

n e w s r e l e a s e



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AUTHORITIES PRAISE SUSTAINED SUCCESS OF JOINT MAJOR CRIME UNIT

“CONTINUING to exceed our expectations,” was the verdict of the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Police Authorities as they reviewed the sustained success of the joint Major Crime Unit recently.

The Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit (B&HMCU) was established in November 2007, following careful consideration and approval by both Police Authorities, with the objective of improving resilience and response to major crimes across the two counties.

As the first unit of its kind in the country, forces and police authorities across the UK have been monitoring its progress and in February last year Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) conducted a review, concluding that the unit was both successful and ‘groundbreaking’.

Both Police Authorities recently reviewed the unit’s performance to the end of March 2009 and heard that:

- There was a 100% record of investigation and clear-up of murder cases
- Twenty-five sentences of life imprisonment have been handed down in relation to investigations conducted since the unit’s inception in November 2007
- There is increased capacity for cold case review which has seen a number of successes. For example, 40-year-old Paul Reeve of Lane Road, Lincoln has been charged in connection with the rape of an elderly victim in Bedfordshire in 1984 and is due to stand trial in December this year.
- There is increased sharing of skills and expertise and improved resilience and capacity, with recognition by the HMIC that the joint unit meets national standards
- Annual efficiencies of £168,000 across the two forces are being achieved as a result of the creation of the unit, which are being reinvested into the delivery of frontline

policing services. That figure is projected to increase by £300,000 per year from this next policing year.

- Having a dedicated team has eliminated the need to 'abstract' frontline officers to support major crime inquiries

Chair of Bedfordshire Police Authority, Peter Conniff, commented: "We have been absolutely delighted with the success of the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit. It has paved the way for further collaborative ventures between the two forces, such as the newly launched joint Dog Unit. These collaborative projects enable us to invest further resources in local policing services, which is a priority for all our communities. I'm really grateful to everyone across the two forces who have worked so hard to make this joint Major Crime Unit a success."

Stuart Nagler, Chair of Hertfordshire Police Authority, added: "Working together in this way enables the two forces to deliver a more efficient and resilient policing service to our communities. The Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit is continuing to exceed our expectations, with some outstanding results being achieved."

The unit comprises 138 officers and police staff who investigate cases of murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, kidnap, work-related death, product contamination, fail to stop road collisions, extortion and blackmail. They also investigate historical 'cold cases'.

Among its recent high profile inquiries conducted by the unit have been the murder of 42-year-old John Finney from Northaw, Hertfordshire, for which two men were found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment following a protracted and detailed investigation. In Bedfordshire, officers from the B&HMCU were also responsible for the conviction of Tennyson Obih for the murder of PC Jon Henry in Luton. Obih was sentenced to life imprisonment for stabbing the officer to death in June 2007.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Library photos of Peter Conniff and Stuart Nagler are obtainable by contacting Sally Patient or Sallie Blair on the contact numbers shown below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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