superintendent. He has three established superintendents to support him with responsibilities for operations, crime and intelligence and partnership, human resources (HR) and finance and resources. There are five chief inspectors for operations, support, borough liaison (partnership), proactive crime (detective) and reactive crime (detective). In addition, there are police staff managers for HR, finance and resources and forensics. Together with a higher analyst position and with their senior police officer colleagues, this group is called the SMT.

21. The BCU operates with five core shifts each led by an inspector that parade from Islington and Holloway police stations. There are eight Safer Neighbourhood teams (SNTs) (with five recently being established) covering nine wards, community contact officers (CCOs) and Safer Schools officers aligned to wards. Overlaid on these teams are various pan-BCU operational units: the reactive CID; the Sapphire team; the prisoner processing unit; the crime management unit (CMU); the telephone investigation unit (TIU); the burglary, robbery and vehicle crime teams; firearms investigation unit; community safety unit (CSU); forensics; a motorcycle team; a borough support unit (BSU); and a criminal justice unit (CJU) shared with Camden BCU.

Islington Borough Command Team



Performance

How successful is the BCU in tackling its principal crime and disorder problems – is performance improving?

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)

22. The boundary of Islington BCU is coterminous with that of LBI and there is therefore one CDRP. This was formed in 1998 following the enactment of the Crime and Disorder Act and works to its second three-year community safety strategy (CSS). Joint work on the third CSS is at a mature stage and will be ready for implementation from April 2005. The partnership is led by the Islington crime, drugs and youth partnership (ICDYP) – its CDRP. This group is subordinate to the Islington local strategic partnership (LSP) that leads the delivery of the council's long-term community plan. The CDRP has agreed expenditure plans for challenge funds under CAD⁵, BSC⁶ and BCU funds that are linked to its CSS and the development of partnership activity.
23. The BCU Commander enjoys an excellent relationship with his partners, who hold him in high esteem, and his openness and accessibility are particularly appreciated. The partnership is in the process of replacing its historic PCCG⁷ meetings with a new community safety board that is intended to become the consultative arm of the CDRP (ICDYP). At the tier below, SNT/CCO staff attend the new MAGPI meetings (see below). The borough has a recently formed IAG⁸ that has been used in earnest recently when some members were engaged in the policing strategy for the Finsbury Park Mosque. The BCU Commander recognises that the group is at a relatively early stage of development and that it is gradually increasing its capacity and experience with time.

Islington CSS

24. The chief executive of Islington Borough Council chairs the ICDYP; this is well attended by both statutory and non-statutory members as well as the elected member with responsibility for community safety. The group discharges its responsibilities through three strategic arms of activity – treatment, young people and safer communities. This reflects the integration of the drug action team (DAT) within the CDRP structure together with the cross-cutting theme of young people. Each of these comprises various themed sub-groups that co-ordinate activity towards delivery of the CSS (see Annex A).
25. The CSS comprises the following themes:
 - **Street Crime** – including supporting victims and potential victims, working with offenders and potential offenders and addressing locations and crime hotspots.

⁵ Communities Against Drugs

⁶ Building Safer Communities

⁷ Police Community and Consultative Group

⁸ Independent Advisory Group

- **Violence (including domestic violence)** – again including supporting victims and potential victims, working with offenders and potential offenders and addressing locations and crime hotspots.
- **Residential Burglary** - again including supporting victims and potential victims, working with offenders and potential offenders and addressing locations and crime hotspots.
- **Anti-social Behaviour** - again including supporting victims and potential victims, working with offenders and potential offenders and addressing locations and crime hotspots.

Box B - Examples of Partnership Working in the BCU

- **Joint Licensing Project** – this initiative involves intelligence-led enforcement and crime suppression patrol activity between the police, environmental health and trading standards. Recent work has also included the Immigration Service, Department of Work and Pensions and the London Fire and Rescue Service. Licensed premises are priorities according to criminality, disorder and anti-social behaviour with planned interventions following. The initiative is currently being evaluated.
- **The Anti-social Behaviour Unit** – this unit is jointly staffed by the police and local authority and takes a strategic role in targeting anti-social behaviour. There is an emphasis that individuals nominated for interventions come from partners rather than the police. The unit has apparently been responsible for achieving the highest number of crack house closures in the MPS.
- **Domestic Violence Management** – this work was funded by the domestic violence co-ordination sub-group and involves non-statutory services to provide third party reporting, victim care and long-term conflict resolution services. This will become a major theme to pursue in the forthcoming violent crime reduction strategy. A full evaluation has yet to be conducted.
- **Setting-up of MAGPIs** – the partnership has established four new multi-agency community focused problem-solving panels known as MAGPIs. These are the result of joint work with the local authority under ICDYP. They are co-ordinated by a multi-agency team and funding for problem-solving initiatives is provided from the NRF⁹ through the community enforcement sub-group. The work of the panels is continuing to expand with the roll-out of SNTs and will become fully integrated into a new citizen focused local problem-solving strategy.

26. The above initiatives represent a sample of the partnership work currently being progressed under the auspices of the CDRP (ICDYP). Indeed, partners work to a comprehensive crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour action plan (2004/05) that incorporates leads, milestones, outputs/outcomes and sources of funding (ie, NRF, BCU Fund and BSCF¹⁰). This action plan contains a rich and impressive range of agreed initiatives, much of which is driven by and actively involves many partner agencies. The plan illustrates how the CDRP has deployed its £366k BCU fund, £447k SSC fund and £1,507k NRF allocation (including additional funding to help meet floor targets) in an innovative and potentially impactful way.
27. The local authority and its key partners are also pursuing a major initiative under the Home Office New Deal for Communities initiative together with a far-reaching regeneration initiative entitled the A1 Project. Both have great potential to improve the quality of life for residents within LBI and the police play an active role in each. Other worthy partnership initiatives include the excellent work undertaken by staff in the planning, preparation and implementation of the policing arrangements for Arsenal FC. This is a major commitment

⁹ Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

¹⁰ Building Safer Communities Fund

for a club that is soon to increase its stadium capacity from 38,000 to 60,000 and which, for category 'C' matches, could involve the deployment of over 300 police officers. The Inspection team was impressed by the use of risk-assessments, match command arrangements and the strong use of intelligence that recognises the impact matches have upon the BCU's key priorities.

28. Information sharing is gradually being improved by the partnership and an 'umbrella' protocol is in place. Further partner-specific protocols together with information gatekeeper arrangements are now required to ensure that useful information is widely shared within the parameters of current legislation. This will become particularly useful in the monitoring of recidivism rates for offenders who are referred or otherwise engage in drug treatment schemes. Persistent and prolific offenders (PPOs) and those arrested for priority offences need to be fast-tracked into such treatment and whilst the merits of this are acknowledged, it has yet to become routinely practised. Allied to this is the need for the partnership to create a service level agreement to formalise interventions when individuals fail to comply with drug treatment and testing orders issued by the courts.
29. The nine SNTs each incorporate police community support officers (PCSOs) who work alongside their police officer colleagues in small established teams of one sergeant, two constables and four PCSOs. The Inspection team interviewed a number of PCSOs and found them to be motivated, intelligence-aware and proud to be members of the MPS. The teams are making an impressive early impact with anxiety amongst partners and the community for all 16 wards to benefit from the teams. That said, problem solving is at an early stage of development and has yet to be mainstreamed throughout the BCU with many PCSOs yet to be fully trained in the methodology. There is also a need to define and publicise the role and purpose of PCSOs on the BCU for the benefit of both the PCSOs themselves and also their colleagues within the wider police family. **The BCU is encouraged to define and publicise the role and responsibilities of its PCSOs to the workforce and wider police family.**
30. Initiatives against the CSS priorities that are dynamically identified in-year (ie, outside the action plan) should be properly co-ordinated by the CDRP and involve problem-solving analytical techniques and the SNTs and their CCO colleagues. Where possible, these should link into the S/TTTCG¹¹ processes whether as a new and parallel (partnership) TTTCG group or with the simple provision of summary updates for the TTTCG. In this way, worthy partnership initiatives would not happen in isolation of the CDRP structure; they would be properly informed, directed and sanctioned. The creation of the right model to enable the CDRP to include the dynamic progression of new and emerging partnership initiatives would require an examination of the BCU's partnership structure and more detailed consultation with stakeholders. Indeed, the existence of the co-located partnership officers could help achieve many of these aims but any review of its terms of reference would require careful management and consultation with stakeholders. Nevertheless, the Inspection team considers it to be essential to promote the mainstreaming of partnership activity and a synergy between the CDRP and the philosophy/concepts of the NIM¹². **The BCU is strongly encouraged to examine its CDRP structure, in consultation with partners, so as to create a capacity to**

¹¹ Strategic/Tactical Co-ordinating and Tasking Group

¹² National Intelligence Model

co-ordinate in-year problem solving initiatives. The identification of these needs to increase in sophistication, potentially coming from analysis, the MAGPIs, partners or directly from operational staff (F302s, etc).

Performance against Operational Targets

31. During the year April 2003 to March 2004, the BCU recorded 40,816 total notifiable offences (TNOs). This was an *increase* of 1,391 offences on the previous year (+3.5%) and an *increase* of 3,205 offences over a three-year period (+8.5% between 2000/01 and 2003/04). There were 225.5 TNOs per 1000 population in 2003/04 and this placed the BCU in the bottom quartile when compared with its most similar BCU (MSBCU) group. For the period July to December 2004, Islington's TNOs per 1000 population *decreased* by 3.5% (to 107.9 offences) compared with the same period the previous year and against an MSBCU average of 79.4 offences.
32. There were 2,611 domestic burglaries recorded in the BCU in the year to 31 March 2004. This was a *decrease* of 472 offences on the previous year (-15.3%) and a *decrease* of 355 offences over a three-year period (-12% between 2000/01 and 2003/04). There were 30.7 domestic burglaries per 1000 households in 2003/04, which placed the BCU in the bottom quartile when compared with the rest of the family group. For the period July to December 2004, Islington's domestic burglaries per 1000 households *increased* by 2% (to 15.2 offences) compared with the same period the previous year and against an MSBCU average of 12.1 offences.
33. In the year to 31 March 2004, there were 1,397 robbery offences recorded. This was a *decrease* of 267 offences on the previous year (-16%) and a *decrease* of 262 offences over a three-year period (-15.8% between 2000/01 and 2003/04). There were 7.7 robberies per 1000 population in 2003/04, which placed the BCU in the third quartile when compared with the rest of the family group. For the period July to December 2004, Islington's robberies per 1000 population *decreased* by 14.8% (to 3.3 offences) compared with the same period the previous year and against an MSBCU average of 3.7 offences.
34. There were 7,596 vehicle offences in the year up to 31 March 2004. This was an *increase* of 242 offences on the previous year (+3.3%) and an *increase* of 439 offences over a three-year period (+6.1% between 2000/01 and 2003/04). There were 42 vehicle crimes per 1000 population in the BCU area in 2003/04, which places it in the bottom quartile when compared with the rest of the family group. For the period July to December 2004, Islington's vehicle crime per 1000 population *decreased* by 32.7% (to 15.0 offences) compared with the same period the previous year and against an MSBCU average of 10.8 offences.

Crime Type - Offences	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
TNOs	37,611	39,425	40,816
Domestic Burglaries	2,966	3,083	2,611
Robberies	1,659	1,664	1,397
Vehicle Crime	7,157	7,354	7,596

Offences per 1000 population/households 2003/04

- TNOs equate to 225.5 per 1000 population in 2003/04.
- Domestic burglaries in the period 2003/04 equate to 30.7 per 1000 households.
- Robberies equate to 7.7 per 1000 population in 2003/04.
- Vehicle crimes in the period 2003/04 equate to 42.0 per 1000 population.

Detected Crime 2001/02 – 2003/04 and Recent Performance

35. Islington BCU had a sanction detection rate of 15.2% for TNOs in 2003/04 that amounted to 6,190 offences detected. This was an **increase** on the previous year when 12.1% (4,752 offences) were detected and an **increase** against that for 2001/02 when 14.5% (5,444 offences) were detected. Between 2001/02 and 2003/04 there was a 13.7% **increase** in overall detections for TNOs. The BCU's detection rate for these offences in 2003/04 places it in the second quartile when compared with the rest of the family group. For the period July to December 2004, Islington's detection rate for TNOs has **increased** to 21.9% against the MSBCU average of 21.9%.
36. There was a 22.7% sanction detection rate (592 offences) for domestic burglaries in 2003/04. This was an **increase** on the previous year when there was a 17.3% detection rate (534 offences) and an **increase** against that for 2001/02 when the BCU had a 7.4% detection rate (293 offences). Between 2001/02 and 2003/04 there was a massive 102% **increase** in overall detections for domestic burglary. The BCU's detection rate for these offences in 2003/04 places it in the top quartile (first place) when compared with the rest of the family group. For the period July to December 2004, Islington's detection rate for domestic burglaries has **decreased** to 20.3% against the MSBCU average of 13.9%.
37. There was a 21.5% sanction detection rate (301 offences) for robbery offences in 2003/04. This was an **increase** on the previous year when there was a 12.9% detection rate (214 offences) and an **increase** against that for 2001/02 when the BCU had a 9.9% detection rate (164 offences). Between 2001/02 and 2003/04 there was a significant 83.5% **increase** in overall detections for robbery offences. The BCU's detection rate for these offences in 2003/04 places it in the top quartile (first place) when compared with the rest of the family group. For the period July to December 2004, Islington's detection rate for robberies has **increased** to 27.2% against the MSBCU average of 14.6%.
38. There was a 3.1% sanction detection rate (235 offences) for vehicle offences in 2003/04. This was a **decrease** on the previous year when there was a 3.4% detection rate (251 offences) and a **decrease** against that for 2001/02 when the BCU had a 4.6% detection rate

(329 offences). Between 2001/02 and 2003/04 there was a 28.6% *decrease* in overall detections for vehicle crime offences. The BCU’s detection rate for these offences in 2003/04 places it in the bottom quartile when compared with the rest of the family group. For the period July to December 2004, Islington’s detection rate for TNOs has *increased* to 7.2% against the MSBCU average of 5.7%.

Crime Type - Detections	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
TNOs	5,444 (14.5%)	4,752 (12.1%)	6,190 (15.2%)
Domestic Burglaries	293 (9.9%)	534 (17.3%)	592 (22.7%)
Robberies	164 (9.9%)	214 (12.9%)	301 (21.5%)
Vehicle Crime	329 (4.6%)	251 (3.4%)	235 (3.1%)

39. One issue arising from the above performance statistics is the apparent paradox between the BCU’s excellent sanction detection rate and recent reductions in crime compared with its position within its MSBCU group. The BCU contends that this anomaly could be explained by the disproportionate ‘foot-fall’ of visitors to the BCU (particularly towards the city and for Arsenal FC matches) that resulted in more victims relative to the residential population. For burglary, potentially not subject to the same influences, the high volume of student accommodation is given as one potential explanation. Preliminary research appears to support this contention, with 38% of robbery victims and 60% of vehicle crime victims in 2003/04 residing off the borough.

Accountability Mechanisms and Performance Management

40. The BCU has an extremely strong performance culture that is driven hard by the BCU Commander and his team. This was clearly evident from focus groups held with staff, the general awareness of priorities and from the display of current performance information throughout every building. In addition to a performance backcloth being given at SMT, TTCG and daily intelligence meetings (DIMs)/daily management meetings (DMMs), quarterly performance meetings are held between the BCU Commander and his SMT that were complemented by five-weekly meetings between the superintendents, their chief inspectors and inspectors. These meetings are supported by team-based performance packs that are used as the basis for discussion. This is soon to be enhanced by a new in-house performance data product called EDDI¹³ that will need to incorporate more performance measures for CID officers and summarise financial management information.
41. In addition, the performance review unit produces a daily performance report that is used at the DIM/DMM processes. This is a useful document, an executive summary of which could usefully be circulated to a wider audience across the BCU, using the Aware system. Personalised performance information on detection rates is maintained within the robbery, burglary and vehicle crime teams in an effort to generate healthy competition amongst staff. Performance information is also produced and used for holding PCSOs and staff on SNTs to account, albeit care needs to be exercised in the use of targets for stop/account tactics and in the issue of fixed penalty notices for disorder (FPNDs) so as not to unduly distort staff behaviour.

¹³ Electronic Data Dissemination Interface

42. To its credit, the BCU has responded to its own EFQM self-assessment that identified staff recognition as an area for improvement. The Inspection team was pleased to discover a genuine pride amongst staff in working at Islington. There is extensive use of bonus payments with some 76 awards made in the last 12 months as part of a wider system of staff recognition that involves peer assessment. A ‘thank-you’ culture is emerging across the BCU with examples including the top ten arresting officers being personally congratulated by the DCI (proactive). These positive changes now need to be extended to include timely and meaningful recognition for staff engaged in less prominent roles such as support staff, PCSOs and members of the Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC).
43. The only area of improvement for performance management relates to the need to ensure that it is regularised for staff below inspector and police staff equivalents. Interviews with staff indicated that there was scope for meetings held by sergeants and inspectors to be more structured and challenging, reflecting the quantitative and qualitative contribution each team potentially makes towards the BCU’s priorities. **The BCU is encouraged to introduce a more formalised system of performance management for staff below the rank of inspector and police staff equivalents.** It was also impressive to see a notable improvement in the levels of public satisfaction with foot and mobile patrols; these had increased from 28% (foot) and 43% (mobile) in 2003/04 to 59% and 57% in the first two quarters of 2004/05 respectively. To build upon this, there is a need to introduce wider indicators of public satisfaction and particularly for points of public contact, thereby helping to support BCU efforts to improve overall public reassurance.

Visibility and Reassurance

44. An integral part of the BCU’s business is that of maximising visibility and reassurance and this is particularly evident when policing Arsenal FC matches but also through the policing style applied across the wider borough. To its credit the BCU has created a patrol strategy that formalises the mode of deployment for each operational unit, thereby promoting consistency of approach and compliance. At the BCU tier, resources in support functions are kept to a minimum and full use is made of staff on restricted and recuperative duties so as to release officers for full operational duties. All pan-BCU operational resources contribute to increasing reassurance (particularly staff on the new BSU) through the timely and professional response to crimes, proactive requirements or the specialist needs of partners (eg, CSU, YOTs, Sapphire, etc). On sectors, the nine SNTs and their local partners arguably offer the greatest opportunity to reassure communities and the full mainstreaming of partnership work together with MPS-led enhancements to the scheme should greatly enable the BCU to achieve this aim.
45. In addition to this work, potential improvements in reassurance and visibility will no doubt arise from the implementation of Recommendation 3 within this report (see ‘Leadership’ below) and the consequential ‘recycling’ of the resource dividend arising from improved demand management towards proactivity opportunities. The potential introduction of community volunteers in police stations and the improved use of MSC resources should also help improve reassurance, as will the continued and fruitful relationship between the BCU and the local media.

Intelligence-led Policing (ILP)

NIM Structures and Processes

46. A key focus within the BCU Inspection process is the application of ILP with a view to establishing to what degree structures, systems and processes are embedded and applied within the BCU. Under the leadership of the superintendent (crime and intelligence), a new detective inspector is working hard to further harness ILP activity both within the BIU¹⁴ and beyond. The Inspection team was pleased to discover a strong intelligence culture amongst staff with a healthy flow of intelligence submissions.
47. The BIU is rightly seen as the hub for all ILP activity and with an established strength of 16 police officers and 12 members of police staff, it is reasonably well equipped to do so. That said, with only one of its five analysts having more than one year's service, analytical experience is somewhat limited. The unit is structured in accordance with the MPS model with themed 'desks' dealing with burglary, robbery and vehicle crime and a new SNT desk intended to support their public reassurance and problem-solving role. The Inspection team welcomes the recent addition of an SNT desk as it should help co-ordinate and initiate problem-solving solutions and ensure that reassurance policing becomes mainstreamed throughout the BCU and within the CDRP. In addition, there is a BIU 'gatekeeper' together with a constable who has responsibility for progressing the new PPO initiative (see below).
48. All key NIM products are produced to a good standard and these are actively used to drive proactivity through the STCG, TTCG and DMM processes. The Inspection team examined the BIU systems to monitor proactivity and found good evidence of this occurring with 20 live PATPs¹⁵, five 'live' RIPA¹⁶ authorities, 81 problem-identification forms (F302 series), 32 live ABCs¹⁷, 13 current ASBOs¹⁸, 17 drug closure orders and some 130 taskings for the planning year to date (PYTD). With RIPA authorities routinely given for policing Arsenal FC matches, there was a need to ensure that these are retained alongside other non-football authorities within the BIU. Daily taskings follow VOL¹⁹ analytical principles and involve the extensive use of fixed post deployments to tackle emerging crime trends. Seemingly simple at first sight, these deployments are predicated on predictive analysis within the BIU, robustly implemented and highly effective. Whilst the quality of daily taskings is generally good, there remains some scope to increase their number (see 'Demand Management' below), particularly on non-core days for shift-based teams and to allocate them to more disparate units across the BCU and within the CDRP (eg PCSOs, MSC, CCTV operatives, etc).
49. The BCU has fully embraced the new Home Office PPO initiative with 44 such individuals allocated for the BCU with a formal national launch planned for 14 March 2005. Work is co-ordinated by a constable (who is also a FLO²⁰) who attends a new PPO co-ordinating group

¹⁴ Borough Intelligence Unit

¹⁵ Proactive Assessment and Tasking Packages

¹⁶ Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act

¹⁷ Anti-social Behaviour Contracts

¹⁸ Anti-social Behaviour Orders

¹⁹ Victim, Offender and Location

²⁰ Family Liaison Officer

that involves key partners (including the CJU manager) and which agrees appropriate interventions for each against the ‘catch and convict’, ‘prevent and deter’ and ‘resettle and rehabilitate’ strands. These are supported by NIM target profiles and ongoing intelligence collection for each regardless of the type of intervention agreed. The acknowledged next stage is the construction of intervention plans for each PPO whereby all partners are clear as to their expected contribution. This work could be further enhanced by the creation of identified management leads, from the CDRP, who could co-ordinate interventions for each PPO and be held to account (ideally at the TTCG and at the PPO co-ordinating group) for delivery. There is also a need to increase staff resilience to co-ordinate this crucial work and for the initiative to be placed on a more formal footing with action plans, critical-path flow charts to help understanding and linkage of emerging young PPO work that could potentially be progressed by Safer Schools officers. **The BCU is therefore encouraged to identify management ‘leads’ responsible for the co-ordination of PPO interventions, increase staff resilience to support the initiative and to ensure that the initiative is placed on a more formal footing.**

50. The meeting structure to deliver ILP follows the NIM principles with a quarterly STCG meeting, a weekly TTCG meeting and a DMM. The STCG is rightly chaired by the BCU Commander, involving key partners and senior police colleagues who consider a strategic assessment that leads to the production of the BCU control strategy that sets the operational direction and emphasis against the BCU’s annual policing plan (APP). The control strategy is a concise document that is fit for purpose albeit there is some scope to increase its prominence across the BCU and for it to overtly influence decisions made within support functions.
51. The Inspection team also observed both a TTCG meeting and a DMM process. The TTCG was chaired well by the DCI (proactive) who energised those present with suitable recognition, direction and support. It included a performance backcloth, accountability for delivery, discussion on emerging trends from the tactical assessment and a review of PPO activity. Without wishing to detract from the significant efforts of its chair, the TTCG should ideally be chaired by an individual who has authority to deploy all operational resources – usually the superintendent (operations). However, the Inspection team was impressed by the way in which the DCI (proactive) harnessed the efforts of uniformed officers and, in reality, his leadership style overcame any potential risks in him being the TTCG chair. Retaining the status quo does not present a major concern in the short-term but is an issue that will need to be addressed when the individual eventually moves out of his post. The TTCG meeting itself could be further enhanced by the inclusion of summary data on taskings, forensic dockets, warrants, F302s and PATPs and by the attending of partners with executive authority to commit resources towards initiatives/campaigns.
52. The DMM meeting was also well chaired and comprehensive in its content. All key supervisors/units attended and the Inspection team observed a healthy exchange of intelligence on emerging crime trends and proactive opportunities against the backdrop of current BCU performance. The meeting thoroughly concentrated on the priority crimes but paid little attention to reassurance (SNT) issues or race/hate crime. Whilst the latter might be explained by relatively low volumes leading to peaks/troughs in proactive opportunities, the former could not and is perhaps indicative of the fact that problem solving has yet to be fully

mainstreamed across the BCU. There is also a need to increase the emphasis within DMM business from the immediate past to the future so as to engage in discussion on predictive trends and proactive opportunities to address them. There is also a separate burglary group that was established with the specific aim to help the BCU achieve its reduction target for 2004/05. Again, chaired by the DCI (proactive), it examines opportunities for reduction in even greater detail than the DMM and has achieved some notable successes. The Inspection team appreciated the rationale for this discrete group and would highlight the need for strong co-ordination between it and the TTCG/DMM so as to avoid tasking conflicts.

53. The BCU also actively tasks the source unit, the supervisor of which is directly line-managed by TPHQ. There are 14 CHISs²¹ who are highly productive in providing actionable intelligence against all priority crimes and not just relating to drugs – in January 2005 alone there were 243 pieces of source intelligence entered on the CrimInt system. Intelligence interviews are not routinely conducted for priority crime prisoners and within a formalised arrangement that enables potential CHISs to be contacted by the source unit. With dedicated units for each priority crime and a CPU²², there are clearly many options open for the BCU to exploit this intelligence opportunity. Furthermore, with two prisons situated on the BCU, no opportunity is lost to gather intelligence on forthcoming prison releases with good liaison established with each. There is also some scope to increase the sharing of intelligence (particularly relating to PPOs) with neighbouring BCUs, especially when their centre of criminality is close to the border.
54. The BCU used the MetBATs package to assist in the delivery of shift briefings and tasking. The Inspection team observed one such briefing and found it to be delivered competently and within a setting conducive to its purpose. Indeed, there was evidence of a good awareness of PPOs and proactivity amongst staff. Briefings were comprehensive and updated by the BIU for each shift except at weekends when there are no resources to undertake the task. This needs to be rectified so as to maintain the proactive momentum over the weekend as well as during the week.
55. Proactivity to target harden repeat victims of domestic violence and hate crime is undertaken in line with MPS policy by the CSU and action towards repeat victims of burglary is managed between the burglary squad and the CMU. However, the arrangements for action towards the repeat victims of other priority crimes (ie, robbery and vehicle crime) are less clear. Whilst there is logic in the CSU retaining ownership of this function for domestic violence and hate crime victims (ie, it forms a more prominent tactical option applied by this unit and the close links with partners), the BCU is urged to create a single reference point to identify, prioritise and activate target hardening work for all repeat victims (except those monitored and progressed by the CSU) by CPOs²³ and partners alike and within existing Force policy.

BCU Proactivity

²¹ Covert Human Intelligence Sources

²² Case Progression Unit

²³ Crime Prevention Officers

56. The BCU has a significant proactive capability that is divested in a range of units, many of which are under the line management of the DCI (proactive), supported by three detective inspectors. These include dedicated pan-BCU robbery, burglary and vehicle crime units together with a firearms focus desk, each of which has a combined investigative and proactive remit. This model works well with one aspect informing the other (and vice versa) coupled with strong leadership to ensure that proactive capacity is maximized within the total established strength of 49 police officers. These units have all achieved significant successes over the past few years, helping the BCU to achieve its healthy downward trend in all three priority crime areas. Indeed, the Inspection team met several officers attached to these units and found them to be highly motivated, dedicated and professional individuals.
57. In addition, there is a dedicated robbery car that provides a first response to robbery calls whilst also providing a proactive capability. A docket team of four established police officers has responsibility for taking action on forensic 'hits' with priority given to APP cases which are pursued in conjunction with the dedicated teams. The five CPOs (including one CPDA) are also positioned under the BCU's proactive arm so as to maximise synergy with the dedicated priority crime units.
58. At the partnership level, there is a growing and increasingly capable range of units that primarily concentrate on tackling reassurance issues in the community largely through the implementation of problem-oriented solutions. At the forefront of this work are the nine SNTs that each comprise an establishment of one sergeant, two constables and three PCSOs aligned to wards. The remaining seven wards retained CCOs who are supplemented by PCSOs pending completion of the roll-out of SNTs. In addition, there is an establishment of seven Safer Schools officers, two officers attached to a multi-agency anti-social behaviour unit co-located within Islington police station and three staff attached to the YOT. The BSU is another useful asset to engage in reassurance policing when not deployed at Arsenal FC or to police events/operations elsewhere in London.
59. Also under the superintendent (partnership) is a unique and purely proactive motorcycle unit that concentrates on vehicle crime, particularly that committed to/on motorcycles (locally called 'two-wheel crime'). This unit has achieved some outstanding successes with a reduction of 43% in two-wheel crime since its formation some 13 months ago and has, no doubt, made a significant contribution towards the BCU's 33% reduction in vehicle crime over the last two quarters. The established eight officer team is highly motivated and has been suitably recognised by the BCU Commander for its achievements. The creation of this team is a credit to the determination of the BCU command in being able to innovate and procure equipment when the corporate systems for doing so are not entirely sympathetic to their needs. However, there remain some unresolved equipment issues that need to be addressed so as to ensure compliance with health and safety legislation together with a need for a training needs analysis so as to ensure staff are suitably trained for the task. These include concerns regarding the use of communication equipment whilst driving motorcycles, clothing during inclement weather and the need for speedy replacement of vehicles when repairs/servicing is due. **The BCU is therefore strongly urged to conduct a specific health and safety risk assessment for officers attached to the motorcycle unit and thereby determine and secure its equipment requirement so as to become compliant with current health and safety legislation.**

60. The policing style of the BCU is strongly proactive with a particular emphasis on the application of fast-track interventions and thorough primary and secondary investigations (see 'Crime Management' below). This is reflected in the healthy flow of intelligence, proactive operations and in the relatively high sanction detection rate for its priority crimes. It is highly responsive to emerging trends and has the capacity and capability to mobilise resources quickly and effectively. The slower track of implementing lasting problem-oriented solutions with partners is also gathering momentum, albeit this has yet to be mainstreamed across the BCU in the same way as the fast-track activity described above. Problem-solving training has not yet fully rolled-out across all SNTs/CCOs and the systems to fully integrate initiatives within the CDRP with linkages to the NIM have yet to be finalised.
61. The abuse of class 'A' drugs is a major driver of acquisitive crime with some 63% of persons arrested for 'trigger offences' testing positive under the presumptive drug testing scheme. The merit of targeted interventions towards suppliers is recognised and some good work is being progressed in the closure of crack houses, with some 17 drugs closure orders issued over the past 12 months. This work is highly intelligence led and is followed up by strong partnership activity, particularly from the Housing Department and Associations, to help ensure that closures remain permanent. With its dedicated drug arrest referral schemes and a coterminous DAT, there is scope for the CDRP to bring the BCU's work in tackling suppliers alongside that aimed at reducing demand within a single overarching drugs strategy. This could include the use of recidivism data against the different tiers of treatment and fast-tracking PPOs and those arrested for APP crimes through treatment services.
62. The BCU has also fully embraced Operation Halifax, the MPS campaign to reduce outstanding warrants. In a recent campaign, it executed 145 warrants against its allocated target of 115 thereby greatly reducing the number outstanding.

Crime Management

63. The reactive investigation of crime was led by the DCI (reactive) who is supported by three established detective inspector positions. These individuals have responsibility for teams dedicated for the investigation of major and beat crime; the CMU and TIU; Sapphire (rape and serious sexual assault allegations); the CSU; a firearms investigation unit; a missing persons unit; prison liaison; the CPU and Jigsaw (the public protection unit). The total number of staff established within these units is 120 police officers and eight police staff.
64. Crimes reported by the public are received in one of several ways – directly to an officer at the scene, by telephone to the TIU (sometimes through the control room) or to an officer despatched by the control room to attend on a graded response basis. Crimes are resulted on the CAD²⁴ system when not notified at the scene and entered directly onto CRIS²⁵ by officers or TIU staff against minimum standards for primary investigation which are bespoke for all core crimes (except vehicle crime) and generic for all others. These are quality assured by

²⁴ Computer Aided Despatch

²⁵ Crime Recording Information System

CMU staff prior to classification, screening against MPS policy and allocation for a secondary investigation to officers on teams/units when the criteria are met. The investigation then follows the generic MPS minimum standards for secondary investigation and is returned, through a supervisor, to the CMU for quality control, approval for sanction detection when suitable and final closure. Suspected false reports of crime are ethically challenged within an MPS policy that provides guidance on the subject. To further enhance an already highly effective system, **the BCU is urged to publish minimum standards for the primary investigation of vehicle crime and for the performance and review unit to conduct periodic dip sampling to monitor compliance.**

65. As can be seen from the section entitled 'Performance against Operational Targets', the BCU is achieving some excellent rates of sanction detections with a placing in the top quartile of its new MSBCU group for residential burglary and robbery in 2003/04. This is attributed to the existence of a very strong performance culture, good housekeeping of crimes, thorough and determined investigations and extensive use of FPNDs. To help validate these good statistics, the Inspection team dip-sampled 26 detected crimes to test compliance against Home Office counting rules and found these to be 100% compliant. Caseloads amongst investigators are reasonable; crimes are regularly reviewed by supervisors and put away in a timely fashion.
66. However, perhaps the greatest issue of concern for the BCU under crime management is its failure to achieve an acceptable standard for compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in an audit conducted of the MPS by the Audit Commission in October 2004. This resulted in an overall audit grading for the BCU of 'red' (73% compliant) for the proportion of crimes closed correctly on the CAD system. The audit tested compliance across a range of crime categories and whilst the BCU achieved 92% compliance for burglary, 79% for criminal damage and 83% for vehicle crime, it only achieved 50% for domestic violence and 37% for disturbances.
67. To its credit, the BCU has acted swiftly following the audit and is actively implementing the MPS NCRS compliance action plan (termed 'first aid kit') to improve activity regarding Investigation One (crime related incidents) and Investigation Five (CADs resulted as no crimes). Indeed, it was pleasing to note from a recent audit of compliance by the MPS crime integrity team (January 2005) that there has been a notable improvement in compliance albeit falling short of the 90% standard. Remedial action must also involve increased use of the TIU in both the reconciliation of CAD/CRIS calls/crimes and in the initial investigation of potential crimes, however tenuous, not requiring the immediate attendance of a police officer (see also 'Demand Management' below). In addition, the BCU continues to routinely conduct the crime integrity checks prescribed by the MPS crime integrity team and, subject to the results, take action when required.
68. Whilst the BCU was fully compliant for burglary (92%) and approaching compliance for vehicle crime (83%) in the Audit Commission assessment, until it is able to achieve a 'green' assessment for its overall compliance with NCRS, the veracity of all its crime reduction achievements remains in question. This has the potential to undermine the excellent work achieved by the BCU described throughout this report. It is therefore critical that the BCU becomes fully compliant with the NCRS and achieves a 'green' assessment as quickly as possible.

RECOMMENDATION 1

It is recommended that the BCU implements its NCRS compliance action plan in support of MPS work to achieve a ‘green’ assessment from the Audit Commission.

69. The Inspection team encountered some excellent work being progressed by the BCU’s Sapphire unit in its investigation of rape allegations. The unit is one of the best performing in the MPS and has achieved a sanction detection rate of 89% for the 94 cases investigated in the year to date. This success is attributed to a dedication to the task by staff, keeping cases open and conducting cold-case reviews, good performance management and the maintenance of an adequately resourced unit.
70. The CSU also conducted specialist work in their investigation of domestic violence and race/hate crime whilst also working closely with partners, particularly in the field of domestic violence where a 63% sanction detection rate had been achieved for the year to date. MPS minimum standards are followed and to its credit, the BCU has embarked on a locally devised training programme to improve the quality of initial investigations, the application of the MPS positive arrest policy and links with partners. This will, no doubt, position the BCU well for the achievement of VAP²⁶ reduction next year. Not wholly unrelated is the work of the small Jigsaw unit that conducts visits/interventions against registered sex offenders and potentially dangerous persons within the framework of MAPP²⁷ decisions.
71. As an MPS pilot scheme, the CJU has been brigaded between Camden and Islington BCUs with resources shared between each. Camden’s BCU Commander chairs the local criminal justice board (LCJB) on a rotational basis. In terms of results, this model seems to work with a notable reduction in cracked/ineffective trial rates from about 50% 12 months ago to 31% (cracked) and 37% (ineffectives) in January 2005. The manager has performed well despite carrying a significant workload with 14 staff to directly manage together with a comprehensive change management programme. The CJU operates a shadow charging scheme with the CPS²⁸ and whilst delays have been experienced with the CPS Direct out of hours service, the charge advocacy aspects apparently work well. Staff report a delay in court listing times that has the potential to impact on crime reduction efforts. This requires negotiation and discussion with partners at the LCJB alongside the need for cases concerning PPOs and APP offences to be fast-tracked ahead of all other cases. The CJU retains the TQ1 system to monitor file quality and feedback provided to officers when files are sub-standard. The introduction of improved systems and DDOs²⁹ within the Islington custody suite has led to significant improvements in the use of Livescan (with outstanding AS numbers reducing from 197 to just 15), presumptive drug testing and reconciliation between the custody/CRIS systems.

²⁶ Violence against the Person

²⁷ Multi-Agency Protection Panel

²⁸ Crown Prosecution Service

²⁹ Dedicated Detention Officers

72. The Inspection team found officers within the CID to be highly motivated and dedicated to their task, albeit a discernible divide has developed between the proactive and reactive arms together with a perception amongst staff that exclusionary selection practices take place for aspiring officers joining proactive units (see ‘Leadership’ below). With such a large and relatively young workforce, there is also a need to positively market the CID as a career opportunity with a widely publicised route map into the specialism for aspiring uniformed officers. Allied to this must be the application of equitable and transparent selection processes that are solely based upon merit and competence. Clearly the HR manager’s (HRM) routine review of selection criteria to avoid discriminatory practices (see ‘HR Management’ below) helps in this regard, but the honestly held perception of it being an elite group of officers still needs to be addressed. **The BCU is therefore urged to positively market the CID as a potential career path and to ensure that all its selection processes (particularly those for the CID proactive units) are transparent, equitable and fair.**

Forensic Audit

73. The aims of the audit are to check the qualitative and quantitative elements of forensic investigation. The qualitative audit tests for the presence of strategies for and/or linkages between the use of forensic investigation and force strategies. The quantitative element consists of interrogating a sufficiently large sample to enable the Inspection team to make an informed decision on the quality of service provided.
74. The methodology used during this audit included the examination of the systems used at Islington BCU for the management and recording of the three main areas of forensic activity:
- Retrieval and submission.
 - Hits and subsequent investigation.
 - Criminal justice (CJ) submissions.
75. The auditors also examined the procedures to action identifications within the intelligence and crime analysis systems. The audit involved interviews with managers and staff, along with the sampling of DNA, fingerprint and custody records.
76. During 2003/04 the MPS devolved forensic budgets on a number of BCUs down to borough level; at Islington it is now the responsibility of the borough forensic manager (BFM). The BFM has been in post for three years and has extensive forensic experience within the MPS.

Retrieval and Submission

77. The retrieval and submission of crime scene and other forensic evidence is managed by the BFM. He is fully aware of his budgetary responsibilities and keeps a running spreadsheet detailing his monthly forensic expenditure against the target budget of £788k. The BFM is responsible for deciding what is submitted to the Forensic Science Service. Decisions are reached in consultation with the investigating officer and considerations include cost effectiveness. To ensure control of the submissions, the BFM and the senior forensic practitioner (SFP) have been issued with a 'forensic validation stamp'. When questioned how financial resources were focused on priority crime, the BFM indicated that as the budget was sufficient for their needs the decisions were made primarily on an evidential basis and the likelihood of conviction.
78. The BFM informed auditors that he had an establishment figure of 14 staff (all posts are filled) as shown below:
- One BFM.
 - One SFP.
 - Four forensic practitioners.
 - Eight assistant forensic practitioners.
79. Two additional assistant forensic practitioners were due to start shortly after the Inspection. Nine forensic staff are based at Islington police station and four at Holloway police station. The unit works a shift system, which enables it to provide cover 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. On nightshifts the BCU operates a 'cluster' system covering a number of BCUs in the north-west of London. Islington is to be the north-west pilot site for the 'sole' reporting of domestic burglary by forensic staff. The pilot is due to start in October 2005.
80. The BFM is a member of the SMT and, although line managed by the MPS scientific support manager, is held to account by the superintendent crime. His objectives are therefore set corporately and are not specifically linked to the objectives of the borough. The BFM attends the monthly management meetings but does not attend performance meetings. He attends DIMs to contribute intelligence and advice on forensic issues both in general and with regard to specific crimes. The BFM does not attend weekly tasking meetings.

Performance

81. The MPS target for BCU domestic burglary forensic interventions is 85%. In the current financial year, performance stands at 78% against a Force average of 84% (ranked 27th in the MPS). The MPS target for BCU autocrime interventions is 10%. In the current financial year, performance stands at 9.4% against a Force average of 8.2% (ranked 20th in the MPS). The MPS target for BCU street crime interventions is 7.5%. In the current financial year, the performance stands at 12% against a Force average of 8.2% (ranked fifth in the MPS). The BFM is able to provide detailed performance information for individuals within his team; he shows a clear commitment to supporting and developing his forensic staff.

82. As part of their development programme all probationary officers must complete an attachment with the forensic team. Due to the BFM's encouragement many PCs and DCs have also undertaken short attachments with forensic staff.
83. The BCU has one custody site based at Islington police station (with an 'overflow' facility at Holloway police station). The auditors visited the custody suite at Islington police station and made the following observations:
- About 10,500 custody entries a year.
 - Ten dedicated custody officers on secondment from response teams covering custody 24/7.
 - Two gaolers and one dedicated detention officer per shift.
 - DNA1 samples are stored in a freezer in the custody area.
 - There were 15 DNA1 samples in the freezer, the oldest dated back to only 3 February 2005 (audit conducted 7 February 2005).
 - There were visible instructions for the completion and storage of DNA1 samples.
 - The recent Operation Halifax 3 aimed at maximising opportunities to obtain fingerprints and DNA from arrested persons showed Islington with a fingerprint failure rate of 7% (MPS average 7.9%) and a DNA failure rate of 14% (MPS average 14.6%).
 - The management of DNA1 samples was excellent.
 - For DNA2 and forensic samples there are four freezers and two fridges.
 - On examining the forensic exhibit fridge/freezers located in the custody area they were found to be full.
 - The auditors were unable to count the total number of DNA2 and forensic exhibits but estimated there were in excess of 1,000.
 - There is no process in place to monitor the storage of DNA2 and other forensic exhibits.
 - The auditors spoke to the DCI in charge of DNA2 and forensic exhibits who had been in post since October 2004. An assurance was given that the issue had been fully identified and resourced and would be resolved by the time of the full HMIC Inspection.
 - There are effective systems in place for the capture and management of footprint samples from suspects and scenes.

DNA and Fingerprint Hits

84. Identified DNA and fingerprint hits are sent through to BCUs from SCD4. MPS guidance recommends that the CMU detective inspector manages the dockets through CRIS. The policy aims to have the hit allocated and the suspect dealt with or circulated as wanted within seven days. SCD4 staff compile their Home Office returns from CRIS.
85. At Islington, the proactive detective inspector has overall responsibility for the investigation of forensic identifications. SCD4 department enters hits onto a dedicated Islington forum on the Force intranet. These records are checked daily by a DC in the docket squad who updates the CRIS entry and enters the details onto a spreadsheet. The DS then allocates records of outstanding hits. Since the beginning of 2004 Islington has allocated significant resources to this area and to support the MPS drive to reduce outstanding dockets (Operation Halifax).

86. The DCI expects all hits to be meaningfully actioned within 24 hours. The DCI checks progress using a spreadsheet prepared for him by the docket squad based on the details of investigation contained on the CRIS system. The DCI is a clear champion for this process and there appears to be a high level of performance in this area. The DCI also acknowledges the leadership of the BCU Commander in driving performance in this area.
87. Over the last 12 months the MPS has undertaken four initiatives under the title of Operation Halifax. These initiatives have been aimed at reducing outstanding warrants and forensic dockets. Islington has performed significantly well in all these operations and was in fact ranked first in the MPS for 'Halifax 1'. The MPS corporately has recently set each borough targets to reduce outstanding forensic dockets through 'Halifax 2'. It is clear that Operation Halifax is driving up performance in this area in Islington borough.

CJ Submissions

88. Overall MPS performance in terms of post-charge DNA error rates gives some cause for concern. Using the same methodology as policy review and standards (PRS) and grouping the year to November 2004 data shows an MPS administrative error rate of 17.3% against a good rate at Islington BCU of 6.5%. The MPS DNA sample rejection rate is 3.4% against an Islington rate of 4.1%. These figures are published on the SCD4 intranet site and BFM's are expected to access the information themselves. SCD4 accepts that this process is not working effectively across the MPS. The Islington BFM is aware of this information.
89. Quality control is shared between BCUs and SCD4, which act as a final quality control check for DNA samples. Research conducted for a recent PRS inspection found that BCUs with quality control checks in place and a named individual responsible for the checks achieve lower than average error rates. The internal thematic also highlighted the number of DNA samples unnecessarily taken from persons whose DNA is already confirmed on the PNC.
90. During their visit, in addition to speaking with the custody manager, the auditors examined a total of 50 finalised custody records. The custody officers were unaware of the failure rate or otherwise of DNA submissions, and had not had sight of any performance figures provided by SCD4. During examination of the 50 records, it was apparent that the issue of obtaining a DNA sample was a permanent feature, and that in every custody record examined, samples were either being obtained or had been obtained previously and confirmed on PNC. In addition, new custody monitoring sheets (form 57P) were being consistently marked up with DNA sample numbers. The auditors are confident that Islington BCU is missing few DNA1 opportunities.

Intelligence

91. At Islington when the hit arrives on the borough and is entered on the spreadsheet system, the record is also passed to the BIU for research to be conducted so that the DS is better able to decide on allocating the action. Cases are also discussed at the BTCG supported by this research. There is no evidence that forensic staff are trained in or submit intelligence reports.

Managing Demand

92. The successful management of demand and the way resources are optimised to meet it is a critical element of successful BCUs. It is only through maximising BCU capacity that the full potential for capability can be realised. As is often the case, the BCU already progresses a range of positive demand management initiatives and there are many more yet to be fully realised. To its credit, the BCU does have a demand management strategy document that contains many good ideas for improving efficiency but this is somewhat dated and requires a full refresh.
93. The BCU's CPU is a good example of demand management that directly releases capacity. With an established strength of four sergeants and 17 constables, this unit processes prisoners arrested by uniformed shift officers so as to ensure their early release for operational duty. Cognisance is also given to the need for probationary officers to develop their interviewing skills and this is facilitated through the CPU protocol that allows for this requirement. The quality of case files has improved and officers interviewed generally valued the support given to them by the CPU. To increase its impact, there would be value in extending the unit's remit to handle prisoners arrested by the highly successful BCU motorcycle unit.
94. Perhaps the strongest initiative to reduce demand is the rollout of SNTs across the BCU. With nine of the 16 wards covered, these small teams of officers and PCSOs are already honing their problem-solving skills and increasing public reassurance in the area in which they operate. This work is gradually being integrated within the BCU's application of the NIM (see 'ILP' above). Indeed, the new SNT desk in the BIU will provide the necessary analytical support to identify sources of repeat demands and create problem profiles to help the CDRP facilitate the application of low-level problem-solving work (ie, F302 series). This could be further enhanced by the provision of guidance to CAD staff on the types of call that are suitable for allocation to PCSOs based on SNTs or on other wards with CCOs. The SNT initiative represents a significant opportunity for the BCU to capitalise on over the next few years.
95. The BCU is also earmarked to be a pilot site for workforce modernisation within the custody suite that could potentially involve the deployment of police staff as 'new' custody officers in lieu of police sergeants. This initiative is subject to primary legislation being passed but nevertheless represents an exciting opportunity to increase efficiency within the suite whilst also enhancing first-line operational supervision for teams. At the time of Inspection, the BCU was rightly pleased to learn that its bid for six more DDOs had been approved. If the legislation is not passed, the BCU will need to consider the introduction of a more permanent dedicated custody team to replace its current 'hybrid' system of three dedicated custody officers working alongside colleagues on 10-week attachments from teams. From experience, the Inspection team considered the latter to reduce risk, increase quality and to introduce a greater sense of ownership of custody systems/processes.
96. The BCU has a 'reserve' designated custody suite at Holloway that is primarily used during football matches but rarely outside these events. Recognising this opportunity, the BCU is currently examining whether persons bailed to return could be scheduled to appear there

instead of Islington. This is a sound innovation that has the potential to alleviate cell capacity issues at Islington during certain times and is supported by the Inspection team.

97. With an established strength of 305 police officers, the uniformed core teams represent 44% of the police BWT³⁰ and the efficiency of their deployment against anticipated demand is therefore a fundamental aspect of managing demand. The BCU currently operates a five team, eight-hour shift pattern that incorporates overlapping shifts on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Officers are routinely deployed in pairs against a static minimum strength of 34 posts (10 being on inside duties) throughout the 24/7 cycle. The shift pattern is very popular amongst staff and many officers consider the overlapping shifts to be invaluable ‘catch-up’ time.
98. Whilst no CAD demand profile was available at the time of Inspection, an analysis of CAD calls in January 2005 illustrates that the average number of CAD calls per officer on the external duty minimum strength (ie, 24 officers) was 3.9 for the early shift, 5.9 for the late shift and 2.9 for officers working nights. This shows that demand is far from static across the shifts and effectively illustrates the opportunity to introduce variable minimum and optimum (ie, published) strengths. Indeed, as part of the shift pattern review, the BCU will also need to consider whether the existing overlapping shifts reflect the times of greatest demand during the week and how it could incorporate scheduled training days.
99. The BCU’s patrol strategy decrees that all vehicles are to be double-crewed with discretion for supervisors to vary this as necessary and yet is silent on the subject for foot patrols. Again, an analysis of assaults on police indicates that, between 1 March 2004 and 28 February 2005, there were 98 officers physically assaulted by a person³¹ which is not disproportionately high. A risk assessment is therefore required that examines the genuine risks presented to core team officers over each hour of the 24/7 cycle and, in accordance with MPS policy, identifies at what times the default position of single crewing/patrol applies. To assist in the process, the BCU may wish to consider using the decision-making model offered within the HMIC thematic report entitled *Open All Hours*.
100. As detailed above, there is a range of opportunities to either improve upon the current shift pattern or to replace it with one that better reflects demand. **As part of an updated and re-energised demand management strategy, these need to be fully considered in consultation with staff associations and the wider workforce. This should follow a more detailed analysis of demand (including known ‘aid’ commitments) and with due consideration given to Police Regulations and the Working Time Directive (WTD).**
101. The BCU is currently required to rely on a corporate system to avail video identification facilities for suspects for offences where identity is in question. These facilities are not always available in a timely fashion and officers report delays in the service, thereby causing the issue of police bail for individuals who may not otherwise be suitable. Subject to Force requirements, the BCU needs to consider whether it wishes to procure its own ‘approved’ video identification equipment so as to provide a more timely and accessible service.

³⁰ Budgeted Workforce Target

³¹ Source: MetAir/Personnel NI

102. Another area of potentially improved efficiency relates to the proportion of crime investigated by telephone. Currently, the BCU investigates 32% of its crime by telephone; this is relatively low compared to many BCUs within the MPS and beyond. **Again, as part of the wider demand management strategy, the BCU is urged to increase this proportion significantly and in advance of any corporate solution availed through the MPS C3i project, thereby releasing significant capacity for proactive work.**
103. Whilst the formation of a VCC scheme by the BCU is acknowledged, there remain opportunities to manage demand through maximising links within the ‘wider police family’ such as the MSC and community volunteers. The Inspection team interviewed members of the MSC and found them to be energetic and committed to policing the borough. Indeed, with some 40 officers based in two locations (north and south of the BCU), they represent a significant proactive opportunity that has yet to be fully realised. There is an awareness of this issue amongst the SMT that has led to the appointment of an alternative liaison officer and several meetings with MSC officers in an attempt to re-focus them. Notwithstanding these efforts, some MSC officers interviewed did not feel valued or fully utilised and there is clearly **a need to review its positioning on the BCU, the methods of deployment/tasking and how the MSC could become more closely integrated with other colleagues within the police ‘family’**. Other potential members of this ‘family’ could include the creation of a volunteer scheme from the community to help staff police station counters and thereby release officers/police staff for other duties.
104. This is not an exhaustive list of demand management opportunities but a summary of the key themes identified from the BCU Inspection. These now need to be embraced within an updated demand management strategy and for their implementation robustly managed under an SMT champion with clear critical success factors and an outcome-based indicator. This should also include a dynamic link with the BCU’s revised SAMReD meeting (or staff deployment group – see ‘Human Resources’ below) so as to meaningfully exploit the resource dividend arising from each initiative.

RECOMMENDATION 2

It is recommended that the BCU constructs and implements a demand management strategy and action plan, championed by a member of the SMT, involving staff and with clearly publicised critical success factors.

Leadership

Does the BCU management team demonstrate effective leadership?

105. Islington BCU is led by a chief superintendent who was appointed BCU Commander in 2002. He has a background in both uniformed and detective disciplines, serving in various operational and HQ postings across the capital. He is supported by three established superintendents (operations, crime/intelligence and partnership/HR and finance and resources); they in turn are supported by five chief inspectors (two detectives), the BFM, FRM³², a higher analyst, an HRM, a CJU manager and a training manager. This group is referred to as the SMT.
106. The BCU Commander's leadership style is energetic, robust and straight-talking; it is both professional and unambiguously focused upon performance. Colleagues on the SMT and many staff respond positively to this style that has become somewhat infectious. This is evidenced by the high levels of staff morale – a recent survey showed 80% of respondents were 'satisfied to some extent with their current job'³³. Equally impressive was the finding from the same report that 88% of respondents 'are satisfied to some extent with their line manager'. This was borne out by comments from staff in focus groups who were positive, highly committed and complimentary about their respective line-managers. Support from partners and the MPA³⁴ link-member is strong; they consider the BCU Commander to be open, accessible, listening and an essential member of an LSP team that is committed to improving the borough. His media profile is also said to be high whilst not being so in any sense of self-promotion but, moreover, achieved through genuine altruism.
107. He has introduced a 'vision statement' that has been widely circulated across the BCU; this states his intention to make Islington 'one of the best performing and safest boroughs in London'. The statement also includes his policing style that is described as achieving reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour through intelligence-led and community-based policing with strong communication with local communities. To enhance understanding, the BCU may wish to separate these into two clear products – the vision (what they aspire towards) and the policing style (the way in which policing services are generally delivered). The BCU follows the TPHQ APP template and has also introduced a number of policies that are accessible to all using the MPS Aware system. That said, there remains scope to increase the range of BCU instructions, guidance and action plans for key issues and initiatives so as to provide an enduring reference point for staff. Examples of this relate to the co-ordination of the new PPO initiative; the role and purpose of PCSOs and SNTs; the licensing transitional arrangements; and in the work to improve NCRS compliance. The construction of these products could be led by SMT members in accordance with their respective thematic responsibilities. The availability of this guidance provides the necessary foundation for key BCU initiatives and processes that are necessary to achieve enduring success beyond the tenure of the existing command team.

³² Finance and Resources Manager

³³ Source: MPS Staff Satisfaction Survey for Islington – RSU04/223

³⁴ Metropolitan Police Authority

108. The SMT is considered to be highly responsive to short-term issues that arise; invariably, when a problem is identified, it is assessed, resourced and resolved very quickly. This is evidenced by the good awareness of critical incident procedures amongst staff and managers alike. There is also a capability to respond to complex and challenging problems, an example being the way the BCU responded to recent events at the Finsbury Park Mosque. To his credit, the BCU Commander took a personal lead in a situation that was attracting considerable national media attention. Partners, including an IAG representative, consider the operation to have been handled sensitively and proportionately with a satisfactory outcome. SMT visibility is more pronounced at Islington police station than at its outlying stations (Holloway, Archway and Highbury) and there is a specific need to increase contact with staff on core teams, SNTs and with support staff.
109. Staff are keenly aware of the BCU's priorities; this is indicative of its strong performance culture and the BCU has introduced a borough improvement group (BIG) that meets quarterly to consider and advise on potential improvements. This is a worthy initiative that engages staff in the process of change and whilst staff associations are members of the group, there is also a need to establish a separate formalised meeting with them. This would enable more sensitive issues to be discussed in closed session and for a meaningful consultative relationship to be developed with them. **The BCU Commander is urged to establish regular formalised meetings with the elected representatives of staff associations.**
110. The strong performance culture within the BCU has served to foster good working relationships between all colleagues. This is particularly evident between uniformed and CID officers but, within the CID itself, a divide has emerged between proactive (ie, burglary, robbery teams, etc) and reactive staff (ie, reactive CID teams, CSU, etc). A culture has developed whereby officers on high profile proactive teams work hard, achieve good results, rewards and recognition whereas colleagues in reactive units are not under the same pressure or always receive fair recognition. There is a genuinely held belief that staff are sometimes 'head-hunted' without following due process and that this is exclusionary to others (see 'Crime Management' above). Whilst the dedication and hard work of officers on the proactive teams are acknowledged, there remains a need to comply with the WTD, a law that protects all employees. Indeed, research shows that over a sample 20-week period, virtually half the staff on the burglary and robbery teams exceeded the legal requirement not to work more than an average 48-hour week within a rolling 17-week period and were therefore potentially in breach of the WTD requirements. **The BCU is strongly urged to address the apparently emerging divide within the CID through equitable leadership and management practices, together with strict enforcement of all the WTD requirements.**
111. As stated above, the SMT incorporates an HRM and an FRM but, unlike many other large BCUs in the MPS, it is without a borough business manager (BBM) position. Instead, the BCU positions both of the above functions under the superintendent (partnerships, HR and finance and resources). This is not ideal as both functions involve work in specialist areas in which most senior police officers would rarely be qualified to strategically co-ordinate and lead. Indeed, there is merit in dedicating the superintendent's post to solely concentrate upon partnerships (see 'Partnerships' above) and to introduce a new BBM position to directly line manage the HR and finance and resources functions. The postholder could complete the

composition of the top-tier 'executive' management team (EMT) that could periodically meet to discuss strategic issues at the STCG and EMT meetings.

112. The Inspection team was pleased to see a comprehensive communication strategy in place, as the co-ordination of such mechanisms is essential on a large and busy BCU. This is applied well with some good examples of innovation such as the BCU Commander authoring items for a regular 'column' within a local newspaper. An in-house newsletter is regularly published (the 'Islington Informer') and the BCU has rightly invested in a dedicated press liaison officer position and, to support the implementation of the communication strategy, the BCU may wish to extend the postholder's remit to encompass enhanced internal communication as well as that relating to the external aspects.

Self-review and Learning

113. The BCU has established a small performance review unit that has responsibility for supporting the planning process, performance management and local inspectorial activity. The BCU underwent a self-assessment under EFQM and has acted upon the areas for improvement that emerged. However, and as mentioned above under the sections entitled 'Performance Management' and 'Leadership', its capacity for proactivity is limited and it has been the continuous improvement aspects of the business that have suffered as a consequence. Learning at an individual level has progressed through the timely and meaningful application of performance development reviews (PDRs) under the training manager, albeit the absence of formalised training days has constrained the BCU's ability to address common issues of concern.
114. The responsiveness of the SMT and staff to deal with tactical issues is a key attribute in the BCU's current success and, as stated above under 'Leadership', increased 'underpinning' with an increased range of policies, guidance and plans will further enhance this. However, this strong tactical focus needs to be supported by increased capacity for strategic thinking by the SMT so as to maximise continuous improvement within the BCU. To enable this to occur, the BCU needs to increase its command team capacity and the degree of available support to help co-ordinate new developments. This could include increased internal/external scanning; the conduct of selective internal inspections and audits; and exploiting the strong links enjoyed with the Islington LSP. To his credit, the BCU Commander has commissioned a 'leadership typing' exercise that involves use of the 'Belbin' model. This helpfully serves to inform the development needs of SMT members whilst also illustrating the need for increased capacity for strategic thinking amongst the team. Many opportunities exist to achieve this by building upon initiatives such as the BIG (see above) and increasing the degree of secretariat support for the SMT (that is relatively limited - one staff officer and a PA for the whole SMT) and by increasing capacity and restructuring the work of the BCU performance review unit. Resources to achieve this could potentially be released from recycling the savings arising from the implementation of the BCU's updated demand management strategy (see above).

RECOMMENDATION 3

It is recommended that the BCU increases its capacity for strategic thinking/development so as to promote continuous improvement and help the BCU attain sustained future success.

HR Issues

115. Islington BCU has an establishment of 675 police officers, 84.1 police staff and 29 PCSOs (including four funded from the partnership), which is a sizeable workforce. As stated above, the HRM works to the superintendent (partnership, HR and finance and resources) with a small team of seven established police staff. The HRM holds a Masters degree in Personnel Development and her unit has responsibility for workforce planning; sickness management; local recruitment of police staff; assisting with selection processes; and the implementation of many aspects of the BCU's diversity strategy (see 'Diversity Issues' below). In addition, members of the unit provide expert advice to managers on questions of employment law and associated issues. Considering its small size relative to the workforce, the unit is working well with few issues reported.
116. Alongside the HRM is a training manager who, with a small established team of six police officers and three members of police staff, has responsibility for the delivery of BCU training, probationer development, the skills database and the co-ordination of PDRs, the timeliness for which has recently improved greatly. Whilst there is a logical link between PDRs and training, the absence of a dedicated training day constrains this opportunity and the separation of PDRs from workforce planning requires good communication between the disciplines. As discussed above, the introduction of a BBM position would help alleviate any risks and improve strategic co-ordination of these functions and that of finance and resources, which are inextricably linked.
117. As discussed in section entitled 'Sickness and PDR Audit', the BCU has good systems in place to effectively manage its staff sickness; these have been actively and personally promoted by the HRM. They include management interventions with staff when pre-determined thresholds are breached, good management of case conferences and robust application of the MPS attendance management policy. Whilst sanctions for the abuse of sickness are effective, there is equally a need for the SMT to recognise good attendance, perhaps by a letter of thanks to those concerned.
118. To assist in this process, the HRM has introduced a meeting entitled SAMReD³⁵ that is supported by management information on sickness, restricted and recuperative duties and posting periods. The meeting is apparently effective and ensures an auditable mechanism for decision-making for individuals falling within these categories. The Inspection team considers there to be value in expanding the remit of SAMReD to encompass all staff moves as well as decisions on attendance management cases. Without wishing to denigrate the work of the current chair, the meeting should be chaired by the superintendent (operations) so as to

³⁵ Staffing, Attendance Management and Restricted Duties

provide a necessary operational emphasis with expert HR advice, as required, together with input from SMT leads from each of the functional lines. Decisions taken could also reflect the operational emphasis given by the BCU's quarterly control strategy, thereby maximising resources in those units most impactful against its themes. This would enhance the quality of decision-making, promote openness and create an audit trail of all posting decisions taken regarding staff. The group would obviously need to be re-titled so as to reflect its new remit. **The BCU is encouraged to broaden the remit of its SAMReD meeting so as to incorporate decisions taken on all staff postings and for it to be given a strong operational emphasis.**

Diversity Issues

119. The BCU Commander recognises his role to champion the promotion of diversity and he is ably supported by his BLO³⁶ and wider SMT in the delivery of the BCU's diversity strategy. This comprehensive document follows an MPS template and has been tailored for Islington BCU with detailed activity being progressed under the following headings:
- Investigation.
 - Prevention.
 - Training.
 - Fair Practice (Internal) and Retention and Progression.
 - Recruitment.
 - Stop and Search.
 - Disability Discrimination Act.
120. At the time of Inspection, the BCU workforce comprised a gender split for police officers (including MSC officers) of 24.9% female and 75.1% male and for police staff the proportions were 54.1% female and 45.9% male. For ethnic origin, some 9.4% of police officers (including MSC officers) had declared themselves within the various non-white categories and this percentage rose to 32.5% for police staff. There were also 23 police officers and 13 members of police staff who worked part-time together with six colleagues who worked flexible, compressed hours albeit job-sharing was not apparently encouraged. The Inspection team encountered a good awareness and application of the requirements (ie, workplace assessments and reasonable adjustments, etc) of the new Disability Discrimination Act.
121. The BCU had received six fairness at work submissions relating to two incidents during the PYTD and was managing two ongoing cases with potential to reach a hearing at employment tribunals. The HRM demonstrated a good awareness of critical incidents within the context of HR business and the need for leadership in such cases together with an accurate/complete audit trail.
122. The BCU has introduced mentoring schemes that are targeted towards specific groups where there is an identified need for increased support, staff retention or recruitment – probationary police officers, visible ethnic minority staff with 0-5 year's service and female officers within

³⁶ Borough Liaison Officer

the CID. A Gender Agenda action group has been established under the leadership of a superintendent and the HRM scrutinises the questions to be asked at BCU selection panels so as to help avoid allegations of discrimination. To ‘reality check’ the degree of staff contentment amongst its minority groups, the BCU may wish to introduce more informal voluntary mechanisms for the HRM or BCU Commander to meet with staff. The Inspection team encountered no evidence that discrimination, inappropriate comments or victimisation was taking place.

123. Externally, the BCU recognises a need to further develop its recently formed IAG albeit it had shown great potential in its involvement with events surrounding the Finsbury Park Mosque. There was equally a need to establish a racial incident panel for CSU officers to directly engage with partners over serious, problematic or repeat victim cases. This is readily acknowledged by the BCU and arrangements are in hand to establish such a forum.

PDR and Sickness Audit

124. The MPS recently reviewed the procedure for the completion and submission of PDRs. As of April 2004, in relation to all PDRs whether for a police officer or a member of the police staff there are set timescales for completion, culminating in the year end report being completed by 31 March each year, which has to be adhered to. The key PDR milestones are set out below:
- By April 2004 new PDR forms should have been opened.
 - By 31 June 2004 SMART objectives to be set.
 - By 30 September 2004 a six-month performance review to be completed.
 - By April 2005 annual review to be completed
125. As stated above, the training manager leads on the PDR process with the support of the administration unit. The manager indicated that there had been a number of unfilled vacancies in the administration unit over the last year that had impacted on its performance. At the time of the audit the training manager produced documentation for PDRs opened and objectives set by 30 June 2005 with 738 completed out of a total of 755. However, this information had been obtained purely from line manager returns and there remains no system in place to ensure that PDRs have actually been completed. In addition, there is no quality assurance process in place. With regards to the submission of September 2004 interim reviews, the training manager was unable to provide any management information concerning levels of completion or quality.
126. The training manager assured the auditors that he had previously identified the issues of concern and that he had developed an action plan to correct the situation by April 2005. In addition, during a short meeting with the BCU Commander it became clear that the issue had been raised, which gave the auditors some confidence that it would be satisfactorily addressed.

127. Prior to the visit, the audit team requested PDRs from a variety of ranks and departments including a number of support staff. In total, 50 completed PDRs were presented for examination. From the sample the following information was obtained:
- All PDRs had been opened correctly on the MPS corporate forms.
 - All PDRs had opening objectives set. However, from the forms the auditors were unable to state when this had been done and if by 30 June 2004.
 - With regards to the completion of an interim review by 30 September 2004, only 6% had achieved this.
 - An additional 14% had completed the interim review by 31 December 2004.
 - An additional 44% had completed the interim review between 1 January 2005 and the date of the audit (7 February 2005).
 - All other PDRs (36%) had completed interim reviews but were undated.
128. The fact that 100% of reviews in the sample examined had been completed indicates that the BCU is starting to get a management grip of the process with regard to PDR completion. The auditors also looked at the qualitative aspects of the PDRs and found that following the interim review there were many occasions where objectives set in June 2004 were shown as completed but the PDR indicated no new objectives had been set.
129. Use is made of the SMART formula for objectives:
- S** – Specific – clearly stated and precise.
M – Measurable – objectives are measurable, benchmarked and progress/results can be recognised as positive achievements.
A – Achievable - objectives are challenging but not impossible.
R – Realistic – objectives are manageable in terms of content and number.
T – Timed – agreed and set timescale to focus on objectives.
130. The auditors found that only 28% of objectives set were SMART. Most objectives failed on the areas of measurability and timing. The auditors noted that 98% of objectives were linked to BCU objectives. **The BCU is encouraged to implement systems to meaningfully monitor the timeliness and quality of PDR completion for its entire staff.**

Probationers

131. There are currently 195 probationer constables working on the BCU. The percentage of probationers on front-line duties within the BCU stood at 40% at the time of the audit. The probationer reports examined by the auditors were of a higher standard than other reports inspected. There appears to be a higher level of control in this area. The auditors noted that management information on the completion of probationary PDRs is available and is included in the BCU five-weekly performance report. The auditors were unable to find the rationale for why only probationary reports are monitored in this way.

Sickness monitoring

132. As discussed under ‘HR Management’ above, this area is led by the HRM. The BCU adheres to the corporate absence management policy. Key points on the local perspective are that after an officer or member of support staff has been off sick for 28 days, the second line manager responsible for that person becomes personally involved in reviewing the case. The personnel manager has encouraged the BCU in taking a firm line in applying MPS guidelines and has reduced the number of exemptions being allowed through when staff apply for courses and promotion.
133. The BCU performance in relation to its sickness absence targets is as follows:

	BCU Figures PYTD	BCU 2003/04	MPS Position	MPS Sickness Targets
Police Officers	8.4	8.8	18th	9.0
Police Staff	9.2	10.0	31st	10.0
PCSOs	8.9	N/A	N/A	10.0

(Most recent data – December 2004)

134. At the time of the audit, the BCU had 74 officers with long-term sickness issues and their status is shown below:
- Suspended – 2.
 - Sick – 13.
 - Recuperative duties – 32.
 - Permanently restricted – 5.
 - Full duties – 22.
135. The BCU is currently within all MPS targets for sickness reduction. In addition, it has reduced sickness levels from the previous financial year and should be commended for this. The HRM provided ample evidence that the BCU is proactive in managing attendance and innovative work in analysing the causes of absences is being undertaken on the BCU.

Financial Management

136. The BCU Commander is accountable for the BCU’s annual budget of £31.9m (2004/05) and, in this regard, he is supported by the FRM who has a team of 12 established police staff to assist. At the time of Inspection, the BCU’s overall budget was forecast to be overspent by approximately £200k (+0.6%), which required reduction. This overspend could entirely be attributed to police overtime (+£236k) which is within the BCU’s span of influence. Overtime budgets are allocated to inspectors and police staff managers with an operational contingency fund used for proactivity under the auspices of the TTCG processes. In common with many other BCUs, there is scope to introduce increased sophistication in the determination of overtime budget levels. Finance is reviewed at fortnightly SMT meetings and, to help reduce overtime expenditure, there is an opportunity for the BCU to use its existing performance management systems and PDR objectives to promote good fiscal management.

137. Accommodation for staff is generally good although staff within the CID are concerned about the shortage of Aware terminals and available vehicles, the latter of which has resulted in a significant overspend of £70k in the BCU's vehicle hire budget of £67k this year.
138. The BCU has made efficiency savings through initiatives it has recently pursued (eg CPU, policing Arsenal FC, DDOs, etc) together with those it intends to pursue under the updated demand management strategy. However, the savings are not routinely being captured in a consistent way and whilst efficiency planning within the MPS does not formally involve BCUs, there is a sound business logic to pursuing efficiencies, recording them and ensuring that savings are 'recycled' in support of BCU priorities. Save for costs recovered from the Immigration Service and income derived from filming in the streets, there is limited sponsorship, cost-recovery or income generation activity by the BCU.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

139. Islington is a large and challenging BCU command. The borough is the second most densely populated in the country and stretches from semi-inner London inwards to border the City of London. It includes Arsenal FC and a range of policing challenges that require a responsive, flexible and professional approach that is also sensitive to the needs of the diverse communities it comprises. It is therefore a credit to the BCU Commander and his team that they have delivered some excellent results over the past two years.
140. The BCU is strongly led with a performance culture that permeates throughout the organisation to the most remote outpost. Its staff are highly focused, work extremely hard and are genuinely proud to work at Islington. The BCU is highly effective at the tactical tier of policing, with an ability to respond to short/medium term trends quickly and with considerable success. Intelligence drives all operational activity with strong linkage established between proactive and investigative activity, particularly within the highly impactful burglary and robbery crime teams. SNTs are starting to have a notable impact in the wards in which they operate and critical incidents are routinely dealt with competently, comprehensively and effectively.
141. Performance for Islington BCU over the past three years is very positive. Residential burglary and robbery have decreased exponentially and it is no coincidence that the BCU has the highest sanction detection rate within its MSBCU group for 2003/04. This success has continued in 2004/05 with further reductions and a substantial decrease in vehicle crime and its detection rate for the PYTD. The somewhat anomalous positioning of the BCU in the bottom quartile of its MSBCU group for volume crime (TNO, burglary and vehicle crime) is potentially explained by the high proportion of visitors (and therefore victims) to the borough relative to its residential population. Sickness reduction on the BCU has been equally successful with dramatic reductions for police officers (11.95 to 8.71 days) and police staff (16.16 to 7.26 days).
142. These impressive statistics are unfortunately undermined by the BCU's recent failure to attain an acceptable grading from the Audit Commission for its compliance with the NCRS. Whilst the audit indicated that the BCU was achieving compliance for burglary and nearing compliance for criminal damage and vehicle crime (79% and 83% respectively against a standard of 90%), the overall grading (73%) remains a serious concern, as it does for the MPS as a whole. The solution rests within some significant process re-engineering that will improve systems for reporting/recording results and the decision-making that follows. The BCU has already embarked upon robust and comprehensive corrective action with support from TPHQ and its command team is absolutely determined to ensure that it becomes fully compliant with NCRS and receives the necessary external accreditation.
143. The excellent tactical work delivered by the BCU now needs to be underpinned by increased capacity for strategic thinking, change management and continuous improvement. This will enable the BCU to further innovate and develop within a framework that maintains focus upon the delivery of key priorities. Key initiatives that are suggested and/or recommended

for implementation within this report will become all the more rich and impactful as a consequence. These include the delivery of its revitalised demand management strategy, the PPO initiative and embedding the philosophy of the NIM within CDRP business. The BCU should now cement the excellent work it has achieved thus far through implementation of the above changes and by ensuring that its key policies, plans and guidance are documented and accessible to all.

144. The Inspection team is confident that the BCU could achieve these refinements as it has a committed and able workforce led by an equally dedicated and highly motivated SMT. This should position the BCU well to achieve enduring success in the years ahead and help the BCU towards achieving its vision of making Islington one of the best performing and safest boroughs in London.

Recommendations

145. The Inspection team has made the following recommendations that will contribute to the drive for continuous improvement displayed by the BCU. It is recommended that the BCU:
- i. Implements its NCRS compliance action plan in support of MPS work to achieve a ‘green’ assessment from the Audit Commission.
(paragraph 68)
 - ii. Constructs and implements a demand management strategy and action plan, championed by a member of the SMT, involving staff and with clearly publicised critical success factors.
(paragraph 104)
 - iii. Increases its capacity for strategic thinking/development so as to promote continuous improvement and help the BCU attain sustained future success.
(paragraph 114)

Areas of Potential Good Practice

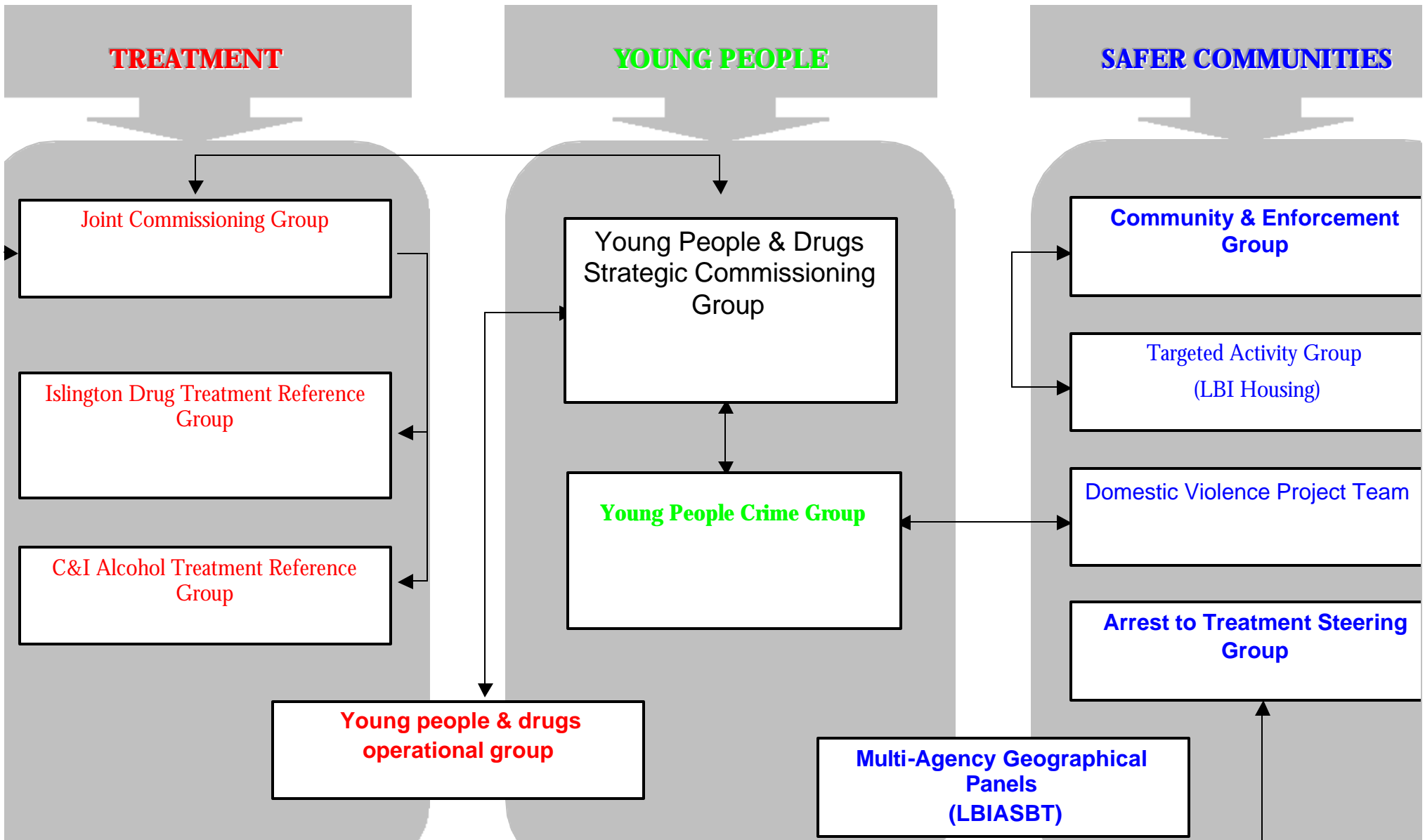
146. The Inspection team acknowledges the following areas of good practice:
- i. **Motorcycle Team** – this small team of eight officers was established some 12 months ago to address ‘two-wheel crime’ (ie, crime committed on or to motorcycles) which has reduced by 43% in 13 months. The unit is strongly intelligence led, highly motivated and able to focus on persistent offenders in a flexible and determined way.
(paragraph 59)
 - ii. **Work of the Sapphire Unit** – this unit has achieved excellent results over the last 12 months with a 77% sanction detection rate for all rapes investigated. This is attributed to the dedication of staff, performance management, cold-case reviews and thorough investigation and supervision of cases.
(paragraph 69)

- iii. **Finsbury Park Mosque (Leadership)** – this high profile, sensitive operation was personally led by the BCU Commander with strong support from TPHQ. Under the strategic direction of the Gold group, the BCU Commander defined and implemented tactics that resolved the situation to the satisfaction of the local Muslim community and the public at large. This included good use of the recently formed IAG, excellent engagement of partners and the sensible application of risk management.
(paragraph 108)
- iv. **Use of ‘Belbin’ Leadership modelling for SMT** – the BCU Commander commissioned a leadership modelling exercise whereby all members of the SMT voluntarily participated and identified their respective attributes so as to inform self-development and that of the team.
(paragraph 114)

Items for Management Consideration

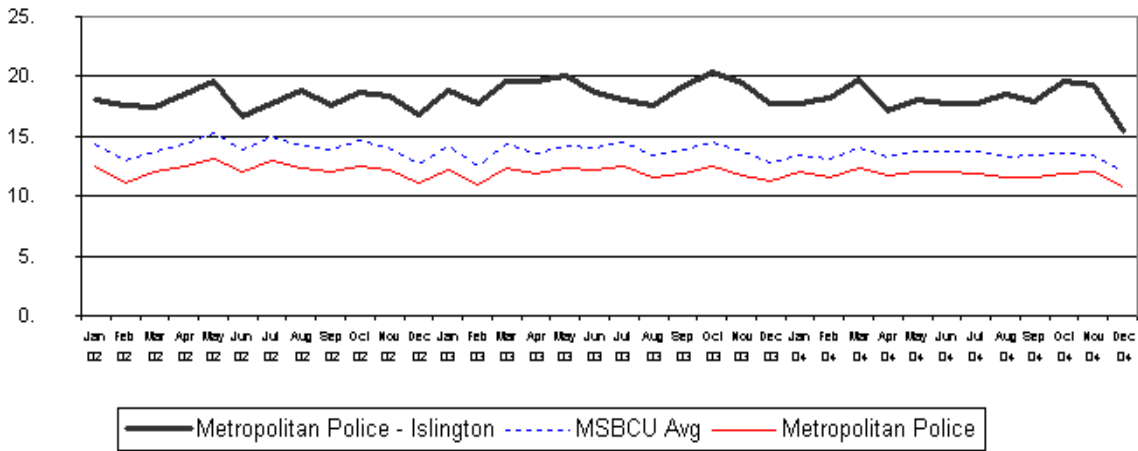
- 147. There are also various suggestions that the SMT may wish to consider contained within the body of the report (**emboldened**), mainly from data gathered by the Inspection team or from BCU staff participating in focus groups or interviews.

ISLINGTON CRIME, DRUGS & YOUTH PARTNERSHIP (ICDYP)

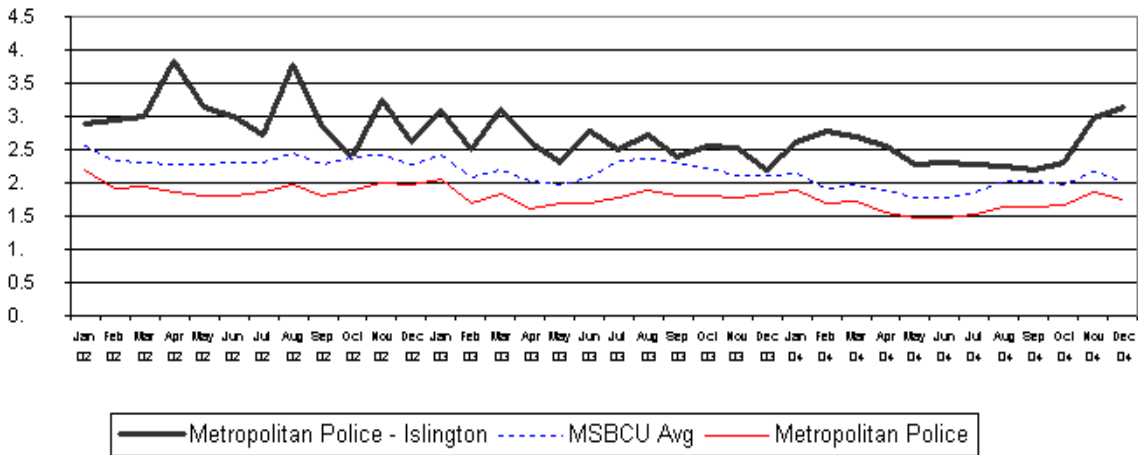


Annex B

Islington BCU Performance Tables

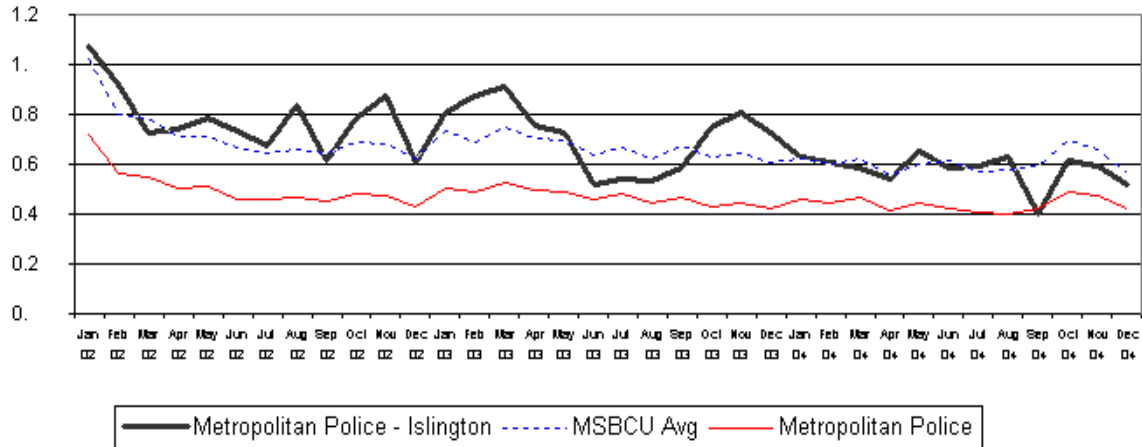


Comparison Chart - Crimes per 1000 Residents Metropolitan Police - Islington All Crime 'Most Similar' BCUs 01 Jan 2002 - 31 Dec 2004

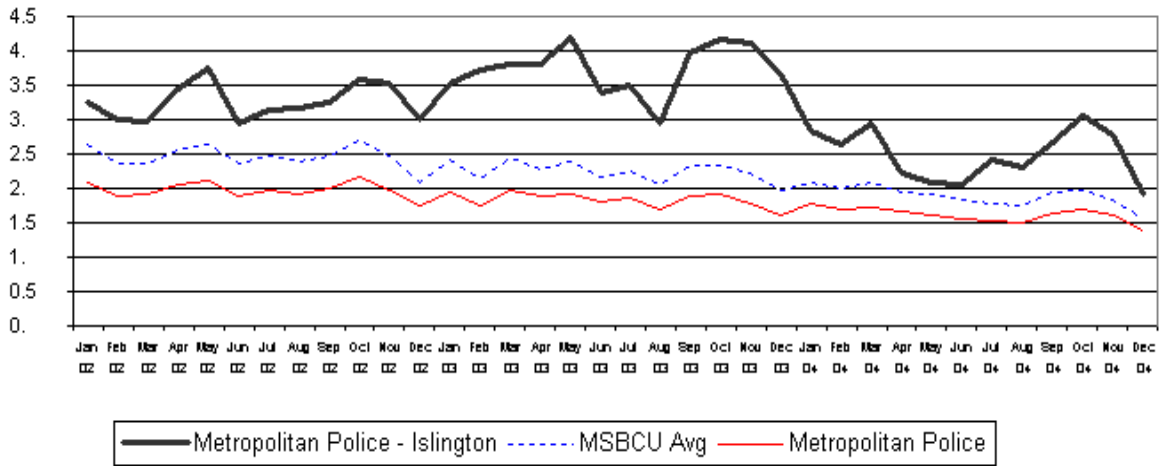


Comparison Chart - Crimes per 1000 Households Metropolitan Police - Islington Domestic Burglary 'Most Similar' BCUs 01 Jan 2002 - 31 Dec 2004

Inspection of Islington BCU – Metropolitan Police Service
March 2005







Comparison Chart - Crimes per 1000 Residents Metropolitan Police - Islington Robbery 'Most Similar' BCUs 01 Jan 2002 - 31 Dec 2004







Comparison Chart - Crimes per 1000 Residents Metropolitan Police - Islington Vehicle Crime (excluding Vehicle Interference) 'Most Similar' BCUs 01 Jan 2002 - 31 Dec 2004

2003/04 performance compared to 2002/03

<p style="text-align: center;">Good – Getting Better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNO recorded detections • TNO detection rate • Domestic burglary recorded detections • Domestic burglary detection rate • Robbery recorded offences • Robbery recorded detections • Robbery detection rate • Violent crime recorded offences • Violent crime recorded detections • Violent crime detection rate 	<p style="text-align: center;">Good – Getting Worse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle crime recorded detections 
<p style="text-align: center;">Poor – Getting Better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic burglary recorded Offences • Domestic burglary per 1000 households • Robbery per 1000 population • Violent crime per 1000 population 	<p style="text-align: center;">Poor – Getting Worse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNO recorded offences • TNO per 1000 population • Vehicle crime recorded offences • Vehicle crime per 1000 population • Vehicle crime detection rate 

July – December 2004 performance compared to July – December 2003

<p style="text-align: center;">Good – Getting Better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNO recorded detections • TNO detection rate • Robbery recorded offences • Robbery per 1000 population • Robbery recorded detections • Vehicle crime recorded detections • Vehicle crime detection rate • Violent crime recorded detections • Violent crime detection rate 	<p style="text-align: center;">Good – Getting Worse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic burglary recorded detections • Domestic burglary detection rate • Robbery recorded detections • Violent crime recorded offences 
<p style="text-align: center;">Poor – Getting Better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNO recorded offences • TNO per 1000 population • Vehicle crime recorded offences • Vehicle crime per 1000 population 	<p style="text-align: center;">Poor – Getting Worse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic burglary recorded offences • Domestic burglary per 1000 households • Violent crime per 1000 population 

Good - Getting Better = Better than MSBCU group average and better than previous year.
Good - Getting Worse = Better than MSBCU group average but worse than previous year.
Poor - Getting Better = Worse than MSBCU group average but better than previous year.
Poor - Getting Worse = Worse than MSBCU group average and worse than previous year.

Annex C

BCU Family Groups

In 1999 the Home Office commissioned a study by Leeds University to prepare two sets of 'families': one of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and one of police Basic Command Units (BCUs). In both cases the families were to be formed by grouping together areas with similar socio-economic and demographic characteristics. A project group composed of representatives from HMIC, RDS, ACPO, APA, Superintendents' Association, LGA, the Audit Commission and Leeds University guided the work.

The CDRP families were published in the PCRG Briefing Note 3/00 (July 2000) and used in the RDS Recorded Crime Statistics bulletin for 1999/2000 (July 2000). The approach has now been refined by Leeds University involving the development of a new set of BCU families that use the CDRP families as their basic structure where possible (the CDRPs are coterminous with local government areas and can therefore be created using the mid-1998 population estimates). Remaining BCUs that do not fit into this structure are then allocated a family by the grouping method, as before.

Islington BCU is now grouped in MSBCU Family 2, with the following BCUs:

BCU	Force
Brent	MPS
Camden	MPS
Greenwich	MPS
Hackney	MPS
Hammersmith & Fulham	MPS
Haringey	MPS
Hounslow	MPS
Islington	MPS
Lambeth	MPS
Lewisham	MPS
Newham	MPS
Southwark	MPS
Tower Hamlets	MPS
Waltham Forest	MPS
Wandsworth	MPS