

**Metropolitan  
Police Service**  
Managing Demand  
January 2004



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Best Value Review Inspection Report

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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. During this process police authorities must fully recognise their responsibilities, 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).
- 1.1.3 The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) has the legal accountability for Best Value, whilst the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is constitutionally personally responsible for operational service delivery. Consequently, the Commissioner and the MPA need to work together to ensure that BVRs make a significant improvement to service delivery.
- 1.1.4 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is charged with the responsibility of inspecting 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 Commissioner.
- 1.1.5 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.
- 1.1.6 The purpose of independent inspection, and 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 MPA conducted a BVR of Managing Demand between July 2002 - May 2003. At the time of HMIC Inspection in January 2004, the service was graded as **'Fair'**. Strengths included:

- ? The use of an Independent Challenge Panel (ICP) - acting as a 'critical friend' to the review team, and the responsiveness of the review team to ICP members.
- ? The close relationships that have developed between the team leader, the ICP and the MPA member.
- ? The detailed, thorough and cross-cutting nature of the final report, which took into account a broad range of services, and other ongoing work such as the Command, Control, Communication and Information Project (commonly known as C3i).
- ? The selection of team members, each with areas of expertise, who were all provided with Best Value training, which resulted in a high quality final report.
- ? The birth of the phrase 'getting it right first time', now beginning to be used widely across the MPS.

1.2.2 The inspection, however, highlighted some important areas for development:

- ? The implementation timetable was unrealistic given other project work, which remains ongoing.
- ? Implementation of recommendations has been extremely limited.
- ? Accountability mechanisms during implementation by the MPA are not sufficiently robust or challenging.
- ? The lack of visibility of a Best Value champion within the MPS Management Board.
- ? An apparent lack of oversight and regular review of the Best Value process by the MPS Management Board. For example, the inspection team was unable to find any audit trail where the Management Board was seen to approve the BVR prior to going to the MPA for approval.

## 1.3 Judgement 2: What are the prospects for improvement?

1.3.1 At the time of the inspection, Her Majesty's Inspector judged the prospects for improvement as **'Uncertain'**. Strengths included:

- ? The level of quality, committed, professional individuals the inspection team met at all levels within the MPS/MPA.

- ? Recommendations produced appeared to be appropriate and challenging.
- ? Considerations for other ongoing projects at the time of the inspection, such as C3i.

1.3.2 However, the inspection highlighted some important areas for development:

- ? A lack of drive towards implementation of recommendations.
- ? A lack of funding, resources and accountability considerations during implementation.
- ? An apparent lack of involvement from the Management Board.

#### **1.4 Best Value Arrangements of the Authority**

1.4.1 The MPA has overall responsibility for monitoring the Best Value programme. It has 23 members, with one member having specific responsibilities for Best Value.

1.4.2 The member sits on the Planning Performance and Review Committee (PPRC), which selects and approves all BVRs, the final reports and their implementation plans. Each year, the MPA approves two BVRs.

1.4.3 Within the MPS, the Management Board, chaired by the Commissioner, sanctions the Best Value programme, its terms of reference, improvement plans and all completed BVRs before submission to the MPA.

1.4.4 For this BVR, one MPA member was appointed to the Best Value Project Board (BVPB), which met monthly during the review phase.

#### **1.5 Acknowledgements**

1.5.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate wishes to thank members of the MPS and MPA who facilitated the inspection and who generously set aside time to speak to Inspectorate staff. Without their assistance and contribution this inspection would not have been possible.

## **2. Contextual Background**

### **2.1 Force Structure**

- 2.1.1 The MPS is the largest and most complex police force in the UK. The area covered comprises 32 Borough Operational Command Units (BOCUs or BCUs) sharing coterminous boundaries with the 32 London boroughs.
- 2.1.2 The MPS is responsible for policing a resident population of just over 7m, with an additional daily influx of approximately 5½ m visitors and workers. The size of the MPS, its contribution to service delivery, organisational and operational complexity make it a unique police organisation.
- 2.1.3 In addition to providing local policing services for those who live, work and visit the capital, it discharges a range of international, national and capital city policing functions, including counter-terrorism.
- 2.1.4 Budgeted officer strength of the MPS at the time of inspection was 30,087 full-time equivalent police officers. The Force has 11,847 police staff members. There are 503 traffic wardens and 1,346 police community support officers and around 700 special constables. Net revenue expenditure for 2003/04 was £2.2bn.
- 2.1.5 London is a growing, increasingly diverse city. Maintaining and improving public confidence in policing amongst ever more diverse communities is a major challenge.
- 2.1.6 The MPS is routinely required to respond to a range of major and critical incidents/events, notable examples being the annual Notting Hill Carnival and the visit of President George W Bush. Both events serve to highlight the unparalleled demands on the organisation and the significant resource commitments necessary.

### **2.2 Service under review**

- 2.2.1 The review was commissioned by the MPA in order to improve the MPS response to increasing and competing service demands.
- 2.2.2 Initially, this BVR was approved to examine both Managing Demand and Operational Support within the MPS. A decision was made at an early stage to split the two business areas, with Managing Demand dealt with as phase one. Operational Support was being finalised at the time of this HMIC inspection.
- 2.2.3 The 2001 HMIC inspection report recommended that the MPS develop a corporate demand strategy, identifying which local initiatives have proved successful, with a view to MPS-wide implementation.

- 2.2.4 The BVR set out to examine demand from the customer's perspective. The scope and focus of the BVR was developed with stakeholders, including the MPS Managing Demand Strategic Committee, to identify areas most in need of improvement.
- 2.2.5 Current command and control functions within the MPS involve around 1800 officers and police staff dispersed across the 32 boroughs, responsible for handling about 2.5m calls annually. During 2001/02, the MPS commenced the C3i project, which will ultimately centralise call-handling arrangements across the MPS into three sites. Their core function will be dealing with calls received from the public and the despatching of officers.
- 2.2.6 The project is one of the largest in the country, involving major technical and infrastructure changes, and will significantly impact on staff and their working practices.
- 2.2.7 The introduction of C3i will mean considerable change to the way day-to-day operational policing is conducted. Delivery of the project requires a co-ordinated programme of closely related activities. The project was, and remains, a key feature within the BVR and its recommendations, and has a planned completion date of 2006/07.

### **2.3 Review Methodology**

- 2.3.1 The MPA conducted its review of Demand Management between July 2002 - May 2003.
- 2.3.2 Within the MPS, the Internal Consultancy Group (ICG) has responsibility for co-ordinating and progressing Best Value. One member of staff within the department was appointed specialist project management support officer, along with one other police staff member who provided an administration support function.
- 2.3.3 In addition, the Force appointed a project manager (chief superintendent), two chief inspectors, one inspector and one police staff member who were each allocated areas of responsibility within the review. Whilst not employed as full-time specialists in the area of Best Value, the officers were seconded to the ICG for the life of the BVR, were provided with training in Best Value and were responsible for the final report.
- 2.3.4 The BVR was based on the application of the '4Cs' as outlined in the introduction. This ensured that the review was carried out with due regard to comparison with other service providers, was opened up to competition, challenged whether and how the service should be provided and consulted with stakeholders.

- 2.3.5 The BVPB was created, initially chaired by an MPS Deputy Assistant Commissioner, and thereafter by an MPS Commander.
- 2.3.6 One MPA member was appointed onto the BVPB. The project board had responsibility for overseeing and managing the BVR and met every 4/5 weeks during the review period.
- 2.3.7 As with all BVRs undertaken by the MPA, the process was given significant support in the form of an ICP. The panel - which met monthly during the BVR - acted as a 'critical friend' to the review team.

## **2.4 Inspection Methodology**

- 2.4.1 The purpose of BVR inspections (BVRIs) is to make two judgements: firstly, how good is the service and secondly, what are the prospects for improvement? HMIC is statutorily responsible for conducting BVRIs within the police service.
- 2.4.2 The bulk of HMIC inspection activity was conducted between 26 – 30 January 2004 on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspector Sir Ronnie Flanagan GBE, MA. Prior to the report's publication, both the MPA and MPS had the opportunity to comment on its factual contents.
- 2.4.3 During the inspection 15 interviews were conducted, gathering evidence from principal members of the review team, members of staff leading on implementation of recommendations, key partners and stakeholders.
- 2.4.4 A wide range of documents were examined, including the original BVR, the implementation plan, supporting papers and meeting minutes, all of which assisted in providing a greater understanding of the review and the service concerned.
- 2.4.5 HMIC also examined and considered:
  - ? The manner in which the review was conducted;
  - ? How the service had developed since the review; and
  - ? The likelihood of improvement flowing from it.



### 3. Judgement 1: How good is the service?

#### 3.1 Are the relevant aims clear and challenging?

3.1.1 Details of the review's aims were not detailed within the BVR. A key product of the BVR was, however, the 'demand resolution strategy' which highlighted five key themes. By use of these themes, the report gave details of a 'vision for the future' as outlined below:

- ? To be an accessible organisation that is responsive to the public's needs and which provides a range of channels through which police services can be accessed.
- ? To improve the quality of response to incidents through the use of more experienced staff and stricter call grading criteria.
- ? To make better use of existing resources to respond to demand.
- ? To shape public expectations about the level of service they can reasonably expect from the MPS.
- ? To develop performance indicators that are customer focused, employee related, and cover the financial and operational aspects of the activities.

3.1.2 The review team then provided a 'where we are now' pen picture along with a section giving details of 'key initiatives to achieve our vision'. In addition, the review made use of the phrase 'getting it right first time', intended for use both within the organisation and externally.

3.1.3 The report provided details of related programmes of work, such as C3i, Police Reform, devolved budgets and the Policing Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF). Some of these work programmes are long-term issues for the MPS. C3i, for example, will not be fully implemented until 2006/07.

3.1.4 HMIC fully recognises the challenging nature of the visions, as provided within the report, and the large cross-cutting functional area of business under review. In the absence of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) aims and objectives, measurement of progress and accountability is difficult - both for the MPA/MPS and HMIC.

3.1.5 Her Majesty's Inspector therefore recommends that all future BVRs contain clear, challenging and SMART aims, which are supported by clearly defined activities.

<b>Recommendation 1</b>
<b>Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that all future BVRs contain clear, challenging and SMART aims, supported by clearly defined activities.</b>

### **3.2 Does the service meet the aims?**

- 3.2.1 Having considered the aims set for the service, as well as those that have been set for it, HMIC assesses how well the service is performing. This includes evaluating how the MPS is measuring actual delivery.
- 3.2.2 During its visit, the inspection team examined in detail the 'vision for the future' with a view to establishing how much progress had been made on delivery of the vision.
- 3.2.3 The final Demand Management report was presented and approved by the MPA in May 2003. The inspection commenced in January 2004, allowing the MPS eight months to begin the process of implementation.
- 3.2.4 'Key initiatives' within the 'vision for the future' section of the report in some cases became recommendations. During interviews with some of the key named individuals responsible for the implementation phase of the review, concerns were raised around the likelihood of a number of recommendations actually being fully implemented.
- 3.2.5 An example highlighting this issue would be the recommendation around single crewing of officers on response duties, together with a risk assessment framework (Recommendation 11). Given the current devolution agenda and the level of autonomy of BCU commanders, the recommendation whilst being discussed was receiving strong resistance. In addition, mobile data terminals will soon begin to be used in response vehicles as the C3i programme is rolled out. The terminals cost £4000 each, and will require two officers to operate the equipment effectively.
- 3.2.6 Some of the other approved recommendations were on hold, either whilst project plans were formulated for further discussions or due to the long-term roll out of C3i.
- 3.2.7 Within the report, the review team produced a table (page 71) displaying each of the 17 recommendations, placing them in either high or low priority, and also the ease/difficulty and rate of implementation. Twelve of the recommendations were regarded by the review team as relatively easy, quick and inexpensive to implement. Of those twelve, eight were regarded as a high priority.
- 3.2.8 At the time of inspection, only one of the 17 recommendations had been fully implemented.

### 3.3 How does the service compare?

- 3.3.1 In the compare and compete elements of the BVR, the review team conducted research in a number of areas, namely:
- ? Satisfaction/effectiveness/opening hours of front counter services in police stations;
  - ? One-stop shops and mobile police stations;
  - ? Public access to information and services; and
  - ? The Internet.
- 3.3.2 During this research the team drew direct comparisons with West Mercia Constabulary, West Midlands Police and Greater Manchester Police.
- 3.3.3 Prior to April 2001, national Best Value performance indicators (BVPIs) measured satisfaction with front counter services. This BVPI has now been removed. Data was, however, analysed by the review for comparison purposes prior to removal of the BVRI; this revealed a downward trend in satisfaction levels and performance during the period 1998 – 2001.
- 3.3.4 Systems and processes were also researched in a number of other forces – namely Thames Valley, Dorset, Kent, South Wales, Merseyside, Sussex, Devon and Cornwall, Leicestershire, Gloucestershire, South Yorkshire, Avon and Somerset, West Yorkshire and Northumbria.
- 3.3.5 Further research was conducted into joint working and partnership activities specifically into call centres, one-stop shops and mobile police stations. Current arrangements within NHS Direct and a number of councils around the country were also the subject of comment within the report.
- 3.3.6 The review team also drew on identified good practice highlighted in the HMIC thematic report *Open All Hours*.
- 3.3.7 Public attitude surveys are conducted quarterly within the MPS. Since the BVPI was removed and since the report was approved, no specific research has been conducted to establish customer service/satisfaction levels at front counters, by telephone or officers on patrol.
- 3.3.8 One of the approved recommendations from the BVR was to “develop and implement a performance management system encompassing measures related to demand resolution”. At the time of inspection, the recommendation was some distance away from implementation. As a consequence, any comparisons to assess progress made since the BVR have not been possible.

### 3.4 Overall Judgement

- 3.4.1 HMI grades each service as either excellent, good, fair or poor, depending on the extent to which it meets criteria set out in the inspection guidance. Taking into account the BVR final report and its findings, and those of the inspection team, Her Majesty's Inspector concludes that the service is **'Fair'**.

## **4. Judgement 2: What are the prospects for Improvement?**

### **4.1 Does the BVR drive improvement?**

- 4.1.1 Best Value legislation requires authorities to demonstrate evidence that they have considered why they provide the service under review, and the alternative ways in which it could be delivered.
- 4.1.2 It was clear to the inspection team that the '4Cs' approach of consultation, comparison, challenge and competition had been applied. This work was given strong support by the presence of the ICP. This group comprised a broad section of professionals with an interest/expertise in the subject matter and took on the role of 'critical friend' to the review team.
- 4.1.3 During its visit, the inspection team met an ICP member and heard comments from key individuals within the BVR process on their role, level of engagement, and value throughout the lifetime of the BVR. At least one ICP member attended each of the project board meetings. Minutes of these meetings indicate the level of challenge ICP members provided throughout.
- 4.1.4 As with a recent further BVRI within the MPS, Her Majesty's Inspector recognises the benefits of an ICP within the BVR process and identifies the concept as good practice.
- 4.1.5 Given the scale, costs and changes that it will bring across the MPS, the C3i project remains at the forefront of MPA/MPS plans and activities.
- 4.1.6 Added into the C3i process is the developing Integrated Borough Operations plan (IBOs). These will provide local control room functions, providing an integral role in tasking, disseminating of fast-time intelligence and safety issues not only for response team officers, but to ward-based/partnership teams, proactive and reactive officers as well as crime scene examiners and their teams.
- 4.1.7 Concerns were highlighted by key individuals during the review around both the speed of implementation and the wording of recommendations within the implementation plan.
- 4.1.8 Given the lack of progress of the implementation plan, comments from key individuals and evidence obtained by the inspection team, there is little to suggest that the implementation plan is a priority, or the main driver for improvements within the MPS.

## 4.2 How good is the improvement plan?

- 4.2.1 BVRs should produce an improvement plan that sets out what needs to improve and why, together with how and when the improvement will be delivered. It should contain targets that are not only challenging but are also designed to ensure the continuous improvement necessary to raise the level of service delivered, in terms of costs/benefits, targets and milestones, supported by clear lines of accountability.
- 4.2.2 For reasons of continuity, one chief inspector who previously had formed part of the Managing Demand BVR remained on secondment for the implementation phase of the review. The chief inspector attends the PPRC meetings on behalf of the lead officer and provides updates on implementation to both meetings.
- 4.2.3 Once the BVR was approved, the MPS commenced Implementation Project Board meetings. These meetings, held on a monthly basis, are chaired by the lead officer, and updated by the chief inspector in a similar manner to PPRC meetings. ICP involvement concluded after the MPA approved the BVR, whilst involvement of the MPA member - originally assigned to the project board during the BVR - became limited to PPRC meetings.
- 4.2.4 The PPRC meets monthly and examines a range of issues - not least of which is MPS performance. Best Value forms part of the agenda of this meeting. Updates of the implementation plan for the Managing Demand BVR are discussed every six months.
- 4.2.5 During the inspection, there was general recognition within the MPA that there were currently shortfalls in the arrangements for implementation of Best Value recommendations.
- 4.2.6 There was also evidence presented to the inspection team suggesting that the MPS Implementation Project Board was not robustly holding key stakeholders to account around implementation.
- 4.2.7 The Managing Demand implementation plan was a detailed and challenging document. The inspection team met with a number of key individuals responsible for the BVR itself and for implementation. In a number of cases, individuals raised concerns that the recommendations were either not deliverable currently, or were being delayed by other factors, as outlined below:
- ? Delivery was being frustrated or delayed by other projects such as C3i and IBOs.
  - ? An apparent lack of Management Board commitment and involvement in Best Value to create the impetus to ensure implementation.

- ? A lack of detailed discussions, including budgetary considerations and wording of recommendations, with key individuals responsible for recommendation delivery, prior to the report being placed with the MPA for approval.
- ? A lack of financial support to ensure that the recommendations are highlighted and implemented swiftly.
- ? Given the current list of agenda items at PPRC, and the frequency of implementation plan updates, a lack of robust accountability for implementation of Best Value recommendations by the MPA.

4.2.8 During another recent BVRI in October 2003 – Bringing Offenders to Justice (BOTJ) - recommendations around implementation were made as follows:

- ? “That implementation plans are produced which delineate how recommendations from the improvement plan will be progressed and subsequently enable effective monitoring.”
- ? “That the police authority regularly monitors the progress of implementation and fully documents this.”

4.2.9 Her Majesty’s Inspector has inspected two BVRs within the MPS in the last four months. In both inspections the area of most concern has been the lack of progress at the implementation phase.

4.2.10 In an attempt to summarise the issues which are impacting on implementation of Best Value recommendations, a number of matters have been highlighted below:

- ? The current level of Management Board involvement.
- ? The level of involvement of the ICP members and MPA member after the BVR has been signed off by the MPA.
- ? The arrangements within the PPRC for Best Value, and the lack of robust accountability mechanisms currently in place.
- ? The lack of a visible Best Value champion within the MPS.
- ? The lack of funding arrangements, which support implementation.
- ? A general lack of emphasis on implementation, as highlighted by the appointment of a chief inspector to lead on recommendations, and the difficulties/resistance encountered in delivery.

4.2.11 In reaffirming the recommendations made within BOTJ, and in light of concerns raised within this BVRI as outlined below, Her Majesty’s Inspector recommends that the current arrangements for implementation of approved BVR recommendations are fully reviewed.

**Recommendation 2**

**Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the current arrangements for implementation of approved BVR recommendations are fully reviewed.**

**4.3 Will improvements in service be delivered?**

- 4.3.1 The inspection team looked for evidence that the MPA will deliver what it sets out in its improvement plan. The plan must have the necessary support from the MPA and the MPS in order for it to prove effective and for improvements in the business area of managing demand to be realised.
- 4.3.2 The demand resolution strategy, a key product of the BVR, is now well in place, as is the MPS Managing Demand Strategic Committee. C3i and IBO projects are progressing, and are clearly a high priority for the MPA/MPS, given both the costs, and changes they will bring to operational service delivery/demand management within the MPS in the foreseeable future.
- 4.3.3 During other visits around the MPS, members of the inspection team are beginning to notice use of the phrase 'getting it right first time' both by senior and middle managers as well as patrol officers.
- 4.3.4 Given the progress and clear levels of commitment towards projects such as C3i and IBOs, Her Majesty's Inspector is confident that improvements will be delivered, but not necessarily as a result of the BVR.
- 4.3.5 Many of the recommendations made within the BVR appear to be appropriate and considered. In certain areas, however, consultation on the wording of recommendations with key individuals before final approval may have alleviated current difficulties in implementation.
- 4.3.6 During its visit, the inspection team was introduced to a variety of individuals, representing the Police Authority, police staff, Special Constabulary, ACPO, and senior/middle managers. The inspection team was impressed with the quality, professionalism and commitment displayed throughout.

**4.4 Overall Judgement**

- 4.4.1 In coming to a judgement on what the prospects for improvement are, Her Majesty's Inspector assesses the evidence within the review, its supporting documentation and evidence obtained during the inspection. The judgement will be one of the following: excellent, promising, uncertain or poor.
- 4.4.2 Having due regard for the above factors, Her Majesty's Inspector concludes that the prospects for improvement are **'Uncertain'**.



## **5. Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1:**

- 5.1 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that all future BVRs contain clear, challenging and SMART aims, supported by clearly defined activities (paragraph 3.1.5).

### **Recommendation 2:**

- 5.2 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the current arrangements for implementation of approved BVR recommendations are fully reviewed (paragraph 4.2.11).

## **6 Potential Good Practice**

- 6.1 Potential good practice includes procedures, processes, methods of operational policing or partnership working, or technological solutions that significantly improve efficiency, effectiveness or quality of service.
- 6.2 Her Majesty's Inspector considers the arrangements for the use of an ICP are a strong critical tool for use within the BVR process.