HMIC INSPECTION OF WESTMINSTER BCU EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive summary

1.1   With over 2,500 staff, Westminster is the largest BCU in the MPS and is situated at the heart of the capital. It comprises some of the nation's most iconic sites such as the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace and Westminster Abbey and the BCU has responsibility for the external security of a number of royal residences, embassies and consulates.   Westminster also contains most of the West End's theatres and cinemas as well as the famous shopping areas of Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street. It hosts 40% of London's hotels and guesthouses and its community is richly diverse with a residential population of 236,000 people that spans 182 nationalities with 120 different first speaking languages.   The borough attracts approximately 750,000 visitors a day and routinely hosts public marches, demonstrations and ceremonial events.

1.2   To reflect its complexity, scale and challenge, the BCU is uniquely led by an officer of ACPO[1] rank – a Commander who is supported by a Senior Management Team (SMT) that comprises an establishment of two chief superintendents, a business manager and six superintendents.   The Borough Commander joined Westminster in April 2007 having transferred from previous roles as Head of the MPS Diversity Directorate and as Head of the MPS Violent Crime Directorate.

1.3   Delivering effective crime reduction performance[2] in Westminster over the past 12-18 months has been challenging. Since April 2008, overall crime has fallen by -2.5% and Domestic Burglary has remained broadly static (+0.1%). However, Robbery has risen by +6%, Vehicle crime by +12% and RRAC[3] by +4.7%. Relative to its family group, crimes rates per 1000/Population in Westminster are in the bottom quartile[4] for TNO, Robbery, MSV[5], Other Wounding and RRAC. It is in the second quartile for Vehicle Crime, Domestic Burglary and SAC[6]. Some would argue that these rates are influenced by an influx of approximately 750,000 visitors a day which serves to inflate its potential pool of offenders and victims from its recorded residential population used in these calculations although other London boroughs could make a similar claim. Against its local indicators, gun crime has been reduced by -65.6% and knife crime by -13.2% over the same period[7].

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[1] Association of Chief Police Officers
[2] Source: iQuanta
[3] Racially and Religiously Aggravated Crime
[4] Performance within a family group of BCUs is divided into four quartiles
[5] Most Serious Violence
[6] Serious Acquisitive Crime
[7] Source: MetStats

1.4   Detection rates over the same period are largely unaffected by Westminster's visiting populous as the MPS method of resource allocation reflects demand and its workloads are therefore more consistent with other boroughs. The detection rate for TNO has improved by +2.11 percentage points (pp) and Domestic Burglary remains unchanged (+0.09pp). However, detection rates have declined for Robbery (-3.96pp), Vehicle Crime (-0.78pp), SAC (-1.32pp), MSV (-2.26pp), Other Wounding (-1.16pp) and RRAC by (-2.73pp). Westminster's positioning within its family group for detection rates is of greatest concern with all but two crime categories (MSV and RRAC) being in the bottom quartile. User satisfaction rates for October 2007 to September 2008 compared to the same period in 2006-2007 have improved marginally (+1.4%) over the last year.

1.5   The borough is in the midst of a comprehensive programme of restructuring, moving from five territorial sub-commands (OCUs) to a functional model of command. The programme was initiated with the aim of improving effectiveness and reducing costs and has been implemented incrementally since January 2008. At the time of inspection, the borough had progressed approximately 70% of the restructuring changes with an interim move to three territorial OCUs, albeit it is acknowledged that the desired changes to the policing culture will take some years to fully embed.

1.6   As with most significant organisational changes, the BCU restructuring programme may have impacted upon performance. However, the degree of its impact can be limited by effective programme management and in this regard, there is significant scope for improvement. Whilst staff and accommodation changes were managed well, changes to key processes (such as intelligence, crime and custody management) were not mapped and agreed prior to and implemented as part of the physical moves. In short, the programme risk has not been effectively managed. This has led to some confusion over many procedures and has consumed considerable management time in the subsequent work to consult, redefine and publish these key processes. Indeed, HMIC found evidence that many of the key processes for NIM[8] and sanction detection improvement were either absent or ineffective, impacting significantly upon overall BCU performance.

1.7   Other aspects of BCU generic business are not wholly dependent upon the change process and should therefore be in place and effective before, during and after the restructuring process. This includes the need for an effective performance management framework and the need for high professional standards. The HMIC inspection found that performance management within the BCU was applied differently across the borough; common and simple performance indicators linked

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[8] National Intelligence Model – A common mechanism by which resources are deployed against priorities

to priorities and PDRs[9] had not been agreed for each section of the workforce and it did not effectively reach down into every team. Concerns regarding the professional standards of staff relate to the need to improve staff compliance with policy and direction, the way in which staff subject to discipline and/or recuperating from sickness are managed and the need to improve the morale and integration of PCSOs engaged on security patrols.

1.8   These challenges need to be addressed through strong leadership and clarity of purpose from the BCU Commander with the full and unified support of the SMT. Such support was not always evident during the inspection with instances of disparate approaches being adopted by superintendents (e.g.; performance management, custody officer training and staff discipline). This disunity has served to further frustrate the progress of change and has lead to confusion amongst some staff as to the direction taken by the BCU on a given function.

1.9   Notwithstanding these issues and to its credit, the BCU has identified approximately £500,000 in savings from the restructuring programme and many more efficiencies are now possible from the streamlining of key processes and in the efficient deployment of staff. These opportunities need to be seized within a coordinated approach to maximise the leverage of resources, including the creation of key outcome measures to help assess progress. Many will flow from the restructuring process and some will emerge from other diagnostic work arising from this report alongside the BCU's internal planning and inspection processes. All need to be identified and implemented with the resultant dividend in resources effectively deployed.

1.10   The BCU enjoys strong support and investment from Westminster City Council in its community safety activity and it can rightly be proud of some highly innovative and effective problem-solving work undertaken with partners and communities alike. Neighbourhood policing in Westminster is an emerging strength and HMIC encountered evidence of strong partnerships as reflected in CivicWatch and the Safer Westminster Partnership.

1.11   It is clear from the issues detailed above and herein that considerable work remains to be done and the SMT has both the expertise and capacity necessary to implement these changes. It must now set about progressing these as part of a structured and coordinated change plan, implemented in a controlled way that minimises risk and which maximises community safety and public confidence within the wider Borough of Westminster.

Recommendations and Good Practice

1.12   The inspection team has made the following recommendations that should contribute to the drive for continuous improvement displayed by

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[9] Performance Development Reviews

the BCU. There are also various suggestions that the SMT may wish to consider contained within the '*What We Found'* section of the report (in bold type), mainly from data gathered by the inspection team or from BCU staff participating in focus groups or interviews.

Recommendation (1):   Borough Restructuring
To improve the programme management arrangements that supports the borough's ongoing implementation of its restructuring proposals and specifically to:
- Communicate more widely the vision, strategy and its rationale;
- Move swiftly into the next phase of restructuring in a controlled way so as to minimise the time spent in the process of transition;
- Exercise effective programme management that includes changes to key business processes and publication of the consequentially revised policies and SOPs;
- Maximise staff inclusion and engagement in the process of change;
- Actively use and maintain a risk register for the programme.

Recommendation (2):   Performance Management Framework
To introduce a performance management framework for the borough that ensures a coherent, consistent and proportionate approach to performance management at every level. This includes the following:
- The construction of clear borough priorities for 2009/10 that reflect the MPS priorities and which are complimentary to the CSS (LAA) priorities;
- For each priority to have an explicit SMT lead with a delivery plan;
- A structured framework of performance meetings at every level;
- Consistent and coherent performance measures/targets for teams;
- Clear links with PDR objectives.

Recommendation (3):   Intelligence and Proactivity
To improve the way in which the National Intelligence Model (NIM) is applied on the borough so as to create an intelligence culture that maximises proactive opportunity and specifically to:
- Improve awareness and understanding of the criteria for using CRIMINT Plus;
- Maximise receipt of quality intelligence;
- Develop the DIM, DMM and BTTCG processes;
- Enhancing the scope and effectiveness of the PPO scheme;
- Improve the range and use of proactive tasking and operations.

Recommendation (4):   Sanction Detection Improvement
To improve sanction detection performance against APACS priorities with a coordinated approach across the borough that includes:
- An SMT lead who is accountable for sanction detection improvement;
- The creation of a sanction detection improvement plan;
- Construction of clear policies/SOPs for each type of sanction detection;

- Maximising crime housekeeping arrangements so that all valid detections can be attributed to the borough;
- Ensuring compliance with minimum standards for primary investigations;
- Training and development for key staff on sanction detections.

Recommendation (5):   Compliance and Professional Standards
To improve the levels of compliance with policy/instruction and the professional standards within the borough. This should enhance effectiveness and provide a professional image of policing services delivered within the borough. Specifically, this is to include:
- The reiteration of the expected standards of behaviour by staff;
- Guidance and development for sergeants and inspectors;
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour in a proportionate way;
- Support from SMT when supervisors instigate appropriate challenges;
- The use of data to monitor the levels of compliance.

Recommendation (6):   Increasing Capacity through Resource Leverage (VFM)
To maximise borough capacity, productivity and efficiency through a coordinated approach to resource leverage that includes the following:
- The construction of an overall resource leverage plan with an SMT lead;
- Use of systems and processes to quantify and re-cycle savings;
- The identification and pursuit of borough level activity against the five domains of resource leverage activity (see HMIC Report on RL in the MPS);
- Increased transparency of borough staff and establishments through core IT systems (e.g.; MetHR, CARMS, MetDuties) and their products;
- The creation of a single outcome-based measure to track progress.

1.13   The inspection team also acknowledges the following areas of good practice:
- ➢ The Key Encounters Weekend at Westminster (Para. 6.4);
- ➢ Work on Developing Citizen Focus (Para. 6.6);
- ➢ The Volunteer Cadet Corps (Para. 6.18).