

**Inspection of  
Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood BCU  
(B Division)  
Nottinghamshire Police  
February 2005**

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1. The inspection of Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood Basic Command Unit (BCU), known as 'B' division, Nottinghamshire Police was conducted on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary by a staff officer for BCU Inspections, Mr Stephen Griffiths, assisted by Chief Inspector Christopher Ward between 28 February and 4 March 2005.

## **Force and BCU Overview**

2. Nottinghamshire is situated in the heart of England and covers an area of 534,175 acres (834 square miles). More than a million people live in the county and it has a working population of over 490,000, with the largest concentration found in the Greater Nottingham conurbation, with its population of more than 600,000.
3. A diverse local economy features world-renowned companies in the fields of healthcare, pharmaceuticals, precision engineering, textiles and clothing and professional services. Boots, Raleigh, Imperial Tobacco, Experian and Capital One are based there, as do government bodies, including the Inland Revenue and the Driving Standards Agency.
4. The county boasts two universities – the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University – offering courses to over 45,000 full and part-time students. In addition, New College in Nottingham is the second largest college in Europe with more than 50,000 full and part-time students. Contrasting with the industrial heritage of the coalfields on its western side, much of Nottinghamshire is rural. South of Nottingham, fields and farmland stretch down towards the Leicestershire border. In the north west of the county are the present day remains of Sherwood Forest.
5. The Force is divided into four territorial BCUs (known as divisions), each of which is headed by a BCU commander of chief superintendent rank.
6. Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood is the northernmost BCU within Nottinghamshire and is co-terminus with the areas of both Bassetlaw District Council and Newark and Sherwood District Council. The BCU covers some 129,000 hectares, which represents almost 60% of the total area of Nottinghamshire. With a total population of over 210,000 people almost evenly split between the two councils, the division serves some 20% of the total population of the county. Each of the two local authority areas is split onto two policing areas, called local area commands (or LAC). An inspector heads each LAC.
7. Bassetlaw District covers an area of 63,687 hectares, almost a third of the area of the county of Nottinghamshire and is the northernmost district of Nottinghamshire situated between the coalfields of Derbyshire, agricultural Lincolnshire and industrial South Yorkshire. While much of the district lies in the Nottinghamshire coalfields, it is predominantly rural in character. Bassetlaw has a population of 104,800, only a tenth of the population of the county of Nottinghamshire. According to the 2001 census, 98.6% of the population are white, with minority ethnic communities accounting for less than 1.4%. The district has two main population centres, the towns of Worksop in the west and Retford to the east. These two towns host the main police stations, with the divisional HQ located at Worksop where the BCU's senior

management team (SMT) is based. Although the coal industry has declined, the area's businesses have continued to develop and expand, and there are several estates dedicated to industrial and commercial enterprises. Businesses now include wholesale/retail distribution food/drink manufacturing, in addition to transport, electronics, engineering, production of clothing/textiles, and a wide range of products for industrial and domestic use. Unemployment (from the 2001 census) is shown at 4.0%, slightly above the national average.

8. Newark and Sherwood is the largest of the seven district councils in Nottinghamshire and is slightly larger than its more northern neighbour, covering some 65,402 hectares with a population of 106,600. 98.5% of the population, according to the 2001 census are white, with less than 1.5% from minority ethnic communities. The major population centre is Newark, and almost a third of the council's population live here. Outside the urban and semi urban areas of Newark, other smaller centres of population include the former mining communities of Ollerton and Boughton, and smaller, predominantly rural communities such as Southwell and Edwinstowe and approximately 90 villages and hamlets. The district's economy is characterised by a shift from manufacturing to services over the last few decades. According to the 2001 census unemployment stood at 3.1%, and is currently at 2.4%. Again, the area is split into two LACs, with the main LAC police stations at Newark and Ollerton (Sherwood LAC) with smaller stations on the Sherwood LAC at Southwell and Blidworth.
9. The BCU has a current establishment of 299 police officers; 58 members of police staff; 67 members of the Special Constabulary and 14 police community support officers.

## Circumstances of Inspection

10. Prior to inspection the BCU commander had instigated a performance improvement plan (PIP) which has been constructed by reviewing the BCU against the questions posed by the BCU inspection protocol "Going Local" and also took into account other internal audit findings. The plan is relatively new and, in the view of the inspection team, is the basis for progress. Further areas for inclusion in the PIP are identified by this inspection but generally the BCU has identified the main areas for development and as such the inspection team are able to validate the plan (see later text).

## Performance

### Crime and disorder reduction partnerships

11. In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the local authority, police, health, fire service supported by other key agencies and voluntary groups have joined together to form crime and reduction partnerships (CDRP). There are two such partnerships within the BCU; Bassetlaw CDRP and Newark and Sherwood Community Safety Partnership. The partnerships conducted their second audit to identify issues of concern for the local population and as a consequence have produced their second strategy to cover the years 2002/05. The key strands are as follows:

**Bassetlaw** – Has 11 objectives, 6 to tackle specific types of crime and 5 that are cross cutting that by effective targeting will impact on the 6 specific objectives.

***Specific objectives***

- *Burglary* – To reduce the number of burglary dwelling offences by March 2005.
- *Vehicle crime* – To reduce the number of thefts from vehicles by March 2005.
- *Violence against the person* – To reduce the number of violence against the person offences by March 2005.
- *Public disorder* – To reduce the number of incidents of public disorder by March 2005.
- *Racial incidents* – To increase the number of racial incidents reported to the police and other agencies by March 2005 and to prioritise these for appropriate action.
- *Domestic violence* – To increase the number of domestic violence incidents reported to police and other agencies by March 2005 and to prioritise these for appropriate action.

***Cross cutting objectives***

- *Drugs* – Reduce the proportion of people under 25 using illegal drugs; reduce the levels of repeat offending by drug abusers and increase the detection of drug dealers.
- *Young People* – Reduce the level of offences committed by young people; reduce levels of disorder and anti-social behaviour committed by young people and reduce delays in the youth justice system.
- *Fear of crime* – Reduce the fear of crime and increase the perception of public safety.
- *Area Targeting* – Targeting crime reduction interventions on wards that are shown to experience a disproportionate level of a specific type of crime.
- *Racial crime and disorder* – Ensure the interests of people living; working and visiting the rural areas of Bassetlaw are taken into account when targeting activity aimed at reducing crime and disorder and the fear that they engender.

**Newark and Sherwood** – Has 6 objectives that focus on the following areas:

- *High Crime Areas* – Includes reviewing and implementing protocols for information sharing; improving the information sources available to the partnership; developing a process to identify areas within wards that experience the highest levels of victimisation; engaging a multi-agency task group to tackle the causes of victimisation; communicating relevant information to individuals, organisations and service providers; implementing and monitoring measures to

address the causes of victimisation and evaluation of the measures with the neighbourhood and revise and develop new measures to tackle victimisation.

- *Burglary* – Includes the strengthening of protocols for information sharing; preventing the opportunity for burglary through environmental design; analysis of data to identify and pro-actively deal with ‘hot spots’; targeting of prolific offenders; supporting victims and the vulnerable through target hardening of their homes; reducing the opportunity of disposal of stolen goods from burglary and contributing to the process of dealing with the perpetrators of burglary, assisting in identifying root causes and communicating to statutory bodies and others information to reduce the number of persons re-offending.
  - *Vehicle related crime* – Includes the development of a district vehicle crime forum; reducing the incidence of vehicle crime outside people’s homes; reducing crimes related to commercial vehicles; reducing vehicle crimes in town centre car parks; reducing vehicle crime in tourist and recreation areas; tackling the distribution of stolen vehicles and identifiable property from vehicles and promote the value of security in car parks across the district.
  - *Young people* – Includes the reduction of the number of first time offenders aged 13; the reduction of repeat offences by children and young people aged 13 to 25 years and promoting a positive image of young people in the district.
  - *Violent crime* – Includes the development of a multi-agency task group to co-ordinate initiatives; identifying areas that experience the highest levels of victimisation; engaging the multi-agency task group to tackle the causes of victimisation; communicating information to individuals, organisations and service providers; and the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of measures to tackle the causes of victimisation.
  - *Other Community Safety Issues* – Includes the introduction of a joint training programme in risk assessment and accident prevention to enable care staff and other volunteers who visit homes to recommend action by relevant partner agencies; in conjunction with the above produce an advice pack on community safety issues for residents; pursuing measures to reduce death and serious injury caused by road traffic accidents; reducing the danger of deaths or injury from children playing on railway lines; highlighting and raising the dangers of water hazards; educating and raising awareness of safety in the home; reducing the level of arson; reducing hoax fire calls and encouraging 100% working smoke alarm ownership.
12. The two CDRPs are trialing a merger as one CDRP from 1 April 2005. This has the agreement of the Government Office of the East Midlands (GOEM) and discussions are ongoing at present to finalise arrangements. The one joint CDRP will cover 60% of the geographical area of the county of Nottinghamshire. A joint agency CDRP co-ordinating office at Bilsthorpe is planned and another key feature will be a meeting based on a tasking and co-ordination group style every six weeks. There will be an overarching strategic group and several tactical groups, which presently are crime management, offender management and community safety groups. The Drugs and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) will sit alongside the new CDRP structure and there will be close links.

13. The inspection team noted:
- One person has written the audits for the two current CDRPs and is writing the strategy for the new combined structure.
  - The vehicle and burglary groups of the current CDRPs have not met for over 10 months, which will be tackled by the new CDRP.
  - The Force met with the Police Authority and partner agencies in November to attempt to bring synergy to objectives and targets incorporating national, force and local requirements for Nottinghamshire. It was disappointing that only the fire service turned up.
14. People from partner agencies met by the inspection team were very positive regarding the BCU's approach to partnership working and there were positive comments regarding the SMT's genuine commitment with easy partnership access to all BCU staff. It is apparent that the right people are attending the right meetings and that BCU staff have a good awareness of CDRP and partnership roles. Issues raised to the inspection team were some frustrations regarding the lack of continuity of officers in post, the use of the BCU fund in the past and the problem on some occasions of timely notification of the need for an anti-social behavioural order (ASBO) application to be attached to a file of evidence. Overall, however, the good approach to ASBOs was praised and it is understood that a dedicated joint agency team is being developed.
15. There were many examples of successful partnership working seen during inspection. Some of these are detailed below:
- The Sherwood Project – The inspection team was impressed with its approach to targeting persistent offenders and the knock on effect of reducing offending. The project uses joint resources such as police; probation; prison service, NHS and DAAT that are co-located. Results are impressive. Mandatory drugs testing occurs with prisoners charged with trigger offences, which assists identifying persons to work with. All prisoners subjected to two years or more imprisonment for burglary dwelling; robbery and serious vehicle crime that are released on licence are subject to multi-agency work. Any breach of licence is robustly acted upon and presently of the 24 such prisoners that are on the scheme, 8 have been returned to prison. Of the 16 still out 6 are in full time employment. Recalls to prison have also been substantially speeded up, thus reducing criminality. The average return to prison after breach of licence prior to the scheme was 35 days; the average is now 1 day (there was an example of 4 hours). The project activity is co-ordinated by a monthly multi-agency meeting similar to the tasking and co-ordination process and there are good links from the project to the BCU tasking and co-ordination meeting with the detective sergeant from the project in regular attendance.
  - Manton Community Alliance – Formed to provide Government Office funded neighbourhood management to one of the most deprived communities (Manton) on the BCU. Its purpose is to be community driven and raise the quality of life locally by ensuring service providers (including the police) are locally accountable, co-ordinate service provision, raise standards of service,

provide clearly identified points of contact, maximise resources, influence Local Strategic Partnerships and sustain community partnerships.

- Operation ERSATZ – High visibility policing in Newark to tackle violent crime during December. Utilising police officers, specials and PCSOs to target specific areas and objectives to reduce offending during December – a month that traditionally experienced higher crime rates. Mobile, overt CCTV was used to complement the existing CCTV systems. Funding was obtained for this, and CCTV ‘loaned’ an operative as well as paying for a police officer.
- IM-PACT – An organisation formed jointly by the police and a broad spectrum of churches of many denominations in the Newark area, in order to provide care and support to people with life controlling drug or alcohol dependencies, through individual mentoring by trained mentors. The overarching aim is to restore people who are on the path to rehabilitation from alcohol or drugs, whether or not they happen to be offenders in the criminal justice system. They work in partnership with several agencies and organisations, voluntary and statutory, religious and secular.
- Tuxford Regeneration in Partnership Crime Reduction Forum – A partnership that has been nationally recognised as best practice by the Home Office. The project involves community involvement with surgeries, police articles in Tuxfordian publications, meetings with community leaders, community patrols, neighbourhood watch, fire service and housing authorities to reduce and prevent crime.
- Operation Equation – An operation aimed at combating juvenile alcohol possession, anti-social behaviour and intimidation by numbers of juveniles. It operated in Ollerton, Southwell and Blidworth and was highly successful resulting in a dramatic reduction of calls regarding juvenile nuisance. The operation gained local and national media coverage. Working with partners, it involved the local council ASBO co-ordinator, youth issues officer, specials, licensing officer and local authority licensing enforcement officer.

## Performance against operational targets

16. BCU performance against operational targets is detailed below in several tables, charts and commentary. BCU performance data is available for all BCUs throughout England and Wales. To allow useful and fair comparison of certain performance indicators, similar BCUs are grouped together into ‘most similar groups’ (known as MSBCU) based, in general, on similar socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Table 1, below, show crime reduction performance for April to December 2004 compared with the same period the previous year.

Table 1, Crime Reduction Performance

Crime Type	Number of offences	Offence per 1000 pop/h 'hold	BCU family average	Rank in BCU family	% Change
Total Crime	15,385	71.50	66.41	12 out of 15	<b>-15.25%</b>
Domestic Burglary	853	9.55	7.83	12 out of 15	<b>-35.67%</b>
Robbery	44	0.20	0.41	3 out of 15	<b>-29.03%</b>
Vehicle Crime	2355	10.94	7.88	13 out of 15	<b>-23.21%</b>
Violent Crime	2461	11.44	15.19	1 out of 15	<b>-3.26%</b>

- **Total Crime**

Year on year total crime has fallen by 15%. Trend analysis indicates that the fall in crime has been constant both in the short and long-term. This significant improvement is closing the gap between the BCU and the MSBCU average. Between April and December 2004 the BCU was ranked twelfth out of 15 in the MSBCU group. If the current trends continue, the BCU would improve its ranking.

- **Domestic Burglary**

Domestic burglary has fallen by over 35% year on year, although levels are still high in comparison with MSBCU averages. The reduction in domestic burglary has been consistent throughout the last 12 months and the BCU is improving at a faster rate than the MSBCU average.

- **Robbery**

Robbery levels have fallen by almost 30% over the same period the previous year and are much lower than the MSBCU average. The significant reductions made by the BCU have been made at a faster rate than the MSBCU average but the most recent trends indicate that performance is now levelling out. The BCU was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> for the period April to December 2004.

- **Vehicle Crime**

Vehicle crime has fallen by over 20% year on year, however, the BCU is still recording higher levels than most of its peers. Current trends indicate that this rate of improvement has been maintained. These are significant reductions.

- **Violent Crime**

Violent crime levels in the BCU are comparatively low. Over the past 12 months the levels of violent crime have fallen slightly but consistently, whilst levels of violent crime in the most similar BCUs has continued to rise. For the period April to December 2004, the BCU had the lowest level of violent crime in the MSBCU group, almost 4 violent crimes per 1000 population less than the MSBCU average.

17. There is little doubt that whilst crime levels are still relatively high in comparison with MSBCU averages, there has been significant reductions in crime since April 2004. The BCU is to be congratulated on these results. This good performance needs to be sustained. However, recent performance is of concern to the BCU commander as reductions are "slowing down". The new CDRP structure could be used to encourage some partners to take further positive action. For example, a large amount of vehicle crime takes place in hospital car parks and the health service as a



major partner in the CDRP, needs to be seen to be taking action before attempts are made to encourage other areas such as the private sector into crime reduction activity. The BCU was asked to comment on how the impressive reductions had been achieved and highlighted three key initiatives:

- Operation Encounter – A major drugs operation that led to the arrest, conviction and imprisonment of many local drug dealers. Their arrest and imprisonment led to a significant fall in acquisitive crime.
- An enquiry into heroin use carried out by a local MP (John Mann) – Whilst in itself not impacting did raise the profile of drug issues and has led to a significant increase in drugs workers and facilities for the treatment of drug users. As a consequence local doctors are now treating more addicts.
- The Sherwood Project – discussed earlier at paragraph 15.

18. Table 2, below, shows BCU crime investigation performance April to December 2004, compared with the same period the previous year.

*Table 2 – Crime Investigation Performance*

<i>Crime Type</i>	<i>Total Detect ions</i>	<i>Detection Rate (%)</i>	<i>BCU family Average</i>	<i>Rank in BCU family</i>	<i>% pt Change in detection rate</i>
Total Crime	3869	25.15%	29.69%	11 out of 15	<b>+1.24% pts</b>
Domestic Burglary	157	18.41%	19.16%	9 out of 15	<b>+1.89% pts</b>
Robbery	17	38.64%	29.37%	2 out of 15	<b>-21.04% pts</b>
Vehicle Crime	180	7.64%	12.79%	15 out of 15	<b>-0.02% pts</b>
Violent Crime	1441	58.55%	56.82%	9 out of 15	<b>-4.73% pts</b>

*Source – Home Office data*

- **Total Crime**  
Year on year the total crime detection rate has remained fairly stable but below the MSBCU average. Whilst there was a slight, year on year rise, the most recent trends show slight decline.
- **Domestic Burglary**  
The domestic burglary detection rate has remained stable year on year and is in line with the MSBCU average. There had been improvements in the proportion of burglaries detected but this is now levelling out.
- **Robbery**  
The robbery detection rate has deteriorated over the last 12 months, falling by over 20 points year on year. Despite this significant fall the robbery detection rate remains relatively high, ranking second in the MSBCU group. The deterioration of the robbery detection rate has been fairly consistent over the last 6 to 12 months but the most recent months have seen an improvement, which will need to be maintained if the BCU is to continue detecting higher levels of robbery than the MSBCU average. This detection rate does, however, relate to a relatively small number of offences and is therefore more sensitive to smaller changes in the number of offences or detections.

- **Vehicle Crime**

The detection rate for vehicle crime is of concern as it is significantly lower than the MSBCU average and, whilst not significantly decreasing year on year, the trend indicates a decline in performance. The BCU had the lowest detection rate for vehicle crime in the MSBCU group for the period April to December 2004.

- **Violent Crime**

Year on year, the violent crime detection rate has fallen by almost five points but remains in line with the MSBCU average. The trend of the violent crime detection rate remains relatively stable.

19. The BCU advocates that detections are difficult due to the amount of detectives currently absent working on serious crime incidents (discussed later). The BCU is unable to resource squads for pro-activity and the CID is running at 6 detective constables from an establishment of 15. There is little doubt that the absence of detectives has impacted negatively upon the detection rates, particularly in relation to the securing of 'offences taken into consideration' (TICs) from prisoners already charged with offences.
20. Table 3, below shows the BCUs performance in relation to stop/searches of persons for the last full year of data (2003/04), compared with the previous year 2002/03.

*Table 3 – PACE Stop/Searches*

	2002/03	2003/04	BCU family Average	% Change 02/03 to 03/04
Total ethnic PACE stop/searches	18	5		
PACE stop /searches of minority ethnic persons per 1000 minority ethnic population	5.78	1.6	17.84	<b>-72.3%</b>
Total Ethnic PACE Arrests	3	2		
% of PACE stop /search of minority ethnic persons leading to arrest	16.67%	40%	16.79%	<b>+23.3% pts</b>
Total white PACE stop/searches	357	253		
PACE stop searches of white persons per 1000 white population	1.69	1.2	10.06	<b>-28.99%</b>
Total White PACE arrests	89	45		
% of PACE stop /search of white persons leading to arrest	24.93%	17.79%	15.87%	<b>-7.14% pts</b>

*Source – Home Office data*

21. There is near parity between white and minority ethnic PACE stop/searches in the BCU but both levels are very low when compared with MSBCU averages. The proportion of stop searches leading to arrest is higher than MSBCU average in both cases. The number of stop searches for the BCU reduced dramatically over the period 2002/03 to 2003/04 and BCU officers admitted that there had been a loss of emphasis in this area of policing leading to a lack of pro-activity. However, the inspection team observed that there have been recent dramatic improvements due to a specific re-emphasis by the new command team and performance is improving. Operational officers accepted that performance had been poor and the inspection team found that the renewed emphasis is understood at the operational level, despite some views from reactive officers that they do not have the time to conduct searches.
22. Table 4, below shows BCU performance for 2003/04 compared to BCU and national averages. The results are generally consistent with the above figures and

commentary. Police staff sickness figures are of concern and are discussed later in this report. BCU figures concerning public disorder and road traffic collisions are not available for the period 2003/04.

*Table 4 – BCU Performance 2003/04*

<b>Best Value Performance Indicator Nottinghamshire Area B BCU</b>	<b>BCU performance 2003/04</b>	<b>BCU family average 2003/04</b>	<b>England and Wales average 2003/04</b>
<b>Complaints per 1000 officers</b>	214.75	217.61	192.24
<b>% of police strength from minority ethnic communities</b>	1.51 %	1.43 %	3.28 %
<b>Work days lost sick/police officer</b>	10.80	9.87	9.39
<b>Work days lost sick/police staff</b>	17.20	11.35	10.84
<b>Recorded crimes per 1000 population</b>	111.65	96.91	113.08
<b>Recorded crime % detected</b>	24.30 %	27.77 %	23.49 %
<b>Domestic burglaries per 1000 households</b>	19.24	13.51	18.20
<b>Domestic burglaries % detected</b>	19.08 %	19.82 %	15.01 %
<b>Violent crimes per 1000 population</b>	15.85	19.44	21.13
<b>Violent crimes % detected</b>	63.12 %	55.89 %	46.76 %
<b>Robberies per 1000 population</b>	0.35	0.66	1.93
<b>Robberies % detected</b>	56.00 %	25.32 %	18.37 %
<b>Vehicle crimes per 1000 population</b>	18.74	13.47	16.94
<b>Vehicle crimes % detected</b>	7.44 %	10.13 %	8.97 %
<b>Public disorder incidents per 1000 population</b>		47.85	49.88
<b>Traffic collisions death/serious injury per 1000 population</b>		0.50	0.46
<b>Racially aggravated crimes % detected</b>	41.38 %	40.02 %	33.50 %

*Origin – HMIC matrix of performance 2003/04*

## Accountability mechanisms and performance management

23. Chief officers of the Force hold the BCU commander accountable by a COMSTAT (robust review of performance using computer-generated statistics) style performance meeting. There is little examination of performance for departments other than BCUs and the focus may not be strategic enough in the BCU commander's view (although HMIC understands that there have been some improvements recently since inspection). These are force level issues. The Police Authority has aligned members to each of the BCUs and it is apparent that there are regular meetings with the BCU commander where performance, finance, personnel issues and the like are discussed.
24. Accountability within the BCU appears good with an SMT meeting every Monday, which includes accountability for actions via a standard agenda and minutes are produced. There are two weekly performance meetings before the BCU's tasking and co-ordination meeting with inspectors, which the BCU commander attends. The meetings are described as "not particularly hostile but useful delivering greater accountability". A single source of monthly performance information provided by headquarters is utilised, and this single source of data means that there is little ambiguity regarding performance. Inspectors are expected to hold their sergeants to account and sergeants likewise their constables via regular meetings, which have to be evidenced. The SMT dictate the style of meetings and for example, each LAC has a weekly "focus" meeting that can include representatives from partner agencies. The Force has invested in 'Team and Officer Management Information' (TOMI data), which is now used to examine individual performance against differential targets set for individual officers and performance will be reviewed monthly. Individual targets have been reasonably well accepted within the BCU which is probably due to good communication, although there have been some minor concerns about differentiated targets for officers of different LACs.
25. In summary, the inspection team found that there were adequate mechanisms to provide accountability and that generally, officers of the BCU were in favour of the performance scrutiny. Some of these accountability aspects are new and not yet producing performance outcomes for the BCU according to the BCU commander.

## Reassurance and visibility

26. The inspection team found a good external communication structure for the BCU including the usual public meetings involving police authority, parish council attendance, surgery style events and so on. Questionnaires are also playing a big part for the Force and BCU. CDRPs are also testing audit results by placing stands in high profile locations such as supermarkets to canvass public views. The BCU is seeking a shop front in the town centre of Worksop, as the police station is not as visible and accessible as the SMT would have wished being slightly away from the town centre.
27. As stated the BCU is divided into four LACs, each headed by an inspector and supported by a station sergeant and teams of dedicated officers. Each LAC inspector has a deputy that enables a more consistent approach to community policing by acting in their absence. The BCU has a media officer working on the BCU three days a week and at headquarters a further two days. The commander recognises the potential

for more marketing of the good work of the BCU. When appropriate CDRP resources are utilised for joint press releases.

28. The inspection team found inconsistency in the way that the BCU uses its beat managers (officers aligned to specific beats). In some LACs they are aligned to response officer shifts, in others they are not. In some there is a high rate of abstraction and in others there is not. There are therefore frustrations with officers and a difference in role has developed. The BCU has recognised this fact and is in the process of 'red circling' several beat managers to provide some continuity at some LACs where the problem is acute such as Sherwood.
29. The BCU currently has 14 PCSOs who are aligned to LACs. They are seen in a very positive light by BCU staff, the public and partners. PCSOs interviewed consider that there is some lack of understanding of their role and as a consequence they felt that they were under utilised, particularly by the control room that rarely tasks via the radio and often deploys uniformed officers instead. The inspection team understands that there are plans to hold regular PCSO meetings at BCU level which will help deal with these issues. The BCU commander has written to all parish councils inviting them to fund further PCSOs together with other areas such as the National Trust and at the time of inspection was having some success.
30. The BCU has a large number of neighbourhood watch schemes and also has a permanently staffed Mobile Rural Contact Point (liveried bus) that acts as a mobile police station. It is used extensively and its deployment is regularly financially evaluated. The service is a partnership project and had in excess of 2,000 visitors last year. It provides rural communities in the two districts with access to advice and information on council and police services and it covers 80 villages on a four week rota.

### Intelligence-led policing

31. The National Intelligence Model (NIM) appears to be widely utilised across the BCU. All meetings of the structure such as the daily tasking and two weekly tasking and co-ordination meeting are in place and appear to be driving BCU activity and outcomes in line with the BCU control strategy. The BCU regularly conducts result analysis of operations and is able to evaluate future similar operations as a result. Documents examined during inspection such as the tactical assessment appear professionally produced and covered the requisite areas.
32. A review (part of the PIP) is ongoing into how the BCU deals with intelligence. The inspection team's view is that there are some clear positive areas:
  - Roles/Posts in accordance with NIM appear to be in place.
  - The Superintendent chairs the tasking and co-ordination meeting and there appears to be appropriate attendance. The process includes a pre-brief the day before involving the detective inspector (intelligence) and senior analyst.

- There is a specific detective inspector (DI) post for intelligence and therefore separate DI posts now lead the intelligence unit and the dedicated source unit (DSU) – officers that handle informants.
33. However, the inspection team found some areas for consideration of development that should be considered within the PIP. These are:
- A better-structured staff briefing system, which is needed to speed up the process and eliminate extraneous conversation by teams whilst the sergeant interrogates the computer system looking for relevant issues. There is no apparent training for sergeants on briefing and therefore some inconsistency, with some briefings being described as “downright poor”. The inspection team observed a briefing that evidenced some of these issues. The briefing took 25 minutes and there was an obvious lack of technology such as smart boards. It is also apparent that if no sergeants are available then often a briefing does not occur. The briefing system known as ‘Merlin’ lacks credibility with BCU staff, who described it as “having lost its way” and therefore some staff do not use it.
  - Of the intelligence that is submitted (1100 reports per month), 50% is actionable and 50% remains with the intelligence unit due to lack of a pro-active capacity. This situation has resulted in a pragmatic attitude by the BCU intelligence unit and packages are not produced unless they can be actioned.
  - There are some clear areas where intelligence is not forthcoming – custody staff and SOCO for example.
  - There is currently no system for access to analytical services, and as a consequence officers are able to gain analytical services without an overview being taken regarding workload or type of work accepted. This is not a problem at the moment, but if the analyst becomes overburdened it may be an issue. Access to the SOCO database would further assist analytical work.
  - BCU staff believe that the BCU tasking and co-ordination meeting is more about performance review than proactivity. Intelligence analysis is provided at the meeting but very little tasking is carried out unless it is a level 2 issue (issues or persons that impact across BCU or force boundaries), with managers being told to share resources outside the meeting for LAC problems. Until recently, the BCU had a proactive team which was disbanded because of abstraction levels to major crime and some of its staff formed LAC proactive units. BCU staff support the re-creation of a BCU proactive capability if possible, but the LAC inspectors would not want to lose their proactive teams.
  - The daily tasking meeting or “health check” as it’s known within the BCU needs to be improved with an ability to involve LAC inspectors without physically abstracting them to Worksop every morning. The inspection team has seen another BCU that was using the radio system known as “Airwave” to facilitate this meeting and this is an issue that the BCU may wish to consider when it takes Airwave in the near future. The BCU may also wish to consider the use of video conferencing.

- The BCU Superintendent attends force level 2 tasking and describes the Force's capability to support the investigation of level 2 crimes as poor due to abstractions for major incidents. There are currently (at the time of inspection) 26 incident rooms operating across the Force, investigating serious incidents of crime. An example of the lack of the support available was a recent request for Force level support to assist investigation into a car ringing team, which was declined. Force level resources that are available such as the surveillance unit get "pulled from pillar to post" and in practice the roads policing unit (RPU) can only provide BCU support for fatal accidents.

## Crime Investigation and recording practices

34. The CID is headed by a detective chief inspector who has a detective inspector in the north and detective inspector for the south of the BCU. As discussed, the reactive detective strength for the BCU has been greatly reduced because of loss of detectives to work on serious crime incidents across the Force. The BCU has an establishment of 15 detective constables (DCs) of which 9 are currently on major enquiries. Of those six left on the BCU, two are on the dedicated source-handling unit, one is based at Rampton hospital and three are left operational. Recognising the impact that major incidents are having on BCU detective strength, the Force has recently set a 40% limit, but unfortunately the BCU is already well above that figure. The inspection team found that there is only one detective left in the north of the BCU who is due to be promoted in April 2005, leaving no substantive detective constable. The BCU permanently posts a DC to Rampton hospital as liaison officer, and although the role is considered necessary and the officer working well, is perceived as another drain on the already reduced CID strength. The inspection team would ask the BCU commander if this is best use of the limited resources and is there is an opportunity for civilianisation of this post?
35. Due to the loss of experienced detectives, trainee investigators have been allocated work, which they would not have had normally. There was evidence that this situation is leading to some errors being made in investigations, to the point that detective sergeants are concerned. Detective tutors are missing for trainee investigators, again due to major crime enquiries. The inspection team met a skilled detective currently deployed on a major enquiry that has not interviewed or arrested anyone for five and a half months. The inspection team is of a view that his skills are not needed for the role that he is asked to fulfil. In light of the above and other examples, the BCU commander is urged to ensure that all detective abstractions from the BCU to major crime enquiries are necessary and that the skills of such officers are properly utilised.
36. The BCU struggles to secure use of the Force level Automatic Number Plate Recognition team (ANPR) because of its commitments to Nottingham city. As a consequence the BCU has looked to develop several ANPR initiatives within the BCU, including hand held ANPR systems and the inclusion of permanent ANPR sites on new developments such as found on the A1 trunk road.
37. The inspection team was impressed with the BCU's crime management unit (CMU). BCU staff are satisfied that processes are now in place to "capture" undetected crimes that have the potential for detection (such as a detection anticipation marker attached

to crimes likely to be detected and the central collation of detection records from the custody suite) and that staffing levels in the unit are appropriate. It is clear that other BCUs in force have followed some of the BCU's developments and processes in this arena.

38. The inspection team was told of some problems raised by operational staff about the Crown Prosecution Service role in the joint charging scheme and the increase in work as a result (national scheme where CPS make decisions to charge suspects or not rather than police). BCU staff were concerned that all too often officers accepted CPS advice without discussion or arguing their point. The inspection team was not convinced that the BCU was able to challenge CPS decisions or had an overview of those challenged. The BCU commander is urged to review this issue with perhaps the creation of a BCU champion to hold an overview and be the single point of contact in such disputed issues with the CPS.

### Use of forensic, DNA and scientific techniques

39. A forensic audit was introduced by HMIC as part of a force or BCU inspection from January 2002 to ensure a standard approach to the evaluation of scientific support services, the effective use of resources and to identify good practice. The methodology for the inspection of Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood BCU was to examine the management and recording of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) samples, fingerprints, and the procedure for the monitoring and dealing with crime scene identifications, as well as to identify any links to the intelligence system and crime analysis.
40. The inspection team examined the custody process to ensure that every opportunity to take DNA samples from prisoners is being taken. The system to identify the need to take a sample or not was found to be fairly robust. DNA is taken from every person arrested for a recordable offence (if not previously taken). Once arrested the person's details are checked both on the police national computer and the internal force SOCO database to ascertain if a sample is required or not. This system is impressive and leaves little room for error.
41. An audit of 100 custody records of persons arrested in October 2004 was undertaken to ascertain if the BCU was taking every opportunity to take DNA. Only 1 from the 100 researched showed an error. The BCU is to be congratulated on this result.
42. The inspection team briefly examined the storage arrangements and continuity of DNA samples. The inspection team was not convinced that the BCU could evidence the continuity of DNA samples taken to headquarters and also there was a lack of secure storage for them in an area used by many staff and prisoners. The inspection team understands that these issues have been rectified soon after inspection.
43. The inspection team examined the management of DNA and fingerprint identifications. Headquarters SOCO forwards positive identifications of suspects to the BCU. 'Merlin' impressively produces basic electronic packages that are then developed by intelligence staff within the BCU. Basic analytical work is completed such as associations of the suspect identified and possible linked offences to that identified. Arrest packages are then forwarded to LAC inspectors who predominantly



allocate them to CID officers or the LAC target team. Arrests are prioritised according to the offence involved and there was evidence that the BCU robustly monitors the package by a spreadsheet maintained by the local intelligence officer and via the twice weekly tasking and co-ordination meeting. In summary, the inspection team found the system comprehensive and efficient. There were some frustrations expressed by BCU intelligence staff regarding the amount of time that it takes for arresting officers to feed them back the results and this was impacting on BCU performance figures maintained by headquarters. This is something that the BCU commander may wish to resolve.

44. The BCU has a senior scenes of crimes officer (SOCO), four SOCO officers and one part time assistant. They are headquarters staff but based on the BCU. SOCO officers interviewed felt that there are not enough staff to match demand at present, and suggested that they needed a further volume crime examiner. The inspection team examined scene of crime performance data for 2004/05 (up to the date of inspection). It showed that the BCU is performing well as regards scene attendance at burglary and evidence recovery. The targets of attending 15% of all burglaries within 3 hrs; 85 % within 24 hours and to attend 100% of burglaries are all being achieved. However BCU SOCO performance in relation to vehicles taken without the owner's consent (TWOC) is not good in comparison with other Force BCUs. The BCU currently examines the fewest number of TWOCd vehicles, has the lowest percentage of fingerprint and DNA recovery from such vehicles and has the lowest identification of suspect rate. The BCU is aware that this is an area of development. The inspection team is aware that the issue of many stolen vehicles from the BCU being abandoned out of force is impacting upon performance, but it was also clear that because of other commitments (to more "serious crime"), a low priority is being given to vehicle crime by SOCO.
45. The Force appears to have an extensive array of performance data available to measure SOCO performance. This information is available down to individual level; however the inspection team was not convinced that BCU SOCOs knew what their individual performance was on a regular basis. Despite the performance data there was only a formal review of performance with the individual once a year (at the time of appraisal). The Force is trying to develop a more robust performance culture and the BCU commander is urged to ensure that there is a regular review of individual performance data directly with officers.
46. SOCOs are deployed from a 'rolling' incident list maintained by the control room. There is little deployment in real time over the radio, although this is apparently improving. There was evidence of staff dealing with several burglaries in an area, travelling back to base and then having to return to the area to deal with another burglary that had been reported subsequently. Lap top computers for the staff, able to log on to command and control are impressive and may resolve some of the allocation issues discussed above.
47. SOCO staff spoken to feel that working from the BCU rather than the centre is producing better relationships and results. They spoke highly of their accommodation and kit. SOCOs believe that crime scene preservation by officers is improving with any issues dealt with by E-mail in the first instance and via supervisors if there is repetition. Advice to victims of crime from the crime desk is perceived as good, but further development training may be needed for the call handlers. The new DCI has

recognised a need to improve forensic performance (particularly in relation to vehicle crime) and may wish to take account of the issues identified above.

## Managing demand

48. A duty inspector is aligned to each of the shifts and will pass on any evidence of strength and weaknesses of staff to the line managers (LAC inspectors). Objectives for the duty officer are set in the PDR (appraisal) and the post has a policy document setting out the role requirements, which include PACE duties, critical incident management, monitoring unresourced incidents and attendance at the daily “health check” (tasking meeting). The duty inspector will collate duty inspector de-brief forms for that meeting. Newly promoted inspectors receive training, which assists with critical incident handling.
49. The inspection team found evidence of good delegation of power to LAC inspectors to shape their areas to best effect. For example some are considering extending their proactive capability and shift patterns of beat officers are being varied. Abstraction of LAC inspectors for PACE duties (legal requirement to review prisoners in custody and authorise certain police activities, such as house searches) does not appear to be problematic. However, the inspection team was not convinced that the hours that they worked were being monitored to ensure compliance with working time directives. This is an issue that the BCU commander is urged to consider.
50. The SMT perceive that the majority of reactive officers are working hard and it is noted that the BCU has the lowest level of non-resourced incidents (approximately 40 on average) in the force. However, the inspection team was not convinced that the BCU had an overall strategy to manage demand. For example staff of the BCU were unsure about a single crewing policy. Most thought it was single crewing during daylight, double crewing at night. All resources are on 2x2x2 (2 early; 2 late; 2 night), shift including some beat officers, which may not best match the demand profile of the BCU, however, this is a pattern dictated by the Force and officers of the BCU who work it are in favour of it.
51. There is a distinct lack of proactive capability within the BCU. The main provision is four target teams that comprise a sergeant plus four constables (one of the teams is a sergeant and two constables). Each team is line managed by the LAC inspectors and tasked from the weekly focus meetings. They together with CID also act as the focal point for the allocation of fingerprint and DNA identification packages. They are tasked in a variety of ways and when considered appropriate often perform duties in uniform. The target team themselves believe that generally BCU staff do not understand their role and the BCU commander may wish to consider ways in which they could market themselves more internally.
52. There were frustrations regarding the role of the control room. Officers believe that they are often deployed unnecessarily to incidents that could have been resolved on the telephone. There were also concerns that if an incident is not resourced within 10 hours it is removed from an allocation queue monitored by the Force control room. This means that local supervisors have the responsibility to resource it when they felt appropriate (termed as going from a blue to a green response). Front line officers believe that this system often means that victims who later contact police with an

identical problem are often given a quicker service than those who have been waiting more than the 10 hours.

53. The inspection team met a very positive and enthusiastic group of special constabulary officers. The BCU currently has 67 special constables with a target to increase by 10% this year. They were restructured last year and aligned to LACs. They have good initial and continuing development training. They consider their integration as excellent and the chief inspector (operations) acts as the overall co-ordinator and the commandant and supervisors attend the relevant management meetings. They provide as much notice as possible of their duties and are generally met with appropriate tasking when they come on duty, including resource provision for operations and events. They are concerned that Airwave radios may not be personal issue to them, but appreciate it is a force issue. The inspection team found that BCU staff value the role of the specials and this is partly evidenced in that they are personally issued stab proof vests (often BCUs issue a 'pool' of such vests). There were some examples of specials working closely with regulars but this was not consistent and whilst their use was often appropriate, the inspection team believes that more use can be made of them. They are a resource, which must be utilised to the best capability of the BCU to help alleviate pressures due to the major crime abstractions. The BCU commander may wish to consider further ways in which the Special Constabulary may reduce demands on front line officers.
54. Many officers during inspection mentioned the lack of support available from force level resources. In particular, there were frustrations regarding the lack of availability of the armed response vehicles (force level vehicles that carry armed officers) who they feel do not deal with incidents other than serious injury accidents even if not committed. Staff quoted a recent example where all BCU resources were busy and a request for support was refused on the grounds that officers were dealing with paperwork.
55. Custody across the Force is staffed by headquarters criminal justice (prisoner handling) staff and issues regarding cover for those officers are dealt with by the headquarters criminal justice department who use their own resources. However on a regular basis within Newark custody suite BCU sergeants often find that they are required to cover abstractions and as a consequence raised this issue to the inspection team. The situation may well be the 'lesser of two evils' in that their presence is required to keep the cell block open and therefore negate BCU prisoners being transported some miles away but the BCU commander may wish to examine this issue which is apparently unique in the Force.

## **Leadership**

### **BCU Management team**

56. The BCU commander (chief superintendent) has 27 years police service and joined Nottinghamshire police 5 years ago, transferring from Derbyshire Constabulary. He was appointed the BCU commander of Nottingham City in April 2002, and early in 2004 moved to South Nottinghamshire BCU before taking up his current post in 2005. He has been a uniformed operational officer for most of his service, having been a

LAC inspector and chief inspector operations. He also spent 2 years working within Derbyshire's policy unit. He is currently a member of the National Executive Committee of the Superintendents Association.

57. The superintendent operations has 25 years police service. He has held a variety of roles including attachments to vice and drugs squads; sergeant at Nottingham city; corporate development; custody and operational support. In 1996 he was promoted to inspector and transferred to Arnold division, moving in 1997 to the traffic department. In 2003 he was promoted to chief inspector as head of the traffic department and after a period of temporary superintendent at corporate development at headquarters was promoted into his current role at B division.
58. The chief inspector operations joined Nottinghamshire Police in 1990 on an accelerated promotion scheme. He was promoted to sergeant in 1994 and moved to Nottingham city. After a year he had postings to custody; drugs squad and corporate development. He also worked on the policing operation during Euro '96. He was promoted to inspector in 1996 spending a year as patrol inspector and then working in the force complaints department. In 1998 he became staff officer to the Chief Constable. In 2000 he was promoted to chief inspector in community safety; in 2001 he moved to Nottingham city and in May 2003 took up his present role within the BCU.
59. The crime manager (detective chief inspector) joined Nottinghamshire Police in 1981 and after a posting to the Meadows area of Nottingham City joined the CID in 1987. In 1990 he moved to Worksop and was promoted to sergeant, staying until his return to CID in 1993. He was promoted to inspector in 1995 and returned to B division in 1996. In 1999 he became a detective inspector before being promoted early in 2005 to detective chief inspector.
60. The Human Resource (HR) manager is a member of police staff. She has an MSc in human resource management and is a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD. She joined Nottinghamshire police in 2002 as HR manager, having worked for Lincolnshire police in a similar role. Prior to this she worked within human resources at a manufacturing company.
61. The business manager is also a member of police staff and joined Nottinghamshire Police in 2001. He has been in post since 2002 following a Force restructure. He is a qualified management accountant having spent most of his career in the railway industry.
62. The inspection team encountered a warm and family like atmosphere on the BCU, and it is clear that the majority of staff interviewed enjoy working and feel valued in the current climate. People get promoted and want to remain on the BCU or come back quickly if promoted off the BCU. Staff believe that morale is good and police staff spoke of good relations with regular colleagues and of being integrated into BCU policing. Whilst BCU staff believed that their own morale was high they also believed that, as a whole, Force morale was low.
63. Staff associations perceive the current SMT as "fantastic" and "really accessible". There are regular meetings with the commander and they are invited to virtually all BCU meetings such as every third SMT meeting, all management meetings and the

new training strategy meeting. Representatives have no issues with time off to carry out their duties. They perceive full consultation on all issues and if not at a meeting, will receive an E-mail asking for their views. They may be asked to leave a meeting if there is an issue to discuss which is not appropriate for representatives, but will be warned that is likely to happen at the start of the meeting. Federation representatives agree with the commander's view that many more complaints can be dealt with on BCU rather than referral to headquarters. There was praise for quick action taken on health and safety issues on the BCU. The main issues raised by the Federation relate to force issues and were - a possible force desire to change shift patterns, the belief of a general 'blame culture' and inequity of special priority payments (monetary bonus for officers performing certain roles). There was also some concern locally about the use of individual targets. Unison raised a perception of lack of staff but praised the current training improvements such as NVQ training for enquiry clerks.

64. The inspection team was impressed that the BCU commander and HR manager had set themselves a PDR objective to obtain Charter Mark status for the BCU.
65. The BCU appears to have an appropriate meeting structure with monthly meetings chaired by the commander such as the divisional management team, health and safety committee and a new forum to resolve issues for minority groups ( for example - Lesbian; Gay and Transsexual; Black Police Association and disabled group) called the diversity forum. Communication up and down the BCU is apparently good with widespread knowledge of meetings and cascading of information. Both the business manager and HR manager have dotted line accountability to headquarters but are line managed by the BCU commander. Both see this positively and are not often overburdened by being tasked regarding the development of force level issues. Both feel they are full and valued members of the SMT and can contribute in areas that are not within their immediate sphere of expertise. The HR manager regularly provides performance information on HR issues such as sickness and abstraction levels via a monthly performance pack that is circulated. She uses this to update SMT and divisional management team meetings when appropriate.
66. It was clear to the inspection team that the SMT is making major efforts on visibility, however, members do not follow any form of plan and examples were given of SMT members arriving at some stations and not meeting anyone. BCU staff suggested that SMT visibility could improve and some staff were not able to name police staff SMT members. There were positive comments made of the recent visibility of the new superintendent. SMT visibility is an area that the BCU commander may wish to examine and provide some clarity and structure to ensure current efforts are maximised.
67. Although there are monthly meetings between the HR manager and chief inspector (operations) to discuss staffing levels, probationer deployments and other 'people' issues, there was a perception that there was no formal structure for managers to discuss HR/people issues with the SMT (although there are opportunities to do so at the monthly management meeting). There was evidence of people being abstracted from LACs with no prior consultation, leaving the LAC inspectors to manage the problem. This was evident on the occasions when there was a requirement for officers to be abstracted at short notice to support major investigations. It was clear that middle managers, particularly LAC inspectors would like more say in how their

people are managed. There was support for a more inclusive HR meeting and this is an issue the BCU commander may wish to consider.

68. The BCU budget is fully devolved but in practice there is not a great deal of flexibility. Examples are that police officer numbers have to be maintained at a certain level and the Force is trying to claw back finance for next year. Despite extensive devolvement of budget to the BCU, there is little, except overtime, devolved to LACs and this was described as work in progress. There was some evidence of income generation, such as private special duty at Newark Antiques Fair. There was some evidence of sponsorship in the form of a sponsored vehicle, however, the inspection team is of the opinion that sponsorship is an area that could be further developed and this is a further area that the BCU commander may wish to consider.

### Self-review and learning

69. The BCU has its own training development co-ordinator directed by the HR manager and with links to headquarters training to ensure co-ordination of training delivery. There is one constable trainer for the BCU. Training needs are dealt with at headquarters or on the BCU dependent on the issue with some force/national training done during BCU training days (included as part of the current shift pattern) if necessary. The BCU also has a training development panel, made up of amongst others: the audit inspector (who provides feedback on issues found through the audit process which can be rectified through training development); the CMU sergeants and inspector (who deliver training as they themselves are trained trainers) and Federation and Unison. The co-ordinator has a skills matrix for staff and is considering its extension to include non-police trained skills. Training is prioritised by means of a monthly meeting of the training panel. PCSOs, special constables and community volunteers have facilities for training which appear appropriate. Training is evaluated by, in the main, questionnaires to students and views of the audit inspector and CMU sergeants. Specialists within the BCU, such as the CMU sergeants are used to deliver training and this may be on a one to one basis if necessary. Attendance at training is monitored by the co-ordinator with relevant details provided to the chief inspector (operations) and this has produced good attendance rates.
70. BCU training has a separate budget, which is overseen by the co-ordinator and managed by the business manager. The BCU uses a local Territorial Army centre to deliver training that has ideal facilities, is close to the BCU and is very cost effective. Some basic E learning is available from HQ on the Intranet, which is continually developing and may not be very popular. However all training information for the BCU is on the Intranet and this appears to be used. The BCU has used actual incidents such as a firearms incident on the BCU as the basis for training and this appears dynamic and impressive.
71. In summary, the facilities, level and quality of training delivered by the BCU appears good and is seen positively by all staff interviewed.
72. The BCU has an audit team with a remit to improve the standard of service of the division. Some of the audit work is centrally driven and may not be fully meshed with BCU objectives at that particular time. Also some of the work may be more of a tactical nature than in other BCUs the inspection team has visited and may have been

handled in other units. An example may be the review of crime files, currently undertaken by the audit team, which may be appropriate for a CMU. The team has a direct link to the superintendent (operations) who also has the performance review remit. It is possible, in the view of the inspection team that areas for improvement could be taken forward by the audit team on behalf of the SMT. The team would appear to be the ideal vehicle to now project manage the PIP, reporting to the SMT, and using the knowledge and links of the team to assist lead officers.

73. The inspection team found an apparent good recognition system on the BCU, which follows the force scheme. A scoring system is included to provide equity of awards, but it is seen as cumbersome by BCU staff. Areas for consideration could be a BCU based awards ceremony or commendations being given during SMT meetings.
74. The superintendent (operations) oversees poor performance issues with the expectation that an officer is given advice by his/her sergeant, which is reported to the inspector. An action plan is put in place with advice from HR and beyond that are unsatisfactory performance provisions.

#### HR and diversity issues

75. The inspection team was impressed that all new members of staff are provided with an induction pack. These packs contain details of contacts and show the structure for partnership working.
76. There is an effective use of reg. 13 process (process for identifying and supporting probationary constables who need further development). Eight such officers have been subject to the process in the last 3 years, of which two were developed, three chose to resign recognising through the process that the police service was not the career path they would like to take and three had their services dispensed with.
77. There is a high completion rate currently for PDRs (individual work appraisals for staff) (currently 95% against a force target of 90%). The HR manager monitors compliance and quality by use of a spreadsheet and there was evidence of the SMT 'naming and shaming' those officers who had not completed them on time. The BCU commander has produced a front sheet for each PDR, which explains the importance of the process to each individual. The HR manager has produced a further document ("Enabling effective performance") that gives advice on completion and target/objective setting. Presently all PDRs are quality assessed by the HR department, they are able to complete this as PDRs are completed on the anniversary of starting work as opposed to all staff having them completed at once during a set time frame of the year. The inspection team carried out a 'dip check' of some PDRs and found them generally of good standard and with 'SMART' and relevant objectives with clear linkage to the policing plan.
78. There are apparent good family friendly policies within BCU. There are 16 part-time officers and some staff working part time. The SMT were seen positively and approachable regarding their support of requests for consideration.

## Equipment

79. The Force has developed a transport policy that outsources the provision of vehicles to a private company and consequently pays a daily availability rate and mileage costs. BCU staff spoke positively regarding the impact of this arrangement and believed that as a consequence they had a better quality and a more 'fit for purpose' fleet.
80. The BCU estate is fairly old but described by BCU staff as adequate and in a good state of repair. A new station at Newark is planned in the near future.

## Attendance management and sickness statistics

*Table 5 – BCU sickness data*

<i>Staff Type</i>	<i>Days lost per officer 02/03</i>	<i>Days lost per officer 03/04</i>	<i>MSBCU average 03/04</i>	<i>Rank in MSBCU family 03/04</i>	<i>% Change of days lost per officer 02/03 to 03/04</i>
Police Officers	11.44	10.80	9.87	8 out of 14	<b>-5.59%</b>
Police Staff	11.89	17.20	11.35	14 out of 14	<b>+44.62%</b>

*Source – Home Office data*

81. Table 5, above, shows levels of sickness for the BCU for the last full year (2003/04) compared against the previous year and MSBCU averages. Police officer sickness levels are above the MSBCU average, but have reduced from the previous year by over 5%. Police staff sickness levels have risen, year on year, by almost 45% and are high when compared with peer BCUs, highest in the MSBCU group. Last year the BCU was bottom of its MSBCU at 17 days and performance will be similar this year. The BCU has a local target of 12 days sickness per staff member per year, equating to 3 per quarter. Figures provided by the BCU indicate some improvement but the yearly target will not be met:

1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2004/2005	6.0 average days sickness per police staff member
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2004/2005	5.3 average days sickness per police staff member
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2004/2005	4.6 average days sickness per police staff member

82. The HR manager stated that the high police staff sickness levels is due to a small number of members of staff having long-term sickness issues that were unavoidable. It is clear to the inspection team that the figures are distorted due to the fact that the BCU has relatively few members of police staff. However, police staff sickness is an area of concern and the BCU commander is urged to continue to review the current position and satisfy himself that all is being done to assist these individuals back to work. The BCU wrote the guidance on return to work interviews (a recognised tool in the management of attendance). This has now been recognised as 'best practice' and incorporated into force policy). The main forum for managing attendance is the SMT meeting. Sickness data is provided daily, and there are regular meetings with the force occupational health department to discuss individual cases. This case conference process was again developed on the BCU, recognised as good practice and is currently being 'rolled out' into all other areas. The inspection team welcomed the fact that in addition to home visits from managers to staff on long-term sickness, the HR team also conducts such visits to discuss welfare.



83. The inspection team found that BCU staff that are working in the areas that are directly affected by the loss of officers working on force level major enquiries, for example detective sergeants and constables, appear to be working long hours. It may be appropriate to ensure that monitoring mechanisms are in place. In addition their welfare in terms of stress levels needs to be carefully considered, as some pressure has been evident and mentioned to the inspection team.

## Complaints

*Table 6 – BCU complaint data*

	2002/03	2003/04	MSBCU Average 03/04	Rank in BCU Family 03/04	% Change from 02/03 to 03/04
Total Complaints	94	68			<b>-27.7%</b>
Complaints Per 1000 Officer	N/A	214.75	217.61	7 out of 11	<b>N/A</b>
Complaints Substantiated	8	0			
% Complaints Substantiated	8.51%	0%	4.24%	1 out of 14	<b>-8.51% pts</b>

*Source – Home Office data*

84. There has been a 28% fall in the number of complaints recorded in the BCU and the number of complaints per 1000 officer is in line with MSBCU averages. In 2003/04, 0% of complaints were substantiated, lower than the MSBCU average and a fall of 8.51% points from the previous year.
85. The BCU commander examines all complaints and he advocates that more complaints could be dealt with locally and there was evidence that he is appropriately returning more reports to managers for early resolution rather than referral to the force complaints department.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The Inspection team would thank the command team for the warm welcome and provision of facilities to carry out the inspection. All staff and members of other agencies met by the inspection team reacted very positively to the process and are thanked for their co-operation. The inspection team would also like to make particular mention of the liaison officer assigned by the BCU who did an excellent job of drawing together the necessary documentation, helping prepare the programme and was very flexible and adaptable for the inspection visit. It is of note that each interview session took place on time and with the relevant people.

The division is co-terminus with the areas of Bassetlaw District and Newark and Sherwood District Councils, which overall is some 129,000 hectares and represents almost 60% of the total area of Nottinghamshire. With a total population of over 210,000 people, the division also serves some 20% of the total population of the county. Staff of the BCU have, in general, a strong affinity with the area and are proud of how the BCU's performance compares with that of the rest of the Force.

In that vein, the BCU has recorded some significant reductions in crime recently, which in the view of the BCU is associated with the drugs operations that have had a knock-on effect with acquisitive crime. Domestic burglary has fallen by over 35% and vehicle crime by over 20% year on year. Overall, total crime has fallen by 15% and this improvement is closing the gap between the BCU and the MSBCU average. These are significant reductions and the BCU is to be congratulated, however, the BCU is still recording higher levels than its peers and was ranked 13<sup>th</sup> out of 15 for performance between April and December 2004.

Year on year the total crime detection rate has remained fairly stable and below the MSBCU average. For the period April to December, the BCU detected a quarter of all recorded crimes, but almost 5% fewer crimes than the MSBCU average and was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of 15. The detection rate for vehicle crime is of concern and trends of current performance indicate a decline in performance. The BCU would advocate that the detection rate performance is difficult to improve given the current force level commitments to investigate serious crime of key investigators who for example, are not in place to support any policy of seeking TICs.

To enhance the level of performance of the BCU, the commander has instigated a performance improvement plan (PIP) which has been constructed by reviewing the BCU against the questions posed by "Going Local". There are some clear indicators that staff enjoy working on this BCU and for this particular command team. These factors indicate a potential positive response from them in achieving against the performance improvement plan. The plan is relatively new and the inspection team would concur that it is the basis for progress, but in the view of the inspection team, will need to be more dynamically driven by a champion with project management skills. Presently the plan lacks marketing and a robust regular review of allocated actions at a management venue. Further areas for inclusion in the PIP are identified by this inspection and by BCU staff themselves. For example the DCI is new to post and has some clear areas for attention to maximise detections, such as why is the division charging less than other divisions on first referral to CPS (58% as opposed to 70%). The process therefore needs consideration of some additional issues and some consideration of the process itself, such as having specific time frames associated with the various actions, a programme management board and full consultation and marketing of the plan. These aspects may be best placed under the directorship of a member of the SMT.

Overall, the inspection team was convinced that the BCU is able to provide an effective policing service and can go forward to improve its performance if attention is paid to some key areas. As such the inspection team is satisfied that it can validate the PIP and make one recommendation:

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

**It is recommended that the BCU commander includes the further development areas identified by this inspection in the performance improvement plan. In addition a director at SMT level should drive the plan with access to the relevant staff and project management skills. Some clear process issues for consideration require specific time frames associated with the various actions, a programme management board and full consultation and marketing of the plan.**

#### Summary of good practice

- The Sherwood Project uses joint resources to target persistent offenders. Results are impressive. All prisoners subjected to 2 years or more imprisonment for burglary dwelling; robbery and serious vehicle crime that are released on licence are subject to multi-agency work. Any breach of licence is robustly acted upon and there are examples of prison licence breaches being returned to custody within 4 hours.
- The BCU has used actual incidents such as a firearms incident on the BCU as the basis for training and this appears dynamic and impressive.

#### Issues for management consideration

- A better-structured staff briefing system, which is needed to speed up the briefing process ensuring that all relevant issues are easily identified. There is no apparent training for sergeants on briefing and therefore some inconsistency, with some briefings being described as “downright poor”. The inspection team observed a briefing that evidenced some of these issues. The briefing took 25 minutes and there was an obvious lack of technology such as smart boards. It is also apparent that if no sergeants are available then often a briefing does not occur. The briefing system known as ‘Merlin’ lacks credibility with BCU staff, who described it as “having lost its way” and therefore some staff do not use it.
- There are some clear areas where intelligence is not forthcoming – custody and SOCO for example.
- There is currently no system for access to analytical services, and as a consequence officers are able to gain analytical services without an overview being taken regarding workload or type of work accepted. Access to the SOCO database would further assist analytical work.
- BCU staff perceive that the BCU tasking and co-ordination meeting is more about performance review than proactivity. Intelligence analysis is provided at the meeting but

very little tasking is carried out unless it is a level 2 issue (issues or persons that impact across BCU or force boundaries), with managers being told to share resources outside the meeting for LAC problems.

- The daily tasking meeting needs to be improved with an ability to involve LAC inspectors without physically abstracting them to Worksop every morning. The inspection team were impressed in a recent inspection of another BCU that was using the radio system known as “Airwave” to facilitate this meeting and this is an issue that the BCU may wish to consider when the BCU takes Airwave in the near future. The BCU may also wish to consider the use of video conferencing.
- The inspection team would ask the BCU commander if there is an opportunity for civilianisation of the detective post at Rampton hospital under the Police Reform Act.
- The BCU commander is urged to ensure that all detective abstractions from the BCU to major crime enquiries are necessary and that the skills of such officers are properly utilised.
- The inspection team was not convinced that presently the BCU was able to challenge CPS decisions or had an overview of those challenged and would urge the consideration of the creation of a BCU champion to hold an overview and be the single point of contact in such disputed issues with the CPS.
- There were some frustrations expressed by BCU intelligence staff regarding the amount of time that it takes for arresting officers to result DNA and fingerprint identification packages and this was impacting on BCU performance figures maintained by headquarters.
- The BCU commander is urged to ensure that there is a more regular review of individual SOCO performance data directly with officers.
- The inspection team was not convinced that the hours that LAC inspectors worked were being monitored to ensure compliance with working time directives.
- The target team themselves believe that generally BCU staff do not understand their role and the BCU commander may wish to consider ways in which they could market themselves more internally.
- The BCU commander may wish to consider further ways in which the Special Constabulary may reduce demands on front line officers.
- BCU sergeants often find that they are required to cover abstractions in the Newark custody block and as a consequence raised this issue to the inspection team. The situation may well be the ‘lesser of two evils’ in that their presence is required to keep the cell block open and therefore negate BCU prisoners being transported some miles away but the BCU commander may wish to examine this issue.
- SMT visibility is an area that the BCU commander may wish to examine and provide some clarity and structure to ensure current efforts are maximised.

- It was clear that middle managers, particularly LAC inspectors would like more say in how their people are managed. There was support for a more inclusive HR meeting and this is an issue the BCU commander may wish to consider.
- The inspection team is of the opinion that sponsorship could be further developed and this is a further area that the BCU commander may wish to consider.
- Police staff sickness is an area of concern and the BCU commander is urged to continue to review the current position and satisfy himself that all is being done to assist individuals back to work.

## **Recommendations**

The BCU commander is recommended to:

- Include the further development areas identified by this inspection in the performance improvement plan. In addition a director at SMT level should drive the plan with access to the relevant staff and project management skills. Some clear process issues for consideration require specific time frames associated with the various actions, a programme management board and full consultation and marketing of the plan.