

**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
Northern Regional Office**

**Second Follow-up/Monitoring Visit to
Chester & Ellesmere Port BCU
Cheshire Constabulary**

BCU Inspection Conducted – February 2003

Follow-up Visit Conducted - March 2004

Further follow-up visit conducted September 2004



Follow up/monitoring visits to inspected BCUs

Chester & Ellesmere Port BCU – Cheshire Constabulary

Date of Inspection	Lead Inspector on both revisits	BCU Commander	Date of final report	Date of First monitoring visit	Date of Second monitoring visit
February 2003	Ch Supt Ian Shannon	Supt Ian HOPKINS (New since original Inspection)	February 2003	March 2004	September 2004

In Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary's professional judgement, at the time of the first monitoring visit, insufficient action had been taken to adequately address recommendations one, three, four and five of the original Inspection report. Therefore it was agreed, in consultation with the Chief Constable, that this further visit would be used to examine progress against these specific recommendations.

1. Significant developments since the original Inspection (e.g. boundary changes, changes to management team, increase/decrease in strength).
 - Since the original Inspection, the BCU Commander (following promotion to chief superintendent) has moved on. The new BCU Commander took up post in February 2004.
 - New command team members since the first Inspection also include the detective chief inspector and one of the two chief inspectors (operations at Ellesmere Port).
 - The Chief Constable has instigated an operational policing review, 'Taking Control'. The review will affect Force structures, operating practices and policing styles and a new Chester and Ellesmere Port and Vale Royal BCU will be formed in April 2005.
 - At the time of this revisit the BCU headquarters had just moved from the centre of Chester to a new purpose built police station at Blacon.

2. Performance

Current BCU Performance compared with most similar BCU family					
Performance indicator	Performance April to August 2003	Performance April to August 2004	% Change from 2003 to 2004	MSBCU average for 2004 period	The BCU's ranked position in MSBCU group
Recorded Crime per 1,000 Population	43.93	41.59	-5.32%	40.83	9 th
Recorded Crime Detection Rate	23.85%	24.27%	0.41 p.p.	27.55%	12 th
Domestic Burglary per 1,000 Households	6.84	4.26	-37.82%	4.71	7 th
Domestic Burglary Detection Rate	21.64%	34.25%	12.61 p.p.	21.63%	3 rd
Robberies per 1,000 Population	0.30	0.23	-25.00%	0.33	5 th
Robbery Crime Detection Rate	16.67%	35.56%	18.89 p.p.	27.74%	3 rd
Vehicle Crimes per 1,000 Population	6.18	5.69	-7.85%	4.83	12 th
Vehicle Crime Detection Rate	13.12%	15.38%	2.26 p.p.	12.43%	3 rd
Violent Crimes per 1,000 Population	6.56	6.64	1.22%	8.76	1 st
Violent Crime Detection Rate	55.95%	58.66%	2.71 p.p.	52.87%	5 th

Please note: This data is not validated and therefore is only provisional.

- At the time of the original Inspection in to the BCU performance there had been increases in:
 - All recorded crimes per 1,000 population
 - Domestic burglaries per 1,000 population
 - Recorded violent crime per 1,000 population
 - Recorded vehicle crime per 1,000 population
 - Recorded robberies per 1,000 population
 - Serious/fatal road traffic collisions per 1,000 population
 (Using data for April to December 2002 as compared with the same period in 2001).
- At the time of the original Inspection detection rates had risen for total recorded crime and vehicle crime, but fallen for domestic burglary, violent crime and robbery.
 - At the time of the first monitoring visit the inspection team had been concerned about the levels of vehicle crime and were disappointed to find that in terms of total recorded crime, violent crime and domestic burglary levels of crime were high compared to the BCU family and were continuing to get worse.

- Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary was very pleased to find that at the time of the second monitoring visit total recorded crime, domestic burglary and vehicle crime were all reducing and the domestic burglary detection rate, which was already good, was continuing to improve and the robbery detection rate was also improving. Whilst violent crime and robbery were increasing slightly and the detection rate for total recorded crime and for violence had fallen it was clear that strenuous efforts had been made to understand the reasons for changes in performance.
- Successes were rightly being celebrated but there was clearly no sense of complacency and performance in 2004/05 is particularly noteworthy.

3. Inspection Recommendations

Recommendation 1	
<p><i>The senior management team develops and corporately agrees (i) a coherent and inclusive policing approach, which includes (ii) an effective performance regime for the strategic management of Chester and Ellesmere Port BCU. (iii) This must be effectively led and communicated to all staff.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘Taking Control’ review has been instigated at Force level and is expected to be complete by April 2005. • A policing vision for the BCU has been developed and this has been accompanied by some changes to the structure of the BCU to support the delivery of the vision, these include more officers working in community action teams and the appointment of a BCU Business Performance Officer. • A BCU communications strategy has been developed and implemented. This has included a continuing series of seminars for all staff, a revised newsletter and greater frequent informal contact with senior management team (SMT) members and the circulation of credit card sized copies of the BCU vision. • The performance management regime has been developed and there is an increasing focus on qualitative as well as quantitative activities and outcomes (including the innovative use of surveys to obtain the views of the public on the quality of their contact with individual police officers and police staff). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new BCU Commander has been instrumental in developing a clear vision, in consultation with his staff and partners. • The vision has been clearly communicated and was welcomed by all staff the inspection team met. • The rationale for a new approach to managing performance has been clearly explained and has been accepted by staff and this has contributed to a laudable improvement in performance. • The approach to performance management is measured and balanced and takes account of crime reduction, detection, anti-social behaviour and reassurance and other quality of life issues. This approach reflects the BCU priorities and supports the delivery of the BCU vision. • The BCU SMT has identified good practice elsewhere in the Force and used this to develop their performance regime. • The links between personal, team and BCU performance indicators and the achievement of BCU priorities is clear. • An excellent approach to reward and recognition has been developed and this supports the development of a performance culture.

Recommendation 3	
<i>The senior management team, with appropriate guidance and advice from headquarters, prepares and implements relevant diversity strategies for the BCU.</i>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A policy document 'Equality and Diversity' has been produced by the Force and distributed to staff. • Recognition of the importance of diversity has been included in the BCU vision. • A BCU diversity forum has been established and meets quarterly. • BCU level training has been provided, which has included inputs from a wide range of minority groups, this training has continued. • The BCU SMT has taken the lead in celebrating diversity, as well as giving clear messages about the possible consequences of inappropriate action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCU staff have received the Force policy document. This document sets out Force standards and requirements for behaviour and conduct. • There was evidence of effective challenges being made in relation to inappropriate conduct within the BCU. • All members of the BCU SMT have attended a discrimination/diversity course. • BCU staff now receive practical information on the diverse cultures represented within the BCU area. • CAT officers have been attending Friday prayers at local mosques. • Each uniform response team has 'adopted' a local restaurant that had been identified as suffering from a high level of hate crime and have been paying frequent high profile visits to these premises. • A very constructive relationship has been developed with many members of the local gay and lesbian community. This has been instrumental in the successful investigation into a number of serious attacks in Chester. • The inspection team were extremely impressed by the approach that has been adopted to developing a positive approach to diversity on the BCU.

Recommendation 4

The senior management team develops formalised internal communication structures within the BCU for regularly consulting staff, and for the provision of feedback and information sharing

Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCU SMT has implemented and developed the BCU communications strategy, which was agreed in February 2004. • Regular formal meetings are now held between the BCU Commander and staff association and union representatives • Regular tasking and co-ordinating and pre-tasking and co-ordinating meetings, which include operational staff, are in place and are effective. • Corporate information is provided to staff through the ‘core brief’. • At the time of the first monitoring visit there had been an over reliance on e-mail as a means of communication, much greater emphasis is now placed on face to face contact. • A sergeants ‘forum’ is held, regularly meeting with the chief inspector operations. • A series of seminars for staff continue at which BCU priorities and other issues are discussed. A structured programme of SMT visits to operational briefings and to outlying police stations has been developed. • SMT members go on patrol with operational staff. • There is a weekly six-hour ‘telephone clinic’, where an SMT member will respond to any issues raised by a member of staff. • A revised BCU newsletter has been developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was clear that staff were confident that they could readily talk to any SMT member and all SMT members were visible and accessible. • The tasking and co-ordinating and sergeants meetings provide a contact point for staff to raise issues, which affect operational delivery. • The BCU has effective mechanisms in place to communicate operational information and tasking requirements. These methods are well understood and used by staff. • Recent seminars connected with the Force ‘Taking Control’ review has provided opportunities to communicate Force level organisational change issues. • The BCU seminars (always led by an SMT member) have proved to be a highly effective mechanism for two-way communication and are popular amongst staff. • The presence of SMT members on patrol has been welcomed and has promoted effective informal communication. • The weekly telephone clinic has been well used, but more importantly most staff do not feel the need to wait for this ‘clinic’ and readily raise issues with SMT members or line managers. • In the professional judgement of the inspection team internal consultation and communication is now effective and this was evidenced in improved morale and performance.

Recommendation 5

The PPI System is reviewed and adjusted to bring it more closely in line with the performance priorities for the BCU

Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCU has adopted the Force PPI performance framework but has also developed the performance management approach to include good practice that had been identified on Congleton and Vale Royal BCU. • Regular performance data distinguishes intelligence items that are relevant to the BCU control strategy. • The range of personal performance information continues to be developed and now includes qualitative as well as quantitative information. • The BCU has used a variety of methods to display and communicate team and BCU level performance data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The link between PPIs and BCU priorities was far clearer than it had been at the time of the first monitoring visit. • PPIs do influence staff activity and the development of qualitative indicators (including the results of questionnaires about the service provided by individual members of staff) provides a much clearer link with the performance priorities for the BCU. • It was clear that an effective performance regime is developing and this is widely accepted by staff on the BCU.

Ancillary issues

A number of suggestions were also made in the original Inspection report. The inspection team have examined the BCU response to these suggestions and are content that they have all now been addressed.

Whilst not central to this revisit the inspection team were particularly impressed with:

- the quality and clarity of tasking that was apparent during operational briefings;
- the active involvement of partners in the development of the strategic intelligence assessment and in tactical tasking and coordinating meetings;
- the clarity that inspectors had about their role and their contribution to driving performance;
- the new facilities at Blacon police station and the management of the move of the BCU headquarters from Chester City Centre to Blacon.

4. Monitoring Assessment and Follow-up Action

Have all recommendations been accepted and acted upon?	Yes
Has the remedial action/implementation plan led to demonstrable improvement?	Yes
Has performance in relation to national/local targets improved? If not, are the reasons for deterioration understood and being addressed?	Yes
Have any problems arisen since the first monitoring visit that are likely to affect performance and merit further scrutiny by HMIC?	No
Other than notification of monitoring outcome to regional office (lead staff officer), is any further action required by HMIC inspection team – e.g. contact with PSU?	No

- The inspection team considers all the recommendations made have now been rigorously addressed and both performance and staff morale have improved. These improvements can be sustained.
- The inspection team would like to thank the BCU Commander and all his staff for the support and warm welcome that they received when conducting this revisit and for the regular updates and contact that was maintained over the last six months.
- In the professional judgement of the inspection team the BCU has been transformed in the six months since the initial monitoring and, whilst not promoting complacency, staff on the BCU should be proud of the progress that has been made.

Chief Superintendent Ian Shannon
28/9/04