

# All together now

Looking to optimise your policing performance? Begin by integrating your information, says Sue Lampard, a superintendent with Surrey Police



*Well-integrated technology can help to underpin the core skills of policing*

**T**he police technology procurement process exists for a reason, and its objectives – which include quality, consistency and cost control goals – are well understood. However, in my view, information and communication technology (ICT) procurement now needs to be approached with greater creativity and vision if we are to ensure that police forces derive maximum benefit from technology that increasingly underpins everything they do for the public they serve.

While each piece of technology may do the job required of it – often well – all too commonly this functionality exists in glorious isolation, literally and figuratively, disconnected from an overall ICT environment whose systems, processes and applications – and the information they manage – are not as integrated as they should be.

So how best to tackle the problem? Don't fear the big question: 'What do we want to

achieve for the business?' And look hard for the answer. There will often be more than one. Use technology to break down functional silos by integrating systems and sharing information across the business. Ensure that the key stakeholders – from senior personnel to officers at neighbourhood level – are consulted and are aware of the IT/business objectives they are helping to mould. And ensure that effective communication with our ultimate employer – the public – is made a priority.

Technologically speaking, there is no reason why command and control – often viewed as the operational 'hub' – should not be integrated with crime recording, HR, property and other assets, nominals and custody records, and ANPR. There is no reason why information shouldn't be held and shared across the organisation and be accessible to both fixed and mobile personnel 24/7.

This does not always require a 'clean sheet, start again' approach. We have learned that the information we hold on our systems is our second largest asset after our people, while technology has got smarter, helping us integrate the systems we already have installed – and the information they contain. For 'legacy' we no longer have to read 'lost'.

## **Control centre strategy**

What better place to kick off the information integration process than in the control centre? One objective for my control team is to have the five sources of information it currently accesses up on screen for immediate reference at the touch of a button. Technology now makes this possible.

Central to the current strategy at Surrey Police is the creation of a pipe or gateway between our Intergraph I/CAD command and control system (our own operational hub) and our data warehouse. The objective is to



Neighbourhood teams have their own local web page listing high priority issues

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## ‘Information and communication technology procurement now needs to be approached with greater creativity and vision’

extend and maximise the use of the incident and other operational information that pours into I/CAD at the rate of up to 36,000 calls per month, for example, making that data available to our officers at a local level, in line with our intelligent, information-led neighbourhood policing strategy. The same objective applies with our crime information system.

Our command and control system is now also deployed for the benefit of our policing partners, notably the Highways Agency. When members of the public call 999 to report a major traffic accident, we now not only log the incident but also pass it over from I/CAD directly to the Highways Agency dispatch system.

The two systems are interoperable using Intergraph’s Direct Electronic Incident Transfer (I/DEIT) interface. The requirement for inter-communication and interoperability between the ‘blue light’ services could be met using the same piece of technology.

Our neighbourhood self-briefing website – through which officers can access incident and other information for their local area quickly and easily via the web, and which also uses Intergraph software – has been a great success, literally extending the reach and value of the data held in our virtual warehouse to inform local policing.

My colleague Supt Charlie Doyle has extensive experience of deploying technology for performance. He is responsible for the

delivery of neighbourhood policing across the force and ensuring that the force has both the human and technological infrastructure in place at local level to meet the objectives and guidelines that have been laid down by the Home Office.

### Mapping and analysis tools

Commenting on the role of technology, Supt Doyle says: ‘We have installed a neighbourhood mapping tool that interfaces with our data warehouse I/CAD command and control system – both provided by Intergraph.

We use this mapping software tool with I/CAD to plot incidents and crimes in each neighbourhood, so that the local officer can see, at the touch of a button, what the main issues are on their neighbourhood beat. They then use this information to establish a patrol strategy based on answering the questions: “What are my priorities? When and where should I be investing my time to have the biggest impact?” The system allows them to do this visually.’

The same data warehouse system also allows police analysts to zero in on the cause of those neighbourhood issues. Particularly where social disorder and crime occur at the same location or in the same area, there will typically be a connection, a link.

By analysing the data, the analysts can provide constables and community support officers on the ground with detailed

information on the problems and types of people they should be looking out for in the neighbourhoods they serve.

### Data layers

‘Technology also helps us use the information we already hold to benefit the public in other ways,’ says Mr Doyle. ‘The latest generation of our command and control software allows us to ‘layer’ data and is enabling a new initiative that links neighbourhood web pages to I/CAD.’

All of our neighbourhood teams now have their own local web page listing the issues that have the highest local policing priority and detailing how police and partners are working with the community to address these issues, in consultation with members of the public in that area.

The I/CAD-to-local-web-page interface allows our operators to review the calls they take in the light of those neighbourhood issues. The operator has a hot key that gives them instant access to the relevant neighbourhood support officer’s local web page, located by postcode. If the operator sees that the subject of the incoming call is a local priority issue, they can respond accordingly.

In the near future I/CAD’s data layers will also allow us to segment data by each of the 665 Surrey county neighbourhoods we have identified. Refinements within I/CAD will enable us to manage information in our data warehouse to extract very granular, detailed data on each neighbourhood, selected by, say, particular types and times of incidents.

This will then inform policing at local level, both strategically and tactically, on how to do business to best effect and when it is best to deploy officers. This is a key objective for Surrey Police, as it is for many other forces. ■