

**Inspection of
South Nottingham BCU (D Division)
Nottinghamshire Police
July 2005**

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1. The inspection of South Nottingham Basic Command Unit (BCU), known as D division, Nottinghamshire Police was conducted on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary by a staff officer for BCU Inspections, Mr Stephen Griffiths, assisted by Chief Inspector Christopher Ward and Dawn Cross between 4 and 8 July 2005.

Force and BCU Overview

2. Nottinghamshire is situated in the heart of England and covers an area of 534,175 acres (834 square miles) and has more than a million residents. It has a working population of over 490,000, with the largest concentration found in the Greater Nottingham conurbation, with its population of more than 600,000. A diverse local economy features world-renowned companies in the fields of healthcare, pharmaceuticals, precision engineering, textiles and clothing and professional services.
3. Boots, Raleigh, Imperial Tobacco, Experian and Capital One have business headquarters here, as do Government bodies, including the Inland Revenue and the Driving Standards Agency. The county boasts two universities – the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University – offering courses to over 45,000 full and part-time students. In addition, New College in Nottingham is the second largest college in Europe with more than 50,000 full and part-time students.
4. D Division in Nottinghamshire is coterminous with the borough councils of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe. The division forms a 'horseshoe' around the City of Nottingham covering an area of over 230 square miles, which represents 30% of the total area of Nottinghamshire. With a total population of over 320,000 people split between the three boroughs, the division serves over 43% of the total population of the county. Each of the council boroughs is split further into two policing areas, called local area commands (LACs): Broxtowe North, Broxtowe South, Gedling North, Gedling South, Rushcliffe North and Rushcliffe South.
5. Broxtowe borough covers an area of 31 square miles and lies to the west of South Notts division. The resident population of Broxtowe as measured in the 2001 Census is 107,570 which is just over a tenth of the population of the county of Nottinghamshire. There are 45,445 households (as per 2001) and 99% of the resident population live in households of which 76.4% are owner occupied and 10.5% are rented from the council. According to the 2001 census, 95.4% of the population are white with ethnic minority communities accounting for 4.6%. The proximity of the University of Nottingham attracts a large influx of students who live, shop and socialise within the Beeston area of Broxtowe. The university has attracted increasing numbers of international students in recent years and this has contributed to the borough having a high proportion of Oriental ethnic groups that account for 1.1% of the borough's population which is the highest on the BCU. The unemployment rate within the borough has fallen from 2.7% in 2001 to 1.3% in December 2004.

6. Gedling Borough covers an area of 46.3 square miles and lies to the east of the BCU. The resident population of Gedling as measured in the 2001 Census is 111,787, which is over a tenth of the population of the county of Nottinghamshire. There are 47,556 households (as per 2001) and 99% of the resident population live in households with 81.2% being owner occupied and 8.4% are rented from the council. According to the 2001 census, 96.2% of the population are white with ethnic minority communities accounting for 3.8%. The borough is mainly residential, serving the Greater Nottingham conurbation, but with a broad industrial and commercial base including manufacturing, retailing, distribution and public services. There is a significant net employment outflow to neighbouring areas. There are numerous business centres and retail parks in the Gedling Borough namely at Daybrook, Netherfield and Colwick. Gedling unemployment currently stands at 2.9%.
7. Rushcliffe borough covers an area of 157 square miles and lies to the south and east of the BCU. The resident population of Rushcliffe as measured in the 2001 Census is 105,599 which is over a tenth of the population of the county of Nottinghamshire. The main centre of population is West Bridgford where around 36,000 of the borough's population live. There are 43,670 households (as per 2001) and 98% of the resident population live in households with 78.9% being owner occupied and 8.6% rented from the council. According to the 2001 census, 95.9% of the population are white with ethnic minority communities accounting for 4.1%. The Rushcliffe North area contains several main sporting arenas. Nottingham Forest Football Club attracts average crowds of around 25,000, the County Ground (home of Notts. County Football Club), Trent Bridge Cricket Ground hosts test match and one-day international cricket matches and the National Watersports Centre is situated at Holme Pirrepoint where national and international watersports are held. Unemployment currently stands at 2.2%. The Rushcliffe borough includes HMP Whatton which is the largest sex offender establishment within the country. Currently accommodating 360 inmates, it is due to expand in August 2005 to 960.
8. For the financial year 2005/06 D division's budget is £14,315,000, an increase of 2.7% on the previous year. It has an establishment of 346 police officers, 77 members of police staff, 79 special constables, 34 police community support officers and 46 volunteers. The senior management team is based at Carlton police station and consists of a chief superintendent (BCU commander), superintendent, crime manager (detective chief inspector), two further chief inspectors, a human resources manager and business manager.

Circumstances of Inspection

9. Prior to inspection, the BCU commander instigated a performance improvement plan (PIP) constructed by reviewing the BCU against questions posed by *Going Local Again* (HMIC inspection methodology). Consultation methods such as 'away days' have populated the plan, which is relatively new and it is evident that most elements are progressing. The commander has a project management board to oversee progress and overall, the inspection

team believes that the PIP is a valuable method of collecting and monitoring BCU progress against identified actions. HMIC was pleased to find established or planned, elements such as specific time frames associated with the various actions, a programme management board with full consultation and marketing of the plan. In particular the planned full day briefing programme on 3 August involving all the SMT is a good initiative. However the inspection team was not convinced that all performance developments detailed during inspection had been captured by the PIP. Further areas for inclusion in the PIP are identified by this report which includes issues identified by BCU staff during inspection.

Performance

Crime and disorder reduction partnerships

10. In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the local authority, police, health and fire service supported by other key agencies and voluntary groups have joined together to form crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs). There are three such partnerships that are coterminous with the BCU, those being Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe.
11. All three CDRPs in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act have recently conducted an audit (the third) and consequently produced strategies to deal with the main issues identified by their local communities. Current strategies and action plans therefore cover the key themes for community safety for the period 2005 to 2008.
12. The Police Authority has taken the lead in a force-wide meeting to rationalise all CDRP objectives and targets. This has helped rationalise BCU objectives and targets and indicated a possibility to form one CDRP for the three borough councils of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe. This possibility was at its early stages during inspection but is likely to occur with obvious benefits for the BCU, such as a rationalisation of meetings. The consequent single CDRP is likely to be more efficient, better placed to compete for funding as a bigger area and hence it could be considered to be 'stronger'.
13. The three current CDRPs are chaired by leaders of various agencies, but the BCU commander and the local authority chief executives are members of relevant strategic groups. Representatives of partner agencies spoke of a high level of police commitment to partnership working and generally were positive about police involvement. It was clear to the inspection team that partners see the police as genuine in their attempts to strengthen partnership activity. Some quotes were "very good level of support" and "lead runners in partnership working". There were also very positive comments about police individuals. The BCU commander was described as "giving clear direction to the BCU". Another quote was "Noticed a change in police/CDRP relationships since his arrival". The chief inspector (neighbourhood policing) was also described positively – "Removes obstacles and get things done". There were positive comments regarding the appointment of two new LAC inspectors "positive – can-do attitude".

14. There is already some joint working between CDRPs and there was evidence of products of this working and of good partnership initiatives that have resulted. Some are detailed below and indicate good strategic and tactical working:
- The ‘Lock Up’ campaign – An anti burglary initiative that was marketing and education based and drew heavily on Home Office advice. The CDRPs and county crime reduction resources provided funding.
 - The Acorn project – Another anti-burglary initiative to assist victims of domestic burglary and vulnerable people from monies from Nottinghamshire County Council to the BCU. The project concentrates on target hardening and is co-ordinated by the crime reduction managers of the borough councils with the BCU finance officer responsible for payments and budgetary monitoring provision. There was evidence that all three borough councils are supporting the initiative with substantial finance.
 - In Gedling dog wardens have been made community wardens and work closely with police community support officers and beat managers. They are involved in joint tasking at LAC tasking meetings and are able to support the policing priorities in their work.
 - The Gedling Community Safety Partnership has jointly funded CCTV in the area leading to a number of arrests, intelligence submissions as well as helping to prevent crime.
 - Broxtowe Borough Council is changing the way it uses parking attendants in order to support high profile patrolling around hot spot auto-crime areas.
 - Broxtowe has also developed a multi agency case conference group to examine people coming to notice of the various agencies and tailoring an appropriate joint response to reduce their offending behaviour.
 - Rushcliffe Community Safety Partnership financed the marketing of the ‘Lock Up’ campaign aimed at reducing burglaries caused by insecure premises and this led to a significant reduction in this type of burglary.
 - Rushcliffe Borough Council has ‘badged up’ all their street cleaning services as ‘Streetwise’ and trained their staff to help support clean up areas suffering from excess litter and graffiti. They are also supporting the neighbourhood policing model by reporting problems in the areas they operate.
15. There are apparent close working relationships with Neighbourhood Watch, which were described as “excellent” across most of the BCU. Partner agency

representatives attend LAC tasking meetings and this was providing further contact and joint working opportunities.

16. There were several issues raised about partnership working that are common themes for partner agencies during many BCU inspections:
 - Continuity in police posts – “just develop a good working relationship and the individual moves on”.
 - Partners described that the knowledge of partnership working of operational officers needed improving (no probationer input on role and workings of CDRP for example) but there are plans to rectify the situation.
 - Partners described a lack of consistent knowledge of partnership funding streams (however one LAC inspector was praised) and believed that there was a skill deficit in this area. Some BCU partners are holding back funding to support initiatives because of the poor presentation of a business case by some police areas. Quote “I fail to support them unless there are clear outputs – I have shied away from specific funding”.
 - Partners stated that there were variances in the skill levels of what they termed “police crime prevention managers”.
 - Partners detailed an almost ‘over enthusiasm’ of police attending meetings, which often meant they were ‘top heavy’ with police. This was disengaging some partners (particularly the voluntary sector), who see meetings having mainly a police agenda.

17. The inspection team was impressed with the force Sherwood project, its approach to targeting persistent offenders and the knock on effect of reduced offending. There is little doubt that the project is one of the reasons that BCU crime levels have reduced and there is a clear passion from ‘Sherwood officers’ regarding their work. The project has been externally evaluated twice in the past year. Firstly by Dr Ian Hearnden, Kings College, and was funded by the Police Standards Unit where it was identified as ‘Best Practice’. Secondly by the Probation Service that concluded that it would “inevitably have an impact on crime reduction through clear processes and procedures”. In addition the project has started a rolling programme of evaluation of offenders and their offending behaviour for the last two years compared with the offending behaviour for two years after. At present only 12 offenders fit this profile but there has been a 54% reduction in their overall offending and significantly the research has shown that the crimes that they do commit are less serious (burglars now shop lifting etc.). Three offenders have committed no crimes at all since leaving the project. The project uses joint resources such as police; probation; prison service; NHS and Drug Action Team. Mandatory drugs testing occurs with prisoners charged with trigger offences, which assist identifying persons to work with the project. All prisoners subjected to two years or more imprisonment for burglary dwelling; robbery and serious vehicle crime that are released on licence are subject to the multi-agency work. Any breach of licence is robustly acted upon and offenders returned to prison very promptly. There are currently 25 persons local to the BCU on the scheme and activity is co-ordinated by a monthly multi-agency

meeting (MAPPOM) similar to the tasking and co-ordination process of the BCU. There are good links from the project to the BCU meeting with Sherwood project officers attending both. The officers detailed one concern that level one offenders (persons released on licence) are dealt with by officers located in the prolific offenders unit at the City BCU. The fast exchange of intelligence appears to be the main issue and Sherwood officers are often asked questions at the BCU tasking and co-ordination meeting about City offenders who they have little knowledge about. There were several success stories detailed to the inspection team, results are impressive and BCU staff recognised the importance of the work throughout the inspection.

Performance against operational targets

18. To allow useful and fair comparison of certain performance indicators, similar BCUs are grouped together into ‘most similar basic command unit groups’ (MSBCU), based, in general, on socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Figure one, below, details South Nottingham’s crime reduction performance for the last full year of available data (2004/05) compared with the previous year and MSBCU and national averages.

Figure one - Crime Reduction Performance (April 2004 to March 2005 compared with same period previous year)

Crime Type	Number of offences	Offence per 1000 pop/h 'hold	MSBCU family average	Rank in MSBCU family	% Change
Total Crime	30,163	92.60	80.80	13 out of 15	-10.50%
Domestic Burglary	2877	20.74	10.87	15 out of 15	-21.52%
Robbery	288	0.88	0.55	15 out of 15	-22.99%
Vehicle Crime	5516	16.93	10.29	15 out of 15	-21.54%
Violent Crime	3717	11.41	17.03	1 out of 15	+0.84%

Source – Home Office data

1-Domestic burglary figures are calculated per 1000 household as opposed to population

- **Total Crime**

Year on year total crime has fallen by 10.5%. Trend analysis indicates that the fall in crime has been constant both in the short and long-term and South Notts BCU is reducing crime at a slightly faster rate than the MSBCU average. At the end of 2004/05 South Notts BCU was ranked 13th in the MSBCU group.

- **Domestic Burglary**

Domestic burglary has fallen by 21.5% year on year. The reduction in domestic burglary has been consistent throughout the last 12 months and the BCU has been improving at a faster rate than the MSBCU average although it still has some way to go to close the gap. The BCU’s level of domestic burglary is almost double the MSBCU average and for the full year 2004/05 the BCU was ranked 15th out of 15 in the MSBCU group.

- **Robbery**

Robbery levels have fallen by almost 23% from the previous year but despite these significant reductions still remains the highest in the MSBCU group in 15th place of 15.

- **Vehicle Crime**

Vehicle crime has fallen by over 21% year on year and current trends indicate that the fall in crime has been constant both in the short and long-term. The BCU is reducing vehicle crime at a slightly faster rate than the MSBCU average. However, vehicle crime remains well above the MSBCU average and at the end of 2004/05 South Nottingham was ranked 15th in the MSBCU group.

- **Violent Crime**

Violent crime levels are the lowest in the MSBCU group despite having risen slightly year on year. Having improved for the first half of 04/05, violent crime is now rising again.

19. Figure 2, below, details crime investigation performance for the last full year of available data (2004/05) compared with the previous year and MSBCU and national averages.

Figure 2 - Crime Investigation Performance (April 2004 to March 2005 compared with same period the previous year).

<i>Crime type</i>	<i>Total detections</i>	<i>Detection rate (%)</i>	<i>MSBCU family average</i>	<i>Rank in MSBCU family</i>	<i>% pt Change in detection rate</i>
Total Crime	5007	16.60%	27.20%	14 out of 15	+0.57% pts
Domestic Burglary	228	7.92%	18.14%	15 out of 15	-3.94% pts
Robbery	105	36.46%	29.45%	3 out of 15	+5.71% pts
Vehicle Crime	209	3.79%	12.23%	15 out of 15	-0.52% pts
Violent Crime	1954	52.57%	55.11%	11 out of 15	-2.48% pts

Source – Home Office data

- **Total Crime**

Year on year the total crime detection rate has remained relatively stable rising by 0.57% points and is still well below the MSBCU average. Current trends suggest that the detection rate is now improving, particularly in the most recent months but there is some way to go to close the gap on the MSBCU average.

- **Domestic Burglary**

The BCU has, for the full year 04/05, the lowest domestic burglary detection rate in the MSBCU group and has deteriorated by almost 4% points year on year. The detection rate of 7.9% is well below the MSBCU average of 18.1%.

- **Robbery**

The robbery detection rate has risen by 5.7% over the last 12 months, and is now well above the MSBCU average. For the full year 2004/05 South Nottingham BCU was ranked 3rd out of 15 in the MSBCU group. Again these

figures relate to a relatively small number of offences and are therefore subject to greater fluctuation.

- **Vehicle Crime**

The vehicle crime detection rate has fallen by 0.5% points year on year and is currently the lowest in the MSBCU group. The BCU is currently detecting 3.8% (a very low figure) and is consequently some distance away from the MSBCU average of 12.2%.

- **Violent Crime**

Year on year, the violent crime detection rate has fallen by almost 2.5% points and is currently below the MSBCU average, ranked 11th in the MSBCU group. The trend of the violent crime detection rate suggests that performance continues to be in decline.

20. In summary, it is encouraging to note that the BCU has recorded some significant reductions in crime recently but to put it into context the BCU still has a long way to go if it is to achieve MSBCU averages. End of year 2004/05 figures show that all crime is down 10.5%, domestic burglary is down 21.5%, Robbery is down 22.9% and vehicle crime down 21.5%. It is clear that these reductions are as a direct result of a combination of focus and tactics and there is little doubt that Operation Sherwood has also impacted. There has also been an enjoined reduction strategy of the three CDRPs that has led to initiatives such as 'Operation Lock-up' (sustained and targeted approach to reducing insecure properties). Reductions in robbery are as a direct consequence of the Force being part of the National Street Crime Initiative that required the highest level of focus across the BCU to ensure that force targets were met. There are also regular National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) audits that show that the BCU level of compliance has gone from poor (red grade) to good (green grade) since February 2005. Overall these are significant and sustained reductions and are encouraging, however despite these reductions being made at a slightly higher rate than the MSBCU average, it is clear that the overall position of the BCU compared with its family remains poor.
21. There have been some slight rises in detection rates, for example the detection rate of all crime has risen by 0.5% and 5.7% for robbery. However again generally the BCU detection performance is poor compared against MSBCU averages and is in fact bottom or near the bottom of four of the five detection areas. The exception to this is robbery where the BCU is 3rd in its group at the end of last year. It is clear that the absence of experienced detectives has impacted upon BCU detection rates and this is discussed later, together with possible causes. The BCU advocates that the rise in robbery detections is as a direct consequence of the Street Crime Initiative and the efforts of a small, dedicated robbery team (detective sergeant and four officers). Recent detection figures provided to the inspection team are more encouraging, for example the detection rate for all crime for June 2005 was 20.4 %. This is a marked improvement and will need to be sustained if the BCU is to further bridge the MSBCU gap.

22. Figure 3, below, details further performance information from the last full year of data (2004/05) compared with MSBCU and national averages.

Figure 3 – BCU performance 2004/05 compared against MSBCU and national averages

Best Value Performance Indicator Nottinghamshire Area D BCU	BCU performance 2004/05	MSBCU family average 2004/05	England and Wales average 2004/05
Complaints per 1000 officers	N/A	N/A	N/A
% of police strength from minority ethnic communities	N/A	N/A	N/A
Work days lost sick/police officer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Work days lost sick/police staff	N/A	N/A	N/A
Recorded crimes per 1000 population	92.60	80.80	106.00
Recorded crime % detected	16.60%	27.20%	25.68 %
Domestic burglaries per 1000 households	20.74	10.87	14.54
Domestic burglaries % detected	7.92%	18.14%	15.88 %
Violent crimes per 1000 population	11.41	17.03	22.57
Violent crimes % detected	52.57%	55.11%	49.51 %
Robberies per 1000 population	0.88	0.55	1.69
Robberies % detected	36.46%	29.45%	19.90 %
Vehicle crimes per 1000 population	16.93	10.29	14.07
Vehicle crimes % detected	3.79%	12.23%	10.14 %
Traffic collisions death/serious injury per 1000 population	N/A	N/A	N/A
Racially aggravated crimes % detected	46.22%	43.44%	36.43 %

Source - HMIC matrix of performance 2004/05

Accountability mechanisms and performance management

23. The BCU commander is directly accountable to an assistant chief constable of the Force and there are regular monthly 'focus' meetings with the whole Force senior management team, heads of department and other BCU commanders to examine performance issues. It was clear that the BCU commander believes he has the support of force chief officers and that he was content with the level of contact knowing that if he needed them they 'would be there'. It was also clear that he was taking forward an impressive range of issues that is significantly developing the BCU. However the inspection team noted that there was little other contact from his ACC line manager apart from the focus meeting.
24. Monthly 'focus' style meetings are used for accountability internally for the BCU, together with weekly SMT meetings. The monthly focus meeting is a meeting between staff and their managers. Managers review individual performance data and this meeting may be a trigger for advice or recognition of good work such as those officers who have attained four detections or more are highlighted at the BCU focus meeting and receive a performance record from the BCU commander or superintendent. There is little doubt that accountability has significantly increased since the current BCU commander arrived. He has shortened and sharpened the focus of the monthly meetings and the weekly SMT meetings tend to discuss issues not pertaining to the monthly meetings. The monthly focus meeting is with the superintendent, chief inspectors, inspectors and other managers and can include police authority members. These meetings are based on the PPAF (Policing Performance Assessment Framework) targets with a section on audit, but are mainly seen as a way to constructively hold individuals to account for the running of the BCU. The force management information pack is received by the BCU within seven days of the end of each month and is used as the basis for performance accountability. The superintendent describes the chief inspectors as being, quote "rigorously held to account" and it was clear that LACs are robustly held to account on a regular basis for performance with team leaders of each section within the BCU holding their own meetings to further cascade the accountability. LAC inspectors described a "passion" to have an impact on their communities and also referred to being robustly held to account every morning via the daily meeting. LAC inspectors clearly relished this situation and there were many comments indicating that they wanted their own particular LAC to be the "best in the Force".
25. It is clear that a stronger performance agenda for the BCU is now starting to emerge than before, with a more intrusive style of performance management evident. There is little doubt that there has been a drive to deal with crime and service issues in faster time than before. Quote - "there was too much old stuff around". It appears that the BCU is now aware of what is expected of it and is starting to deliver a more robust review of crimes and of their disposal. Crimes that were previously DNFPAs (detected no further police action) have been reduced significantly and the reason, quote - "Down to management intervention and leadership by LAC inspectors". There have been some staff changes at LAC inspector level and this has helped with a change of emphasis.

Some LACs have their own performance improvement plans (PIPs) in place that have been devised 'bottom up' and sanctioned by the SMT. LACs have been given more autonomy over resources and this has led to more accountability and focus. The SMT's desire to promote LACs to being the 'front end' of service delivery appears to have succeeded.

26. In summary the BCU SMT is to be congratulated for significant improvements regarding internal accountability that appears to be starting to translate into performance improvements. The monthly focus meeting is clearly the driver for accountability. At the time of writing a performance analyst has been employed by the BCU. Their role will be to examine and shape the 'focus' product and to unwrap performance information such as detection rates for burglary and establish who on the BCU is contributing what? Also to examine high performing BCUs with the idea of learning from them. However, there were a couple of accountability issues found during inspection that the BCU commander may wish to consider:
- The BCU has established a structure where chief inspectors have clear portfolios and directorship of some units. They have the lead on task groups such as 'hate crime' which is giving positive results and have led to the BCU 'leading the way for the Force'. However, the structure caused some issues with the inspection team understanding who is responsible and accountable for, in particular, key crime issues. The BCU chief inspectors themselves used the words "frustrating at times" when describing trying to take forward some portfolios when another directs the relevant resources. The inspection team accepts that the structures are new and developing and this lack of clarity may well be the result of the changes not yet being fully embedded, but it is apparent that some urgent clarification is needed. For example two different chief inspectors told the inspection team that they chair the tasking and co-ordination meeting if the superintendent is not available. LAC inspectors spoke positively of the arrangements – quote "the BCU has an expert in each crime area". However when it comes to accountability and ability to deal with issues they said "feel we are on our own most of the time".
 - There was a consistent theme (throughout inspection) of examining performance by comparing with other BCUs of the Force. There was little mention of the MSBCU family. The commander analyses MSBCU performance himself and shares the figures at the monthly 'focus' meeting but there is little more than this at present. It is planned that the new performance analyst will examine this information in detail so that the BCU can better understand its overall position and learn from high performing BCUs.
27. The BCU is currently on track with spending its £14.25m budget. The business manager described the position as "healthy". As is often the case, the BCU has little flexibility with police officer numbers and is currently over establishment. Presently there is a low level of financial devolution to LACs with just a small overtime budget available to them. They have the ability,

however, to get more if they make a business case or make operational requests through the tasking and co-ordination meeting. There were positive comments regarding sector administrators assisting LAC inspectors in the management of overtime. There was some evidence of income generation from policing the two football grounds and Trent Bridge cricket ground. However, presently there is little sponsorship (one vehicle) and this is an area that the BCU commander may wish to be enhanced.

Reassurance and visibility

28. The BCU is divided into six LACs, each of which is headed by an inspector and supported by a sergeant who supervises neighbourhood policing teams (NPT). Teams of response officers and neighbourhood policing officers (beat managers, PCSOs and volunteers) deliver policing from each LAC. BCU units such as CID support both teams. Presently every beat within the LAC has a nominated beat manager (constable – some have more than one beat). Central to the BCU reassurance drive is the role of the corporate communications officer. There were positive comments regarding her support to the BCU and there was evidence of a proactive use of the media to highlight BCU initiatives.
29. The BCU has 34 PCSOs based on LACs and linked to neighbourhood teams. Performance indicators have been set in place for PCSOs with clear objectives recorded in their PDRs. This is a BCU initiative (and is an extension of the force focus process – see earlier) which has recently (May 05) been adopted force-wide. The performance indicators set are extensive and it was evident that the indicators and monthly monitoring arrangements have given PCSOs clear direction for their work and makes them very proud of their contribution. They are now regularly invited to performance meetings where their training needs are monitored and any other issues discussed. This is the most comprehensive structure for PCSO accountability seen to-date by the inspection team and the BCU is to be congratulated. The same process is currently being developed for members of the Special Constabulary.
30. The BCU has 12 volunteers who work at Calverton station. They work with the parish council, manage their own time and resources and cover station front office duties at weekends. They attend the tasking and co-ordination meeting and appeared well informed regarding BCU issues. In Arnold, volunteers are able to access the police computer to identify neighbourhood policing issues that they can deal with. The BCU is congratulated regarding the development of volunteers.
31. The inspection team was very impressed with BCU special constabulary members. There was a maturity and passion within the group and they were able to detail some excellent relationships with LACs. It was clear that they enjoy their current structure (Each LAC has an area officer (AO) that links in with the NPT sergeant). There are currently 79 members who were able to demonstrate that they were making an effective contribution to demand management. Their role is mainly about response policing and reducing the

non-resourced incident lists, but there were some good examples of specials being aligned to beat managers and assisting problem solving along with other non response roles such as conducting facial identification surgeries. In Gedling North, the specials at their own initiative, recently undertook roadside vehicle checks with the aid of force resources, partnership agencies and the local council. There are also plans for officers to be aligned to the BCU burglary team. There were good links to intelligence with most specials trained in the intelligence system, the commandant attending the BCU tasking and co-ordination meeting and AOs attending the LAC T&CGs. Specials were able to detail regular positive feedback from officers regarding their work in addition to formal recognition. “Regulars respect specials – we are part of the team now”. “Used to be regarded as overtime stealers but we are going from strength to strength now”. Specials stated that their equipment is “better than ever now” and they have their own personal issue stab proof vests. They described training as “The best it’s ever been” and they are in the process of having PDRs, which will include objectives tied into hours worked. They detailed a force scheme to pay them if they reach 300 hrs for the year from a £90k reserve (this may work out at about £150 - £300 each). Overall it was apparent that the specials were rightly very proud of what they do and were proud of what the Force thinks of them.

32. It is clear to the inspection team that the BCU is embracing the neighbourhood-policing concept with police and the community starting to refer to local officers as neighbourhood teams. The concept is detailed but briefly comprises a locally dedicated team approach to policing with police officers and members of the extended police family, wardens, volunteers and the like that focus on public priorities and are accountable via public meetings. What is also clear is that the BCU is raising expectations of local communities. In Broxtowe the local MP has assisted with raising the profile of neighbourhood teams conducting a leaflet drop to all local residents. The overall goal is to move teams away from stations and out into the community but it is clear that the BCU is far from ‘best in class’ and the SMT was provided with some examples where neighbourhood policing is much more advanced such as Chesterfield and East Wolverhampton. The SMT stated that the BCU is still in the development stage, with for example Gedling Borough still determining the exact needs of the local community. The BCU is also still interpreting the idea of neighbourhood policing initiatives. Areas that the BCU may wish to consider are:

- There is no apparent extensive science behind the deployment of community officers and how to exactly resource this aspect of policing with a range of options. For example, beat officer surgeries are not well attended in some areas, which may be indicative of the lack of a need for a ‘full’ beat officer. There are some BCUs that have developed this aspect to better inform resource decisions – for example Wolverhampton East BCU in the West Midlands.
- Each LAC has a neighbourhood sergeant post, which is the former LAC deputy post and they still take on that role. The sergeants have had problem orientated policing training, but the inspection team found variations in roles and different objectives set in PDRs.

- Response demand means that community orientated resources such as beat managers are often taken away from their work to deal with, for example, unallocated incidents.
- The inspection team met an enthusiastic group of neighbourhood policing team staff that included beat managers; PCSOs; wardens and a community volunteer. It is clear from them that the ‘team’ ethos is still to develop further. Generally PCSOs were clear regarding their role and expectations of them; however beat managers were unsure what the role of PCSOs exactly entailed. It may be pertinent to clarify expectations.
- There are variations in the workloads of beat managers. Some beat managers are fairly free of response type issues and rarely abstracted others are more of a ‘glorified response officer’ that suffer from abstractions and are picking up a lot of reactive type incidents.
- There were several examples of beat managers coming to work and picking up prisoners lodged in the Bridewell (custody suite) and having to deal with them despite not initiating the arrest or having no connection with their beat. Generally they felt that the drive for performance and accountability (particularly to crime orientated targets of reductions and detections) are leading to target achievement rather than community problem solving. It is interesting that beat managers had the same targets as response officers.

Intelligence-led policing

33. The BCU has its own intelligence department headed by a detective inspector. It was clear from staff interviewed that they believe that they provide a good service to the BCU (quote – “Best in Force”) but feel that they could offer more but are held back by limited resources. Some quotes from the team were “We haven’t got enough staff to do the work we’d like to do”. “It is frustrating because there is no time or resources to do the research work”. Generally it was clear that the main elements of the National Intelligence Model were in place. For example all relevant meetings such as the two weekly tasking and co-ordination meeting and the BCU daily meeting were in place (however compliance with the model alone does not necessarily mean a quality product). It was noted that the National Intelligence Model had been extended to include LAC tasking and co-ordination meetings (known as local operations meetings) and these were seen positively by the inspection team as driving actions locally directly from the BCU tasking meeting.
34. Outside the unit the inspection team found the following issues and quotes for consideration:
 - Staff stated that the BCU is “on a learning curve” with intelligence. BCU staff view the tactical assessment as “a reactive document based on performance”. LAC inspectors strongly felt that resource decisions are made prior to the meeting and they do not have a contribution to this aspect of the meeting.

- “Intelligence-led policing is fundamental, yet I lost my FIO (Field Intelligence Officer) to an operation”. “I do it myself on occasion or use restricted officers”.
- “Officers are feeding the system, but no feedback”. “It is like feeding a black hole”. “Don’t know what the intelligence team do”.
- Staff consider that there is too much information on the briefing document. Should be more LAC specific. “Why do I want to know about an abandoned vehicle on another LAC”?
- LAC inspectors and sergeants are doing their own analytical work. Intelligence resources are not available for them – “too busy doing other things”. “If you want something, you have to do it yourself”.
- A lack of availability of proactive units was highlighted – the divisional support unit (DSU) (2 sergeants and 14 officers) appeared to be the main resource but is often unavailable to LACs due to commitments. At the time of inspection all but three of the unit’s officers were deployed at the G8 Conference in Scotland.
- “Intelligence doesn’t give us a great deal. Never had a package”. “We have been banging the door for a package”. “It is a one way machine”. “We don’t see them (intelligence unit) although we are in the same nick”.
- “Not enough intelligence from prisoners at the bridewell”. “Biggest hindrance is that we have to take our prisoners to the Bridewell”.
- BCU staff believe that some officers do not have enough time or skills to submit intelligence. Some are submitting irrelevant intelligence due to performance indicator requirements.
- There has been a loss of contact and communication between sergeants and FIOs. In the past the FIOs have attended the LAC tasking meetings but this has not happened for some time.
- There has been limited dedicated source handling unit (DSHU) capability. There are plans to increase the DSHU staff levels (officers who handle covert human intelligence sources—CHISs – informants). It was apparent that at the time of inspection the BCU has a relatively low number of such sources. This is a resource issue.
- CID officers stated that the briefing system contained too much information at different locations. This they said was particularly an issue with intelligence where they have to sort through lots of intelligence to find current issues. They would like current intelligence and relevant information contained in one document (web page).
- The briefing and tasking processes for neighbourhood policing are recognised as not being good, but this area is also under development. There is new technology, which will link all stations.
- Some scenes of crime officers (SOCO) are not using the electronic intelligence system and intelligence is being passed either verbally or by email and either method could have a failure potential.
- Information required by the crime management unit (CMU) is not available in time to meet the deadline for the provision of the daily briefing at the daily meeting.

- It was apparent that the BCU conducts some result analysis from operations and taskings of staff. However it is not consistent at present.
35. The BCU acknowledges that intelligence needs to develop and has identified many of the issues raised during inspection that are contained within the PIP. It is impossible given the short amount of time during inspection to fully test the issues detailed above but it is clear that they need further examination by the BCU. Intelligence is a critical success factor and it must follow that in light of the above a recommendation is made for the BCU commander to further review how BCU resources are operating in practice to ensure best intelligence gathering and the subsequent translation of that intelligence into successful outcomes. It may also be beneficial to examine other BCUs that are good at collecting and acting on community intelligence using partnership resources via the NIM (Trent Valley in Staffordshire).

RECOMMENDATION 1

It is recommended that the BCU commander further reviews how BCU resources are operating in practice to ensure best intelligence gathering and the subsequent translation of that intelligence into successful outcomes.

Crime Investigation and recording practices

36. The BCU has three detective inspectors, each of which has a clear remit. One post has been designated as the one that is likely to be utilised on an almost permanent basis for major crime. CID staff interviewed were very frank about the issues that they and their colleagues face. It was clear to the inspection team that the main issue is that of abstractions of skilled investigators from the BCU to deal with force level major crime issues. The absence of senior and skilled detectives has meant that the majority of the CID is made of trainee crime investigators and constables on attachment. This situation has undoubtedly left a skills gap and it was clear that many trainee detectives have little mentoring. In that light it was impressive that the BCU had focused training by choosing the relevant parts of the trainee investigators programme and delivering those elements and had also looked at mixed skill teams. Current CID establishment under the detective inspectors is 5 detective sergeants (DS) and 25 detective constables (DCs). The BCU's perspective is that if the BCU and CDRPs could reduce crime to target levels, then the current detective strength (if available) would be appropriate to detect crime to a target level. It is clear that this situation is at least a year away. Staff left within CID are working long hours including some rest days. It was apparent that DSs are under considerable strain in that often they are acting as DSs, DCs and tutor detectives at the same time. DSs and DCs met during inspection concerned regarding the quality of investigation that they were able to offer. Quotes were "not doing the jobs justice because of a lack of staff". "Lost our investigative capacity" and "I came to learn from experienced

colleagues but there aren't any". There were examples given to the inspection team that highlighted this point.

37. Whilst relationships between CID and their uniformed colleagues appeared okay there were comments from both CID and uniformed officers that relationships had deteriorated because of the current demands on all BCU officers. Officers spoke of a 'silo' effect beginning to develop one quote was "This is my job and I'm not moving from it" attitude. It is apparent that presently no probationer attachments occur to CID. These are issues that the BCU commander may wish to consider.
38. The BCU currently operates a 'night crime car' along with the City BCU. Every four weeks a CID officer and BCU officer crew a car and covers CID issues across the City and D division. The 'night crime car' is not seen positively by CID officers and they consider that the BCU loses out in that there is not often a D division need compared with the City. It is also apparent that relatively inexperienced officers are being used in this role with it common place that a constable attached to CID will crew with a reactive BCU officer. The inspection team would urge the BCU commander to ensure that such officers are sufficiently trained to undertake this role.
39. There were negative comments regarding the force homicide unit by CID officers. The issues were the drain of experienced CID officers and lack of management of them to ensure their early return. They stated that often the skills of a detective are not required to do the role "Used to photocopy taxi fare records and provide the continuity of the exhibit". "Six weeks deployed watching CCTV evidence". They feel that officers assigned to the unit have an "easy ride" and there are comments back to BCU colleagues "You must be mad – why aren't you on homicide". They also feel that a skill gap appears the longer officers are away and that some are now "frightened to come back". It is appreciated that there are force-wide aspects to these issues, but the BCU commander may wish to examine these matters in light of the high abstraction rates of detectives.
40. It would appear that there has been a rise in domestic violence recently but the inspection team noted that it is not included in the violent crime portfolio owned by the relevant chief inspector.
41. A constant and overwhelming theme during inspection was issues regarding the BCU custody facilities. The BCU does not have its own active custody suite, although it does have one 'mothballed'. Custody facilities are provided at one of two custody facilities off the BCU. The largest and most used provision is located within the City BCU known as the 'Bridewell Unit'. The Bridewell is a stand alone custody facility managed and staffed by the criminal justice department of the Force. The 'Bridewell' brings with it several challenges, some of which are detailed below:
 - Travelling to and from custody is impacting on officers' decisions to arrest and other solutions are being sought. If not impacting on the decision to arrest the travelling and other issues such as CPS

availability is impacting on the timing of the arrest. For example there was evidence that search warrants were being executed on a Thursday rather than Friday because officers may need to use 'CPS direct' rather than the usual CPS if they arrested on a Friday and made a remand application on the Saturday. Officers interviewed stated that this was because CPS direct was not as successful as CPS at remand applications. This issue may well be a perception of officers but is an area that needs consideration.

- There are often long delays for officers wishing to consult CPS on charging decisions and advice. Often there are delays of 1-2 hours. The long delays in booking prisoners in and getting CPS advice prompted the comment - "The Force is paying overtime to wait in queues".
 - TICs (offences that are taken into consideration once a prisoner has been charged or reported) are not easily obtained due to the lack of skilled investigators or the time investment needed for them to operate at the Bridewell. There were also issues that a recent force discipline of officers connected to the obtaining of TICs has led to some reticence to a point of officers being afraid of TICs and a lack of understanding of what can or cannot be done to secure them.
 - It is common practice within the Bridewell for defence solicitors to advise their clients to make "no comment" to police interviews and generally this translates into no co-operation with detecting crime from their clients. "They know how to play the legal aid system". "We complain through the criminal justice board, but all we get is that they are doing what is best for their clients". "Cannot remember the last time someone admitted something". The solicitors' stance (which is a legal one and one they apparently admit quite openly) is that they will wait and see what the evidence is.
 - The facilities for arresting and escorting officers are poor. There is little in the way of refreshment or rest areas for officers and no report writing room. Officers frequently have to use prisoner toilets – "Feel like you are a prisoner yourself". "We slum it".
 - The current prisoner handling team of a sergeant and eight is perceived as inadequate by BCU staff, particularly as they mainly consist of restricted duty officers. As a consequence officers often deal with their own prisoners.
 - The potential co-location of CID and a 'lock up' facility was seen as advantageous but BCU staff were fearful that if BCU skilled investigators were put into the current bridewell, they would seek transfers.
42. To say that the Bridewell is a 'block to performance' is an understatement and it is apparent that there is a large negative stigma attached to the name.

Officers frequently used emotive words such as “nightmare” “chaos” “It’s like playing an away game – with a hostile crowd”. “The bridewell has got to be the biggest mistake this Force has ever made”. These issues have not and will not come as a shock to managers of the BCUs affected and it is apparent that the Police Authority is anxious to resolve the issues. The inspection team urges that all involved seek an urgent resolution.

Use of forensic, DNA and scientific techniques

43. A forensic audit was introduced by HMIC as part of a force or BCU inspection from January 2002 to ensure a standard approach to the evaluation of scientific support services, the effective use of resources and to identify good practice. The methodology for the inspection of South Nottingham BCU was to examine the management and recording of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) samples, fingerprints, and the procedure for the monitoring and dealing with crime scene identifications, as well as to identify any links to the intelligence system and crime analysis.
44. The inspection team examined the custody process to ensure that every opportunity to take DNA samples from prisoners is being taken. The system to identify the need to take a sample or not was found to be fairly robust. DNA is taken from every person arrested for a recordable offence (if not previously taken). Once arrested the persons details are checked both on the Police National Computer and the internal Force SOCO database to ascertain if a sample is required or not. This system is impressive and leaves little room for error.
45. An audit of 50 custody records of persons arrested in April 2005 was undertaken to ascertain if the BCU was taking every opportunity to take DNA. Only 1 from the 50 researched showed an error. An issue was raised during the audit regarding the authority to take DNA samples from persons arrested on suspicion of drink driving and yet when tested on equipment at custody were found to be under the limit. Local legal advice is being sought and direction should then be tendered to custody officers to avoid confusion.
46. The inspection team examined the storage arrangements and continuity of DNA samples. Overall arrangements were satisfactory with secure freezers, a daily collection of DNA samples and continuity records maintained.
47. The inspection team examined the management of DNA and fingerprint identifications. Headquarters SOC forwards positive identifications of suspects to the BCU. A locally developed and impressive system known as ‘package tracker’ (now adopted by the Force) produces and monitors basic electronic identification packages (DNA, fingerprint and now CCTV identifications) that are then developed by intelligence staff if required within the BCU. The BCU can proactively view the system to identify suspects in the ‘pipeline’. Basic analytical work is completed if required after liaison with the officer in the case. Often this work includes issues such as associations of the suspect identified and possible linked offences to that identified. Arrest packages are then prioritised according to the offence (3, 10 or 21 days).

Burglaries are allocated to the burglary team, robberies to the robbery team and vehicle crime and other offences to LAC inspectors. The system is impressive and allows for robust and intrusive management of packages/arrests by simple traffic light colour notification of progress on the system. For example a package that expires its target date is shown in red. At the time of inspection the BCU had 41 packages of which 23 were outstanding for the arrest of the suspect. Common quotes used on the tracker system were “unable to take complainant statement due to lack of resources” “Unable to action – IP (victim) not available”. These comments and the fact that 23 were outstanding indicate that the monitoring and accountability for actions needs improvement. At present the packages are briefly reviewed at the two weekly tasking meeting but greater accountability may be gained by daily monitoring of overdue packages (perhaps at the daily meeting) or more intrusive management at the two weekly meeting itself. It may also speed up the process if officers routinely take statements of complaint at any scene where blood or DNA had been left.

48. Scene of crime officers (SOCOs) are a headquarters resource but deployed from the BCU. The BCU currently has a senior SOCO; four SOCOs; three volume crime attendees and a SOCO assistant. Staffing levels, equipment and accommodation are adequate. SOCOs have attendance targets for burglary dwelling and vehicles taken without the owners consent (TWOCs) of 100% and 46% respectively, which the BCU is currently achieving. Performance information is collected at headquarters and there are plans for quarterly individual performance reviews to take place with each staff member. The senior SOCO attends the BCU tasking and co-ordination meeting. It is clear that the BCU is able to influence SOCO attendance for issues not usually within the force attendance criteria. Overall SOCO services are good but the following issues were found for consideration:
- SOCOs were frustrated over the policy of 100% attendance to all burglary dwellings. They attend on occasion despite no hope of forensic recovery (they estimated 20% of such incidents).
 - SOCOs believe that crime scene awareness of officers is patchy but the main issue is the lack of time that officers have at each scene to give good forensic advice to victims due to reactive demands.
 - SOCOs are able to deal with poor scene preservation issues by emails to officers directly but it is clear that these emails are not copied to supervisors.
 - There were some frustrations over the monitoring of SOCO performance and the bureaucracy this has allegedly caused SOCO officers (faxing of results sheet to two different locations). It is apparent that the Force is trying to engender a more SOCO performance culture and this indicates that they still have some way to go.

Managing demand

49. BCU managers state that the BCU has a very young workforce and this is particularly so regarding officers at the 'front end' of reactive policing. Generally, sergeants are very inexperienced and there is a constant drain of experience from the 'front line' due to officers specialising or abstractions to major crime enquiries. Response officers describe their day being dictated by satisfying demand with little capacity for pro-activity. Inspectors state that officers are "running from job to job to job". This situation appears to vary across the BCU as there are some response teams that are proactive and generate their own work. Other teams are very busy and can only "play catch-up". This may be an issue of resource deployment or sergeant skills/levels of deployment.
50. It is apparent that response officers are still being deployed to calls for service that could have potentially been dealt with over the telephone. There were contrary views with constables stating that the situation has "improved quite a bit recently" and believe that the control room staff have had extra training in this area. Inspectors and sergeants had a contrary view and stated that call handling still presents problems. Quotes – "If I could change anything, I would change that". "It is like having two teams". They stated that there is often not enough detail or irrelevant information is being recorded. This they commented is due to a lack of experience by police staff who have little police background and no supervision or training on what is required for the job.
51. There was evidence that response officers 'cherry pick' jobs to hit performance figures. They recognised in interview that this stance does not always provide the best quality of service. There was evidence that a number of constables are becoming increasingly demoralised as they are expected to take on work they are not trained to do, or do not have the time or resources to complete successfully.
52. Current shift patterns do not completely reflect demand although it was clear that some 'slipping' of shifts is occurring when possible. There is a working party in the City BCU examining this issue. There was a lack of knowledge of a single crewing policy although there were generalisations by staff supervisors and managers that they expected single crewing on earlies and up to 6pm. This may need a clarification of management expectations.
53. The demand management inspector (DMI–duty inspector) role potentially provides a very high level of visible and intrusive management to response officers and at critical incidents. It is significant that they do not often cover custody reviews and authorisations and have recently had the responsibility for the direct line management of response staff taken off them and given to LAC inspectors. The inspection team believes that there are opportunities for extra management responsibilities and the chief inspector operations already has plans to involve them more in his remit such as having one DMI involved with event planning and command. It was pleasing to find that a standards document for the role of demand management inspectors has been produced. The change in role does not appear to have affected the good communications

between DMI and LAC inspectors. DMI inspectors were able to detail a good level of training and are accountable for tasks allocated at the daily meeting.

54. The inspection team met highly motivated staff from the divisional support unit. This unit is known as the BCU DSU and this may cause some confusion with a widely recognised abbreviation DSU meaning ‘dedicated source unit’ – persons who handle informants. Officers clearly enjoy their role – “Best job on the BCU”. The team consists of 2 sergeants and 14 staff located at 2 bases. The main issue is abstractions, for example, to police football matches. They are clearly tasked by the two weekly tasking and co-ordination meeting and were able to detail some excellent results such as crack house closures and other good drug related investigations. They were complimentary about beat managers and their ability to deal with some lower level proactive work (this may be a further area that the new performance analyst may wish to examine in order to evaluate the results and establish how good they are?) The DSU officers displayed maturity regarding the work of the Sherwood project and the general ethos of rehabilitation. They appear to be supervised and managed well and are accountable via monthly returns to the focus meeting that measure issues such as detections.

Leadership

BCU Management team

55. The chief superintendent (BCU commander) has 26 years service, and has been in post since November 2004. He has a varied police service that includes CID roles, operations support, professional standards and head of personnel.
56. The superintendent (operations) has 31 years service and been in post since August 2003. He also has a varied police service that includes CID, fraud squad, training and research and personnel.
57. The crime manager (DCI) has 14 years service and been in post since May 2004. Prior to joining the police he served with the Royal Air Force. Previous roles include detective inspector and LAC.
58. The chief inspector (local policing) normal post holder has 26 years service and has been in post since January 2005. He is currently abstracted. Amongst various roles he has been seconded to the Central Planning and Training Unit and HMIC (Training).
59. The acting chief inspector (local policing) current post holder has 25 years service and has been temporarily in post since May 2005. He has had a varied service that includes anti-vice, special branch, LAC and has also drafted national advice for the policing of non-designated airports.
60. The chief inspector (operations) has 19 years service and been in post since May 2004. He has spent the majority of his service in the north of the county

and presently has the responsibility as the Force ‘silver commander’ for vehicle crime.

61. The HR Manager is a member of police staff and joined the police service in 2001. She has a human resource background in both the public and private sector.
62. The (Acting) Business Manager is also a member of police staff and joined the service in 1999. She was seconded to the BCU in December 2004 from her role as payroll and payments manager.
63. The Business Manager (Abstracted) is also a member of police staff and joined in 2001. His background prior to the role includes financial work with the NHS and MoD. At the time of inspection the acting and full time business managers were in transition back to their original roles.
64. There were positive comments throughout inspection regarding the commander’s influence upon the BCU since he arrived. It is clear that he is sympathetic to performance stresses and allows managers freedom to drive performance. Most staff held a general view that morale is good and has improved considerably since his arrival. Police staff feel there is now a big team approach and everyone is friendly and relaxed. There is little doubt that there is a clear sense of direction and that people are more robustly held to account. The SMT appears to be ‘gelling well’ and there is a good mix of skills. It is apparent that all the SMT feel part of the team and valued for their contribution. There is a definite ethos within the BCU to make it the top performing division within the Force and staff feel that it will be an “uphill struggle” with both internal and external issues to overcome. Communication to them of what is happening and on progress of the PIP is paramount in the view of the inspection team.
65. Staff representatives were positive about formal and informal links with the SMT of the BCU, which was generally supported by the views of all staff. The representatives raised the following as issues for the BCU or Force:
 - They described the ‘front line’ resource situation as critical “sometimes like trying to get a pint out of a half pint glass”.
 - The issues around the bridewell (detailed earlier).
 - Bureaucracy.
 - No formal notification of people on long term sick or those under investigation.
 - Having to interrogate several computer systems to obtain the relevant information. This issue is particularly pertinent for sergeants.
66. Reward and recognition processes appeared adequate and follow the force structure (Chief Constable commendations; commander commendations and the like). The HR manager and staff associations meet to decide on special priority payments. There are performance awards made by the superintendent (four sanctioned detections or more per month). However, the inspection team received some mixed messages with a clear knowledge and examples given of recognition of good work system contrasting with – quote “People are not

always praised for doing good work”. Sergeants expect senior PCs to complete their own recognition note in some areas.

67. There is a marked variation in supervision at sergeant level perceived by response officers. An example was that some sergeants fully appreciate why performance targets were not met and an appropriate PDR entry is made. Others are really frustrated that supervisors were not in a position to understand why targets had not been achieved and therefore fail to support their officers. Communications between sergeants is an issue. LAC sergeants meet fairly regularly but meetings for sergeants across the BCU are rare. These are issues that the BCU commander may wish to explore.
68. Despite the efforts of the SMT to appear more approachable and to physically visit LACs regularly, the size of the BCU means that travelling around all stations on a regular basis is very difficult. The SMT has plans to raise visibility and evidence from BCU staff indicates the need. For example, the general feeling by sergeants was that the SMT is not bothered with them. They stated that the SMT rarely visit LAC meetings, so they appear unapproachable and they were unsure of the ethos of the SMT. There is some evidence that the SMT have mechanisms to communicate with sergeants such as the commander himself has met at least twice with every sergeant since his arrival but these comments need consideration. Other communication across the BCU appeared good and there was particular praise regarding the BCU newsletter known as “The Collar”.

Self-review and learning

69. The BCU has a performance review department headed by an inspector. The inspector is relatively new to the position and spoke highly of the support that the superintendent had given him in establishing processes and systems of work. The team (consists of two permanent PC posts and two sergeants who are on light duties) focuses on audit to comply with headquarters requirements and other work, which supports BCU performance. It is apparent that compliance demands from headquarters have reduced and as a consequence recent focus has been on BCU needs. These include National Crime Recording Standard compliance (there was evidence of recent improvement – discussed earlier); investigative quality review to ensure sanctioned detections; auditing crime investigations for the key crime areas and other audit issues. The inspector attends a network of meetings on the BCU and externally to discuss the work of the unit. He is able to have inputs on training days.
70. The BCU has a good training resource provision of a training and development co-ordinator and three staff, although the co-ordinator would ideally want more resources due to abstraction of her trainers for other BCU duties (evidence gatherer at football matches for example). The co-ordinator organises the provision of training for new legislation, officer safety, divisional requirements and individual requests. Some training initiatives are very positive such as extra training provided to PCSOs; training for the specials; beat manager training and in Gedling, PCSOs were recently trained

with the Fire Service for arson awareness. The training facilities are adequate, with use being made of a local Territorial Army centre for the delivery of some training. Training is overseen on the BCU by a training and development panel chaired by the HR manager. The BCU has a positive stance regarding training attendance. The spare day in the 10-week shift pattern cycle is used to deliver training. Attendance has developed from 60% and is currently 100%. This has been achieved by a non-attendance email to the officer and line manager to explain absence. Some training and development issues identified during inspection are:

- There is a lack of ability by the Force to scan for new legislation and then deliver training packages. This has led to the BCU (and maybe other BCUs) developing training on their own only to find that the Force had plans to deliver it later. Clearly there is a lack of communication.
- The BCU commander considers that the force succession planning and training for skilled investigators needs further consideration. Presently, even with the appropriate funding, there will not be a relevant level of fully trained skilled investigators on the BCU for about two years.
- The three-week course for newly promoted sergeants has received some criticism in that some of the topics are being covered too quickly (an example given was how to deal with probationers – covered in half a day).
- The BCU may wish to market the developmental side of the training and development co-ordinators work. Although there has been some excellent initiatives such as the piloting of NVQs in customer services for front counter staff, most staff believe development and attachments are not available due to resource levels.

HR and diversity issues

71. A diversity forum is being established and all groups on the BCU will be invited to attend. The forum will deal with collective and not individual issues. Terms of reference are currently being discussed.
72. Induction packs are provided for all new members of staff, (which have been developed from the force induction pack). In addition, information packs are given to all sergeants.
73. The inspection team examined the PDR process on the BCU. Overall the process is complied with and valued by BCU staff. The BCU follows the force process based on the National Competency Framework that has been in place 18 months. There was wide compliance found throughout inspection with all officers questioned having a current PDR. PDRs are conducted within 4 weeks of staff taking up new roles followed by a 6-monthly review and 12-

monthly full review. The Force sets a target of 95% compliance and the BCU prior to November 2004 was at 50-60%. There has been an SMT drive to increase compliance and raise the profile of PDRs and as a consequence compliance has risen to a high of 98%. At the time of inspection the rate was 82% but the BCU was able to rationalise this due to the fact that a large number were due in April and May and this has created a backlog. Compliance rates are monitored at the monthly focus meeting. It is clear that presently the SMT has focused on compliance and as such there is little in the way of quality assessment of PDRs. The BCU has plans to set qualitative standards in the near future that will be monitored by the divisional personnel officer. There is an opportunity having set the standard to monitor quality rates in the same manner that the BCU monitors compliance at the focus meeting.

74. The BCU approach to health and safety appears adequate. Representatives had no concerns regarding the BCU approach and generally staff felt that health and safety issues were taken seriously. The BCU has a quarterly health and safety meeting to co-ordinate the BCU's response to the issue. The HR manager is responsible for people issues such as accidents and near misses and the business manager is responsible for buildings health and safety issues. There are trained assessors on each LAC.
75. BCU constables are concerned about the impending changes to shift patterns. They stated that they have had little opportunity to submit their views and have no updates on what is happening, just advised to speak to the Federation representative. There appears some confusion as sergeants are saying that shifts are basically staying the same with a little 'tweaking' and yet constables feel the changes will be more radical. It may be appropriate for these issues to be clarified.

Equipment

76. Generally the BCU estate and equipment was seen as adequate. BCU staff raised an issue about sharing a talk group on Airwave (radio system) with some force resources in particular, the firearms teams. There are periods when the response staff are unable to get onto the channel for day to day business. An issue regarding driver authorisations was also raised. A change in force policy has meant that several officers are now not able to drive certain vehicles, with many therefore not usable at present. These are issues that the BCU commander may wish to consider.

Attendance management and sickness statistics

77. At the time of inspection sickness data was not available for comparison against MSBCU averages. However, from the figures below it is clear that the BCU has made significant progress in reducing sickness rates of police officers and police staff (rates are average per officer per year).

Figure 3 – BCU Sickness data

	2003/04	2004/05
Police Officer	13.13 days	8.92 days
Police Staff	10.91 days	8.89 days

Source – BCU data

78. It can be seen the BCU has performed well against force targets of 10.5 and 12 days respectively and at the end of 2004/05 was the best performing BCU in the Force. This has been achieved due to more intrusive management and a raising of awareness of sickness policy and support available. It was apparent that the BCU has good support from the force occupational health department and medical staff.

Complaints

Figure 4 – Complaint data

	2003/04	2004/05	MSBCU average 04/05	Rank in BCU family 04/05	% Change from 03/04 to 04/05
Total Complaints	92				
Complaints Per 1000 Officer	247.44				
Complaints Substantiated	17				
% Complaints Substantiated	18.48%				

Source – Home Office data

79. At the time of inspection complaint data was unavailable for 2004/05 (Note – Figures will be provided for final report). Figure 4, above, shows that 2003/04 complaint figures were high. At 247.44 complaints per 1000 officers the BCU was ranked 10th in its MSBCU out of 15, and the proportion of complaints substantiated was the highest in its group at 18.48%, well above the MSBCU average of 6.59%.
80. It is clear that the BCU needs to analyse complaint data for trends more readily. The difficulty is the absence of detailed figures from the police standards department (PSD) of the Force in that the data is not currently provided in a way that can be broken down to LAC level. The inspection team understands that this issue has been raised with the force professional standards department and that discussions are ongoing for resolution. It is important that the regular provision of such data is available to allow BCU analysis and the identification of trends in ‘quick time’ to better inform BCU training requirements.

Conclusions and recommendations

D division, Nottinghamshire is coterminous with the borough councils of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe and the division forms a 'horseshoe' around the City of Nottingham. The division covers an area of over 230 square miles, which represents 30% of the total area of Nottinghamshire and has a total population of over 320,000 people. The division therefore serves over 43% of the total population of the county. There is little doubt that the BCU has significant challenges as regards major and volume crime issues, with 30,163 crimes recorded in the BCU for 2004/2005.

Within this context, it is encouraging to note that the BCU has recorded some significant reductions in crime recently. End of year 2004/05 figures show that all crime is down 10.5%, domestic burglary is down 21.5%; robbery is down 22.9% and vehicle crime down 21.5%. These are significant reductions and the BCU is to be congratulated. However despite these reductions being made at a slightly higher rate than the MSBCU average, it is clear that the overall position of the BCU compared with its family remains poor.

End of year 2004/05 also show that there have been some slight rises in detection rates, for example the detection rate of all crime has risen by 0.5% and 5.7% for robbery. However, again generally the BCU does not compare well against MSBCU averages with the BCU bottom or near to bottom in four of the five areas. The exception to this is robbery where the BCU is 3rd in its group at the end of last year.

To enhance the performance of the BCU, the commander has instigated a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) which has been constructed by reviewing the BCU against the questions posed by *Going Local Again* and consultation with staff. The plan is relatively new and the inspection team would concur that it is the basis for progress. There are some clear indicators that staff enjoy working on this BCU and for this particular command team. These factors indicate a potential positive response from them in achieving against the performance improvement plan.

Overall, the inspection team was convinced that the BCU could go forward to improve its performance if attention is paid to some key areas. A critical success factor for the BCU is the provision and action of intelligence and despite intelligence issues being taken forward by the PIP there are many issues raised during inspection that need further consideration. The inspection team believes that the PIP is a valid and appropriate mechanism to drive further improvement and consequently (apart from intelligence) does not feel the need to make several further recommendations to sit outside of the plan. Therefore it is recommended that the BCU commander includes the other further development areas identified by this inspection within the performance improvement plan.

RECOMMENDATION 2

It is recommended that the BCU commander includes the further development areas identified by this inspection within the performance improvement plan.

Summary of good practice

- The inspection team was impressed with the force Sherwood project, its approach to targeting persistent offenders and the knock on effect of reduced offending. There is little doubt that the project is one of the reasons that BCU crime levels have reduced. The project uses joint resources such as police; probation; prison service; NHS and Drug Action Team. Mandatory drugs testing occur with prisoners charged with trigger offences, which assist identifying persons to work with the project.
- Performance indicators have been set in place for PCSOs with clear objectives recorded in their PDRs. This is a BCU initiative which has recently (May 05) been adopted force-wide. The performance indicators set are extensive and it was evident that the indicators and monthly monitoring arrangements have given PCSOs clear direction for their work and makes them very proud of their contribution. This is the most comprehensive structure for PCSO accountability seen to-date by the inspection team.
- The BCU has 12 volunteers who work with the parish council and manage their own time and resources and cover the front office duties of the station over weekends. They attend the tasking and co-ordination meeting and appeared well informed regarding BCU issues.
- A locally developed and impressive system known as 'package tracker' (now adopted by the Force) produces and monitors basic electronic identification packages (DNA, fingerprint and now CCTV identifications). The system is impressive and allows for robust and intrusive management of packages/arrests by simple traffic light colour notification of progress on the system.

Issues for management consideration

It is usual for HMIC BCU inspection reports to identify issues for management consideration which are not included in specific recommendations. In this case all issues identified in this report can be included in the BCU's PIP.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the BCU commander:

- Further reviews how BCU resources are operating in practice to ensure best intelligence gathering and the subsequent translation of that intelligence into successful outcomes.

(Paragraph 35)

- Includes the further development areas identified by this inspection within the performance improvement plan.