

**Inspection of Western BCU  
Suffolk Constabulary  
November 2005**



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## Introduction

1. Between 21 and 25 November 2005, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary conducted the Inspection of Western Basic Command Unit (BCU), Suffolk Constabulary.

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

3. The focus on performance in reducing crime and disorder is likely to be relentless. Forces and police authorities, working with local authorities and other community safety partners, will need to raise their game year after year. Indeed, the statutory regime of Best Value demands 'continuous improvement'. The Government recognises the need for additional resources in the fight against crime, and the 2004-2007 comprehensive spending review (CSR) settlement is acknowledged to be the most generous the police service has received for many years. More police officers, better communications and information technology and ever more sophisticated forensic techniques should all enhance police effectiveness. However, the potential for the service as a whole to deliver better results in crime reduction and detection cannot conceal an inescapable fact – that performance between BCUs operating in similar policing environments and with comparable resources varies to a degree that is at times remarkable.

4. Leadership by BCU commanders is probably the single most important determinant of BCU effectiveness. The responsibilities of command are significant, and some superintendents are not well supported in terms of the strength of their management teams and/or the quality and quantity of support from headquarters. Without exception, staff in pilot sites wanted their management teams to be more visible and accessible. One outcome from BCU inspections should be a better understanding of the practical manifestations of effective leadership.

5. In trying to make sense of the variations in operational performance, which exist – to differing degrees – in every force, a key ingredient is *focus*. The best performers focused efforts of their staff through timely, dynamic local briefings that are supported by a well managed intelligence system. They set targets and make sure that staff are aware of them; they communicate results and celebrate success. They define responsibilities and hold individuals to account for how they have used their time. In some BCUs this performance culture is absent, reflected in the fact that the personal development review (PDR) system of setting and monitoring individual

goals is in abeyance. A nationwide rolling programme of inspections that focus upon performance and leadership is thus likely to produce an upturn in results.

**Note**

**For consistency, the term Basic Command Unit (BCU) will be used throughout this report, albeit that within Suffolk Constabulary, local policing is delivered through an area command structure.**

## Overview

1. Suffolk Constabulary covers principally a rural coastal county of 3,802 square kilometres with an overall population of 656,800. The county is renowned for its scenic beauty and heritage coastline that attracts many tourists. The strategic location of Felixstowe Harbour and its prominence as the largest container port in the UK, together with the port's economic connection to the European mainland, make the road networks of the A12 and A14 extremely busy with commercial traffic.

2. The Constabulary is headed by the chief officer group, which comprises the Chief Constable, a deputy chief constable, an assistant chief constable and assistant chief officer (resources). Policing is delivered through three identified territorial BCUs (Eastern, Western and Southern) and supported in their delivery of local policing services by various headquarters departments based at Martlesham Heath including crime management, central switchboard, Force operations room, training and operations department.

3. The corporate vision and drive for performance has evolved from the '*Suffolk First*' initiative which was launched in 2001 with the aim of making Suffolk the country's safest county, more recently into '*Suffolk First for You*' with an emphasis on providing an even higher quality of service to local people. The strategy is broken down into five key areas:

- **First for Citizens** – providing improved customer care and quality of service, as well as improving public access and the service provided to victims and witnesses;
- **First for Local Services** – increasing community policing, devolving management to local policing areas, as well as improving partnership working and community engagement;
- **First for Safety** – including increasing crimes solved and tackling violent and alcohol related crime;
- **First for Staff** – reducing bureaucracy, better use of IT and modernising the workforce; and
- **First for Value** – making best use of resources, improving performance management, better inspections and more collaboration.

4. The Constabulary's strength at the time of the Inspection was over 1,310 full-time equivalent (fte) police officers, 908 (fte) police staff, 273 special constables and 32 of the 35 established police community support officers (PCSOs) posts were filled.

## Western BCU

5. The BCU known locally as Western Area, covers an area of 1,896 square kilometres and has a population of 244,050. The BCU has borders with Essex, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk police forces and both Eastern and Southern BCUs within Suffolk Constabulary. It includes the towns of Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Stowmarket, Mildenhall, Brandon and Haverhill.

6. The area is mainly rural by definition but has some busy road links including the A14, A11 and A140 running through the BCU, as well as railway routes to Norwich, Ipswich, Cambridge and London. Newmarket is the centre for horse racing

involving much operational work. There are several military bases with American air bases at Lakenheath and Mildenhall and British military stations, RAF Honnington and Wattisham.

7. The BCU is coterminous with three local authority areas of Forest Heath, Mid Suffolk and St Edmundsbury. Below is a profile for each district:

### **Forest Heath**

- The Forest Heath district covers an area of 375 square kilometres and has a population of 55,514. The main conurbations are Newmarket, Mildenhall and Brandon. The district's unique feature is the two American air force bases, one at Mildenhall and one at Lakenheath. There is an above average number of individuals working in defence within the district, i.e. 8.8% of its population. There are two wards with more than average percentage for black and minority ethnic (BME) groups; these are located at 'Eriswell and the Rows' and the 'Severals'. Newmarket races can attract up to 25,000 attendees to each race day.
- The district is policed by **Newmarket sector** based at Newmarket police station and **Mildenhall sector**, with stations located at both Mildenhall and Brandon.

### **St Edmundsbury**

- St Edmundsbury district covers an area of 652 square kilometres and has a population of 98,179. The main conurbations are Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds with a population of 21,400 and 35,250 respectively. The main industries are manufacturing (20.0% of the population), wholesale/retail (almost 18%) and real estate. There is also an air force base at RAF Honnington providing significant employment. A total of 0.55% of the population are of minority ethnic backgrounds. The district also has two prisons (St Edmunds Hill and High Point) within its boundaries, Bury St Edmunds cathedral, a major hospital and a college.
- The district is policed by three individual sectors: **Haverhill sector**, with police stations at both Haverhill and Clare; **Bury rural sector** with police stations at Horringer and Ixworth; and **Bury sector** for the town of Bury St Edmunds, which holds the main police station and central custody facility.

### **Mid Suffolk**

- Mid Suffolk covers the largest geographical area of the three districts with 867 square kilometres and has a population of 86,837. The main towns are Stowmarket and Needham Market with a population of 14,170 and 4,574 respectively. There are less than 0.50% mixed minority ethnic groups. There are seven upper schools in Mid Suffolk itself, representing 50% of the BCU's total number. The area is mainly agricultural and farming, with industries in Stowmarket providing work for 17.3% of the population and wholesale/retail and real estate. There is an army

base at Wattisham that provides employment for 6.3% of the workforce.

- Policing is covered by **Mid Suffolk sector** and comprises four police stations, Stowmarket, Elmswell, Eye and Debenham.

**8.** The BCU has a strength of 344 police officers (47 being probationary constables), 96 police staff, 11 PCSOs and 74 active special constables (51 being qualified for independent patrol). The model for policing in Western area is 'community zone policing', which sees an identified inspector or chief inspector (sector commander) responsible for each of the six policing sectors:

- Newmarket;
- Mildenhall;
- Haverhill;
- Bury Rural;
- Bury St Edmunds; and
- Mid Suffolk.

**9.** The sector teams are directly responsible for policing the areas with dedicated resources including community police officers, response officers and PCSOs (see Operations later).

**10.** The BCU's policing plan for 2005/06 is closely aligned to the Force's '*Suffolk First for You*' strategy and includes seven operational crime areas as priorities identified within the control strategy:

- counter terrorism;
- burglary dwelling – reduce the number of offences and increase the detection rate;
- criminal damage – reduce the number of offences and increase the detection rate;
- class A drugs – target the supply and use;
- serious violence in a public place – restrict to 2004/05 level;
- prolific and priority offenders; and
- improve the level of sanction detections.

**11.** During the BCU Inspection week the team interviewed over 100 members of staff of all ranks and grades and a cross section of partner agencies. A number of reality checks and data gathering exercises were performed during this period, including discussions with staff at outlying police stations, the intelligence unit and custody suites. The process concluded with a debrief to the BCU Commander and his command team, followed by a similar meeting with the assistant chief constable.

**12.** The inspection team would like to express its thanks to the BCU Commander and his staff for the courtesy, openness and assistance afforded them during the course of the Inspection, in particular the constructive participation and the helpful and friendly nature of the BCU staff at all ranks and grades.



## Part One – Leadership

### The BCU Command Team

#### BCU Commander – Chief Superintendent

**1.1** The post holder has 25 years' service being promoted to his current rank in November 2005. He has uniformed operational experience at each rank, including serving as sector commander at Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds. The post holder has also undertaken departmental postings at Force headquarters including head of the Force community safety unit. In July 2002 he joined the Western BCU command team as crime manager and in May 2003 was promoted to operations manager. During the first nine months of 2004/05 he was temporarily appointed BCU Commander before being promoted substantively into the role in November 2005. He is a trained gold commander of firearms incidents and is bronze/silver command trained for public order incidents. The post holder is the strategic lead for the BCU and sits on the responsible authorities group for the West Suffolk crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) and the two local strategic partnerships (LSP) - see paragraph 1.16 later.

#### Operations Manager – Superintendent (acting)

**1.2** The post holder has 22 years' service within Suffolk Constabulary and has worked in all of the Force's BCUs. In 1997 he was promoted to detective inspector in charge of the Western crime management unit, which was the forerunner to the BCU's current intelligence unit. He had additional responsibilities for the control of covert human intelligence sources (CHISs) which are now under HQ control. The post holder has also undertaken roles of detective inspector for Forest Heath and sector commander of Mid Suffolk. In April 2004 he was temporarily promoted to the post of the Western BCU crime manager, taking on the substantive role in November 2004. Since November 2005 the post holder has been the operations manager as acting superintendent. This role includes responsibility for the day-to-day management of policing operations within the BCU. The post holder is a trained CHIS controller and senior investigating officer (SIO).

#### Administration Manager

**1.3** The post holder has served with Suffolk Constabulary since 1980 when he was appointed as an administration clerk at divisional headquarters. He was promoted to sub divisional administrator at Sudbury in 1985 and administration officer in 1991. In 1995 he was promoted to his current role. This role includes managing all police staff and human resources as well as holding responsibility for 64 devolved budgets and the general administration for the BCU. The post holder has been an active member of Force Best Value Review teams and is currently the Suffolk representative on the *'Three Counties Collaboration for Property, and Off Site Storage projects'*. He holds an MSc in human resource management, a diploma in human resource management IPD, certificate in management IPD and general management certificate (CMS). The post holder has also completed courses in financial management for senior managers (CIPFA) and equal opportunity development.

#### Crime Manager – Detective Chief Inspector (acting)

**1.4** The post holder has 25 years' service and was promoted to inspector in 2002. He has served as sector commander for Haverhill and until October 2005 managed the intelligence unit. He has been involved in relocating the unit to new premises and realigning the intelligence function to reflect the forthcoming changes in the BCU. He is currently performing duties as the acting crime manager having direct responsibility for the overall management of CID and investigation into serious crime within the BCU. The post holder chairs the Havebury housing partnerships community investment focus group, which allocate funds for community projects.

### Partnership Manager

**1.5** The post holder joined Leicestershire Constabulary in January 1966, serving in traffic, CID and the regional crime squad. In September 1977, whilst holding the rank of sergeant, the post holder left the police service to join the motor manufacturing industry. This included experience with British Leyland Ltd, Honda, British Aerospace and finally the BMW/Rover Group. He held the position of operations manager responsible for security for the Rover Group in Europe. In January 2001 he was appointed the community safety officer based at Suffolk headquarters until his promotion into his current position in July 2003. The post holder has responsibility as the managerial lead in all aspects of community safety activities and the police link officer to statutory partners. He is also responsible for the overall management of the crime reduction and community safety unit and financial management for the police BCU fund.

### Visibility of the BCU Command Team

**1.6** All those interviewed commented positively on the visibility of the command team. The BCU Commander and operations manager undertake regular and programmed visits (one day per month) to each sector, during which they discuss performance with sector inspectors, attend briefings and interact with staff. A further half-day per month is utilised to visit staff at Hillside Business Park (ASB unit, Western Compass, event resolution unit, area intelligence unit and the victim care centre). The crime manager undertakes a similar programme with the BCU's specialist units.

**1.7** In addition, a number of initiatives and documents are positively promoted by the BCU command team, including its active intrusive management (AIM) document that sets out the standards and priorities expected of line managers working within the BCU.

**1.8** Overall, staff had confidence in the command team and expressed the view that all members are approachable and supportive. There was a view expressed by several, however, that the BCU command team sometimes made decisions only then to undertake a consultation exercise. Staff associations expressed the view that members of the command team were approachable and listened to their views during the local negotiating consultative committee (LNCC), but again felt that it was often a matter of informing them about a decision rather than true consultation. In particular, they raised concerns about a number of police staff who are uncertain about their future roles pending possible structural changes through the new district policing model that has yet to be finalised.

**1.9 Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary commends the efforts of the BCU command team in ensuring effective communication of plans and objectives to all staff. He encourages them to fully consult with staff associations in respect of the impending new district policing arrangements to allay unnecessary fears and support those who may be subject to uncertainty.**

## **Strategic Management**

**1.10** The BCU Commander has primary responsibility for the strategic development of the BCU both internally and externally with partner agencies. He is an active participant in all relevant Force strategic development groups including the Force management board the *Suffolk First For You programme board*, the Call First project, the NSPIS project board (senior user), the Strategic Properties Issues Group and the Superintendents best practice group. He is also fully engaged with the three CDRPs (co-ordinated into a single responsible authorities group) and the two local strategic partnership groups (see paragraph 1.16).

**1.11** A BCU business plan, following closely the ‘*Suffolk First For You*’ format of the Force and Police Authority’s local policing plans, provides direction for leaders within the BCU to deliver improvements in five key areas i.e:

- **first for citizens** - emphasising partnership commitments, establishment of service standards for all officers to improve quality of service provision, and outlining several policing initiatives such as the police direct portal (to promote information flow between the police and local communities) and tackling criminal damage problems; (see paragraph 1.47).
- **first for local services** – including intended introduction of the national neighbourhood policing model, commitment to police input to every upper school in the BCU, support for CDRP enabled area action teams and promoting casualty reduction initiatives;
- **first for staff** – including the provision of direction, training and support for all staff to ensure they have the skills and resources to effectively carry out their duties. It also identifies the development of a prisoner processing unit to maximise officers’ operational time, effective use of the Special Constabulary and recognition of high quality performance;
- **first for safety** – developing commitment to the national intelligence model (NIM) through inclusion of partner agencies, tackling persistent offenders through the principle and priority offender scheme (in conjunction with CDRP members) and dealing with drug offending, including the successful drug referral and treatment initiative targeted at the most ‘chaotic’ users, Western Compass. It also includes commitments to improve sanction detection rates and to tackle serious violence in public places;
- **first for value** – including improvements to the BCU’s inspection/review processes, examination of administration support processes, minimisation of bureaucracy and identifying efficiency savings such as savings in the vehicle fleet and revenue costs associated with the estate.

**1.12** Targets are set within the plan for the whole BCU and for the six constituent sectors individually regarding:

- crime reduction and detection (house burglary, vehicle crime, serious violence in public places, criminal damage and total crime); and
- public reassurance.

**1.13** Underpinning the BCU business plan are a number of more detailed strategy documents that provide the framework for the delivery of BCU objectives. These include anti-social behaviour, house burglary, problem solving and sanction detections. The crime manager chairs the strategic development issues group, bringing together ‘champions’ responsible for each of these strategies, to review progress.

**1.14** Each action contained within the business plan has an identified manager (BCU command team member) but, unlike the Force’s ‘First For You’ plan, an action matrix is not maintained but rather, action managers report progress in time for the development of the following year’s plan. Those actions that relate to the NIM control strategy are effectively monitored and progressed through discussion at the strategic development issues group but others are not routinely evaluated.

**1.15 Her Majesty’s Inspector considers that an action matrix, reviewed regularly, would be advantageous in ensuring that the business plan remains relevant, helps drive improvement and records progress to better inform the development of the following year’s plan.**

## **Partnerships**

**1.16** The inspection team met with a range of partner agencies during the Inspection. These included representatives from the three CDRPs (including the three community safety officers), the two LSPs (including a chair, an LSP manager and a policy officer), West Suffolk MIND, the fire service, crime prevention panels, victim support, watch schemes (neighbourhood and pub watch), and a local housing association.

**1.17** The three CDRP areas combined provide coterminosity with the BCU area. They also reflect the district council areas.

**1.18** There has been an agreement reached between partner agencies to combine the three CDRP meetings to form a single group known as the responsible authorities group (RAG) in advance of a proposal submitted to the Home Office to formally do so (awaiting ratification). This arrangement provides considerable advantage in that it reduces unnecessary bureaucracy, ensures a more consistent approach across district boundaries, provides a strong platform for improvement across partner agencies and minimises the amount of time spent on duplicated meetings. The BCU command team was a strong advocate of this change and all those interviewed during the Inspection supported it as they felt the new arrangement has brought clarity and a greater propensity for action.

**1.19** At operational level there are three multi-agency geographically based local area action teams (mirroring the CDRP/district areas above). These teams come together with parish councillors, youth workers, neighbourhood watch, local community police officers (CPOs) and a number of voluntary groups to identify local priorities and to inform the community safety audit (in preparation of the community safety strategy). This group feeds into the RAG together with information from a number of other inter-linked groups. These include: the prolific and other priorities group; the anti-social behaviour joint agency group (JAG); the substance misuse group; the cross county initiatives group (dealing with matters such as domestic violence and hate/racial crime); and the officer working group (all statutory partners with wider partner agencies such as Connexions). Link officers are employed to help co-ordinate the activities of all these groups and support the RAG meetings.

**1.20** There are two LSPs in the Western BCU area – West Suffolk and Mid Suffolk. Geographically they share boundaries with the primary health care trusts that are similar but not quite coterminous with the BCU/CDRP boundaries.

**1.21** The LSPs work closely with the CDRPs and help co-ordinate and promote the good work through the safer communities board and the stronger communities board to the county-wide local area agreements/local public service agreements steering group and the Suffolk strategic partnership. The partnership is still developing its understanding of the demands and changes through the national policing plan/safer and stronger communities and in particular, financial governance, responsibilities for local area agreements and is identifying opportunities that this presents to them. There is clearly a commitment and willingness to progress positively in these areas and there is a strong synergy between the priorities and actions from the community safety strategy, local authority agreements and the BCU's policing objectives.

**1.22** In reviewing the community safety strategy for 2005–2008 the Western Suffolk CDRP agreed the following strategic aims:

- to reduce the British Crime Survey (BCS) comparator recorded crime by 17.5% in Forest Heath district, 12.5% in Mid Suffolk district and 12.5% in St Edmundsbury borough by March 2008;
- to reduce the number of recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour by 5% by 2008 across Suffolk;
- to reduce the harm that drugs and alcohol cause to communities; and
- to reduce the number of deliberate fires by 10% by 2010.

**1.23** The strategic document states that 'these four priorities' were developed in line with the ODPM/Home Office publication: *The Safer and Stronger Communities Fund Implementation Guidance*, and the *National Drug Strategy Performance Management Framework* published by the Home Office.

**1.24** Examples of recent partnership resourcing include:

- the appointment of an administrator for the prolific and other priorities scheme;
- an ASB co-ordinator post has been established;

- each district has a community safety officer;
- the establishment of link officers; and
- the police criminal damage team (see paragraph 1.47) has been equipped with CCTV and vehicles through the partnership.

**1.25** It has been recognised that the partnership needed to be more performance driven and iQUANTA data is now used to inform the RAG meeting of performance in key crime categories.

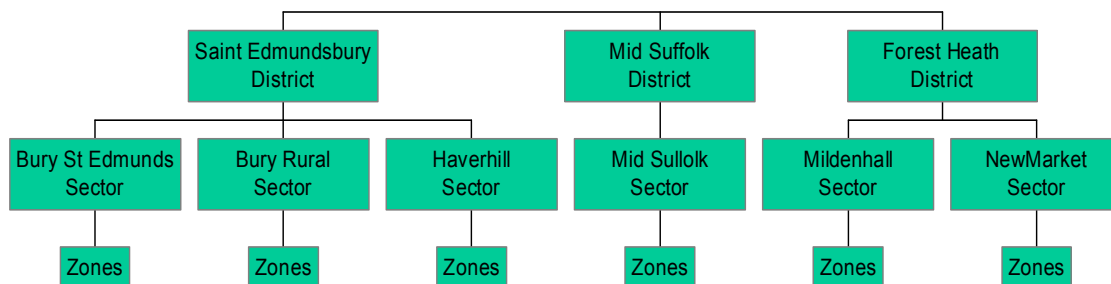
**1.26** Overall, partnership working in West Suffolk is providing a good platform for future developments including the BCU command team’s intention to enhance neighbourhood policing arrangements (see paragraph 1.31) and to meet crime reduction targets set within local area agreements.

**1.27** Those interviewed by the inspection team were extremely complimentary about the commitment and input from the BCU command team and those at the tactical level in all areas of partnership working. This is reflected in the minutes of various partnership meetings and the discussions and actions emanating from them.

**1.28 Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary commends the BCU command team for the commitment to, and support for, partnership working. In particular the commitment, knowledge and enthusiasm of the community safety partnership manager at both the tactical, and strategic levels, is praiseworthy.**

## Operational and Demand Management Structure

**1.29** Operationally, there is a chief inspector with responsibility for the St Edmundsbury district and seven uniformed inspectors – six, each with geographic responsibility for one of the sectors illustrated in the diagram below and the seventh with responsibility for the anti-social behaviour unit and Western Compass drugs intervention programme. In addition, there are five detective inspectors, one aligned to each of the three districts, one responsible for the area intelligence unit and one responsible for the victim care unit. It is planned to increase the number of uniformed chief inspectors by two, to provide a lead in each of the three district areas and provide a strategic head for partnership working in those geographic areas (this aligns with the Force’s pathfinder neighbourhood policing model currently being piloted at Ipswich).





**1.30** The BCU's community policing arrangements are known as 'community zone policing'. Sergeants are responsible for policing identified zones and are supported by one or more community police officers (CPOs) and in some cases, PCSOs (although there are currently only 11 such posts in Western BCU). These sergeants, when on duty, are also responsible for response policing across the whole sector and have a compliment of uniformed officers in order to do so.

**1.31** This is an appropriate structure on which to build the BCU's neighbourhood policing arrangements, as it brings together the disciplines of response, community, investigation and proactive intelligence-led policing. However, during the Inspection it was evident that CPOs did not have sufficient capacity to fully engage with the community in line with the national model. They were frequently abstracted for response duties or, as experienced officers, to undertake acting sergeant or other duties. A strong interaction between CPOs and crime prevention panels/neighbourhood watch groups was not evident – this being left to the sectors' crime prevention officers to progress. In addition, there was little engagement of the Special Constabulary or wider police family in the zone policing arrangements for Western BCU. CPOs were, however, making a significant commitment in engaging school children through the BCU's stated intention to spend time in every upper school in the area.

**1.32** The frequent abstraction of CPOs is undermining these officers' attempts to engage fully with their local communities and undertake multi-agency problem solving initiatives to address local problems. Similarly, there is very little community intelligence available within the BCU. The role of the CPO is not one that is sought after and there is often difficulty filling such vacancies when they arise.

**1.33** The introduction of district chief inspectors is an opportunity to better engage sector inspectors, to build on the integrated 'community, response, investigation and proactivity' model already operating, better focus activity, raise the profile of CPOs and minimise the abstraction of these officers in order to:

- improve community engagement in association with partner agencies and the BCU's own crime prevention officers;
- better engage the Special Constabulary and seek opportunities to make better use of the extended police family, including volunteers;
- improve action in respect of 'quality of life' issues affecting local communities through community based problem solving initiatives and, in so doing, help reduce the non-urgent demands currently placed on response officers;
- improve performance in key anti-social behaviour categories of crime reduction including criminal damage; and
- target local hotspots and address problems associated with persistent and priority offenders to ensure every effort is expended to deal positively with them.

## Recommendation 1

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the BCU command team, following consultation with the pathfinder project team, chief officers, its own staff, partner agencies, and local communities, finalises and implements its district policing model.**

### Event Resolution Unit

**1.34** The Force operates a system of centralised call management utilising eight grades as follows:

- Grade 1 - immediate (incident to be allocated within two minutes and attendance within 12 minutes if urban and 18 minutes if rural);
- Grade 2 - attend as soon as practicable, but in any case within 30 minutes of a call for service;
- Grade 3 - allocate within two hours and attend as soon as practicable but in any case within four hours of a call;
- Grade 4 - to allocate within 72 hours from the receipt of the call;
- Grade 5 - no action required – for information only;
- Grade 6 - a call-out message, e.g. vehicle recovery;
- Grade 7 - scenes of crime call-outs; and
- Grade 8 - to be dealt with without deployment of an officer.

**1.35** The central, Force-wide facility deploys officers and manages 'events' to all grades of call except grade 8s which are handled by the BCU's 'event resolution unit'. The unit consists of a small team of staff (often officers on recuperative duties) who re-contact a complainant/caller, discuss the issue fully with them and seek to resolve it without the need to deploy an officer. Whilst this is beneficial, the inspection team is of the opinion that further progress could be made in reducing operational deployments if the event resolution team reviewed calls categorised as Grade 4 and made appointments, where appropriate, for callers to come to police stations against appointment times. This would alleviate some pressures on response policing, avoid the wasteful practice of revisiting addresses when callers are not at home (often a problem in rural areas like Western BCU), and help to avoid drawing neighbourhood police officers into the response policing role.

**1.36** Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary feels that there are significant advantages of an appointment system being developed in support of Western BCU's district policing model and suggests that the BCU command team considers such arrangements when developing its final neighbourhood policing structure.

### Anti-Social Behaviour Unit

**1.37** During 2004 the BCU introduced an anti-social behaviour unit led by a sergeant and line managed through an inspector. This was in response to feedback from operational staff and partners that a more structured approach was required in



taking best advantage of new legislation and dealing positively with those causing problems to local communities, including persistent offenders. It was felt that, in conjunction with relevant partners, a streamlined and tiered system was needed.

**1.38** The unit has worked closely with district councils, magistrates, the Crown Prosecution Service, local housing associations and the partnership funded anti-social behaviour co-ordinator (servicing all three CDRPs) to develop protocols to progress a series of measures, i.e:

- anti-social behaviour contracts;
- housing injunctions;
- demoted tenancy agreements;
- eviction process;
- diversionary schemes;
- anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs); and
- CRASBOs (anti-social behaviour orders issued by the court at the time of conviction of an offence).

**1.39** Partners are encouraged to table such issues at the anti-social behaviour joint agency group to ensure a consistent and effective process across all agencies concerned. Sector inspectors, CPOs and PCSOs attend the JAG meetings and are actively encouraged to raise appropriate issues for consideration.

**1.40** The anti-social behaviour unit has developed a system of scanning all command and control incidents reported during the previous 24 hours to identify those that constitute a 'quality of life'/anti-social behaviour problem. If the complainant was not visited originally, they ring back the caller and explain what work has been undertaken on the problem and ensure that the CPO has been informed to attend, as appropriate. The callers are re-contacted by the unit two weeks later to discuss whether the actions taken by the CPO have alleviated the problem. If not, further problem solving initiatives are considered in conjunction with the CPO.

**1.41** This is potentially a very valuable service, but inconsistent application of the initiative, due to lack of resource, could undermine its effectiveness and may lead to community dissatisfaction. A review of capacity to ensure a consistent service, possibly through the use of community volunteers and the wider police family would be beneficial.

**1.42** **Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary congratulates the BCU command team for the introduction of such a structured approach to anti-social behaviour and quality of life issues in Western BCU.**

### Western Compass

**1.43** The inspector responsible for the anti-social behaviour unit also has responsibility for Western Compass, a drug treatment and diversion scheme targeted at the most 'chaotic' drug users, invariably prolific offenders. The inspector has a small team working closely with probation, mental health workers, drug intervention programme (DIP) workers, health workers, the prison service and local doctors to proactively address problems caused by those presenting the greatest concern. The

scheme involves drug assessment, lifestyle assessment, diversionary measures, scripting services and regular testing programmes and has funding until 2008.

**1.44** At any one time there are 12 ‘chaotic’ drug users on the scheme. Analysis, although not conclusive due to uncertainties of the amount of crime each participant would have committed if not on the scheme, indicates that there could be up to 30% reduction in acquisitive crime and 12% reduction in burglary dwellings in some areas of the BCU.

**1.45** Western Compass is fully supported by both LSPs and is to benefit from a DIP funded housing advisory officer in the near future.

**1.46** Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary is impressed with the Western Compass drugs treatment and diversion scheme, particularly the work being done to encourage those about to leave prison to join the scheme before they returned to a life of crime. He considers this project to represent good practice. He was further encouraged by the work being undertaken to better integrate this project into the PPO scheme and that the drug and alcohol action team (DAAT), following formal evaluation, appear to be about to fully participate in the project.

#### Criminal Damage Team

**1.47** The BCU has developed a criminal damage team in each sector to address an area causing considerable concern. It was clear during the Inspection that support for these teams at the sector level was mixed and that some were more proactive in their use against criminal damage offences than others. There was an opinion expressed by a number of people that the teams’ initial successes in increasing the criminal damage detection rates was mainly due to them addressing backlogs of work held by other officers (a number with suspects to be arrested) rather than a sustained improvement. In addition, the majority of criminal damage offences committed appeared to be associated with anti-social behaviour, rather than a sustained crime trend and that neighbourhood policing problem solving initiatives were more likely to provide sustainable, long-term benefits.

**1.48** The establishment of proactive criminal damage teams such as those in Western may have short-term benefits, but a more sophisticated solution revolves around the development of Western’s district policing model and use of the wider police family. Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary urges the command team to consider this during their deliberations on neighbourhood policing development.

#### Area/Operational Support

**1.49** The BCU operates an area support team (AST) consisting of a sergeant and eight constables to provide proactive capability. It is tasked through the area tactical tasking and co-ordinating process in support of NIM priorities. The unit supports all sectors as appropriate. The Special Constabulary has also formed a support team in furtherance of ‘quality of life’ issues across the BCU (see paragraph 1.128).

**1.50** Operational support (dogs, roads policing, armed response) is provided centrally and bid for through Level 2 tasking and co-ordinating procedures.

## Custody

**1.51** Custody provision in Western BCU is inadequate and is significantly hindering performance and leadership from 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> line managers, causing unnecessary abstraction of operational officers from street duties and is adding to the costs of the already overspent fuel budget.

**1.52** Bury St Edmunds police station accommodates the main custody suite for the BCU as the only 24 hour dedicated facility available to officers. It has a total capacity of only eight cells and is regularly full. This occurs every Friday and Saturday evening and on other less predictable occasions. Once Bury St Edmunds custody facility is full, one of the BCU's four (unresourced) custody suites is used to accommodate prisoners (Haverhill, Mildenhall, Stowmarket or Newmarket). The location of this overflow facility is determined purely by where the next prisoner is arrested whether this is the most suitable location or not. If the arrest is made in Newmarket, then that becomes the central facility for the BCU.

**1.53** This arrangement is having the following effects:

- custody duties are regularly performed by sector sergeants who were scheduled to perform uniformed patrol. This leaves operational officers (often young and inexperienced) with reduced outside supervision, this at times when public disorder and violent crime is most likely;
- it is common for acting sergeants to perform custody duties. This is far from ideal although they are trained for the role;
- it is not uncommon for officers from Bury St Edmunds to have to travel to outlying stations with prisoners because cells at their own station are full – some of the prisoners occupying Bury St Edmunds cells being from the same stations to where Bury St Edmunds officers are redirected;
- operational officers are abstracted from street duties to transport prisoners between stations unnecessarily;
- prisoners are often being accommodated in custody areas that are in need of refurbishment and modernisation;
- the BCU is not enjoying the full benefits of developing a prisoner processing unit (see paragraph 2.50) as many offenders (some prolific) are often accommodated some distance from this unit in cells other than Bury St Edmunds; and
- operational officers are delaying making arrests at busy times to avoid leaving colleagues vulnerable while they transport prisoners to another station. It is likely that the lack of such positive early action could result in offenders committing more serious offences later in the evening. If so, this will undoubtedly adversely affect performance in two priority areas (criminal damage and serious violence in a public place) at times when the night time economy is at its height.

**1.54** The Force has engaged in a collaborative arrangement with neighbouring forces to progress a private finance initiative (PFI) custody build and one such facility is anticipated for Bury St Edmunds sometime during 2009.

**1.55** The detrimental effects of the current arrangements cannot be allowed to continue for four years until the PFI project is complete. In the short-term, research into capacity versus demand is essential to help identify when contingency plans are needed. Such plans should make provision, during identified peak times, for a nominated custody suite to come into operation with staffing planned in advance. Whichever custody suite is identified for this purpose, it should be subject to a full evaluation and funding secured for necessary refurbishment. The medium-term plan must increase the capacity of Bury St Edmunds custody suite to ensure the full benefits of the prisoner processing unit are realised.

### **Recommendation 2**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the BCU command team develops both short-term and medium-term plans to alleviate the problems being caused by the current custody suite limitations.**

#### **Criminal Investigation**

**1.56** Those detectives interviewed during the Inspection, expressed the view that they held a reasonable number of more serious investigations such as rape, robbery and violent crime, but that a lot of volume crime was screened in for investigation. By necessity, this was resulting in response officers carrying a higher crime workload than was necessary. The inspection team was concerned that a high proportion of crime is allocated for investigation (up to 90%) and that a better focus on priority crime and solvability factors would help improve the BCU's performance in key crime areas.

**1.57** The Force does not have a major crime investigation capability and detectives are drawn from BCUs as the need arises. BCU command team members and detective officers, although finding such abstraction disruptive, acknowledge that the burden is equally shared by the three BCUs and HQ departments. They prefer to have staff temporarily abstracted rather than have their detective establishment permanently reduced.

**1.58** The alignment of detective inspectors to district areas and detective sergeants and detective constables to zones, is viewed very positively as it enhances the integration across the policing teams, provides an opportunity to hold zones accountable for performance and will undoubtedly assist with the development of the district policing model. It was clear that there is a good working relationship across the disciplines as a result.

#### **Victim Support / Child Protection**

**1.59** The BCU has established a purpose built victim support centre at Hillside Business Park, in a separate building adjacent to the area intelligence unit. This unit is led by a detective inspector, who is supported by the child protection team headed by a detective sergeant and 'victim care' staff with particular responsibility for domestic violence and hate crime offences.

**1.60** Staff working within the child protection team take responsibility for the more serious cases and over the last three months have dealt with all joint investigations with social services (up until then only 62% had been handled within the team).

**1.61** Victim care staff work closely with investigating officers, victim support and other partner agencies to provide support, guidance and care for victims. They undertake risk assessments where appropriate and develop safety plans as necessary. At the time of the Inspection, four of the five posts within the team were abstracted (either unfilled or subject to illness) and it was evident that the detective inspector and his staff were under considerable pressures of work, particularly as repeat victimisation is increasing significantly. The table below illustrates the increase in repeat domestic violence incidents over the last three years.

<b>Figure 1: Domestic Violence Incidents Records</b>			
	<b>No of Domestic Violence Incidents</b>	<b>No of Repeat Domestic Violence Incidents within 12 months</b>	<b>% of Repeat Domestic Violence Incidents within 12 months</b>
2002/03	788	350	44.42%
2003/04	1,538	504	32.77%
2004/05	1,559	639	40.99%
% Change 2003/04 to 2004/05	1.4%	26.8%	+ 8.22 percentage points

**1.62** The number of repeat victims for domestic violence rose by 26.8% between 2003/04 and 2004/05, i.e. by 135 offences and by 289 offences compared to 2002/03.

**1.63** Staff working on domestic violence and hate crime within the victim care team had received little or no specialist training and relied on a two day awareness course for the majority of their ‘specialist knowledge’.

**1.64** Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary welcomes the introduction of such a valuable centre within Western BCU and congratulates the BCU command team for being the first BCU in Suffolk to progress this facility. In order to move forward positively, there is now a need to review the specialist training requirements of staff working within the centre and to address capacity problems through recruitment into vacant posts, possible additional support through the partnership groups and an exploration of whether community volunteers could assist. This would enable staff within the unit to concentrate on those issues where they add the greatest value.

### Duty Management

**1.65** The inspection team was concerned that, despite there being a corporate, BCU-wide duty management software package available, each sector was able to determine whether that was the system they used for duty planning or continued with simple spreadsheets. The result is little long-term BCU-wide overview of operational capacity and integrated advanced duty planning. Staff shortages are discussed at the daily tasking meeting (DTM) for that day, but this is too late to properly address shortfalls. The inspection team witnessed such a situation during one night duty at Bury St Edmunds, yet those staff on duty did not know what support was available from neighbouring sectors and were vulnerable.

**1.66** Such a system is also essential if the event resolution unit is to make appropriate appointments for members of the community to attend police stations against appointments as suggested earlier in this report.

### Recommendation 3

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the BCU command team determines the consistent use of the agreed corporate duty management system. This is in the interests of improved advanced duty planning, effective oversight of a BCU-wide resource and to support possible implementation of an appointments system for non-urgent calls for service.**

## Organisational Culture

### Communications

**1.67** As outlined under 'command team visibility' above, the BCU Commander, operations manager and crime manager have regular and meaningful contact with all staff in the BCU.

**1.68** The command team has outlined the standards expected of first and second line managers through its AIM document circulated to all supervisors in November 2005. This is in four parts:

- managing their staff;
- managing their crimes;
- managing their events (command and control incidents); and
- managing their prisoners.

**1.69** Each part documents a detailed account of what is expected, a few examples of these being outlined below:

#### Under **Managing Staff** -

- intrusive supervision;
- briefing;
- transformational leadership;
- rewards and sanctions; and
- appearance.

#### Under **Managing Crimes** -

- checking crime workloads every 14 days - giving advice, where appropriate;
- ensuring victims of crime are updated every 14 days;
- ensuring crimes are investigated appropriately, professionally and efficiently; and
- arresting a suspect within 10 days of identification.

Under **Managing Events** -

- prioritise workloads;
- awareness of priorities;
- management of Grade 3 and 4 incidents; and
- customer contact regarding non-crime matters.

Under **Managing Prisoners** -

- informing the victim during the officer's tour of duty that the arrest has been made;
- consideration of PACE searches following an arrest;
- consideration of who is best to conduct the interview; and
- high quality hand-over were appropriate.

**1.70** Other issues such as police complaints, police collisions and the Regulation of Investigative Powers Act authorisations are also included.

**1.71** At the heart of the document is a desire to improve service delivery and overall performance of the BCU, and all those interviewed during the Inspection had a good knowledge and understanding of the document. In addition, there was a good understanding of the '*Suffolk First For You*' plans and BCU strategies/action plans such as the sanction detection action plan (see paragraph 2.41).

**1.72** The inspection team was impressed by the knowledge and overt enthusiasm of staff who clearly wished to do a professional job in providing effective services to the local community.

**1.73** All inspectors and police staff equivalents attend the area management meeting and information from these meetings is cascaded appropriately to staff.

**1.74** However, several members of staff interviewed felt that the internal newspaper, that used to be published every six months but has recently been discontinued, had been beneficial and the command team may wish to consider reintroducing such a publication.

**1.75** In respect of external communications, the BCU has information displayed on the Force website and is piloting the police direct portal on behalf of the police information technology organisation (PITO). Police direct is a messaging system intended to keep the community informed about local policing issues including:

- latest information about local crimes, including appeals for witnesses and information;
- advice to the public to help prevent them becoming a victim of crime; and
- information about police initiatives and developments.

**1.76** Targeted messages can be sent based on a subscriber's postcode and allows each subscriber to register up to three postcodes for information free of charge. The system allows 3,000 messages to be sent per minute and 200,000 per hour. Currently,



there are 1,000 members registered on the system. The command team is hoping to increase this to 5,000 shortly.

**1.77** Although it is in its early stages, and yet to be evaluated, the system offers considerable potential for engaging the local community and should prove a particular asset to Western’s district policing structure.

**1.78** Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary considers the police direct portal to offer significant opportunities to policing in Western BCU, particularly the district policing model and supports the BCU command team’s efforts to maximise and promote its use.

## Complaints/Public Satisfaction

### Complaints

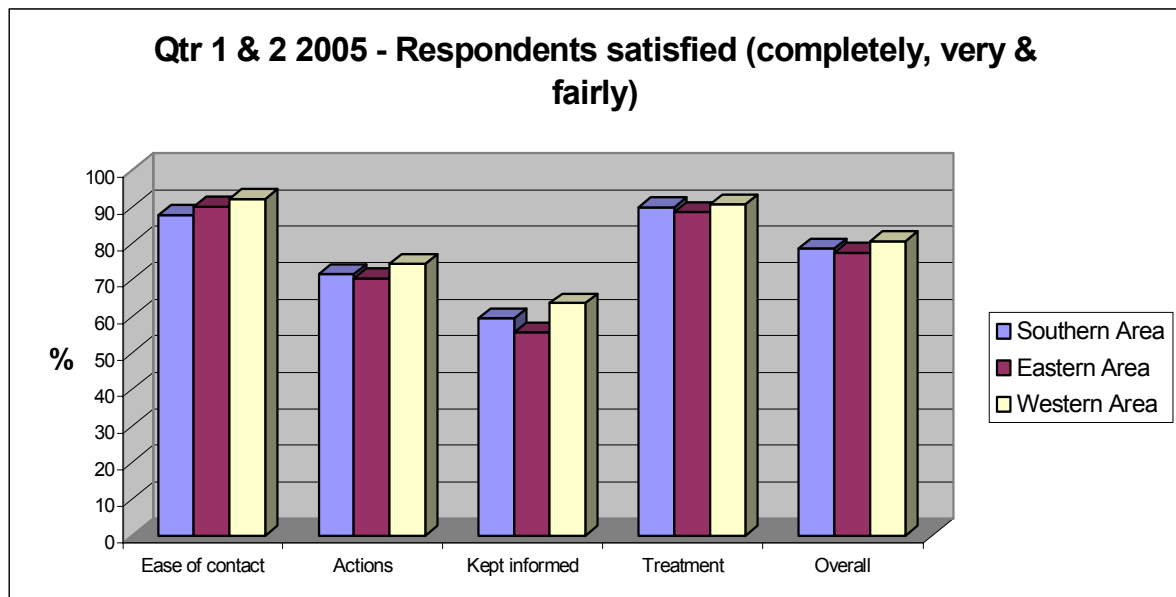
**1.79** The table below illustrates the numbers of complaints received and finalised in respect of police officers in Western BCU for 2002/03 and 2003/04.

<b>Figure 2: Complaints</b>						
	<b>Complaints</b>	<b>Complaints per 1,000 officers</b>	<b>Complaints Finalised</b>	<b>% of police officer complaints finalised</b>	<b>Complaints Substantiated</b>	<b>% of complaints substantiated</b>
2002/03	46	139	70	152.2%	4	8.7%
2003/04	66	192.5	72	109.1%	6	9.1%
<b>% Change</b>	<b>+43.5%</b>	<b>+38.5%</b>	<b>+2.9%</b>	<b>-43.1p.p</b>	<b>+50%</b>	<b>+0.4p.p</b>

**1.80** During 2002/03 Western had the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest number of complaints of the 13 BCUs in the most similar BCU (MSBCU) group (2 of the 15 in the group did not supply data), and 4<sup>th</sup> lowest of the 13 during 2003/04.

**1.81** Force data indicates that Western had 52 complaints in the six month period April to September 2005, and if this rate of reported complaints were to continue during the second half of the year, the BCU would experience 104 complaints during 2005/06, an increase on 2003/04 of 42%. This represents 302 complaints per 1,000 officers. Whilst it is acknowledged that Western has the lowest number of complaints of Suffolk’s three BCUs and increases are undoubtedly, in part, due to changes to the way complaints are recorded, these increases are worthy of further exploration by the command team. Consideration of complaint data in respect of Western for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2005/06 reveals that (similar to the Force) approximately 60% were the result of alleged ‘oppression’ or ‘incivility’.





### Public Perception

**1.82** The chart above illustrates the results of the Force’s public perception survey for the three BCUs. Western has the highest satisfaction rate in all five categories measured, and has high satisfaction rates in respect of ‘ease of contact’ and ‘treatment’. The BCU command team acknowledges weaknesses in respect of keeping the public informed and this would undoubtedly improve if the anti-social behaviour ring-back process could be consistently applied.

### Working Relationships

**1.83** In the main there appeared a single employee culture within Western BCU, police officers and police staff being supportive and working constructively together. The inspection team was impressed with the attitudes of staff and the positive working environment within the police stations visited. There were some suggestions however, that part-time staff were not as valued by their full-time counterparts as they would like to be - their reduced hours being interpreted by some as a lack of commitment.

**1.84 Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary encourages the BCU command team to ensure that the valuable contribution made by part-time staff to policing, is acknowledged and promoted across the BCU.**

**1.85** Working relationships between the command team and staff are good. As stated above, the BCU is to appoint two further chief inspectors in the near future, to ensure each sector is headed by a district commander, and this should further promote close working relationships between the BCU command team and operational staff. Care is needed, however, that this change does not lead to sector inspectors being excluded from the corporate decision-making and tasking processes. If they are, there is a danger that corporacy across the sectors will not be maintained as they operate in isolation of BCU plans. The inspection team considers that, even though currently included in these meetings, sector inspectors were not operating completely within corporate frameworks and this was already leading to inconsistency. Examples of this are as follows:

- there has been an inconsistent application of the criminal damage teams (sector inspectors determining the priorities and role they undertake);
- sectors are not working to a consistent duty management system (despite one being available); and
- patrol staff are concerned only about their own sectors (with little cognisance of what is happening in neighbouring areas).

**1.86** During the Inspection of Western BCU, both formal and informal acknowledgement of good work was evident. It is the BCU's policy that whenever an 'area merit' nomination is made, consideration is given to it being accompanied by a bonus payment application. Between January and November 2005 15 area merit awards were presented at the BCU command team's monthly performance meeting. In addition, each sector has a notice board to display letters of appreciation (138 such letters were received between January and November 2005).

**1.87** There is a Special Constabulary 'annual assembly' each Autumn at which 'confirmation of service' and merit awards are presented. To ensure it is an occasion fitting of the achievements of these valuable volunteers, officers' partners are also invited to attend.

**1.88** All those interviewed during the Inspection expressed the view that whenever they do good work it is recognised by their line managers, and that they feel valued by BCU supervisors and peers alike.

**1.89** Staff associations are invited to the joint meeting of the local negotiating consultative committee (LNCC) and the health and safety group, and this provides an opportunity to discuss areas of concern. However, it is limited regarding consultation on BCU development issues, principally because there is limited time available once day-to-day concerns have been discussed (see paragraphs 1.99–1.100). The BCU command team may wish to split this meeting into two distinct sections to ensure appropriate consultation and focus.

**1.90** The Force has recently published a diversity strategy but Western BCU does not hold a separate diversity meeting. Such meetings present an opportunity to discuss national, Force-wide and BCU issues and identify any actions that should be progressed. Matters such as BCU stop/search statistics, recruitment and retention and appropriate policy issues, can be assessed and the BCU command team may wish to consider the introduction of such a valuable consultation process.

**1.91** Similarly, the BCU does not have an independent advisory group (IAG) consisting of members of the community, voluntary sector and other partners to discuss critical and serious incidents, help develop the local policing style and extend consultation and communication with the local community. The inspection team is aware that some work has been undertaken at Brandon where there is a significant minority ethnic population of Portuguese workers. A meeting has been established which is chaired by a district councillor and has various organisations and members of community on the steering committee including the sector sergeant.

**1.92 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary is encouraged by the work being undertaken in Brandon but considers that there is considerable merit in forming an independent advisory panel and urges the command team to consider developing one for Western BCU.**

## **Resource Management**

### **Administration/Financial Management**

**1.93** The BCU has some devolved financial management including police staff salaries, police overtime and vehicle fleet, but not police officer salaries. The BCU is expected to make annual efficiency savings (5%) and finalised the 2004/05 financial year £20k under spent, which has been carried into 2005/06. The BCU is held accountable for financial management through regular review meetings with the assistant chief officer.

**1.94** Despite the heavy costs of vehicle fleet (including increased fuel costs, i.e. £8k overspend up to September), the BCU is currently on schedule to complete the financial year on budget. However, this is at the expense of holding some police staff vacancies unfilled longer than the BCU would wish. The inspection team witnessed several areas where staff were under significant pressures of work due to staff vacancies.

**1.95** In preparation for the 2006/07 financial year, the administration manager has submitted a BCU finance plan, including a review of estates, with a view to making efficiency savings, improving operational facilities and supporting the BCU's district policing model. The inspection team was impressed with the administration manager's commitment and strategic overview of the BCU, but there are a number of sensitive issues within the plan that will require consultation, communication and detailed longer-term planning if this financial strategy is to be a success. In addition, the plan assumes that the current custody facilities are appropriate until the Force's collaborative PFI custody build. The inspection team considers that capital expenditure is urgently required in respect of Bury custody facilities and, unless central funding is available for that development, this is likely to undermine the plan.

**1.96 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary congratulates the administration manager on the development of such a forward thinking plan. Once provision has been identified for custody improvements and it is known which elements of the plan are agreed with chief officers, the command team can integrate this into the district policing implementation plan.**

**1.97** Revenue funding of just over £143,000 is available during 2005/06 from the BCU fund (including £6,000 under spend from 2004/05). This has been used to provide funding for:

- a project research and performance officer;
- a partnership administrator (part-fund);
- increasing the hours of community watch liaison clerks;
- paying 1/3<sup>rd</sup> for automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) administration (with the other two Suffolk BCUs);
- PPO targeting;
- PPO substance misuse;

- criminal damage initiative (e.g. vehicle costs and CCTV);
- partnership development and marketing; and
- the young people's strategy.

**1.98 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary encourages the BCU command team to explore the opportunities within the fund to increase the capacity of PCSOs within the BCU in support of the district policing model.**

### Health and Safety

**1.99** The administration manager chairs the joint LNCC and health and safety meeting attended by the BCU Commander, staff associations, the health and safety officer and representatives from various departments and units working within Western BCU's facilities.

**1.100** Examination of the minutes of these meetings identifies that relevant issues are discussed, including matters raised at the Force health and safety committee, buildings safety and security, first aid training, hazards and incident reports, injury on duty/accident reports, risk assessments and any areas of concern raised by attendees. Actions are raised, ascribed and reported upon at the next meeting.

**1.101** The BCU undertakes an annual Health and Safety Inspection in conjunction with staff associations, and a matrix of issues identified (with ascribed action owners) is produced and progress reported to the joint LNCC and health and safety meeting. The Health and Safety Executive has recently undertaken an inspection of the BCU and Stowmarket police station has been identified as needing some improvement.

**1.102** During the Inspection, there were a number of health and safety issues apparent within the custody areas, particularly at Stowmarket, Mildenhall, Haverhill and Newmarket. These have been identified to the BCU command team and have been subject to an immediate review.

### Attendance Management

**1.103** The BCU's current attendance management performance against Force targets is outlined in the table below.

<b>Figure 3: Attendance Management</b>			
	<b>Force target days per staff member</b>	<b>BCU actual</b>	<b>BCU projected</b>
<b>Police Staff (including PCSOs)</b>	7.9 days	7.5 days	4.97 days
<b>Police Officers</b>	7.1 days	6.6 days	7.41 days

**1.104** Police staff sickness is currently below target and is projected to be significantly under target at the conclusion of the financial year. Police officer sickness is similarly below target but is projected to rise to just above target by the conclusion of the year.

**1.105** For 2004/05, in comparison with its MSBCU group, Western was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 15 BCUs for police officer sickness (51 hours per officer compared to the group average at just under 91 hours). Commendably, in respect of police staff sickness, Western was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> (46 hours compared to just under 81 hours for the group average).

**1.106** Police officer sickness reduced by almost 20% between 2003/04 and 2004/05 and police staff sickness reduced by over 16% during the same period, both having fallen at a greater rate than the MSBCU average.

**1.107** The BCU deals with attendance management issues according to published Suffolk Constabulary policy. On a monthly basis attendance management data is produced as part of the BCU command team's monthly performance report. This report forms the basis of an extrapolation so the management can predict how sickness performance will vary. The report accounts for officers on long term sick leave, recuperative and restricted duties, and maternity leave.

**1.108** The BCU is keen to return people to suitable work and accordingly makes good use of recuperative duties; 23 people were working in this way at the time of the pre-inspection audit. A preferred use of these officers is the anti-social behaviour unit or event resolution unit, where officers are employed constructively to reduce demands on patrolling officers.

**1.109 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary congratulates the BCU command team for the excellent attendance management performance and effective implementation of appropriate policies. The reductions in sickness rates over the last two years are impressive. Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary urges the command team to satisfy itself that some staff are not attending work when really unfit to do so, out of a sense of duty to hard pressed colleagues.**

#### **Training and Development:**

**1.110** The Force training plan for 2005/06 has been determined following consultation with the three BCUs as part of the business planning cycle. This has taken into account national drivers for change, Force, BCU and departmental priorities, considered against budgets and internal resource availability. BCUs are able to influence the ongoing training agenda through input and representation at the monthly training priorities group, chaired by the Force training manager and attended by BCU operations managers.

**1.111** Training within the Force is largely a centralised function incorporating both specialist and probationer training and development. Area training officers (ATOs) are aligned to BCUs, working within a service level agreement to the BCU Commander, although reporting and ultimately accountable to the head of training. Western BCU has one allocated ATO whose primary responsibility involves overseeing the training and development for probationary constables. The ATO, in consultation with the probationary constables and their line manager, will undertake objective appraisal, set SMARTS objectives and developmental milestones throughout the officers' initial two year probationary period. Suffolk Constabulary is due to align with the initial police learning and development programme (IPLDP) in

2006 which will see the introduction of professional development units within each of the three BCUs.

**1.112** As well as overseeing probationary constables' training and development, the ATO conducts PCSO training, oversees training for the Special Constabulary and delivers training at the BCU local training days. The ATO is assisted and supported by reciprocal arrangements with ATOs from other areas, by headquarters based training staff and, when available, a number of BCU personnel who have an interest in training. Due to the high workload of the ATO it was apparent that delivery of local training priorities is significantly inhibited. Competing demands on operational staff who are used to support training is also preventing significant progress.

**1.113** For uniformed staff there is training provided for within the duty roster, allowing uniformed sector staff to attend a full days training at a local level every ten weeks. Arrangements for CID staff to attend such training was less formalised with few staff having attended any recent training, citing restrictions due to incompatible shift patterns and/or workload as reasons for non attendance. Staff interviewed throughout the Inspection from both uniformed and CID roles expressed concern regarding the availability of relevant and dynamic training, particularly in relation to changes in legislation.

**1.114** Subject matter for local training days is determined by the training priorities group and is discussed on an ad hoc basis at the monthly BCU management meetings. The prioritisation and co-ordination of BCU training against business plan objectives is limited, sporadic and not supported by accurate data or staff consultation, in part, not helped as a result of the suspension of the electronic PDR system.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the BCU command team undertakes a review of training provision across the BCU, to ensure local training needs are able to be dynamically identified, prioritised and delivered to all relevant personnel within the BCU. Such a review should include consideration of roles and responsibilities to ensure BCU personnel are able to receive high quality local training, having consideration of, and support for, business plan priorities.**

#### **Personal Development Review (PDR)**

**1.115** In 2003 Suffolk Constabulary introduced a computer based PDR process for both police officers and police staff that is compliant with the integrated competency framework (ICF). Probationary constables and PCSOs' performance and development are monitored through separate professional development portfolios.

**1.116** All members of the Force have their PDR conducted annually and this is aligned to the fiscal year to assist with business planning processes. This takes place

between April and June for police officers and between May and July for police staff. The previous year's PDRs are completed and closed and new PDRs for the forthcoming year are established. During this period the supervisor and appraisee consult and set work based and personal objectives.

**1.117** In August 2005, the inspection team audited 52 completed PDRs from Western BCU. These included a wide range of ranks and grades. A summary of the results from this audit is shown below:

#### **Completion rates police officers**

**1.118** At the time of the audit there were 373 police officers who required a PDR (including part-time staff). Of these:

- 203 had been completed (64 of which were probationer PDPs);
- 95 were still shown as incomplete; and
- 11 had still not been set up on the computerised system.

**1.119** Of the 106 PDRs outstanding, 3 had justifiable reasons, therefore 27.6% of police officers' PDRs for 2004/05 remained incomplete apparently without justification.

#### **Completion rates police staff**

**1.120** Of the 94 police staff who should have had a PDR in 2004/05, the following was the result of the audit:

- 40 were complete;
- 11 were PCSOs on a separate regime,
- 16 were incomplete; and
- 17 had yet to be set up on the system.

**1.121** As of 31 August 2005, 31% of police staff PDRs for 2004/05 remained incomplete.

#### **Qualitative issues**

- only a limited number of PDRs contained evidence of performance against the 2004/05 objectives. Even less made any reference of objectives being set for the forthcoming year;
- whilst the PDR template followed the integrated competency framework, some supervisors reported that they had not been trained in the application of the ICF or how to formulate developmental objectives according to the SMARTS model. Furthermore, Suffolk Constabulary is committed to delivering services via the '*Suffolk First*' and latterly '*Suffolk First for You*' plans, however, these did not feature in objective setting;
- many reports in the audit sample appeared to be completed in a minimalist way. By grading appraisees as 'competent' against the majority of 'behaviours' and 'competencies', line-managers are not required to endorse them with supporting evidence and this was invariably the case with those PDRs examined; and



- conversely, other reports had clearly been completed appropriately in collaboration between the appraisee and their supervisor. These reports contained critical self-assessment by appraisees and cited good work reports and references.

**1.122** In September 2005, due to complexities with the computerised IT system, the Force made the decision to suspend the use of this programme with the aim of introducing a new PDR process with supporting IT in April 2006. As a result, at the time of the Inspection, staff on the BCU were no longer able to access or retrieve previously entered PDRs. This, even though there had been an instruction from both the Force and the BCU management team reinforcing continuance of the recording and collection of evidence. Staff interviewed during the Inspection were in the main supportive of the principles of PDR, but many were unsure or unaware of the requirements for continuing the PDR process in the absence of the IT system.

**1.123** In preparation for the new PDR process, the Force has identified pilot sites within a number of sectors in Western BCU and some HQ departments. Trials are due to start in December 2005. This opportunity has been fully embraced by the Western BCU Commander who has actively sought to support and encourage completion of effective PDR processes on the BCU.

**1.124 Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary is encouraged by the approach and commitment of the BCU Commander to improving the PDR process, but urges the BCU command team to satisfy itself that all staff fully understand the interim requirements for completion of PDR. In addition, in preparation for the introduction of the new process in April 2006, the BCU command team is encouraged to introduce appropriate quality assurance mechanisms to enhance effectiveness and compliance with PDR on the BCU.**

### Estates

**1.125** With the exception of custody facilities and Stowmarket police station (which is to be the subject of an improvement plan following the Health and Safety Executive’s inspection), the estate in Western BCU is to an acceptable standard.

**1.126** Custody facilities are, in the main, old and in need of modernisation and improvement, especially in the outer stations and the very limited cell capacity at Bury St Edmunds is severely hindering performance.

**1.127** As stated under the ‘Demand Management’ section of this report, the administration manager’s financial plan for better use of Western BCU’s estate is forward thinking and supports the intended implementation of a district policing model.

### Special Constabulary

**1.128** At the time of the Inspection there were 74 active members of the Special Constabulary working within the BCU (51 being qualified for independent patrol). Those interviewed during the Inspection were making a big commitment to the BCU, several working up to 70 hours per month.



**1.129** Special constables are used in four main roles within Western BCU – reactive patrol, civic and public events, proactive ‘quality of life’ initiatives and community policing. During the Inspection process it was clear that special constables have not been specifically aligned to neighbourhood policing structures. Of those seen during the Inspection, several, but not all, worked closely with CPOs and local communities. Those interviewed who were engaged in community policing expressed the view that CPOs were happy to let them develop ‘pathway’ problem solving initiatives, but often tended to leave them to progress these themselves, rather than fully engaging with them in partnership. Development of these initiatives without cognisance of the whole partnership agenda and not fully supported whilst laudable, is unlikely to deliver the most benefit.

**1.130** Earlier this year a specials area support team was created to proactively address ‘quality of life’ type problems across the BCU and this offers potential in support of the district policing model.

**1.131** The inspection team is of the opinion that the Special Constabulary, aligned to CPOs and - working closely with PCSOs and - as they develop further, community volunteers, offers the most effective use of these valuable officers.

**1.132 Her Majesty’s Inspector urges the BCU command team to fully engage the Special Constabulary within the development of its district policing model and develop a structure that best aligns them to the new community policing arrangements.**

**1.133** Those members interviewed felt valued, had appropriate equipment and enjoyed a high standard of training. The inspection team was impressed by the quality and frequency of special constables’ training, although several members expressed the view that it was more than they would ideally wish to receive, as they preferred not to be abstracted from patrol. Special constables’ training commences with initial training (four weekends at HQ) followed by one day per month law input and ‘universal’ (procedural) training. At the BCU level there is a comprehensive training programme rotating key components such as stop/search, PACE and crime reduction. Each session concludes with a 30 minute input on any subject chosen by the group to be of particular importance, for example, best practice in statement taking.

**1.134 Her Majesty’s Inspector congratulates the BCU command team on the quality of the training provided to the Special Constabulary.**

## Part Two: Performance

### Performance Management and Accountability

#### Performance Management Structures

**2.1** The assistant chief constable holds a monthly performance review meeting with the BCU command team, involving consideration of a detailed management information pack and areas for improvement are identified.

**2.2** In addition, the Force is currently introducing annual BCU inspections to be conducted by the Chief Constable and the deputy chief constable, with support from the police improvement unit. Actions emanating from these inspections will be monitored during the ACC's monthly performance review meeting.

**2.3** The BCU command team reviews performance every Monday morning to identify trends and areas for improvement. This is supplemented by the daily tasking meetings where overnight crimes are reviewed and appropriate action is directed.

**2.4** Sector inspectors are held to account for their sector's performance, by the BCU command team, at a meeting that immediately precedes the area tactical, tasking and co-ordinating meeting. The inspection team witnessed such a meeting and it was incisive, challenging yet supportive. Sector inspectors were clearly being held to account for performance and the BCU command team had a very strong grasp of the operational challenges they face. The BCU's performance evaluator produces a comprehensive and very detailed monthly management performance pack for this meeting displaying BCU performance against the following headings:

- overall crime performance (volume, detections, sanction detections);
- performance against targets – utilising spider diagrams with each axis representing 'Suffolk First For You' categories of burglary dwellings, criminal damage, vehicle crime and serious violence in a public place (volume and detection rates);
- iQUANTA data identifying MSBCU positions for all crime, burglary dwelling, vehicle crime and criminal damage (with individual sector breakdowns for these and for serious violence in a public place);
- sanction detection rates by sector;
- forensic hits outstanding by sector;
- warrants – received, executed and outstanding by sector;
- PNC inputting of forensic samples by sector;
- updates on drug activity (including Western Compass); and
- attendance management by sector (including restricted information on individual cases for use by the BCU command team only).

**2.5** In addition, file quality/timeliness and intelligence submissions are to be included when the data is available.

**2.6** Those officers of inspector rank and above are appropriately held accountable for performance but below this level it is less formal and inconsistent. Team and

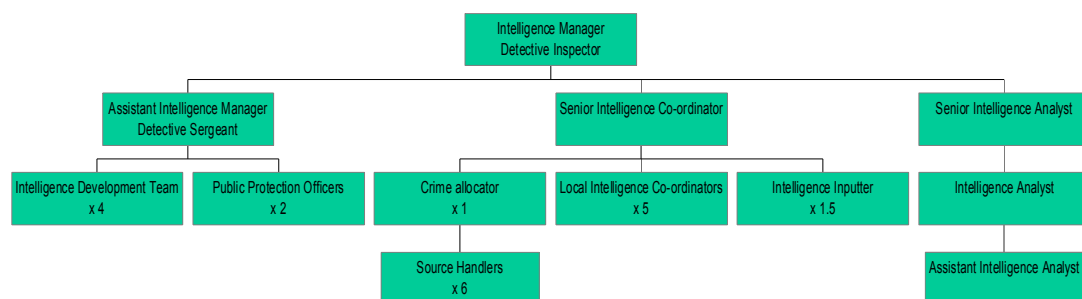
individual performance should be reviewed to ensure that there is a consistent approach and accountability at those levels. The current situation with the PDR system (see above) and the lack of more detailed individual performance information does not aid this process.

**2.7 Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary congratulates the BCU command team for developing such a challenging yet supportive process for holding sector inspectors to account for performance, and encourages further development below this level.**

## Intelligence-Led Policing

### Intelligence Handling

**2.8** The area intelligence manager (detective inspector) has overall responsibility for the intelligence unit with the structure and establishment being shown below.



### Inputting and Evaluating

**2.9** Staff submit intelligence on a 5x5x5 form that is then electronically forwarded and registered onto the intelligence source register (ISR). All intelligence is received on this system, each item being screened and quality checked by the intelligence inputter before being transferred to the nominals crime intelligence system (CIS) record. CIS intelligence is linked into four main categories:

- persons (nominals);
- vehicles (including ANPR);
- business; and
- Suffolk tasking and briefing system (STABS).

**2.10** Local intelligence co-ordinators (LICs) are responsible for the management of intelligence, including the weeding and auditing processes to ensure the data held is accurate and relevant. Intelligence is reviewed and categorised as either:

- information that has been received and requires some corroboration and/or development before being actioned; or
- intelligence that has been graded sufficiently highly to warrant immediate action.

**2.11** The intelligence manager has overall responsibility for evaluating and ultimately sanctioning appropriate action in relation to intelligence. Items thought relevant are discussed at the intelligence unit’s morning meeting that precedes the

BCU DTM and this facilitates the dynamic tasking of intelligence development or immediate action through the DTM. The processes and roles outlined were fully understood by all staff with a clear commitment demonstrated towards intelligence-led activity.

### **Research and Analysis**

**2.12** The BCU has three analysts allocated to support the intelligence functions - all are fully trained in key analytical processes and packages. The analysts are responsible for the development and production of the six monthly strategic assessment, fortnightly tactical threat assessment, research into forensic hit packages and charting of performance within control strategy crime areas. There is some commissioning of analytical products at the tactical tasking and co-ordinating group (TT&CG) or DTM.

**2.13** Analytical products are produced according to Force templates, however it was apparent to the inspection team that whilst the BCU has access to highly skilled analysts, limited use was being made of them. This was particularly evident within the fortnightly TT&CG process (see below).

**2.14** This under use and lack of understanding of the analytical expertise represents a missed opportunity and is leading to highly skilled staff feeling undervalued.

### **Handling and Development**

**2.15** Intelligence development officers (IDOs) have primary responsibility for developing intelligence and preparing target packages for allocation to sector staff. The IDOs work closely with a nominated local intelligence officer, both being allocated responsibility for one of the three districts. A nominated package owner is identified at the daily intelligence unit meeting following discussion regarding actionable intelligence, and dates are set for completion of this work. Once target packages have been completed they are allocated for progression through the DTM or TT&CG. These structures are appropriate and allow for dynamic intelligence-led activity and for LICs and IDOs maintaining close links in order to support their allocated sectors. The inspection team was able to review a number of target packages prepared for sector 'opportunity days' – which were appropriately developed to ensure a proactive, relevant and focused use of resources.

**2.16** Covert human intelligence sources (CHISs) are controlled and handled by the Force dedicated source unit (DSU). The three BCUs have CHIS handlers allocated to their areas. They primarily liaise and consult with intelligence unit staff. The co-ordination and flow of intelligence from the DSU appeared effective, with good links into corporate and local objectives and staff attending key BCU intelligence meetings.

### **National Intelligence Model**

**2.17** The BCU holds strategic intelligence meetings every six months attended by senior management and intelligence unit staff. In April 2005 partner agencies were included to ensure their participation and support in establishing priorities. The strategic threat assessment, produced to inform the meeting, is of high quality and provides a strong platform to enable the BCU to effectively review and reset the control strategy. The threat assessment includes an evaluation of the current control strategy and examines performance and trends within the four police performance

assessment framework (PPAF) domains of reducing crime, investigating crime, promoting public safety and providing assistance. In addition, Suffolk statutory performance indicators (SPIs) and crime and disorder targets are taken into consideration. At the time of the Inspection the crime control strategy included:

- counter terrorism;
- burglary dwelling;
- criminal damage;
- serious violence in a public place;
- class A drugs; and
- sanction detections.

**2.18** In order to deliver against the control strategy priorities and assist in focussing activity, the BCU holds a number of meetings. These include a monthly strategic development issues group, fortnightly TT&CG meetings and DTMs. A summary of each follows:

#### **Strategic Development Issues Group**

**2.19** This meeting is held monthly, is chaired by the crime manager and includes the participation of BCU assigned ‘champions’ for each of the control strategy priorities. The focus of the meeting is to determine strategic direction in relation to prevention, intelligence and enforcement activity for each of the priority areas.

#### **Tactical Tasking and Co-ordinating Group**

**2.20** The BCU holds fortnightly TT&CG meetings which are conducted in three parts:

- a pre-meeting;
- a priorities meeting; and
- a tactics meeting.

**2.21** The tactical assessment, produced to inform the meetings, follows a corporate template and includes a brief outline of performance against control strategy priorities, profiles of current tactical activity, emerging issues and key dates within the next reporting period:

- pre-meeting - the operations manager chairs the pre-meeting. Attendees include the crime manager, intelligence unit staff, a representative of the area support team (AST) and source handling unit inspectors. At this meeting those problem and target profiles contained within the relevant tactical assessment are discussed and the prioritisation of BCU resources and bids to be made to the Force TT&CG are considered;
- priorities meeting - chaired by the operations manager, this meeting has wide ranging representation from staff across the BCU including sector inspectors and has recently seen the attendance of CDRP community safety officers - one from each of the three districts. The format of the meeting follows the structure of the relevant threat assessment. This contains primarily target and problem profiles, submitted by sectors for which they are seeking support from BCU or Force resources. Sector

commanders or their representatives are required to account for their submissions before decisions are made by the chair of the meeting on the allocation of resources; and

- tactics meeting - chaired by the crime manager, this meeting reviews, with the assigned problem owner(s), actions against agreed priorities and seeks to progress tactical options.

**2.22** The inspection team observed a priorities meeting which had extensive BCU representation, along with that from a number of headquarters departments including roads policing, source handling unit and media. At the start of the meeting the chair reviewed the tactical assessment. This concentrated on problem and target profiles submitted by sector staff and there was full and enthusiastic participation from those attending, but there was little analysis or inferences to help identify how resources could be allocated to best effect. All profiles submitted had operational value and merit but it was not clear how activity was truly focused, whether it was the most appropriate or if it had synergy with the current control strategy due to the limited analysis being discussed. In addition, there was no evaluation reported (or requested) to establish the effectiveness or otherwise of operations being discharged from the TT&CG. Whilst both the senior intelligence analyst and intelligence analyst were in attendance their roles were restricted to administration and collation of the minutes. Decisions reached at the conclusion of the two hour meeting regarding allocation of BCU staff or bids for Force resources appeared to be made in isolation by the chair and seemed to be predetermined.

### **Daily Tasking Meetings**

**2.23** The operations manager chairs the DTM. This utilises telephone conferencing facilities linking sectors to allow the participation of all sector inspectors (or nominated sector staff) and representatives from the intelligence unit. The meeting reviews a wide range of policing activity from each sector including: critical incidents; overnight prisoners arrested in relation to control strategy priorities; missing persons; control strategy crimes; actionable intelligence; and media issues. In conclusion, the allocated tasks from the previous day are reviewed to establish progress and/or completion, and new tasks are allocated based on the information and intelligence discussed.

**2.24** This provides an appropriate forum for senior and sector managers to review BCU progress and direct policing activity. It facilitates dynamic tasking of resources as required. There was good accountability and the meeting provides a clear link for the BCU into the Force DTM held immediately following the BCU meeting.

**2.25** Overall the NIM processes operating at a strategic level and within the daily tasking meeting appear appropriate and relevant, adding support and value to the BCU intelligence-led activity.

**2.26** Effective and efficient processes were less apparent, however, within the various levels of the TT&CG structure as described above. This, in the main, is due to the number of meetings, their complexity and lack of analytical input.

## Recommendation 5

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the command team undertakes a review of the TT&CG processes and threat assessment to simplify the structures and ensure the BCU effectively utilises the skilled analytical and evaluation capability available. This to better inform decision-making in relation to control strategy priorities, and raise awareness and understanding of sector supervisors of the role of the analysts and relevant analytical products available.

### Briefing Systems

**2.27** The LICs within the intelligence unit are responsible for updating sector briefings on an electronic system known as Suffolk tasking and briefing system (STABS). Each briefing follows a corporate template that includes relevant information for the sector in relation to control strategy crimes, prolific and priority offenders, CCTV identifications and priority taskings.

**2.28** The inspection team observed a number of briefings within a variety of sectors and times. There was good attendance across various disciplines including community officers, response and CID with good interaction and discussions apparent. There was clear tasking of activity.

**2.29** Overall the briefing facilities, processes and mechanisms across the BCU were good, with staff in all areas and departments being able to receive a comprehensive briefing at the commencement of their tour of duty. Accountability through the DTM emphasises the importance and priority the BCU places upon effective briefing processes.

### BCU Performance

**2.30** Within this section the term MSBCU will be used to make comparisons of performance. Western BCU is grouped with 14 other most similar BCUs as follows:

Force	BCU
Avon & Somerset	Somerset East
Cambridgeshire	Central
Derbyshire	Buxton (B Division)
Dorset	Eastern
Essex	Braintree
Gloucestershire	Cotswold and Stroud
Humberside	East Riding of Yorkshire
Kent	Weald
Lincolnshire	South Lincolnshire



Figure 4: MSBCU continued	
Norfolk	Western
North Yorkshire	Western
West Mercia	Shropshire (F Division)
Wiltshire	Chippenham (C)
Wiltshire	Salisbury (A)

## Crime Reduction

**2.31** The table below compares Western BCU's recorded crime performance for the 12 month period October 2004 to September 2005 to the same period during 2003/04 and identifies its performance in relation to the MSBCU group.

Figure 5: Crime Reduction Performance Statistics				
	Performance Oct 04 to Sep 05	% Change from same period the previous year	MSBCU group mean	MSBCU group ranked position
Recorded crime per 1,000 population	67.27	+4.45%	63.88	9 out of 12
Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	5.97	+5.25%	6.12	6 out of 12
Recorded robberies per 1,000 population	0.19	-11.76%	0.21	2 out of 12
Recorded vehicle crime per 1,000 population	7.24	+7.37%	6.99	6 out of 12
Recorded violent crime per 1,000 population	13.34	+6.62%	11.98	7 out of 12

Note: This data is not validated and therefore is only provisional.

**2.32** Recorded crime has increased in all categories except robberies per 1,000 population where there has been a commendable reduction of just under 12%, placing Western in 2<sup>nd</sup> position of the 12 BCUs where data is available.

**2.33** For domestic burglaries per 1,000 households Western is 6<sup>th</sup> out of the 12 BCUs where data is available. Burglary dwelling is below the MSBCU group mean by just under 0.9 percentage points. Trend analysis indicates a considerable spike during August and September 2005 which the BCU attributes to a particular prolific offender and, since his recent arrest, the crime rate has returned to normal (October 2005). Excluding this inflated two month period, the BCU has consistently been below the MSBCU mean for some considerable time. Burglary dwelling was recently returned to the BCU's NIM control strategy to address concerns particularly in Mid Suffolk where distraction burglaries have been a problem, and the sector has experienced 142 burglary dwelling offences to the end of October compared to a target of just 85. Burglary statistics for October 2005 are more promising with only 6 such offences being committed against the monthly target of 12.

**2.34** Overall recorded crime and violent crime per 1,000 population are above the MSBCU group means and are positioned in the third quartile at 9<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respectively. Trend data indicates that the BCU has been just above or just below the



MSBCU mean for all crime since April 2004 - before that time the BCU was consistently below the mean.

**2.35** The BCU sets a target for 'more serious violence in a public place'. BCU data to the end of October indicates that targets are not being met in four of the six sectors (Bury St Edmunds and Bury rural being the only ones meeting the target), and the overall BCU target is just being missed (685 offences to the end of October compared to a target of 659 offences).

**2.36** Recorded vehicle crime per 1,000 population at 7.24 represents an increase on last year of over 7% which is above the group mean but places the BCU in mid table position. BCU data (considering performance since the beginning of this financial year) indicates only a slight (1.5%) increase on the same period in the previous year, and that the BCU is constantly below its set monthly targets. Only Mid Suffolk and Haverhill of the six sectors are giving any cause for concern (Mid Suffolk being 52 crimes above target to October 2005 and Haverhill showing a steady increase in offences).





**2.37** Criminal damage is an area of concern for the BCU (6.77% increase in 2004/05 at 3,912 offences compared to 3,647 offences in 2003/04), resulting in it being placed on the NIM control strategy and four dedicated teams (of two officers in each sector) have been established. Performance data on criminal damage is maintained and reviewed regularly. Three of the six sectors are considerably above targets set to the end of October:

- Bury rural having experienced 105 reported crimes compared to a target of 87;
- Bury St Edmunds had 711 reported crimes compared to a target of 587; and
- Haverhill had 555 offences compared to the target set at 435.

**2.38** Mid Suffolk and Newmarket also exceeded their targets with only Mildenhall having fewer offences reported than that set as a target (and that sector experienced an increase in October 2005).

**2.39** The inspection team, following discussions with a number of operational officers, considers that the majority of such crime is likely to be committed as a consequence of anti-social behaviour, but this should be subject to detailed analysis to establish a more accurate profile. If criminal damage offences are due to anti-social behaviour, the best opportunities for addressing reductions in this area are through community engagement and problem solving, rather than through the work of small criminal damage teams (with little resilience and limited opportunity to interact with the community).

**2.40** Overall, Western BCU's performance is slipping in several areas as illustrated in the box below and the BCU command team, through the NIM process (see Intelligence above) and community engagement, must give this its full attention.

<b>Good – Getting Better</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robbery per 1,000 population</li> </ul> 	<b>Good – Getting Worse</b> 
<b>Poor – Getting Better</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic burglary per 1,000 households</li> </ul> 	<b>Poor – Getting Worse</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total crime per 1,000 population</li> <li>Vehicle crime per 1,000 population</li> <li>Violent crime per 1,000 population</li> <li>Criminal Damage</li> </ul> 

## Crime Investigation

**2.41** The table below compares Western BCU’s detection and sanction detection rates for the twelve month period October 2004 to September 2005 to the same period during 2003/04 and identifies its performance in relation to the MSBCU group.

<b>Figure 6: Performance Statistics</b>				
	<b>Performance Oct 04 to Sep 05</b>	<b>% Change from same period the previous year</b>	<b>MSBCU group mean</b>	<b>MSBCU group ranked position</b>
<b>% Recorded crime detected</b>	31.17%	-0.2% pts	30.09%	4 out of 12
<b>% Recorded crime sanction detections</b>	24.21%	+2.6% pts	25.25%	9 out of 12
<b>% Domestic burglaries detected</b>	15.97%	-6.27% pts	19.82%	10 out of 12
<b>% Domestic burglary sanction detections</b>	12.98%	-5.59% pts	18.21%	10 out of 12
<b>% Robberies detected</b>	26.67%	-2.75% pts	27.64%	6 out of 12
<b>% Recorded robberies sanction detections</b>	26.67%	+5.10% pts	26.06%	6 out of 12
<b>% Vehicle crime detected</b>	16.98%	+9.61% pts	12.36%	1 out of 12
<b>% Vehicle crime sanction detections</b>	15.78%	+9.83% pts	11.48%	1 out of 12
<b>% Violent crime detected</b>	62.67%	- 2.99% pts	61.74%	8 out of 12
<b>% Violent crime sanction detections</b>	43.1%	+3% pts	48.57%	11 out of 12

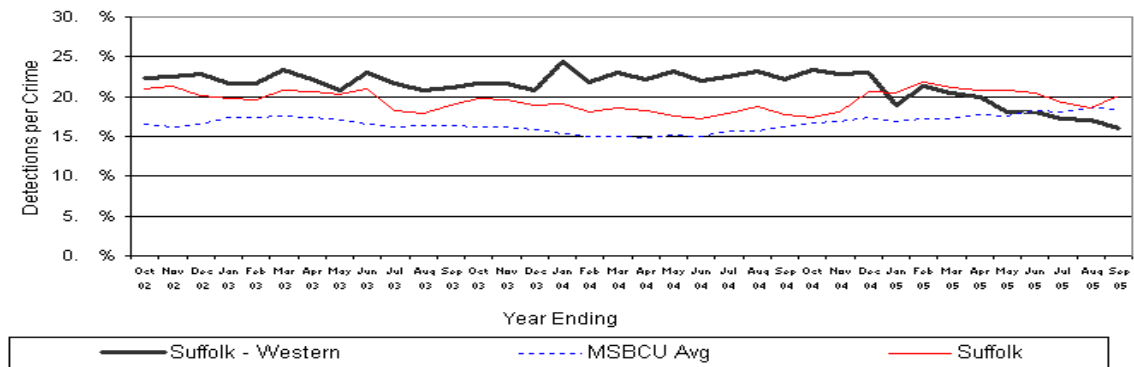
Note: This data is not validated and therefore is only provisional.

**2.42** The overall detection rate for recorded crime in Western BCU is at a healthy 30.09%, which places the BCU 4<sup>th</sup> of the 12 BCUs where data was available in the MSBCU group.

**2.43** The sanction detection rate has increased by 2.6 percentage points undoubtedly reflecting the sanction detection action plan developed by the crime manager (see below). At 25.25% this still only places the BCU in 9<sup>th</sup> position in the MSBCU group, but this is likely to improve as the plan matures and is consistently applied.

**2.44** Domestic burglary detection and sanction detection rates are of particular concern at only 15.97% and 12.98% respectively – both reducing by approximately six percentage points on the previous twelve months and placing the BCU in 10<sup>th</sup> position in the group.

**2.45** The chart below shows the deterioration of the burglary detection rate since December 2004 (black line) to a position where it is now below both the MSBCU and Force average.







Comparison Chart - Detections Per Crime Suffolk - Western Domestic Burglary 'Most Similar' BCUs 01 Oct 2002 - 30 Sep 2005

**2.46** The BCU command team’s decision to return burglary dwelling to the NIM control strategy in September was clearly much needed.

**2.47** Violent crime detection, at just under 63%, has slipped by almost three percentage points on the previous year, but is still above the MSBCU group mean by over one percentage point. The sanction detection rate is improving from a very low base of only 40.1% the previous year, to 43.1% this.

**2.48** The increases in both the detection rate and sanction detection rate for vehicle crime is commendable, both being approximately 4.5 percentage points above the MSBCU group mean and placing Western 1<sup>st</sup> in the MSBCU group in both categories.

**2.49** The diagram below clearly indicates where the BCU is having the greatest difficulty in maintaining a strong performance – sanction detection rates in most areas (except burglary dwelling) are improving, but a concerted effort is now required in several key areas of investigation.

<p><b>Good – Getting Better</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % Robbery sanction detects</li> <li>• % Vehicle crime detects</li> <li>• % Vehicle crime sanction detects</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Good – Getting Worse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % Violent crime detects</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Poor – Getting Better</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % Total crime sanction detects</li> <li>• % Violent crime sanction detects</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Poor – Getting Worse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % Domestic burglary detects</li> <li>• % Domestic burglary sanction detects</li> <li>• % Robbery detects</li> </ul> 

## Prisoner Processing Unit

**2.50** The command team has recently introduced (9 November 2005) a prisoner processing unit (PPU) at Bury St Edmunds police station servicing mainly prisoners accommodated at the Western BCU's main custody area (although, on occasions, they can be deployed to the outer sectors custody suites).

**2.51** The unit is managed by a sergeant and has an establishment of nine additional staff (six constables, one detective constable and two members of police staff who have been seconded from the HQ criminal justice unit based in Bury St Edmunds as enquiry officers).

**2.52** The remit of the unit is to interview and process prisoners, then complete a file of evidence for other than serious/major crime and release front line operational staff as quickly as is possible to street duty. Other benefits of the unit are anticipated to be:

- through experienced and dedicated staff, reduce the time spent by prisoners in custody from an estimated average of 7.4 hours to 4.2 hours (as experienced in the Ipswich pilot project);
- improve the quality and timeliness of file submission to reduce wasteful rework, better engage CPS in determining appropriate disposal through statutory charging and improve the possibility of a successful prosecution;
- deal more effectively with persistent offenders by improving the quality of interviews (conducted by experienced staff) in the interests of improved sanction detection rates;
- ensure that, through experience, officers only release appropriate advanced disclosure information and by so doing increase the possibility of a successful prosecution; and
- better identify opportunities to secure intelligence and to engage the central source handling unit early.

**2.53** An experienced evidence review officer is engaged early whenever a prisoner is handled by the PPU (and also advises other officers with their investigation). The evidence review officer has the following role:

- he/she sets the enquiry parameters;
- directs and co-ordinates specific actions to ensure the investigation/file preparation is thorough;
- provides advice to officers dealing with further enquiries regarding prisoners;
- following appropriate consultation with CPS and the custody officer, determines the appropriate disposal of a prisoner; and
- interviews prisoners, as appropriate, and assists with case building.

**2.54** Appropriate safeguards have been established to ensure probationary and other officers gain the necessary experience and retain skills (for example secondments to the unit).

**2.55** Although the unit had only been operating for two weeks at the time of the Inspection, it had already dealt with 66% of all prisoners accommodated at Bury St Edmunds (and 50% of all the BCU's prisoners), and had recorded 64 sanction detections. They had forwarded 25 specific intelligence submissions to the area intelligence unit and had successfully completed 8 remand files for prosecution. The head of the criminal justice unit and CPS solicitors based at Bury St Edmunds highly praised the unit and stated that it represents a considerable improvement.

**2.56** The two CJU police staff enquiry officers are very experienced retired police officers, and they feel that their remit should be extended to allow them to conduct interviews of prisoners and to support inexperienced officers in this way. Such a development would be in accordance with the modernisation agenda and offers considerable advantage to the BCU.

**2.57** Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary considers the establishment of the PPU to represent a considerable improvement for the BCU in the interests of more effective prisoner management, timeliness and quality of file preparation, and overall improvements in sanction detection rates. It also supports the development of community policing arrangements as it releases operational staff to street duties and should alleviate some pressures on community police officers being drawn into response policing. He commends the introduction of this unit and urges the command team to explore the opportunities for extending the role of enquiry officers.

#### Sanction Detection Action Plan

**2.58** The crime manager has developed a sanction detection action plan including the following elements:

- implementation of crime investigation service standards – setting standards for recording, investigating and reporting progress to victims of crime. In addition, setting timescales for resolution of crime investigations including a maximum time of 10 days to arrest a known suspect;
- endorsement of officers' PDRs with targets for intelligence submissions and sanction detections;
- 'improving sanction detections' to be a standing agenda item on sector and appropriate BCU-wide meetings;
- detective inspectors to monitor, action and report progress on forensic hits (see later);
- bail management – authorisation by a detective inspector to cancel bail attendance being mandatory and by a sergeant to extend bail – in both cases the reasoning to be challenged to ensure appropriateness;
- regular audits of overdue crimes;
- 'intelligence' questioning to be applied to all arrested persons;
- identifying a thorough process to ensure TICs are secured and have integrity (seven point plan);
- robust management of administrative detections;
- implementation of the criminal damage teams;

- PPOs to be allocated to zone teams to ensure attention is focused on them;
- PACE searches following arrest are progressed when appropriate;
- introduction of service standards regarding prisoner management;
- communication of the sanction detection plan to all sector staff; and
- effective crime auditing to ensure opportunities to detect crime are not lost.

**2.59** A matrix is maintained for each sector to monitor progress against the plan and the inspection team undertook a number of ‘reality checks’ to ensure staff had a good understanding of the demands of the plan – on every occasion this proved positive.

**2.60** In respect of PDR entries, the demise of the system has negated any benefits of this action (see PDR above).

**2.61** Monitoring procedures of forensic hits (DNA, fingerprints and footprints) differed between the three sectors, and there was a large number of outstanding cases where apparently a suspect had yet to be detained. There were a total of 81 outstanding forensic hits at the end of October 2005 for five of the six sectors. Data for the sixth sector was not available. It was explained to the inspection team that forensic hits had to be prioritised as a large number of hits referred to cases where the sample identified came from a person with legitimate access to the crime scene.

**2.62** **Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary considers the sanction detection plan to be very thorough and worthwhile and congratulates the crime manager for its development and promulgation. The command team must address the issue within scene management, of securing elimination samples from those with legitimate access. Unless addressed, this leads to considerable wasted time and effort that could be better expanded on investigating genuine forensic hits, and this will become more acute as the policy is to take DNA samples from all those in detention to increase positive forensic identifications.**

## Summary

**2.63** The BCU enjoys a degree of devolved responsibility having financial control in most areas (with the notable exception of police salaries) and most operational resources. Roads policing and armed response have recently been the subject of a Force strategic review and debate at corporate level which has resulted in the current arrangement (managed centrally) being sustained.

**2.64** There are suitable accountability structures in place for the BCU through monthly performance review meetings with the ACC and recently introduced BCU inspections headed by the Chief Constable and deputy chief constable. Performance management within the BCU to sector inspector level is effectively supported by a comprehensive and extremely useful local management information pack. Accountability for performance below sector inspector is less structured, with the exception of the DTM. Crime is increasing in most key crime categories except robbery where there has been a commendable 12% reduction. The overall detection rate at approximately 30% is being sustained and the overall sanction detection rate is improving and close to the target set by the Force. Vehicle crime detection and

vehicle crime sanction detections place the BCU 1<sup>st</sup> in the MSBCU group, and this is commendable. Other key crime areas, most notably burglary dwelling, are not as strong, but this has been recognised and several improvements made by the command team. Burglary dwelling has returned to the NIM control strategy. A comprehensive sanction detection action plan has been implemented and the introduction of the prisoner processing unit are the main developments that offer sustainable improvements.

**2.65** The administration manager has developed a strategic financial plan that ties into intended district policing developments and necessary improvements to the estate. However, custody provision is a major drawback in Western BCU and improvement cannot wait until the collaborative (three force) PFI project delivers new facilities by 2009 at the earliest. The current custody provision is undoubtedly unnecessarily abstracting operational staff from street duties (sergeants and constables), and leaving response officers with less supervision at times of greatest demand. It is also leading to officers not taking positive action by not making arrests early when otherwise they would do so and, consequently, may be adding to increases in public disorder and key crime categories. In addition, the BCU's budget for transport costs is overspending and continual transportation of prisoners across the BCU does not assist. Short-term improvements can be achieved by better planning for peak times such as Friday and Saturday evenings and a medium-term business plan is needed to increase cell capacity at Bury St Edmunds. Increased capacity at that station would alleviate most of the problems and have the considerable added benefit of making best use of the prisoner process unit in the interests of more professional handling of prisoners, file preparation and increased performance in key crime areas.

**2.66** The inspection team considers demand management could be improved by making appointments for non-urgent calls for service and reviewing the current screening of crime. These would better focus activity and support both crime investigation and increased capacity for community policing. The introduction of four small criminal damage teams is recognised by the BCU Commander as a short-term solution and that more sophisticated community policing arrangements offer more sustainable improvement. The BCU plans to move to a district policing model offers considerable opportunities and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary welcomes the intention to increase community engagement and better use the wider police family. It is evident that the partnerships are strong and offer an effective platform for the future. In particular, Western Compass, the drug intervention and treatment programme, is fully supported and this is considered by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary a very effective and worthwhile initiative.

**2.67** The NIM processes are, in the main, effective but could be streamlined, simplified and make better use of analytical capability held on the BCU. In addition, there are clearly issues to be addressed in respect of the personal development review process and the prioritisation and delivery of training in support of policing objectives.

**2.68** Overall, the inspection team was very impressed by the leadership, professionalism and clear sense of duty displayed by all members of the BCU. In



particular, there was a knowledge and understanding of what the command team was trying to achieve and support for the way that it was trying to improve performance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary makes five recommendations:

**1.** The BCU command team, following consultation with the pathfinder project team, chief officers, its own staff, partner agencies, and local communities, finalises and implements its district policing model.

[Para 1.33 refers]

**2.** That the BCU command team develops both short-term and medium-term plans to alleviate the problems being caused by the current custody suite limitations.

[Para 1.55 refers]

**3.** That the BCU command team determines the consistent use of the agreed corporate duty management system. This is in the interests of improved advanced duty planning, effective oversight of a BCU-wide resource and to support possible implementation of an appointments system for non-urgent calls for service.

[Para 1.66 refers]

**4.** That the BCU command team undertakes a review of training provision across the BCU to ensure local training needs are able to be dynamically identified, prioritised and delivered to all relevant personnel within the BCU. Such a review should include consideration of roles and responsibilities to ensure BCU personnel are able to receive high quality local training, having consideration of, and support for, business plan priorities.

[Para 1.114 refers]

**5.** That the command team undertakes a review of the TT&CG processes and threat assessment to simplify the structures and ensure the BCU effectively utilises the skilled analytical and evaluation capability available. This to better inform decision-making in relation to control strategy priorities, and raise awareness and understanding of sector supervisors of the role of the analysts and relevant analytical products available.

[Para 2.26 refers]

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