

**Inspection of
Trent Valley BCU
Staffordshire Police
March 2005**

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1. The inspection of Trent Valley Basic Command Unit (BCU), Staffordshire 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 between 14 and 17 March 2005.

Force and BCU Overview

2. Policing in Staffordshire is structured around four operational BCUs (divisions); Chase, North Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Trent Valley. Each has its own command team, headed by a divisional commander of chief superintendent rank. Within each BCU are Local Policing Units (LPU's), headed by an inspector. This locally based style gives officers ownership of local problems and issues, fostering and encouraging strong ties with the community.
3. The main centres for the county are around the city of Stoke on Trent, and major towns of Newcastle Under-Lyme, Stafford, Burton on Trent, Tamworth and Cannock. The average earnings of the region are significantly lower than the national average as is the average house price. Stoke-on-Trent's ceramics industry draws thousands of tourists to the city every year, being home to some of the greatest ceramics producers, including Wedgwood, Royal Doulton and Spode.
4. Trent Valley BCU is positioned to the East of Staffordshire, and polices the areas covered by East Staffordshire Borough council, Lichfield District council, and Tamworth Borough council, which total almost 300 square miles with a population of 262,235 and 105,572 households.
5. Road networks include the M42 and more recently the M6 toll road, which during construction became a major policing operation. Major trunk roads include the A5, A51, A38 and A50. Sporting venues include Burton Albion football club, Tamworth football club, and Uttoxeter racecourse. Military establishments include Whittington Barracks near Lichfield. The Division houses two prisons, Swinfen YOI near Lichfield and Dovegate prison at Marchington. There are also women's refuges located within the Division.
6. The BCU is sub divided into five local policing units (LPU's) each managed by an LPU commander of inspector rank. Each LPU commander leads a community action team (CAT). CAT sergeants supervise a team of community beat constables, each of whom have a responsibility for a specific geographical area. Each parish is policed by at least one nominated constable who is supported by officers of the special constabulary and police community support officers (PCSOs).
7. The BCU has a current establishment of 435 police officers, 85 police staff, 90 special constables and 15 PCSOs and has a budget of £17.255 million.

Performance

Crime and disorder reduction partnerships

8. In accordance with the crime and disorder act 1998, the local authority, police, health, fire service supported by other key agencies and voluntary groups have joined together to form crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs). The BCU has 3 such partnerships being; East Staffordshire; Lichfield and Tamworth. The partnerships conducted their second audit to identify issues of concern for the local population and as a consequence have produced their second strategy to cover the years 2002/05. Brief details of the priorities for each CDRP are detailed as follows:

East Staffordshire

- Burglary
- Motor vehicle crime
- Substance misuse
- Reducing violence
- Young people
- Arson and fire safety

Tamworth

- Young people as victims and perpetrators of crime and disorder
- Domestic violence
- Substance misuse
- Anti-social behaviour
- Perception of crime
- Priority crime types (burglary; violence and vehicle crime)
- Geographic focus on localities that suffer a disproportionate level of crime and disorder

Lichfield

- To reduce crime and disorder and improve community safety throughout the Lichfield district.
- To provide a strategy to encourage youth participation in active community citizenship for 3 identified hot spots.

- To raise awareness to those crimes that are currently under reported and to co-ordinate attempts to reduce the occurrence.
 - To develop partnership performance.
9. The inspection team found that the need to relate to three CDRPs for partnership working brings with it some complex meeting arrangements; however, the BCU has taken the lead for the CDRPs in terms of performance management which has helped focus the three areas in terms of targets and objectives. The three areas appear to have developed effectively, with for example joint operations groups (more later), a joint analyst and the sharing of resources to good effect. For example two domestic violence posts presently covering three areas bringing an efficiency gain allowing for the funding saved to be used for domestic violence initiatives.
 10. There were positive views from partner agency representatives of the role of BCU staff in and the commitment to partnership working. This praise extended to specific members of the Police Authority aligned to the BCU and their work within the responsible authorities group (RAG). This partnership view confirms the BCU view that the Police Authority is active and supportive in its role as a ‘critical friend’. There were particularly positive comments regarding the BCU commander and chief inspector (community) being helpful and proactive with the partnership groups. Some quotes to the inspection team included “The change of commander has given us a fresh pair of eyes” and “continuity for the last 18 months is beginning to pay dividends”. Partnership representatives stated that partnership working has developed significantly over the last 18 months and whilst they have always had good working relationships, they stated that the partnership sergeants have driven activity helping achieve issues such as the pooling of budgets and similar targets. There was little doubt that partnership representatives viewed the roles of the community sergeants and their teams very positively. Partners expressed concerns regarding continuity of key posts such as BCU and LPU commanders, particularly what they described as the regular change of LPU commanders and its disjointed impact upon partnership working.
 11. The BCU appears to have appropriate structures for linking with the CDRPs in the form of the chief superintendent; chief inspector community and two community sergeant posts. There was also evidence of good links between LPU commanders with partnership initiatives being placed on the BCU web site.
 12. Partner agencies and BCU staff praised the joint operations groups set up by each of the partnerships. There was recognition that the Tamworth group is ahead of the others, which are more embryonic but nevertheless all were seen positively.
 13. The inspection team met a very positive group of BCU officers who generally work with partner agencies. They spoke highly of the recent upturn in partnership activity and accountability. However they identified that there is still a gap in knowledge of partnership working amongst some BCU staff, particularly the incident management unit (IMU-response) officers. It was their view that the current 2002/2005 strategy had become stale but assured the inspection team that the 2005/08 strategy is flexible enough not to follow suit. They reported some duplication of meetings and conversations, but this is an unavoidable outcome of having three distinct CDRPs. The inspection team heard that there are some collaborative meetings and ongoing

work to identify cross over points. The team has aspirations for the three CDRPs to form more joint meetings and co-location of groups. BCU partnership officers were able to make a good case for increasing staffing levels of the team. They believed that a further crime reduction officer (CRO) would assist delivery and provide synergy (presently two covering three CDRPs). They also spoke of an absence of a drug liaison officer role.

14. There was an impressive use of community volunteers to conduct ‘speedwatch’ activity (community members trained in use of speed monitoring equipment and results fed for police action). This is indicative of the general high levels of support for police amongst local residents.
15. It is to the credit of the BCU command team that they recognised the need for a third chief inspector post to deal with community engagement and consequently made a successful bid to the Chief Constable. It is apparent that other Force BCUs have followed in such requests to change structure.
16. The future route of funding for CDRPs may be through the County set up and this needs some consideration due to the lack of engagement of the County at this time.
17. The inspection team found many examples of good partnership initiatives that are impacting well at a tactical level. Some of these initiatives are detail as follows;
 - JOGs - each LPU is has established or is in the process of establishing joint operations group (JOG). The group meet directly after the BCU tasking and co-ordination meeting and is a dynamic joint partnership problem solving initiative. Issues are raised at the meeting and there were many examples of its successful impact such as the recovery of a Subaru from a rented garage linked to a series of “ram raid” type crimes and a multi agency approach to dealing with problems associated with a local travellers’ site.
 - Operation “Crackdown” – As part of a national campaign targeting drug use/dealing and associated anti-social behaviour operation, “Crackdown” was launched. The joint operation used sharing of information protocols and joint resources to target known drug user/dealer premises. A number of search warrants were executed, arrests made and in conjunction, housing officers served repossession notices on residents. The successful operation impacted on several localities and was accompanied by joint agency press releases.
 - Operation “Trunkguard/Footprint” – An intelligence led joint operation driven by the BCU tasking and co-ordination meeting and JOG. Crime pattern analysis and intelligence identified several localities across the BCU where there had been an increase or potential crime “spike”. Police officer, PCSOs and wardens undertook high profile patrols to provide reassurance and identification of vulnerable premises. Occupants of such premises were given crime prevention advice and if appropriate were referred to the “handyman” scheme (community safety project to provide crime prevention devices to the vulnerable). “Trunkguard has proven to be successful in a number of areas where burglary has been reduced. The operation has been publicised by newspaper, radio and local television coverage.

Performance against operational targets

18. The BCU has its own business plan that takes account of the national policing plan and “Safer Staffordshire”. The inspection team found that staff, particularly LPU commanders, view the plan very positively. The plan is clearly driving work and not seen as paperwork exercise.
19. BCU performance against operational targets is detailed below in several tables, charts and commentary. BCU performance data is available for all BCUs throughout England and Wales. To allow useful and fair comparison of certain performance indicators, similar BCUs are grouped together into ‘most similar groups’ (known as MSBCU) based, in general, on similar socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Figure1, below, shows BCU performance in relation to crime reduction from April 2004 to January 2005 compared with the same period last year.

Figure 1 - Crime Reduction Performance (April 2004-Jan 2005 compared with April 2003-Jan 2004)

Crime Type	Number of offences	Offence per 1000 pop/h'hold	BCU family average	Rank in BCU family	% Change
Total Crime	21304	78.30	74.59	9 out of 15	-6.81%
Domestic Burglary	1028	9.34	9.76	6 out of 15	-16.49%
Robbery	161	0.59	0.64	8 out of 15	-39.93%
Vehicle Crime	2211	8.13	9.44	6 out of 15	-18.59%
Violent Crime	5487	20.17	15.99	15 out of 15	+0.37%

Source – Home Office performance data

- **Total Crime**

Year on year, total crime has fallen by 7%. Trend analysis indicates that the fall in crime has been constant both in the short and long-term. Total crime levels are just above the MSBCU average but the falling trend is tracking the performance of the MSBCU average and therefore the gap is not increasing. Between April 2004 and January 2005 the BCU was ranked ninth out of 15 in the MSBCU group.

- **Domestic Burglary**

Domestic burglary has fallen by over 16% year on year. The trends of the last 3, 6 and 12 month periods show that over the long term the BCU has made significant reductions but these are slowing and the BCU has actually seen a slight rise over the last 3-month period. Nevertheless, over the last 12 months the BCU had lower levels of burglary than the MSBCU average and is ranked sixth out of 15.

- **Robbery**

Robbery levels have fallen by almost 40% on the same period the previous year and are lower than the MSBCU average. The significant reductions made by the BCU have been made at a faster rate than the MSBCU average and the most recent trends indicate that the improvements in performance are accelerating. The BCU was ranked 8th for the period April to January.

- **Vehicle Crime**

Vehicle crime in Trent Valley has fallen by almost 20% year on year and current trends indicate that this rate of improvement has been maintained. Vehicle crime

levels are below the MSBCU average and the BCU is ranked sixth in the MSBCU group.

- **Violent Crime**

Violent crime levels in Trent Valley are high. Whilst year on year levels have risen slightly, the most recent trends indicate that performance is starting to improve. However, between April 2004 and January 2005, the BCU recorded the highest level of violent crime in the MSBCU family.

20. Figure 2, below shows BCU crime investigation performance for April 2004 to January 2005 compared with the same period the previous year.

Figure 2 - Crime Investigation Performance (April 2004- Jan 2005 compared with April 2003-Jan 2004).

<i>Crime Type</i>	<i>Total Detections</i>	<i>Detection Rate (%)</i>	<i>BCU Family Average</i>	<i>Rank in BCU family</i>	<i>% pt Change in detection rate</i>
Total Crime	7265	34.10%	27.86%	3 out of 15	+2.75% pts
Domestic Burglary	250	24.32%	18.26%	4 out of 15	+3.12% pts
Robbery	61	37.89%	25.18%	3 out of 15	+17.37% pts
Vehicle Crime	309	13.98%	13.84%	7 out of 15	+4.84% pts
Violent Crime	3321	60.52%	54.59%	5 out of 15	-1.92% pts

Source – Home Office performance data

- **Total Crime**

Year on year the total crime detection rate has risen slightly and is above the MSBCU average. The long and short-term trends suggest that the slight year on year improvements have been maintained throughout the year. For the period April to January the BCU detected a third of all recorded crimes, almost 7% more crimes than the MSBCU average and was ranked third out of 15. More recent performance data from force indicates that this good performance is continuing with overall detection rates at the time of inspection at just under 36%.

- **Domestic Burglary**

The domestic burglary detection rate has also risen slightly year on year and is again, above the MSBCU average. The BCU is detecting a quarter of all domestic burglaries and is ranked fourth in the MSBCU group.

- **Robbery**

The robbery detection rate has improved greatly over the last 12 months, rising by almost 20 point's year on year. The robbery detection rate remains relatively high, ranking third in the MSBCU group, and continues to improve.

- **Vehicle Crime**

The detection rate for vehicle crime is in line with the MSBCU average and, has risen slightly year on year. The trends of current performance indicate continued improvement in performance. Trent Valley is ranked seventh in the MSBCU group for the period April to January.

- **Violent Crime**

Year on year, the violent crime detection rate has fallen slightly but remains above the MSBCU average. The trend of the violent crime detection rate remains relatively stable.

21. The BCU highlights the following issues in terms of the impressive performance achievements:
 - Burglary reduction - Burglary dwellings are a key priority during the year for NIM tasking and proactive policing. There are good prevention initiatives in conjunction with partners in the local authorities and neighbourhood watch is encouraged with the use of 'foot print' and other leaflet campaigns supported by positive media exposure. The targeting of known prolific offenders is driven robustly by the BCU intelligence team and it is apparent that action is taken promptly on bail breaches and prison releases.
 - Robbery reduction - Reductions in robbery are primarily achieved by a combination of high visibility patrolling alternating with covert surveillance in areas highlighted by crime pattern analysis. Many robberies are mobile phone thefts committed by juveniles targeting other juvenile victims. The BCU appointed a single point of contact on all robberies, and this has ensured better co-ordination of enquiries and a more consistent service to victims.
 - Vehicle Crime - From 01.04.04 the BCU established a separate team attached to the proactive group consisting of a sergeant and four constables who took responsibility to review every vehicle crime report. The national intelligence model was used to target known prolific offenders and action taken promptly on bail breaches and prison releases. The BCU also negotiated an improvement in the % attendance of vehicle examiners to 100% recovered stolen vehicles and 43% of thefts from vehicles (100% assessed by trained staff on report). Money from the BCU Commanders Fund was used to fast track the results and this has yielded an improved identification rate.
22. In summary, the BCU is to be congratulated on its recent performance. There are substantial and sustained reductions across all areas except violent crime. Most recent trends indicate that the violent crime performance is starting to improve and BCU figures show a 0.57% reduction for April 2004 to end of February 2005, compared to the same period for the previous year. There are substantial reductions in domestic burglary; robbery and vehicle crime.
23. Figure 3, below shows BCU levels of repeat victimisation (the percentage of victims that then become a victim again) in relation to burglary and violent crime.

Figure 3 – BCU levels of repeat victimisation 2003/04 compared with 2002/03

	02/03	03/04	MSBCU Family Average 03/04	Rank in MSBCU family	% Change from 02/03 to 03/04
Repeat Burglaries	139	87			
Burglaries	1396	1410			
% Repeat Burglaries	9.96%	6.17%	9.32%	4 out of 13	-3.79% pts
Repeat Domestic Violence	1533	223			
Domestic Violence	4119	1566			
% victims of repeated domestic violence	37.22%	14.24%	28.36%		-22.98% pts

Source – Home Office data

24. The level of repeat burglaries fell, year on year by almost 4% points to just over 6%. This is below the MSBCU average and the BCU is ranked fourth in the MSBCU group. The level of repeat domestic violence fell considerably year on year, from 37% in 2002/03 to just 14% in 2003/04. This is half the MSBCU average of 28%. The BCU also recorded a considerable reduction in the total number of domestic violence incidents. These impressive results have been achieved in no small part by the BCU establishing a unique public protection unit (PPU-now adopted throughout the Force) that has combined officers, police staff, and funded practitioners from the areas of sex offending, domestic violence, hate crime and child protection. In combination with partner agencies, every known domestic violence offender has been profiled and listed in order of risk (frequency of offending and harm done). The top five are adopted by the BCU as 'Gold' offenders and targeted by the unit for multi-layered intervention. A strict arrest policy, together with prosecutions progressing with victim support, coupled with bail condition enforcement has reduced the amount of offending. A unique free legal advice support system was also introduced specifically for victims of domestic violence and this has encouraged more reporting and witness statements being offered. The 'Gold' domestic violence offenders are reviewed at every tasking and co-ordination meeting.
25. Figure 4, below, shows levels of road traffic collisions that result in people being either killed or seriously injured. The levels of such accidents within the BCU are the lowest within its MSBCU. The BCU were asked to comment on the low rates and suggested that results are partly due to the fact that fixed and mobile speed camera enforcement coverage is dense within Staffordshire and also that road collisions are regularly analysed in accordance with the national intelligence model. This has led to additional high visibility speed enforcement and vehicle construction and use campaigns throughout the year.

Figure 4 – levels of road traffic collisions.

	2002/03	2003/04	MSBCU Average	Rank in MSBCU family	% Change 02/03 to 03/04
RTCs	99	98			
Road traffic collisions that resulted in death or serious injury per 1000 population	0.37	0.36	0.52	1 out of 11	

Source – Home Office data.

26. Figure 5, below shows BCU performance for the last full year (April to March 2003/04) compared to both MSBCU and national averages. The results generally indicate that there has been an upturn in performance over the last year and this clearly reflects well on the command team and staff of the BCU. Levels of police staff sickness are higher than average and this is discussed later in this report.

Figure 5 – BCU performance 2003/04 compare with MSBCU and national averages

Best Value Performance Indicator Trent Valley BCU	BCU Performance 2003/04	MSBCU family average 2003/04	England and Wales average 2003/04
Complaints per 1000 officers	247.25	249.24	192.24
% of police strength from minority ethnic communities	2.70 %	2.36 %	3.28 %
Work days lost sick/police officer	9.76	9.64	9.39
Work days lost sick/police staff	12.33	10.99	10.84
Recorded crimes per 1000 population	100.70	94.92	113.08
Recorded crime % detected	31.55 %	26.81 %	23.49 %
Domestic burglaries per 1000 households	12.81	13.96	18.20
Domestic burglaries % detected	22.27 %	19.22 %	15.01 %
Violent crimes per 1000 population	24.08	18.00	21.13
Violent crimes % detected	62.48 %	55.97 %	46.76 %
Robberies per 1000 population	1.15	0.87	1.93
Robberies % detected	20.19 %	24.61 %	18.37 %
Vehicle crimes per 1000 population	11.90	13.64	16.94
Vehicle crimes % detected	9.42 %	11.21 %	8.97 %
Traffic collisions death/serious injury per 1000 population	0.36	0.52	0.46
Racially aggravated crimes % detected	41.18 %	39.86 %	33.50 %

Origin - HMIC matrix of performance 2003/04

Accountability mechanisms and performance management

27. The inspection team found robust performance accountability for the BCU commander from chief officer level particularly from the line manager Assistant Chief Constable who holds the commander to account by formal meetings and visits and also by informal regular contact. There is a structured 6 monthly programme of reviews by HQ that examine thematic issues (PDR compliance, IIP and development of police reform issues). Chief Officers are often seen on the BCU carrying out half-day visits to teams and formal feedback is provided to the command team. This accountability extends into the BCU. Various meetings are used to examine performance and these are supported by exceptional availability of real time performance data down to individual level. This is viewed very positively by BCU staff and managers and not seen as a 'big stick', with healthy banter between officers. There is excellent use of PDRs (Performance Development Review-appraisal system) for individual and team accountability. PDR objectives are set around the business plan. There are structured meetings for the command team and wider management team that are inter-related with set agendas to ensure continuity and a regular review of performance.
28. The budget is devolved to the BCU in total. Hence there is a high degree of autonomy and ability to vire and shape resources within set parameters to meet local needs. LPU commanders have a devolved budget with support to manage it. Some LPUs have created spreadsheets to help them monitor spending and others have not and it was apparent to the inspection team that the current finance IT systems could be developed in that presently information has to be drawn manually and is not in real time. It would be useful for all LPU commanders to have up to date and accurate budget information and this is an area that the BCU commander may wish to consider. Generally LPU commanders relish the opportunity to manage their own budget.

Reassurance and visibility

29. As discussed, each LPU is commanded by an inspector who has command of CAT teams to drive LPU partnership working and community policing. Generally teams of reactive officers who are line managed by other managers support each LPU, which is a Force model. Recently the BCU, after consultation with the Force, has stepped outside this corporate model and two LPUs provide both response and CAT team policing under the LPU inspector. Where this has occurred, the inspection team found positive comments from BCU staff. The inspection team believe that the structure in these areas has assisted the LPUs develop and perform better which is reflected in performance and public satisfaction figures. The inspection team believes that this move is to the credit of the Force and the BCU command team.
30. The BCU command team has a vision to place as many IMU officers within CAT teams as they can. The rationale for this is that community problem solving work will reduce demand levels and that "prevention is better than a cure". The BCU currently maintains an impressive electronic community contacts register and there was evidence that the register is driving CAT activity in visits and patrol.

31. The BCU has its own media and communications officer whose main role is to deliver reassurance to the community. The officer has regular meetings with partnership media officers and occasionally issues joint press releases.
32. The BCU has 15 PCSOs, who are seen very positively by BCU staff, partners and the public. The inspection team found that BCU officers are still a little uncertain as to what their role is - particularly IMU officers. A PCSO page on the web site is currently under development but the inspection team believes that PCSOs could market themselves and their role further, for example by attending IMU briefings. PCSOs are clearly deployed according to intelligence and it was clear that activity is also driven by specific PDR objectives such as foot patrol for 6 hours out of an 8-hour tour of duty. The inspection team was impressed with the development of the Force command and control system which will automatically ask controllers or dispatchers if the incident is suitable for the deployment of a PCSO. This type of innovation should ensure that PCSOs are considered and used more appropriately. The inspection team welcomed the development of the 3 monthly meeting at headquarters for all PCSOs and the nomination of divisional representatives. This meeting structure should provide consistency to the use and development of PCSOs at a Force level, for example, possible extension to PCSO powers such as the ability to issue fixed penalties for not wearing seat belts or using mobile phones raised by PCSOs interviewed during inspection.
33. The BCU has a very strong special constabulary resource with 112 on establishment. Each LPU has a specials recruitment officer and there is little doubt that their activity is attracting many new recruits. Generally the specials are seen in a very positive light by BCU staff and there were many examples of specials performing a variety of different and valued roles. Some special officers are trained in interviewing; conduct high visibility patrol; conduct community work; perform operation Vampire (high profile policing during late evenings around licensed premises) and 'streetsafe' – operation at Tamworth, monitoring licensed premises. Specials are aligned to CAT teams within each LPU and generally liked this alignment stating that they still had the opportunity if they wished to experience the other side of police work, the "blues and twos" side of reactive policing. They felt that they were able to build up a good rapport with the local community because of their alignment to CATs. Special officers interviewed are content with the level of training they receive and described very good communication and relations with regular officers. There were some concerns expressed over their equipment such as stab proof vests. Specials would like individual issue. Presently they use pool vests stored at certain LPUs. The pool vests are described as poorly maintained and often smell stale because of lack of cleaning. This situation has led to some specials going out without them, which may be contrary to Force advice for certain roles. They perceive the lack of vests could impact upon recruitment and highlight that they are issued with tunics costing a lot of money that they never wear (apart from ceremonies) and they have even offered to buy their own. They also expressed concerns regarding the lack of availability of Airwaves radios and earpieces. Impressively, specials are subject to PDRs but presently the compliance rate is fairly low and this needs consideration. All specials are trained in the use of the computerised intelligence system and are able to directly input and research intelligence. Presently there is a lack of information regarding the number of specials due to attend duty and officers, particularly IMU inspectors would like to know how many were coming on duty to assist in occasional holistic resource

decisions they have to make. The BCU commander may wish to consider the issues in relation to the special constabulary highlighted above.

Intelligence-led policing

34. There is no doubt that the BCU is National Intelligence Model (NIM) compliant with relevant meeting structures in place and provision of documents such as strategic and tactical assessment. The inspection team attended a professionally chaired and comprehensive daily management meeting that struck the balance between reviewing what had occurred (not becoming a nine o'clock inquest) and setting the direction of policing activity. As a consequence, BCU staff stated that they felt that managers are more aware of operational issues. Praise for good work was evident at the meeting including specific instructions to make PDR entries and some quality assurance work was instigated (two arrested persons that were released without further police investigation were actioned for review by the chair). The inspection team heard further positive comments regarding the daily meeting (in place for 6 months) providing a feeling of togetherness and a greater understanding of other department/LPU issues.
35. The same comments can be applied to the two-weekly tasking and co-ordination meeting. There is an apparent good balance of review, praise for good work and appropriate tasking. Partner agencies are also being tasked through LPU inspectors to take to their joint operations group. The inspection team was impressed that the control strategy contains issues that are clearly driven from the community such as criminal damage and anti-social behaviour. This gives real clarity and direction for action, particularly to LPU inspectors.
36. Each LPU has an intelligence support assistant and there were positive views regarding the support that these officers provide for dissemination of intelligence relating to specific LPUs. LPU inspectors particularly valued these posts. The inspection team reviewed some examples of the daily briefing distributed electronically. They were of a good standard and comments from BCU staff indicate that they have improved along with briefing room facilities. The rooms and Information technology used to deliver the briefings is excellent. Despite this there was an obvious need (comments from BCU staff) for training of sergeants in the presentation of the product to ensure that briefings are delivered to a corporate standard.
37. There was evidence that not all BCU staff are consistently submitting intelligence. The intelligence team themselves commented that the same officers continually submit the bulk of intelligence onto the electronic system. This would appear to be a training issue for the BCU and it was clear that some officers have difficulty with the technology and hence do not submit intelligence. Presently officers are not regularly receiving feedback on intelligence submissions as routine but do receive feedback on extremes (either a good or bad submission). With this point in mind and comments from the intelligence team themselves, the inspection team believes that the intelligence unit could market themselves and the value of intelligence again. Presently there is no attachment process and this may be worthy of consideration in light of the above, particularly with new members of staff.

38. The inspection team attended the inter-agency joint operations group (JOG) meeting at Tamworth. It is apparent that other LPUs are setting up similar embryonic groups. The structure is very impressive and the meeting follows on directly from the BCU tasking and co-ordination meeting. It was clear that the JOG meeting was able to take issues forward. There was a wide attendance of partnership representatives and evidence of dynamic joint problem solving occurring without further referral. An example of this was the identification of vehicles likely to be stolen from a specific area of Tamworth (old Vauxhalls and Fords) and the provision of a high profile stand at a supermarket selling discounted security products to owners of such vehicles.
39. Regional intelligence sharing is improving and there is good contact with West Midlands and direct access to the West Midlands intelligence system (Flints). It is apparent that the formal process of notification of forthcoming prison releases is not working despite challenges to the Force and prison service, but presently a good informal network is producing relevant intelligence.
40. The BCU commander may wish to consider the following issues highlighted above: training for sergeants regarding delivery of briefings; further marketing of the intelligence unit and its role and the formal structure of notification of prison releases.

Crime Investigation and recording practices

41. The BCU has three CID teams who are based at Burton; Lichfield and Tamworth and there is currently an ongoing review to consider if CID needs to be located at two bases. It is evident that CID officers see themselves and are seen as a BCU resource and there was evidence of detective sergeants (DSs) sharing resources with other CID offices. It was apparent to the inspection team that DSs are intrusive in their management of detective workloads with a regular review of ongoing enquiries and many examples of working along side their officers. Detectives are measured on such specifics as arrests; detection rates and intelligence entries. There was evidence that the CID and proactive teams are working closely together. CID staff market themselves and their work to their colleagues, attend briefings and involve junior staff in the execution of search warrants. There was support from detective constables (DCs) for a divisional CID meeting, although they stated that generally, there were no problems with communications. DCs were very positive about their role and conditions. A comments from an experienced detective was “ really enjoy the job – best it has ever been”.
42. The BCU has a police support unit (PSU) strength (one inspector, three sergeants and eighteen constables) proactive team that is likely to be enhanced soon to have thirty constables. They work to a written protocol and are deployed by the two weekly tasking and co-ordination meeting. It is apparent that they have the capacity to react to ‘hot intelligence’ via telephone referral to a manager. Whilst generally very positive, proactive officers raised the lack of surveillance trained officers within the team which they stated is occasionally limiting their effectiveness. This is an issue that the BCU commander may wish to consider.
43. The crime audit team is the BCU guardian of crime recording standards and gives feedback to officers on the standard of crimes and files. There are regular, robust and

intrusive quality checks conducted by the team, who attend LPUs and trawl through paperwork to conduct 'reality checks' and ensure crime recording and investigation standards are met.

44. The BCU public protection unit (officers that deal with persons assessed as a higher risk to society such as sex offenders) appears appropriately resourced and operating under good processes. There is a good level of general knowledge of the unit, its work and processes by operational officers. The unit is looking to build an appropriate web site shortly. Staff of the unit were very praiseworthy of the BCUs commitment to this area of work.

Use of forensic, DNA and scientific techniques

45. 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 Trent Valley 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.
46. The inspection team examined the process in taking DNA samples from prisoners to ensure that every opportunity to take such samples is being taken. Force policy dictates that all persons arrested for any recordable offence has DNA samples taken from them shortly after arrival in custody. After research on the police national computer (PNC) custody staff complete a form on prisoner arrival that indicates whether a DNA sample is required to be taken or not (not required if previously taken and confirmed as such on PNC). If DNA is taken it is placed in a secure sample bag and then freezer before being collected on a daily basis and taken for examination.
47. An audit of 100 custody records was undertaken by the inspection team to examine if the process was 'capturing' every DNA taking opportunity. There were no cases out of the 100 where the BCU had failed to take a sample. The BCU is congratulated on this result. In summary, the process for identifying a need to take a DNA sample, storage and transport arrangements are sound.
48. The inspection team examined the process for dealing with fingerprint and DNA identifications. Once an identification of a suspect is made a notification and brief package is forwarded to the BCU from the force intelligence bureau. An officer in the BCU intelligence unit then conducts further analytical work and develops a more extensive package that contains details of associates of the suspect and possible further linked offences either by method or of location to the offence identified. The package is then forwarded to the demand management unit sergeant of the BCU (silver control-see later) who monitors progress via a spreadsheet. Arrest packages are allocated to LPU inspectors or if identified, as a BCU priority will be allocated to CID or the proactive team. The Force sets a 14-day target for arrest or update and monitors those packages that are more than 4 weeks old in the form of a performance indicator. Overall the process was good.

49. The BCU has a good provision of Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCO) with a current establishment of a senior SOCO; 7.5 SOCO posts and two vehicle examiners. The BCU has also twenty officers trained as minor scene examiners who will examine theft from/criminal damage vehicles. SOCO are a Force level resource but are located on the BCU. The inspection team examined the BCU SOCO performance outcomes in comparison with other BCUs of the Force. It was clear that they compare well and figures for 2004/05 show that they attended 88% of all burglary dwelling scenes (equal top of Force) against a Force target of 85%. They also recorded the second highest Forensic identifications of the four BCUs. SOCOs see it an important feature to be based on BCU to assist relationships and exchange of intelligence but highlighted some minor disadvantages in that minor supplies (such as paper) have to come from HQ. Current office provision on the BCU may not be adequate (designed for two officers and has to accommodate five). Support from SOCO is seen as professional, accommodating and overall very good by BCU staff. Storage facilities are described as “superb” including a garage. SOCOs work to a crime scene attendance policy, but this can be varied via the tasking and co-ordination meeting, which the senior SOCO attends. The senior or one of the SOCOs will attend the daily tasking. There are good performance management processes in place and appropriate efficient deployment.
50. Generally it was apparent that officer crime scene awareness could be improved. Comments from SOCOs supported this view, and were also frustrated on occasions regarding the lack of specific direction from officers’ entries on the Force command and control system. It is often that the incidents have comments such as “tag for SOCO” without any detail as to what they are meant to look at.

Managing demand

51. The inspection team was impressed with the BCU demand management unit (DMU). The unit is headed by a sergeant and utilises some officers on recuperative duties to attend incidents instead of the reactive teams (IMU). The DMU is able to deal with a third of all ‘open’ incidents for the BCU thus reducing demand on IMU and providing a quicker service for callers. The DMU also acts as a control facility and ‘doubles’ as Silver command for the BCU for appropriate incidents/events (control room established for specific or major incidents). The inspection team noted a lack of formal meeting between the DMU and control room and the BCU commander may wish to consider a formal meeting between the DMU and ACR staff to share ideas, initiatives and good practice.
52. IMU staff feel positive about their role and whilst they stated that they are going from job to job, feel that they have a realistic workload. IMU inspectors believe that they are spread too thinly. There is currently one IMU inspector per shift (five shifts) but the role means that they cover all five LPUs when they are on duty. The inspection team believes that the IMU inspector role is busy but presently they are coping well. There was no adverse comments regarding their visibility by front line officers and custody staff stated they are usually available fairly quickly. Operations room staff echoed this view. There is an obvious good interaction between IMU and LPU inspectors with willingness to loan officers to assist each other.

53. The inspection team found maturity about the sharing of resources between LPUs and there was evidence of formal and informal use of each other's staff. There is frequent sharing of resources between IMU and CATs to clear open incident lists. There is, as a consequence, an excellent working relation between different teams and roles within the BCU. This is not accidental and initiatives such as CAT officers being instructed to sit on IMU briefings helps, although this is not so easy at Burton as they have different bases.
54. There is good support generally from HQ departments, including the major incident department (MID) and for other level 2 issues (prisoners who transcend BCU or Force boundaries). Generally IMU inspectors were happy with the level of support that they get from central resources. One exception to this was the dog section. They stated they can get one via tasking for planned events but were not so positive regarding getting ones to spontaneous incidents of public order or drug related issues. They also noted that the CID call out rota was not always accurate leading to several wasted phone calls.

Leadership

BCU Management team

55. The BCU commander (chief superintendent) has 20 years police service and took up the current post on promotion in September 2003. He is a graduate of the accelerated promotion scheme and has served widely across the county in a variety of roles including uniform; C.I.D and other specialist roles. He has also held positions within the headquarters Human Resource department. He holds a post-graduate management qualification and has a Masters degree in Business Administration. He holds national accreditation and Force level responsibility for CBRN, firearms and public order and is the Staffordshire Branch Secretary of the Superintendents association.
56. The superintendent has 19 years police service and has a broad base of operational experience gained from a variety of roles within the county. He has served within CID as DC, DS and DI. Uniformed experience includes public order management, LPU commander at Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, Best Value reviews of child protection, operational management units and front office services. He took up the current role in September 2003 and has recently completed the Force's Leadership Development Programme, delivered at Staffordshire University. He has a national accreditation in public order and firearms management, post-graduate qualifications in management and an Honours degree in Law.
57. The Human Resources manager is a member of police staff and has extensive experience within the private sector and public sector before joining the Force in 1999 as Divisional HR manager. She holds qualifications in both Human Resources and Management, is a member of the Institute Of Personnel and Development (MIPCD) and has a Masters degree in Business Administration.
58. The Business Manager has 16 years experience within a public sector financial environment. He joined Staffordshire police in 1999. He holds professional qualifications with the Association of Accounting Technicians and is a chartered

Public Finance Accountant. He has also recently completed the Force's Leadership Development Programme.

59. The chief inspector (Community engagement) has 27 years police service. He has been in his current role since 2001. He has a wide policing experience having served at most stations within the Force. He also has experience in CID, Tactical team and training. He is an experienced firearms, public order and sporting events commander. He is an executive member of the East Staffordshire Race Equality Council and holds a number of post-graduate qualifications including a Masters Degree in Business Administration.
60. The chief inspector (operations) has 18 years service and took up his current position in June 2004. He was previously a DI within the Force Major Investigations department. He is an accredited senior-investigating officer and has recently achieved level 3 of the Professionalising the Investigation Process (PIP-see later).
61. The chief inspector (crime) has 27 years service and has a wide range of policing experience. He took up his present post in June 2004. He has a BSc (Honours) degree in policing and police studies and is currently studying for the Force leadership diploma course.
62. There is little doubt from what the inspection team has seen that morale and confidence of officers is high. This stems from the positive attitude, culture and accessibility of the command team, with issues such as a visibility schedule in place. There were many positive comments to evidence this along with staff generally feeling supported in their work and an absence of 'blame culture'.
63. There were excellent communications from the command team to BCU staff, of particular note was that there had been individual feedback in a recent staff perception survey with all comments responded to by the BCU commander personally. A Web site ability to ask the command team questions (known as "The Wall") had been well received and used. There is a clear BCU meeting structure; "open door policy" and formal and informal visits to LPUs. The BCU is congratulated regarding these achievements. The inspection team also heard positive comments about the leadership of the Force – particularly of the Chief Constable himself in that he seems to "know all by their first name and everything that is going on". The BCU commander was also specifically praised regarding his positive attitude, some members of staff referred to it as "infectious".
64. It is apparent that all BCU senior managers feel a full part of the command team and able to contribute. They are also able to participate in areas that are not directly within their expertise and there is an apparent good, close working relationship between HR and Finance. Middle managers felt they are consulted and listened to for personnel issues and that the HR department is very approachable and helpful.
65. There was high praise for all aspects of command and management from representative groups the inspection team saw. Formal and informal meetings were appreciated, and the accessibility of the command team, particularly the commander was highlighted. Specific comments included "He treats us like a family" "If we have a problem, he has a problem".

66. The BCU has an excellent Intranet site, which has impressive links and facilities. It is certainly an item of good practice, and, as discussed the inspection team was impressed with the community contacts register maintained on it. The inspection team often find that BCUs struggle to identify efficient mechanisms to capture community views and would suggest that this system may be developed to further feed community views into BCU policing plans and the control strategy. Some initial concerns that the system may capture intelligence that is then not captured in the intelligence system were negated. BCU officers were aware of the need to submit separate intelligence entries and that there was an audit process (headed by a detective inspector) to check that this was done.
67. The inspection team met a very positive group of police staff members. They were able to detail very positive relationships with police officers and felt that they worked in a very positive family environment. Some police staff members who had previous employment experiences outside the service stated that it was the best and most supportive environment that they had worked in. They spoke very positively of the command team and accessibility to them. Front office staff felt they had the capacity to support police officers more and provide a better quality of service to the public such as the development of self reporting road traffic collisions or further statement taking etc. This is an area the BCU may wish to examine.
68. The inspection team heard a comment that some of the community and political leaders of Tamworth felt the town had been “downgraded” and had suffered a loss of status by the appointment of an inspector as commander. This probably stems from the fact that it used to be led by a superintendent and chief inspector and is an issue for the command team to consider regarding their own visibility.
69. There is a good level of BCU income generation and sponsorship, for example JCB and Armitage Shanks provide premises and other sponsorship deals.

Self-review and learning

70. The BCU has good training facilities and appropriate mechanisms for determining training needs. The inspection team found positive comments regarding the Force leadership programme and development of staff in general. It was impressive that as part of the leadership programme, officers were given topics to develop such as examining the joint operations group role that not only developed the individual but also the BCU/LPU.
71. There is a good recognition system on the BCU, which is valued by staff generally although there is a perception from the IMU that they do not get recognised as much as others groups. An example given was that “often CID working on an incident receives team commendations, but an officer talking a male out of suicide and putting their own safety at risk received a PDR note”. The inspection team perceived that this was not a big issue for staff, but one for the command team to bear in mind.
72. The BCU is trailing a Force project known as Professionalising the Investigation Process (PIP). Early indications are that it is a success and leading to more detections. Officers have to pass rigorous assessment of their investigative and interview skills. There were many positive comments regarding PIP and it was obvious to the

inspection team that officers are proud of achieving accreditation. Success in the process results in the award of a tie pin a lot of “badge wearing” was obvious to the inspection team. The chief inspector (crime) leads the trial and is justifiably proud of the process and its impact on officers.

HR and diversity issues

73. There is an apparent good overall control of HR issues, eg disciplines issues, grievances, training, and sickness. The BCU has delegated authority to arrange promotion selection for the ranks of sergeant and inspector. Whilst the ultimate authority for promotion remains with the Chief Constable, local examination and nomination of applicants has definitely received favourable support and appears to assist morale. There are structures and processes in place ensure compliance with equal opportunities. The BCU has plans to give newly promoted sergeants attachments to various units prior to their operational deployment to assist in their development and training. The inspection team welcomes this approach.
74. The inspection team found that PDRs are seen very positively by BCU staff and are clearly used as a mechanism to deliver performance and develop the individual. There is an excellent electronic system that enables officers to add comments to other PDRs remotely. The BCU has excellent compliance rates for PDR completion, and at the time of inspection 97% of staff had a current PDR. These rates are monitored monthly at the management team meeting. There are regular PDR ‘dip checks’ by all command team members who examine compliance rates and the quality of objectives ensuring that at least one links individual performance to the BCU policing plan. The inspection team examined several PDRs at random and was impressed with the specific objective setting. The BCU is congratulated.

Equipment

75. The BCU business manager has responsibility to develop the BCU estate and felt that support from headquarters is good. Co-ordination of such issues is provided via quarterly meetings with headquarters staff who attend the BCU.
76. BCU staff view the radio system ‘Airwaves’ very positively. There is a more comprehensive coverage and a clearer reception leading to less repetition of radio messages.
77. The BCU vehicle fleet is seen as adequate by BCU staff and there is a regular interchange of vehicle types across LPUs dependent on needs. IMU inspectors believed that they had too many advanced driver vehicles and felt there should be more standard vehicles meaning that often, advanced vehicles are stood unused. They also raised the issue that they felt that there was a lack of ownership regarding vehicle maintenance (checking of kit – cleaning of interior of cars etc). Each shift has the responsibility for checking two cars, but they felt that regular checks were not always occurring and often vehicles were not clean with rubbish being left inside.

Attendance management and sickness statistics

Figure 6 – BCU sickness data

Staff Type	Days lost per officer 02/03	Days lost per officer 03/04	MSBCU average 03/04	Rank in MSBCU Family 03/04	% Change of days lost per officer 02/03 to 03/04
Police Officers	10.82	9.76	9.64	8 out of 14	-9.8%
Police Staff	8.58	12.33	10.99	9 out of 14	+43.7%

Source – Home Office data

78. Figure 6, above details BCU sickness for the last full year of available data 2003/04 compared with 2002/03. Police officer sickness levels are in line with the MSBCU average, and have reduced from the previous year by almost 10%. Police staff sickness levels have risen, year on year, by almost 45% and are high when compared with peers.
79. Recent figures (end of year 2004/05) for officers is reported as 8.28 and for police staff 7.05 average days lost per person respectively. This is a considerable reduction of police staff sickness. The BCU was asked to comment on the 2003/04 figures and indicated that police staff figures had been severely effected by a small number of persons on unrelated and unavoidable long-term sick leave. These individuals are all now back at work.

Complaints

Figure 7 – BCU complaint data

	2002/03	2003/04	MSBCU Average 03/04	Rank in BCU Family 03/04	% Change from 02/03 to 03/04
Total Complaints	123	97			-21.1%
Complaints Per 1000 Officer	311.57	247.25	249.24	8 out of 13	-20.6%
Complaints Substantiated	10	3			
% Complaints Substantiated	8.13%	3.09%	4.44%	7 out of 13	-5.04% pts

Source – Home Office data

80. Figure 7, above, details BCU complaint data for the last full year of information 2003/04 compared against the previous year. There has been a 21% fall in the number of complaints recorded in Trent Valley. The number of complaints per 1000 officer is in line with the MSBCU. In 2003/04, 3% of complaints were substantiated, lower than the MSBCU average and a fall of 5.04% points from the previous year.

Conclusions and recommendations

The BCU polices an area of almost 300 square miles with a population of 262,235 in some 105,572 households and is responsible for the three local authority areas of East Staffordshire Borough, Lichfield District, and Tamworth Borough councils. The main urban areas are at Burton and Tamworth with Lichfield, Burntwood and Uttoxeter being largely rural areas.

For the period April 2004 to January 2005 compared with same period the previous year, total crime has fallen by 7%. Trend analysis indicates that the fall in crime has been constant both in the short and long-term and for the period the BCU was ranked 9th out of 15 in the MSBCU group. That total figure includes a fall in domestic burglary of over 16%, robbery by almost 40%, vehicle crime by almost 20%, but a slight rise in violent crime levels. Most recent trends indicate that the violent crime performance is starting to improve and BCU figures show a 0.57% reduction for April 2004 to end of February 2005, compared to the same period for the previous year. Most recent figures from the BCU indicate a potential to achieve an overall reduction rate of 7.3% for the financial year 2004/2005.

For the same periods, the total crime detection rate has risen slightly and is above the MSBCU average. For the period April 2004 to January 2005, the BCU detected a third of all recorded crimes, almost 7% more crimes than the MSBCU average and was ranked 3rd out of 15. Most recent figures from the BCU indicate a potential to achieve a detection rate of 36% for the financial year 2004/2005.

Performance for the period also includes a fall in the level of repeat burglaries by almost 4% to just over 6%. Falls in the level of repeat domestic violence are impressive from 37% in 2002/03 to just 14% in 2003/04 which is half the MSBCU average of 28%. Trent Valley also has very low levels of RTCs, the lowest in the MSBCU group, and has maintained these low levels over the last 2-year period.

It is obvious that the staff of the BCU are very proud of the achievements and justifiably so with virtually all crime areas showing trends in the right direction. The command of the BCU can also be justifiably proud of the praise it received from staff and members of other organisations. Staff refer to an excellent atmosphere with many positive comments to evidence this. They feel very well supported in their work and particularly referred to an absence of any 'blame culture'. Partner agency representatives stated that partnership working has developed significantly over the last 18 months.

Overall, the inspection team was convinced that the BCU is providing an excellent and effective policing service and there is no doubt that staff on the BCU will want to even further improve levels and quality of service to their community. It is incumbent on managers to constantly look to improve and develop resource capability and the BCU infrastructure. At this time the inspection team are confident that the command team have the vision and confidence to improve productivity by taking account of some issues raised by this report without the need for any specific recommendations.

Summary of good practice

- The BCU has established a Public Protection Unit (now adopted throughout the Force) that has combined officers, police staff, and funded practitioners from the areas of sex offending, domestic violence, hate crime and child protection. In combination with

partner agencies, every known domestic violence offender has been profiled and listed in order of risk (frequency of offending and harm done). The top five are adopted by the BCU as 'Gold' offenders and targeted by the unit for multi-layered intervention. A strict arrest policy, together with prosecutions progressing with victim support, coupled with bail condition enforcement has reduced the amount of offending. A unique free legal advice support system has also been introduced specifically for victims of domestic violence and this has encouraged more reporting and witness statements being offered. The 'Gold' domestic violence offenders are reviewed at every tasking and co-ordination meeting.

- The inspection team was impressed with the development of the Force command and control system which will automatically ask the question of controllers or dispatchers if the incident is suitable for the deployment of a PCSO. This type of innovation should ensure that PCSOs are considered and used more appropriately.
- The inspection team was impressed with the BCU demand management unit (DMU). The unit is headed by a sergeant and utilises some officers on recuperative duties by attending incidents instead of the reactive teams (IMU). The DMU is able to deal with a third of all 'open' incidents for the BCU thus reducing demand on IMU and providing a quicker service for callers.
- The BCU has an excellent Intranet site, which has impressive links and facilities. It is certainly an item of good practice, and, as discussed the inspection team was impressed with the community contacts register maintained on it.
- The BCU has autonomy to promote to inspector and sergeant ranks and this definitely assists morale of officers. There are structures and processes in place ensure compliance with equal opportunities.
- The BCU has plans to give newly promoted sergeants attachments to various units prior to their operational deployment to assist in their development and training. The inspection team welcomes this approach.

Issues for management consideration

- It would be useful for all LPU commanders to have up to date and accurate budget information and this is an area that the BCU commander may wish to consider.
- There were several areas in relation to the special constabulary that the BCU commander may wish to consider; 'pool' stab proof vests are poorly maintained; the unavailability of Airwaves radios and earpieces; the compliance rate for special constabulary PDRs could be improved and there is a lack of duty information preventing for a more holistic BCU deployment.
- The BCU commander may wish to consider the following issues: training for sergeants regarding delivery of briefings; further marketing of the intelligence unit and its role and the formal structure of notification of prison releases.

- Proactive officers raised the lack of surveillance trained officers within the team which they stated is occasionally limiting their effectiveness.
- The BCU commander may wish to consider a formal meeting between the DMU and ACR staff to share ideas, initiatives and good practice.
- Generally it was apparent that officer crime scene awareness could be improved. Comments from SOCOs supported this view, and were also frustrated on occasions regarding the lack of specific direction from officers' entries on the Force command and control system. It is often that the incidents have comments such as "tag for SOCO" without any detail as to what they are meant to look at.
- Front office staff felt they had the capacity to support police officers more and provide a better quality of service to the public such as the development of self reporting road traffic collisions or further statement taking etc. This is an area the BCU commander may wish to examine.

Recommendations

No recommendations are made.