



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

**Follow up/Monitoring visit to Shropshire BCU  
West Mercia Constabulary**

**BCU Inspection Conducted - June 2004**

**Monitoring Visit Conducted - July 2005**

<b>Date of Inspection</b>	<b>HMIC Revisit Inspector</b>	<b>BCU Commander</b>	<b>Date of Final Report</b>	<b>Date of Monitoring Visit</b>
7 - 11 June 2004	Chief Supt Frank Sullivan	Chief Supt Guy Rutter	November 2004	26 July 2005

## **Introduction**

There are approximately 300 basic command units (BCUs) in England and Wales and no two are alike. They vary in size from a little over 100 officers to a little over 1,000; some serve densely populated, ethnically diverse inner cities, while others cover vast tracts of sparsely populated countryside. What they do share are some key aims and objectives, specifically to work with partner agencies on reducing crime in their areas, and to do so with integrity. Scrutiny of police performance has moved from aggregate force outcomes to the performance of individual BCUs, with the recognition that policing is essentially a locally delivered service. But BCUs are not islands; they operate within a framework of policy and support determined by headquarters-based chief officer teams. The precise configuration of policing units and the balance of resources between HQ and BCUs varies across the 43 forces in England and Wales.

The focus on performance in reducing crime is likely to be relentless. Forces and police authorities, working with local authorities and other community safety partners, will need to raise performance outcomes year upon year. Indeed, the statutory regime of Best Value demands 'continuous improvement' and an array of sanctions exist if authorities fail to deliver this. The potential for the Service as a whole to deliver better results in crime reduction and detection cannot conceal an inescapable fact – that performance between BCUs operating in similar policing environments and with comparable resources varies to a degree that is, at times, remarkable.

The purpose of the revisit process is to monitor the progress of the BCU against the recommendations and action plans produced following the full BCU inspection. This report concerns itself with that monitoring process. It is not a further inspection report and makes no further recommendations.

## **Methodology**

Apart from analysis of data prior to and during the inspection a number of staff were interviewed. Members of the senior management team (SMT) were interviewed, including the crime manager, detective inspector divisional intelligence unit, chief inspector and inspector operations; and members of the FLU team. Most usefully, the inspection began with a presentation on the current performance of Shropshire BCU.

As previously, staff on the BCU were most helpful and had made significant efforts to accommodate the requests of the inspection team, for which the team were most grateful. The inspection concluded with feedback to the chief superintendent BCU commander.

## **Significant developments since the original inspection**

At the time of the revisit a number of members of the SMT were in acting positions but the majority remained on the BCU. Therefore, they were interviewed in connection with their normal role rather than their temporary position, which assisted with continuity. When the BCU was inspected in June 2004 the commander was relatively new in role and there had been some changes within the SMT. It is clear that the senior management team has matured into a cohesive team and they are working well together. Unsolicited comments made it clear that performance is now at the hub of activity on the BCU, and there was a positive buzz around Shrewsbury police station.

The inspection team had the opportunity to benefit from a presentation by a community beat sergeant, who instigated the closure of a problem premises under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. This legislation allows for the closure of houses where class A drugs are being used, and where there has been significant anti-social behaviour in the locale. These are often referred to as 'crack houses'. The Shropshire division was the first in West Mercia to successfully use this legislation, and there have now been three successful applications.

This has resulted in a significant drop in anti-social behaviour around these premises, and members of the public have approached officers in the street to thank them. There has been some positive press coverage.

## **Original Recommendations**

1. The BCU conducts a detailed management review of its approach towards family protection, which includes benchmarking against other forces and agreed best practice.
2. The SMT reviews its current application of the National Intelligence Model against the ACPO minimum standards 2003 document and recognised best practice.
3. The BCU develops its crime management processes with particular emphasis upon Narrowing the Justice Gap, improving sanction detection performance and reducing repeat victimisation.
4. A short compulsory remedial training package is made available to existing PCSOs, and incorporated in all future initial training.
5. Review custody provision throughout the BCU with the objective of identifying an intermediate solution to resolve the immediate and urgent problem of lack of provision at Shrewsbury.

**Performance Table**

<b>Crime Levels and Detections</b>	<b>July 2003 to June 2004</b>	<b>July 2004 to June 2005</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Total recorded crime	20,411	18,973	<b>-7.05%</b>
Number of crimes detected	6,230	5,526	<b>-11.30%</b>
% Crimes detected	30.52%	29.13%	<b>-4.58%</b>
Total recorded crime per 1,000 population	71.18	66.17	<b>-7.04%</b>
Total residential burglary	886	829	<b>-6.43%</b>
Number of residential burglaries detected	137	249	<b>81.75%</b>
% Residential burglaries detected	15.46%	30.04%	<b>94.25%</b>
Total residential burglaries per 1,000 households	7.46	6.98	<b>-6.43%</b>
Total vehicle crime	1,962	2,237	<b>14.02%</b>
Number of vehicle crimes detected	216	334	<b>54.63%</b>
% Vehicle crimes detected	11.01%	14.93%	<b>35.62%</b>
Total vehicle crime per 1,000 population	6.84	7.8	<b>14.04%</b>
Total violent crime	4531	3278	<b>-27.65%</b>
Number of violent crimes detected	2915	2058	<b>-29.40%</b>
% Violent crimes detected	64.33%	62.78%	<b>-2.41%</b>
Total violent crime per 1,000 population	15.8	11.43	<b>-27.66%</b>
Total robbery	82	61	<b>-25.61%</b>
Number of robberies detected	21	22	<b>4.76%</b>
% Robberies detected	25.61%	36.07%	<b>40.83%</b>
Total robbery per 1,000 population	0.29	0.21	<b>-27.59%</b>

**Total Crime**

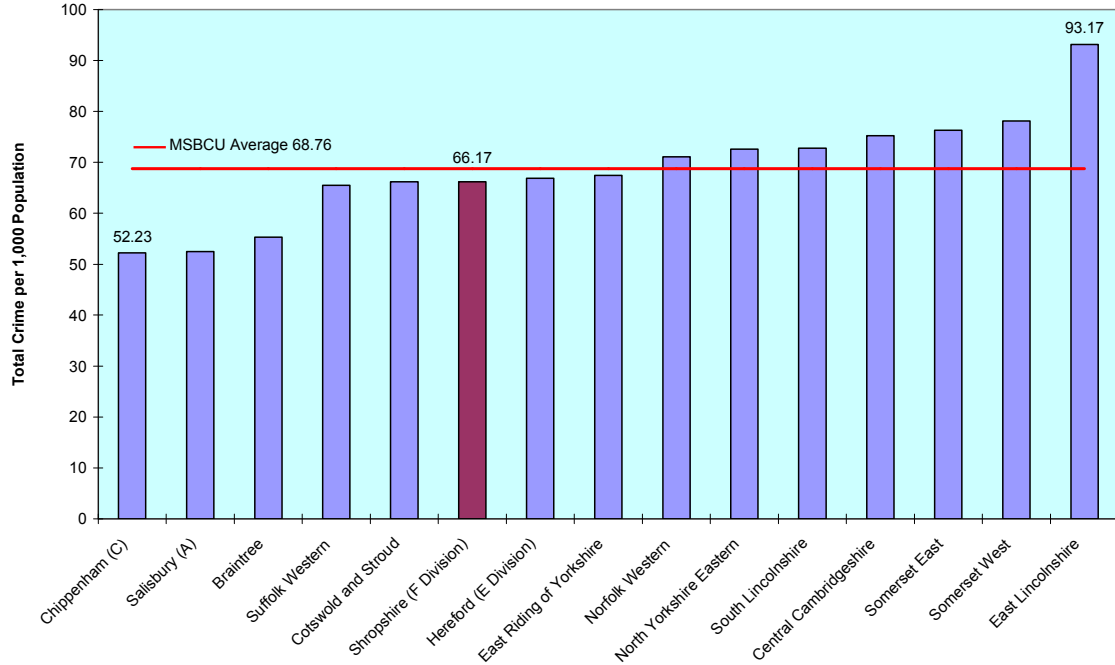
For the period July 2004 to June 2005 total recorded crime **decreased by 7.05%** when compared with the previous year. The BCU ranked **6<sup>th</sup> out of 15** for total crime per 1,000 population in their MSBCU group. The BCU is **just below** the MSBCU average for total crime per 1,000 population. Projections based on the last 3, 6 and 12 months' data show the level of total crime **decreasing**.

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 the actual number of crimes detected **decreased by 11.30%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **29.13%** compared with **30.52%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **7<sup>th</sup> out of 15** in the MSBCU group. The BCU is **in line with** the MSBCU average detection rate. Projections based on the last 12 months show the detection rate **decreasing**, but projections based on the last 3 and 6 months data show the detection rate **increasing**.

One of the real successes for the BCU is in sanctioned detections, which have improved from 14% to 25%, and the BCU's SMT are striving towards a 30%

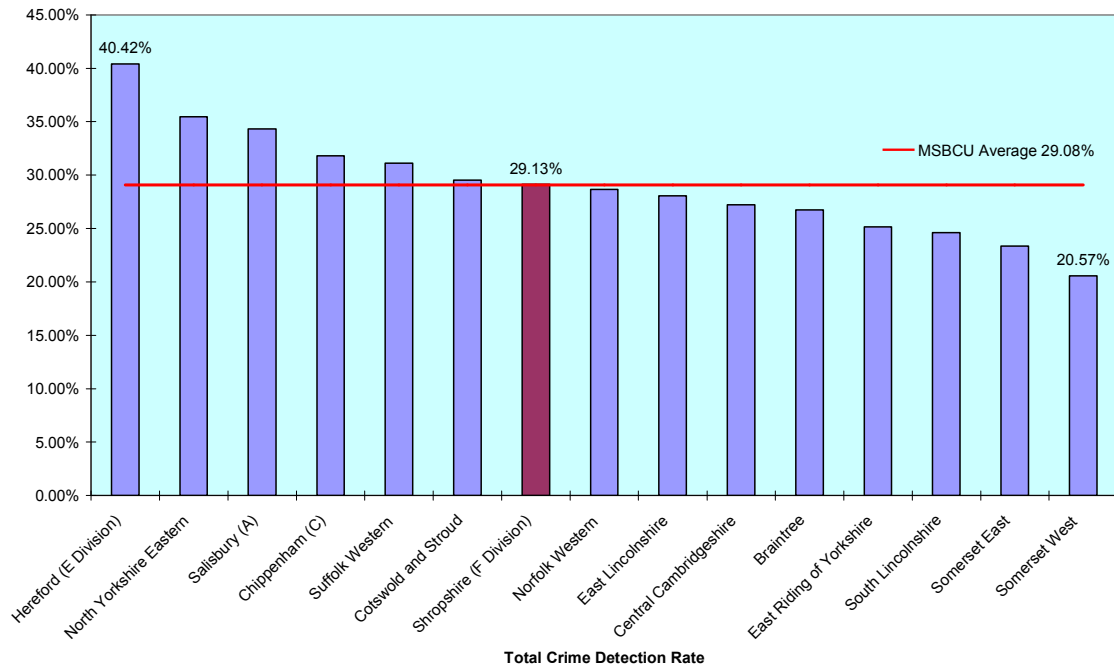
sanctioned detection rate, which will be stretching by any standard. However, the commitment and determination displayed on the Shropshire BCU leads the inspection team to the view that it is a real possibility.

**Total Crime per 1,000 Population July 2004 to June 2005**



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005

**Total Crime Detection Rate July 2004 to June 2005**



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005

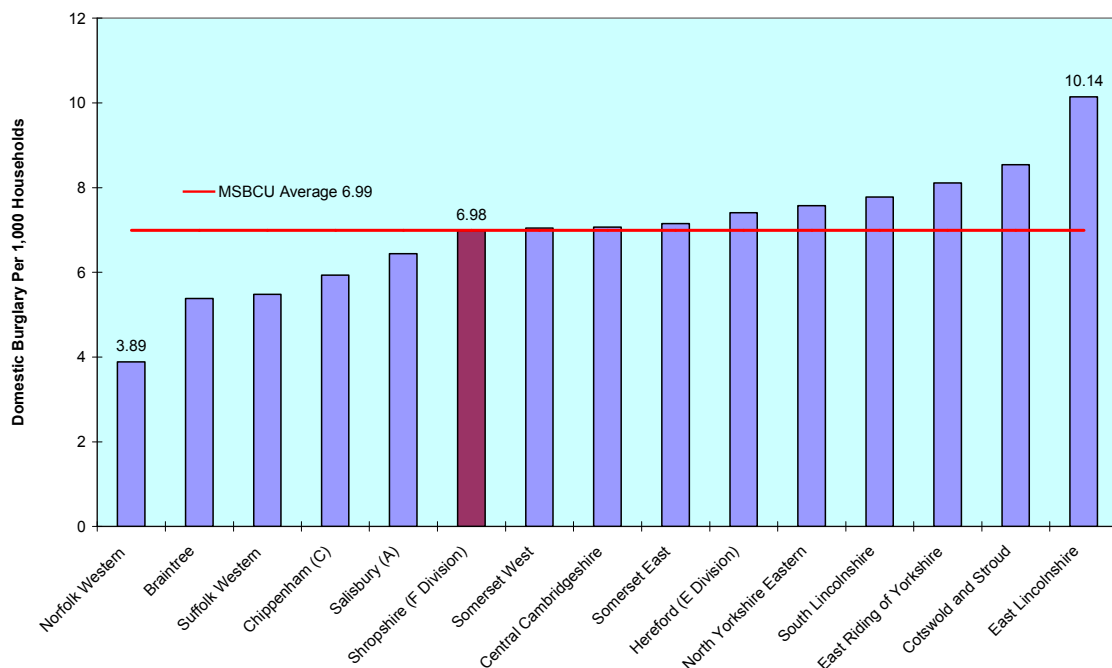
### Domestic Burglary

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 total recorded domestic burglaries **decreased by 6.43%** when compared with the previous year. The BCU ranked **6<sup>th</sup> out of 15** for domestic burglary per 1,000 households in its MSBCU group. The BCU is currently **in line with the MSBCU average** for domestic burglary per 1,000 households. Projections based on the last 3 months data show the level of crime **increasing**, projections based on the last 6 months data show the level of domestic burglaries **remaining at the current level**, and projections based on the last 12 months data show the level of domestic burglaries **decreasing**.

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 the actual number of domestic burglaries detected **increased by 81.75%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **30.04%** compared with **15.46%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **1<sup>st</sup> out of 15** in the MSBCU group and is **above** the MSBCU average. Projections based on the last 3 months data show the detection rate **decreasing**, projections based on the last 6 months data show the detection rate **remaining at the current level** and projections based on the last 12 months data show the detection rate **increasing**.

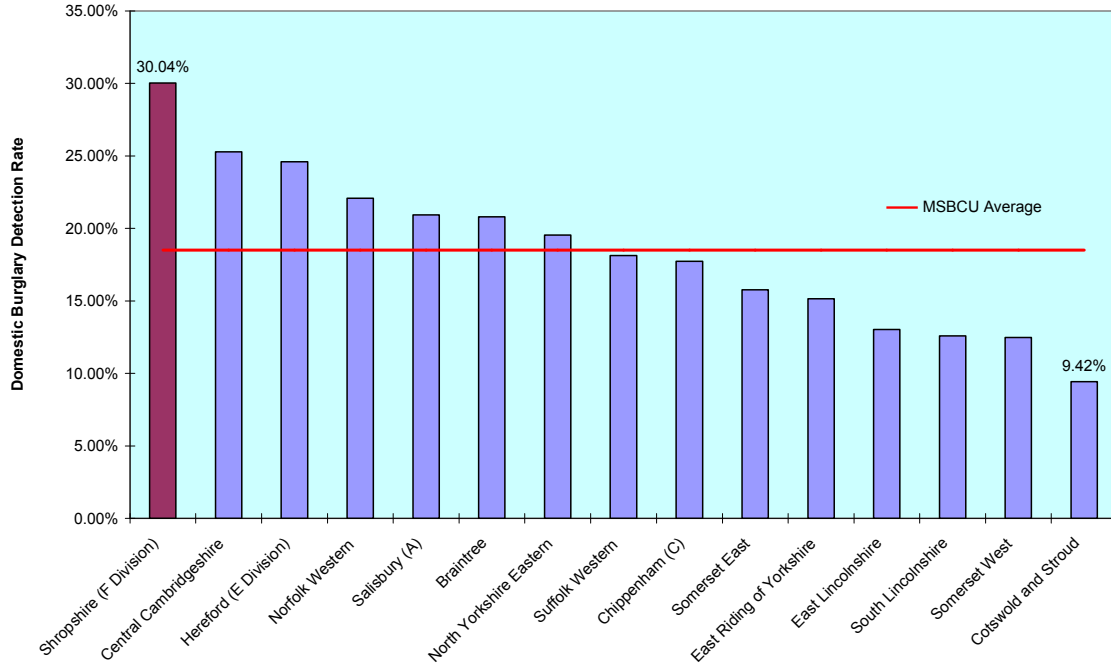
The sanction detections for burglary dwelling for Shropshire BCU are the best in its family at 27.50%, against a family average of 16.47%.

### Domestic Burglary per 1,000 Households July 2004 to June 2005



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005

**Domestic Burglary Detection Rate July 2004 to June 2005**



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005

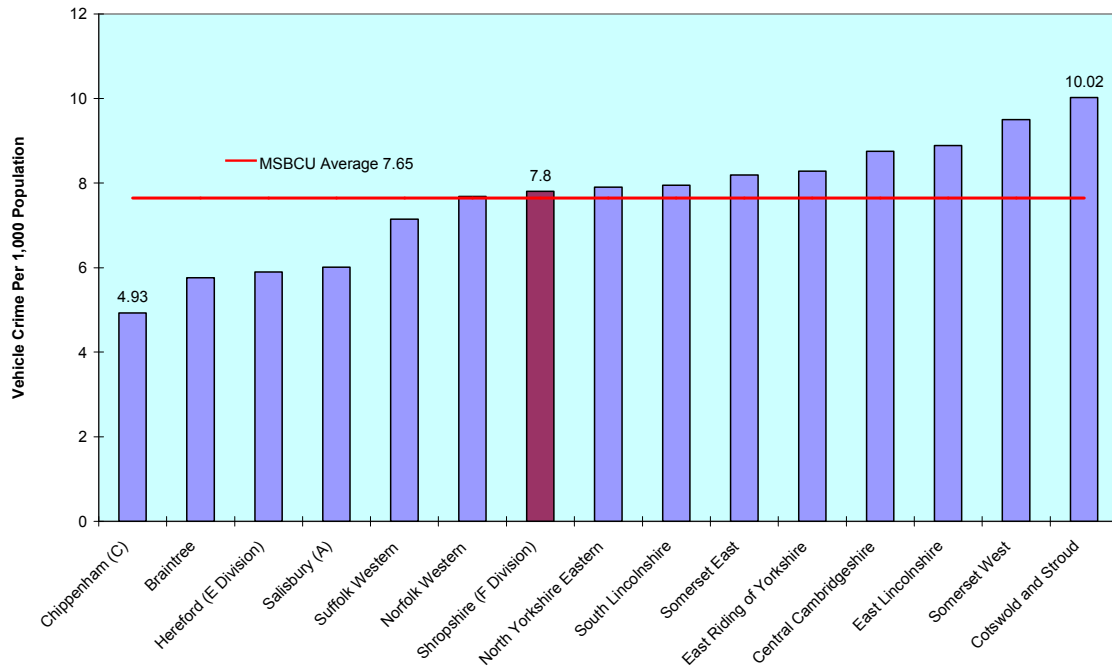
**Vehicle Crime**

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 total recorded vehicle crime **increased by 14.02%** when compared with the previous year. The BCU ranked **7<sup>th</sup> out of 15** for vehicle crime in its MSBCU group. The BCU is **in line with** the MSBCU average for vehicle crime per 1,000 population. Projections based on the last 3, 6 and 12 month’s data show the level of vehicle crime **increasing**.

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 the actual number of vehicle crimes detected **increased by 54.63%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **14.93%** compared with **11.01%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **3<sup>rd</sup> out of 15** in the MSBCU group. Currently the detection rate is **above** the MSBCU average. Projections based on the last 3, 6, and 12 months’ data show the detection rate for vehicle crime **increasing** with projections based on the last 3 months data showing the biggest rise.

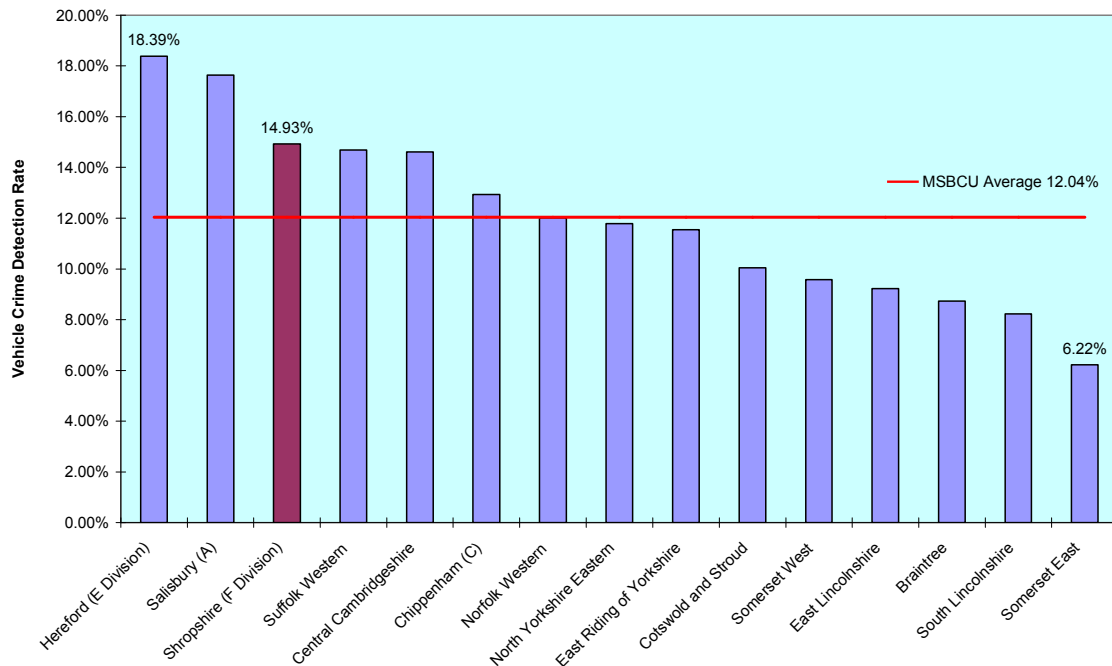
The sanction detections for vehicle crime for Shropshire BCU are 14.66% against a family average of 17.05%, placing it second in its family.

**Vehicle Crime per 1,000 Population July 2004 to June 2005**



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005

**Vehicle Crime Detection Rate July 2004 to June 2005**



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005



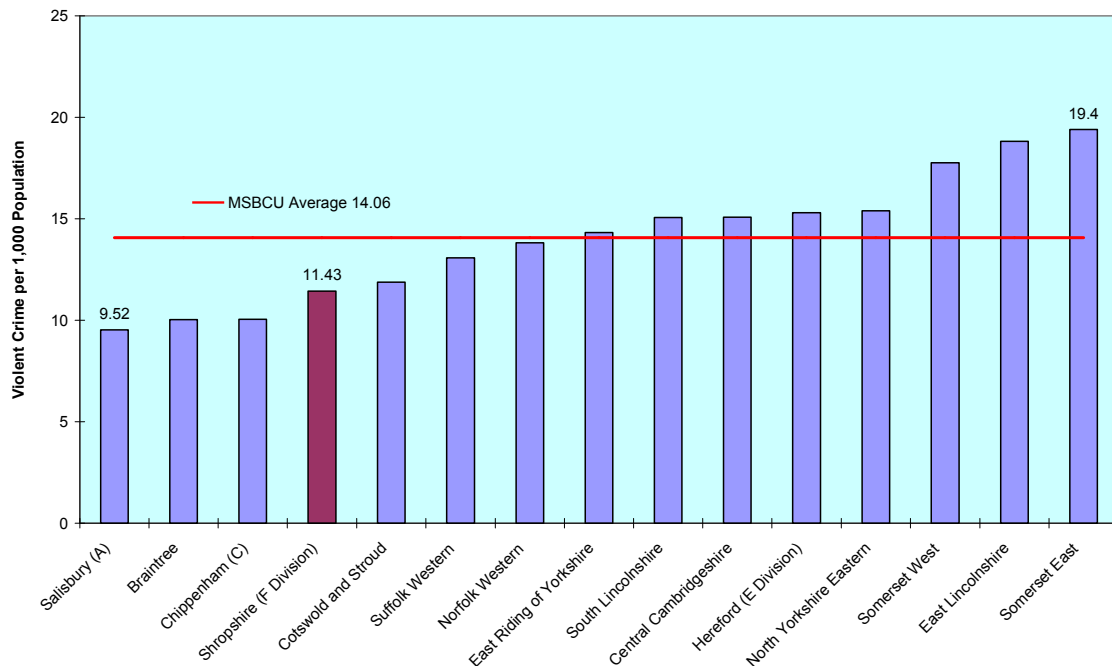
## Violent Crime

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 total recorded violent crime **decreased by 27.65%** when compared with the previous year. The BCU ranked **4<sup>th</sup> out of 15** for violent crime in its MSBCU group. The BCU is currently **below the MSBCU average** for violent crime per 1,000 population. Projections based on the last 3, 6 and 12 months' data show the level of violent crime **decreasing**.

For the period July 2004 to June 2005 the actual number of crimes detected **decreased by 29.40%** when compared to the previous year. For the same period the overall detection rate for the BCU is **62.78%** compared with **64.33%** the previous year. The BCU is ranked **8<sup>th</sup> out of 15** in the MSBCU group. The detection rate is **just above** the MSBCU average. Projections based on the last 6 and 12 months' data show the detection rate **remaining at the current level**, but projections based on the last 3 months data show the detection rate **increasing**.

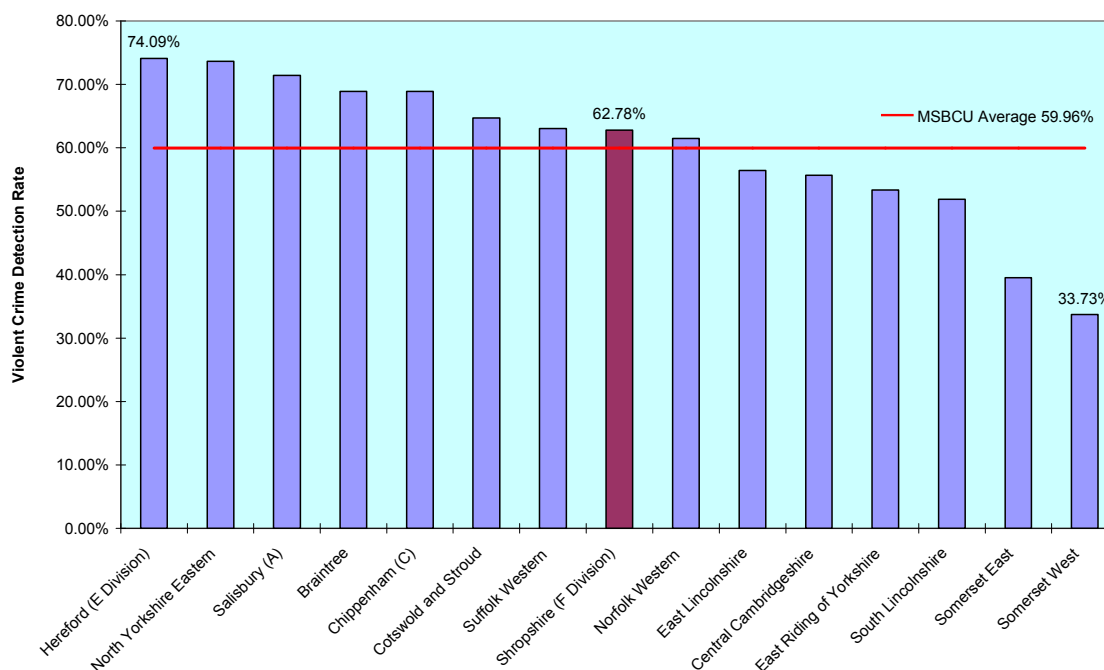
The sanction detections for violent crime are 49.45% against a family average of 45.13%.

## Violent Crime per 1,000 Population July 2004 to June 2005



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005

### Violent Crime Detection Rate July 2004 to June 2005



Source: HMIC South of England Region – RDS Crux Matrix 2005

### Summary

The BCU is performing well and its performance in priority crime areas is good to excellent. Total crime is falling and the BCU has a healthy detection rate of just below 30%. Sanction detections have improved from 14% to 25% currently, and the crime manager believes that a 30% sanction detection rate is a real possibility in the future, and is striving towards that target whilst ensuring ethical recording.

Burglary dwelling has decreased whilst there has been a marked increase in detections as a result of the creation of a properly resourced BCU wide burglary team. As an indication of the performance mentality on the BCU, it was pointed out to the inspection team that there was a dip in performance in June, but staff are aware of the reasons and working to resolve them. This will affect the short term projections, as seen above. Such openness and focus is refreshing.

Vehicle crime has seen an increase but with a 54.63% increase in detection rate the signs are healthy and should soon be reflected in a turnaround overall numbers of offences. The reduction in violent crime is mirrored in the overall number of detections but the BCU still maintains a detection rate of 62.78%.

Other positive factors which impact performance not covered above are improvements in file quality and submissions of PDRs. Previously the PDR completions were a paltry 14% but the BCU is submitting confirmed figures of 100%. Having staff with clear objectives, which demonstrate what they can contribute to the performance of the BCU overall, has been found to be a positive contribution towards performance on other BCUs. File quality in terms of timeliness and quality varied on the BCU and in June 2004 was 57%, but since the creation of the 'FLU' team by the chief inspector with responsibility for performance, this has improved performance to 73% in May 2005, with a target of 80%.

## Inspection recommendations

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action taken by BCU</b>	<b>Measurable Impact</b>
The BCU conducts a detailed management review of its approach towards family protection, which includes benchmarking against other forces and agreed best practice.	A complete review has taken place and a Public Protection Unit has been setup combining domestic violence, family protection and hate crime. New accommodation is under active consideration.	The role of the unit has been enhanced and given more significance. Domestic violence is now in the CDRP plan and the unit is moving to more of an offender focus. The action taken reflects national best practice.
The SMT reviews its current application of the National Intelligence Model against the ACPO minimum standards 2003 document and recognised best practice.	The BCU has reviewed its NIM compliance and has visited other forces to obtain best practice. Additional structures are in place and an action driven daily tasking now takes place.	Intelligence now works in a more coordinated manner, and the numbers attending T&CG has been reduced, so tasking is more strategic. The action plan has not been signed off as it is seen as a living document and there is work in progress which goes beyond HMIC recommendations.
The BCU develops its crime management processes with particular emphasis upon Narrowing the Justice Gap, improving sanction detection performance and reducing repeat victimisation.	Sanctioned detections have been driven by SMT, emphasising the role of the crime audit team. Training and processes have taken place across the board.	The number of crimes written off for no further action has been dramatically reduced. Sanction detections have increased from 14% > 25%.
A short compulsory remedial training package is made available to existing PCSOs, and incorporated in all future initial training.	Training has been completed.	PCSOs now fully trained.
Review custody provision throughout the BCU with the objective of identifying an intermediate solution to resolve the immediate and urgent problem of lack of provision at Shrewsbury.	Significant investment has been made available for an expansion of custody. A total of sixteen cells will be available once the work has been completed.	Major building work to commence in August 2005.

## **Monitoring assessment & follow-up action**

It was clear to the HMI Staff Officer that all the recommendations contained within the original report had received attention and action.

### **Review Family Protection Unit**

A complete review of the Family Protection Unit has taken place and a Public Protection Unit has been created, combining domestic violence, family protection and hate crime. Also improved accommodation is under active consideration but is dependant upon other major changes that are due to taken place, as the Force is considering setting up a force call handling centre at Shrewsbury.

The role of the Unit has been enhanced and given more significance within the BCU and the crime manager is taking steps to appoint a dedicated DI to run the Unit. Domestic violence is now in the CDRP plan and the unit is moving to more of an offender focus. There is now a more holistic approach to vulnerable victims with a move towards a greater emphasis dealing effectively with the offenders. This reflects what is considered best practice.

### **National Intelligence Model**

The BCU has reviewed its NIM compliance and has visited other forces to obtain best practice. Additional structures are in place and a daily tasking which is action driven now takes place. The proactive team are tasked each Monday and there is now an excellent briefing facility at Shrewsbury for patrol officers. Previously officers were briefed in the social club.

Intelligence now works in a more coordinated manner, and the numbers attending T&CG has been reduced, so tasking is more strategic. The action plan has not been signed off as it is seen a living document and there is work in progress which goes beyond HMIC recommendations.

### **Narrowing the Justice Gap**

#### **'FLU'**

The BCU has achieved significant progress in this area, largely due to the performance focused approach of the SMT and the willingness of staff that have been receptive to new ideas. The BCU has set up a File Liaison Unit (FLU) based at Shrewsbury with a remit to improve the quality and timeliness of files submitted to the CPS. The Unit is led by a sergeant with two experienced officers who strive to achieve an 80% success rate for all files. File quality in terms of timeliness and quality varied on the BCU and in June 2004 was 57%, but since the creation of the 'FLU' team by the chief inspector with responsibility for performance, this has improved performance to 73% in May 2005; thus surpassing the national target of 67%.

The FLU conduct additional work on files and assist officers with enquiries which were previously allocated to already over-burdened response teams. Use is made of

officers on recuperative duty, and research has shown that the Unit has saved £158,600 in efficiency savings.

### **Sanction Detections**

The BCU has made significant improvements in sanction detections by improving its housekeeping procedures and training staff, particularly supervisors, to ensure that potential detections are not missed. Work has been done to identify and achieve detections from offences which previously would have been filed, marked 'no further action'. Close supervision of staff by the crime manager is now paying dividends. The BCU has embraced ideas from other forces and is now using an effective electronic crime recording and crime enquiry tracking system (FLOPSE), which has considerably assisted the audit process. Time has been invested in training staff on detections work and effective investigation and officers have been issued with a manual 'A Guide to Crime Investigation'. The SMT have been determined to improve the quality of investigation of volume crime and officers now attend relatively minor offences and investigate them thoroughly, when other commitments allow. The focus on sanction detections is maintained by management information, produced on a monthly basis detailing the performance of individual officers. The inspection team views this work as good practice and if used appropriately will help sustain good performance.

### **Repeat Victimisation**

The BCU has developed a strategy for reducing repeat victimisation. Repeat victims are categorised after a thorough risk assessment with the most vulnerable being labelled as gold, through to silver and bronze. The assessment is sent to the sector inspector who is responsible for determining the appropriate police response and coordinating the investigation.

To improve the service to victims and witnesses the BCU has set up the Victim and Witness Care Unit, staffed by two officers. Investigating officers distribute business cards to victims and witnesses and the unit provides them with updates and advice. The Unit has received positive coverage by local radio and newspapers and staff have distributed posters in public places encouraging people to contact them. The Unit has attracted interest from other forces that rightly see it as an example of good practice.

### **First Aid Training for PCSOs**

First aid training has been given to all PCSOs and new recruits receive training in their initial course. The BCU has ensured that there is a more consistent and integrated approach towards the recruitment, training and tutoring of the PCSOs.

### **Custody**

The Police Authority has provided £1.6m for, what is basically, a completely new custody suite and this represents a significant investment. The seven cells are being replaced with sixteen modern cells and to support this, there will be additional interview rooms, and the charging area will be doubled in capacity. A particularly positive element is that the Force has taken the opportunity to have digital CCTV placed in four of the cells, to safeguard the welfare of vulnerable detainees. Work will commence in August 2005 and is due to be complete by February 2006.

## **Conclusion**

The BCU command team should be rightly proud of what they have achieved in the past twelve months. Not only did they grasp the recommendations as an opportunity to improve the performance of the division, but have gone beyond them, and have tried to introduce innovative ways of further improving performance.

Shropshire BCU continues to be a friendly, positive BCU where the staff clearly like to work; and delivering performance to the public is at the forefront of all they do.

The inspection team are happy to unequivocally sign off all the recommendations as satisfactorily actioned. There is no need for any other inspection activity other than routine monitoring.

Shropshire BCU, West Mercia Constabulary  
Follow up/Monitoring Visit – July 2005

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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.