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Final report from the evaluation of the “20,000 Police” initiative

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English summary of Brå report 2014:17

**The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) –
centre for knowledge about crime and crime prevention measures**

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå)
works to reduce crime and improve levels of safety in society
by producing data and disseminating knowledge on crime
and crime prevention work.

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Summary

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) has been instructed by the Government to evaluate the initiative referred to as “20,000 Police”. The initiative involved the Swedish Police being expanded with the addition of approximately 2,500 new officers during the period 2006–2010 with the objective of improving the organisation’s results. To date the National Council has published three reports within the framework of this evaluation (Brå 2013:12, 2013:20 and 2013:21). This publication represents the final report from the National Council’s evaluation.

The National Council’s Remit

The following questions were formulated in the Government’s instruction to the National Council (Ju2012/2428/PO):

- How did the police authorities plan for the utilisation of the increased resources?
- How have the resources been utilised, with a focus on the distribution of these resources across different areas of the police’s work?
- How have the results of the police developed over the course of the period in question, and what significance have the increased resources had in this regard?
- Which factors, both factors that can and cannot be influenced by the police themselves, may have been of significance for the development of the police’s results?
- How could internal factors that have had a negative effect on the work of the police be improved?
- Can the methods used to measure the work of the police be improved?

The first report from the National Council’s evaluation (Brå 2013:12) primarily examined the first three questions. The subsequent reports then analysed the deficiencies in the police’s results in more detail. One of these reports described the police’s own views regarding the investigation of volume crime (Brå 2013:20), while the other described the police’s views on crime prevention work (Brå 2013:21).

The focus of the current report is directed at the final three questions, i.e. which factors have affected the development of police results? What can reasonably be expected of the Swedish Police? And how should the work of the police be measured? As regards factors that may have affected the development of police results, we analyse both factors that the Swedish Police may influence themselves and factors that they cannot affect.

Focus on the clearance rate

The earlier reports published in connection with the National Council's evaluation have shown that the results achieved by the police have improved in many respects since 2006, when the initiative started. Case processing times have been reduced, there has been an increase in planned crime prevention initiatives and levels of public confidence in the police have increased. Furthermore there has been a positive trend in relation to the central mission of the police, namely that of reducing crime and improving public safety. Even though there are many factors external to the police that have a major effect on crime trends and perceptions of public safety, this nonetheless represents a positive development.

However, the factor that has attracted the most attention in both the political and media debate is the trend in the proportion of reported offences resulting in what are referred to as person-based clearances, hereafter referred to as the clearance rate. This trend has not been as positive. Since the results in this area constitute the most problematic aspect of the work of the police, the National Council has directed the principal focus of this final report specifically at the clearance rate. The fundamental question examined is that of what might explain the way the clearance rate has developed during the period in question, and on the basis of this we then analyse what might reasonably be expected of the Swedish Police with regard to the clearance rate. The following questions are examined in the report's four chapters:

1. Have conditions affecting the police's ability to clear reported offences changed since 2006? What factors may have been of significance in this regard, including both those that the police themselves can influence and those that they cannot affect?
2. Would a refinement of the role of the police be desirable, and if so, could this lead to an improvement in the clearance rate?
3. How much is it possible to improve the results of police investigations into volume crime? How much might changes to working methods be expected to achieve?
4. How does the Swedish clearance rate compare to that of other European countries? Are the Swedish police better or worse at clearing crime than the police in other countries? Is there reason to supplement or adapt our way of measuring the clear-

ance rate to make it more compatible with that of other countries?

1. The clearance rate – results and conditions

The first chapter of the report examines whether conditions affecting the police's ability to clear crime have deteriorated during the period examined. The chapter builds on analyses of developments since 2006 based on crime statistics from the National Council, the Swedish Prosecution Authority and the National Police Board.

The central aspects examined are as follows:

- Has there been an increase in the proportion of reported offences that have a small chance of being cleared?
- Has the age distribution of those suspected of offences shifted in a way that would be expected to reduce the clearance rate?
- Has there been an increase in the proportion of so-called investigation-limitation decisions?¹
- Has there been an increase in the proportion of offences involving two or more suspected offenders?
- Does an increased proportion of negative drug tests affect the person-based clearance rate in total?
- Which uncertainties remain?

The analysis is conducted both for all reported crime and separately for different categories of offences.

Changes in the structure of reported crime cannot explain the decline in the clearance rate

The structure of reported crime has changed somewhat over the course of the period examined. Certain types of crime that are difficult to clear, such as fraud offences, have come to constitute a larger proportion of the total amount of reported crime. At the same time, the numbers of reported theft offences, which are also characterised by a low clearance rate, have declined substantially. There has also been an increase in the proportion of registered crime accounted for by certain types of offences whose discovery depends on the work of various enforcement agencies, and which therefore have a high clearance rate. The National Council's assessment, on the basis of a number of different calculations, is that the effect of the changes in the structure of reported crime is such that they balance one another out, and that at the aggregate level, these changes have thus not had a negative effect on the police's ability to clear reported crime.

¹ Investigation-limitation means that a decision is taken either to discontinue or not to initiate a police investigation specifically for reasons of process economy.

Increased number of investigation-limitation decisions

The increase in the number of investigation-limitation decisions seen during the period in question ought, however, to have affected the clearance rate. If the offences that were subject to such decisions had instead been cleared, then in 2013 this would have served to increase the clearance rate by half of one percent.

Smaller proportion of young offenders has a marginal effect

The age distribution among those suspected of offences has changed during the period examined. The proportion of registered suspects under the age of 21 years has declined from 26 to 21 percent. Since the likelihood of clearing offences is higher, statistically speaking, when the suspected offenders are youths, this change is likely to have had a slightly negative effect on the police's ability to clear crime. This effect is not judged to have been particularly large, however.

The National Council's analysis also shows an increase in the number of suspected offenders per offence for those burglaries and fraud offences where a suspect had been identified. It is reasonable to assume that the increase in the number of suspected offenders per crime has made it more difficult to clear these offences, but it is not possible to calculate the size of the effect this may have produced.

More reported offences means an increased workload

One factor that has generally made the work of the police more difficult is that the number of reported offences increased by 200,000 per year at the beginning of the period examined – an increase of 16 percent. This produced an increased workload for the police officers working with volume crime which exceeded the increase in resources associated with the initiative.

Remaining uncertainties

The report's first chapter concludes with a brief overview of additional factors that have, or may have, influenced the clearance rate. The National Council has not study them empirically. The following factors are thus merely hypotheses

- Changes in the character of specific offence types
- Increased demands placed on technical evidence by prosecutors and judges
- Changes in the Police's recording systems
- Changes in the quality of police investigations

One of the questions the National Council therefore asks is whether the decrease in the clearance may be due to a decline in the quality of police investigations. The statistics that the National Council

has access to do not support this hypothesis, but there is, on the other hand, no empirical evidence to the contrary either. It can be seen from the statistics that the proportion of cases where the police could identify a suspect has increased, even though there is a decrease the clearance rate. This could be interpreted as the police having become more efficient in their investigative work, while the prosecutors' requirements for prosecution have increased. This change could also be interpreted as the quality in the police investigations having declined or the requirements of what the police consider as a "suspect" being lowered. According to the National Council there might be reason to study this matter more closely.

2. Should the role of the police be refined?

The second chapter of the report directs its focus at whether it is possible and desirable to reduce the number of work tasks that the Swedish Police are required to carry out. The background is that several of the police officers interviewed in connection with one of the National Council's previous reports on the initiative (2013:20) mentioned that the breadth of the police's mission was one of the reasons that the clearance rate for volume crime is not higher than it is. These officers felt that the tasks of the police are at present too broad and varied and that several of these tasks could just as easily be carried out by other actors. Among other things, the officers took up tasks such as assistance with transportation requested by other authorities² and taking custody of livestock. In this section of the report, the National Council charts the extent of the services tasks of this kind conducted by the police and also whether the extent of this work has increased or decreased during the period of the 20,000 Police initiative. The chapter concludes by presenting the results of an interview study with ten senior managers within the Swedish Police who were asked about their views on the need for a refinement of the work of the police.

The number of police tasks has increased rather than decreased

The first section of the chapter presents the most recent large-scale governmental inquiry into whether the task of the police needs to be refined, that of the Policing Commission (Polisverksamhetsutredningen, SOU 2001:87, 2002:70, 2002:117). The inquiry was con-

² This means that the police authority assists another authority with the transportation of an individual. This may for example involve taking in an individual who refuses to go to the hospital but who is at risk of becoming violent without medication or an individual who is to be deported and requires transport to the airport due to the risk that they will flee.

ducted at the beginning of the 2000s and proposed around ten tasks that should completely or in part be reassigned to other actors.

The presentation then describes what has happened since. The central finding is that very little has happened. While there remains a substantial interest in a refinement of the work of the police, and further investigations have been conducted into a number of police tasks, the situation in practice remains unchanged. A closer examination of the situation shows furthermore that the extent of the tasks conducted by the police has in fact increased rather than decreased. The work associated with certain tasks, such as cases involving animals, issuing passports and holding those taken into custody in accordance with the 1976 Intoxicated Persons Detention Act,³ appears to have increased markedly. The work associated with other tasks also appears to have increased, but to a lesser extent. Finally, there are a couple of tasks in connection with which the work of the police has declined – lost property, the serving of summonses and parking cases.

Senior managers favour a refinement – but also see certain risks

In order to develop a picture of how management strategy is affected by the breadth of the work conducted by the police at the present time, the National Council has also interviewed five county police commissioners and five district police commissioners in order to discuss whether they think that the work of the police needs to be refined. The results from these interviews show that senior managers have predominantly positive attitudes towards such a refinement – particularly the county police commissioners. They feel that the current breadth of the police's task creates difficulties in both planning and budgeting for the work of the police. They also hope that a refinement of the role of the police would free up resources, which could then be used to improve the results of the police. At the same time, several of the senior managers interviewed also saw risks linked to a refinement of the police's role, such as having fewer contacts with the public and fewer opportunities to affect crime at the local level.

First and foremost, the senior managers wanted someone outside the police to take over the cases involving animals and appeals in relation to incorrect parking, but they also wanted to reduce their involvement in the detention of intoxicated persons and assistance with transportation requested by other authorities. Opinions were somewhat more divided in relation to whether the police should continue to handle lost property, passports, reports of lost or stolen property and various types of permit.

³ This refers to those cases where those taken into custody in accordance with the legislation are held in police cells and are thus the responsibility of the police authority.

3. How much could the results of police investigations be improved?

The report's third chapter presents the results of a pilot project initiated by the National Council in order to study how much of an improvement might reasonably be possible in the clearance rate for volume crime. The Swedish Police are being criticised from a number of different directions – politicians, the media and the public – because too few offences are being cleared. However, expectations as to how large a proportion of crime the police should actually be clearing are often rather diffuse. For the most part what is said is simply that the clearance rate is too low. But what can reasonably be expected with regard to the results of police investigations? How much could the police achieve?

A new-old work model

The pilot project has been implemented in collaboration with the City Police District and the City Public Prosecution Office in Stockholm and is based on a work model developed by the National Council on the basis of the deficiencies and problems noted in the Council's previous report from the current evaluation regarding the police's work with the investigation of volume crime.

In many areas, the model represents a concretisation of how the Police's National Investigation Concept (PNU) can be applied in practice, with a focus on the conducting of investigative measures early in the investigation, routines for feedback and active leadership of police investigations. These conditions are created through teamwork throughout the investigation process in volume crime cases. The chief investigating officer, who will be leading the investigation, is involved from the beginning by being contacted by the officers at the crime scene. The model also provides routines and a structure that facilitates and encourages increased levels of feedback with regard to the individual officer's work.

Possibilities to work this way are created through teamwork throughout the investigation process in volume crime cases. Police with different functions work the same hours with the same chief investigating officer throughout the entire process and the cases are passed on to one and the same prosecutor. In addition, the model provides routines and a structure that facilitates and encourages increased levels of feedback with regard to the individual officer's work. There are also routines for providing feedback⁴ to staff regarding subsequent developments in the cases in which they have been involved and for the measurement of results for mo-

⁴ The term feedback is thus used in two different senses – as was the case in the pilot project. On the one hand there was feedback on individual performance, and on the other feedback to staff on the subsequent results in cases in which they had been involved.

tivational purposes. The idea is that this will improve efficiency, decrease the loss of information and provide good conditions for the police to become a learning organisation, thereby producing an increase in the clearance rate.

Experiences from the implementation of the project

The National Council has followed the project closely by means of participant observation and interviews with participants. The factors that emerged most clearly were the following:

- It is difficult to get police officers to want to change their working hours. Staff were put off by the idea of shifts and regulated working hours.
- The creation of better feedback not only required organisational changes but also a shift in attitudes.
- The systematic feedback across unit boundaries and the contacts between staff working with internal and external duties respectively led relatively quickly to developments in the working methods of patrol officers and investigating officers.
- It is difficult to create a situation where there is sufficient time available for patrol officers to conduct initial investigative measures in relation to volume crime during the evening shift, which is when most offences are committed.
- Active management and active central individuals were required in order to ensure that the new working methods would actually be implemented and maintained.

Positive results

The results of the project have been measured in four different ways:

- The proportion of cases resulting in a person-based clearance
- The proportion of cases in which the police have done everything “right”
- The staff’s views on implementation and effects
- Satisfaction among complainants

Increased clearance rate

The model included a prosecutor examining and assessing the police’s investigative work in all concluded cases that the team has worked with, irrespective of whether the investigations were completed and presented to a prosecutor or were discontinued without result. The assessment is based on eight categories that the National Council has developed. The teams’s prosecutor assessed that at best, 51 percent of the cases included in the pilot project were such that they could have resulted in a person-based clearance (category 1). Usually, the clearance rate at the City Police District for the mix of volume crime that the project worked with lay at 38 to 39 percent. The pilot project instead produced a clearance rate of

46 percent of the cases included. Thus the clearance rate was improved by seven to eight percentage points during the period of the project, and was only five percentage points lower than the maximum possible clearance rate for the cases included in the project as assessed by the prosecutor. These results show that the quality of the work conducted at the City Police was good even prior to the pilot project, but that it was nonetheless possible to achieve a notable improvement.

The National Councils eight categories are as following:

1. Person-based clearance
2. Correct investigation-limitation decision
3. Other offences where the investigation was discontinued due to legal reasons
4. Offences where the police conducted adequate investigation measure but that were not possible to clear
5. Offences where the investigation was discontinued even though there apparently have been meaningful investigation measures left to conduct.
6. Offences where the investigation was discontinued and where the police have overworked the case.
7. Offences where the investigation was discontinued that should have resulted in a completed investigation being presented to a prosecutor.
8. Offences where the investigation should have been discontinued but that instead resulted in a completed investigation being presented to a prosecutor.

The police do things “right” in most cases

The model also includes a new, complementary method of measuring the investigative work of the police, which focuses not only on cleared offences but on all those offences where the police have done the “right” things, irrespective of whether or not the offence was subsequently cleared. According to the prosecutor’s assessment, the police implemented the correct measures and made the correct assessments (category 1 to 4) in 94 percent of the cases included in the project.⁵ This figure can be compared with that obtained when the clearance rate is instead chosen as the measure for assessing the police’s investigative work (46 percent). The difference between these two figures illustrates how large the difference can be in the picture obtained of the police’s work depending on the measure chosen.

Staff are on the whole satisfied with the project

In order to obtain a picture of how well staff felt the project had worked the National Council asked staff to complete a questionnaire prior to and at the end of the project. The questionnaire contained questions about, among other things, cooperation, support

⁵ This does not mean that the remaining ten percent might automatically have resulted in clearances. They may rather have been cases that ought to have been subjected to investigation-limitation decisions or cases where the police have overworked a case that under the circumstances was impossible to clear.

feedback and learning. The general picture obtained was that most of the staff felt that the working model had been positive and had improved their work.

A large majority of the respondents reported that:

- Cooperation within the chain of investigation had improved
- There had been more support in their work at the beginning of investigations
- There had been more feedback on both individual performance and on the subsequent results of cases – but the amount of feedback had declined as knowledge improved
- The measures used in relation to the quality of the work were an improvement

Complainants interviewed by the National Council were also satisfied with the treatment they had received from the police officers working in the project.

4. The clearance rate in Sweden and other countries

When the effectiveness of the police is discussed in relation to the investigation and clearing of offences, comparisons are sometimes made with other countries. The picture that emerges from such comparisons is that the police in other countries clear a much higher proportion of crimes than their Swedish counterparts. The Swedish police thus appear to be ineffective by comparison with the police in other countries. Is this correct? This is the question that is examined in the report's final chapter. The objective here is in part to analyse whether the comparisons are fair, and in part to discuss whether we in Sweden ought to supplement or adapt the methods we use to measure the clearance rate in order to make it more comparable with those used in other countries. The countries included in the comparison are Norway, Denmark, Germany and England & Wales.⁶

Sweden has the highest number of reported offences and the lowest clearance rate according to crime statistics

According to official crime statistics from the different countries examined, Sweden has the largest number of reported offences per 1,000 of population and the lowest clearance rate (see table 1).

⁶ Finland and Iceland are the Nordic countries that are not included in the study. This was due to the fact that their inclusion would have increased the language difficulties associated with the study. The National Council is considering extending the study to include all of the Nordic countries.

Table 1. Number of registered offences per 1000 of population and clearance rate in percent according to official statistics. 2012

	Sweden	Norway	Denmark	Netherlands	Germany	England & Wales
Registered offences	147	55	95	68	73	64
Official clearance rate	17	47	18	25 ¹	54	27/29 ²

¹ Preliminary figure, the definitive figure will be not be presented until 2016.

² The clearance rate amounts to 27 percent if only "sanction detections" are included. It amounts to 29 percent if "non-sanction detections" are also included. Home Office Statistical Bulletin: Crimes detected in England and Wales 2012/13 July 2013

This chapter of the report analyses country by country the differences in statistical methods and police working methods that might be able to explain why the clearance rate is lower in Sweden. The two most important differences were found to be

- That the police in the other countries are not required to register reported incidents that are found not to constitute offences. In practice, they also refrain to a greater extent from registering less serious offences that they assess to be impossible to clear. In Sweden the police are required to register as offences everything that is reported as an offence, and the Swedish police have a more far-reaching obligation to register offence reports in relation to e.g. assaults where the victim does not want to report the offence than is the case in other countries. This means that the proportion of offences that are *difficult to clear* is greater in Sweden than in the other countries.
- In several of the other countries, it is sufficient for the police to have identified someone who is suspected of the offence on reasonable grounds for the offence to be counted as cleared. In Sweden, an offence is not counted as cleared until an offender has been prosecuted for the offence or issued with a summary sanction order or a waiver of prosecution.

In addition, there are a number of statistical differences, such as differences regarding offence counting rules, which also contribute to the differences, but to a lesser extent.

Are convictions per 1000 of population a more appropriate measure?

In order to develop a somewhat more reliable view of the size of the concrete differences in police effectiveness, the National Council has tested an entirely new measure for comparisons between the countries. The measure used is the number of convictions⁷

⁷ Conviction decisions include court convictions, and decisions to issue summary sanction orders or waivers of prosecutions. Cleared offences (person-based clearances) are those which have resulted in a court prosecution (irrespective of the court verdict), a waiver of prosecution or a summary sanction order.

per 1000 of population. The Council assesses this to constitute a meaningful comparative measure given that the number of persons exposed to crime per 1000 of population appears to be approximately the same across the different countries examined. The number of convictions per 1000 of population then becomes a measure of how well a society, via the police and the rest of the justice system, succeeds in producing a criminal justice reaction to these offences.

The definition of convictions includes decisions by prosecutors or the courts that as far as possible correspond to summary sanction orders, waivers of prosecution and court convictions in Sweden. As can be seen from Table 2, when this measure is used, the differences between the countries examined are very limited. Measured in this way, the effectiveness of the Swedish police and prosecutors lies at the same level as that of their counterparts in other countries.

Table 2. All convictions per 1000 of population in six countries. 2012.

Country	Convictions
Norway ¹	16
England & Wales	14/20 ²
Sweden	14
Denmark	14
Germany	12
Netherlands	10

¹ The figure for Norway relates to 2011.

² The figure for England & Wales has been calculated in two ways. The one alternative includes sanctions issued by the police. The other excludes these since these sanctions are not, as is the case in the other countries, decided at the level of either prosecutors or the courts.

The National Council's assessment and answers to the questions contained in the Government's instruction

In its instruction to the National Council for Crime Prevention, the Government specified a number of questions that were to be examined. On the basis of all of the studies conducted in connection with the evaluation, the National Council would like to present the following summary answer.

How did the police authorities plan for the use of the increased resources?

The planning conducted varied from one police authority to another. Some had clear ideas and plans for how the resources would be received and where they would be placed. Other police authorities had not given as much consideration to how the new resources would be distributed. In these cases, the responsibility for placing the new officers was passed on to managers at a more local level. Several police authorities felt that the guidance provided by the Government and the National Police Board as to how the new resources were to be distributed and used was too brief and unclear. They were uncertain how they should make the prioritisation between the target of increasing the visibility of the police and that of improving the results of the police's investigative work.

How have the resources been used, with a focus on the distribution of these resources across different areas of the police's work?

As regards the utilisation of the new resources, it should initially be noted that in practice, the initiative did not produce as large an increase in full-time police manpower as one might initially believe. The principal reason for this is that many of the young police officers who finished their training were on parental leave and were only working part time during the period examined.

The areas of the police's work that saw the most substantial increases in percentage terms are training, management, criminal intelligence work, search and surveillance, planned crime prevention work, specialist services and special initiatives. The new police officers who finished their training during the period in question were primarily given placements working with external, incident-governed activities (patrol and response activities). At the same time, experienced officers have been moved to other areas of work and, as far as the National Council can see, at the national level there has been no increase in the number of individuals working with patrol and response activities or with the investigation of volume crime by comparison with the situation prior to the initiative, although there may be exceptions to this as the local level.

The picture obtained by the National Council is that with regard to the police's external duties, crime prevention work and patrol and response work have been in competition with one another. The National Council's study of the ways in which the police authorities planned for the increase in resources shows that there is a perception at the majority of police authorities that no clear guidance was given as to how prioritisations should be made between these different areas of the police's work.

The National Council's assessment is that this remains a problem today. Strategic police management at the local level needs to be given better guidance as to how the balance should be struck between different targets and thus also as to how different tasks should be prioritised in relation to one another. This is important because each of these areas of the police's task – crime prevention work, patrol and response and the investigation of crime – could swallow more or less infinite resources. Depending on how extensive crime prevention work should be, which calls the police should immediately respond to and how extensively reported offences should be investigated, these different areas of police work consume resources at one another's expense. The National Council is assuming that this question is being raised and clarified in connection with the coming reorganisation of the Swedish Police.

How have the results of the police developed over the course of the period?

When the results of the police's work are analysed it should be born in mind, as was noted above, that the increase in resources in terms of the level of full-time manpower was not as substantial as had been expected. If the increase is viewed in relation to the increase in the size of the population that occurred during the period examined, the number of full-time posts increased between 2006 and 2012 by five percent per 100,000 of population. In this regard it can also be noted that the number of police officers per 100,000 of population is not higher today than it was at the beginning of the 1980s. It can further be noted that losses of staff to retirement during the period examined led to a substantial staff turnover. Over the course of this period, one-third of the entire police force was replaced. Taken together, these factors mean that it is important to have reasonable expectations regarding the improvements to police results achieved as a result of the initiative.

Having said this, it can nonetheless be seen that the work of the police has developed in a positive direction in the majority of areas. Exposure to crime has declined according to the National Council's Swedish Crime Survey (SCS). Offending among young people in particular has declined, as can be seen from the National Council's school surveys.

The level of perceived insecurity in the Swedish population has also declined. It is of course impossible to know how important a role the work of the police has had for the trend in crime and the public sense of safety. It is not unlikely, however, that the police's crime prevention work conducted in collaboration with the municipalities, which has been intensified during the period examined, may have had some effect in this regard. Irrespective of the size of this effect, it is positive to note that the trend over the course of this period has been moving in a positive direction in relation to the central goals of the Swedish Police.

The trend has also been positive in relation to goals that lie closer to the practical work of the police. Results have either improved or been maintained at a good level. Thus the police's crime prevention work has expanded and become more structured. The police's collaboration with the municipalities in relation to this work has, as already mentioned, also been intensified. In addition to that has the level of public confidence in the police increased by six percentage points since 2006.

The one area where results have not lived up to the expectations of the government, however, is that of the proportion of reported offences that are cleared by the police. One of the objectives associated with the increase in police resources was specifically to produce an increase in the proportion of cleared offences, but this

has not happened. Instead the proportion of cleared offences has declined towards the end of the period examined.⁸

What external factors may have been of significance for the development of police results and what effects were produced by the increase in police resources?

The National Council has chosen to direct its primary focus at the causes of the trend in the clearance rate, since this is the area where police results have not developed in the way intended. The National Council's overall assessment is that a number of factors, which the police have no control over, are likely also to have contributed to the absence of an improvement in the clearance rate during the period examined. Central among these factors are the following.

- The number of reported offences increased during this period.
- A third of all the police officers employed in 2012 had started their police careers during the period examined.
- The extent of work tasks that compete with volume crime for police time has increased over the course of the period.
- The number of offences that were subject to investigation-limitation decisions increased.⁹

Which internal factors may have been of significance for the development of police results?

However, there are also factors that are of significance to the clearance rate that the police *should have been able* to influence. One such internal factor is the way in which the new resources were distributed among the different areas of the police's work. As has been noted above, those areas of work that are of direct significance to the clearing of volume crime, which accounts for the majority of reported offences, were not prioritised.

In addition, there are a large number of significant internal factors that were described in the National Council's previous report from the evaluation (Brå 2013:20). These include a lack of time, knowledge, motivation and feedback in connection with the work to clear volume crime, particularly in relation to the measures taken in the initial stages of an investigation. It is difficult to say whether these problems have become more serious during the period examined, but they are without question important factors

⁸ However, the number of cleared offences has not declined during this period. This figure instead increased somewhat between 2006 and 2012 and was relatively unchanged if the year 2006 is compared with 2013.

⁹ The increased number of investigation-limitation decisions can also be seen as an internal factor, it is, however, defined as an external factor here because the law that gave the police permission to make investigation-limitation decisions is an external factor during the period examined.

in relation to any discussion of how the police's results can be improved.

How much “should” police investigation results have improved considering the initiative?

A question that is linked to which factors that might have had an influence on the results is, how much impact the “20,000 police” initiative could be expected to have on the person-based clearance rate. In order to assess what reasonable expectations on the person-based clearance rate are, it is important to understand that a considerable amount of the reported offences cannot be cleared or should not be investigated. This becomes clear in the pilot project initiated by the National Council within the framework of the evaluation.

To understand how much of an improvement might reasonably be possible in the clearance rate for volume crime it is important to remember that the initiative itself was limited. As mentioned before there were additional aggravating factors that could have had a negative impact on the person-based clearance rate (e.g. an increased number of investigation-limitation decisions). These factors affected how much of an improvement was possible but cannot completely explain why the person-based clearance rate did not increase. The National Council's overall assessment based on all studies conducted within the framework of the evaluation is that a slight improvement would have been reasonable but not a major one.

How might internal factors that have a negative effect on the work of the police be improved?

The pilot project initiated by the National Council indicates several factors that are essential for increasing the person-based clearance rate. The pilot project's work model largely corresponds to and concretises the police's national investigation concept (PNU), with routines for an active leadership of investigations, ensuring that adequate investigative measures are taken in the initial stages of an investigation and feedback to the staff. In addition to this, the model includes a focus on teamwork in investigations across unit boundaries (including prosecutors). The chief investigating officer is included in the investigation from the beginning through contact with the patrols at the crime scene. The aim is to increase efficiency through creating a learning organization with decreased information loss and increased feedback. In addition to this there is a motivating method for measuring the team's results. The project produced positive results and the factors that were primarily regarded as the keys to success among the participants were

the teamwork across unit boundaries, increased contacts with the prosecutors and the increased levels of feedback. The project produced good results and was appreciated by the participants.

The National Council's assessment of the pilot project is that the police in the local police areas (Lokalpolisområdena) in the upcoming reorganisation of the Swedish Police could benefit by organising themselves into teams, where different functions in the line of an investigation work together.

In addition to what has been possible to test in the context of the pilot project, it emerged during the course of this work that there are also other possibilities for improving the effectiveness of the police's work to investigate crime. One important factor, for example, is the time it takes for patrols to complete the registration of reported offences. It is the view of the National Council that there ought to be considerable potential to reduce this time. This would in turn increase the time available for working in the field.

Another important factor that regards improving the effectiveness of the police's work is ensuring that the technical equipment required at crime scenes, such as cameras, must be both available and working. During the pilot project the prosecutor asked for more pictures from the crime scene, but the patrols equipment was often inadequate.

The studies conducted by the National Council within the framework of the evaluation also show that there is a need for more patrols to be on the streets at those times of day when the majority of offences are committed. This is necessary in order to be able to conduct initial investigative measures in connection with a larger proportion of volume crime. This could be achieved in two ways: either by assigning more staff to work with external duties or by changing the working hours of patrol officers. The question of which solution should be chosen can only be answered on the basis of a more detailed analysis of the resources available at other times. As far as the National Council understands, the current agreement on working hours within the police service provides opportunities for those who manage the work of the police to direct the distribution of working hours in the direction required by this work to a greater extent than they do at present.

Can the methods for measuring police results be improved?

Identifying optimal measures of police performance and effectiveness is an important but difficult task. In the surveys conducted for our reports about police's views on the investigation of volume crime and on crime prevention work, the National Council asked how measures of police work might be improved, many answers were critical of the current measures. These were perceived, for

example, as being too exclusively quantitative and as encouraging a focus on producing “good numbers” rather than on presenting a more nuanced picture of whether the goals associated with the police’s work had been achieved. At the same time, however, there were very few concrete suggestions for alternatives. Further, the alternatives that were suggested were of a very unspecific nature, such as an expressed desire for more “meaningful measures”, for example.

Different needs and possibilities at the national and local levels

One issue that affects the question of which methods of measurement are appropriate and possible to develop is that of whether the measures are to be used at the national or local level. Where the objective is to evaluate the work and results of the police at the national level, the National Council’s view is that statistical measures are unavoidable. Attempting to analyse developments over time in the work of the police at the national level in the complete absence of numerical measures would in the Council’s view not be particularly rewarding. It is important that statistical measures are used and that those measures are clearly defined. At the same time, the work of the police needs to be governed in such a way that statistics do not come to be more important than the goals and the actual content of the police’s work.

At the national level it is important that statistical measures are used and that these measures are uniformly defined. It is also important at the national level that the number of measures employed is pruned down, and that the choice of which measures to retain is based on an assessment of which are most valuable from a strategic point of view. It is also important, of course, irrespective of which measures are selected, that the resulting statistics are interpreted with caution and in context.

At the local level it may be more fruitful to develop complementary measures that are clearly related to the goals associated with a particular area of the police’s work. Measures of this kind may contribute to increasing the motivation of police employees and to the development of a better dialogue with the public. There are also good opportunities to develop new measures and methods of measurement in relation to crime prevention and service provision as a means of assessing local problems and initiatives. These could include both quantitative and qualitative measures and could relate to both performance and results.

Should the measures presented in the official crime statistics be supplemented or adjusted?

When discussing the measures presented in the official crime statistics that are used as indicators of police effectiveness, there are two possible points of departure. One is the question of whether they

serve their function as a means of conducting national comparisons, i.e. over time and between different parts of the country, the other that of whether these measures are optimal for the purpose of international comparisons.

As regards the issue of international comparisons, the National Council's review shows that Sweden measures both reported crime and offence clearances in a way that produces a picture indicating that the situation is "worse" here than in other countries. The more detailed analysis conducted by the National Council shows that this is not in fact the case and that the situation in Sweden is more or less the same as that found in other comparable countries. This does not, however, mean that the quality of Sweden's methods of registering and measuring crime and the clearance rate is poorer than that of other countries. A neutral judge might rather say that the Swedish statistics produce a clearer picture of the phenomena that are being measured than the statistics of many other countries. Another factor that speaks against the idea of adapting Swedish statistics to those of other countries is the lack of any uniform praxis. The methods employed in other countries differ from one another.

If one wanted to improve the opportunities to obtain an indication of the effectiveness of the Swedish police in relation to the police in other countries, one possibility would be to present statistics on the number of offences where the police are able to identify a suspect on reasonable grounds. This is how "cleared offences" are defined in a number of European countries, including Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands.

Another possible basis for international comparisons is to count the number of individuals convicted per 1000 of population. For such a measure to be meaningful, however, requires that actual crime levels (as measured by victim surveys) are approximately the same in the countries included in the comparison. This is the case in relation to the countries included in the National Council's study, and here the comparison shows that the number of individuals convicted per 1000 of population is approximately the same in Sweden as in other countries.

Finally, it can be noted that work is currently underway at the National Council to develop the contents of Sweden's official crime statistics. This will result in new methods of presenting reported crime, registered suspects and cleared offences that are easier to understand than those currently in use and that also provide improved opportunities for end users to produce their own measures, for example by combining figures presented in different statistical tables.

In addition, ongoing work that is being conducted to develop the statistics collected throughout the criminal justice system (RIF) will provide additional opportunities to measure the effectiveness of both the police and the other agencies of the justice system.