

**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
South of England Region**

**Inspection of Milton Keynes BCU
Thames Valley Police**

December 2006



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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Thames Valley Police recently reorganised and amalgamated its existing BCUs, with the exception of Milton Keynes. The new large BCUs are on a county basis and each BCU has a number of local police areas (LPAs) commanded by a chief inspector or superintendent that provides local service delivery while supported by the infrastructure of the larger police divisions. Such a structure is now common across many forces in the south, with the smaller police units often referred to as ‘districts’. Districts are intended to be co-terminous with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to aid partnership working, which they are in Thames Valley Police.
- 1.2 Although not unique, Milton Keynes is unusual for two main reasons. The BCU, LPA and CDRP are all co-terminous leading to a linear command structure. Milton Keynes LPA does not sit under the Buckinghamshire BCU, probably for a number of reasons, including the fact that unlike the rest of Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes is a unitary authority and as a ‘city’ is subject to unprecedented growth, making it the largest LPA in Thames Valley. Milton Keynes borough is estimated to have a population of 212,710, which is likely to grow to 247,480 by 2011.¹ It is accepted that the growth of Milton Keynes has had an affect on the ‘crime economy’ for the BCU, but it is disappointing that the senior management team (SMT) of the BCU were unable to articulate to what extent.
- 1.3 Clearly growth is an issue and one that the Force should keep under review. The inspection revealed that the reasons for Milton Keynes BCU current under-performance revolve around leadership, resource use and the systems and processes used to deal with volume crime, in other words the most common crime categories normally impacting a BCU. The BCU has seen a rise in vehicle crime of 35% and burglary dwelling of 21% between April – November 2006. It is also behind other BCUs in the Force in terms of its performance with regard to hate crime and domestic violence. A thematic approach has been taken to describe the main findings of the inspection team and these are linked and described below.

Service Delivery

- 1.4 Milton Keynes BCU has capable, willing and able staff keen to deliver a quality service to the public. There is a clarity of role and purpose but this is suffering from ‘mission creep’. Sector based neighbourhood teams are moving towards a more reactive role; crime reduction teams are moving into victim support; analysts are providing performance information rather than analytical products with the performance manager supplementing the gaps by providing analytical information. There is evidence of duplication of activity undertaken by a number of different teams.
- 1.5 Staff indicated that morale was good within individual teams or units, with most supervisors being well regarded. Superintending ranks, however, were not seen as visible apart from one or two areas of activity and several managers declared that the BCU was in effect, run by the chief inspectors. Managers do not feel valued and lack

¹ Source Milton Keynes Population Bulletin 2005/06

the opportunity to feed ideas upwards. There is little cross fertilisation of ideas (e.g. few examples of shared best practice between sectors).

Leadership

- 1.6 Supervisors and managers are currently an untapped resource in terms of ideas to take the BCU forward, and though some feel the BCU has turned the corner since the summer, the SMT has some way to go to recover the situation with others. There was a general feeling of having things ‘done’ to them and not being a party to the decision-making. Staff are insufficiently engaged by the senior management team.
- 1.7 There is no doubting that the BCU had an exceptionally challenging time during the summer. There was a significant amount of major crime, large-scale public events and the Force under a great deal of pressure due to counter terrorism operations at High Wycombe. The inspection team has identified some weakness within the SMT in terms of style and communication (and previously in portfolios but this has largely been addressed with a recent realignment of responsibilities). When the BCU was riding high on its reputation of being a high achiever in terms of sanction detections, these weaknesses were less apparent.

Volume Crime Investigation

- 1.8 The inspection team have not seen an explanation for the significant rise in crime earlier in the year. Individual managers have their own theories and some of the explanations are more convincing than others. The indisputable fact is that the BCU was slow to react, lacked analysis of the problems or the means to communicate the problem to the staff effectively.
- 1.9 As a result many of the responses appear to be short-term, disjointed and lack overall strategic aims. To a degree the revitalised Crime Reduction Strategy has addressed this, but managers have stated that they do not feel that they have ownership as it was imposed upon them.
- 1.10 A number of issues have contributed to the challenges faced by the BCU, for example the changes to crime reporting, and travelling criminals. The BCU has been slow to respond and this reactive stance has led to a style which is viewed as ‘crisis management’.

Partnership

- 1.11 The partnership is headed by the local strategic partnership (LSP), the statutory officers support group (SOSG), then the community safety partnership (CSP) and finally a series of delivery groups. The CSP benefits from many meetings, strategies and targets but suffers from a lack of accountability and plans to deliver actual performance improvement. The partnership arrangements absorb a great deal of energy from SMT with little in the way of outcomes, although there are pockets of good practice and innovation.

Conclusion

- 1.12 The Milton Keynes BCU has successfully piloted neighbourhood policing and is planning to extend it across the area shortly. The inspection found strong links with local communities, which the BCU can build upon as neighbourhood policing is rolled out.
- 1.13 There were innovative ideas and examples of good practice within teams but this activity was not ‘joined up’ and suffered due to the poor communication on the BCU, often going unrecognised. If the SMT take the opportunity presented by the inspection to tap into this enthusiasm, it will be able to channel this energy into positive performance outcomes.

Recommendations and Good Practice

1.14 The inspection team has made the following recommendations.

Neighbourhood Policing

Recommendation (1): The BCU should actively promote a better understanding of the concept of neighbourhood policing amongst all officers and staff, in particular how problem solving and joint working can be used to address both neighbourhood issues and those contained within the BCU control strategy. This understanding needs to be supported by analysis to develop creative and joined up partnership solutions.

Volume Crime Reduction

Recommendation (2): The BCU is performance focused but this is being communicated to staff as overly simplistic personal targets, which are not stretching. More relevant performance measures that are inclusive and encompass sectors', teams' and individual police officers' performance linked to the control strategy are needed. These measures should include the quality and volume of intelligence submissions, which is currently absent.

Recommendation (3): The current deployment of resources should be reviewed as a matter of urgency. This should take a blue skies approach and needs to return to basics, examining the relationships between individual teams and the outcomes that are desired. The aim should be a more holistic strategy, and less reliance on individual teams.

Recommendation (4): The partnership meeting structure within the CDRP could be improved to provide more rigour and holding to account of those who are contributing to the objectives and targets within the community safety strategy.

NIM

Recommendation (5): The BCU is urged to rationalise the current meeting and tasking structure and review the aims and objectives of each meeting; who should attend, timescales, frequency and links to other meetings. The analytical products for each meeting should be enhanced and should feed through the tactical and strategic assessment process, making NIM the driving force for the BCU.

Recommendation (6): Briefing for officers and staff should be improved to provide focus, with clear ownership of tasks that are tightly focused, realistic and limited in number. This tasking should be monitored by the AIT for completion, effectiveness and impact.

Recommendation (7): The products from the analytical team need to be developed so they move away from performance into true analytical work, and put in place performance measures that ensure that there is efficient use of their qualified, specialist and limited resource.

Leadership

Recommendation (8): The SMT needs to spend some time developing a shared vision for the BCU, involving staff and thereafter developing leadership capability at all levels.

Recommendation (9): A communication strategy is needed that not only considers the delivery of senior managers' messages but also how to tap into the enthusiasm and ideas of the workforce. There should be a message that quality of service is the key priority, being underpinned by sanction detections, crime reduction and neighbourhood policing.

Recommendation (10): The BCU should examine opportunities presented by workforce modernisation to support officers with the full range of powers in their core role.

Good Practice

- 1.15 The inspection team also acknowledges the following areas of good practice. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all good work on the BCU, of which there was much, but a means of highlighting potential good practice which may be transferable to other BCUs: -

Fairness & Equality in Service Delivery

The establishment of a dedicated hate crime investigation team.

The adoption of 'True Vision' and multiple hate crime reporting sites.

Partners, such as the REC, were appreciative, hold the work of the BCU in high regard, acknowledging that they are open, prepared to listen, and keen to work with all communities.

Neighbourhood Policing

Initial sound approach using NHP principles undertaken in the establishment of the pathfinder NHP teams at the Lakes Estate and at Olney.

Strong partnerships with town and parish councils that enable effective tactical joint working on local problems and priorities (e.g. match funding for PCSOs).

Joint tasking meeting with partners seen as productive (JATAC).

Volume Crime Reduction

Strong links to the BCU crime reduction plan.

Good support from the crime reduction team and effective use of the principles of 'secured by design'.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

The use of the red and yellow card system, which has been adopted by the Force.

Co-located multi-agency team to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Protecting Vulnerable People

Dedicated public protection unit which is co-located on one site.

Human Resource Management

Diversity well embedded.

Good use of best practice on sickness management.

The 53 volunteers are co-ordinated by a dedicated member of staff and provide much needed support to officers and staff.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Basic command units (BCUs) are a fundamental building block in the delivery of policing services. Aligned to communities, BCUs represent the local interface with the public and are therefore highly influential in the police service's aims to reduce crime and disorder, and to increase community confidence. BCUs vary in size and composition according to the areas they police. All share responsibility for the delivery of the national community safety plan as it affects them and, with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) colleagues, the delivery of the local community safety strategy (CSS) priorities. As such, individual BCUs will continue to be subject to increasing scrutiny of performance from both Government and local communities.
- 2.2 The range in performance outcomes between BCUs presents an opportunity for continuous improvement and to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of this tier of policing. A key ingredient of successful BCUs remains focus, with the most successful being those that maximise focus through effective leadership at every level. Such BCUs also have a performance management framework that strikes the right balance between holding individuals to account, and providing support for those in most need. The NIM will be fully embedded and mainstreamed throughout the BCU, driving all types of proactive intervention through the systematic and skilled interpretation of intelligence. Successful BCUs will also have a thorough appreciation and desire to meet the needs, wishes and expectations of their primary customer - the communities they police.
- 2.3 Following a five year rolling programme of BCU inspections, HMIC has since moved to a more intelligence-led approach whereby only a small number of BCUs are selected for inspection. This follows an examination of their relative performance within their MSBCU group, together with a detailed review of their self-assessment, which was completed as an integral part of the review process. All BCU inspections are now directly aligned to the Baseline Assessment frameworks and police performance assessment framework (PPAF) domains, and evidence gathered at the BCU tier can easily be used to help assess overall force performance.

Aims of BCU Inspection

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

- 2.4 The inspection of Milton Keynes BCU in Thames Valley Police was conducted between 4th and 13th December 2006. This report sets out the inspection findings, highlighting areas of good practice and making recommendations for improvement where appropriate. Her Majesty's Inspector thanks the officers and staff of Milton Keynes BCU for the co-operation and assistance provided to members of the inspection team.

2.5 The inspection of Milton Keynes BCU consisted of the following core stages:

- Pre-visit data and analysis of BCU self-assessment
- Leadership Audit
- BCU Inspection
- Feedback to BCU
- Reporting

2.6 During the inspection a total of 42 structured interviews and focus groups were conducted, involving over 132 individuals and partnership agency representatives. An audit of fifty crime reports was undertaken and thirty staff PDRs were examined. Other than the divisional headquarters two visits to other stations were made where additional staff were interviewed. A leadership audit was also conducted within the BCU.

3. Force Overview and Context

Geographical Description of Force Area

- 3.1 Thames Valley Police is the largest non-metropolitan police force in England & Wales, covering 2,200 square miles and serving a population of 2.1 million, with over 6 million visitors annually. It covers 16 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), across the three counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. It has five basic command units, recently reduced from ten as part of a major restructuring initiative entitled Challenge and Change. In terms of resources, the net revenue expenditure for 2005/6 was £329.5 million. Police officer strength has continued to increase during the past financial year and in March 2006 there were 4,165 police officers (full-time equivalent), 3,150 police staff, 360 special constables and 132 police community support officers (PCSOs), assisted by some 420 volunteers.

Demographic Description of Force Area

- 3.2 The over-arching economic position of the force area is one of prosperity, with low unemployment and above average earnings, although it must be acknowledged that there are some areas of deprivation. Steady and continued economic growth is predicted. In terms of demography, the Thames Valley area is experiencing continued population growth, most notably at Milton Keynes and Aylesbury. With regard to community demographics, 6% of the population in Thames Valley are from black and minority ethnic communities with a much higher proportion in the south east of the force area, particularly within the major population centres of Reading, Slough and High Wycombe.

Structural Description of Force

- 3.3 The Force is divided into five basic command units; these are Berkshire West, Berkshire East, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire. There are five operational command units; these are Control Rooms and Enquiry Department, Tactical Support, Crime Support, Roads Policing and Professional Standards. Each BCU contains a number of local police areas (LPAs) whose boundaries are coterminous with those of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP) and local authorities.

4. The BCU Overview and Context

Geographical and Demographic Description of BCU Area

- 4.1 Milton Keynes is at the most north-eastern point of the Thames Valley Police Area and has a population of over 222,000 people, a figure that is increasing by 4,000 – 5,000 per year.
- 4.2 Milton Keynes has one of the youngest populations in the UK, and 46% of residents are under thirty years of age. There are approximately 35,000 children in primary and secondary education in the city.
- 4.3 The visible ethnic minority population is 10% and comprises mainly of Asian, black African, and Chinese. The city has a growing Somalian population that is generally located in areas of poor housing and multi occupancy dwellings. The city is also experiencing a rise in the number of Eastern European citizens moving into the area, in particular Kosovans, and more latterly Polish immigrants. The unemployment rate in the area is relatively low at 2.3%, lower than the UK rate of 2.6%.
- 4.4 Milton Keynes is an area of major growth and new development will create 71,000 dwellings by 2031, and the current population will increase from 222,000 to 340,000. The major shopping centre in the heart of the city attracts more than 31 million visitors each year. Over recent years, the number of entertainment venues in the city centre has increased dramatically, with up to 45,000 socialising in the city centre on a Friday or Saturday night. Milton Keynes is also home to the National Bowl, a major outdoor entertainment venue with a 65,000 capacity. More than 300,000 spectators recently attended a series of concerts there by Robbie Williams.
- 4.5 The National Hockey Centre is also based within Milton Keynes and is currently acting as a temporary home to MK DONS (formerly Wimbledon FC). Temporary seating has been installed to provide a 9,000 capacity.
- 4.6 As well as policing the new City of Milton Keynes, the BCU also encompasses other older towns such as Bletchley, Stony Stratford, Wolverton, Woburn Sands, Newport Pagnell and Olney.

Structural Description of BCU

- 4.7 The BCU restructured in 2005 in line with the force Challenge and Change programme. Although the external boundaries remained coterminous with the Local Authority, a number of internal boundary changes at sector level took place. This increased the number of geographic inspectors from four to six, intended to provide more local ownership.
- 4.8 The BCU is headed by a chief superintendent and supported by an LPA commander and superintendent operational support. The BCU is unique within Thames Valley Police, in that the LPA is coterminous to the BCU boundary and is the largest LPA in the Force.

- 4.9 The BCU has a business manager, a personnel manager, two uniformed chief inspectors and a detective chief inspector as part of the senior management team (SMT). The senior performance manager and the media manager are not members of the SMT but regularly attend meetings as a matter of course.
- 4.10 Under the original Challenge and Change reorganisation, responsibility for both uniform reactive shifts and neighbourhood policing lay with the LPA commander. It has recently been acknowledged that, given the size of the LPA, and the numbers of personnel involved that the capacity for robust supervision was limited.
- 4.11 The SMT have recently agreed to move responsibility for the core reactive shifts to the chief inspector operational support.
- 4.12 As of December 2006 the BCU establishment is as follows;

Establishment	Full time equivalent posts
Constables	317 18.8 of whom are acting sergeants
Sergeants	48.5 3 of whom are acting inspectors
Inspectors	18.3
Chief inspectors	3
Superintendents	2
Chief superintendent	1
Police staff	117.75
PCSOs	16
Special constables	39
Volunteers	53

5. Milton Keynes BCU Performance

Crime Levels and Detections	December 2004 to November 2005	December 2005 to November 2006	% Change
Total recorded crime	27,110	28,920	6.68%
Total recorded crime per 1,000 population	124.08	132.37	6.68%
Number of sanction detections	8,694	7,378	-15.14%
% Crimes with a sanction detection	32.07%	25.51%	-6.56 Pts
Total residential burglary	877	1,119	27.59%
Total residential burglaries per 1,000 households	9.94	12.68	27.59%
Number of residential burglary sanction detections	178	180	1.12%
% Residential burglaries with a sanction detection	20.30%	16.09%	-4.21 Pts
Total vehicle crime	3,201	3,892	21.59%
Total vehicle crime per 1,000 population	14.65	17.81	21.59%
Number of vehicle crime sanction detections	329	271	-17.63%
% Vehicle crimes with a sanction detection	10.28%	6.96%	-3.32 Pts
Total violent crime	5,896	6,452	9.43%
Total violent crime per 1,000 population	26.99	29.53	9.43%
Number of violent crime sanction detections	3,395	2,897	-14.67%
% Violent crimes with a sanction detection	57.58%	44.90%	-12.68 Pts
Total robbery	280	320	14.29%
Robbery per 1,000 population	1.28	1.46	14.29%
Number of robbery sanction detections	53	57	7.55%
% Robberies with a sanction detection	18.93%	17.81%	-1.12 Pts

Figure 1

Total Recorded Crimes per 1,000 Population
December 2003 to November 2006

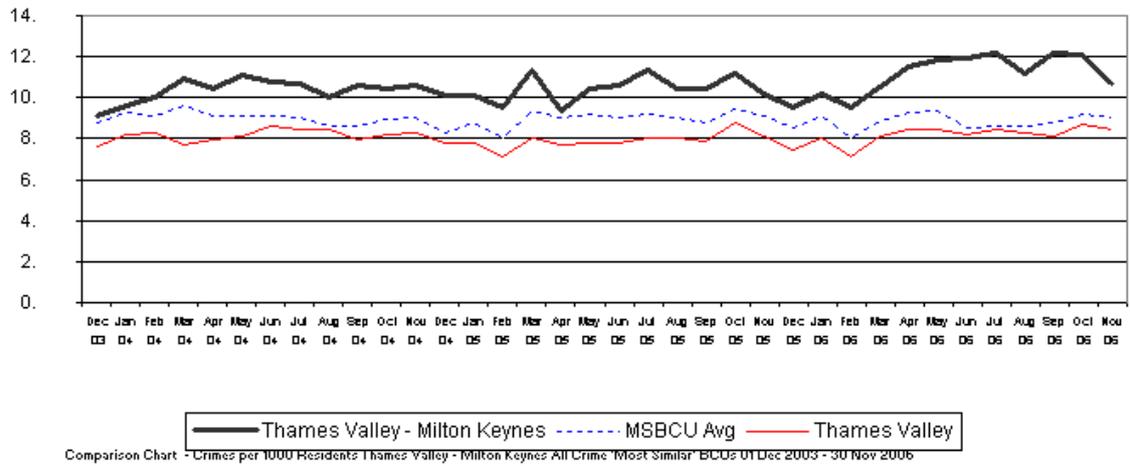
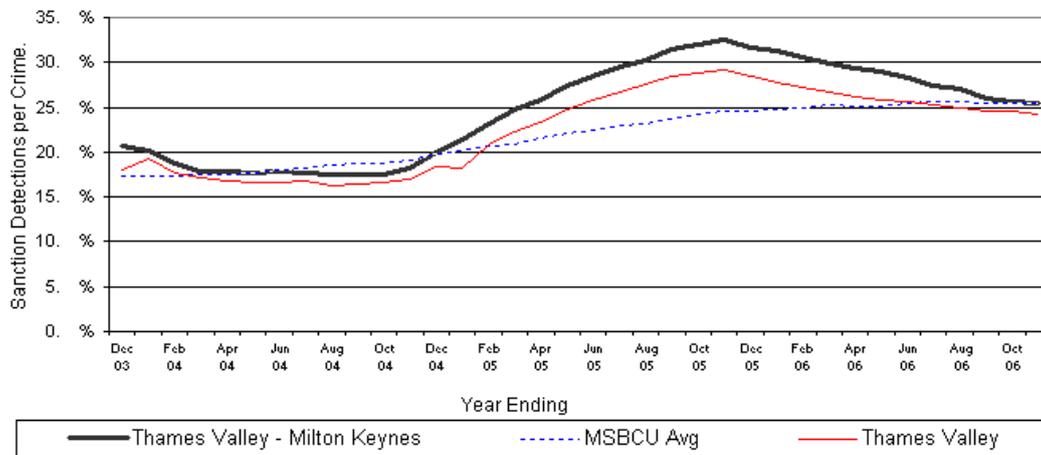


Figure 2

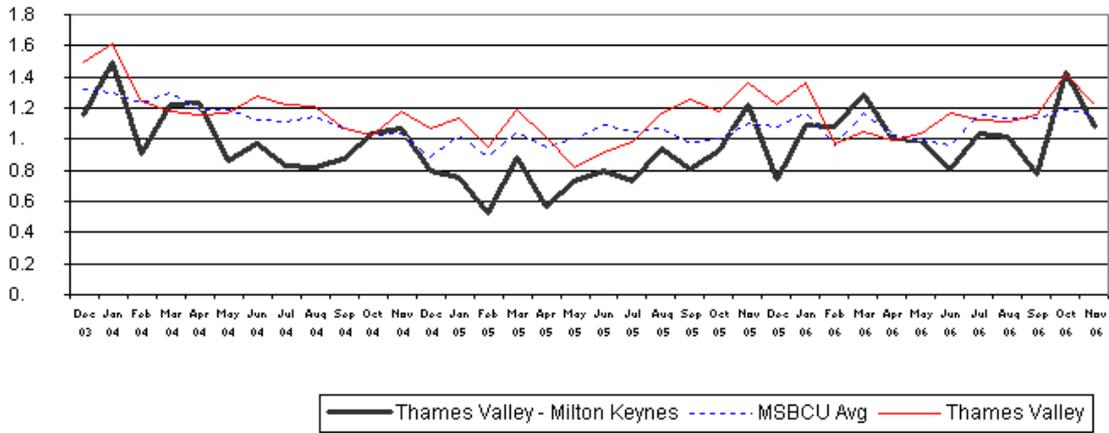
Sanction Detection Rate for Total Recorded Crime
December 2003 to November 2006



Thames Valley - Milton Keynes - All Crime - 'Most Similar' BCUs - 01 Dec 2003 - 30 Nov 2006

Figure 3

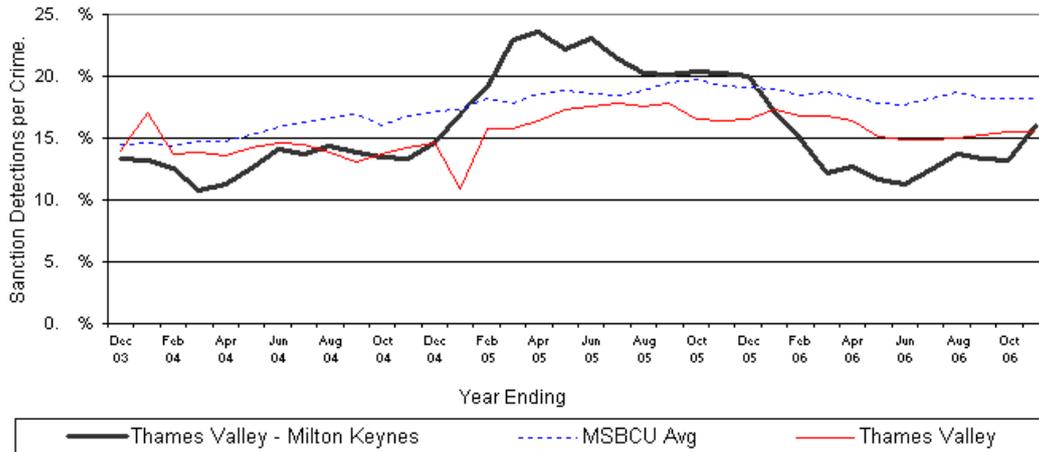
Total Recorded Domestic Burglaries per 1,000 Households
December 2003 to November 2006



Comparison Chart - Crimes per 1000 Households:Thames Valley - Milton Keynes Domestic Burglary 'Most Similar' BCUs 01 Dec 2003 - 30 Nov 2006

Figure 4

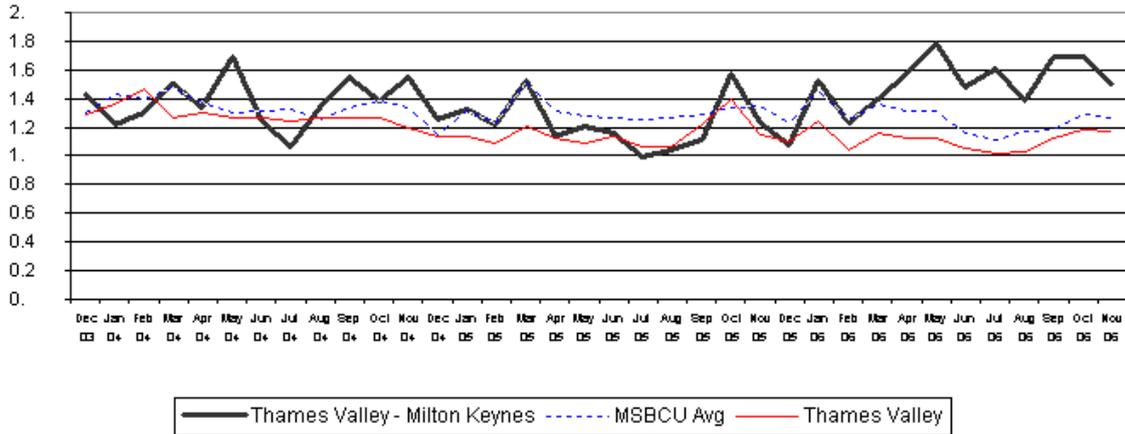
Sanction Detection Rate for Domestic Burglary
December 2003 to November 2006



Thames Valley - Milton Keynes - Domestic Burglary - 'Most Similar' BCUs - 01 Dec 2003 - 30 Nov 2006

Figure 5

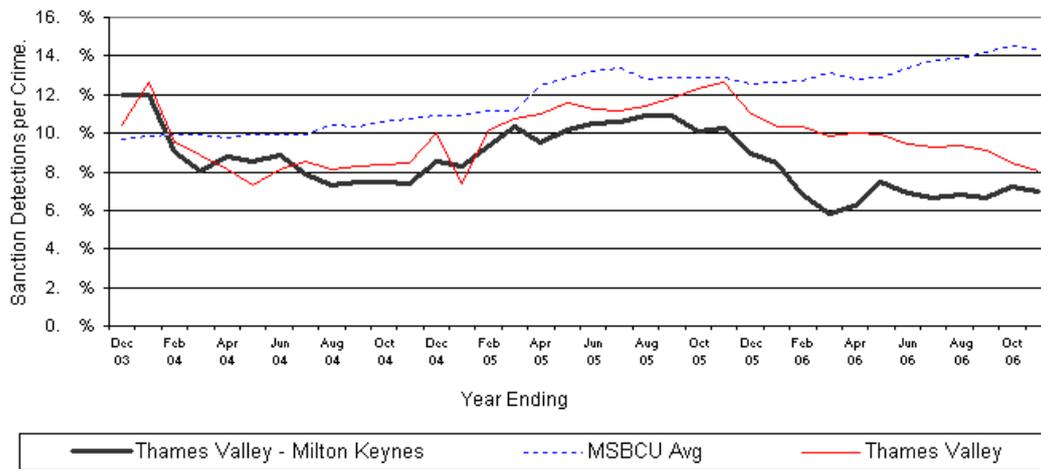
Total Recorded Vehicle Crime per 1,000 Population
December 2003 to November 2006



Comparison Chart - Crimes per 1000 Residents Thames Valley - Milton Keynes Vehicle Crime (excluding Vehicle Interference) 'Most Similar' BCUs 01 Dec 2003 - 30 Nov 2006

Figure 6

Sanction Detection Rate for Vehicle Crime
December 2003 to November 2006



Thames Valley - Milton Keynes - Vehicle Crime (excluding Vehicle Interference) - 'Most Similar' BCUs - 01 Dec 2003 - 30 Nov 2006

Figure 7

Total Recorded Violent Crime per 1,000 Population
December 2003 to November 2006

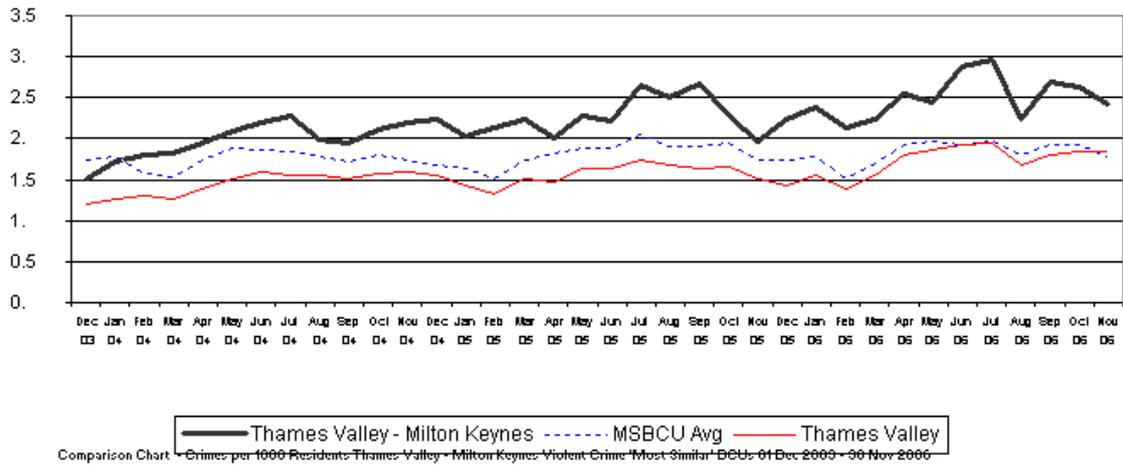


Figure 8

Sanction Detection Rate for Violent Crime
December 2003 to November 2006

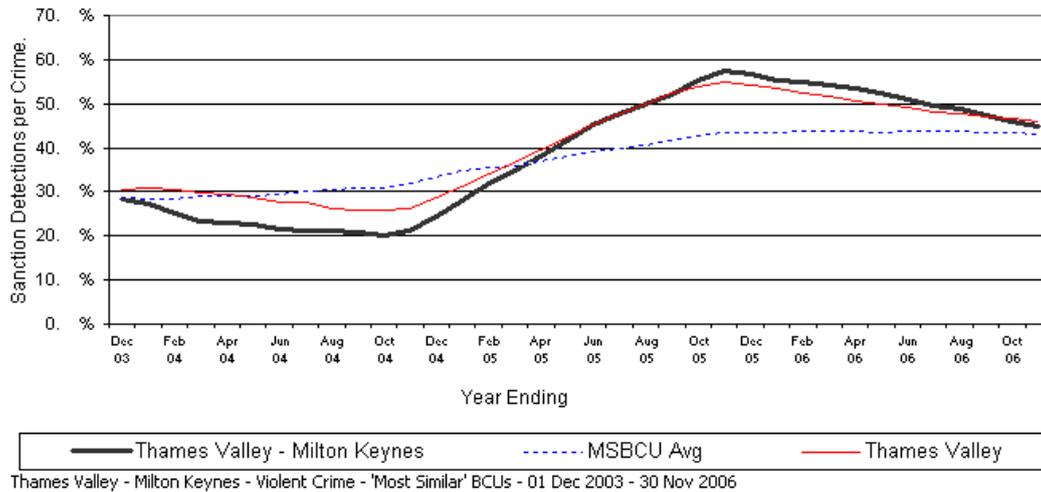
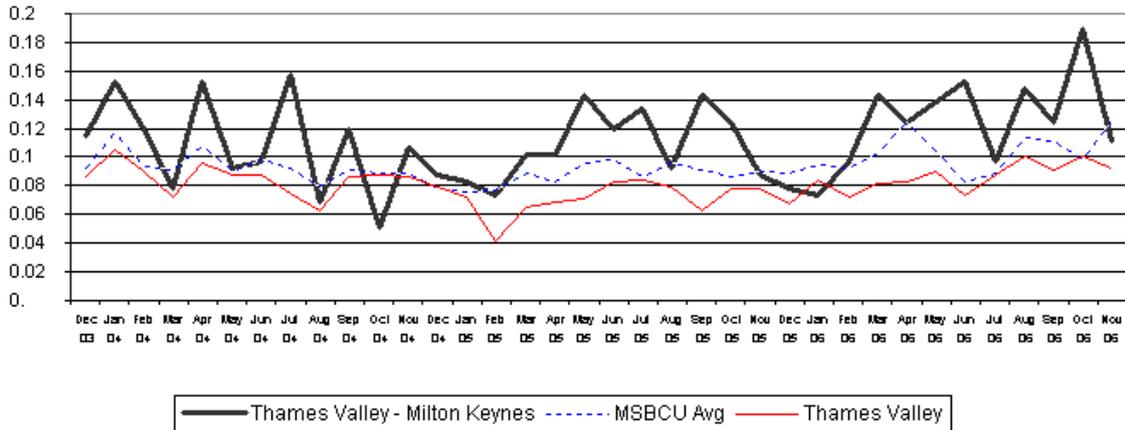


Figure 9

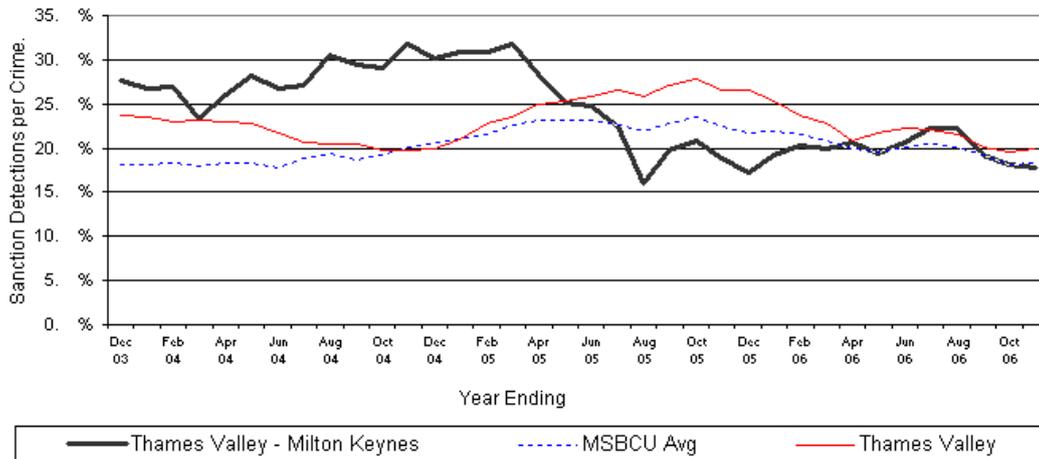
Total Recorded Robbery per 1,000 Population
December 2003 to November 2006



Comparison Chart - Crimes per 1000 Residents Thames Valley - Milton Keynes Robbery 'Most Similar' BCUs 01 Dec 2003 - 30 Nov 2006

Figure 10

Sanction Detection Rate for Robbery
December 2003 to November 2006



Thames Valley - Milton Keynes - Robbery - 'Most Similar' BCUs - 01 Dec 2003 - 30 Nov 2006

6. The Leadership Audit

- 6.1 A critical attribute of successful BCUs is effective leadership. Leadership styles vary – some are highly transformational while others veer more towards transactional approaches. There is no ‘correct’ style because circumstances vary too, and good leaders attune their approaches to fit these circumstances. To try and explore the components of leadership and their relative impact on performance, HMIC has developed a leadership audit tool, the findings from which inform the fieldwork stage of the inspection to validate key themes. This is a developing tool that will become increasingly powerful as benchmarks are created from BCUs against which results can be evaluated.
- 6.2 The leadership audit explores leadership across the whole BCU, using the headings that are applied to force-level leadership as part of Baseline Assessments. This is a development from the previous focus of BCU inspections on the leadership of the commander and senior management team.
- 6.3 The audit process comprised three phases: a questionnaire, circulated to staff by HMIC; focus groups with a representative cross section from officers, special constables and police staff; and one-to-one interviews with members of the SMT. The audit also included an interview with the relevant assistant chief constable who exercised line management over the BCU Commander, to explore their working relationship. The full results from this audit have been supplied to the BCU Commander. Those below are some significant highlights.

The Audit Results

- 6.4 The BCU Commander feels that he receives excellent support from his line manager who is the ACC - Local Policing.
- 6.5 The ACC has set all five BCU commanders similar PDR objectives but within these there is some flexibility for individual objectives reflecting local circumstances. The BCU’s recent poor crime reduction performance has rightly increased the amount of scrutiny from the centre. It is not only on areas of performance that the ACC becomes involved: he has recently visited the Area to speak to local Parish Councillors with a view to seeking additional funding for PCSOs on the BCU.
- 6.6 The Chief Constable meets regularly with the Local Authority and in particular the Chief Executive. She recently gave a presentation to the Scrutiny Committee. The BCU was restructured during the Challenge and Change Force Restructuring Programme. A key element of that role was the introduction of a local policing area (LPA) commander, to liaise directly with the Local Community Safety Partnership.
- 6.7 ***The BCU has an appropriate structure which is aligned to the Force Strategy***
- 88.18% of those questioned consider that their role is clearly defined and contributes to the BCU and Force Strategy, with more than 50% of respondents answering with the two highest positive answers.
 - 80.73% of respondents believe that health and safety procedures on the BCU are effective and make them feel safe in the workplace.

- 47.71% of respondents answered positively to the question “resources are effectively managed within the BCU including specific issues of demand and deployment”.
- 51.55% of respondents believe that throughout the BCU teams are balanced in terms of skills, experience and diversity.

6.8 *The BCU has a performance culture with integrity*

- 82.88% of respondents believed that their manager demonstrates an interest in their performance and development.
- 81.55% of respondents believe that there is effective use of NIM.
- 42.06% of respondents believe that within the BCU, good performance is recognised and rewarded.
- 51.49% of respondents believe that innovation is promoted and supported on the BCU.
- 51% of respondents believe that managers ensure that the BCU is maintaining our integrity.

6.9 *Diversity*

- 89.22% of respondents believe that diversity is embedded within the BCU, specifically in terms of personal values and all areas of business including selection and appointment of staff.
- Over 80% of respondents believed their manager’s decisions in respect of operational and disciplinary issues are consistent.
- 87.04% of respondents feel that their manager inspires them with confidence.
- 43.48% of respondents believe that absences from duty, other than sickness, are effectively managed within the BCU.
- 38.71% of respondents believe that there is a commitment within the BCU to staff retention.
- 35.14% of people answered the question “Managers deal effectively with bullying” with “Don’t Know”
- 22.52% of people answered the question “My manager’s decisions in respect of disciplinary issues are consistent” with “Don’t Know”

6.10 *Personnel Management*

- 86.49% of respondents believe they have regular and meaningful contact with their line manager.
- 80% of respondents believe that personnel issues are dealt with by their manager in a relevant and timely manner.
- 21.62% of people answered the question “Coaching and mentoring is available to me if I need it” with “Don’t Know”

6.11 *Communication*

- 84.55% of respondents believe that their manager communicates relevant information to them.

- 84.68% of respondents believe that their manager is available when they need to talk to them.
- 82.86% of respondents believe that their manager responds in a positive way to feedback from staff.
- 53.64% of respondents feel that, where it is appropriate, they are consulted on matters of policy and strategy
- 56.63% of respondents feel that the BCU Commander and SMT respond in a positive way to feedback from staff. 25.23% of answers to this question were “Don’t Know”.

Audit Conclusions

- 6.12 Certain areas in the audit results were reflected in the actual inspection; such as the individual teams feeling well supported by their direct supervisors, and the management of human resources; with positive results on diversity and personnel issues. More negative aspects featuring in both audit and inspection were the feelings/perception that good work is not adequately recognised and that communication – notably with the SMT – could be enhanced. There is a perception that there is a lack of resources. Increased use of opportunities presented by workforce modernisation would assist.

7. What We Found

- 7.1 Following a review of the BCU's performance, the GL3 (Going Local 3) self-assessment, the findings from the leadership audit and other key documentation, HMIC conducted its fieldwork at Milton Keynes BCU. The inspection team sought to validate acceptable practice and investigate/evidence further both potential good practice and any areas for improvement (AFIs). This report does not, therefore, reiterate what is and should be happening on a BCU in terms of its core functional activities, given that these are detailed within the GL3 self-assessment process. Instead, the following section highlights areas against the Baseline Assessment frameworks that are evidenced by the inspection team as either particular strengths or opportunities for improvement against the core business of the BCU.

Citizen Focus

- 7.2 This domain is chiefly about how the BCU responds to the needs of the local community and its openness and accessibility. The Milton Keynes BCU has successfully piloted neighbourhood policing and is planning to extend it across the area shortly. The inspection found strong links with local communities, which the BCU can build upon as neighbourhood policing is rolled out. There is also some good work taking place with minority groups but this is yet to be reflected in the BCU's performance in hate crime. However, the BCU is taking action, as indicated below, to improve detection rates.

(* Indicates strength or AFI identified in Milton Keynes self assessment and ratified during inspection)

7.3 Fairness & Equality in Service Delivery

Strengths

- The establishment of a dedicated hate crime investigation team, the adoption of 'True Vision' and multiple hate crime reporting sites are all contributing to increased confidence in the reporting of hate crime.
- There are good working relations with other partners such as the REC who indicated that they had great confidence in the police.
- There is an established multi-agency traveller's management unit, the principles of which have been adopted elsewhere.*
- Police regularly engage with the IAG, representation on which is being expanded to take account of the six strands of diversity.*

Areas for improvement

- There is a lack of identification of, and understanding of the needs of vulnerable communities at sector level. Community and Diversity officers need to be more proactive and work with all groups.
- Patchy compliance with the Hate Crime Plan processes has led to poor quality investigation. A BCU action plan aims to address this*

- Stop/search training for front line officers needs to be improved (a project at force level is in place to produce a Streetcraft programme).*

7.4 Neighbourhood Policing and Problem Solving

Strengths

- There is a strong commitment to neighbourhood policing. An initial sound approach using neighbourhood policing principles was undertaken in the establishment of the pathfinder NHP teams at the Lakes Estate and at Olney. Active community engagement is apparent and it is important that similar principles and existing good practice be adopted elsewhere as NHP is rolled out across the BCU.*
- Strong partnerships with town and parish councils enable effective tactical joint working to address local problems and priorities (an example being match funding for PCSOs).
- A joint agency tasking and coordinating meeting (JATAC) with partners is seen as productive. Chaired by the community safety manager, it has wide representation, and is informed by the views of neighbourhood action groups with progress being monitored against actions.*

Areas for Improvement

- The aims of NHP are clear but are not consistently understood across the whole BCU. Based on experience elsewhere, the intention to cascade this understanding through team training days is unlikely to be effective. **(see Recommendation 1)**.
- The communications manager should become more pro-active in promoting the purpose of the NHP rollout internally and externally, particularly to sector inspectors to enable them to plan effectively.
- PCSO recruitment was proving problematic with some PCSOs leaving to work elsewhere for higher remuneration. This could impact on the NHP roll out. However there is currently a strong recruitment drive underway.
- Abstractions of Area Beat Officers has been high. This should be assisted by a proposed abstraction policy and new NSO appointments.
- Neighbourhood action groups (NAGs), where they have been established, are a good example of community engagement. A tactical menu should be developed for addressing issues identified by them.
- There is an absence of effective problem solving and joint working in those sectors where NHP has not been rolled out and they appear to be in 'stasis' catering for reactive policing only. The inspection team saw no evidence of sector inspectors having a community contacts database and few staff have been trained in problem solving techniques.
- A lack of suitable performance indicators for neighbourhood policing makes it difficult to assess progress and excludes staff from the performance culture of the BCU. Pending development of force PIs, the BCU needs to build on customer

survey data collected to date and develop simple measures with which to assess progress.

- There is an apparent lack of knowledge by sector supervisors and managers as to what safer schools officers are doing and to what extent they contribute to the performance of the sector and BCU.

7.5 Customer Service and Accessibility

Strengths

- The BCU makes effective use of a number of highly motivated and skilled volunteer staff, a good example being their use in surveying 50 callers per month to check out the quality of service at front counters.*
- The introduction of a mobile police station should improve accessibility and visibility, particularly in rural areas.*
- The inspection team met enthusiastic and well trained front counter staff.
- Co-location with partners (for example at Netherfield), exemplifies the BCU commitment to be more highly visible.

Areas for Improvement

- The lack of comparative data with regards to front counter services (i.e. waiting times) makes it difficult for the BCU to introduce improvements. Quality measures also need enhancement*.
- Opening hours of counter services can sometimes reflect availability of staff and volunteers rather than on a needs basis.*

7.6 Professional Standards

Strengths

- All complaints are seen by the complaints champion to ensure appropriate allocation and consideration of local resolution where appropriate.*
- A comprehensive database assists the management of complaints with the public able to access the complaint system by a range of methods, via e-mail, letter, fax and telephone*.
- There is a good relationship with Professional Standards department who regularly input into SMT meetings.*
- Evidence of organisational learning and improvement through audit of complaints data and individual cases (e.g. driver training) is apparent.*

Areas for Improvement

- There is scope for better quality performance management from the PSD database.*

- There is currently no performance data to compare complaints performance with other MSBCUs.* The BCU could network with similar BCUs to obtain such information.

Reducing Crime

7.7 This is a particular area of concern for Milton Keynes BCU, with some significant increases in car crime and burglary dwelling, to which the BCU was slow to react. Previously the BCU has focused on detections, with some considerable success, but this work has been undone to a degree by the steep rise in crime.

7.8 Volume Crime Reduction

Strengths

- A recently updated and extensive crime reduction plan has strong links to the Community Safety Partnership plan.* With named personnel for each priority area it provides a sound basis for reducing the steep rise in crime witnessed earlier in the year (but see AFIs below).
- There is good support from the crime reduction team and effective use of the principles of ‘secured by design’.
- Signing up suppliers of satellite navigation kits to provide crime prevention advice to purchasers has the potential to reduce the theft of these highly sought after devices.*
- The appointment of an auditor within the BCU performance unit is helping monitor NCRS compliance especially with regards to domestic violence and hate crime.*

Areas for Improvement

- Effective partnerships and strong accountability are the key to reducing crime. The work of CSP delivery groups needs to be action rather than project driven, better coordinated and there needs to be more holding to account of those tasked with actions to ensure delivery. A meeting of the delivery groups’ chairs and vice-chairs would assist coordination of plans, discussion of cross-cutting themes and enable the sharing of good practice. (see **Recommendation 4**).
- Crime Reduction has not been seen as a priority for all staff on the BCU.* In efforts to achieve sanction detections the BCU has been too reliant on enforcement as a tactic, almost to the exclusion of prevention, leaving crime reduction officers marginalised.
- The BCU were taken by surprise by the sudden increase in crime and were slow to react. Full use was not made of analysis techniques and products to help inform a workable crime reduction strategy. There is a need for a seasonal programme of crime reduction activity that is supported by trends and analysis to ensure more efficient direction of resources.

- As outlined in strengths above, the crime reduction plan provides a strong basis for reducing crime. When next reviewed, the importance of involving all those with responsibility for implementation is stressed, to ensure ownership and commitment to action.
- Patchy compliance with force and BCU policy and procedures has resulted in unacceptable standards in crime investigation, a prime example being the number of outstanding un-filed and undetected crimes. This is acknowledged by the BCU and is being rectified, helped by the AIM process and more intrusive supervision.*
- The BCU is now making progress in efforts to improve NCRS compliance.*
- A policy on repeat victimisation that includes a menu of options to reduce the risk needs to be developed.

Investigating Crime

7.9 Previously the BCU has performed well in this area, with a high sanction detection rate. It also benefits from having some highly qualified major incident/public order commanders amongst the SMT. However, the BCU's approach to drug crime appears uncoordinated.

7.10 Managing Critical Incidents and Major Crime

Strengths

- During the summer of 2006 the BCU were called on to deal with a high number of serious crimes, critical incidents and counter terrorism operations. A weekly crime review meeting which provided oversight of tactics and resources helped ensure minimum impact upon other BCU priorities.
- There is a strong Silver/Bronze Command major incident ability within the BCU.*
- Critical incident training for sergeants and inspectors has been carried out, helping to ensure the ability to recognise an incident and instigate 'golden hour' principles.*
- The BCU has a high number of MAST trained officers on core shifts enabling it to provide an effective and speedy response to any force mobilisation.*

Areas for Improvement

- There has and continues to be losses of skilled senior detectives and CID investigators creating an organisational risk and a number of CID officers await their initial training course.* Skilled staff need to be fully engaged in mentoring/coaching less experienced officers.
- BCU staff consider that changes to force policy on dealing with serious sexual assault may impact on their ability to deal effectively with victims. A force plan is in place to tackle this issue.

- Not all inspectors and sergeants have received critical incident training. This is of particular importance with the emphasis on the ‘duty inspector’ being the ‘critical incident manager’ and the number of officers undertaking ‘acting roles’. Some sergeants have been in acting roles for over a year and have not received appropriate training.

7.11 Tackling Serious and Organised Criminality

Strengths

- The BCU has dedicated tactical teams led by detective inspectors.* These focus on priority crimes, are surveillance trained to ‘level two’ and the role is highly sought after.
- The BCU makes regular and frequently successful bids through the force TCG process for support in dealing with ‘level two’ criminality.

Area for Improvement

- In view of the impact of drugs misuse in fuelling volume crime, the BCU would benefit from a better understanding of the Drugs Market allowing a more intelligence led approach to tactical resolution (see **Recommendation 7**).* A recent drug strategy meeting commissioned analysis of criminal groups and market profiles which is a step in the right direction.

7.12 Volume Crime Investigation

Strengths

- In 2005/06 the BCU achieved an overall detection rate of 32%.*
- The CIM sergeant role has potential to improve the quality of volume crime investigation, and increase the skill base of supervisors and constables in the medium to long term.*

Areas for Improvement

- There is scope for more sophisticated use of performance measures and objectives in PDRs to achieve performance improvement. The current two sanction detections per sector officer per month is not stretching. Emphasis should be placed on quality not quantity, on priority crimes and on gaining valuable intelligence. Performance measures that are inclusive and encompass sectors, teams and individuals linked to the control strategy are required (see **Recommendation 2**).
- Dedicated teams for the investigation of drug supply and motor vehicle crime should be reviewed and, at the very least, mainstreaming of drug enforcement should be a priority (see **Recommendation 3**).

- The role of partners in reducing volume crime needs to be enhanced and moved away from solely aspirational long-term solutions, which are yet to deliver (**see Recommendation 4**).
- There is a lack of analytical support both to the tasking process and to sectors. It is not unusual for inspectors to spend hours poring over crime data in preparation for strategic meetings (**see Recommendation 7**).
- Staff expressed concern about the accuracy of crime recording by the PECs. There is considerable post-recording scrutiny by a number of units (CIMU, SDU and AIM) to rectify errors and this is time consuming and bureaucratic.
- Staff training on NCRS and the HOCR needs to continue, to cater for new staff and ensure a greater level of understanding by more of the workforce.
- The arrest of a prominent nominal requires an enhanced service to gain the maximum advantage. Consideration should be given to involvement of a CID officer, interview by the source-handling unit, house searches where appropriate and setting suitable bail conditions.
- The policy on the investigation of robbery requiring detectives to investigate all offences, however minor, needs revisiting. There is routine non-compliance.

7.13 Improving Forensic Performance

Strengths

There is strong commitment to improving forensic performance evidenced by:

- Input on investigation at team training days which included forensic issues
- Intelligent led deployment of SOC staff through the SDU
- Increasing involvement of scenes of crime staff in BCU tasking processes, strategic meetings and with tactical teams.

Areas for Improvement

- There is a need to improve the level of forensic awareness and crime scene preservation amongst front line staff.
- A protocol should be introduced with replacement auto glass companies to notify police when blood is found at the time of a vehicle window replacement.
- All detainees should have their footwear scanned into the footwear database by detention staff. This is currently limited to those arrested for burglary.
- The accountability and management of forensic identifications is an area of weakness with some poor supervision resulting in slow actioning of forensic identifications.*
- Obtaining timely and correctly evidenced forensic exhibits in custody has proved extremely problematic and has led to a situation where senior managers cannot understand, or effectively manage, this side of the Forensic process.*

7.14 Criminal Justice Processes

Strengths

- Regular prosecution team performance management (PTPM) meetings on a county wide basis have helped develop a more ‘joined up’ prosecution team.*
- The introduction of a ‘Gatekeeping’ role has delivered significant improvements in file quality with discontinuances down to 11%.*
- In regards to timeliness and file quality – 54% of files were sufficient to proceed and on time compared with TVP average of 39%.*

Areas for Improvement

- There are significant delays in custody, which are directly affecting operational performance.* There are a number of explanations, not least the NSPIS custody computer project which has proved challenging. Extra sergeant posts have been agreed in principle, which is welcomed, but urgent consideration also needs to be given to get officers returned to patrol more quickly. Good practice elsewhere needs to be explored. (see **Recommendation 3**).

Promoting Safety

- 7.15 This section examines how the BCU attempts to increase public reassurance, deal with anti-social behaviour and protect vulnerable people. Key to this is visibility and use of appropriate tactics in partnership with other stakeholders, but the BCU lacks an analytical capability in this important area of business. The Milton Keynes BCU has successfully piloted neighbourhood policing. It also has a good MAPPAs unit and the Force has recently introduced public protection units across all BCUs.

7.16 Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

Strengths

- A co-located multi-agency team and a dedicated ASB co-ordinator provide a sound basis to tackle anti-social behaviour.*
- An active escalation process enables early interventions such as acceptable behaviour contracts (ABC) to be adopted.*
- The red and yellow card warning system, highlighting to parents inappropriate behaviour by their children, has been adopted by the Force.
- Effective deployment of the special constabulary, PCSOs and wardens for patrol of identified hotspots and for disruption tactics, to include the use of mobile CCTV, is apparent.*

Areas for Improvement

- The BCU has made great strides in tackling anti-social behaviour but there is over reliance on sector based teams and special constables in tackling city centre anti-social activity. With greater partnership engagement, improved joint analysis (many partnerships employ a CDRP analyst), and better management information more could be achieved.*

7.17 Protecting Vulnerable People

Strengths

- A dedicated public protection unit (PPU) incorporating the child abuse investigation team, the DV unit and MAPPAs office are co-located, providing for good liaison and communication.
- The BCU has strong links with the Probation Service and a well regarded MAPPAs process.*

Areas for Improvement

- In efforts to ensure domestic violence calls are given high priority a dedicated response car is in operation. There is an absence of clarity about its remit, the cost benefits and its management. Its function needs to be reviewed and the skills levels of all officers need to be enhanced to give them the confidence to deal effectively with domestic violence (see **Recommendation 3**).
- The development of the MARAC would benefit from an SMT champion.
- Whilst the establishment of a missing persons co-ordinator within the CIMU is a positive there is a lack of ownership of missing persons and a handover culture exists for the investigation process.
- Few officers and staff have been trained to use the missing persons database and the importance of investigators linking in with the PPU is stressed.
- The BCU has a good reputation for its MAPPAs arrangements but would benefit from additional administrative support.

Providing Assistance

- 7.18 Providing assistance examines how easy it is for the public to contact the local police, via local police stations or telephone, and in turn how the BCU accesses central support services. Milton Keynes makes good use of volunteers and has a dedicated service delivery unit. It also has good links with the roads policing unit, which is based at the central police station.

7.19 Contact Management

Strengths

- Volunteers are effectively used to survey 50 callers per month to quality assure service at front counters.*
- A dedicated service delivery unit manage 'By arrangement' and 'Non-urgent' incidents and the daily tasking meeting highlights any high-risk cases.* Together this is helping to provide a more effective and timely response to the public.

Areas for Improvement

- Enhanced management information would help inform a programme to improve service delivery.*

7.20 Providing Specialist Operational Support

Strengths

- The BCU boasts an impressive and forward looking Operations team with long standing experience of major events.
- Three silver commanders trained in public order and major events and six bronze commanders provide a highly skilled cadre of staff to deal with planned and spontaneous events.*
- There is also a dedicated firearms cadre with two superintendents.*
- Service level agreements with specialist departments help maintain resilience.*

Areas for Improvement

None apparent.

7.21 Strategic Road Policing

Strengths

- The BCU has the benefit of being co-located with a roads policing unit.*
- Roads Policing attend briefings and TTTCG. Successful joint operations (e.g. Operation Chromium) have resulted, as have major disruption operations focused on bulk crime.*
- A good level of support is afforded the BCU by the Roads Policing pro-active unit.*

Areas for Improvement

- There is scope for better engagement at BCU level, integrating roads policing into neighbourhood policing and BCU staff into the Safer Roads Partnership.*

Resource Usage

7.22 A strong suit for Milton Keynes BCU is how it deals with personnel issues and diversity. A weakness is communication on the BCU, particularly by senior managers, and its general use of resources, which the inspection team considered to be uncoordinated.

7.23 Human Resource Management

Strengths

- Diversity is well embedded on the BCU and there are effective working relationships with staff associations.
- The BCU has achieved force TVP performance targets for PDR submissions.* They are now working towards improving quality issues.
- Shift patterns have been amended to reflect demand and consider welfare issues. Further reviews of other parts of the workforce are on-going.*
- Sickness management systems are in place that reflect best practice.
- Volunteers are co-ordinated by a dedicated member of staff and, together with highly motivated special constables, provide much needed support which is highly valued by officers and police staff.
- The HR team have a strong focus on supporting operational delivery.*

Areas for Improvement

- Meetings, in the main, are functional and there are no regular staff forums held. The BCU commander does not routinely hold strategic meetings with supervisors or managers, designed to enable an upward flow of information and views (**see Recommendation 8**).
- There is considerable scope to improve communication on the BCU. There is a reliance on directive ‘top down’ management meetings or shift briefings, which have a negative effect on staff (**see Recommendations 6/8**).
- The BCU has yet to fully embrace workforce modernisation – there are no caseworkers for example. Double crewed uniform vehicles are used to collect CCTV tapes, whereas other BCUs use much more imaginative alternatives (**see Recommendation 3**).
- There has been poor management of overtime with the requirement for unrealistic authorisation levels. This has now been rescinded.

7.24 Training, Development and Organisational Learning

Strengths

- There is a sound recruitment, training and development programme and good learning facilities.
- The special constabulary has recently introduced the use of PDRs for its sergeants and inspectors.
- PCSOs were very supportive about the training they had received.

Areas for Improvement

- The suspension of training during the summer months did not consider the long-term impact with apparently limited short-term benefits.
- Police staff were generally not aware or offered training to help them develop into their current role or progress into others.
- Many detective staff are awaiting their initial training course and there are an apparently high number of officers in acting positions that have had little formal training for their roles.
- There remains a vacancy for a learning and development manager*.

7.25 Race and Diversity – Internal Organisation

Strengths

- There is a clear SMT lead on maintaining a locally representative workforce and it is apparent that diversity is well embedded across the BCU.
- The BCU Commander chairs a Diversity Group which includes all six strands.*
- The Chair of the IAG is a member of the BCU Committee with the ability to inform the BCU Plan*
- The REC has quality assured the plans for the implementation of neighbourhood policing.*
- There are a number of examples of the BCU making ‘reasonable adjustments’ in line with DDA compliance, e.g. use of voice activated software for a member of staff with a hand injury.*

Areas for Improvement

- Improved data on ethnicity in relation to recruitment, selection, promotion, and retention would help highlight any possible discriminatory practices and enable remedial action to be taken if required.*

7.26 Managing Financial and Physical Resources

Strengths

- A zero based budgetary allocation process, coupled with tight fiscal control has resulted in expenditure in line with budget for the last two years.*
- There is evidence of successful bids through the Community Safety Partnership to fund Community Safety Projects.*
- There is daily monitoring of staffing levels, taking account of tasking and forecast demand.*
- A Resource Management Group chaired by the Personnel Manager ensures compliance with HR policies and assists with strategic workforce planning.*

Areas for Improvement

- The BCU consider that the force resource allocation process has not kept pace with the growth of Milton Keynes.*
- The linkages between expenditure and performance need to be improved. There has been little evaluation of initiatives and operations in terms of impact on performance and value for money.*

7.27 Information and Communication Technology Management

Strengths

- An IT co-ordinator from the force ICT department is working with the business manager helping the BCU to prioritise work and obtain budget approval for IT projects.
- An asset register is maintained of the location of I.T equipment.*
- The 'All user' email policy is strictly enforced.*

Areas for Improvement

- There have been breaches of email policy, some of which have led to discipline procedures being taken. IT policies are clear and well publicised but continued monitoring and audit is necessary to ensure universal compliance.*
- The number of staff trained in project management is limited.*

7.28 National Intelligence Model

Strengths

- The BCU has established NIM structures and continues to develop the NIM process. A NIM enforcer now helps drive activity, there is greater partner engagement in the tasking process and the tasking meeting is benefiting from a more structured agenda.

- The fortnightly tasking meeting is complemented by a daily tasking meeting, helping ensure a prompt response to emerging issues.
- The Duty Inspector handover document helps continuity and assists with briefing.*
- Dedicated Community Intelligence Officers are helping to collate, disseminate and action community intelligence.*

Areas for Improvement

- Rationalisation of the current meeting and tasking structure and a review of aims and objectives of each meeting is required. This should include who should attend, timescales, frequency and links to other meetings. The analytical product feeding into each meeting needs to be enhanced and should feed through the tactical and strategic assessment process (**see Recommendation 5**).
- Briefing for officers and staff needs to be improved to provide focus, encouraging ownership of tasks that are limited in number to reflect finite resources. This tasking should be monitored by the AIT for completion, effectiveness and impact (**see Recommendation 6**).
- There is scope for improving the analytical product. Analysts are a qualified, specialist and limited resource. They currently spend time providing performance management information rather than analysing data and using their specialist skills to identify trends, patterns of crime and develop problem profiles. Recruitment of a new lead analyst provides the opportunity for ensuring better use of their skills by the introduction of suitable performance measures (**see Recommendation 7**).
- BCU wide understanding of NIM principles need to be further developed.*

Leadership and Direction

7.29 The inspection team identified some weaknesses within the SMT in terms of style and communication, and there is an urgent need for a communications strategy. Other observations are contained within the points made below.

7.30 Leadership

Strengths

- The BCU benefits from considerable operational experience amongst several of the SMT members.*
- The BCU has capable, willing and able staff keen to deliver a quality of service to the public. They feel well supported by their line managers with whom they have regular and meaningful contact.

Areas for Improvement

- Restructuring under Challenge and Change created local police areas headed by a superintendent or chief inspector. Milton Keynes was somewhat unique in that the CDRP, LPA and BCU boundary are one and the same. Coupled with changes to the management team, this has created some tensions which the BCU is trying hard to address.
- A recent rebalancing of portfolios has assisted. There remains, however, a lack of a clear vision of what the BCU is trying to achieve and staff feel that priorities change on a weekly basis. The SMT would benefit from time spent team building and developing a shared vision, which can then be fully communicated to staff **(see Recommendation 9)**.
- There have not been regular meetings between inspectors and sergeants and the SMT. There is a lack of formal consultation arrangements to encourage ownership and get ‘sign up’ to the overall ‘vision’ and any improvement plans. Staff have good ideas but are an un-tapped resource and need to be more involved in strategy and policy making. To achieve this the effectiveness of internal communication needs to be improved **(see Recommendation 8)**.
- Many staff spoke of high workloads and the drive to improve performance has increased pressure on them. Core reactive teams and detective staff have been particularly affected and minimum strengths are not always maintained. Specialised units have proliferated in efforts to improve crime performance. These are not always well coordinated or have clarity of purpose. A review of deployment of resources needs to be undertaken to ensure a more joined up and holistic approach **(see Recommendation 3)**.
- In addition, the BCU should examine opportunities presented by workforce modernisation to support officers with the full range of powers in their core role, for example the use of prisoner handling teams and case workers **(see Recommendation 10)**.
- Lack of supervision of some crime processes has impacted on performance.* Training for inspectors in relation to scrutiny of investigations and crime management is now being provided.

7.31 Performance Management and Continuous Improvement

Strengths

- A regular performance group meeting is held, chaired by the BCU commander. Representatives of the local authority and the police authority attend, increasing accountability and the meeting is informed by an extensive performance pack.
- All the SMT have objectives linked to performance, as do the staff and this was particularly effective in the drive in 2005/06 to increase sanction detections.
- Regular sector inspection visits cover a wider range of issues than BCU Performance Group.*

- The BCU regularly uses structured debriefs following major incidents to ensure organisational learning.*

Areas for Improvement

- The focus now seen on crime reduction needs to be maintained. The BCU acknowledges that in the drive to increase sanction detections, crime reduction had been marginalised.
- There needs to be a proper analysis of the increase in crime, with a facility to automatically trigger analysis when crimes cross certain thresholds. Greater use could be made of MSBCU data with a view to seeking good practice.
- PDR crime reduction objectives for sector officers do not match the control strategy and those for core reactive shifts are difficult to measure. Police staff PDR objectives are not always relevant to role or assist in pay uplift. In efforts to improve the quality of PDRs more relevant performance measures need to be developed and objectives need to be ‘smart’ (see **Recommendation 2**).
- There is duplication of effort, with many officers and staff checking identical information on IT systems purely in preparation for the daily tasking meeting (at least the equivalent of two fulltime posts). There is scope for rationalisation with the information being centrally provided (see **Recommendation 5**).
- There is a need for clarification and purpose of the following meetings: silver meeting; performance meeting; daily tasking; fortnightly tasking; JATAC; linked crime; and drugs.
- The BCU crime reduction plan does not include named owners for tasks assigned to sectors. Sectors do not have locally agreed plans that detail specific crime reduction and sanction detection targets in support of the BCU plan and the control strategy.

HMIC Going Local 3 – BCU Inspection

Appendix A – GL3 Notional Contract

Purpose

This document follows an HMIC inspection of Milton Keynes BCU in Thames Valley police force, which was conducted in December 2006 and sets out the action required by the BCU together with the improvement outcomes required. It is between the HMI, the BCU Commander and his/her ACPO line manager.

Action Required

BCU inspection reports published by the HMIC contain both recommendations and areas for improvement. Save for exceptional circumstances rendering the implementation of recommendations impossible or inappropriate, the implementation of recommendations is a given. Areas for improvement are highlighted to assist the BCU and are intended to allow the BCU discretion and flexibility on how it responds.

For Milton Keynes BCU, the HMIC requires that the following recommendations be implemented by July 2007:

Neighbourhood Policing

1. The BCU should actively promote a better understanding of the concept of neighbourhood policing amongst all officers and staff, in particular how problem solving and joint working can be used to address both neighbourhood issues and those contained within the BCU control strategy. This understanding needs to be supported by analysis to develop creative and joined up partnership solutions.

Volume Crime Reduction

2. The BCU is performance focused but this is being communicated to staff as overly simplistic personal targets, which are not stretching. More relevant performance measures that are inclusive and encompass sectors', teams' and individual police officers' performance linked to the control strategy are needed. These measures should include the quality and volume of intelligence submissions, which is currently absent.

3. The current deployment of resources should be reviewed as a matter of urgency. This should take a blue skies approach and needs to return to basics, examining the relationships between individual teams and the outcomes that are desired. The aim should be a more holistic strategy, and less reliance on individual teams.

4. The partnership meeting structure within the CDRP could be improved to provide more rigour and holding to account of those who are contributing to the objectives and targets within the community safety strategy.

NIM

5. The BCU is urged to rationalise the current meeting and tasking structure and review the aims and objectives of each meeting; who should attend, timescales, frequency and links to other meetings. The analytical products for each meeting should be enhanced and should feed through the tactical and strategic assessment process, making NIM the driving force for the BCU.
6. Briefing for officers and staff should be improved to provide focus, with clear ownership of tasks that are tightly focused, realistic and limited in number. This tasking should be monitored by the AIT for completion, effectiveness and impact.
7. The products from the analytical team need to be developed so they move away from performance into true analytical work, and put in place performance measures that ensure that there is efficient use of their qualified, specialist and limited resource.

Leadership

8. The SMT needs to spend some time developing a shared vision for the BCU, involving staff and thereafter developing leadership capability at all levels.
9. A communication strategy is needed that not only considers the delivery of senior managers' messages but also how to tap into the enthusiasm and ideas of the workforce. There should be a message that quality of service is the key priority, being underpinned by sanction detections, crime reduction and neighbourhood policing.
10. The BCU should examine opportunities presented by workforce modernisation to support officers with the full range of powers, in their core role.

Improvement Outcomes

The implementation of recommendations and areas for improvement should ultimately lead to improvement in BCU performance. It is therefore essential that this notional contract include expectations as to future performance that are firmly linked to force and BCU priorities. Milton Keynes BCU is expected to meet or exceed the following performance targets by 30 June 2007:

Reduce Residential Burglary by 5% for January to June 2007 when compared to the same period in 2006

Reduce Vehicle Crime by 5% for January to June 2007 when compared to the same period in 2006

Increase the Sanction Detection rate for Hate Crime to 28.2% for January to June 2007

Increase the Sanction Detection rate for Domestic Violence Crime to 44.8% for January to June 2007

It is acknowledged that there will be occasions when circumstances change beyond the control of either the Force or the BCU Commander whereby the implementation of certain recommendations or improvement outcomes is rendered unrealistic and void. Account will therefore be taken of these factors when the HMIC revisit is conducted within the timescale described herein.

BCU Revisit and Review

Milton Keynes BCU will be revisited in July 2007 to determine whether this notional contract has been fully discharged. The HMIC will make an overall assessment that will fall within one of the following four options:

- 1) Fully discharged;
- 2) Partially discharged with further revisit scheduled;
- 3) Fully or partially discharged with aspects voided;
- 4) Not discharged with PSU referral.

APPENDIX B – LEADERSHIP AUDIT

INSTRUCTIONS:

Each question requires your single score (from 0-5) using the following guide:

Score Guide:

(5)=This is an integral part of our culture and operation and can be regarded as best practice

(4)=Yes this is recognised as the way we do business, and we achieve real benefits

(3)=Yes this usually happens but it could be improved

(2)=This happens occasionally but there is no consistency

(1)=No - this doesn't happen

(0)=Don't Know

Staff survey questions

Q01	My role is clearly defined and contributes to the BCU and Force Strategy
Q02	I am set objectives which are clearly relative to my role and experience
Q03	Lines of accountability and responsibility within the BCU are clearly defined
Q04	Resources are effectively managed within the BCU including specific issues of demand and deployment
Q05	Throughout the BCU teams are balanced in terms of skills, experience and diversity
Q06	The health and safety procedures on the BCU are effective and make me feel safe in my workplace
The BCU has a performance culture with integrity	
Q07	My manager demonstrates an interest in my performance and development
Q08	I receive the development I need to perform my role
Q09	Within the BCU, good performance is recognised and rewarded
Q10	Innovation is promoted and supported on the BCU
Q11	On the BCU there is effective use of the National Intelligence Model - resources/tasking/coordination
Q12	BCU managers ensure that maintaining our integrity is more important than achieving good performance
Q13	The BCU delivers an effective service to the community
Diversity	
Q14	Diversity is embedded within the BCU, specifically in terms of personal values and all areas of business including selection and appointment of staff
Q15	Fairness at work procedures (e.g.: grievance or appeals) can be confidently used by staff on the BCU without fear of recriminations from managers
Q16	My manager's decisions in respect of operational issues are consistent
Q17	My manager's decisions in respect of disciplinary issues are consistent
Q18	My manager solves problems effectively
Q19	My manager inspires me with confidence

Q20	Sickness and welfare are effectively managed within the BCU
Q21	Managers deal effectively with bullying
Q22	Abstractions from duty - other than sickness - are effectively managed within the BCU
Q23	There is a commitment within the BCU to staff retention
Personnel management	
Q24	I have regular and meaningful contact with my line manager
Q25	My manager demonstrates a genuine interest in me
Q26	I feel that my contributions are welcomed and valued
Q27	My manager makes me feel proud of the service we deliver
Q28	My manager makes me feel trusted, valued and included
Q29	Training and development is allocated on the BCU according to need
Q30	I am encouraged to learn by my manager
Q31	I feel prepared for future changes
Q32	Coaching and mentoring is available to me if I need it
Q33	Personnel issues are dealt with by my manager in a relevant and timely manner
Communication	
Q34	The BCU Commander & Senior Management Team has a high profile within BCU
Q35	My manager communicates relevant information to me
Q36	I feel that, where it is appropriate, I am consulted on matters of change within the BCU
Q37	My manager is available when I need to talk to him/her
Q38	The BCU Commander, Senior Management Team are available to staff at appropriate times
Q39	The BCU Commander and SMT respond in a positive way to feedback from staff
Q40	My manager responds in a positive way to feedback from staff

HMIC BCU reports represent a snapshot in time, ie when the inspection occurred. It is acknowledged that performance may have changed since the time of the inspection. Every effort is made to publish reports as soon as possible after inspection.