



HMIC Inspection Report
West Mercia Constabulary
Neighbourhood Policing
Developing Citizen Focus Policing

September 2008



West Mercia Constabulary – HMIC Inspection

September 2008

ISBN: 978-1-84726-810-5

CROWN COPYRIGHT

FIRST PUBLISHED 2008

Contents

Introduction to HMIC Inspections
HMIC Business Plan for 2008/09
Programmed Frameworks
Statutory Performance Indicators and Key Diagnostic Indicators
Developing Practice
The Grading Process
Force Overview and Context
Force Performance Overview

Findings

Neighbourhood Policing

Developing Citizen Focus Policing

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Appendix 2 Assessment of Outcomes Using Statutory Performance Indicator Data

Introduction to HMIC Inspections

For a century and a half, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been charged with examining and improving the efficiency of the police service in England and Wales, with the first HM Inspectors (HMIs) being appointed under the provisions of the County and Borough Police Act 1856. In 1962, the Royal Commission on the Police formally acknowledged HMIC's contribution to policing.

HMIs are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Home Secretary and report to HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, who is the Home Secretary's principal professional policing adviser and is independent of both the Home Office and the police service. HMIC's principal statutory duties are set out in the Police Act 1996. For more information, please visit HMIC's website at <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/>.

In 2006, HMIC conducted a broad assessment of all 43 Home Office police forces in England and Wales, examining 23 areas of activity. This baseline assessment had followed a similar process in 2005, and thus created a rich evidence base of strengths and weaknesses across the country. However, it is now necessary for HMIC to focus its inspection effort on those areas of policing that are not data-rich and where qualitative assessment is the only feasible way of judging both current performance and the prospects for improvement. This, together with the critical factor that HMIC should concentrate its scrutiny on high-risk areas of policing – in terms of risk both to the public and to the service's reputation – pointed inexorably to a focus on what are known collectively as 'protective services'. In addition, there is a need to apply professional judgement to some key aspects of leadership and governance, where some quantitative measures exist but a more rounded assessment is appropriate.

Having reached this view internally, HMIC consulted key stakeholders, including the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). A consensus emerged that HMIC could add greater value by undertaking more probing inspections of fewer topics. Stakeholders concurred with the emphasis on protective services but requested that Neighbourhood Policing remain a priority for inspection until there is evidence that it has been embedded in everyday police work.

HMIC uses a rigorous and transparent methodology to conduct its inspections and reach conclusions and judgements. All evidence is gathered, verified and then assessed against specific grading criteria (SGC) drawn from an agreed set of national (ACPO-developed) standards. However, the main purpose of inspection is not to make judgements but to drive improvements in policing. Both professional and lay readers are urged, therefore, to focus not on the headline grades but on the opportunities for improvement identified within the text of this report.

HMIC Business Plan for 2008/09

HMIC's business plan (available at <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/business-plan/>) reflects our continued focus on:

- protective services – including the management of public order, civil contingencies and critical incidents as phase 3 of the programme in autumn 2008/spring 2009;
- counter-terrorism – including all elements of the national CONTEST strategy;

- strategic services – such as information management and professional standards; and
- the embedding of Neighbourhood Policing.

HMIC's priorities for the coming year are set in the context of the wide range of strategic challenges that face both the police service and HMIC, including the need to increase service delivery against a backdrop of reduced resources. With this in mind, the business plan for 2008/09 includes for the first time a 'value for money' plan that relates to the current Comprehensive Spending Review period (2008–11).

Our intention is to move to a default position where we do not routinely carry out all-force inspections, except in exceptional circumstances; we expect to use a greater degree of risk assessment to target activity on those issues and areas where the most severe vulnerabilities exist, where most improvement is required or where the greatest benefit to the service can be gained through the identification of best practice.

The recent Green Paper on policing – *From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our Communities Together* – proposes major changes to the role of HMIC. We are currently working through the implications to chart a way forward, and it will not be until the late Autumn when we are able to communicate how this will impact on the future approach and inspection plans. In the meantime, we have now commenced work covering the areas of critical incident management, public order and civil contingencies/emergency planning – which will conclude in early 2009. In consultation with ACPO portfolio holders and a range of relevant bodies (such as the Cabinet Office in respect of civil contingency work) we have conducted an assessment of risk, threat and demand and, based on this, we will focus on those forces where we can add most value. We will also commence a series of police authority inspections in April 2009, which will follow a pilot process from November 2008 through to January 2009.

Programmed Frameworks

During phase 2 of HMIC's inspection programme, we examined force responses to major crime, serious and organised crime, Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing in each of the 43 forces of England and Wales.

This document includes the full graded report for the Neighbourhood Policing inspection and Developing Citizen Focus Policing inspection.

Neighbourhood Policing

The public expect and require a safe and secure society, and it is the role of the police, in partnership, to ensure provision of such a society. The HMIC inspection of Neighbourhood Policing implementation assesses the impact on neighbourhoods together with identified developments for the future.

The piloting of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) between April 2003 and 2005 led to the Neighbourhood Policing programme launch by ACPO in April 2005.

There has been considerable commitment and dedication from key partners, from those in neighbourhood teams and across communities to deliver Neighbourhood Policing in every area. This includes over £1,000 million of government investment (2003–09), although funding provision beyond 2009 is unclear.

The NRPP evaluation highlighted three key activities for successful Neighbourhood Policing, namely:

- the consistent presence of dedicated neighbourhood teams capable of working in the community to establish and maintain control;
- intelligence-led identification of community concerns with prompt, effective, targeted action against those concerns; and
- joint action and problem solving with the community and other local partners, improving the local environment and quality of life.

To date, the Neighbourhood Policing programme has recruited over 16,000 police community support officers (PCSOs), who, together with 13,000 constables and sergeants, are dedicated by forces to 3,600 neighbourhood teams across England and Wales.

This report further supports Sir Ronnie Flanagan's *Review of Policing* (2008), which considers that community safety must be at the heart of local partnership working, bringing together different agencies in a wider neighbourhood management approach.

Developing Citizen Focus Policing

Citizen Focus policing is about developing a culture where the needs and priorities of the citizen are understood by staff and are always taken into account when designing and delivering policing services.

Sir Ronnie Flanagan's *Review of Policing* emphasised the importance of focusing on the treatment of individuals during existing processes: this is one of the key determinants of satisfaction.

A sustained commitment to quality and customer need is essential to enhance satisfaction and confidence in policing, and to build trust and further opportunities for active engagement with individuals, thereby building safer and more secure communities.

This HMIC inspection of Developing Citizen Focus Policing is the first overall inspection of this agenda and provides a baseline for future progress. One of the key aims of the inspection was to identify those forces that are showing innovation in their approach, to share effective practice and emerging learning. A key challenge for the service is to drive effective practice more widely and consistently, thereby improving the experience for people in different areas.

Latest data reveals that, nationally, there have been improvements in satisfaction with the overall service provided. However, the potential exists to further enhance customer experience and the prospect of victims and other users of the policing service reporting consistently higher satisfaction levels. All the indications show that sustained effort is required over a period of years to deliver the highest levels of satisfaction; this inspection provides an insight into the key aspects to be addressed. It is published in the context of the recent Green Paper *From the Neighbourhood to the National – Policing our Communities Together* and other reports, which all highlight the priorities of being accountable and responsive to local people. The longer-term investment in Neighbourhood Policing and the benefits of Neighbourhood Management have provided an evidence base for the broad Citizen Focus agenda.

Statutory Performance Indicators and Key Diagnostic Indicators

In addition to the inspection of forces, HMIC has drawn on published data in the Policing Performance Assessment Frameworks (PPAFs) published between March 2005 and March 2008 as an indicator of outcomes for both Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing.

The statutory performance indicators (SPIs) and key diagnostic indicator (KDI) that are most appropriate to indicate outcomes for the public and are used to inform this inspection are set out below:

Neighbourhood Policing

- SPI 2a – the percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job.
- KDI – the percentage of people who ‘agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area’.
- SPI 10b – the percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour in their area.

Developing Citizen Focus Policing

- SPI 1e – satisfaction of victims of domestic burglary, violent crime, vehicle crime and road traffic collisions with the overall service provided by the police.
- SPI 3b – a comparison of satisfaction rates for white users with those for users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided.

Forces are assessed in terms of their performance compared with the average for their most similar forces (MSF) and whether any difference is statistically significant. Statistical significance can be explained in lay terms as follows: ‘The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.’ A more detailed description of how statistical significance has been used is included in Appendix 2 at the end of this report.

Developing Practice

In addition to assessing force performance, one of HMIC’s key roles is to identify and share good practice across the police service. Much good practice is identified as HMIC conducts its assessments and is reflected (described as a ‘strength’) in the body of the report. In addition, each force is given the opportunity to submit more detailed examples of its good practice. HMIC has therefore, in some reports, selected suitable examples and included them in the report. The key criteria for each example are that the work has been evaluated by the force and the good practice is easily transferable to other forces; each force has provided a contact name and telephone number or email address, should further information be required. HMIC has not conducted any independent evaluation of the examples of good practice provided.

The Grading Process

HMIC has moved to a new grading system based on the national standards; forces will be deemed to be meeting the standard, exceeding the standard or failing to meet the standard.

Meeting the standard

HMIC uses the standards agreed with key stakeholders including ACPO, the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and the Home Office as the basis for SGC. The standards for Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing are set out in those sections of this report, together with definitions for exceeding the standard and failing to meet the standard.

Force Overview and Context

West Mercia constabulary has:

- 5 BCUs;
- 145 Neighbourhood Policing Teams;
- 485 Officers dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing;
- 271.8 PCSOs dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing;
- Is a member of 11 CDRPs (known as Community Safety Partnerships) which cover the force area.

2007 represented a significant milestone in the Force's history, during which we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the formation of West Mercia Constabulary from the constituent forces of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire and Worcester City Police.

West Mercia's strong national reputation has been built upon the dedication and commitment of generations of police officers, police staff and volunteers who have served their communities well over the last 40 years. The dedication and commitment was clearly apparent in the selfless and courageous actions of PC Ricky Gray, who tragically lost his life in an incident in Shrewsbury in May 2007, whilst protecting his unarmed colleagues and members of the public from a man armed with a firearm.

Geographical description of force area

West Mercia Constabulary covers an area of 7428 square kilometres (2,868 square miles), the fourth largest police area in England and Wales. The area is a blend of sparse rural areas and more densely populated cities and towns such as Worcester and Shrewsbury. Situated at the heart of the country, West Mercia borders a significant number of neighbouring police forces including West Midlands, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Dyfed Powys and North Wales.

Demographic description of force area

West Mercia Constabulary has a population of 1.181,900 people, of which 2.3% are of minority ethnic origin.

Strategic priorities

The force's strategic priorities for 2008–11 include the following:

The current West Mercia Strategy is entitled '*4000 + an even better place*'.

The strategy outlines:

- How the force intends to deliver - by the four tracks of policing.
- What the force intends to deliver - i.e. the four better outcomes
- What successes will be built upon, i.e. the four key principles

In setting the four better outcomes for 2007/08 and again into this policing year, the Chief Constable and Police Authority have:

- listened to community feedback, not only through the established Police Authority channels, but also via extensive surveys, PACT meetings and other means of engagement. As a result there is less emphasis on volume crime detection and an increased focus on satisfaction and confidence;
- recognised that policing is becoming increasingly complex, with challenges in dealing in everything from counter terrorism to anti-social behaviour at a local level. This has resulted in a widening of the performance focus to encompass the whole spectrum of policing;
- recognised the shift in emphasis at the national level, and sought to embrace APACS as a broader, more holistic performance framework.

Taking these and other drivers into account in April 2007, the force launched new four better outcomes as follows:

- Tackling Crime
- Promoting Community Safety
- Improving Satisfaction and Confidence
- Protecting the Public

Priority goals and initiatives for 2008 -2011 include:

- The establishment of local policing teams who will be visible, accessible and will address those issues of greatest concern to local communities.
- The development of partners and communities together (PACT) to enable partners and the public to work closely with West Mercia in identifying and dealing with local issues.
- Ensuring the powers and tactics available to tackle anti-social behaviour are used widely and wisely, in response to community needs.
- To use the results of public satisfaction results to identify and address the elements of West Mercia's service that are most likely to lead to satisfaction.
- Making relevant information available to the public, targeting it towards specific groups and communities when necessary.
- Working with criminal justice agencies focusing on the service provided to victims and witnesses, aiming to improve satisfaction levels and confidence in the criminal justice system.
- Promoting a strong image of West Mercia Constabulary through raising awareness of style, values, people and successes.
- Demonstrating how local policing is addressing community priorities and providing a more responsive, accountable service.
- Ensuring that any complaints and civil claims received from the public are actioned and dealt with and that necessary organisational and individual learning is actioned.

- Using local policing communications to raise awareness and confidence and provide reassurance that action is being taken to address local issues of concern.

Force Performance Overview

Force development since the 2007 inspections

Building upon past successes, the Constabulary's strong performance in the broadest sense was recognised by very positive reports from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) (Baseline Assessment), the Home Office (in relation to the Policing Performance Assessment Framework PPAF) and the Audit Commission in respect of the Police Use of Resources Evaluation (PURE).

The force, together with local authority partners, other criminal justice agencies and local communities is committed to making life difficult for people who commit crime and seek to prey upon the more vulnerable members of society.

There were 1.9% fewer crimes recorded in 2007/08 compared to 2006 / 07. This brings crime down to its lowest level for four years, a reduction of 24.8% during the period. The British Crime Survey comparator focuses on the crimes that people worry about the most. These include robbery, burglary, and criminal damage and vehicle crime. There were 3% fewer of these types of crimes recorded in 2007/08 compared with 2006/07. Recorded violent crime, a concern at a national level, also fell across West Mercia by 0.6% year on year.

The investment in Neighbourhood Policing contributed significantly to a 9.2% reduction in recorded anti-social behaviour incidents, with 9040 fewer reports in 2007/08 compared to the previous year.

Notwithstanding the strong performance in the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, the force acknowledges that there is room for improvement in terms of increasing the satisfaction and confidence of those people who are victims of crime.

The force places great importance on listening to the needs and concerns of local people and ensuring that they have a voice in how their local policing area is policed. During the last year all user satisfaction surveys have been transferred from paper based surveys to telephone interviews and a 'feedback loop' to divisions has been implemented.

For the year 2007/08 the force set a target for overall satisfaction with service received of 82.8%, this target was reached with 83% of respondents reporting that they were completely or very satisfied with the service provided with the force. However, in 2008/09 the force is committed to doing more to improve the follow up service provided to victims of crime.

Progress made following the publication of HMIC Major Crime inspection report July 2007

The HMIC inspection of major crime included the recommendation that urgent steps should be taken to ensure victims of rape and serious sexual assault have acceptable and timely access to trained officers at the time of initial reporting, and effective co-ordination and supervision of sexual offences liaison officers (SOLOs) be implemented. Since inspection activity in November 2007 some progress has been made, co-ordinated through the rape steering group chaired by the ACC (specialist operations). A detective sergeant has been seconded to headquarters crime support to progress the action plan who is working with statutory and voluntary agencies, other forces and specialist advisors.

Improvements achieved by August 2008 include the provision of awareness training to call handlers and student officers, the availability of early evidence kits, the use of policy books by investigators and a training needs analysis has been conducted to develop an input for all front line officers and supervisors. Some 40 officers have been identified to receive bespoke training in sexual offences who will then provide a specialist investigative and victim focussed response at the time of reporting to all victims, but this training is not due to commence until the Autumn 2008. Once trained these officers will provide a 24/7 response through an on-call system, and be co-ordinated by the central DS. Work is also underway to improve the examination suites and provide additional specialist training to forensic medical examiners. While progress is acknowledged, until such time that the recommendation is fully addressed and the action plan completed this remains an area of risk to the force.

Neighbourhood Policing

The overall aim of Neighbourhood Policing is to achieve confident and secure neighbourhoods by providing communities with greater access, influence, intervention and answers. There has also been significant progress in the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing across West Mercia. 2007/08 saw all 145 Policing Teams embedded, providing a visible and accessible and reassuring policing presence to communities.

Performance of the Neighbourhood Policing teams is closely monitored. Through the PACT forums, LPTs work with communities to understand and tackle the issues affecting their specific area. Each Local Policing Team should have three local current priorities agreed and set and in 2007/08 87.6% of local policing areas had three or more priorities set.

Citizen Focus

In December 2007, the force's joint community strategy was reviewed. It has five key objectives:

- Meaningful and reassuring interaction between the force and the public.
- Meaningful and reassuring interaction between the police authority and the public.
- Gathering and taking into account public opinion.
- Providing feedback and information to the public.
- Working with partners to deliver co-ordinated and effective action.

Improvements have included rebranding the community engagement arrangements as 'Policing Matters' groups and introducing new style public meetings monitored by divisional policing boards, with representatives from the Police Authority, divisional command, representatives of the CSP, PACT meetings, neighbourhood watch, elected member representation and other relevant persons or groups.

Significant improvements have been made to call management procedures, including the opening of a new Call Management Centre, serving the north of the force in April 2008.

WMC has invested heavily in a programme entitled 'speaks quality' which seeks to provide advice, guidance and support to all frontline staff in delivering a high quality service and re-engineered its approach to surveying victims of crime as a result of feedback. Additional questions to those required for national standards have been included to provide specific feedback on call handling procedures.

Protective Services

January 2008 also saw the successful completion of a hugely ambitious two year £2.9m investment programme aimed at strengthening the force's capability and capacity to respond effectively to the serious and resource intensive challenges that pose a threat and cause harm to communities. Delivered in early 2008 and ahead of time, the programme has significantly increased the ability to combat the demands caused by major crime and critical incidents, serious and organised crime, civil contingencies and the threat of terrorism.

In August 2007, the Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith opened new specialist crime facilities at Defford, Worcestershire. The £4m investment has provided a new operational base for operational police officers and staff working in the Forces' Serious and Organised Crime Unit (SOCU), Special Branch (SB) and Covert Authorities Bureau (CAB).

Neighbourhood Policing

2007/08 Neighbourhood Policing Summary of judgement	Meeting the standard
--	-----------------------------

Meeting the standard

Following the moderation process, West Mercia Constabulary was assessed as meeting the standard. Neighbourhood policing has been implemented to a consistent standard across the force.

Summary statement

The force is deploying across all its basic command units (BCUs), the right people in the right place at the right times to ensure its neighbourhoods are appropriately staffed.

Strengths

- The positive initial investment in setting up the structure and distribution of local policing teams (LPTs) has resulted in little alteration or redrafting of neighbourhood boundaries since they were set up. In total, 145 LPTs are aligned with local ward boundaries and operate to deliver Neighbourhood Policing to citizens. Each policing area is being reviewed by a central team to ensure that initial decisions are still valid.
- There is a high degree of confidence from senior managers, LPT staff and community safety partners that the pattern of delivery of local policing is a good fit with local needs. Information about crimes and incidents in every area is routinely compared with community concerns and used to judge whether the level of resources engaged in local policing is correct. The strategy performance and communications department uses five separate resource allocation models to assist in determining the overall distribution of officers and community support officers (CSOs).
- Some 485 staff are engaged in the delivery of local policing, equating to 18% of the total available resources. There are 147 local policing officers (LPOs) and 267 CSOs shown on the establishment. Each neighbourhood has a named contact and details of the inspector, sergeant, PC(s) and CSOs are published for each LPT area. Force policy requires all LPT staff to have their photograph on the internet to enhance visibility and familiarity with team members. Pictures are also on the internet and in posters and pamphlets to promote local policing. As part of the inspection process numerous enquiries were made at enquiry offices and calls were made to the contact centre to check the availability of information about the identity of local policing staff in various LPT areas. In all cases the names of staff and details of the next opportunity to publicly meet with them were supplied.
- There is clear evidence of an active approach to anticipating forthcoming recruitment needs within the LPTs; area managers feel there has been some significant progress. In one team, four long serving LPOs were about to retire. Plans were already in hand to fill these roles to provide continuity of service to the public.

- Some local policing posts are not attracting a sufficient number of applicants. Managers believe that this is due to the significant workload and demands that such a posting involves. Divisional commanders are recognising the value of experience in local policing in divisional promotion processes to encourage others to volunteer for this role. Road shows have also been organised on divisions by the learning and development department to explain the training and role requirements to potential applicants. Some officers have shown greater levels of interest as a result, but numbers attending were not as high as expected.
- There have been accurate predictions about the number of CSOs who wished to pursue their career in the constabulary as police officers. This transition of staff between roles has assisted the recruitment and training of replacement CSOs which is adequately planned and budgeted for. The recruitment of CSOs into the constabulary has been received positively by the community. Divisional managers have recognised this effect and are working to build better continuity in local arrangements such as handover briefings and shorter gaps between appointments of replacement staff.
- The inspection found strong compliance with the policy that LPT staff should not be abstracted other than in emergency situations or with the express permission of the divisional commander. There is also a good level of general understanding of the role of the LPTs from both divisional and headquarters staff. The large geographical area of some divisions resulted in LPTs providing greater levels of support to response officers, but decisions to use local policing staff in this manner are rationalised and they predominantly remain in the boundaries of their LPT.
- The assistant chief constable (ACC) (territorial operations (TO)) overviews long-term abstractions from LPTs following comments in a previous inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). Long-term sickness, maternity leave and secondments to other roles are regularly reviewed at the bi-monthly local policing champions' meeting.
- A corporate model has been constructed to assess both police data and the way the community views its policing needs. A crime/worry matrix uses information from 22 indicators and is employed to profile each local policing area according to its crime levels and community perceptions of crime. It suggests the type and frequency of engagement that will be the most effective, recognising that the approach taken should meet the needs of the community and that 'one size does not fit all'. A simple colour coding is generated as a summary to inform the appropriate resource level for each of the 145 areas.
- Neighbourhood or local profiles have been built up from the initial analysis of staffing need. The views of the public, obtained through an annual crime and safety survey where 11,500 residents responded, are included in the profiles alongside community intelligence collected by LPTs. The survey is conducted jointly by the constabulary, police authority, 11 crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) covering the 13 local authority areas, the Worcestershire substance misuse action team and the safer roads partnership. A considerable amount of relevant material is available in these documents to assist existing LPT staff or individuals joining a team. These profiles are used to provide continuity of professional knowledge whenever changes to personnel occur.

- Deployment decisions are the responsibility of divisional commanders who allocate resources and individuals to LPTs to meet local need. While there is no corporate framework to direct that staff must be deployed in response to neighbourhood profiles, local priorities and demand, there is evidence of specific postings to match skills of officers to meet the needs of emerging and minority communities.
- A key tool in assessing the required changes of policing response to neighbourhoods is a purpose designed local policing database available on the intranet. The database contains details of the locality, staffing and duties of LPOs and CSOs, engagements with the public (including local priorities), crime and incident data, priority offenders, persistent young offenders, violent and sex offenders register (ViSOR) information and prison releases. Officers are able to update the site, which in turn directly updates the external internet site. Submissions can be made directly into the intelligence system and future additions are planned, including information on persistent young offenders, anti-social behaviour orders, curfew and bail information. Direct access to all other operational systems is available using the Genie search tool. Other forces have used the West Mercia model to improve their own local policing intranet sites and both HMIC and the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) have cited this in published documents as an example of developing practice.
- The overall ethnicity profile of LPTs closely matches that of the resident communities across the force area. Good use is being made of existing staff with language skills such as a Polish speaker in South Worcestershire addressing a meeting of Polish community members.
- Formal recognition of the learning of team members during the initial course is achieved through a linkage with the Chartered Institute of Management. Centred around the way LPOs supervise the CSOs on their teams, a qualification similar to that available under the National Vocational Qualification Scheme is awarded. To assist some LPOs new to this type of activity, additional support is provided to guide them through the scheme.
- Training provided to all new police officers is linked to the work of the LPTs. Early stage placements occur during student officer training to ensure that the skills and insights fundamental to working in neighbourhoods are developed. Problem solving tasks and engagement with schools are active components of this approach. An understanding of Neighbourhood Policing is being built up in all officers in this way and their work accredited through the University of Teesside at degree level.
- Benefits also result from the way newly recruited CSOs and officers are jointly trained for the first seven weeks of their service. A 'one team' ethos is promoted by this approach and efficiency savings are generated if a CSO subsequently joins as a police officer. The seven weeks is accredited as prior learning and the officer can join the programme at a more advanced stage. The same mechanism operates if an LPO is promoted to sergeant. Local policing training is recognised as part of the Core Leadership Development Programme, completed by all on promotion.
- Since initial training, a number of additional training sessions have occurred for both CSOs and LPOs. South Worcestershire division has organised training days on a regular basis, and in the Telford area meetings of local officers took place within the division to allow sharing of good practice. West Mercia Constabulary (WMC) is building up and promoting a SHARE (schools, hits, advertising, risk reduction and

environment) database for neighbourhood officers, which allows, as its title suggests, good practice to be collated and viewed across the five divisions. It also enables staff to input questions, perform free text searching, order advertising literature and download information.

- The central support team produces training material at two distinct levels of detail. There is a range of clear and concise 'quick start' guides on the subjects of engagement with communities, postcards, surveys, officer surgeries and face-to-face meetings. These contain the basic essentials of the way to conduct these activities and are also accessible to those not involved in local policing but wanting to understand these processes. Also available on the internal intranet are 'how to' guides, which explain all of these local policing techniques and skills in far more detail to improve the practice of specialists in this area.
- One of the four principles for the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing is that each LPT will be led by a nominated supervisor who is responsible for overseeing the work of the team and establishing formal links with partner agencies. The constabulary matches the strong investment in local policing staff with proportionate levels of supervisory ranks. The proportions and working practices of local supervisors was subject of positive commentary during inspection activity as staff felt they were largely appropriate and fit for purpose. In total there are 18 inspectors and 46 sergeants in this role, giving an average ratio of sergeants to PCs and CSOs of 1:11. This supervision ratio is enhanced further as LPOs direct and manage the CSOs on their teams, including taking responsibility for CSO performance development reviews (PDRs). The ratio of sergeants to inspectors varies across the force to meet different needs; for example there are high numbers of sergeants to relatively low numbers of staff in both North Worcestershire and Herefordshire BCUs. In these areas the ratio reduces to around 1:6.
- In each division, inspectors with responsibility for LPTs are known as geographic inspectors. The importance of the geographic role has been underlined with the creation of two new posts in the Telford and Wrekin area. In this area it was acknowledged that the strong unitary authority and partnership links required additional police management focus. Many inspectors saw this as positive evidence of the organisation valuing their role.
- LPT inspectors are supervised by a chief inspector dedicated to developing and improving the delivery of local policing. The chief inspectors meet bi-monthly with the ACC (TO) to form the 'champions group'.
- Local supervisors are keenly aware of the role LPOs have in both the prevention of terrorism and the building of community cohesion. They routinely performance manage the quality and rate of intelligence submissions by their staff through the local policing database, emphasising the importance of maintaining effective key individual networks in their areas.
- The local policing database provides an effective tracking tool for supervisors, who can effectively monitor activity in a neighbourhood through the information recorded on it by staff members. The detail of each meeting with the public and the primary outcomes are required to be entered. The target of one formal engagement event to be held every three months on an area is one way of measuring the work of the team.

- All LPOs are awarded a special priority payment (SPP) in recognition of the additional responsibilities of the role. While the SPP scheme is reviewed on an annual basis, the importance of this remuneration is included in the local policing policy which stipulates that LPOs performing this role should receive an award, thus reflecting an intention to permanently reward this category of officers.
- Each of the local policing courses has been opened either by the ACC (TO) or an Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) colleague. This has reinforced to staff the importance of the training but also provided ACPO with the opportunity to thank officers personally for undertaking this role.
- Ceremonies to recognise achievement, the quality people awards, are held annually, and include separate awards for the LPT of the year and CSO of the year as well as divisional awards and a High Sheriff's award for the Special Constabulary. These achievements are well publicised both internally and through the public media.
- There are numerous divisional level events and ceremonies to recognise success in the delivery of local policing. The division piloting the use of volunteers in many areas of neighbourhood work has scheduled an evening to celebrate the contribution of members of the public over the last year. The police authority supports the force awards structure, and the chair sponsors a divisional award in Herefordshire. The authority is considering further awards as a way of underlining its commitment in support of local policing and community engagement.

Work in progress

- Developments in local government, with the potential emergence of new unitary authorities, have prompted consultation and planning with key partners on continuity in local policing. Mapping is currently taking place to trace where re-designation of neighbourhoods may be necessary in the Shropshire and Telford areas. A wider review of all the local policing areas is expected to reveal where changes in circumstances require an adaptation of the area size or make up of the LPT.
- A new post is being established to make additional crime data available to the public in line with the new public service agreements. It should act as a springboard for a more dynamic process for updating local policing profiles and making them available to the public. The local policing champions group is considering how ownership of the profiles can be transferred from headquarters to those managing the immediate delivery of local policing.
- A pilot scheme in the use of volunteers is running in one division where unpaid members of the public have been recruited to assist in a number of tasks which support policing. These tasks include assisting with community engagement, front enquiry office work and the scenes of crime department. The division has not only added to its capacity to respond in certain key areas but also benefits from the perspectives of these members of the public about the way it delivers policing services. A decision will be made in the near future as to whether this scheme will be adopted force wide.
- Members of the Special Constabulary are deployed differently across divisions. In some areas, Special Constables are completely aligned to LPTs and support local problem solving initiatives but in other areas they are deployed to assist the response teams. As the numbers of Special Constabulary officers are at the lowest

for some time an initiative is under way to scope a fresh approach to their deployment, recruitment and training. This action should deliver the recommendation contained in a previous inspection report to maximise the contribution of the Special Constabulary by focusing their efforts into helping to deliver the local policing priorities.

- The learning and development department has had an excellent record in responding to the needs and emerging requirements of the local policing project. Strong consultation took place that resulted in a series of well constructed and practically relevant courses provided to LPT staff over a two week period. While attendance on the course was mandatory, such training has not been available to new staff joining LPTs. Work is in progress to develop such training.
- Consideration is currently being given to adopting an employer-supported policing policy, which would grant time to police staff members to conduct duties as a Special Constable while being paid for their ordinary employment. This will serve to act as recognition of the individual's commitment to both areas of responsibility and ensure that duties are not completely conducted in the individual's free time.

Areas for improvement

- Before concluding the current review of local policing areas, there should be direct consultation with both the communities affected by any proposed changes and the LPTs currently delivering their services. In this way existing positive levels of support and engagement would not be eroded.
- Staff succession planning is managed at divisional level and in the main vacancies in the LPTs are filled from within the local establishment. There is some degree of movement between the divisions, but this is not encouraged and is the exception. Greater flexibility may be achieved by considering such moves at a force level and at the same time wider opportunities could be created for individual staff members. Such a strategic view would ensure individual skills and aspirations were matched with corporate need.
- Two areas previously reported in an HMIC phase one report, published in October 2007, work in progress have yet to be resolved. WMC was examining ways of limiting the disruption to LPTs by restricting access to other specialist training for LPOs as well as setting a minimum two year posting period. While recognising that both initiatives need careful management, the resilience of local teams would be much improved by prompt solutions to these issues.
- The local policing policy contains a section on abstractions which sets out the expectation that staff should not be detracted from their core role as detailed above, but no definitions or measurement criteria are stipulated. Anecdotally staff across four divisions did not report any problem with LPT staff being used for activities outside of their core remit, and control room operators were clear that they were not to be deployed as alternative response officers. In one rural division there was less clarity of role difference between response officers and LPOs because local officers and CSOs would deploy to incidents in their locality as a more efficient use of resources. Consistent clarity of definition and monitoring of abstractions would ensure staffing levels, deployments and resources committed to local policing are appropriate.

- At present there is little proactive use made of the local profiles among LPTs. Effort should be made to make these profiles more operationally meaningful to the teams and consideration given to making the profiles part of the shared problem solving process. A project manager has recently been appointed to progress this work.
- The devolved responsibilities to divisions for CSO recruitment has resulted in no effective recruitment directed at those from emerging communities. Consideration should be given to replicating the current effort by operational and recruiting staff which has gone into reaching out to Traveller and Gypsy groups. A targeted recruitment campaign to attract under represented groups would further assist LPTs to reflect and therefore engage with these communities.
- The initial course for all LPT staff contains a number of modules on understanding and applying problem solving skills. Despite this, some LPOs and CSOs have little knowledge of the basic theory of problem solving in a neighbourhood setting. HMIC found that enthusiasm to act was evident, but this often resulted in the exclusion of partners and community to help find possible solutions. The central support team should audit force wide the understanding and pragmatic employment of these skills in resolving prioritised problems, and provide guidance and additional training to meet skill gaps.
- The direct supervision of CSOs by constables is working well in practice. However, where LPOs are absent for extended periods, for example through long-term sickness or maternity leave, consideration should be given to clarifying who takes line management and responsibility for CSOs in that area.
- While there is a robust model of support and guidance across most divisions, concerns were expressed in the few locations where sergeants were responsible for both local policing and response work. The demand for resourcing response was detracting from the time available to commit to Neighbourhood Policing. The immediate pressures which have led to this situation should be reviewed at a force level rather than as a divisional level issue.
- The variance of sergeant to PC and CSO ratios should be the subject of regular review to ensure resource allocation to local policing remains effective across the force. By taking a holistic approach a clear rationale for deployment practices would be developed for local implementation.

Effective community engagement is taking place. Representative communities are being routinely consulted and are identifying local priorities and receiving feedback.

Summary statement

All neighbourhoods in the force area are actively engaging with their local police and force partners.

Strengths

- A joint community engagement strategy between the force and police authority identifies the means by which they will gather and take into account public opinion. The objectives in the strategy are:

- being accessible, visible and listening to the public in order that their views influence our strategies, decision making and how we do things and being open and transparent in how we have taken their views into account;
 - making sure that the public understand how they are able to access our services and how they are able to have a say; and
 - ensuring that we have developed a range of consultation and engagement approaches to ensure that the views of our diverse communities are captured.
- The strategy was reviewed in December 2007 which included re-branding its community engagement arrangements as 'policing matters' groups and introducing new style public meetings monitored by divisional policing boards. The meetings include representatives from the police authority, the BCU commander, representatives of the community safety partnership, (CSP) partners and communities together (PACT) meetings, neighbourhood watch, elected member representation and other relevant persons or groups. The scheme for policing matters groups was approved by the police authority in March 2008 and introduced in April 2008.
- The approach to community engagement has been centred on the commitment to use a range of engagement methods including holding regular highly visible public meetings known as PACT, an approach that was followed by other forces. The aim of these meetings is the identification and prioritisation of issues for action in a neighbourhood area. The PACT process is understood by staff and the principles supporting it are well embedded in the work of LPTs.
- The local policing database is used to record each of the PACT meetings held across the area. The primary decisions about priorities made at the meetings are also recorded, and information entered into this section of the intranet-based local policing database is automatically available to users of the public internet. Any new members of an LPT can use this facility to pick up on the recent history of local problems and subsequent action. While the updating process is initially complex for new staff to administer, the system is effective and acts as a key audit function at divisional and force levels.
- In many neighbourhoods, the PACT process has been successfully grafted onto other forms of community gatherings and meeting structures, such as residents' associations. Partners are supportive of the approach taken, for example a Community Safety Manager from a CDRP felt that the PACT structure had been used to tackle issues at the heart of community problems and LPOs and CSOs had "really put PACT to the test".
- Imaginative use of thematic PACT meetings has taken place. For example the Kidderminster business PACT has focused on those with commercial interests in the locality while migrant workers PACT meetings have been arranged for those from the accession countries of the EC with a total attendance to date of over 3,000. Faith specific PACT meetings have also been held following Friday prayers at mosques, and PACT meetings have been held in schools and homes for the elderly. Some LPOs are also taking language courses to strengthen direct communication with the Polish community.
- The strategic engagement of divisions has been directed by the ACC (specialist operations (SO)). Important research was commissioned in each division to check that there was an awareness of the scale and geographical spread of migrants, particularly from Eastern Europe. Each of the areas was required to report on its engagement plan

to track the development of new communities. As a result, co-ordinated and partnership led interventions were put in place to respond to these changes.

- The widespread use of PACT has led to a number of different methods of engagement used by LPTs while still retaining the basic PACT approach. In some areas, the traditional PACT formal public meeting has only had limited effectiveness with relatively few attendees. To overcome this problem, surveys in the form of returnable postcards have been developed to understand what most people believe are the main problems in an area. This approach was piloted across all the divisions before being adopted as a valid engagement tool. LPOs also use surgeries, environmental audits and face-to-face meetings in public places to reach out to the public.
- Community engagement guides have been prepared and are widely available to LPTs which provide practical guidance to officers and CSOs. While a significant amount of work has been focused on PACT, this has not been to the detriment of other forms of engagement.
- Engagement with young people has been developed and a wealth of imaginative engagement and diversionary activities are used. For example, LPOs support football clubs and adventure activities and have set up sports coaching in rugby and boxing. Schools have featured highly in the way officers have worked at becoming better known in their communities and more easily contactable. Setting up links between a school web site and the LPT is typical of this positive approach. Each of the five divisions has appointed at least one youth and schools worker dedicated to engaging with young people and a number of youth PACTs have been held. The determination to respond to the concerns and views of young people has seen the creation of targeted online questionnaires with a significant increase in the proportion of respondents in this age group in surveys. Results have shown that engagement with young people through schools is proving effective. Geographic inspectors have directed their teams to attend school fetes to maximise contact with both pupils and parents and to provide opportunities for them to influence local priorities. In addition, numerous initiatives such as providing post boxes in primary and secondary schools where notes raising issues of importance to young people can be placed, providing PACT lanyards, regular school visits and locating LPTs in school premises, are all contributing towards improving engagement with young people.
- The constabulary and police authority have developed a joint engagement strategy to guide the process of consulting and exchanging views with the public on all aspects of policing. The action plan underpinning this strategy contains a number of key initiatives, for example the creation of a communications post solely for local policing, intended to improve the way the force finds out what matters to people. Each division has a designated authority member to link with and who then reports back on engagement issues.
- Strong information-sharing relationships with partners enable effective decision making. Anti-social behaviour forums and safe and sensible drinking action partnerships are examples of where there is a high degree of co-operative working and information exchange. At Telford, the rapid ability to share information has resulted in the need to issue only one anti-social behaviour order. A further 1,008 cases have seen positive and swift interventions which have been successfully resolved by partners. Neighbourhood watch benefits from a positive approach to consultation and information sharing. The constabulary has designated a police lead to support neighbourhood watch groups in

every area, supported by a member of police staff in each division. This facilitates a two way flow of intelligence.

- The WMC internet site contains helpful detail accessible to the public about each of the LPTs. The website lists the people working on each of the LPTs and shows a photograph and how to contact them. The site is well set out and can be searched by means of postcode to find out the local priorities in an area and the dates of the next public meetings or events in the neighbourhood.
- Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and CDRPs are supported by formal information sharing protocols and joint analytical work. A number of analysts working on joint strategic assessments are jointly funded by district councils and the police.
- A number of internal audit processes and targets have been developed to track the scale of formal community engagement PACT-style contacts in every area. If a meeting has not been held within a three month period, supervisors will ask LPOs what alternative mechanisms they have used. Street briefings, where LPT supervisors speak to local people present in busy public places about their work and priorities, are starting to be used to great effect in a number of the divisions. Analysts have helped the pilot LPTs to discover which communities in their areas were missed in their postcard survey work. Mosaic is used to plot the survey returns against the groups of people known to live in a neighbourhood.
- Information from the National Insurance register is drawn on to build a picture of recent economic migration into the area and information is analysed at headquarters against the information available from LPT engagement. This research has flagged up the potential arrival of a sizeable Romanian community in the area and WMC has set up an exchange of two officers with the Romanian Police in preparation.
- A series of newsletters has been sent out in selected neighbourhoods to let the public know what officers had done to address local priorities. The corporate communications department has attached a simple response slip which allows them to dip sample the awareness of the public about LPTs. While the responses were lower than expected in some locations, the local policing support teams are actively reviewing the pattern of returned forms. Engagement plans will be adapted in areas should low awareness of LPT activity be indicated by the public.
- The value of the work of LPT officers is recognised by those combating organised crime groups (OCGs). Submissions from these teams are fed into and are of use to major crime investigations and operations. LPOs are tasked with building up some elements of the intelligence requirement when mounting this type of intervention. There are examples of LPOs being included in some of the most sensitive operations conducted against OCGs. LPTs have also been involved in operations to prevent the exploitation of migrant workers by a criminal gangmaster.

Work in progress

- The force has a long-term information technology (IT) project under way to improve the force internet site and develop greater proactive interaction with the community, including more timely feedback mechanisms. Until development work is completed significant further improvements to enhance online surveying and provide PACT feedback cannot be made. A six month project to identify improvements is complete but a bid for additional resources to make significant changes has not been fully

supported. Work is however under way to ensure information is compliant with the requirements of the management of police information (MoPI). Checks on which LPT pages receive the most hits may inform LPOs where to maximise IT based engagement and where upgrades should be prioritised.

- The police authority is close to finalising the restructuring of the way it holds formal public consultation meetings. Following the success of local policing engagement meetings, a more open and responsive structure is being planned to complement the work done in neighbourhoods.
- A project is currently examining the management of community intelligence and how information from other agencies can be utilised by existing intelligence systems. The project is nearing the end of a secondary reporting phase. It is anticipated that a solution can be found to merge multi-agency data from many sources into a format compliant with the MoPI codes of practice.
- Some eleven CSOs will be specifically allocated to youth and schools engagement in support of the engagement strategy. It is anticipated these roles will be dedicated from the summer 2008.
- There is no analysis of the addresses of people attending PACT meetings to judge the extent of success in engaging with the public. Checking for regular attendance or discovering why someone ceases to attend is seen by many officers as too bureaucratic and time consuming. The introduction of the PACT postcard and face-to-face survey scheme into 60 pilot areas has presented a simpler system to check patterns of engagement, which involves a planned timetable of engaging and regular surveying the public at LPT level. This enables target groups and target locations to be planned in advance. The constabulary is able to draw on the results of the PACT survey postcards to check the spread of engagement. Starting in April there will be comparison with the mosaic data to check that a positive spread across communities is happening with the surveys in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. This will help to link PACT contact back to hotspot areas of crime and incident data.
- In order to improve security arrangements required by the direct involvement of LPTs in counter-terrorism work, all LPOs and CSOs are in the process of having their security clearance status raised.

Areas for improvement

- Well produced publicity material is available for all the LPTs to assist them to become accessible to their communities. During the reality checks carried out as part of the inspection, this material was not readily visible within a number of communities beyond police stations or civic buildings. Checks to ensure that publicity material featuring the names, photographs and contact details of local policing staff is widely distributed in all areas should be carried out.
- Developments in the PACT approach are now reaching a wide local audience allowing more involvement in local policing. WMC must consider ways in which it can actively measure and test the degree of involvement beyond that which is currently achieved or planned. The level of engagement with communities is thought by some to be most positive where positive relationships have always existed. The force needs to be confident it is succeeding in its engagement activities in every area and with the broadest possible range of members of the public.

Joint problem solving is established and included within performance regimes.

Summary statement

Joint problem solving involves the police with partners and communities across all neighbourhoods. Joint problem solving activity is partly evaluated, which demonstrates moderate problem resolution at neighbourhood level.

Strengths

- The database records of LPT activity contain multiple examples of community problems being identified and consequently resolved by collective problem solving. The NPIA has circulated several case studies from WMC both regionally and nationally as examples of effective neighbourhood responses to commonly encountered problems. The force policing plan 2008/11 also cites some of these positive results and the qualitative difference made to local communities.
- Performance management and evaluation of local policing is carried out at a strategic level at the monthly force performance group chaired by the deputy chief constable (DCC) and attended by all chief officers, senior managers, police authority members and invited guests. At divisional level, the progress in meeting the priorities raised at PACT meetings is regularly monitored and the chief inspector for local policing is held to account. Individual LPOs and CSOs are required routinely to update the evidence of their work as outcomes on the local policing database.
- The performance unit produces community feedback profiles for those LPTs participating in the survey and postcard pilots that include information on the levels of worry about crime mapped against crime levels on a ward basis (referred to as the crime/worry matrix). The profiles use face-to-face and other survey information to detail where the geographic coverage of engagement has been good and those areas where the evidence available to the unit suggests further work is required. Demographic data is also considered and a respondent profile against the community profile is produced to help target activity in terms of gender, age and ethnicity. These documents help inform LPT problem solving and engagement activity.
- Partners at CDRP level see themselves as joint stakeholders with the constabulary in the management and resolution of community issues. Both LPOs and partner agencies confirm that an open dialogue is maintained during activity phases of problem solving and not restricted to formal meetings. Key stakeholders in other agencies and the community are actively approached by police staff as part of the evaluation process to gain their perceptions of the solutions achieved.
- WMC has launched the SHARE database designed to capture information on 'schools, hits, advertising, risk reduction and environment'. The intention is to formalise the recording and evaluation of individual LPT activity as well as providing the opportunity to communicate and share ideas. Given the number of LPTs and the volume of activity across five divisions, this has become an invaluable way of spreading 'what works' in local neighbourhoods. The database also contains templates for leaflets and posters to ensure standard branding across the force area, and sample letters and leaflets for use before, during and after policing operations.

- The investment in local policing is cited as having a significant impact on the 9.2% reduction in recorded anti-social behaviour incidents, some 9,040 fewer reported incidents in 2007/08 compared with the previous year.
- Local policing arrangements reflect the differing circumstances affecting partnership arrangements across the counties of West Mercia and where there was initial reluctance to engage in the PACT process steps were taken at command and operational levels to overcome and resolve the issues. Challenges have been made to those statutory crime and disorder responsible authorities and partners who were not perceived as fully committed to joint activity. Local policing staff feel supported by their managers and recognise that senior management will assist them if they encounter difficulties in their working relationships. This has required a flexible approach to accommodate the needs of principal stakeholders while retaining a corporate philosophy to local policing. The police authority has also played a role in facilitating arrangements to maximise the use of the PACT process and help to develop links with parish and district councils.
- LPTs are directly involved in a range of preventative tasks which depend on multi-agency management; for example local officers are involved in management plans of persistent young offenders and registered sex offenders in conjunction with the public protection unit. The LPT sergeants receive domestic abuse care plans by email and arrange for follow-up victim visits to be conducted. Information on persistent young offenders and locally registered sex offenders is channelled to the teams in a similar way.
- The value of strategic engagement is very clear to partners. Investment has been made in new shared data warehouse systems within county community safety units, which allow local government to share information more freely. An example is the Triangle system installed in Telford and Wrekin which will be fully operational by the end of 2008. To complement this work, the partnership has also succeeded in establishing an analyst's post to work within the police intelligence unit and maximise links to the LPTs.
- Local officers and teams are co-located with partners in a number of localities across the force area. Arrangements include an integrated one-stop-shop at Evesham where the police share accommodation with the town council, Worcestershire county council, Wychavon district council and the job centre. LPTs also share council accommodation: for example in Shrewsbury and Redditch there are eight shared sites and police posts are located in schools, for example in Kidderminster, and also in community centres, for example in Sutton Hill. Benefits have not been formally evaluated but both the police and partner agencies believe them to be significant.
- Local policing policy and procedure strongly underlines the importance of involving partners at both divisional- and force-level tasking and co-ordination groups, and there is partner attendance at such meetings. Resources from different agencies are allocated to address local concerns effectively.
- Strategic assessments produced at CDRP and divisional level are researched and agreed by local government partners. Key priorities for local control strategies are recommended using an approach that is compliant with the National Intelligence Model.

- LPOs understand that as part of the formal PACT meetings they have a responsibility to provide full updates to the community about actions completed or progress made. Updates are provided at meetings and are supplemented by newsletters, personal contact and media messages.
- Internal performance indicators are collected to reflect the extent to which community priorities have been addressed on each of the local policing areas. There is a strong and justified sense of achievement in the constabulary about the determination, professionalism and innovation of work with partners in solving the problems affecting neighbourhoods.
- LPOs and CSOs frequently seek a range of views and public feedback to measure the extent to which an initiative has resolved a local problem. Completing this form of evaluation serves to inform stakeholders of the work of LPTs and influences future activity.
- The new ACC (TO) took up post in June 2008 with lead responsibility for both citizen focused policing and local policing. This combined approach will assist the LPTs to become better equipped to understand the value of ensuring communities and individuals are more fully involved in the signing off of priorities when resolved.
- Joint problem solving training, arranged by the Government Office West Midlands, took place during 2007. Subjects included in the training were the scanning, analysis, response, assessment (SARA) model of problem solving and the problem analysis triangle. Partners were also reminded of their responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act.

Work in progress

- A local policing strategic assessment is being completed which will inform the force strategic assessment (FSA) and is due for completion in summer 2008.
- Each CDRP area completes its own strategic assessment and as a result the tasking processes in each area have developed to meet local need, adapting the corporate NIM model as appropriate. A working group has been set up to produce the FSA in a more joined-up way. A themed set of meetings will be held, aimed at building a dynamic joint assessment for 2008/09, incorporating the desired goals of the various LAAs. Local policing is seen as a key part of that delivery.
- A review is under way to determine future provision of joint problem solving training as it is recognised that additional training would improve local outcomes. Recommendations in the final report will address how this work can be taken forward.

Areas for improvement

- WMC should devise a more transparent system for achieving sign off on a local priority when action has been completed, significant progress made or a key milestone reached. Current methods rely on consistent attendance at formal PACT meetings, word of mouth and media releases. No matter how significant the achievements of LPTs, public satisfaction will only increase when direct feedback is achieved. LPT supervisors should have an essential role to play in quality assuring public levels of agreement with police and partner actions.

- Local policing pages on the force internet site contain a section to include forthcoming meetings and local events. While some sites include details of locations and times of face-to-face surveys, surgeries and other meetings and engagement methods, some only display PACT meetings and some show that there are no PACT meetings or events planned. As a key portal for engagement and information provision steps should be taken to ensure information is accurate, timely, informative and readily available.
- Reality testing of the internet site was conducted, visiting 10% of LPT pages. This found most sites contained current priorities, although one did not. Some information was from meetings up to five months previous to the date of the checks and had not been refreshed since initial entry. No information was available on any of the sites checked of work undertaken to address the priority areas, how the community could become involved or the involvement of other agencies, nor were any results recorded. The lack of such information does not reflect the extent of problem solving activity being undertaken. Information to show the progress made and achievement of key milestones and successes would inform the public of activity. Regular audits should take place to ensure information available on the internet is accurate, useful and timely.
- The LPTs have a helpful reference source for good practice in police or joint problem solving in the SHARE database. Review of the database reveals the extent to which LPOs and CSOs are developing their understanding of practical multi-agency work. There is no similar mechanism for partners to contribute their practice and findings. WMC should consider how such knowledge and understanding can be formally shared and recorded in a common partnership forum.

The outcomes of Neighbourhood policing are being realised by the surveyed public.

	SPI 2a Percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job		KDI Percentage of people who 'agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area'		SPI 10b Percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour	
	Difference from MSF (percentage point pp)	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	Difference from MSF	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	Difference from MSF	2005/06 to 2007/08 change
West Mercia	-0.2pp	+3.4pp	-1.0pp	+5.2pp	+1.4pp	+2.6pp

Summary statement

The SPI/KDI data shows that force performance is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

The SPI/KDI data also shows that force performance is unchanged compared with two years ago.

Context

The SPI and KDI statistics are obtained from the PPAFs to March 2008. These figures are survey based and have been analysed for statistical significance, which can be explained in lay terms as follows: 'The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

Note: When comparing the force's performance with previous years, year-on-year statistical significance is explained as follows: 'The difference in force performance between the years compared is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

There is a summary of how statistical significance is used at Appendix 2 at the end of this report.

As part of the BCS, approximately 1,000 interviews are undertaken in each force area in England and Wales. Included in the survey is the individual's assessment of whether the local police are doing a good job, whether the police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in their area, and whether anti-social behaviour in their area is a problem.

SPI 2a – percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job.

52.5% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 think that their local police do a good or excellent job, which is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

Force performance was unchanged in the year ending March 2008; 52.5% of people surveyed think that their local police do a good or excellent job, compared with 49.2% in the year ending March 2006.

KDI – percentage of people who ‘agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area’.

51.7% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 ‘agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area’, which is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

Force performance was unchanged in the year ending March 2008; 51.7% of people surveyed ‘agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area’, compared with 46.5% in the year ending March 2006.

SPI 10b – percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour.

13.4% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour, which is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

Force performance was unchanged in the year ending March 2008; 13.4% of people surveyed think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour, compared with 10.8% in the year ending March 2006.

Strengths

- The British Crime Survey measure of the “percentage who think their local police do a good or excellent job” (SPI 2a) reveals West Mercia is consistent with the MSF average and has shown improvement over the last three years.

Work in progress

- The percentage of people who “agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area” (KDI) in West Mercia has shown a substantial improvement in the last three years but is still below the MSF average.

Area for improvement

- The percentage of the public surveyed who perceive a high level of anti-social behaviour has risen by two and a half percentage points over a three year period. With the implementation of local policing structures now complete, attention should be given to how these increases in public concern can be reversed through additional focused initiatives. The promoting community safety section of the policing plan lists this as a priority goal and promises an effective response to anti-social behaviour (ASB) and disorder.

Force-level and local satisfaction/confidence measures are used to inform service delivery.

Summary statement

The force partially understands the needs of its communities. Identified service improvements are frequently made to improve local service delivery.

Strengths

- Performance analysts have researched and highlighted the recent fluctuations in the force position relative to SPI and KDI data and the probable causes for these changes, and the findings have been presented at the force performance group. Clear recommendations have been agreed for driving up ratings in these areas, which rely on local policing interventions.
- The force performance group, chaired by the DCC is the monthly forum where commanders are held to account for performance against targets. The emphasis has changed in 2008/09 from quantitative crime reduction and detection data to a greater emphasis on confidence and satisfaction. The meeting in January 2008 focused on confidence and satisfaction and examined the drivers of confidence, satisfaction and reassurance and identified those drivers which have the greatest impact on outcomes. The key influencing factors of confidence were identified as communication, visibility, engagement and problem solving, and the relationship between this and reassurance. A presentation outlined current performance and suggested how divisional and departmental commanders should develop the Citizen Focus agenda to the next level. Performance group returned to this area of focus in April 2008.
- A strong lead from ACPO has focused the minds of senior managers and the desire to account for current performance and subsequently improve it is replicated at BCU level. Four out of five BCUs list local satisfaction and confidence measures as a primary area of focus for the year. Specialists working in this area have given a presentation to all the management teams on several divisions to assist in the understanding and use of this performance material.
- The links between feedback from surveys and improved satisfaction in neighbourhoods is well understood and a formal system is in place to action it appropriately. Comments drawn from all forms of survey work are fed in a timely fashion through appointed divisional champions to BCUs. LPOs and CSOs recognise the importance of this information in judging the impact they have on the public and welcome both positive feedback and areas for development.
- Feedback from customer satisfaction surveys is informing service delivery at a local level. Each division has an action plan to respond to such feedback. For example in Telford enhanced aftercare is being provided to all dwelling burglary victims by LPOs while CSOs visit those affected by vehicle crime. In North Worcestershire, PACT meetings are being used to gather more direct local feedback of the service provided alongside the identification of the main priorities for LPTs. There is a clear realisation that the LPTs can improve local service delivery by responding to the views expressed.

Work in progress

- The second of the 'four better outcomes' detailed in the current policing plan addresses the determination to increase satisfaction and confidence levels. Continuous improvement in service quality is a stated aim of this work, to be achieved through keeping communities well informed about policing in their area and responding to the results of public satisfaction surveys. Twelve separate actions to deliver this outcome are described as in progress for the year ahead in which the force intends to:
 - act speedily upon feedback from our public satisfaction telephone surveys in seeking continuous improvement in service quality;
 - improve victim and witness experiences of the criminal justice system through joint working with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), combined courts service and victim and witness support schemes;
 - implement enhanced customer relationship management processes to support telephone call-takers and other direct service delivery roles;
 - further extend our 'speaks quality' training and awareness programme in support of our customer service (CARE) principles;
 - work with our partner agencies to build public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the criminal justice system;
 - communicate our successes and undertaken public awareness campaigns to provide reassurance to local communities and other key stakeholders;
 - bring offenders to justice in the most efficient, effective and proportionate way;
 - provide enhanced levels of high quality public information concerning policing including a local policing summary, leaflets, posters and development of the constabulary and authority websites;
 - implement the planned legislative changes concerning police disciplinary procedures scheduled for introduction in 2008, identify key learning points from both national and local complaints and misconduct incidents, and ensure lessons are effectively fed back into operational policing;
 - fully comply with the requirements of the victims code and keep people informed on the progress of their case; and
 - deliver what we say we will through an effective response to calls for assistance.
- These goals and intentions will be monitored by the authority's inclusivity and community engagement (ICE) panel, human resources management and force performance monitoring panels.
- WMC has concentrated on achieving the targets set for the reduction and detection of offences involving crime and disorder. Having successfully improved performance in these key areas, the senior leadership is determined to maintain these gains while drawing attention to the equally important area of improved customer satisfaction and public confidence. Targets have been set for the current year which, if met, will see outcomes matching the best satisfaction levels in MSFs.

- Information received from the public informs delivery at a local level. Data from PACT meetings, local surveys and PACT postcards, together with results from the crime and safety survey is being used to update community profiles. This information will further inform LPTs about their areas and it is anticipated that they will use this information to further inform PACT engagement activities. Information will be updated from the regular bi-monthly and quarterly surveys and postcard results and this information will also feed into the tasking process.

Areas for improvement

- A better understanding of the way that police and community views of ASB can vary is being gained through analytical comparison of police data and where the public see this behaviour occurring. Consideration should be given to extending this study to include why public concerns about ASB are increasing despite the efforts going into providing local policing solutions.
- The authority and senior managers have realised that a widening of survey activity beyond the current levels required by national performance measures would be desirable. This view is set out in the community engagement strategy as an important action as it would provide a more effective method by which performance against customer care principles could be determined. To date resources have not been found to broaden the schedule of surveying and this remains an aspiration.

The force demonstrates sustainable plans for Neighbourhood Policing.

Summary statement

The force and the police authority have convincingly shown how they have ensured Neighbourhood Policing will be sustained beyond April 2008.

Strengths

- Local policing is central to the delivery of the strategic plan for 2008–11, and the primary task of LPTs of promoting community safety is one of the four better outcomes described in the policing plan.
- The structuring of the budget for the current year has been achieved in a way that will see no reduction in local policing. The 271.8 full time equivalent CSO posts have been ring-fenced until 2011 and the provision of £13.5 million in the sustaining service delivery fund significantly reduces the likelihood of any future negative impact on local policing.
- All key support departments such as learning and development continue to include the needs of the LPTs in their own planning and budgetary arrangements. In at least one division, the criminal investigation department is re-aligning staff deployment so as to be better able to work alongside the LPT structures.
- The outgoing ACC (TO) has driven much of the implementation and development of the local policing structure and has overseen the creation of a performance regime to gauge progress. He considers that he has delivered on this task, a view supported by the recent NPIA report on embedding Neighbourhood Policing. Examples

demonstrating his support include attending all ACPO Neighbourhood Policing annual conferences, initially meeting with the headquarters (HQ) support team weekly, divisional commanders monthly and local policing champions bi-monthly, to drive activity, reinforce corporate messages and support implementation. As local policing has become more embedded he has continued to have monthly meetings with the HQ support team and divisional champions.

- WMC continues to invest in a dedicated HQ-based support team overseeing local policing development headed by a chief inspector and supported by two inspectors and seven other staff. The team has other responsibilities including crime risk management, youth offending and partnership development in addition to local policing. These posts are fixed in the establishment until 2009 after which they will be reviewed. Each division also has a local policing champion who acts as a conduit between the support team and the BCU. This approach continues to support the broader programme and provide corporacy and consistency.
- A seminar attended by approximately 170 delegates was held in May 2008 to celebrate past success in local policing and develop an understanding of where the force needs to develop in order to further the Citizen Focus agenda. Delegates included members of LPTs, BCU commanders, operational managers, partners and police authority members, and the seminar provided a platform to pass the responsibility from the outgoing to the incoming ACC. The event was supported by facilitators from the NPIA and a presentation given by a national speaker of note on the importance of customer focus. The seminar was well received and feedback suggests delegates were inspired by the content.
- Both the force and authority closely monitor progress against those areas identified for improvement from inspection and reviews, and a spreadsheet of progress is maintained and regularly updated by the strategy, performance and communications department.
- The police authority is closely monitoring changes to partnership arrangements in the new LAAs which affect the local policing arrangements. A partnership co-ordination group has been created to oversee the decisions made on local prioritisation of outcomes and provide a corporate balance.
- The chair of the authority and the members aligned to each of the BCUs take an active interest in the everyday work of LPTs, and the local policing portfolio holder is also the chair of the authority ICE panel, and the vulnerable people group. The authority performance panel regularly scrutinises satisfaction and confidence data as well as performance against the local policing agenda.
- The joint West Mercia police authority and constabulary community engagement strategy has five key objectives:
 1. meaningful and reassuring interaction between the force and the public;
 2. meaningful and reassuring interaction between the police authority and the public;
 3. gathering and taking into account public opinion;
 4. providing feedback and information to the public;
 5. working with partners to deliver co-ordinated and effective action.
- The engagement strategy is supported by an action plan which is monitored by one of the ICE panel. The authority also plays an active part in community engagement

which is scrutinised through the authority's ICE panel and it is represented on the community policing boards. The authority also has active involvement at divisional level where regular meetings are held with divisional commanders.

Work in progress

- None identified.

Areas for improvement

- Where there is a close physical proximity in stations between LPTs and other officers and teams, such as is found in many rural environments, connective working is evidently taking place. In the urban context of some divisions, some officers described a big divide between LPTs, reactive staff and specialist units. It is imperative that all sections of the constabulary understand and value the work of the LPTs and the positive integration found in most areas is made universal.
- The local policing project plan does not extend beyond April 2008, the date required for full national implementation. There are some unresolved issues, such as the management of community intelligence that would benefit from a formal plan for resolution. Outstanding issues raised as work in progress and areas for improvement in previous HMIC inspection reports, together with findings in this report, should be added to any action plan generated by the current internal review of local policing.
- Given the importance of developments in local policing to the delivery of many of the outcomes in the three year strategic plan, the police authority may wish to appoint a liaison member to improve governance.

Developing Citizen Focus Policing

2007/08 Developing Citizen Focus Policing Summary of judgement	Meeting the standard
---	----------------------

Meeting the standard

A Citizen Focus ethos is embedded across the force, establishing an initial baseline.

Summary statement

The force fully understands the needs of its communities. Identified service improvements are frequently made to local service delivery. The force partially communicates the National Quality of Service Commitment standards, the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime standards, and the force corporate/ accessibility standards to its communities.

Strengths

- A joint community engagement strategy between the force and police authority identifies the means by which public opinion is gathered and taken into account. The objectives in the strategy are:
 - being accessible, visible and listening to the public in order that their views influence our strategies, decision making and how we do things and being open and transparent in how we have taken their views into account;
 - making sure that the public understand how they are able to access our services and how they are able to have a say; and
 - ensuring that we have developed a range of consultation and engagement approaches to ensure that the views of our diverse communities are captured.
- The strategy was reviewed in December 2007. Improvements have included re-branding the community engagement arrangements as policing matters groups and introducing new style public meetings monitored by divisional policing boards, with representatives from the police authority, BCU command, representatives of the CSP, PACT meetings, neighbourhood watch, elected member representation and other relevant persons or groups. This scheme for policing matters groups was approved by the police authority in March 2008 and introduced in April 2008.
- Telephone surveys are conducted with victims of burglary, vehicle crime, violent crime, road traffic collisions and victims of racist incidents. The survey contains questions relating to the quality of service and satisfaction of service provided to feed into the policing performance assessment framework (PPAF). Additional questions to those required for national statistical purposes have been included to provide specific feedback on call-handling processes. As a result of feedback, processes have been re-engineered to improve service.
- It is recognised that only 20% of customers are included in the PPAF survey sample. Feedback on customer opinion is supplemented by the local annual crime and safety

survey conducted jointly by the constabulary, police authority, 11 CDRPs covering the 13 local authority areas, the Worcestershire substance misuse action team and the safer roads partnership. During 2007, some 60,000 residents were surveyed and 11,500 responses were received. The main sample was supplemented by a booster selection of people aged between 16 and 24 years of age, resulting in 8% of total respondents falling into this age category – an improvement from 2006 where they amounted to only 4%. A target for 2008 is for this age group to comprise 12% of respondents. In addition, an internet based crime and safety survey aimed at young people aged 10 to 15 years resulted in 2,159 responses. Questions have also been included for 2008/09 on behalf of the local criminal justice board (LCJB). The survey is promoted on the front page of the force internet site where online completion is encouraged.

- Each division has held an inaugural victims of crime focus group led by senior managers, to receive direct feedback from victims and use their experiences as drivers of improvement. The findings of the focus groups are currently being reviewed and work is under way to ensure learning is implemented. Public consultation forums are also held in different areas of the force by the communications centre to seek feedback from users.
- There is an identified Citizen Focus champion of chief inspector rank on each division. Feedback from public surveys is passed through them for individual feedback to officers and staff. Both positive and negative feedback is given. A trial has started on Telford and Shropshire divisions whereby those who receive negative comments on three separate occasions will be the subject of a personal development plan focusing on the issues identified.
- A broad public engagement strategy for local policing teams (LPTs) has been adopted which focused local policing engagement through a consultation framework – PACT. Within the PACT menu of consultation methods are five main activities that include meetings, environmental visual audits, surgeries, postcard consultation and face-to-face surveying. Guidance is available for each method and enables officers to use tools that are appropriate to their locality or issue. The results of the PACT activity helps inform decisions around police visibility, perceptions of levels of crime and disorder, community empowerment, rates of victimisation and rates of non-reporting of crime.
- Information from the National Insurance register is used to build a picture of recent economic migration into the area and information is analysed at headquarters against the data available from LPT engagement. This research has enabled divisional commanders to be alert to emerging communities and to establish appropriate links to policing services.
- Three force-level independent advisory groups (IAGs) operate, each with 12 members. The groups are black and minority ethnic (BME) IAG, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender IAG, and a disability forum, the members of which act in an IAG capacity. IAG members are routinely consulted on both reactive and proactive issues including advising gold groups, providing advice on emerging issues and policy development. Examples include giving advice over street signage for blind people, talking newspapers and Braille copies of documents, and the production of leaflets containing the fireworks code in the eight languages suggested by the IAG as having the most impact.

- Significant improvements have been made to call management procedures to improve the quality of contact and customer experience, led by a chief superintendent. Links have also been established with specialist areas of delivery such as LPTs to ensure that call handlers fully understand how they can help with public enquiries, and a member of the local policing support team has briefed all departments on the role of LPTs to aid their understanding. All calls answered by operators require a standard response, including providing the caller with the name of the operator. The call management centre is able to receive and send text messages and emails from the public as part of a broad approach to provide appropriate and alternative communication methods. An emergency text number of 80992 and mini-com on 08456 000303 are available.
- The force performance group, chaired by the DCC is the monthly forum where commanders are held to account for performance against targets. The emphasis has changed in 2008/09 from quantitative crime reduction and detection data to a greater emphasis on confidence and satisfaction. The meeting in January 2008 focussed on confidence and satisfaction and examined the drivers of confidence, satisfaction and reassurance and identified those which have the greatest impact on outcomes. The key influencing factors of confidence were identified as communication, visibility, engagement and problem solving, and the relationship between this and reassurance. A presentation outlined current performance and suggested how divisional and departmental commanders should develop the Citizen Focus agenda to the next level. Performance group returned to this area of focus in April 2008.
- In four out of the five divisions public satisfaction and confidence features as a priority and divisional commanders have been set local targets that are embedded in the PDRs of their personnel. This covers officers and staff in both forward-facing roles and in support departments.
- Customer service principles have been developed under a programme entitled CARE, launched in early 2007 as part of the cultural change project in support of the user experience element of implementation of the quality of service commitment. The programme seeks to raise staff awareness and provide guidance of customer care principles. CARE as an acronym stands for:
 - Communicate – listen and manage expectations;
 - Accountability – ownership and responsibility – a can do attitude;
 - Responsive – to needs and keeping people informed;
 - Educate – understanding, flexibility and feedback.

Staff displayed a high level of awareness of the principles of CARE which has received a high profile internally.

- A victim care DVD has been presented to all staff in training days during 2007/8. This has been supported by a communications strategy and practical support such as memo cards and the publication of a victims code booklet. The effectiveness of these tools is due to be evaluated in 2008.
- Records are kept of the operational need for translation facilities to inform future service provision. A spreadsheet showing the frequency with which interpreters have been used for each language has been compiled for the past three years.
- The joint West Mercia police authority and constabulary community engagement strategy has five key objectives:

1. meaningful and reassuring interaction between the force and the public;
 2. meaningful and reassuring interaction between the police authority and the public;
 3. gathering and taking into account public opinion;
 4. providing feedback and information to the public;
 5. working with partners to deliver co-ordinated and effective action.
- The engagement strategy is supported by an action plan which is monitored by one of the four authority committees – the ICE panel. The authority also has active involvement at a divisional level where regular meetings are held with divisional commanders.
 - In addition to the ICE panel above, the police authority performance panel monitors progress against policing plan targets, goals and initiatives, and the four better outcomes, one of which is improving satisfaction and confidence. Authority members are also present at force performance group meetings, where they are free to ask questions in open forum. The policing plan for 2008–11 specifies a series of actions which will be complete in 2008/09 to support the overall aim to deliver a service that is fair, equitable, sensitive to individual needs and generates high levels of public satisfaction. It is stated in the plan that the force will:
 - act speedily upon feedback from our public satisfaction telephone surveys in seeking continuous improvement in service quality;
 - improve victim and witness experiences of the criminal justice system through joint working with the CPS, combined courts service and victim and witness support schemes;
 - implement enhanced customer relationship management processes to support telephone call-takers and other direct service delivery roles;
 - further extend our speaks quality training and awareness programme in support of our customer service (CARE) principles;
 - work with our partner agencies to build public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the criminal justice system;
 - communicate our successes and undertake public awareness campaigns to provide reassurance to local communities and other key stakeholders;
 - bring offenders to justice in the most efficient, effective and proportionate way;
 - provide enhanced levels of high quality public information concerning policing including a local policing summary, leaflets, posters and development of the constabulary and police authority websites;
 - implement the planned legislative changes concerning police disciplinary procedures scheduled for introduction in 2008, identify key learning points from both national and local complaints and misconduct incidents and ensure lessons are effectively fed back into operational policing;
 - fully comply with the requirements of the victims code and keep people informed on the progress of their case; and
 - deliver what we say we will through an effective response to calls for assistance.

These goals and intentions will be monitored by the authority's ICE panel, human resources management and force performance monitoring panels.

- The portfolio lead for community confidence for the authority is also a member of the ICE panel and the complaints and surveys working group, thus ensuring that interrelated issues can be shared between groups.
- The quality of service standards booklet entitled *Be the Difference* was launched in early 2007 and all staff received a personal copy. This document details the standards expected when dealing with others and contains details of a variety of Citizen Focus initiatives including the victims code of practice, a description of call handling procedures and services. It explains calls for service and how they are handled, together with standards the public can expect in relation to correspondence by letter and email. The booklet was designed for both internal and external audiences and it has been placed in community areas such as libraries and other public arenas. Over 3,000 copies have been publicly distributed and it is also available on the force website. The *Be the Difference* booklet has since been used by another force which identified it as good practice.
- The force routinely uses a range of methods to identify users' views for example face-to-face surveys, postal and telephone surveys, youth postcards and PACT meetings. Results are mapped into local policing areas and help highlight any differences between incident data and feedback of public perception or experiences. Not only does this help identify where and what the public problems and concerns are but it also informs the knowledge gaps of officers who support and shape local delivery.
- The professional standards department reviews and quality assures all conduct and direction and control complaints from which they identify individual, team, divisional, force or national learning. Both types of complaint are now recorded and tracked on the national professional standards database, Centurion, which records progress of complaint handling and lessons learned. A 'lessons learned' group, comprising the heads of training, professional standards and personnel and the force solicitor, promotes continuous improvement and organisational learning. This group identifies a need for policy revision or additional training following complaints, disciplinary cases and tribunals. In addition, the police authority has established a complaints and surveys working group to consider specific issues and monitor improvements made. This scrutiny results in demonstrable improvements to service delivery.
- An implementation plan was developed to introduce into the force the national quality of service commitment, which was developed in line with the structured programme of change to improve citizen focused policing in spring 2005. The user experience workstream was set up to manage improvements in satisfaction, confidence and public involvement in policing. The target was to deliver against the quality of service commitment by November 2006. While most actions were finalised within this time scale the action plan has remained live to continue to monitor progress and prevent slippage.
- A user experience database has been developed, accessible through intranet site of the strategy, communications and performance team (recently renamed from the organisational development unit). The site provides access to a summary of the overarching programme, the programme brief and minutes of meetings. Since the launch of the site in 2007 over 2,500 visits have been made by staff members.

- Risks identified in the user experience workstream are added to the corporate risk register, an example of which is the risk that the force will not be fully compliant with the victims code. Actions to mitigate this risk have been implemented, such as the introduction of the victims code database to monitor compliance, with direct links from the crime system.

Work in progress

- Ten pilot sites have been identified as part of the safer communities strand of the 4000+ project to measure customer confidence and satisfaction at LPT level. The force benefits realisation analyst is currently undertaking a review of the findings with a view to identifying service improvements.
- The force has a long-term IT project under way to improve the force internet site and develop a greater proactive interaction with the community, including more timely feedback mechanisms. Until development work is complete significant further enhancements to improve online surveying and online PACT feedback cannot be made. A six month project to identify improvements is complete but a bid for additional resources to make significant changes has not been fully supported. Work is however under way to ensure information is compliant with the requirements of the MoPI.
- Some £9,000 has been provided by the police authority to further improve survey work with young people during 2008/09.
- The SHARE database site on the force intranet acts as a repository of good practice for LPTs. It is structured around the five themes and acts as a forum for staff to record problem solving activities and share ideas and good practice. Given the number of policing teams, the geographical spread and the volume of activity across five divisions, this is becoming a valuable tool to improve service delivery. Although awareness and use of this tool is variable across LPTs, examples were provided where successful problem solving strategies from the database were used by other teams.
- Chief officers have initially discussed the future strategy to embed a Citizen Focus culture across all functions of the force, with a full agenda item for discussion at chief officer strategy group in June 2008. The present ACC (TO) is retiring in September 2008 and the new post-holder takes responsibility for both local territorial policing and Citizen Focus from June 2008. This is a change from the previous responsibilities where local policing was under the ACC (TO) and Citizen Focus under the ACC (SO).
- A seminar attended by approximately 170 delegates was held in May 2008 to celebrate past success in local policing and to develop an understanding of where the force needs to progress in order to further the Citizen Focus agenda. Delegates included members of LPTs, BCU commanders, operational managers, partners and police authority members, and the seminar provided a platform to pass the responsibility from the outgoing to the incoming ACC. The event was supported by facilitators from the NPIA and a presentation given by a national speaker of note on the importance and impact of customer focus. The seminar was well received and feedback suggests delegates were inspired by the content.
- A review is under way into the service provided by the public service desk and front

counter services, with a completion date for recommendations of 31 August 2008. All staff in these areas received a questionnaire with a response date of 16 June. The findings from internal consultation will be considered together with those from the public consultation forum held in May 2008, when over 30 members of the public attended a meeting advertised through the media to give feedback on service provided. The findings of this work will result in recommendations to chief officers to further enhance the service provided. An early improvement that has been identified is the use of diarised appointments with victims, as the introduction of this has positively impacted on performance in other force areas. Consideration will also be given to the line management of front counter staff, who are currently supervised through the BCU structure.

- An additional £100,000 capital funding has been allocated to develop the command and control system to enable the application to track and better manage customer relationships. Current systems enable a search on telephone numbers and addresses to view previous incidents but it has proved difficult always to track previous contact with the police to provide background information and assist with the risk assessment and prioritisation processes. The technology to automatically search on the caller's name and provide previous contact information has been delivered and training for call management centre (CMC) and public contact desk staff is under way. The risks associated with the project are on the risk register. It is anticipated the system will go live in autumn 2008 and will provide greater detail to give a more citizen friendly, efficient and effective response to calls received from the public.
- In response to customer feedback, which revealed the main switchboard number 08457 444 888 was not widely known by the public, research has been undertaken into the viability of introducing the national non-emergency number 101 in order to improve the ease of contact. Negotiations are under way with local authorities, who are largely supportive of the initiative, and it is anticipated a paper with recommendations will be presented to chief officers in July 2008. In the interim consideration is being given to moving to a low-cost number (0345) as a result of feedback from the public and national media attention of the cost of 0845 numbers. Should 101 be adopted, the 0345 number would remain active as a means of contact for non-incident related matters.
- A paper has been prepared for presentation to chief officers in June 2008 recommending the trialling of QUEST principles in one BCU. QUEST is a project supported by the Home Office in six trial forces that have re-engineered business processes to focus on the customer. In the trial forces, the entire process of contact management, response policing, local policing and public service desk functions have been reviewed from the customers' perspective. A one team approach has been delivered, waste has been eliminated and major process changes have been implemented. West Mercia seeks to learn from the pilots and implement improvements to advance service and satisfaction levels.
- To develop a greater understanding of the service provision required to meet the anticipated rise in the local population of Eastern European migrants, arrangements are in hand for an exchange with the Polish police for two officers. Delegations from Poland have visited WMC on two occasions and information gleaned from such visits is used to develop the force approach to these emerging communities.
- Force policy requires that officers contact victims with an update within 7 days of the

date a crime is reported, which is a more stringent requirement than the national 28-day limit. This was introduced following consultation with victims. Further contact for open cases is also required within 28 days. Since the introduction of the victims code database in April 2008 compliance has been monitored through an intranet based IT solution, linked to the CRIMES (crime recording database) system that electronically records when victims are updated. An email is automatically sent to the officer if the 7- or 28-day update requirement is not adhered to. Compliance with policy is measured by the strategy, communications and performance team and reported upon at the force performance board. Current performance is reported as below 50% compliance rate but issues have been raised about the reliability of the data; in particular when the victim is updated on the same day as the crime is recorded this is not counted as a victim update. Work is in progress to address the technical difficulties, but chief officers are clear that improvements are a priority, where a victim has been updated on the day of the report they should also be contacted again within 7 days. Leadership is provided at a local level to meet the force standard. Monitoring of compliance will continue and the database will be fully reviewed in autumn 2008.

- The chief superintendent (contact management and service quality) oversees, co-ordinates and identifies best practice from territorial divisions relative to the national quality of service commitment. Each division has recently appointed a divisional champion through whom best practice and improvements to customer service can be provided.

Areas for improvement

- Reality checks by HMIC revealed some short-notice amendments to opening hours of station enquiry offices due to apparent staff shortages. It is important that in support of the public confidence and reassurance agenda station office opening hours are honoured whenever practicable. Opening hours should be reviewed as part of the front counter review.
- Reality testing of the internet site was conducted, visiting 10% of LPT pages. This found most sites contained current priorities, although one did not. Some information was from meetings up to five months prior to the date of the checks and had not been refreshed since the initial entry. No information was available on any of the sites checked of work undertaken to address the priority areas, how the community could become involved or the involvement of other agencies, nor were any results recorded. The lack of such information does not reflect the extent of problem solving activity being undertaken. Information to show the progress made and achievement of key milestones and successes would inform the public of activity. Regular audits should take place to ensure information available on the internet is accurate, useful and timely.
- The extent to which officers are reporting details of crimes directly by telephone from scenes, through 'crime call direct', should to be reviewed. Although fresh impetus has recently been given to encourage officers to directly report crimes, evidence was presented during inspection of varied performance in this area.
- Consideration should be given to the use of mystery customers to identify quality of service improvements through personal feedback.

The force has integrated Citizen Focus and operational activity, such as contact management, response, Neighbourhood Policing, and investigation and through the Criminal Justice process.

Summary statement

The force has implemented corporate service standards expected of all staff when dealing with the public. Satisfaction and confidence performance is partially integrated into BCU and force performance management processes.

Strengths

- The force has held the Charter Mark since 2000 and was reaccredited during 2007 under a new process of examination. The Charter Mark, sponsored by the government Cabinet Office is open to all public sector organisations and sets standards that help an organisation focus on and improve customer service.
- Corporate standards have been implemented which detail those standards by which staff are expected to deal with everyone with whom they have contact as specified in the customer care booklet *Be the Difference*. The document outlines the 16 aspects of the user experience programme in an easily readable format. Sections include:
 - what is a contact?
 - quality of service commitment;
 - customer service principles;
 - speaks quality;
 - victims code of practice;
 - call handling and public service desks'
 - telephony procedure and written communications;
 - LPTs; and
 - customer satisfaction surveys.

All staff had received copies of the booklet and displayed an awareness of the principles.

- Standards and service levels have been set in relation to correspondence handling in line with the national quality of service commitment, where an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent within ten days. Where it is not possible to provide an immediate response the standard is set at 21days for a full reply. Officers and staff are required to check email daily when on duty and provide a response within five working days. When away from work an out of office message must be activated.
- All call handlers have clear guidance on answering the telephone and are required to give their name to the caller on first answering. Reality checking found compliance with this requirement and calls were answered promptly, courteously and efficiently.
- LPTs can be contacted direct by email from the force internet site local policing pages. Each LPT has details and photographs of team members, direct email address, a voicemail number, telephone number and a map of the local policing area. Direct access to a local team can be achieved by typing a postcode into a search facility, or clicking on text or maps. The corporate standard of five days to respond to email and voicemail is clearly displayed. A link provides details of police stations and opening hours and identifies those with the facilities for disabled

access, where there are toilets for the disabled and those equipped with hearing loops.

- Stations that are open to the public have external telephones for use outside opening hours, the use of which is auditable. Damage to the phones causes an alarm to activate so repairs can be arranged. Calls made from these phones are answered as priority calls. Clear signage stating the location of the station would assist in identifying the location of the caller when they are unfamiliar with the area and in need of urgent assistance.
- The bespoke speaks quality programme – designed to embed changes in behaviour, attitude and language in order to improve customer service – was delivered to all CMC, front desk and public service desk staff in 2007. This has since been rolled out to include all staff working on front desks, in witness and victim care units and the public service desk. Staff in the CMC have each received a follow up with a one-to-one session ensuring the standards are complied with and direct feedback has been given. A significant financial investment was made in this programme, with 52 trained coaches able to provide staff with mentoring and guidance to reinforce learning. In addition all LPT staff have received a one-day input on speaks quality and members of the professional standards department are receiving a bespoke two-day input. During autumn 2008 three members of the learning and development team will receive accreditation to train the programme in house and will subsequently train all members of the constabulary to support the Citizen Focus agenda.
- Four of the five divisions have confidence and reassurance as a divisional priority. BCU commanders tailor their approach to achieving their priorities to meet their needs, but each ensures that all members of their team are aware of the division's objectives and how they will contribute to the joint policing plan objectives. In one division, for example, the BCU commander has conducted a series of two hour presentations which all staff are required to attend. He explained the customer care principles and was clear that all visitors to police stations would receive a first class service, so if a local officer was unavailable to deal with a callers issue, then another officer, of whatever rank or department, would deal with it. In another division the BCU commander has run a series of 'raising the standards' conferences and has linked with local businesses to learn how to improve customer experience.
- Members of the Special Constabulary have received training in customer focus and are aware of the force policy and values. Specific training is given on the victims code.
- The responsibility to drive the Citizen Focus agenda has been that of the ACC (SO) who has held fortnightly Citizen Focus review meetings with the chief superintendent (contact management and service quality). The change of focus towards satisfaction and confidence in 2008, and the spotlight on performance in this area in January and April has resulted in all chief officers championing the standards. The alignment of portfolios in June 2008, bringing together local policing and Citizen Focus under the newly appointed ACC (TO), will provide fresh impetus to the work in this area.
- Ceremonies to recognise achievement, the quality people awards, are made annually and include awards for: delivering excellence in policing, the Chief Constable's trophy, an award for criminal investigation, civic dignitary sponsored awards and awards for team and local policing recognition. Examples of good work

are reported in the press and internal publications and are contained in the policing plan. Officers and staff reported that their work was recognised and they received both positive feedback as well as areas for development. Bonus payments and SPPs are awarded in accordance with national guidelines.

- There is an identified Citizen Focus champion of chief inspector rank on each division. Feedback from public surveys is passed through them for individual feedback to officers and staff. Both positive and negative feedback is given. A trial has started on Telford and Shropshire divisions whereby those who receive negative comments on three separate occasions will be the subject of a personal development plan focusing on the issues identified.
- A local annual crime and safety survey is conducted jointly by the constabulary and police authority. During 2007, some 60,000 residents were surveyed and 11,500 responses were received. The sample was supplemented by a booster selection of people aged between 16 and 24 years of age, resulting in 8% of total respondents falling into this age category – an improvement from 2006 where they amounted to only 4%. A target for 2008 is for this age group to comprise 12% of respondents. In addition, an internet based crime and safety survey aimed at young people aged 10 to 15 years resulted in 2,159 responses. This data is available at LPT level and is used by BCU commanders for performance management processes to improve service delivery against their local plans in support of the three year joint policing plan.
- In January and April 2008, the force performance group examined satisfaction and confidence in some detail. In the January meeting a detailed presentation was given which included sections on why this was important, explained what information is available, defined confidence and how it is measured, described current performance and looked at the drivers and inhibitors of confidence and reassurance. Analysis was also presented of each local policing sector examining the levels of crime and worry about crime to help prioritise resources. The impact of activity will be tracked through survey responses over time.
- Satisfaction and confidence was revisited at the force performance group in April 2008 where the five performance indicators of user satisfaction were discussed and the performance at BCU level was presented. The targets for 2008/09 are:
 - user satisfaction – percentage satisfied with the whole experience – 84% or higher;
 - user satisfaction – percentage satisfied with follow up – 70% or higher;
 - confidence in local police – 53% or higher;
 - perception of anti-social behaviour – to be monitored by the police authority; and
 - perception of local drug use/drug dealing – to be monitored by the police authority.
- The impact of local policing and partnership activities on local people is tested periodically to assess people's satisfaction and confidence before and after specific problem solving activity. Under the 4000+ Safer Communities Programme a range of joint problem solving initiatives with partners has taken place following the SARA problem solving model, focusing on priorities identified by the community, for example: in Upton on Severn – speeding; Shifnal – anti-social behaviour; Ledbury –

drug misuse; Oldington and Foley – criminal damage; and Haygate and Ercall – issues generated by the licensing trade in town centres. At the end of these interventions during September to December 2007 local people were surveyed to establish whether there had been an impact on satisfaction and confidence levels as the link between positive action and these measures are recognised.

Work in progress

- There is a significant drive to improve customer satisfaction and confidence, articulated in the joint policing plan 2008–11 with clear leadership from the chief officer team. The customer experience programme will be reviewed following the appointment of the new ACC (TO) in June 2008. The new ACC comes with extensive knowledge and experience of the Citizen Focus portfolio as his previous role was as staff officer to the ACPO lead.
- Consideration is being given to developing a staff advocacy strategy, to ensure that those who work for the constabulary consistently give positive messages to the public about the organisation and the wider criminal justice system. This work is based on recent research which recognises that staff can have a significant impact on confidence and customer satisfaction.
- Following consultation with stakeholders a victim care pack has been produced to further increase satisfaction and confidence levels. The pack will be provided to all victims of crime from October 2008. It provides guidance and information, gives contact details of the officer dealing with the case and other useful numbers, and clarifies the service they should expect from the force.

Areas for improvement

- The content of the *Be the Difference* booklet would benefit from updating; for example it contains a forward from a former ACC and does not reflect how the force has developed since publication. While the key messages are still relevant and useful as a guide for staff and the public, consideration should be given to reviewing the content and accessibility of the information to new and emerging communities, for example by making the information available in other languages and formats. The need to refresh the document has been recognised, but work to do so had not commenced at the end of May 2008.
- The voicemail and email policies should be re-marketed as a recent audit found a significant number of staff had not responded to their email within the required five-day period and the inspection found mixed levels of awareness of the policy. In the event of individual staff absence, for example through sickness, there is no clarity in the policy to ensure supervisors can access voicemails and emails of the absentee.
- The telephone contact database is used by the switchboard to route calls to officers and staff. In the absence of a corporate and consistent policy as to who is responsible for notifying all changes to the database there is little confidence that the extension numbers on the database are accurate.
- Divisions currently have media support provided but not necessarily marketing expertise. Given the emphasis on and the importance of communication as outlined in the community engagement strategy the force should review its marketing support to divisions in order to maximise the opportunities to further develop the Citizen Focus agenda.

The force can demonstrate the relevant SPIs remain stable as a minimum.

	SPI 1e Satisfaction with the overall service provided		SPI 3b Satisfaction of users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided	SPI 3b Gap – comparison of satisfaction for white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided
	Difference from MSF	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	+/-pp
West Mercia	+1.8pp	+3.4pp	-2.6pp	2.9pp

Summary statement

The SPI data shows that force performance is significantly better than the average for the MSF.

The SPI data also shows that force performance has significantly improved compared with two years ago.

Satisfaction of users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided is unchanged.

There is a satisfaction gap between white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided. Users from minority ethnic groups are 2.9 percentage points less satisfied, although this difference is not statistically significant.

Context

The SPI statistics are obtained from the PPAFs to March 2008. These statistics are survey based and have been analysed for statistical significance, which can be explained in lay terms as follows: 'The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

Note: When comparing the force's performance with previous years, year-on-year statistical significance is explained as follows: 'the difference in the force performance between the years compared is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

There is a summary of the statistical analysis methodology at Appendix 2 at the end of this report.

Victims of crime and users of police services are surveyed using West Mercia Constabulary's own user satisfaction surveys, which comply to national standards and thus allow comparison with other forces. Surveys are based on a sample size of 600 interviews per BCU.

SPI 1e – satisfaction with the overall service provided.

83.5% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 were satisfied with the overall service provided, which is significantly better than the average for the MSF.

Force performance significantly improved in the year ending March 2008; 83.5% of people surveyed were satisfied with the overall service provided, compared with 80.0% in the year ending March 2006.

SPI 3b – comparison of satisfaction for white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided.

Force performance was unchanged in the year ending March 2008; 78.8% of users from minority ethnic groups were satisfied with the overall service provided, compared with 81.4% in the year ending March 2006.

There is a satisfaction gap between white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided. Users from minority ethnic groups are 2.9 percentage points less satisfied.

Strengths

- User satisfaction with the overall service (SPI 1e) in West Mercia has increased significantly over the last three years, increasing by 3.4 percentage points to 83.5%. This value is also 1.8 percentage points above the MSF average which is a significant gap.
- The number of BME victims contacted as part of the force satisfaction surveys has been increased to provide additional data to compare BME and white satisfaction levels. In Telford and Wrekin division plans are in place to use external facilitators to run focus groups to help understand reasons for differences in satisfaction levels and provide information from which service improvements will be implemented.

Area for improvement

- User satisfaction for BME users has fallen by 2.6 percentage points in the last three years to a value of 78.8%. The fall in BME satisfaction has contributed to the gap in satisfaction between white and BME users, widening by 2.5 percentage points to 2.9 percentage points. This measure is not proactively monitored at BCU or force level and most staff interviewed during inspection activity were unaware of the fall in satisfaction.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ACC	assistant chief constable
ACC (SO)	assistant chief constable (specialist operations)
ACC (TO)	assistant chief constable (territorial operations)
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers

B

BCU	basic command unit
BME	black and minority ethnic

C

CARE	communicate, accountability, responsive, educate
CDRP	crime and disorder reduction partnership
CMC	call management centre
CSO	community support officer
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSP	community safety partnership

D

DCC	deputy chief constable
-----	------------------------

F

FSA force strategic assessment

H

HMI Her Majesty's Inspector

HMIC Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

I

IAG independent advisory group

ICE inclusivity and community engagement

IT information technology

K

KDI key diagnostic indicator

L

LAA local area agreement

LPO local policing officer

LPT local policing team

M

MoPI management of police information

MSF most similar force

O

OCG organised crime group

N

NPIA National Policing Improvement Agency

P

PACT partners and communities together

PCSO police community support officer

PDR performance development review

PIM performance improvement meeting

PPAF policing performance assessment framework

S

SARA scanning, analysis, response, assessment

SPI statutory performance indicator

SPP special priority payment

W

WMC West Mercia Constabulary

Appendix 2 Assessment of Outcomes Using Statutory Performance Indicator Data

Context

The HMIC grading of Neighbourhood Policing and Citizen Focus for each force takes performance on the key SPIs as a starting point. These are derived from the PPAF and are survey based.

The survey results come from two different sources:

- **Neighbourhood Policing**
Results come from the BCS, which questions the general population. The annual sample size for the BCS is usually 1,000 interviews per force.
- **Developing Citizen Focus Policing**
Results come from forces' own user satisfaction surveys. The annual sample size for these user satisfaction surveys is 600 interviews per BCU.

Understanding survey results

The percentage shown for each force represents an estimate of the result if the whole relevant population had been surveyed. Around the estimate there is a margin of error based on the size of the sample surveyed (not on the size of the population).

This margin is known as a **confidence interval** and it will narrow or widen depending on how confident we want to be that the estimate reflects the views of the whole population (a common standard is 95% confident) and therefore how many people have to be interviewed. For example, if we have a survey estimate of 81% from a sample of approximately 1,000 people, the confidence interval would be plus or minus 3 and the appropriate statement would be that we can be 95% confident that the real figure in the population lies between 78% and 84%.

Having more interviewees – a larger sample – means that the estimate will be more precise and the confidence interval will be correspondingly narrower. Generally, user satisfaction surveys will provide a greater degree of precision in their answers than the BCS because the sample size is greater (1,000 for the **whole force** for the BCS, as opposed to 600 **for each BCU** for user satisfaction).

HMIC grading using survey results

In order to **meet the standard**, forces need to show no 'significant' difference between their score and the average for their MSF or against their own data from previous years. Consequently, force performance could be considered to be 'exceeding the standard' or 'failing to meet the standard' if it shows a 'significant' difference from the MSF average or from previous years' data.

HMIC would not consider force performance as 'exceeding the standard' if SPI data were travelling in the wrong direction, ie deteriorating. Likewise, credit has been given for an upward direction in SPI data even if performance falls below the MSF average.

Understanding significant difference

The calculation that determines whether a difference is statistically significant takes into account the force's confidence interval and the confidence interval of its MSF.¹ The results of the calculation indicate, with a specified degree of certainty, whether the result shows a real difference or could have been achieved by chance.

This greater level of precision is the reason why a difference of approximately two percentage points is statistically significant² in the case of the user satisfaction indicator, whereas a difference of around four percentage points is required for the BCS indicators. If the sample size is small, the calculation is still able to show a statistically significant difference but the gap will have to be larger.

[Produced by HMIC based on guidance from the NPIA Research, Analysis and Information Unit, Victoria Street, London.]

¹ The BCS results are also corrected to take account of intentional 'under-sampling' or 'over-sampling' of different groups in the force area.

² It is likely that there is a real, underlying difference between data taken at two different times or between two populations. If sufficient data is collected, the difference may not have to be large to be statistically significant.