

**Metropolitan
Police Service**
Bringing Offenders to Justice
October 2003



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



HMIC Best Value Review Inspection

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 By virtue of Section 1(1)(d) of the Local Government Act 1999, all police authorities in England and Wales are required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the function of policing is exercised within their force area, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.1.2 Police authorities must prepare a Best Value performance plan (BVPP) for each financial year in accordance with orders and guidance issued under the Act. In particular, the authority must conduct reviews of its functions and publish a programme of the Best Value reviews (BVRs). Whilst it is clear the police authority has the legal accountability for Best Value, the chief constable is constitutionally personally responsible for operational service delivery. Consequently, they will have to work together to ensure that BVRs make a significant improvement to service delivery.
- 1.1.3 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is charged with the responsibility of inspecting all BVRs within the police service. The resulting reports are 'public' documents, and in every case a copy will be forwarded to the Secretary of State, the chair of the police authority and the chief constable or commissioner of the force concerned.
- 1.1.4 Reviewing authorities must demonstrate that they have challenged why and how a service is being provided; compared their performance with others; embraced fair competition to secure efficient and effective services; and consulted with local people, customers and stakeholders.
- 1.1.5 The purpose of independent inspection, and thus of this report, is to:
- ? Enable the public to see whether best value is being delivered;
 - ? Enable the inspected body to see how well it is doing;
 - ? Enable the Home Secretary to see how well best value is working;
 - ? Identify failing services where remedial action may be necessary; and
 - ? Identify and disseminate good practice.

1.2 Judgement 1: How good is the service?

- 1.2.1 The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) conducted a BVR of criminal justice (CJ) procedure, entitled Bringing Offenders to Justice (BOTJ), between

September 2001 - December 2002. The subsequent HMIC inspection of BOTJ concluded the service provided was **'Fair'**.

1.2.2 Strengths included:

- ? The formation of a specific strategic unit for CJ matters.
- ? Enhanced partnerships with criminal justice system (CJS) agencies.
- ? New practices enhancing services to victims and witnesses.
- ? An improved performance-driven CJ culture.

1.2.3 The inspection found some areas in need of attention:

- ? Lack of an overall implementation of recommendations.

1.3 Judgement 2: What are the prospects for improvement?

1.3.1 HMIC judged that the prospects for improvement were **'Uncertain'**.

1.3.2 Strengths included:

- ? Clear opportunities to create community confidence in prosecutions.
- ? Reduction of cracked and ineffective trials.
- ? Continued development of joint CJS targets.

1.3.3 The inspection found some areas in need of attention:

- ? No coherent implementation plan to guide progression.
- ? Lack of monitoring of implementation.
- ? Unrealistic implementation timescales.
- ? Other reports superseding BOTJ and recommendations being neglected.

2. Contextual Background

2.1 Best Value Arrangements of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA)

2.1.1 The MPA has an appointed member for Best Value. The member sits on the Planning Performance and Review Committee (PPRC). It is to this committee that the final review report was presented. Other MPA committees receive BVR reports when they fall within their remit.

2.1.2 Implementation of the report's recommendations is monitored every six months at the PPRC.

2.2 Force Structure

2.2.1 The MPS is the largest and most complex police force in the UK. To fully analyse the organisational structure would not contribute to the understanding of the review. Those sections of the MPS that affected the BVR and CJ are outlined below.

2.2.2 The MPS is led by the Commissioner and his Deputy (who has a separate and distinct command). Assistant commissioners (ACs) lead the four main functional areas of the Force; one of these is the AC Territorial Policing (ACTP).

2.2.3 Territorial Policing is run from a dedicated headquarters (TPHQ) in Central London. From here the 32 Borough Operational Command Units (BOCUs), which deliver the daily geographical policing services to London, are commanded.

2.2.4 TPHQ directs the activities of BOCU criminal justice units (CJUs) via the newly formed Department of Criminal Justice (DoCJ). This department is pivotal to the findings of this inspection.

2.3 Service under review

2.3.1 Activity is driven by the CJ strategy for London 2003 – 2006. The vision statement provided by this strategy aspires to...

“A safer London where more offences are brought to justice, outcomes are successfully delivered first time and victims and witnesses receive an excellent standard of care.”

- 2.3.2 At the strategic level there is the DoCJ, which provides the corporate lead and sets policy for the BOCU CJUs. DoCJ is led by a Commander (ACPO rank) and he is accountable directly to the ACTP.
- 2.3.3 Delivery of the CJ function at a local level resides with the CJUs based on the 32 BOCUs. These units are accountable to BOCU commanders, usually via the chief inspector CJU manager. Other units operate CJUs outside of BOCUs, such as the Traffic OCU's dedicated facility at Marlowe House.
- 2.3.4 This structure is responsible for delivering the full range of CJ functions. These include: custody suites and prisoner processing; file administration; communication with the range of CJS partners, which crucially includes the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS); and improving performance and customer satisfaction.
- 2.3.5 The annual budget for the MPS is £2.2bn, £35m of which is spent on providing CJ services. Some 1542 police staff are employed across the MPS in the provision of these services; this does not include police officers who are inputting cases to CJUs.

2.4 Review Methodology

- 2.4.1 The review was undertaken by the MPS between September 2001 and December 2002. The review team comprised police officers and police staff, who were recruited specifically for the review, and other officers and staff who made occasional or informal contributions.
- 2.4.2 Initially, the review was overseen by Policy Review and Standards (PRS), with a Best Value support team providing assistance to the review team. Due to restructuring toward the end of 2002, the review was moved to the DoCJ and then began to receive support from the Internal Consultancy Group (ICG).
- 2.4.3 The review was based on the application of the '4Cs' as outlined in the introduction. This ensured that it was carried out with due regard to comparison with other service providers, opening up the service to competition, challenging whether and how the service should be provided and consulting with stakeholders.
- 2.4.4 The process was bolstered by an Independent Challenge Panel (ICP), which acted as a critical friend to the review.

2.5 Inspection Methodology

- 2.5.1 The purpose of an HMIC BVR inspection (BVRI) is to make two judgements at its conclusion. Firstly, how good is the service? Secondly, what are the prospects for improvement? HMIC is statutorily responsible for carrying out BVRI's within the police service.
- 2.5.2 The inspection was carried out between September - November 2003 on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspector Sir Ronnie Flanagan GBE, MA. Prior to the publication of this inspection report, the MPA and MPS have been given opportunity to comment on the factual contents.
- 2.5.3 During the course of the inspection, 16 interviews were carried out, gathering evidence from principal members of the review team, staff leading on CJ implementation, practitioners, CJ partners and stakeholders. Three workplace visits were conducted in order to get an accurate picture of the service.
- 2.5.4 Numerous sources of documentary evidence were examined. These are referenced when appropriate; however, the main ones that merit mention are listed below.
- ? The BVR 'Bringing Offenders to Justice'.
 - ? The CJ strategy for London, 2003 - 2006.
 - ? The MPS BVPP.
 - ? Assorted minutes of the PPRC.
 - ? *Blueprint for Change* by Atos KPMG, which was part of the Justice for London Project.
 - ? The Project Initiation Document (PID) for BOTJ.
- 2.5.5 One of the principal objectives was to gauge the perception of those involved as to how good the service was and whether it was improving as a result of the BVR. This was then compared to HMIC's own observations and findings.

3. Judgement 1: How good is the service?

3.1 Are the service aims clear and challenging?

3.1.1 Prior to the interview phase, the inspection team requested a copy of the BVR and the PID.

3.1.2 The PID lays out the internal and external CJS environment from the standpoint of the MPS and outlines the structures that are to be put in place in support of the review. The document identifies three subject areas that the review should address.

- ? Prisoner processing from arrest to disposal (paragraph 2.2.1).
- ? Victim and witness care (paragraph 2.2.2).
- ? Interdependencies between MPS and CJS partners on court outcomes (paragraph 2.2.3).

3.1.3 The executive summary of the BOTJ full report sets out the aims of the review, which are to:

- ? Identify where improvements can be made in the level of service provided by the MPS to victims and witnesses.
- ? Identify where police performance in respect of offenders can be improved to reduce crime and disorder and improve public/community confidence.
- ? Identify where improvements in police performance can be effected by the activities of partner agencies in the CJS and liaise with those agencies accordingly.

3.1.4 The review team went on to define how it intended to achieve these aims. It looked at how current services supported the aims and which should be reviewed. The next stage was to make performance improving recommendations based on the findings of the review. The report expands on the current state of CJ functions and projects a vision of the future. Absent from the review were specific areas of poor performance illustrated by statistical analysis with targets for improvement.

3.1.5 It became evident that the PID and the initial aims of the review were revised and refocused on several occasions. This was a source of frustration for the review team and attracted criticism from the ICP.

Recommendation 1

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that BVRs are supported by clear aims which remain constant and define activity during reviews.

3.2 Does the service meet the aims?

- 3.2.1 HMIC has considered the aims the MPS has set for delivering CJ services and subsequently assessed how well the service is performing. This involves testing the service against specific standards and evaluating how the MPS is measuring actual delivery.
- 3.2.2 The final BOTJ report was presented to the MPA in January 2003. The inspection commenced in September 2003, thus allowing the MPS nine months to implement the recommendations.
- 3.2.3 It is reasonable given this amount of time to expect to see considerable activity and tangible results. HMIC was cognisant of the fact that the review was of a large functional area and was 'cross cutting' in that it involved many departments within the MPS and external agencies. However, extensive implementation was found in just one BOCU (Southwark) and the early stages of implementation at a second (Lambeth).
- 3.2.4 Southwark had made considerable progress with witness liaison desks, case progression units and lawyers at the point of charge. Lambeth was some way behind this. Implementation of recommendations is due for completion MPS-wide by April 2004. The first places to receive the benefits are priority street crime BOCUs, with other BOCUs experiencing implementation later.
- 3.2.5 Lawyers at the point of charge seems to be progressing rather more rapidly than other recommendations, with many BOCUs providing the service. Apart from this, implementation of other recommendations is slow, making the target of April 2004 seem unlikely.
- 3.2.6 HMIC was pleased to see that where implementation had taken place the results were positive and offered an improved service to CJ customers and CJS partners.

3.3 How does the service compare?

- 3.3.1 The comparison element is extensively documented in the final report and staff from the review team were able to account for how this activity was conducted.

- 3.3.2 Comparisons were drawn internally across MPS departments and BOCUs and externally with seven other forces: Merseyside, South Yorkshire, West Midlands, Thames Valley, Kent, Surrey and South Wales. Although three of these forces are similar to the MPS in that they are metropolitan forces in terms of scale, they cannot compare to the MPS.

Recommendation 2

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that international benchmarking is conducted in future BVRs where the scale of operation or function makes domestic comparison difficult.

- 3.3.3 Inter-agency comparison was undertaken; an example of this can be found in witness care where the review team looked at Home Office and Victim Support Scheme expectations around the Victims' Charter.

3.4 Overall judgement

- 3.4.1 HMIC grades the service inspected as excellent, good, fair or poor according to criteria laid out by inspection guidance. In light of the findings of the BVR and what was subsequently found by the inspection, Her Majesty's Inspector grades the service as **Fair**.

4. Judgement 2: What are the prospects for improvement?

4.1 Does the BVR drive improvement?

- 4.1.1 Best Value legislation under the Local Government Act 1999 requires forces to demonstrate that they considered why they provide a service under review and alternative ways that it can be delivered.
- 4.1.2 As the area under review was so large, the review team split into pairs to research the areas under consideration. Each pair applied the '4Cs' methodology of comparison, consultation, challenge and completion to their area. This phase of work was supported by the ICP, which consisted of a broad section of professionals with an interest or expertise that could be brought to bear as a critical friend. The ICP maintained regular contact with the review team and analysed progress. It was apparent during the inspection that the ICP proactively discharged its role by tasking the team to explain decisions and consider alternative methods and avenues. Both the review team and the ICP were complimentary of the work of the other.
- 4.1.3 HMIC recognises the inclusion of the ICP in the BVR process as productive and endorses it as good practice.
- 4.1.4 The review team was aware of other projects and work being conducted into CJ issues at the same time as its review. By coincidence, CJ issues rose to prominence for central government with direct attention being paid by the Cabinet Office. As the review was nearing its conclusion in November and December 2002, another CJ review commissioned by TPHQ took place. This review was conducted by consultants Atos KPMG and was entitled *Blueprint for Change*.
- 4.1.5 *Blueprint for Change* made recommendations that were virtually the same as many of those in BOTJ, although BOTJ made several recommendations that were not duplicated by *Blueprint for Change*.
- 4.1.6 At around the same time, ownership of the review was passed from PRS to TPHQ, due to an organisational restructure. This left TPHQ with two similar projects and competing recommendations.
- 4.1.7 The inspection concluded that TPHQ favoured *Blueprint for Change* and its recommendations. The implementation seen during the inspection was biased towards the *Blueprint for Change* model, with the terminology of that report being extensively adopted.

- 4.1.8 The CJ strategy for London 2003 – 2006, which is the main driver for CJ policy in the MPS, discusses the implementation of BOTJ in terms of it having an influence on the strategy. However, the influence of *Blueprint for Change* is far more prevalent within this document.
- 4.1.9 HMIC has concluded that certain recommendations from BOTJ are being carried forward, but only those that coincide with recommendations in *Blueprint for Change*. Several of the recommendations made by BOTJ do not feature anywhere in the CJ strategy and HMIC is unable to account for how these recommendations have been progressed. The BVR does not drive improvement, but it is apparent that current strategy is cognisant of it.

4.2 How good is the improvement plan?

- 4.2.1 BVRs should contain an improvement plan based on findings and recommendations. It should be clear what needs to improve, why, how the improvements will be delivered and in what timescale. It should contain challenging targets designed to deliver continuous improvement which will raise the level of service. The costs and benefits should be laid out along with targets, milestones for improvement and clear lines of accountability.
- 4.2.2 The final report contained a detailed improvement plan that fulfilled all the criteria the inspection was looking for.
- 4.2.3 The inspection noted that despite the improvement plan there was only limited evidence of implementation. This was confined to those recommendations from BOTJ that matched those from *Blueprint for Change*, such as lawyers at the point of charge, witness liaison desks and prisoner handling teams (case progression units under *Blueprint for Change*). BOTJ made recommendations for custody detention officers, flexible bail to court and corporate case files. These recommendations have not been developed and there is no record of how they should be managed. Whilst the DoCJ clearly has ownership of the CJ strategy, there is no evidence that they have produced an implementation or action plan for the BOTJ recommendations.

Recommendation 3
Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that implementation plans are produced which delineate how recommendations from the improvement plan will be progressed and subsequently enable effective monitoring.

4.3 Will the Force deliver the improvements?

- 4.3.1 HMIC looked for evidence that the Force will deliver against the improvement plan. The improvement plan must have the necessary support from the MPA and the MPS in order for it to prove effective and for improvements in the CJ service to be realised.
- 4.3.2 The CJ strategy sets out the way forward for the MPS and there is no doubt that advances are being made; however, it is hard to attribute this to any adherence to the proposals from BOTJ or Best Value principles.
- 4.3.3 One of the recommendations made by the review was to establish a DoCJ. This was included in the review at a late stage and had all the appearances of a foregone conclusion, as the DoCJ came into existence before the final report was presented to the MPA. HMIC is confident that improvements are being delivered; however, this is not due to the BVR.
- 4.3.4 Members of the MPA were interviewed about the review. The MPA is committed to both Best Value and CJ, taking an active interest in these issues. However, after the report was presented to the MPA implementation should have been monitored via the PPRC. A review of the minutes of these committee meetings throughout 2003 showed there was little attention paid to the report after it had been presented.

Recommendation 4
Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the police authority regularly monitors the progress of implementation and fully documents this.

- 4.3.5 Paragraph 10.1 of BOTJ PID outlines risks associated with the review. Two of these appear particularly pertinent to the inspection. Firstly, the lack of commitment to Best Value from the MPS Management Board; this gives the impression that there is not the level of support required in the MPS to make BOTJ a success and a driver for CJ improvement. Secondly, the level of change in the MPS; other projects such as that conducted by Atos KPMG clearly impacted on BOTJ and the MPS clearly favoured that report for inclusion in the CJ strategy 2003 - 2006. The inspection was left in no doubt by the DoCJ that BOTJ was not seen as a major influence on CJ policy.

4.4 Overall judgement

- 4.4.1 In order to arrive at the judgement for the prospects for improvement, HMIC assesses the evidence presented by the review, supporting documentation and discoveries made during the inspection. Possible judgements are excellent, promising, uncertain or poor.

4.4.2 Having due regard for those areas mentioned above, Her Majesty's Inspector concludes that the prospects for improvement are **'Uncertain'**.

5. Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that BVRs are supported by clear aims which remain constant and define activity during reviews (paragraph 3.1.5).

Recommendation 2:

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that international benchmarking is conducted in future BVRs where the scale of operation or function makes domestic comparison difficult (paragraph 3.3.2).

Recommendation 3:

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that implementation plans are produced which delineate how recommendations from the improvement plan will be progressed and subsequently enable effective monitoring (paragraph 4.2.3).

Recommendation 4:

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the police authority regularly monitors the progress of implementation and fully documents this (paragraph 4.3.4).

6. Potential Good Practice

- 6.1 The ICP was clearly beneficial to the work of the review team and contributed greatly to the overall quality of the review. The inspection also found an independent perspective to be especially useful during its work. HMIC recognises this as good practice.