

FORCE AUDIT BOARD – AUDIT AND INSPECTION REPORTS

INTRODUCTION

1. This report seeks to update Members on the progress of the audit and inspections that have recently been carried out on behalf of the Force Audit Board.

INFORMATION

High-Tech Crime Unit (HTCU).

2. The audit was carried out between the 1st and 17th June 2005. The purpose of the audit was to benchmark the HTCU against the ACPO Advice and Good Practice Guide; the Forensic Examination of Electronically Stored Material practice direction; and the ACPO Strategy for the Investigation of Computer-Enabled Criminality and Digital Evidence 2005. The audit also considered the future staffing and workload of the Unit as a result of increasing demand and future technology.
3. The main findings of the audit were that accommodation was inadequate and posed a potential security risk; that the training budget needs to be increased; that a replacement policy for equipment is put in place and that a budget is set to allow for the regular updating of equipment and software; and that a robust system needs to be put in place to ensure that copies of evidence and digital media subject of a forfeiture order are returned to the HTCU for destruction. The report recommends that consideration is given for the improvement of accommodation for the Unit, which would include a viewing room for defence representatives, a reception room, a larger storage area and a larger working area in the event of staff levels increasing. The improvements should also include the Health & Safety advice in the Guide in relation to anti-static flooring, circuit breaker switches and rubber mats. The other findings were also subject of recommendations.

Firearms Licensing

4. The audit was carried out between the 22nd June and the 25th July 2005. The purpose of this audit was to benchmark the Firearms Licensing Unit against the Firearms and Explosive Licensing Procedures Practice Direction; Home Office Firearms Law; Guidance to the Police 2002; and the recommendations made by Lord Cullen as a result of the Public Enquiry into the shootings at Dunblane Primary School in 1996. In addition, the HMIC Firearms Licensing

Thematic Review 2002 and the HMIC Humberside Police Firearms Licensing Inspection 2002 was also taken into consideration. The audit also considered the staffing arrangements and workload implications for the Unit in light of the Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations 2005.

5. The main findings were that the Firearms Licensing Unit needs extra staff to deal with the introduction of the new explosives regulations; that officers carrying out firearms enquiries require further training and that the Firearms and Explosives Licensing Procedures practice direction requires updating. These findings were subject of recommendations in the report.
6. Improvement action plans have been prepared, which incorporate all of the recommendations outlined in the audit reports. The ACC(OS) will be the ACPO sponsor for the reports and he will be responsible for implementation of the plans. The plans will be regularly monitored by the Force Audit Board.

Verification of the Race Equality Scheme 2002-5

7. Verification took place between the 5th and the 27th July 2005. The requirement for verification of the actions in the above mentioned Race Equality Scheme (RES) was established as a result of a request from the Race & Community Relations Officer. A review of the first RES was carried out to verify how many of the activities in the scheme have been completed and what progress has been made against the activities that were still outstanding. This assisted with the implementation of the new scheme, which commenced on 31 May 2005.
8. 56 actions were identified in the scheme for implementation. Of these, 61% have been fully implemented, 14% are partially implemented and only require data monitoring and 25% or 14 actions have not been implemented. The outstanding actions have been given to the ACC(O) for implementation and progress will be monitored by the Force Audit Board.

RECOMMENDATION

9. It is recommended that the Members scrutinize the contents of this report and discuss the issues arising.

T S Hollis
Chief Constable

Contact Officer: John Ford
Background papers: Force Audit Manual

Telephone 01482 578194