



**AGENDA ITEM NO:6e**

**POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**  
**5 September 2019**

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## **Briefing Paper – Specialist Operations Transition UPDATE**

### **1. PURPOSE**

At 0001 hours on April 19<sup>th</sup> 2019, the Tri Force Specialist Operations collaboration formally returned to the direction and control of the Chief Constable. Some four months on, this paper provides an update on the current operational status of armed policing, roads policing, collision investigation and dogs policing, and provides clarity in respect of the delivery of the new specialist operating model, due to 'go-live' on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2020 and its integration into the overall community policing operating model (CPT) of Wiltshire Police to reduce harm in Wiltshire communities.

### **2. CURRENT POSITION – Wiltshire Specialist Operations**

Specialist Operations has transitioned smoothly into the operational framework of the organisation and all specialisms are currently delivering effective service across the county, working closely with CPT to support overall 'frontline' resilience and provide specialist knowledge as required.

All officers remain in their original teams and on the six-team shift pattern until transition to the new operating model in January. They continue to be deployed from Police HQ in Devizes, under the direction of the duty Force Incident Manager. All resources are operationally available throughout a full twenty-four hour duty cycle and are locally managed by their thematic heads of department as shown below:

- Head of Armed Policing – Inspector Paul Saunders
- Head of Roads Policing – Inspector Mark Freeman
- Head of Dogs Policing – Inspector James Brain
- Head of Dogs Training – Mr Ian Partington

All four managers continue to split their time between HQ and the main Community Policing Hubs, to forge relationships with their peers and ensure absolute understanding of local challenges and community issues. They represent the department at local tasking meetings and continue to develop the Force's Tasking and Briefing system to ensure Specialist Officers can provide quick-time updates in respect of live-time activity and high-priority incidents.

**Since April 2019, specialist officers have responded to over 1000 Force logs, working side-by-side with CPT colleagues in support of the public. Of these logs, 209 were initially graded at the highest level of priority, and all were attended within an average time of under five minutes - this demonstrates how the newly focused Specialist capability is effectively supporting service to the communities of Wiltshire.**

#### **Armed Policing**

Armed Policing remains operationally resilient with full establishment. Officer deployability is

challenged by the summer period and the associated annual rise in calls for service, however this is being managed and operational deployability is consistent, and effective. Overall officer numbers reflect the key-findings of the annual Armed Policing Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment (APSTRA) process that will be refreshed from September 2019 to secure a contemporary understanding of the threats associated with public access to weapons as we enter 2020.

Wiltshire continues its regional relationship with the Avon and Somerset, and Gloucestershire constabularies in accessing bespoke training through the Black Rock Specialist Training Centre near Portishead, and operationally as partner members of the South West Counter Terrorist Specialist Firearms Team in mitigating high-threat criminality.

### **Roads Policing (including Collision Investigation)**

Having initially required notable abstraction to build the Wiltshire Collision Investigation capability, Roads Policing is now steadily returning to strength with new staff transferring to the department continuously over the next six months. Armed Policing colleagues are additionally trained and available to offer secondary support to this area of Policing, providing strong visibility and capability on our fast roads, when not deployed on their core role.

The Collision Investigation team has stabilised well with new members working to achieve both occupational and operational competence in this highly important area of specialist policing support. They are structured to achieve early compliance with ISO accreditation requirements, due to come into effect in 2020. In the four months since the team have returned to standalone Wiltshire direction and control, they have responded to 23 major roads incidents of which 7 have sadly proven fatal.

The integration of Roads Policing, Collision Investigation, and Road Safety into a single portfolio under the thematic 'Inspector, Head of Roads Policing' effectively delivers preventative, tactical, and enforcement approaches in full support of the National Road-Harm Reduction Strategy and the OPCC's Police and Crime Plan.

### **Dogs Policing and Training**

Our dogs officers are fully effective and deploying directly from their kennel locations to wherever operational business requires. Directly line-managed by a specialist Dog Sergeant, they are now also supported by a dedicated Dog Training Manager and two dog-training officers. This ensures our animals are always operating at the highest level of occupational ability, are available county-wide, and that their welfare is always a core departmental focus. Our dogs play a key role in the effective management of high-threat offenders, tracking of vulnerable persons, and the recovery of discarded stolen goods.

The Inspector Head of Dogs Policing has recently designed and delivered an internal campaign to highlight the capabilities of the team, and importantly educate Force colleagues to think creatively at incident scenes and to call for a dog whenever appropriate. This has been supported by an external publicity campaign which has been well received.

### **Ad Hoc Arrangements (Securing operational resilience during transition)**

Since April 19<sup>th</sup> 2019, transition resilience has been supported for all specialisms by the ability to access formal 'Ad-Hoc' arrangements in between Avon and Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire. These arrangements are now drawing to a close and will formally cease at 2359 hours on August 31st. The Force is extremely grateful to regional colleagues for their support.

Securing this position has been a crucial delivery requirement of the past four months and

the Force is now in a period of stability pending movement to the new specialist operating structure on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **3. NEW SPECIALIST OPERATIONS OPERATING STRUCTURE**

The PCC and Chief Constable have formally agreed the new Specialist Operations delivery model and a 'go-live' date has now been set for January 6<sup>th</sup> 2020.

This model recognises the three main specialisms individually but crucially recognises the strengths they bring when deployed in multi-disciplinary teams where they share resilience and balance operational availability. There are a number of benefits to approaching specialist operations from a 'multi-skilled', interoperable perspective. Updating the operating model to a 12-hour shift pattern provides the opportunity to deliver a team structure that maximises operational capability by flexing hours of work to meet demand. The model has been designed to meet and be resilient to unanticipated service-demand, but focus effort toward frontline CPT priorities and assist with problem solving. It achieves this efficiently without excessive growth, and utilises effective tasking processes to prioritise activity. The model maximises specialist operational capability.

#### **12-Hour Shift Pattern**

The strength and foundation of any operating model is the shift-pattern that underpins it, and significant work and officer consultation (both locally and nationally) has been undertaken by the Force to ensure that demand, operational experience, and officer wellbeing were fully recognised at the core of any considered options. Over a number of months the strengths and weaknesses of a number of options were evaluated with eventual recognition that a 12-hour shift pattern could be safely worked by specialist officers, and would be capable of delivering service in line with public expectation and Force demand.

**Many forces across the country, both metropolitan and rural, utilise similar patterns to deliver their specialist policing services.**

This pattern has now passed through formal officer consultation and been agreed by the Chief Constable. The team structure is now being built to balance skills and secure operational readiness for go-live in January.

Collision Investigation, by exception, will continue to work on a days and evenings pattern with an on-call capability at all other times.

#### **2019/2020 Budget**

The budget for the current year has been secured and assigned to the new operating model. It is of note that reliance upon officer overtime has been an issue of the existing structure as the Force has sought to stabilise officer numbers and create a standalone capability for all business areas. The new shift pattern and structure manages officer numbers across fewer teams and has a notable inbuilt protected learning capability which minimises necessity to abstract from core strength. In addition use of 12-hour shifts minimises service delivery requirements and maximises officer numbers at key demand times. It is anticipated that reliance upon overtime will reduce in 2020 and measures have been taken to address this.

#### **Location**

Firearms and Roads Policing assets will continue to be centrally deployed from Force operations police HQ, but will now operate on the same team and shift structure.

Dog Unit assets will operate on the same wider team and shift structure as their firearms and roads colleagues, but they can deploy directly from their home address kennelling locations to the CPT hubs.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The Force is committed to mobilising its workforce towards addressing high threat, harm and risk in the community, particularly in relation to supporting those most vulnerable individuals in our communities, susceptible to exploitation. The new model is working well, and is grasping the opportunity to bring proactivity and problem solving to local community policing.

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