

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary



**HMIC Inspection Report**  
**Northamptonshire Police**  
**Neighbourhood Policing**  
**Developing Citizen Focus Policing**

**September 2008**



*Northamptonshire Police – HMIC Inspection*

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## Introduction to HMIC Inspections

For a century and a half, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been charged with examining and improving the efficiency of the police service in England and Wales, with the first HM Inspectors (HMIs) being appointed under the provisions of the County and Borough Police Act 1856. In 1962, the Royal Commission on the Police formally acknowledged HMIC's contribution to policing.

HMIs are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Home Secretary and report to HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, who is the Home Secretary's principal professional policing adviser and is independent of both the Home Office and the police service. HMIC's principal statutory duties are set out in the Police Act 1996. For more information, please visit HMIC's website at <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/>.

In 2006, HMIC conducted a broad assessment of all 43 Home Office police forces in England and Wales, examining 23 areas of activity. This baseline assessment had followed a similar process in 2005, and thus created a rich evidence base of strengths and weaknesses across the country. However, it is now necessary for HMIC to focus its inspection effort on those areas of policing that are not data-rich and where qualitative assessment is the only feasible way of judging both current performance and the prospects for improvement. This, together with the critical factor that HMIC should concentrate its scrutiny on high-risk areas of policing – in terms of risk both to the public and to the service's reputation – pointed inexorably to a focus on what are known collectively as 'protective services'. In addition, there is a need to apply professional judgement to some key aspects of leadership and governance, where some quantitative measures exist but a more rounded assessment is appropriate.

Having reached this view internally, HMIC consulted key stakeholders, including the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). A consensus emerged that HMIC could add greater value by undertaking more probing inspections of fewer topics. Stakeholders concurred with the emphasis on protective services but requested that Neighbourhood Policing remain a priority for inspection until there is evidence that it has been embedded in everyday police work.

HMIC uses a rigorous and transparent methodology to conduct its inspections and reach conclusions and judgements. All evidence is gathered, verified and then assessed against specific grading criteria (SGC) drawn from an agreed set of national (ACPO-developed) standards. However, the main purpose of inspection is not to make judgements but to drive improvements in policing. Both professional and lay readers are urged, therefore, to focus not on the headline grades but on the opportunities for improvement identified within the text of this report.

## HMIC Business Plan for 2008/09

HMIC's business plan (available at <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/business-plan/>) reflects our continued focus on:

- protective services – including the management of public order, civil contingencies and critical incidents as phase 3 of the programme in autumn 2008/spring 2009;
- counter-terrorism – including all elements of the national CONTEST strategy;

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- strategic services – such as information management and professional standards; and
- the embedding of Neighbourhood Policing.

HMIC's priorities for the coming year are set in the context of the wide range of strategic challenges that face both the police service and HMIC, including the need to increase service delivery against a backdrop of reduced resources. With this in mind, the business plan for 2008/09 includes for the first time a 'value for money' plan that relates to the current Comprehensive Spending Review period (2008–11).

Our intention is to move to a default position where we do not routinely carry out all-force inspections, except in exceptional circumstances; we expect to use a greater degree of risk assessment to target activity on those issues and areas where the most severe vulnerabilities exist, where most improvement is required or where the greatest benefit to the service can be gained through the identification of best practice.

The recent Green Paper on policing – *From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our Communities Together* – proposes major changes to the role of HMIC. We are currently working through the implications to chart a way forward, and it will not be until the late Autumn when we are able to communicate how this will impact on the future approach and inspection plans. In the meantime, we have now commenced work covering the areas of critical incident management, public order and civil contingencies/emergency planning – which will conclude in early 2009. In consultation with ACPO portfolio holders and a range of relevant bodies (such as the Cabinet Office in respect of civil contingency work) we have conducted an assessment of risk, threat and demand and, based on this, we will focus on those forces where we can add most value. We will also commence a series of police authority inspections in April 2009, which will follow a pilot process from November 2008 through to January 2009.

## **Programmed Frameworks**

During phase 2 of HMIC's inspection programme, we examined force responses to major crime, serious and organised crime, Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing in each of the 43 forces of England and Wales.

This document includes the full graded report for the Neighbourhood Policing inspection and Developing Citizen Focus Policing inspection.

## **Neighbourhood Policing**

The public expect and require a safe and secure society, and it is the role of the police, in partnership, to ensure provision of such a society. The HMIC inspection of Neighbourhood Policing implementation assesses the impact on neighbourhoods together with identified developments for the future.

The piloting of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) between April 2003 and 2005 led to the Neighbourhood Policing programme launch by ACPO in April 2005.

There has been considerable commitment and dedication from key partners, from those in neighbourhood teams and across communities to deliver Neighbourhood Policing in every area. This includes over £1,000 million of government investment (2003–09), although funding provision beyond 2009 is unclear.

The NRPP evaluation highlighted three key activities for successful Neighbourhood Policing, namely:

- the consistent presence of dedicated neighbourhood teams capable of working in the community to establish and maintain control;
- intelligence-led identification of community concerns with prompt, effective, targeted action against those concerns; and
- joint action and problem solving with the community and other local partners, improving the local environment and quality of life.

To date, the Neighbourhood Policing programme has recruited over 16,000 police community support officers (PCSOs), who, together with 13,000 constables and sergeants, are dedicated by forces to 3,600 neighbourhood teams across England and Wales.

This report further supports Sir Ronnie Flanagan's *Review of Policing* (2008), which considers that community safety must be at the heart of local partnership working, bringing together different agencies in a wider neighbourhood management approach.

### **Developing Citizen Focus Policing**

Citizen Focus policing is about developing a culture where the needs and priorities of the citizen are understood by staff and are always taken into account when designing and delivering policing services.

Sir Ronnie Flanagan's *Review of Policing* emphasised the importance of focusing on the treatment of individuals during existing processes: this is one of the key determinants of satisfaction.

A sustained commitment to quality and customer need is essential to enhance satisfaction and confidence in policing, and to build trust and further opportunities for active engagement with individuals, thereby building safer and more secure communities.

This HMIC inspection of Developing Citizen Focus Policing is the first overall inspection of this agenda and provides a baseline for future progress. One of the key aims of the inspection was to identify those forces that are showing innovation in their approach, to share effective practice and emerging learning. A key challenge for the service is to drive effective practice more widely and consistently, thereby improving the experience for people in different areas.

Latest data reveals that, nationally, there have been improvements in satisfaction with the overall service provided. However, the potential exists to further enhance customer experience and the prospect of victims and other users of the policing service reporting consistently higher satisfaction levels. All the indications show that sustained effort is required over a period of years to deliver the highest levels of satisfaction; this inspection provides an insight into the key aspects to be addressed. It is published in the context of the recent Green Paper *From the Neighbourhood to the National – Policing our Communities Together* and other reports, which all highlight the priorities of being accountable and responsive to local people. The longer-term investment in Neighbourhood Policing and the benefits of Neighbourhood Management have provided an evidence base for the broad Citizen Focus agenda.

## Statutory Performance Indicators and Key Diagnostic Indicators

In addition to the inspection of forces, HMIC has drawn on published data in the Policing Performance Assessment Frameworks (PPAFs) published between March 2005 and March 2008 as an indicator of outcomes for both Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing.

The statutory performance indicators (SPIs) and key diagnostic indicator (KDI) that are most appropriate to indicate outcomes for the public and are used to inform this inspection are set out below:

### Neighbourhood Policing

- SPI 2a – the percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job.
- KDI – the percentage of people who ‘agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area’.
- SPI 10b – the percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour in their area.

### Developing Citizen Focus Policing

- SPI 1e – satisfaction of victims of domestic burglary, violent crime, vehicle crime and road traffic collisions with the overall service provided by the police.
- SPI 3b – a comparison of satisfaction rates for white users with those for users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided.

Forces are assessed in terms of their performance compared with the average for their most similar forces (MSF) and whether any difference is statistically significant. Statistical significance can be explained in lay terms as follows: ‘The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.’ A more detailed description of how statistical significance has been used is included in Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

## Developing Practice

In addition to assessing force performance, one of HMIC’s key roles is to identify and share good practice across the police service. Much good practice is identified as HMIC conducts its assessments and is reflected (described as a ‘strength’) in the body of the report. In addition, each force is given the opportunity to submit more detailed examples of its good practice. HMIC has therefore, in some reports, selected suitable examples and included them in the report. The key criteria for each example are that the work has been evaluated by the force and the good practice is easily transferable to other forces; each force has provided a contact name and telephone number or email address, should further information be required. HMIC has not conducted any independent evaluation of the examples of good practice provided.

## The Grading Process

HMIC has moved to a new grading system based on the national standards; forces will be deemed to be meeting the standard, exceeding the standard or failing to meet the standard.

### Meeting the standard

HMIC uses the standards agreed with key stakeholders including ACPO, the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and the Home Office as the basis for SGC. The standards for Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing are set out in those sections of this report, together with definitions for exceeding the standard and failing to meet the standard.

## Force Overview and Context

Northamptonshire Police has:

- 2 basic command units (BCUs);
- 41 Neighbourhood Policing teams (NPTs);
- 185 officers dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing; and
- 159 PCSOs dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing.

The force is a member of 6 crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) that cover the force area.

### Geographical description of force area

The county of Northamptonshire is located in the south of the East Midlands region and covers an area of 914 square miles. The largest town is Northampton, with other main towns including Brackley, Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Rushden, Towcester and Wellingborough. Northamptonshire's central location affords easy access, with good road and rail links. The M1, M6 and M40 motorways, together with the A1 and A14 trunk roads, pass through or near the county. Good transport links have led to rapid growth in light industry, particularly in warehousing and distribution, retail and financial services. There has also been an expansion of the smaller, high-tech motor-racing industry, particularly in the south of the county around the world-famous Silverstone racetrack, and also in the north where the Rockingham venue attracts motor-racing enthusiasts.

### Demographic profile of force area

Northamptonshire has a population of 670,800 (projection for 2008 estimated in 2004). The black and minority ethnic (BME) proportion of Northamptonshire's population is 6.1% (estimated at June 2004) compared with 10.6% for the East Midlands region as a whole, with the highest percentages living in the Northampton and Wellingborough areas. The employment rate for the county is high at 80%, above the national average of 74.3%, and ranging from 91.8% in South Northamptonshire to 71.5% in Corby. The proportion of the population claiming Jobseeker's Allowance averages 2.1% across the county (2004). The cost of housing is above the regional average (£177,317 compared with £163,688), but low compared with the national average of £184,111.

The county is scheduled for a significant increase in population over the next 25 years as a result of the planned housing growth in the South Midlands sub-region, with the population predicted to rise by 47% by 2031 and an additional 167,000 new homes.



## Structural description of the force area

There are two basic command units (BCUs) covering the force area; these are called 'areas' locally. A chief superintendent with a high degree of delegated authority heads each BCU, which are coterminous with local authority boundaries. A neighbourhood policing model operates, with 43 safer community teams whose areas are coterminous with ward and parish boundaries.

In April 2008, the force had 1,285 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers, 164 FTE police community support officers and 1,187 FTE police staff, supported by 180 special constables.

There is a close working relationship with the police authority, through both formal authority and committee meeting structures and a wide range of other linkages such as planning / budget seminars and police authority membership of major project boards.

## Strategic direction

The strategic direction of the force was reviewed in early 2008 and is expressed in a re-launched 'Making the Difference' statement:

"Our vision

To deliver the best possible quality of policing services to the people of Northamptonshire.

Our mission

Policing in partnership to:

- identify and respond to the needs of our communities;
- focus local policing through safer community teams;
- reduce and prevent crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder;
- bring offenders to justice;
- improve public safety;
- build public satisfaction and confidence; and
- help our communities to work together.

Our values

We value people who:

- focus on service improvement;
- care about individuals and our communities;
- act with integrity;
- are honest, open and courteous to the public and to each other;
- display creativity, flexibility, initiative and responsiveness;
- demonstrate commitment and take personal responsibility;
- appreciate and encourage the contribution of others; and
- respect diversity and the talents of individuals."

## Strategic priorities

The force's annual budget for 2008/09 is £114.8 million, an increase of 4.1% on 2007/08, which is broadly in line with inflation. However, to meet strategic commitments a significant budget reprioritisation process has been undertaken. Strategic priorities as identified in *Policing Northamptonshire* (which incorporates the strategic plan and local policing and performance plan) are as follows.

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The force's strategic aims for the next three years are to:

- increase the public's confidence and satisfaction by addressing local problems and priorities to reduce the fear of crime and disorder, maintain public safety, respond to the threat from terrorism and deliver high standards of service to communities, victims and witnesses;
- drive down crime and anti-social behaviour in communities through focused prevention work and bringing more offenders to justice; and
- develop the force and the police authority for the future through:
  - positive engagement with local communities, developing strengthened partnerships and collaboration with other agencies, and visible policing that actively listens to local people and responds to local concerns;
  - vision and strong leadership, developing the organisation and its people, and valuing diversity, innovation, initiative and creativity; and
  - influencing the level of funding available for policing and responding to the growth of the county.

### **Focus for 2008/09**

The force's focus for 2008/09 is to:

- increase the public's satisfaction levels by responding to what is important to them and improving the service it provides to communities, victims and witnesses;
- increase the public's confidence by working to identify and tackle the local issues of crime and anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods that matter to the public;
- reduce the threat to the public of serious harm by improved management of dangerous offenders, enhanced services for vulnerable people, and seeking actively to prevent major and organised crime, homicide and terrorism; and
- further reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in communities through prevention and detection, with an emphasis on neighbourhoods with particular crime and anti-social behaviour problems and through identifying and tackling emerging issues.

### **Force developments**

Crime in Northamptonshire has gone down for the last four years in succession, with crime volumes for 2007/08 being 19% lower than in 2003/04. The rate of crime reduction in Northamptonshire has outperformed that of the most similar forces (MSF) group. Specific types of crime have also seen significant reductions: vehicle crime is at its lowest rate in 23 years – 37% less than 4 years ago; dwelling burglary is at its lowest in 19 years – 30% less than 4 years ago; criminal damage is 14% less than 4 years ago; and robbery is 28% less than 4 years ago.

During 2007/08 there was a large fall in offences of anti-social behaviour – falling by 21%, or 16,496 fewer incidents. The introduction of safer community teams, which have now been in place for at least a year, has no doubt had a significant impact on this problem. The effect of the improved performance of the force is now starting to show in increased levels of confidence and satisfaction. Public confidence in Northamptonshire Police has increased according to the British Crime Survey. Keeping victims of crime updated with progress was an area where the force was not performing so well, but changes in the force communications centre and an improving focus on customers are showing results, and satisfaction with the follow-up service provided has increased during the last year.

Public satisfaction with ease of contacting the police remains high, as is satisfaction with how the public are treated by staff. The force was graded Excellent when compared with other forces for levels of satisfaction with actions taken by the police.

The latest staff opinion survey carried out in 2007 shows positive trends, with staff opinions largely improved on the previous 2005 survey. Sickness levels are low, and officer sickness is the eighth lowest in England and Wales.

The force has benefited from a chief officer team unchanged since 2004, which has been able to provide stability while leading the force through a period of change.

## **Key initiatives**

### **Business engineering review team**

The force has established a dedicated business engineering review team (BERT), whose work has been recognised as good practice by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and which during 2007/08 has focused on protective services capability. The creation of the protective services command in April 2008 increased resilience to tackle serious and organised crime, homicide, public protection and strategic roads policing, and the ongoing development of this command is a key focus over the next three years. This new approach brings together for the first time the force's specialist resources dedicated to public protection and enhances the structures and resourcing of elements of this work. This includes an emphasis on improving communication and joint working with partner agencies.

### **Workforce modernisation**

Core to the BERT work has been analysis of existing departments and processes, to identify opportunities to change traditional structures and to improve efficiency and performance, as well as financial savings. The force has for some years had a high percentage of police staff, and has thus been leading in the drive for workforce modernisation. This has resulted in a net reduction of 56 police officer posts and a net increase of 109 police staff posts. During 2008/09 the BERT will continue in order to implement far-reaching workforce modernisation in the crime and prisoner investigation units.

### **Collaboration and partnerships**

The force is involved in many cases of innovative partnership activity, for example in relation to the Milton Keynes and South Midlands expansion, and it leads a tri-force project (with Thames Valley and Bedfordshire police forces and authorities) to ensure that crime and disorder issues are an integral part of the regional growth programme. It works closely with developers and the development agencies to ensure that the required policing infrastructure is put in place and to positively influence future funding.

The force is committed to working with partner authorities in the county to shape and deliver the local area agreement (LAA) agenda, and has been a significant contributor in the development of the new LAA2 and in practical delivery through a partnership board.

Senior staff have been seconded to a variety of East Midlands collaboration roles over the last two years as part of the regional collaboration team. The Chief Constable now chairs the regional collaboration board, and examples of collaborative work streams include demand management, transport, policy development and the East Midlands special operations unit.

### **Good practice**

There are a variety of areas of good practice in which Northamptonshire Police is well placed nationally, for example the force's forensic science service leads the field in researching and pioneering techniques for improving the effectiveness of DNA evidence in detecting crime. The force performs well on citizen focus and has been ahead in the introduction of online crime recording and victim services. A pioneering Foundation Degree in policing has been introduced, in partnership with the University of Northampton.

### **Efficiency planning**

Northamptonshire Police has exceeded its efficiency plan targets for the last three years, and in order to achieve its efficiency target during 2008/09 the force will focus on:

- reducing the opportunities for crime by working with local planners on the design of new developments in the county;
- collaborating with the other forces in the East Midlands region to reduce costs and improve services to the public;
- using technology to improve the efficiency of the force's intelligence, information and administrative systems and their related costs;
- working with local partners to make best use of resources and facilities while providing ready access to services for the public; and
- using risk management techniques, performance management processes and demand-led resource allocation to ensure the highest possible level of output from the resources available.

## Neighbourhood Policing

<b>2007/08 Neighbourhood Policing Summary of judgement</b>	<b>Meeting the standard</b>
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### Meeting the standard

**Following the moderation process, Northamptonshire Police was assessed as meeting the standard. Neighbourhood policing has been implemented to a consistent standard across the force.**

**Neighbourhoods are appropriately staffed (coverage).**

### Summary statement

**Neighbourhoods are appropriately staffed (coverage). The force is deploying across all of its basic command units (BCUs) – the right people in the right place at the right times – to ensure its neighbourhoods are appropriately staffed.**

### Strengths

- Neighbourhoods and their boundaries have been clearly defined and are coterminous with the county and district councils. It was recognised that partners and the communities were not fully consulted during the initial establishing of the boundaries so further consultation took place in 2006 and 2007 which led to a more informed review of these boundaries especially in neighbourhood management areas.
- All 41 safer community teams (SCTs) were in place by April 2007. The majority of teams have several beat managers and police community support officers (PCSOs), and each team has a dedicated or shared sergeant. Contact details for named staff on each SCT, including names, photographs, a team mobile telephone number and an SCT email address are widely published through a variety of media. Voicemail facility is available on both desk and mobile telephones. Visits to both Castle ward SCT and Eastfields SCT in Northampton revealed a high level of knowledge of contact details among residents, local businesses and at community meeting centres. Positive experiences when dealing face to face and emailing SCTs were reported. Contact posters are available in different languages and innovative use was made of table coasters with SCT contact details. All marked police vehicles display the force non-emergency number and the force email address, and officers wear name badges.
- Access to each SCT page on the force website is easy to navigate and facilitated by a postcode search option. The force media manager ensures the accuracy of the SCT pages and monitors the number of 'hits' on the site. Full contact details, including photographs of all SCT staff, together with details of local priorities and engagement meetings are on each SCT page.
- Continuity and succession planning for SCT staff and sergeants, as well as the extended police family, special constables, volunteers and accredited persons, are

detailed in the human resources (HR) strategy for SCTs (2006–09). BCU managers prioritise succession planning for SCTs and, at the time of inspection, all dedicated SCT posts were filled within a 28-day period. There was a clear understanding from staff that they would expect to be in post for a minimum of two years and a significant number have been in post for that period or longer. The force recruitment plan for PCSOs has a turnover percentage built into it to support speedy replacement of PCSOs. Beat managers and SCT sergeants felt strongly that their posts had a high status and were keenly sought after.

- Abstraction from their core role for SCT officers and PCSOs is actively monitored and challenged. An abstraction policy for beat managers is in place and BCU managers robustly monitor the target as part of the SCT performance framework reported through the monthly BCU performance meeting. At the time of inspection, the target for beat managers to be in their geographic area at least 85% of their time, dealing with incidents in that neighbourhood, was consistently being met with minimal levels of abstractions recorded – around 5%. Reality checking showed no overall distortion of abstraction rates through, for instance, abstraction for a number of hours on a tour of duty which does not get recorded as an abstraction. The policy also provides for beat managers to discontinue accreditation of specialist skills after six months, to assist with minimising abstractions over the longer term.
- At the time of inspection, both dedicated SCT sergeants and sector commanders (inspectors) reported minimal abstraction from their core role. They, together with beat managers, identified this as an important factor for both their job satisfaction and increasing public satisfaction with local policing.
- A range of information informs the allocating of resources to SCTs. BCU managers draw on local policing experience, supported by data on levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, including partner information, through the joint agency database called Community Profiling and Shared Solutions (ComPaSS) reflected in neighbourhood profiles. Additional resources have been allocated to the neighbourhood management areas, because of challenging issues in those neighbourhoods, on each of the BCUs, including the two rural deprivation wards. SCT staffing levels are reviewed by the BCU chief inspector community as part of SCT performance monitoring.
- At the time of inspection, 14% of the force's total numbers of police officers (185 out of 1,319) were deployed as beat managers on SCTs. All of the 159 PCSOs and 50% of the 195 special constables were assigned to SCTs. Taking police officers, PCSOs and special constables together (1,673 staff), 26% of all these staff are engaged directly in delivering local policing through SCTs.
- Staff profiles are considered, at BCU level, when recruiting to a beat manager's post: for example, language skills or previous experience relevant to any significant communities identified by the neighbourhood profile, including Counter Terrorism intelligence requirements.
- Several pilot schemes are operating throughout the force to build up the level of dedicated resources that SCTs can draw on, based upon neighbourhood profiles and local priorities. One example is allocating a number of detective and incident response resources to a sector commander to strengthen the response to a particular set of local priorities.
- A significant investment has been made in the training of SCT staff and supervisors. A three-day training course has been developed and customised following internal

feedback and external evaluation. As well as focusing on core skills such as engaging with communities and joint problem solving it provides a number of essential inputs including using the ComPaSS system, all of the county's watch schemes, and counter-terrorism. Following the course, all inspectors, sergeants, beat managers and PCSOs undertake an introductory award in neighbourhood management giving them the opportunity to continue learning in key skills whilst policing their own communities, over a six-month period. There is a support network to assist staff to complete the certificate awarded by the Chartered Institute of Managers (NVQ level 3 equivalent). At the time of inspection, all SCT staff had attended the three-day course and were completing the modules. SCT training is routinely and robustly reviewed (see Developing practice).

- Numerous forces including Lancashire, North Yorkshire, Dorset and Nottinghamshire have studied the force's modular learning approach. This approach to training was cited by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) as good practice (*NPP Newsletter*, November 2007, issue 14) and elements of the SCT course are an integral part of the force's core leadership development programme (CLDP). The force's lead trainer presented at a national CLDP seminar in 2007 and NPIA cite their CLDP as best practice.
- As part of continued development and for a wider understanding of issues that impact on their local priorities, beat managers have had placements with relevant partner agencies. Although not formally evaluated, staff reported that such placements had improved their contribution to joint problem solving. A notable example is the opportunity to work with mental health patients (as reported in *Police Review*, 27 April 2007, 'Mind matters – mental health training in Northamptonshire').
- Personal development review (PDR) objectives for beat managers and PCSOs are customised to directly support the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing. Objectives are largely relevant to local priorities with an emphasis on public satisfaction and confidence measures, rather than on volume crime targets. The effective use of the menu of generic PDR objectives is covered in the force's CLDP. The use of PDR objectives for non-SCT staff to directly support Neighbourhood Policing is also evident, for instance, detective inspectors having a PDR objective to meet monthly with the sector commander.
- Effective support and supervision for community engagement and joint problem solving is being provided by SCT sergeants and sector commanders. Across the 41 SCTs the ratio of a dedicated sergeant to the number of beat managers and PCSOs varies from 1:8 to 1:10. Reality checking confirmed intrusive but supportive monitoring by sergeants and inspectors of progress towards local priorities and engagement with harder-to-reach groups and new communities, in particular. This, in turn, is monitored by the BCU chief inspector community as part of their regular meetings with SCT sergeants.
- Great emphasis is placed on rewarding and recognising quality of service. On the BCU the daily management meeting identifies such work and the force reward and recognition procedure provides for a range of recognition and awards at both BCU and force level. Awareness of the procedure to be recognised for good work was widespread and several SCT staff provided examples of recognition ranging from a PDR entry to a force award. Examples of where SCT staff have been recognised for delivering a positive experience to the public include the Eastfield and Headlands SCT awarded force SCT of the year 2007 and one of its PCSOs being nominated for PCSO of the year.

- In recognition of the key role played by beat managers in delivering Neighbourhood Policing and the challenges of their role, they will receive a special priority payment, subject to continued performance, for 2008/09.

### **Work in progress**

- None identified.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The automated voicemail audit is good practice and one BCU has carried out an initial audit of voicemail, which showed variable management of voicemail by staff. The force needs to develop a formal audit to establish how well staff are managing voicemail. The automated email message identifying when a person has exceeded the voicemail limit, should also go to line managers who would then be able monitor effectively the management of voicemail by their staff. The audit should also establish if staff update messages when they are on leave or unavailable for any reason.

**Effective community engagement is taking place. Representative communities are being routinely consulted and are identifying local priorities and receiving feedback.**

### **Summary statement**

**Most neighbourhoods in the force area are actively engaging with their local police force and its partners.**

### **Strengths**

- Building on the community engagement guide provided for SCTs, a 'communicating with your communities' policy has now been adopted across the force. This provides SCTs with a more user-friendly communications checklist and minimum requirements for engagement identifying a range of tactics outside of traditional meetings including using the force website, doorstep surveys, newsletter, interaction cards, and key individual networks (KINs). At the time of inspection, the ComPaSS system had 1,646 community contacts and 672 agency contacts recorded on it.
- Community panels and neighbourhood boards, many of which have a large number of local residents as members, have been established in all wards and are used to discuss, prioritise and agree local priorities. Joint action groups (JAGs) carry out actions to deal with the priorities by tasking the relevant agencies.
- Two of the sections in the list of SCT review questions (a recently introduced self-assessment to assess how Neighbourhood Policing is being embedded) provide a force-wide position on engaging with the community and to what degree communities have been consulted on local priorities. A summary of SCT responses to the questions in each of those two sections shows that the vast majority of the 41 SCTs are graded either green or amber in putting in place effective engagement to determine local priorities.



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- All SCTs use a wide range of engagement tactics, some carried out with partners, to engage with local communities and identify local priorities. The majority of engagement is outside the traditional meeting format and routinely includes: widely distributed interaction cards; email; door-knocking; street briefings; use of KINs and Neighbourhood Watch; environmental audits; neighbourhood management action days; coffee 'drop in' with senior citizens; conducting surgeries at community focal points like libraries, council halls and colleges; and mobile 'drop-in' surgeries for more rural communities.
- In the last twelve months, much emphasis has been given to identifying and engaging with harder-to-reach groups especially young people and emerging Eastern European communities. The inspection found evidence of success in identifying such groups and getting representatives of such groups to be increasingly involved in the engagement process. Examples include where PCSOs have worked with young people (the 14–18 age group) to obtain funding to provide new facilities such as a skate park and a youth club in response to their priorities. At least one SCT has used YMCA trips for youths subject to anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) to engage with them. Northamptonshire West BCU has a community cohesion unit which supports SCTs engaging with harder-to-reach groups, and one success, working with the Northamptonshire West Indian Community Association, is adding a vibrant membership of some 200 black and dual heritage youths to the association. On the Northamptonshire North BCU SCT staff visit supplementary schools for the Chinese, Greek, Arabic and Polish communities and engage with pupils aged between 6 and 18 years.
- One BCU, working with 30 partner agencies, has held separate engagement evenings for both the Polish and Somalian communities. The events were widely advertised and supported by local media, and numerous engagement contacts made by SCT staff. A number of SCT staff on the BCUs central sector have taken Polish language lessons to assist in their engagement and a Polish PCSO at Corby attends the Polish Catholic church meetings.
- Information sharing between communities and SCTs takes place through a variety of means. At a strategic level this is sponsored by the Safer Stronger Northamptonshire Partnership and the Safer Schools Partnership in Northamptonshire. In November 2007 a partnership meeting was held at force HQ, to facilitate senior managers planning where Northamptonshire police fitted into the county agenda around working with young people – primarily through schools. One result of this has been schools providing information on new communities, reflected through new children starting school.
- The ComPaSS system provides a range of functions for SCTs and partners to use as a Neighbourhood Policing tool and so share information. It contains multi-agency information for analytical purposes and developing neighbourhood profiles. Key individual networks are also recorded on the website, with new contacts being added as SCTs develop their engagement. An email facility provides an excellent way of communicating with all of the KINs and partner contacts.
- All wards produce a regular newsletter which is distributed both in and outside wards. Local media is used to inform communities including non-English speaking ones of forthcoming engagement events across neighbourhoods. Another source of information about neighbourhoods and engagement meetings is through the force website, including e-newsletters, currently available to 25,000 recipients, and a newspaper, 'Home Beat', delivered to 286,000 households every six months.

- Every six months the force provides a professional conference facility for two weeks, in-house, to enable SCT seminars to take place and provide a platform for information-sharing presentations. Partners are invited both as delegates and speakers and individual SCTs often present case studies (see Developing practice). Bespoke seminars are also provided such as in October 2007, which introduced PCSOs to their role in the Safer Schools Partnership. BCU community chief inspectors' regular meetings with their SCT sergeants are an opportunity to share developments around engagement and problem solving.
- During the last six months, the force has been testing the effectiveness of existing KINs, the most recent test being in March 2008. A paper-based scenario was used with various critical incidents developed and SCT staff set tasks involving the use of a range of KINs. Results are used by SCTs to measure if their existing KINs are the most appropriate to help deliver local policing.
- Reality testing in two neighbourhoods show that PCSOs and beat managers are constantly testing the strength and inclusion of engagement by speaking to people from both identified communities and the harder-to-reach communities.
- In the last 15 months over 500 community intelligence logs have been submitted to SB where they are analysed by dedicated field intelligence officers and developed where appropriate. Examples have been provided where individual SCTs have been tasked successfully to obtain intelligence on potential domestic extremism sites.
- Effective communication between SCT staff and the dangerous persons management unit takes place. Staff also showed a good knowledge of dangerous persons and sex offenders living on their neighbourhoods.

### **Work in progress**

- Several pertinent questions relating to harder-to-reach communities are included in a number of questions that make up both the engagement and consultation sections of the self-assessment. Whilst summary findings for each of those sections have been published, an analysis of SCT responses to each individual question including the pertinent ones around harder-to-reach communities is still progressing. The results will provide valuable information for the developing SCT engagement plans.
- Whilst SCT staff has access to electronic briefings on the activities of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) as part of the force briefing system, and several SCTs have been part of a force response to tackling OCGs, the force is working to improve the use of all SCTs in tackling OCGs.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Recognising that existing SCTs engagement plans are largely generic, sector commanders have recently started work to tailor such plans to specific communities in their neighbourhoods. National research shows that it is important to test whether people from the community in high crime and incident areas not identified in the neighbourhood profile are engaged with neighbourhood teams. As part of the tailoring of engagement plans some SCTs would benefit from adopting an engagement calendar approach and considering printing newsletters in some non-English languages.
- At the time of inspection, only some preparatory steps had been taken towards reality checking community engagement against neighbourhood profiles through

mapping neighbourhoods, for example, by purchasing partner data overlaying software ie MOSAIC, and developing the SCT self-assessment process.

- When developing reality testing around community engagement, planned for 2008, the force may wish to consider adding a question to the SCT self-assessment to establish if the list of attendees at formal, or even some informal, engagement meetings is being checked to identify why some residents may attend initially but do not re-attend. Doing so may determine whether they received a positive or negative engagement experience.
- A process to reality test SCT self-assessment responses, especially where anomalies are identified or where other sources of information suggest a different picture, has yet to be put in place. The force plans to introduce compliance regimes through the existing force performance review process of BCUs, later in 2008.

**Joint problem solving is established and included within performance regimes.**

**Summary statement**

**Joint problem-solving activity involves the police and partners across all neighbourhoods. Joint problem-solving activity is routinely evaluated, which demonstrates moderate problem resolution at neighbourhood level.**

**Strengths**

- The force has invested heavily in joint problem-solving processes and relationships to more effectively address local priorities. Each local priority has a problem-solving plan, recorded and managed through ComPaSS, and the progress and results of these are monitored and evaluated at BCU level using a traffic light spreadsheet. Sector commanders are held to account for the number of local priorities entered onto ComPaSS through the SCT performance framework and the status of those plans at the BCU monthly performance meeting. BCU commanders monitor the status of local priorities with their partnership renewal oversight group (PROG) and use this group to tackle, jointly, any barriers to further progress.
- A systematic problem-solving template and process follows the scanning, analysis, response, assessment (SARA) model. The process includes a detailed scanning phase to ensure that all relevant partner information is considered in the template. The ComPaSS system can also be used to identify and task partners who can support the problem solving. The final part of the template is for an assessment of the success of the plan. Problem-solving plans are monitored through JAGs and signed off by agreement with the neighbourhood panel.
- The ability to monitor joint problem solving at force level is evidenced through the regularly available updates of plans, and at what stage they are in the SARA model. As part of the pre-inspection requirement an activity report for the period 1–31 October 2007 was produced by the force.
- A number of questions in the problem-solving section of the SCT review self-assessment relate to how problem-solving plans are being progressed and the effectiveness of the JAG. A summary of SCT responses to questions in the problem-solving section shows that the majority of SCTs assess their problem solving as good or fair.

- In March 2007 Northamptonshire Borough Council undertook an evaluation of the dispersal order process and the effectiveness of the orders in adding value to anti-social behaviour-related problem-solving plans. The learning from this was passed to all partners and JAGs and brought about key recommendations. One is to invest more in a programme to improve youth facilities. Another is to send a précised evaluation report to affected local residents with details of ongoing plans around dispersal orders.
- At the time of inspection, approximately 100 problem-solving plans were on the ComPaSS system, allowing all users of the system to review any plan for problem-solving good practice or ideas. Many SCT staff reported that, whilst they had used this facility, good practice and ideas were also shared through the force and BCU-level SCT seminars and meetings. Examples of successful shared problem-solving initiatives were provided by SCT staff.
- Tackling street prostitution is strongly led by the Castle ward SCT in Northampton and is an excellent example of sustained and long-term joint problem solving ongoing in some wards across the force, which is making a demonstrable difference to local residents. For many years, residents and businesses in part of the ward were blighted by significant street prostitution activity. The SCT worked with neighbourhood management partners and voluntary organisations, specifically sex workers around Northampton (SWAN), and obtained funding to support an incremental closure approach to the sex workers rather than just to target and displace them. Local crack houses were closed, street furniture was redesigned or changed to create a managed zone for sex workers, an automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) camera installed to identify 'kerb crawlers' and sex workers supported to change lifestyles. From about 220 sex workers active in this red-light district three years ago, the current numbers are down to fewer than 60. The community aim is to remove all sex workers by 2010. A data-sharing protocol between the Northampton Borough Council Housing Department and the SCT ensures that prospective tenants are checked for previous anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. Praise for the improvement in the quality of life experienced by local businesses and residents was palpable.
- In 2006 the Eastfield residential estate was described by national and local media as being "like war torn Beirut" because of spiralling levels of anti-social behaviour, vandalism and car fires. The SCT (started in January 2007) working together with an active residents' association – one of its members was chosen from 350 nominees in 2006 to win the Home Office's Respect Task Force award – and other voluntary organisations robustly tackled crime levels throughout the estate. A year on and overall crime has fallen by 25% and incidents of anti-social behaviour by 30%. Local residents' perceptions, as recorded by local media, are now of an estate where anti-social behaviour, and other crime that plagued the estate two years ago, is very low or almost totally eradicated.
- Another example of problem-solving activity typical of many SCTs is the motorcycle nuisance reduction work on Kingswood and Corby wards to deal with a more common local priority in the short term. Collaborative work with both borough and county councils together with residents identified offenders, seized bikes, and used multi-agency visits to suspects and warning letter drops to reduce the number of such incidents by 90% in some areas over a six-month period. The work is now the subject of a Tilley Award application and has been approved at regional level.

- Active engagement by chief officers led by the Chief Constable and assistant chief constable (ACC), (territorial policing) (TP) supported by BCU commanders has sponsored joint funding and co-location opportunities. In 2007/08 the force identified funding to match fund an extra 25 PCSOs above the national allocation, together with funding from the county, borough and parish councils. Partners have committed to sustain the funding for the next three years, at least. A strong partnership has been established with the county library service resulting in SCTs holding regular surgeries and having access to office and IT facilities, as well as accompanying the mobile library to better access rural communities. Across the force, SCTs are establishing community located satellite offices with one or several partners.
- In October 2007 two joint strategic assessments covering the county, one for each BCU, were produced using joint analytical resources and partner information including ComPaSS and inputs from JAGs. The assessments were used at BCU level to inform the control strategies. A series of meetings has taken place with partners to enhance joint intelligence in preparation for the 2008 joint strategic assessments.
- Local authority partners are tasked through BCU tasking and co-ordination meetings and the PROG. Local priorities feature as a specific section in the tactical assessment document used for the BCU tasking and co-ordination meeting. The threshold to activate BCU resources for local priorities elevated to the tasking meeting is low enough to ensure that where bids for resources are referred from JAGs they meet with success. There is evidence that SCTs are fully involved in the tasking process and that the tackling of local priorities are supported by a full range of BCU resources, where appropriate.
- SCTs use neighbourhood panels (which have community representatives who identify and agree local priorities on behalf of their communities) and JAGs to agree the resolution and sign off local priorities, as recorded in minutes and checked by supervisors. In addition, other methods are used to advise a wider audience about the resolving of local priorities and, in effect, sign them off, through newsletters, word of mouth, posters and responding to some individual community interaction cards. SCT sergeants endorse signed-off local priorities. Extensive use is made of local newspapers to inform communities about the successes of problem solving especially where the local priority is of high profile – such as in both Castle and Eastfield wards.
- A number of staff from the county and borough council, such as neighbourhood managers and wardens, who work with SCTs on joint problem solving, have attended the SCT training course and reported positively on this opportunity to train jointly. The force continues to extend the invitation to all partners to take this opportunity.

### **Work in progress**

- At the time of inspection, the problem-solving part of the ComPaSS system had been suspended for a number of weeks owing to a concern about data protection. Whilst SCT staff were updating plans through JAG minutes and were confident this issue would soon be resolved, there was an acknowledgement of a wider question about the suitability of ComPaSS as a tool to support the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing in the future. Accordingly, a review with partners is looking to integrate ComPaSS with the local area agreement (LAA) site (observatory) that will provide a more joined-up approach with the LAA agenda, improve community messaging capacity and clarify data protection and ownership issues.

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- The force is continually looking for ways to improve the knowledge base of SCTs in respect of problem solving. For instance, work to develop the profile of the top five common local priorities and identify associated problem-solving responses is ongoing. An SCT sergeant message board on the force intranet is another concept under development.
- Whilst summary findings for each of the sections in the SCT review self-assessment have been published, an analysis of progress of each SCT against each question is still progressing. The results will provide valuable information for SCTs to further develop problem solving and how results are fed back to communities. For instance, reality testing in two SCT wards showed that there were varying levels of knowledge by local residents and businesses about local priorities and successful outcomes – from a little to in-depth – and differences in the numbers of priority posters used.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Currently, the ComPaSS system does not provide an electronic search facility so users can easily identify specific problem-solving plans that may be of use to them. The force has included this as part of the ongoing work into developing the next generation of ComPaSS. This could also assist SCT sergeants and sector commanders to monitor local priorities that have been signed off.
- In addition to the processes used to sign off local priorities, outlined as a strength overleaf, some SCTs respond directly to all individuals who contribute to the setting of local priorities through community interaction cards (but who do not attend neighbourhood panels), to advise them about resolutions. However, this is not done consistently across the force and is not subject to self-assessment checking. There is an opportunity to improve the consistency of this method of 'signing off' local priorities, where it is practicable, and so maximise the impact on public satisfaction and confidence that resolving local priorities has.
- The force has yet to complete a learning needs analysis in conjunction with its partners and community members in relation to joint problem solving. In doing so, joint training requirements can be identified and a structured approach can then be taken to delivering and evaluating such training, including evaluating the existing, albeit ad-hoc, training given to members of JAGs and neighbourhood panels.

**The outcomes of Neighbourhood policing are being realised by the surveyed public.**

	<b>SPI 2a</b> Percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job		<b>KDI</b> Percentage of people who 'agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area'		<b>SPI 10b</b> Percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour	
	Difference from MSF	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	Difference from MSF	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	Difference from MSF	2005/06 to 2007/08 change
<b>Northants</b>	-3.3pp	+0.5pp	-7.6pp	+1.7pp	+1.8pp	-2.0pp

**Summary statement**

**The SPI/KDI data shows that force performance is significantly worse than the average for the MSF.**

**The SPI/KDI data also shows that force performance is unchanged compared with two years ago.**

**Context**

The SPI and KDI statistics are obtained from the PPAFs to March 2008. These figures are survey based and have been analysed for statistical significance, which can be explained in lay terms as follows: 'The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

Note: When comparing the force's performance with previous years, year-on-year statistical significance is explained as follows: 'The difference in force performance between the years compared is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

There is a summary of how statistical significance is used at Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

As part of the BCS, approximately 1,000 interviews are undertaken in each force area in England and Wales. Included in the survey is the individual's assessment of whether the local police are doing a good job, whether the police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in their area, and whether anti-social behaviour in their area is a problem.

**SPI 2a – percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job.**

49.2% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 think that their local police do a good or excellent job, which is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

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Force performance was broadly unchanged in the year ending March 2008; 49.2% of people surveyed think that their local police do a good or excellent job, compared with 48.8% in the year ending March 2006.

**KDI – percentage of people who ‘agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area’.**

44.1% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 ‘agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area’, which is significantly worse than the average for the MSF.

Force performance was broadly unchanged in the year ending March 2008; 44.1% of people surveyed ‘agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area’, compared with 42.4% in the year ending March 2006.

**SPI 10b – percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour.**

16.5% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour, which is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

Force performance was broadly unchanged in the year ending March 2008; 16.5% of people surveyed think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour, compared with 18.5% in the year ending March 2006.

**Strengths:**

- A performance monitoring framework has been developed to hold SCTs to account for performance, using learning from other forces. The Neighbourhood Policing indicators, which are monitored through the Citizen Focus Board and Managing Performance Group, include a wide range of measures such as numbers of crimes and incidents, community intelligence logs, community interactions, SCT priorities and SCT staff abstractions. These feed into public confidence, satisfaction and perception outcomes, reflecting how well local police understand and deal with local issues, monitored at force level.

**Work in Progress:**

- Senior managers have identified several reasons for the gap between performance and the levels of investment in delivering Neighbourhood Policing activity. Firstly, because of the statistical and time period restrictions of the BCS a less than full and up to date picture of performance is presented. For instance the force’s own Public Attitude Survey provides more up to date information and shows better recent performance in both SPI 2a and SP10b, as detailed in NP/SGC 2.2b. Secondly, there is a legacy from the adverse publicity during the two-year period the force was engaged with the then Police Standards Unit because of poor performance in reducing and detecting volume crime. Thirdly, a number of SCTs have only been in place for 12 months and their engagement and problem solving activity has not had the impact of the longer established teams. HMIC acknowledges the relevant context of these factors and agrees that the increasing level of Neighbourhood Policing activity has probably yet to be fully reflected in BCS performance information. However, to help ensure that all SCTs, together with partners, are successfully identifying priority policing issues and tackling them the force needs to progress an intrusive reality testing regime over the next 12 months. The results will support the



current and future force strategic priority of improving key Neighbourhood Policing performance indicators.

**Force-level and local satisfaction/confidence measures are used to inform service delivery.**

**Summary statement**

**The force fully understands the needs of its communities. Identified service improvements are frequently made to improve local service delivery.**

**Strengths**

- An internal telephone bureau, based in the HQ department for service improvement, comprising four part-time staff carry out surveying activity, allowing the force to measure victim satisfaction and public perceptions.
- In June 2007 a public attitude telephone survey was started to capture perception information on a more localised level and with more regularity than that provided by the BCS. Questions based on the BCS provide information on confidence in the local police (SPI 2a), fear of crime (SPI 10a), and perceptions of high levels of anti-social behaviour (SPI 10b). In addition, questions relate to other key indicators; percentage of people who agree that police in their area understand issues that affect them; are dealing with things that matter to them; and can be relied upon to deal with minor crimes. Visibility of, and accessibility to, local police is also measured. The sample size is approximately 1,700.
- For the year ending March 2008, results of the public attitude survey show that the percentage of the public who have confidence in the local police and believe they do a good or excellent job (SPI 2a) is 58%, some 10% higher than the BCS for 2007 shows. In relation to the percentage of people who have a perception of high levels of anti-social behaviour, the survey reports only 10.2% believe this as opposed to the BCS figure of 15.3%.
- Opportunities are taken to participate in joint surveys– most recently, a postal survey (Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Survey) conducted by a marketing company (Marketing Means) on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire LAA in February 2008. The survey was sent to 12,329 households across all the county's neighbourhood renewal areas with 34% (4,108 households) responding. A draft analysis produced in March 2008 has provided the force with perceptions of residents about anti-social behaviour and crime and how well the local police are tackling them for each of the neighbourhood renewal areas.
- All force survey performance information and how it translates to public confidence and victim satisfaction is included in performance management at both BCU and force level. SCT staff showed an overall awareness of current performance and the force priority of focusing on raising performance levels.
- The force also carried out an anti-social behaviour victim satisfaction survey from May to October 2007 involving 348 victims across one BCU (Northampton area) to provide BCUs with specific satisfaction information. A breakdown of the results including all aspects of the service from ease of contact to police action identified positive performance as well as areas for improvement for each BCU to focus on.

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- Community policing teams respond to formal and informal feedback from local communities. Problem-solving plans, which are in place for every local priority, articulate the link between the various methods of community engagement and the decision on what will be a local priority. This is especially evident in the neighbourhood management areas.
- All quality of service complaints are recorded on three separate databases held at the professional standards department (PSD) and one on each BCU. PSD maintains an overview of all quality of service complaints.
- In January 2008 an online crime reporting facility was made available to the public via the force website. In order to improve the new online reporting service contact has been made with every user of the facility inviting them to attend a workshop during the summer of 2008 to discuss ways to improve this service. The force website also enables a victim to enter their crime number to access updates on their crime.
- The force website section 'online services and forms' provides links to 18 other services and forms, including the ability to report to Crimestoppers, provide call handling feedback, a drugs incident report form, 'contact your SCT', which has a postcode search facility, and submitting intelligence on any subject.

### **Work in progress**

- Tiered focus groups with service users and providers in areas where public attitude and public satisfaction data is lower are planned for the summer of 2008, in order to improve services. HMIC acknowledges the good work it is doing already in this area to review the online crime reporting facility.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Currently, very few of the measures in the SCT performance framework measure engagement and joint problem-solving activity. The force has identified an opportunity to include SCT engagement and problem-solving performance as part of the review of the SCT performance framework.

## **The force demonstrates sustainable plans for Neighbourhood Policing.**

### **Summary statement**

**The force and the police authority (PA) have convincingly shown how they plan to ensure Neighbourhood Policing is sustained beyond April 2008.**

### **Strengths**

- Sustaining the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing beyond April 2008 is a key part of the force's strategic plans for the next three years. Governing this is a recently started SCT strategic oversight group chaired by the ACC (TP) with senior representatives from the county council and all district councils to co-ordinate budgets, learning and development, and co-location. This strategic joined-up approach will also help the force and partners to meet the commitments under public service agreements (PSAs) in respect of neighbourhood management, including equal access to policing services for all, especially in the many rural areas of the county. The SCT strategic group reports to the Citizen Focus board.

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- Force budgets are in place to support the future development of SCTs including maintaining the number of PCSOs. The chief officer group (COG) is also considering increasing the number of SCT sergeants by six to add resilience for the future. In addition, the county council has committed to continue Neighbourhood Policing-related funding of £500,000 and other partners have agreed to continue part funding the 25 additional PCSOs (over and above the force's national allocation) until 2010 at least.
- Over the last two years, a self-development process has been undertaken in conjunction with the NPIA, whose field officers have worked closely with the Neighbourhood Policing project team. Where NPIA and HMIC have identified areas for improvement these have been integrated into the Neighbourhood Policing project plan, resulting in improved working practices for SCT staff. In order to drive these improvements through SCTs many of the improvements now feature as part of the SCT review self-assessment process.
- Examples of improvement include how the force has provided SCT with staff to input onto ComPaSS in order to reduce the administrative burden (an area for improvement in the 2007 inspection report); improved training and awareness for SCTs around identifying community intelligence (a work in progress identified in 2007); and the completion of all neighbourhood profiles for SCTs (a work in progress identified in 2007). All of the eight work-in-progress actions and the one area for improvement identified in the 2007 inspection have either been fully addressed or significantly moved forward.
- The commitment and leadership of the chief officers and senior HQ and BCU managers have already been identified throughout this report, for instance, in securing partner funding. However, SCT staff have also noticed intrusive but supportive leadership in the drive to fully establish all of the SCTs and share their challenges and successes specifically around engagement and problem solving.
- The PA is active at all levels in the governance of how well the force is delivering Neighbourhood Policing. The authority lead member for Neighbourhood Policing has a strong working relationship with all chief officers and sits on the force Citizen Focus board. The authority's consultation and engagement officer also sits on several other key force level meetings including the community consultation working group. Members with responsibility for meeting regularly with BCU commanders challenge those managers in relation to negative feedback that comes from the PA's attendance at community forums.
- At ward level, all 17 of the PA members commit to sit on all neighbourhood panel meetings and feed back to the consultation and engagement officer, who summarises progress for the authority's Equalities and Engagement committee meeting. Although this process only started approximately two months before the inspection it is already providing members with a more informed picture of how effectively the force is delivering Neighbourhood Policing.

### **Work in progress**

- Structures to meet the future challenges for Neighbourhood Policing in Northamptonshire are already being put in place. A good example of this is the joined-up approach to tackling young people issues – specifically, anti-social behaviour. A force young persons' strategy working group has recently been set up with a wide range of partners represented to ensure that the force can engage in all relevant work by those partners in relation to young people. Another example is the

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successful bid for Home Office monies to pilot the use of mobile data technology to reduce the time front-line officers spend on bureaucracy. SCT staff will be prioritised to receive the BlackBerry-style mobile data units.

- Other strands of work currently being developed as part of future plans for Neighbourhood Policing include realising the vision that all SCTs will have a community base, further increasing PCSO involvement with victims of crime and enhancing the existing counter-terrorist and domestic extremism perspective of SCTs.
- During May 2008, an independent cultural audit will be conducted with all of the staff in the force, which will provide an assessment and draw conclusions for consideration and action. The independent audit will provisionally report the findings to the force in June 2008. This will provide the COG and senior managers with a barometer of morale, perceptions and views on its leadership and direction.
- One potential risk to Neighbourhood Policing has been identified and actively planned for. The force workforce retention group is monitoring and preparing for the potential loss of skilled and experienced SCT staff in the future to its neighbouring force, the Metropolitan Police. This has been an issue for the force previously because of weighting allowances paid to Metropolitan Police staff and the close proximity of Northamptonshire to Greater London.

#### **Area for improvement**

- None identified.

## Developing Citizen Focus Policing

<b>2007/08 Developing Citizen Focus Policing Summary of judgement</b>	<b>Meeting the standard</b>
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### Meeting the standard

**A Citizen Focused ethos is embedding across the force, establishing an initial baseline.**

#### Summary statement

**The force fully understands the needs of its communities. Identified service improvements are systematically made to improve local service delivery. The force comprehensively communicates the National Quality of Service Commitment (NQoS) standards, the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime standards, and the force corporate/accessibility standards to its communities.**

#### Strengths

- A Citizen Focus strategy was introduced by the force in October 2007, which supports the force vision and strategic priorities for Citizen Focus for 2008–11. For example, the strategic priorities are to, tackle crime, increase public confidence and satisfaction and position the force for the future by engaging with people and strengthening partnerships and collaboration. The governance and direction is provided by the Citizen Focus board chaired by the ACC (TP). An action plan has been prepared that contains 18 actions under the headings of customer, feedback and service. A total of 56 objectives have been set, each with a lead officer under five themes, namely, people, partnerships, performance, policy practice and systems, and marketing and communications – each with a senior manager lead. To drive this forward, a Citizen Focus delivery board is in place chaired by a chief superintendent, department for service improvement.
- The force vision for Citizen Focus is ‘making the difference’, which is, “to deliver the best possible quality of policing services to the people of Northamptonshire”. Making the difference also includes the force mission which has seven sub-headings including, for example, to identify and respond to the needs of our communities, and build public satisfaction and confidence, and force eight values. Examples include, focus on service improvement and care about our individuals and communities. The inspection found good awareness of ‘making the difference’, particularly with public facing staff and HMIC considers it to be well embedded.
- The inspection found good evidence of strategic leadership: for example, seminars on Citizen Focus delivered to all 400 managers and supervisors in the force during April 2008, led by the Chief Constable, supported by the COG, including the Citizen Focus champion the ACC (TP).
- Staff from the Department of Service Improvement (DSI) are members of the East Midlands regional forces Citizens Focus group which brings the forces together to share good practice and developments. It is actively engaged with one of the forces, exchanging and sharing their experiences to the mutual benefit of both forces.

- Each BCU and the force communications centre (FCC) has a Citizen Focus strategy and action plan in place. For example, the FCC strategy, which has been in place since January 2006 takes into account the HMIC thematic inspection, 'First contact' which puts the customer first. The FCC has embraced this in its strategy, at the heart of which lies customer experience. To support the strategy, the FCC has an inspector post dedicated to quality and Citizen Focus testing systems and processes who also manages the customer relations department.
- Full use is made by the force of the BCS and in June 2007 it introduced a public attitude telephone survey aiming to provide more regular localised information and to allow better understanding of public perceptions. The staff who conduct the Police Performance Assessment Framework satisfaction survey also conduct the public attitude survey. The questions posed are the same as those contained in the BCS. The aim is to conduct 4,200 of these surveys per annum. For June to December 2007, 1,370 were conducted. All current satisfaction survey data is accessible to the public via the force's website. The force also shares public survey data with its crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) in order to better inform joint service delivery.
- The force was one of the early pioneers in introducing telephone survey call-back bureaux and has hosted the Derbyshire Constabulary for discussions on telephone surveying and supported the Nottinghamshire Police in implementing their call-back bureau. It has also hosted a meeting with other force users of survey software to share best practice and developments.
- Cognisance is also taken of the witness and victim experience survey (WAVES) collated independently and distributed among all criminal justice partners. The force has used this data to implement a quality of service standard to measure the percentage of witnesses who are offered a victim personal statement, for example. This is dip-sampled monthly for compliance by staff in each BCUs operational performance group.
- In 2007 the force introduced a new method of updating victims of road traffic collisions (RTCs) by letter to improve performance in this area following victim satisfaction surveys, which demonstrated required improvement. RTC victim satisfaction has improved by over 10% since the beginning of 2008 following these changes to the procedure.
- All force survey performance information and how it translates to public confidence and victim satisfaction is included in performance management at both BCU and force level.
- All quality of service complaints are recorded on three separate databases held at the PSD, and one on each BCU. PSD maintains an overview of all quality of service complaints.
- Internally, the force has a 'bright ideas' scheme which enables all staff to submit suggestions to improve service delivery. The inspection found good knowledge of this process by staff across the force at all levels.
- Good engagement has taken place with a disability advisory group which led to the introduction of the disability access line, providing a dedicated non-emergency number for a person to ring, where their disability affects their telephone use. This enables the caller to by-pass the switchboard and be directed straight into the FCC,

being prioritised over other non-emergency calls. This process is supported by a force policy entitled 'force communications centre disability line'.

- The FCC has a customer relations department consisting of a manager and two customer relations officers, which is proactive in contacting callers to the FCC to obtain their views. They deal with approximately 20 complaints per month, recording each in detail in the FCC feedback folder. Outcomes are used to both praise and develop staff utilising the PDR process. Staff from the customer relations department spend a fair proportion of their time promoting the FCC, attending parish, council, residents' and SCT meetings. It also invites a range of groups, for example, schools and scouts, and partner agencies to view the FCC in operation. They also invite complainants to view the FCC and observe the working environment and demands placed upon staff. All FCC staff also attend a one-day Citizen Focus course entitled 'First contact'.
- In January 2008, an online crime reporting facility was made available to the public via the force website. In order to improve the new online reporting service, contact has been made with every user of the facility inviting them to attend a workshop during the summer of 2008 to discuss ways to improve this service. The force website also enables a victim to enter their crime number to access updates on their crime.
- The force website section 'online services and forms' provides links to 18 other services and forms, including the ability to report to Crimestoppers, provide call handling feedback, a drugs incident report form, 'contact your SCT', which has a postcode search facility, and submitting intelligence on any subject.
- In May 2008 during the deaf awareness week the force launched its standard messaging system (SMS) text facility enabling deaf or hard of hearing people to make quick and easy contact with the force via the FCC.
- The Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) that the inspection found was thoroughly embedded into the force at all levels, particularly for updating victims of crime. The force crime information system (CIS) has a red, amber and green (RAG) flagging system which indicates if a victim has been updated. The force standard is to update all victims within 28 days of reporting their crime. Supervisors can easily access the crime system to check the RAG status of all crimes being investigated by their staff and take appropriate action to ensure victims are updated within the target time. The crime system does not allow filing of a crime report until the VCOP update to victims has been complied with. Managers and supervisors up to the rank of chief superintendent on BCU conduct quality call-backs to victims of crime, asking a standard set of questions and recording responses on to the CIS. Sergeants conduct one per officer per month and chief inspectors conduct four randomly per month.
- The inspection found consistently that staff had a Citizen Focus PDR objective to update all crime victims within 28 days 100% of the time, helping to drive compliance in this area. Follow-up to victims was a previous area of weakness for the force, which it has addressed with significant improvements of 10% in satisfaction with its drive on VCOP.
- During the inspection four police stations were visited to assess how citizen friendly front counters were for the public. The following positive attributes were noted:
  - Corporate branding and signage were good and clear.

- There were visible and clear displays of the SCT and contact details, both internally in the reception areas and externally on walls and notice boards.
- Enquiry staff can access the force intranet and identify officers if required and also have access to the duty planning of SCT staff. At all sites visited there was the facility for the enquiry staff to leave both email and voicemail messages for SCT staff.
- The reception areas and access were Disability Discrimination Act compliant. All signage was supported by Braille, access was uniformly wheelchair friendly with appropriate placed door access facilities, handrails were fitted where appropriate, hearing loop facilities in the main were available.
- There were customer friendly street maps and useful contact details on external walls of the enquiry offices.
- All outside phones were tested and found to be in good order and test calls were answered promptly.
- The staff were found to be helpful, polite, and presented a professional image.
- Large widescreen televisions were used to display a range of information including SCT staff details and contact points.
- The force website has a link to [www.askthe.police.uk](http://www.askthe.police.uk) which features over 500 frequently asked questions (FAQs) by the public. This is a good resource, and one of the most common questions is, 'How soon do I have to report a collision after it has happened?' It also enables anyone to pose a question to the police. This comprehensive bank of FAQs means a person does not have to make telephone contact with the force and also reduces demand on the FCC.
- A positive and effective service is delivered to robbery victims across the force, tailored on each BCU to meet demand. For example, on one BCU where the incidents of robbery are higher, a dedicated robbery team is in place. Here every victim receives a personal visit from a team member. On the other BCU where demand is lower each victim is contacted by the detective inspector to review the investigation and quality assess the service provided. These interventions ensure that good and consistent service is delivered to victims.
- A PA member and the PA consultation and engagement officer both sit on the Citizen Focus board. It also has a performance and monitoring committee which reviews all performance data in force, including satisfaction and confidence. As members of the Citizen Focus board, both PA attendees receive copies of all of the force surveys. The consultation and engagement officer is also a member of the force feedback user group and community consultation working group. All 17 PA members sit on two or three community panels to ensure it is aware of local issues.
- The Northamptonshire police website provides, via the information button, access to service standards, which in turn provides access to the quality of service button. The quality of service section outlines in full the quality of service commitment (QoS) and sets out the nine main public facing commitments ranging from making it easy to contact the police, to complaints, each providing a link to users to access more detailed information. The home page shows 22 nationalities flags, which provides



the user with a link to gain access to free online translation services, allowing the user to paste sections of text onto the site and get a free translation into any of the 22 languages. The complaints section of the QoSC provides links via the Independent Police Complaints Commission for 16 languages. Internally, the force intranet has a good Citizen Focus button enabling staff to access a variety of information and data on this subject.

- All operational staff are able to access language interpreter and translation services via their Airwave radios. Other staff can access the service via telephone. Also available to operational staff is a language card with some 40-plus languages, allowing a person to identify their national flag so that the officer can engage the correct language service. The inspection found good use of this by SCTs, response staff, and in custody centres.
- The PSD oversees all quality of service complaints and each BCU maintains its own spreadsheet. PSD maintains an overview of all matters and provides a newsletter which is accessible to staff via the force intranet identifying ways for staff to improve efficiency and deliver better service.
- The force monitors how it is performing against the 50 National Quality of Service standards via a number of groups and forums, primarily by the Citizen Focus board. At the time of inspection, the force was able to demonstrate performance against the key standards and has a red, amber and green grading for each. It has adopted a total of 96 service standards in relation to the NQoSC and uses an action plan to manage all of them. This includes the service standard, source and measurement, including frequency and current performance. For example, the standard for satisfaction by a victim making emergency telephone calls stands at 97.8% as of March 2008 and is considered green by the force. At inspection, two-thirds of the standards were green and one third amber, all with actions in place to progress full compliance.

### **Work in progress**

- During May 2008 an independent cultural audit will be conducted with all of the staff in force which will provide an assessment and draw conclusions for consideration and action. The independent audit will provisionally report the findings to the force in June 2008, providing the COG and senior managers with a barometer of morale, perceptions and views on the leadership and direction of the force in the context of Citizen Focus.
- In March 2008 the operations and crime and community departments were merged into one, forming the protective services command (PSC). Citizen Focus was at the forefront when merging these specialist departments and PSC has its own Citizen Focus strategy designed to support the development of a Citizen Focused approach to policing in Northamptonshire. The strategy has four key themes: front-line services delivered by the PSC, PSC support to SCTs, a focus on internal quality and public confidence. PSC has identified its key front-line services as scientific support and firearms licensing. It is developing a methodology to measure customer satisfaction and will begin with a pilot scheme to enhance the level of service provided by scientific support to victims of domestic burglary. This process will commence with supervisors making call-backs to all victims to assess the quality of service delivery.
- All standard operating procedures (SOPs), as they come up for their annual review, will be subject to a Citizen Focus checklist consisting of 15 areas for review. These

range from: 'Are the customers clearly defined?' to 'Keeping you informed'. This process ensures all SOPs are reviewed for Citizen Focus and will bring consistency and corporacy.

- In May 2008 the NPIA will deliver to the forces 24 Citizen Focus champions a strategic Citizen Focus course bespoke for the requirements of Northamptonshire Police.
- In June 2008 the force intends to introduce a postcard-sized feedback card to be given to all users of the front counter facilities in the force, in order to assess and understand service users' views and react to the feedback to improve and enhance the services offered.
- Tiered focus groups with service users and providers in areas where public attitude and public satisfaction data is lower are planned for the summer of 2008, in order to improve services. HMIC acknowledges the good work it is doing already in this area to review the online crime reporting facility.
- A review is currently taking place of the force crime reporting system, initially to map the victim's journey through the process, the aim being to add value for the victim. It will report on the findings in the autumn of 2008.
- The PA is actively engaged in community consultation and is currently developing a joint consultation strategy with other local partners through the LAA.
- An interim Citizen Focus communication plan was introduced in January 2008, which has a key objective to raise awareness amongst the public of Northamptonshire. It identifies numerous channels to engage in, including, for example, leaflets and mobile police stations. The force recognises the need to develop further and market the plan and to help achieve this it has created a new post of marketing manager to be in post by July 2008. The force Director of Resources has ensured a budget is available for the new marketing manager to drive forward and embed key messages.
- The force has recognised that its system for collating and recording quality of service complaints was not effective. To improve this area it has purchased a software application called 'Tell-us' which is a product related to the 'Centurion' complaints database used by the PSD. 'Tell-us' will enable the identification of trends, causes and gaps in service, it will also identify best practice, organisational learning and allow feedback from complaints to be captured. The system is being piloted on the North BCU between May and July 2008. Early indications suggest this will be an effective system and will be introduced across the force in August 2008. The force also intends to provide wider access to the system enabling inspectors, for example, to search and review all quality of service complaints to identify trends and access good practice.

### **Area(s) for improvement**

- The force does have a front counter working group, set up in 2007, to implement national best practice. There are longer-term plans to improve this part of customer experience with partners: for instance, the force has piloted the provision of front counter services at the Northampton Guildhall. However, following the inspection of four station front counters to assess how citizen friendly services were for the public the following areas were noted:

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- Although all locations visited were Disability Discrimination Act compliant there was some mixed staff awareness as to the use of hearing loops and access to magnifying equipment for sight-impaired customers.
- Presentation of enquiry counter staff was variable with non-compliance with some corporate standards: for example, some staff wore name badges, some did not, and some just wore identity cards. The inspection found that the majority of staff wore name badges at all times, therefore, this message needs reinforcing with some staff to ensure the force presents a corporate standard to all customers.
- The Campbell Square enquiry office has significant graffiti on the front of the building and on the opening hours signage. This, potentially, is a signal crime and sets a poor image – an area the force intends to take immediate action on.
- The Campbell Square site also suffered from litter outside the main entrance. Litter bins were removed from outside the building by the council following national terrorist/public safety concerns. It is also appreciated that this site shares a joint access with the magistrates court. However, the image was less than favourable and needs attention again. The force intends to take immediate action to address this.
- The Wellingborough site had significant graffiti to the wooden chairs inside the enquiry office, the carpets were dirty and there was litter on the floors.
- Confidentiality – most enquiry office layouts have little regard to the public raising confidential issues. Albeit, interview rooms would be made available if required. Signage to suggest that issues can be raised confidentially would be beneficial.
- Provision of drink facilities and improved access to public toilets would all enhance the customer experience.
- To improve access to quality of service information the force may wish to consider moving the quality of service button on its website to the home page, as in the case of the SCTs, and consider adding the 50 NQoSC or its own 96 adopted related commitment standards. It could also include a Citizen Focus theme on its rolling information displayed on widescreen television in its public counter areas.
- Although a wide range of information booklets are available, the inspection could not find any evidence of a specific Citizen Focus or quality of service leaflet to mirror the information available on the force website. This would enable the force to reach those customers who do not use, or have access to, the internet.
- The force may wish to consider whether the PSD newsletter is sufficiently impactful and reaching all its public facing staff to deliver key messages on service delivery. It may consider incorporating this data into its internal Citizen Focus section on the internet, for example.

**The force has integrated Citizen Focus and operational activity, such as contact management, response, Neighbourhood Policing, investigation and through the criminal justice process.**

### **Summary statement**

**The force has implemented corporate service standards expected of all staff when dealing with the public. Satisfaction and confidence performance is fully integrated into BCU and force performance management processes.**

### **Strengths**

- The ACC (TP) is the senior responsible officer (SRO) for demand management in the East Midlands region. The regions collaboration and programme team have completed work setting out the strategic developments for demand management in the region with a particular aim to improve customer satisfaction. The SRO is progressing the development of a regional strategic plan to deliver agreed regional quality standards. The key high level outcomes for the demand management project are, improved customer satisfaction, improved demand management and increased efficiency. Each force has a project lead area – in Northamptonshire’s case this is for Airwave and mobile data. This work will be reviewed in September 2008.
- An effective witness care unit is in place with good processes and procedures to maintain and update the witness’s journey through the criminal justice system. It has one of the highest rates in the country for witnesses attending the Crown Court and good performance for witnesses attending the magistrates’ court. The unit provides a number of leaflets to victims about attending court, with specific booklets for children and teenagers.
- The inspection found good evidence of corporate standards in the FCC with standard greetings, call scripting and guidance text on how to deal with calls. Managers in the FCC monitor a minimum of three calls per call-taker per month to ensure corporate standards are maintained. The FCC also conducts approximately 150 feedback calls per days to users of the FCC to update them on the progress of their call, via the force helpdesk, which has two staff per shift dedicated to making the calls. It will also use email if that medium suits the caller.
- Good use of corporate standards is made by the SCTs with common contact forms, posters and voicemail messages evident.
- Consistent corporate standards for accessibility exist for all SCT staff: for example, the force website contains identical contact details for all of the SCTs in force enabling a user to easily navigate the site and access contact details, both email and telephone.
- An automated voicemail audit system is in place whereby if a member of staff exceeds more than 15 messages in their voicemail box, an email is sent to the user to clear their voicemails. This reminder acts as a prompt to staff to manage their voicemail account effectively.
- During the spring of 2008 a number of leadership seminars were held by the force on Citizen Focus, delivered to all 400 managers and supervisors in the force, led by the Chief Constable and supported by the COG. The force has taken the view to focus on its managers and supervisors in order to drive and deliver the Citizen Focus agenda by cascading messages and themes to their staff.

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- In addition to the ACC (TP) Citizen Focus champion, the force has identified a further 24 champions, six on each of the force's two BCUs, six for headquarters departments and six in the PSC, all of whom will receive bespoke NPIA delivered Citizen Focus training in May 2008. The force statement on Citizen Focus is 'making the difference', which was found to be widely understood by staff in the force.
- All marked police vehicles display the force non-emergency number and the force email address, and all officers wear name badges.
- The inspection found good and consistent evidence of knowledge and awareness of the force reward and recognition processes both at BCU, departmental and force level. The force has a 'making the difference' award which is a flexible award, which can include Citizen Focus, and is included in the force awards ceremonies. Both BCUs each have their own local award ceremonies. Good examples were provided: for example, the West BCU has the 'Westie' award where the BCU senior managers will reward staff with tea and biscuits for good service delivery. Common and frequent use is made of letters of thanks, certificate of achievement by senior managers and use of PDRs.
- The Citizen Focus performance in force is amongst the highest in England and Wales, and has attracted contact and interest from other forces. During April 2008 staff from the DSI hosted a group of officers from Cambridgeshire Constabulary who attended the force and received a number of presentations on how Citizen Focus is structured and processed in Northamptonshire. Positive feedback was received from the Cambridgeshire force with acknowledgement on the progress achieved by the force in Citizen Focus.
- The force is able to provide satisfaction and confidence data via its public attitude surveying down to BCU and CDRP levels – this data is available on the force intranet to all staff and made available to partners. During inspection, staff consistently identified knowledge on how to access data and had a good overview of the force performance on Citizen Focus.
- The SCTs all consult with their local communities on an ongoing basis to identify the local priorities. This consultation takes place in a variety of ways, informally on the street or formally at community meetings. For every contact with a member of the community an officer will complete an interaction card to record the three local priorities identified by a person. All interactions are entered onto the force Neighbourhood Policing computer system ComPaSS, which will identify the top priorities for an area, allowing the SCTs to focus on the areas where the greatest impact on satisfaction and confidence can be made. SCTs use neighbourhood panels and JAGs to agree the resolution and sign off local priorities as recorded in minutes. In addition, other methods are used to advise a wider audience about the resolving of local priorities, and in effect to sign them off, through newsletters, word of mouth, posters and by responding to some individual community interaction cards. SCT sergeants endorse signed-off local priorities. Extensive use is made of local newspapers to inform communities about the successes of problem solving, especially where the local priority is of high profile.
- During February 2008, Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire LAA and the force conducted a postal neighbourhood survey which was sent to 12,329 households. A return rate of 34% was achieved. The survey clusters geographical responses, namely Corby, Kettering, Northampton, Wellingborough and a rural cluster with an overall level. On one specific question – rating of the job done by the police – overall, 5% thought the police were doing an excellent job and 8% felt they

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were doing a poor job. One of the clusters, Wellingborough, rated the police the lowest. Both BCUs have a monthly quality Citizen Focus meeting chaired by a superintendent with a set agenda to discuss a range of issues including survey and satisfaction data. Actions tasked included developing a focus group to identify customer expectations following a racist incident.

### **Work in progress**

- The force is waiting for the outcome of its cultural audit before it embarks on developing bespoke Citizen Focus training for its staff. The audit finding should be available by July 2008.
- The strategic improvement board is currently assessing the viability of producing satisfaction and confidence data down to SCT level, acknowledging the need for a suitable survey sample to make statistical judgements.

### **Area(s) for improvement**

- Although good use is made of corporate standards by FCC, SCT and witness care staff, the inspection did not find commensurate levels of use of corporate standards with response and specialist staff. The next step for the force is to transfer and embed these standards in all of its public facing staff.
- The automated voicemail audit is good practice, and one BCU has carried out an initial audit of voicemail which showed variable management of voicemail by staff. The force needs to develop a formal audit to establish how well staff are managing voicemail. The automated email message identifying when a person has exceeded the voicemail limit, should also go to line managers who would then be able monitor effectively the management of voicemail by their staff. The audit should also establish if staff update messages when they are on leave or unavailable for any reason.
- HMIC recognises the good inputs the force has delivered to its managers and supervisors on Citizen Focus and real benefit would be accrued by delivering these inputs to all of its public facing staff whatever the outcome of the cultural audit is. However, cognisance should be taken of the audit findings.
- Consideration should be given by the force on delivering training to line managers to test compliance with force standards, or developing formal audit at the centre to test compliance.
- The introduction and training of 24 force champions for Citizen Focus is a positive step by the force. Although the ACC (TP) is recognised as the force champion the inspection found limited knowledge of the BCU and departmental champions. In acknowledging this new initiative the force should ensure that the 24 champions market and promote the corporate standards of the force.
- Although reward and recognition is thoroughly embedded in the force it may wish to consider developing a specific Citizen Focus award or restrict the 'making the difference' award to Citizen Focus. It should also consider developing an overarching reward and recognition policy to bring consistency in proving awards across the force.

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**The force can demonstrate that the relevant SPIs remain stable as a minimum.**

	SPI 1e Satisfaction with the overall service provided		SPI 3b Satisfaction of users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided	SPI 3b Gap – comparison of satisfaction for white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided
	Difference from MSF	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	+/-%
Northants	+1.5pp	+3.1pp	+3.9pp	2.8pp

### Summary statement

**The SPI data shows that force performance is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.**

**The SPI data also shows that force performance has significantly improved compared with two years ago.**

**Satisfaction of users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided is unchanged.**

**There is a satisfaction gap between white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided. Users from minority ethnic groups are 2.8 percentage points less satisfied.**

**Where there is a gap in satisfaction with service delivery between white users and users from minority ethnic groups, the force has evidenced that it is taking action to understand and narrow the gap.**

### Context

The SPI statistics are obtained from the PPAFs to March 2008. These statistics are survey based and have been analysed for statistical significance, which can be explained in lay terms as follows: 'The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

Note: When comparing the force's performance with previous years, year-on-year statistical significance is explained as follows: 'the difference in the force performance between the years compared is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

There is a summary of the statistical analysis methodology at Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

Victims of crime and users of police services are surveyed using Northamptonshire Police's own user satisfaction surveys, which comply to national standards and thus allow

comparison with other forces. Surveys are based on a sample size of 600 interviews per BCU.

### **SPI 1e – satisfaction with the overall service provided.**

83.1% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 were satisfied with the overall service provided, which is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

Force performance significantly improved in the year ending March 2008; 83.1% of people surveyed were satisfied with the overall service provided, compared with 80.0% in the year ending March 2006.

### **SPI 3b – comparison of satisfaction for white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided.**

Force performance was unchanged in the year ending March 2008; 80.5% of users from minority ethnic groups were satisfied with the overall service provided, compared with 76.6% in the year ending March 2006.

There is a satisfaction gap between white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided. Users from minority ethnic groups are 2.8 percentage points less satisfied.

Where there is a gap in satisfaction with service delivery between white users and users from minority ethnic groups, the force has evidenced that it is taking action to understand and narrow the gap.

### **Strengths**

- The force has made a significant investment in Citizen Focus and has introduced many new initiatives and actively promoted Citizen Focus outlined in this report, which has made an impact reflected in the data outlined above.

### **Work in progress**

- Although there is a gap in service delivery between white and black and minority ethnic (BME) service users, BME user satisfaction has increased slightly. The force has evidenced that it is taking the following action to understand and narrow the gap by commissioning a report by the force research unit, dated March 2008.
- For Northamptonshire, the gap has reduced from 9.9% at year end February 2007 to 3.9% at year end January 2008. Detailed analysis has taken place to understand the factors which may have influenced the narrowing of the gap. The main findings of the research were that BME victims aged between 16 and 44 years were significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with police actions compared to white victims in the same age group. This contradicts the finding of research by the Lancashire Constabulary which demonstrated decreased satisfaction as age increased. Further follow-up visits to BME victims resulted in dissatisfaction with the police action. Conversely, further visits to white victims resulted in greater satisfaction levels. BME victims were more likely than white victims to be dissatisfied with being kept updated as a result of not having received contacts and updates. BME victims were likely to be satisfied with follow-up if they received the first contact from the police within one week of reporting the incident. The main conclusions are that the variations indicate that the type of service provided to victims should be



appropriate to their needs, regardless of their ethnicity. Furthermore, officers and staff should negotiate, where appropriate, with victims about further contact based on their individual needs and circumstances. This is embedded in the 'making the difference' vision of the force and features in all seminars and inputs on Citizen Focus, which should enable the force to continue to meet the needs of all of its victims and aim to increase satisfaction levels.

**Area(s) for improvement**

- None identified

## Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

### A

ACC	Assistant Chief Constable
ACO	Assistant Chief Officer
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ASB	Anti-social Behaviour
ASBO	Anti-Social Behaviour Order

### B

BCS	British Crime Survey
BCU	Basic Command Unit
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BPA	Black Police Association

### C

CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CMU	Crime Management Unit

### D

DCC	Deputy Chief Constable
DV	Domestic Violence

### G

GO	Government Office
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### H

HICT	Head of Information and Communications Technology
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HR	Human Resources

HSE Health and Safety Executive

**I**

IAG Independent Advisory Group

ICT Information and Communications Technology

liP Investors in People

IS&T Information Systems and Technology

**L**

LCJB Local Criminal Justice Board

LSCB Local Safeguarding Children Board

**M**

MAPPA Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements

MPR Monthly Performance Review

MSF Most Similar Force(s)

**N**

NCRS National Crime Recording Standard

NIM National Intelligence Model

NHP Neighbourhood Policing

NPIA National Policing Improvement Agency

NSPIS National Strategy for Police Information Systems

**O**

OBTJ Offender brought to Justice

**P**

PCSO Police Community Support Officer

PFI Private Finance Initiative

PI Performance Indicator  
PIP Professionalising the Investigative Process  
PURE Police Use of Resources Evaluation

**Q**

QoSC Quality of Service Commitment

**R**

REG Race Equality Group

**S**

SARA Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment

SOCA Serious and Organised Crime Agency

SPG Strategic Performance Group

SPOC Single Point of Contact

**T**

TCG Tasking and Co-ordinating Group

## Appendix 2: Developing Practice

<b>Title:</b> Safer community team training
<b>Problem:</b>  To develop a training package that fully prepared all officers, special constables, PCSOs and neighbourhood wardens to undertake the role of safer community teams (SCTs) and to ensure an effective transition from community action teams to SCTs.
<b>Solution:</b>  In January 2007 an evaluation was conducted, which identified that the current course needed to be adapted to better meet the needs of the SCTs. The course was changed to include inputs as mentioned above but, also to focus on the practical SCT skills such as using ComPaSS, Neighbourhood Watch and other watch schemes, Crimestoppers, and the introduction of the Neighbourhood Policing module (NPM). Following on from this course, all inspectors, sergeants, constables and PCSOs undertook an introductory award in neighbourhood management. Neighbourhood wardens were invited to participate in the NPM. This is paper based, but students also had the opportunity to use National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT) to further develop their skills in this module through e-learning. This is a flexible learning approach that allows staff to continue their learning within their community (eg Corby rural). The modules covered community engagement, collaborative problem solving, neighbourhood meetings, partnership working, signal crimes and ASB/housing law. There is also a support network to facilitate the completion of the certificate, including an induction, a protected study time policy, line manager support, mentors and the encouraged use of action learning sets.
<b>Evaluation:</b>  The force initially evaluated this training using verbal feedback, but also a formalised process where Level 3 evaluation questionnaires and evaluation forms were used. There is currently an external consultant, part of the regional training and development unit, evaluating the effectiveness of the training.
<b>External validation:</b>  Cited as national best practice by NPIA  Letter of appreciation from Nigel Lloyd, Head of CLDP at NPIA  Cited in the NPIA <i>NPP Newsletter</i> , November 2007, issue 14  Training officer delivered presentations at a national CLDP conference, at Ryton, Harrogate and Bramshill, regarding the Neighbourhood Policing module introduced.

**Outcome(s):**

All SCT staff are properly equipped to set up and participate in their SCTs.

Learning and development was ongoing within the twelve-month timeframe for the introductory award in neighbourhood management.

7 SCT staff have achieved a formal qualification from the Chartered Management Institute.

300+ staff progressing through the formal qualification and nearing completion.

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**Title:** Safer community team seminars

**Problem:**

The force wanted a means of senior officers being able to engage with significant numbers of SCT officers in order to demonstrate the importance of their role, communicate key messages and receive feedback.

**Solution:**

Every six months the force holds seminars for all supervisors and to do this converts the force gym into a large conference room and hires in appropriate IT and sound equipment for a week. This provides a professional conference facility and the force now extends the time that this facility is available by a week for other use.

Depending on the proposed content, the seminars can be aimed at all Neighbourhood Policing staff or can be themed to certain groups. Seminars in the past have been held for rural SCTs, PCSOs, supervisors and special constables. Partners are also invited to these seminars where appropriate both as delegates and as speakers.

Individual SCTs will often present case studies of issues or local priorities they have tackled and this is a good forum for sharing best practice. Examples of this are:

- the displaying of crushed vehicles when dealing with priorities linked to anti-social use of off-road motorcycles or other vehicles;
- encouraging drivers caught speeding near to schools to apologise to the schoolchildren.

Wherever possible, these sessions are interactive with delegates and presenters bouncing ideas off each other.

All seminars are opened by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) lead for Neighbourhood Policing and culminate in an open question-and-answer session with a panel consisting of ACPO lead, superintendent for community policing and partnerships, BCU lead officers for Neighbourhood Policing and any invited guests. These sessions provide opportunities for officers and PCSOs to raise, with senior officers, issues that they see as potential blockers in performing their roles, in order that they be addressed where possible.

**Evaluation:**

The seminars are evaluated through feedback from delegates and presenters. In addition, there is a post-seminar debrief to pick up any learning and ensure it is captured. Issues raised are taken away, looked at and reported back.

**External validation:**

NPP field officers have attended the seminars both as observers and speakers and cited them as good practice.

**Outcome(s):**

Staff have better ideas of what their colleagues are doing and ideas of good practice, as well as leaving the seminars with key messages.

There is a developed sense of inclusivity for all SCT staff, as well as a reinforcement

of the importance of Neighbourhood Policing to the force.

**Force contact:**

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September 2008

**Title:** Police front office trial at Northampton Borough Council 'One Stop Shop'

**Problem:**

To improve interactions with the general public at a more central location, to increase police visible presence around the town centre.

**Solution:**

The project was developed in partnership with the PA and Northampton Borough Council to improve interactions with the public at a more central location on non-police premises working in partnership. Suitable premises were identified and the pilot ran from December 2007 to February 2008.

**Evaluation:**

The pilot has been evaluated, which identifies that 409 customers used the 'one stop shop'. The majority were happy to be able to access two services at one location, namely council and police staff working together. The environment at the 'one stop shop' was considered to be friendlier than the local police station. The partnership is now looking to develop the 'one stop shop' by integrating the SCT and submitting a report with options to secure future funding to formalise the project for 2009/10.

**External validation:**

Kent police have made contact to discuss lessons learnt and nearby Daventry District Council have also expressed interest.

**Outcome(s):**

Quality focused contact with the public improved interactions which would not have occurred in a police station. Improved partnership working

**Force contact:**

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## Appendix 3: Assessment of Outcomes Using Statutory Performance Indicator Data

### Context

The HMIC grading of Neighbourhood Policing and Citizen Focus for each force takes performance on the key SPIs as a starting point. These are derived from the PPAF and are survey based.

The survey results come from two different sources:

- **Neighbourhood Policing**  
Results come from the BCS, which questions the general population. The annual sample size for the BCS is usually 1,000 interviews per force.
- **Developing Citizen Focus Policing**  
Results come from forces' own user satisfaction surveys. The annual sample size for these user satisfaction surveys is 600 interviews per BCU.

### Understanding survey results

The percentage shown for each force represents an estimate of the result if the whole relevant population had been surveyed. Around the estimate there is a margin of error based on the size of the sample surveyed (not on the size of the population).

This margin is known as a **confidence interval** and it will narrow or widen depending on how confident we want to be that the estimate reflects the views of the whole population (a common standard is 95% confident) and therefore how many people have to be interviewed. For example, if we have a survey estimate of 81% from a sample of approximately 1,000 people, the confidence interval would be plus or minus 3 and the appropriate statement would be that we can be 95% confident that the real figure in the population lies between 78% and 84%.

Having more interviewees – a larger sample – means that the estimate will be more precise and the confidence interval will be correspondingly narrower. Generally, user satisfaction surveys will provide a greater degree of precision in their answers than the BCS because the sample size is greater (1,000 for the **whole force** for the BCS, as opposed to 600 **for each BCU** for user satisfaction).

### HMIC grading using survey results

In order to **meet the standard**, forces need to show no 'significant' difference between their score and the average for their MSF or against their own data from previous years. Consequently, force performance could be considered to be 'exceeding the standard' or 'failing to meet the standard' if it shows a 'significant' difference from the MSF average or from previous years' data.

HMIC would not consider force performance as 'exceeding the standard' if SPI data were travelling in the wrong direction, ie deteriorating. Likewise, credit has been given for an upward direction in SPI data even if performance falls below the MSF average.

## Understanding significant difference

The calculation that determines whether a difference is statistically significant takes into account the force's confidence interval and the confidence interval of its MSF.<sup>1</sup> The results of the calculation indicate, with a specified degree of certainty, whether the result shows a real difference or could have been achieved by chance.

This greater level of precision is the reason why a difference of approximately two percentage points is statistically significant<sup>2</sup> in the case of the user satisfaction indicator, whereas a difference of around four percentage points is required for the BCS indicators. If the sample size is small, the calculation is still able to show a statistically significant difference but the gap will have to be larger.

[Produced by HMIC based on guidance from the NPIA Research, Analysis and Information Unit, Victoria Street, London.]

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<sup>1</sup> The BCS results are also corrected to take account of intentional 'under-sampling' or 'over-sampling' of different groups in the force area.

<sup>2</sup> It is likely that there is a real, underlying difference between data taken at two different times or between two populations. If sufficient data is collected, the difference may not have to be large to be statistically significant.