SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY
ÙGHDARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

Agenda Item 10

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	**21 June 2023**
Location	**Apex Grassmarket, Edinburgh**
Title of Paper	**Organisational Learning - Operation Unicorn/ Operation Talla**
Presented By	**Malcolm Graham, Deputy Chief Constable Local Policing**
Recommendation to Members	**For Discussion**
Appendix Attached	**Yes** **Appendix A - Operation Talla Formal Debrief Report** **Appendix B - Operation Unicorn Formal Debrief Report**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the Formal Debrief Reports for Operation Talla and Operation Unicorn. It is intended to inform the Scottish Police Authority, providing details of the delivery of both Operations and the recommendations contained therein, and provide members with updates on how Police Scotland have responded to identified learning.

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this paper and Appendices.

1. OPERATION TALLA

1.1 **Background**

1.2 In June 2022, as the final coronavirus restrictions were lifted, the Chief Constable approved the stand down of Operation Talla structures and directed that an organisational wide debrief should be conducted to examine Police Scotland's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to identify learning and to understand what the pandemic meant for people across the Service.

1.3 All police officers and staff were asked to contribute their views and experiences as part of this debrief which was led by SMARTEU in line with an agreed terms of reference.

1.4 The formal debrief examined Police Scotland's response to the pandemic following the outbreak from March 2020 up to and including June 2022. The methodology was a simple and broad set of five questions which were hosted on the Citizen Space (CS) platform.

1.5 The consultation guidance issued expressly highlighted that no issues were excluded from the consultation and that responses should capture any topics across the whole pandemic response that can reflect internal, external, community, home life or any other matters.

The questions were:

- What did we do well in response to COVID?
- What could we have done better in our response to COVID?
- What changes to policy, procedure or practices should be retained?
- What changes to policy, procedure or practices should be reviewed?
- What was the most valuable learning experience in response to COVID and for what reasons?

1.6 **Op Talla formal debrief report recommendations and delivery**

1.7 The consultation received 294 online responses comprising individual and team submissions representing the views of over 5300 of our people. These responses were collated and formulated into a debrief report containing 15 recommendations and 6 practice observations. The Report was presented to Police Scotland's Strategic Leadership Board in March 2023 who approved the delivery of the Report's Recommendations.

1.8   The Report highlights Police Scotland's ability to adapt and respond to unprecedented challenges through the provision of effective personal protective equipment and COVID tests, to the implementation of agile working supported by ICT and adapted working practices. Communication and operational guidance also feature prominently as does the changes made to response protocols, absence management and the provision of individual and family support throughout the pandemic, all of which contributed to the maintenance of effective service delivery.

1.9   By identifying what went well and what we could have done better, the report provides details on our peoples experiences and feelings on how pandemic and our responses contributed to personal safety and wellbeing and their ability to continue to respond to the public's demand for service. Through the honesty and openness of feedback, the report was able to identify key areas for development and learning that can be taken forward through maintaining identified best practice and preparing for future challenges.

1.10   Delivery of the recommendations has commenced through an organisation wide Short Life Working Group (SLWG) chaired by Chief Superintendent Governance, Audit and Assurance. The progress on delivery will thereafter be reported through the ACC Professionalism and Assurance Strategic Group.

1.11   Working closely with SMARTEU, identified recommendation owners have reviewed the full background and expected outcomes for each recommendation to ensure that this meaningful and impactive learning is delivered through organisational change and incident planning.

1.12   The majority of the recommendations have been directly aligned to ongoing or delivered work streams such as implementation of the National Hybrid Working Guidance, development of the Force Mass Mobilisation Project, the Virtual First Training Project and completion of the Contact Assessment Model rollout. The recommendations that align directly to major incident response planning have been raised as actions for the Major Incident Tactical Governance Group to ensure delivery is coordinated across the organisation.

1.13   One key theme that was highlighted by our people throughout the report was the availability and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). A broad range of responses on this subject has been included in the Report and as members will be aware, this is an area where we have been focussing our efforts to ensure that our officers and staff

continue to receive the best available PPE in all circumstances where its use is required to keep themselves and the public safe when responding to incidents.

1.14 One recommendation whilst fully supported by Police Scotland, requires the support of our justice partners as it relates to the retention of government legislation for the remote granting of warrants. Our Justice Reform team are pursuing all relevant options to retain this provision that came in to effect during the Pandemic.

1.15 **Next Steps**

1.16 At the conclusion of the Short Life Working Group, progress on the recommendations will continue to be monitored through our Governance and Assurance structure in line with our assurance arrangements for our external scrutiny body recommendations.

1.17 Listening to our people, accepting and implementing the recommendations in this report is just one of many steps Police Scotland will take to evaluate the impact of Operation Talla, embed learning and improvement and prepare for any future challenges for Scotland and its communities.

1.18 The presentation of this report will be supported by an internal communications plan.

2. OPERATION UNICORN

2.1 **Background**

2.2 On 8 September 2022, Operation Unicorn was activated following the death of Her Majesty The Queen at Balmoral Castle. What followed was the largest 'no notification' mass mobilisation policing operation in the history of Police Scotland. The significance of the event was beyond the scale of anything Police Scotland had dealt with before and it was planned, over many years, in the knowledge that the operational response would be under intense scrutiny from the world's media.

2.3 The delivery of the Operation met significant challenges, including the requirement to co-ordinate over 15,000 officer deployments, whilst providing safe and secure public viewing spaces. This was set against an uncertainty over public attendance numbers making the planning more complex still. The Operation was a success and protected the safety of Her Majesty, the Royal Family, VIP's and Officers and the public alike. In light of the world wide scrutiny on Police Scotland,

Officers and Staff were required to maintain an intense focus on professional standards and the style and tone of their interactions with the public and partners.

Despite the very real reputational risks that existed, the professionalism, skill and conduct of our Officers and Staff was exemplary and widely acknowledged by the public, partners and international media outlets alike.

2.3 The debrief element of the operation encompassed three distinctly separate approaches, with the feedback from each stage being used to draw information to maximise the overall learning for Police Scotland. This comprised of hot debrief forms which were circulated to all commanders, a force wide questionnaire to collate feedback from all officers and staff impacted by the operation and two formal SMARTEU led debrief sessions.

2.4 The SMARTEU led debrief sessions focused on the following themes:

- Planning Stage;
- Activation;
- Mobilisation;
- Information flows;
- Wind down / Return to Business As Usual

2.5 From these themes feedback was drawn out covering:

- What went well?
- What did not go well?

2.6 **Op Unicorn Formal Debrief Highlights/Recommendations**

2.7 Overall, the operation was considered by those involved in debrief, as being a success with the following elements identified:

Why was it a success?

- National planning team structure, knowledge and function;
- Plans developed to a high standard;
- Professional commitment and relationships;
- Resource numbers identified in advance;
- Representation from most partner and police departments within one building.

What were the challenges?

- Roles and responsibilities for all partners and agencies;
- Multi-agency information sharing and action management;
- National partner and agency meeting structures;
- Development level of partners plans on activation;
- Amendments to plans without wider consultation.

2.8 Key highlights identified for Police Scotland:

- The national planning team structure and function provided continuity, confidence, knowledge and support to police commanders and partners across Scotland.
- The operation has allowed for the development of mass mobilisation structures that can be utilised for a variety of major events/operations in Scotland.
- The ability to collate both specialist and local policing resource from across Scotland into areas of operational demand was fundamental to the successful delivery of the policing operation.

2.9 **Next steps**

2.10 All good practice and learning from Operation Unicorn will be disseminated to commanders and planning teams in the near future, but is already providing the base for planning of other major operations in Scotland. The scope and scale of Operation Unicorn was unprecedented, but it is vitally important that good practice and the basic principles that derive from these points are taken forward into all events and operations, ensuring efficiency, to strengthen effective partnerships and to enable officers and staff to deliver to the best of their ability.

2.11 Work is already underway to establish a mass mobilisation plan that can be implemented to allow for the pooling of resources, whilst maintaining business as usual levels of staffing in vital areas. The basic principles of this are being utilised in the planning of the UCI Cycling World Championships.

2.12 Effective partnership working, including testing and exercising is being undertaken for Royal Week 2023, with this seeing a number of key partners coming together to scenario test various aspects of plans, and being co-located within police estate during delivery phase.

2.13 Resulting recommendations will be incorporated into future operations through the governance of the Gold Commander, with the application being undertaken by the planning team.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The overarching Policing cost to deliver Operation Unicorn was £15, 618,640. This cost was fully recovered from the Scottish and UK Governments.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Over 15,000 officers were deployed to Operation Unicorn. These officers were deployed in a positive fashion with welfare being at the forefront of considerations and plans. Full consultation with staff associations was carried out prior to activation, during delivery and subsequently at the debrief stage. Key welfare indicators were agreed and established which assisted in rectifying any issues that emerged in a timely fashion.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There <u>are no</u> legal implications in this report.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There <u>are</u> reputational implications in this report. The de-brief reports for both Talla and Unicorn, identify areas of learning and development as well as good practice for the future. It is important that this organisational learning is developed into policy, practice and training for future events.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There <u>are no</u> social implications in this report.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1 There <u>are no</u> community implications in this report.

9.   EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1   There <u>are no</u> equality implications in this report.

10.   ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1   There <u>are no</u> environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Members are invited to discuss the Operation Talla and Operation Unicorn Formal Debrief Reports.

Police Scotland Operation Talla

Formal Debrief Report

Debrief Date	Second half of 2022
Sponsor / Owner	ACC Alan Speirs
Author	Douglas Stirling, SMARTEU

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SMARTEU\Learning & Development\Operational Learning & Debriefs\SMARTEU Formal Debrief Reports\2022\Op Talla Response\L&D\Report\PSoS Operation Talla Formal Debrief Report V.0.5

Revision History

Date	Version	Summary of Changes	Author
23/09/2022	0.1	First Draft	David O'Neill /Rhona Dunn
30/09/2022	0.2	Second Draft	Douglas Stirling
16/11/2022	0.3	Third Draft - Inclusion of recommendations and practices	Douglas Stirling
16/12/2022	0.4	Fourth Draft – Amendment to practice numbering	Douglas Stirling
19/12/2022	0.5	Fifth Draft – Removal of Sponsor Comment boxes and any reference thereto – at request of Angela Wood	Andy Jones
26/03/2023	1.0	Version control and pdf following sign off at SLB	Andy Jones

Approvals

This document requires the Sponsor(s) approval(s). A signed copy should be retained in the project files.

Name	Signature	Title / Rank	Date	Version
SLB				V.0.5

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Scott Cameron, on behalf of GAA	Inspector	26/03/2023	V.1.0

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Background of Operation

In late 2019 and early 2020 the emergence and spread of a novel coronavirus, COVID, caused countries around the world to start to prepare for a reasonable worst case scenario. Scotland was no different and Police Scotland began refreshing plans for a 'pandemic,' one of the highest risks on the National Security Risk Assessment, consistently for in excess of 10 years. On 11 March 2020, the Director General of the World Health Organisation declared a world pandemic.

Police Scotland's response to COVID was named Operation Talla. This name was later adopted for the UK National policing response by National Police Chief's Council.

An initial Police Scotland Command Structure was established.

DEBRIEF TERMS OF REFERENCE

Aim

To examine the PSoS response to the COVID19 (Op Talla) following the outbreak in March 2020 up to an including June 2022, to identify best practice and areas for development for future responses.

Outcomes

The proposed outcomes of the debrief is as follows;
- Best practice will be identified
- Opportunities for future development will be highlighted
- Capability and capacity to respond safely to this type of incident will have been considered
- Training and / or other considerations required to fully achieve any future response will be captured.

Scope

As the final coronavirus restrictions lifted and we moved back to business as usual, the Chief Constable approved the stand down of Operation Talla structures and asked ACC Alan Speirs, as Silver for the Operation, to conduct an organisation wide debrief. This was to examine Police Scotland's response to the COVID19 pandemic and capture what the pandemic has meant for people across the service.

Exclusions

Nothing has been excluded from inclusion.

On the contrary, the Line Manager Briefing contained the direction, *'There are no set themes to consider, responses should capture any topics your team might raise. This could be across the whole response and might reflect on internal, external,*

community, home life or any other matters. If it's important to them, then it should be discussed and a view captured.'

Methodology

A simple and broad set of five questions were hosted on the Citizen Space (CS) platform.

The questions were;

1. What did we do well in response to COVID?
2. What could we have done better in our response to COVID?
3. What changes to policy, procedure or practices should be retained?
4. What changes to policy, procedure or practices should be reviewed?
5. What was the most valuable learning experience in response to COVID and for what reasons?

The link to the platform was shared to Line Managers (LM) across the organisation. A Line Manager Briefing (LMB) asked LM to agree at a local level how to bring a team together to gain their collective responses to the questions posed – ensuring that all staff and officers within their division / department / function had the opportunity to contribute.

LM were asked to collate a collective response from their teams and load the response to Citizen Space. It was suggested that feedback such as, 'there was overwhelming agreement that,' or 'there was an evenly split view on' or other language representative of the collective views of the teams might be helpful.

The LMB was supported by a Corporate Communication intranet front page release announcing the debrief, and further supported by ACC Speirs, Professionalism and Assurance forwarding the LMB to his peers asking them to encourage staff engagement at all levels.

The Citizen Space platform also contained an area to capture some demographics of where returns were submitted from, including geographical area, broad role performed and ranks / grades of involvement.

Reporting

It was agreed in the Debrief Proposal that a Debrief Report would be produced to include issues identified. These were categorised as:

- **Practice** – Where something either did happen and was regarded as good practice, or was considered should happen in future.
- **Observation** – An issue identified that may be considered for action, or an issue raised / identified by an agency which affects external agencies or organisations.
- **Recommendation** – Where an issue is considered to require tasking for development or action if accepted.

A 'suggested owner' should be allocated to each issue identified if accepted.

The report has been submitted to the Sponsor for consideration of acceptance of the Practice, Observations and Recommendations, inclusion of any Sponsor comment and sign off. The report will be shared with all participants who attended the debrief and is thereafter to be cascaded to relevant staff within the wider organisation and to partners for information and / or attention.

The Executive Lead for each organisation will ensure any issue or accepted Recommendations captured in the report are escalated to appropriate governance structures within the respective organisations affected.

<u>WHAT DID WE DO WELL?</u>

1. Personal Safety

It is evident from the large number of responses that the instruction to work from home (WFH) and introduction of flexible/agile working was a significant contributor to personal safety and minimisation of the spread of the virus. This will be explored in more detail in the section below covering working from home and flexible/agile working.

In respect of the organisations immediate response to provide personal safety there was overwhelming agreement that the supply of quality personal protection equipment (PPE) was a huge positive. In the main the responses indicated prompt, and effective roll out of PPE with ease of access to the equipment, sufficient stock and regular re-supply as and when required.

However, some responders opined that the initial supply of PPE was laboured and un-coordinated, with terms such as 'poor, eventually and slow'.

Some expressed specific support of the

"***Excellent provision of masks and sanitizer and PPE. Always available and of a high standard.***"

In addition to the supply of PPE it was recognised that there was prompt clear and detailed instructions of when to use the PPE and to what standard with specific comments including

"***The fitting and videos linked to PPE were self-explanatory. Minimal amount of PPE was issued to stop the storing of PPE in personal lockers in the event of a major incident etc. Later on, a large quantity of PPE was stored at landward offices for use by staff and could be distributed easier.***"

Some responders provided that the nature and process for provision of PPE gave the perception of being well looked after.

A large number of responders highlighted the benefit of early introduction of social distancing in offices, the widespread supply of masks and access to sanitising

facilities, ensuring staff felt safe whilst at work and praised the introduction of COVID marshals, all giving a sense of being looked after.

However, similarly to the criticism of time taken in delivering PPE, a small number of responses stated that the establishment of COVID marshals should have been instigated earlier.

Practice 1
It was widely recognised that the earliest possible introduction of social distancing, organisation wide issuing of PPE and the establishment of COVID marshals was good practice and in this response served to enhance the staff sense of safety and being well looked after.

It was commented by some, that there was proper signage in the work place ensuring staff were spaced appropriately in the office and this was managed locally ahead of any corporate response or communication

The social distancing was further supported by the adoption of a flexible working arrangement leading to minimal staff attending the work place and this was thought to have minimised the risk of infection spreading through the workforce via crossovers between shifts and was quoted as being '*well received by officers'*

In addition to social distancing and provision of PPE it was widely agreed that the increased cleaning regime within the stations and vehicles, including cleaning material supplied for individuals to be able to clean their own and shared work spaces was beneficial. In particular SODEXO secured praise for both their system to secure specific cleansing and the quality of the process.

Practice 2
The establishment of an enhanced cleaning regime and the supply of appropriate cleaning materials to support the sanitising of vehicles and work stations, was highlighted as best practice and one that should be maintained.

Recommendation 1
PSoS to consider the retention of the practice of enhanced cleaning regime across the service including the provision of cleaning materials through-out the service estate. In line with Practice 2.

Further positive comments were given in regards to the process of a 'deep clean' in areas that were exposed to confirmed positive cases, with some areas reporting that

"We all agreed that the welfare and wellbeing response, in respect of accommodation and catering were delivered well"

and the support to access Lateral Flow Test (LFT) kits was seen as a huge positive together with the securing of priority testing and the establishment of local arrangements with NHS to get spare vaccines when there was surplus stock.

Finally, some responses indicated the decision to advise officers and staff who came into contact with a positive COVID case to isolate until a negative test was received, was contributory to the minimisation of the virus spread.

2. Communications

The overwhelming view in regards to the organisations communication strategy, both internally and externally, was very positive. Many of the responses emphasised the positive establishment of Op Talla, which ensured critical information was shared with all staff, it was up to date and accurate and easily accessible, although a number of responders whilst complimenting this stance, were critical that it was not established immediately and some stated the communication lines 'lack real content, direction or plans'.

Recommendation 2
PSoS should consider the early establishment of an overarching governance structure in response to any major event/incident. The structure should include a mechanism to provide a single route for the provision of up to date and detailed information including clear strategic direction to keep the workforce informed, similar to the role provided by the Op Talla structure.

A number of responders gave praise for the emails and updates regularly sent out by the Op Talla team which were said to be reasonable and provided much sought updates as the pandemic evolved. Further responses indicated that the internal intranet to cascade key messages and establishment of an Op Talla direct phone line, enabled them to inform their teams and answer any questions asked of them. The responders suggested that the direct phone line should be recognised as good practice, together with the weekly briefings on legislation, current absent rates and other key information.

Practice 3
The establishment of the Op Talla direct telephone line to provide staff access to information and relevant briefing material was recognised as good practice.

It was also provided that the rapid response to the lock down and the introduction of WFH was well communicated throughout the organisation with clear direction provided by senior managers. Further the response provided that communication was effectively cascaded down through the various management levels in a clear and concise way. This included praise for the effective use of face to face briefings by line management.

In addition, it was cited that the information provided around the potential wider impact COVID could have on staff roles and how their working lives would be affected, was greatly appreciated. A few responders further stated that the communication from the executive was excellent, as was the internal guidance that

was repeatedly updated on receipt of new government guidance and how it related to Police Scotland.

The allocation of support and learning through one to one mentorship, fortnightly team discussions and keeping in touch for wellbeing purposes were all recognised as good examples of organisational communication with quotes including;

"The dedicated Intranet site, which was created fairly quickly, had a raft of important guidance which was fairly easy to find".

"All communication via Memos was clear, unambiguous and directed end users to the most appropriate guidance."

3. ICT, flexible/agile working and working from home (WFH)

There was clear recognition and praise for the work undertaken by ICT in their support of the organisations decision to drive flexible/agile working and WFH, which in turn, contributed to the staff safety, both physically and from a wellbeing standpoint.

There were a minor number of responses criticising the initial speed of the ICT support with some stating that RAS tokens were an initial issue with slow distribution, but the vast majority were very positive, with many recognising the enormity of the task faced by ICT in terms of the size of the organisation and the demanding timescales to roll out the support.

The feedback received included;

"Quick and effective procurement of laptops to effectively allow staff to WFH. In previous organisation they refused to do this until roughly 8 months into pandemic."

and

"The rollout of IT equipment went well. When placed into two separate working from home roles I received an IT solution that was fit for purpose very quickly. Any issues were promptly resolved by ICT colleagues"

The prompt roll out of equipment including laptops and the adoption of MS Teams as a means to communicate across the organisation was applauded. The vast majority of responses stated that the creating of opportunities for flexible working and only requiring people to be in the office if necessary was a 'good decision'. The responders stated the decision helped staff feel more comfortable and the fact that people were regularly testing was reassuring.

Some additional positive examples of flexible working included;

"The adaption to each individual's circumstances and flexibility offered in the initial stages was well received - ability to work lab days at the weekend to

minimise contact with others; lack of core hours allowing work to be performed around childcare or when feeling overwhelmed."

The sense of 'feeling overwhelmed' was a recurring theme with terminology used to describe how the staff were feeling at the initial stages of the pandemic including it was "**very upsetting and fearful time**" and "**anxiety was through the roof**" many responders stating that the flexibility offered to them for their working arrangements including the ability to work from home was the most significant support they could have received from the organisation.

Recommendation 3
The 'working from home' policy should be reviewed to establish its adoption as normal working practice, where appropriate.

4. Staff support and absence management

A significant number of responders were complimentary on the level and appropriateness of their line management support through-out the response to the pandemic. Areas of support that was highlighted included the establishment of the dedicated phone line for absence and the advice it provided as well as the removal of the requirement for medical notes in support of officers who contracted COVID.

There was further appreciation of the temporary changes to scope and absence management policy whereby COVID sickness did not adversely affect staff/officers records with supporting comments such as;

"Most officers appreciated that the organisation was sensitive to families wishing to isolate or if a loved one became infected that an officer could take time off to look after their children etc."

A number of responses indicated that the management's approach to absence management showed a culture of trust. This included access to special leave being given in appropriate circumstances and the early identification of "**presumption of non-attendance**". This allowed front line officers not to put themselves at risk unless absolutely necessary. This staff protection extended to early recognition and support provided to those with underlying health conditions, with caution in working arrangements and appropriate absence management.

Practice 4
The introduction of temporary changes to SCOPE and absence management policy was recognised as best practice in extremely challenging circumstances.

Additional positive comments were made regarding the quick set up of an outbreak management team to deal with guidance around COVID and the establishment of Op Talla team, which was a single point of access to guidance and advice.

5. Call attendance and response protocol

A strong picture of pride was evident in the organisations ability to provide an appropriate policing service, that maintained public confidence, whilst providing a reasonable level of protections to officers with responses in line with;

'In the first year it worked out on average that the legislation/rules relating to COVID changed once every 8 days; the fact that we kept on top of that to understand it ourselves and ensure the front line knew etc. was an exceptional piece of work.'

It was provided that the maintenance of service delivery was greatly assisted by the work of the 'resolution teams' and the introduction of the 'THRIVE' model, with the successful and effective move to non-attendance for routine/minor calls. This process was seen as positive minimising unnecessary contact and thereby providing protection for both staff and their families.

Some responders stated that the robust triage of calls was very effective in minimising the need for officers to attend and while this was initially done to protect staff there was no drop in effectiveness or service delivery experienced. As such it was suggested that this process was very well received by staff and no detriment to the public.

Further in regard to the presumption of non-attendance it was stated that;

'numerous calls were dealt with over the phone – this allowed response officers to not be tied up with calls that did not require attendance and allow them to remain free to attend urgent calls, from cops perspective and us as supervisors – we appear to have reverted back to attending calls which could be dealt with other than by response officers – low level thefts, neighbour disputes etc. All officers agreed that this should be retained to allow response to be available to respond to immediate/prompt calls.'

Further positive comments were made about the change to diary calls with some stating that

'all believed decisions made around limiting contact for diary calls which lead to taking statements over the phone worked extremely well, not only did it protect the officers and the public from unnecessary contact it speed up the process and allowed several incidents to be completed by one officer without the time delay of travel especially based on …… geographical issues.'

Recommendation 4
A review of the impact on PSoS service delivery, as a result of the presumption of non-attendance policy and use of diary calls, should be undertaken to establish the viability of retaining and/or expanding the practice.

The changes to court attendance was also cited as good practice, with clear support for the adoption of court standby, whereby an email based system was deployed. It was opined, that this in process made officers more productive through the removal of unnecessary attendance, which allowed office based tasks to be pursued and some stated that this improved their morale and productivity.

In addition, the adoption of warrants being issued by email after phone consultation with Sheriff, removing the necessity for face to face with Sheriff was very positive.

Practice 5
The use of an emailing system for court standby avoiding the need for officer attendance together with the ability to secure warrants by email following a telephone consultation with a Sheriff was recognised as effective and efficient practice.

Recommendation 5
In line with Practice 5, PSoS should consider the retention of the email system in support of court attendance/standby.

Recommendation 6
In line with Practice 5, PSoS should consider the adoption of a process whereby warrants can be secured via email following appropriate consultation with relevant judicial representative (Sheriff/Justice of the Peace).

There was submissions stating "***unanimous agreement***" that the rapid arrangement with Police Scotland & COPFS to reduce case submissions in line with reduced resourcing and limiting police to core services helped mitigate the drop in capacity.

A number of responders praised the decision to direct patrolling to key areas such as supermarkets where there was potential for conflict with officers stating that this provided a positive view of the police and reassurance to both staff and public.

Praise was also directed to the 4 E's approach which was stated to have supported officers providing a structured mechanism to utilise discretion and restraint when dealing with the public with some recognising that this assisted officers in being;

"***better able to keep the public on-board and navigate around some of the PR pitfalls which forces in E + W found themselves in such as removing elderly people from park benches***".

A number of responses highlighted the re-deployment of resources from departments to assist frontline colleagues as a positive decision. Furthermore, responders stated there was a perception that police assaults were being treated more seriously by custody and courts which was reassuring in particular with examples of officers being spat at, leading to persons being held in custody / remanded.

WHAT COULD WE HAVE DONE BETTER?

1. Personal safety

A large amount of survey responses highlight a widespread perception that, despite the known risks of Pandemic Flu, the acquisition and distribution of PPE and cleaning materials was slow. Numerous respondents reported their departments and individual officers were required to source their own PPE and sanitising materials. When this lack of resources was queried by some staff, Op Talla apparently advised them to contact Procurement, who simply stated it was a Sodexo issue. As one response stated,

"Frontline felt isolated and unsupported at the early outbreak, having to fend for themselves and make do with minimal resources."

The process for re-ordering and receiving PPE and cleaning materials via Business Support Units caused frustration, as it was felt these items should have been made easier to replenish quickly and frequently. A more streamline process, to obtain FFP3 masks and suits in particular, would have been preferred, particularly at weekends. Business Units reportedly became natural choke points as all BSU staff were seen to be either off or working from home and there was no flexibility in the process. It was suggested that the organisation should have ensured quicker and easier access to PPE. One suggestion put forward in a number of responses was for a central store located within Divisions, where the officers could collect replacements almost instantly instead of putting in requests.

Existing PPE Kit hubs could have been managed more effectively. It was suggested too many lines of communication were feeding into a Senior Manager who was working from home and did not have the capacity to deal with all the questions being raised.

Recommendation 7
PSoS should consider the establishment of an 'in person' team, to support any future major logistical work stream, in line with that performed at staging/briefing hubs. The team should be led by appropriate command/managerial level to enable dynamic decisions and escalation process.

Many responses compared Police Scotland's PPE to those that partner agencies were seen to be using. One respondent shared an experience, apparently occurring well into the pandemic response, where front line officers were turning up to incidents where paramedics were scared for Police' safety due to the lack of appropriate kit, before providing SAS PPE to the officers. Such incidents left some staff feeling exposed to increased risk.

Some respondents considered the deployments of Op Talla resources should have been better managed, as there was a perception some areas exploited having these officers. Some responses suggested that some resources should have been stood down and returned to core roles sooner, but were used unnecessarily.

"I had staff taken away to work at Divisions and they were then used for things like delivering SPF Easter eggs, tidying up back record conversion databases that were years out of date and tidying up offices. They were supposed to be used for backfill on shifts that were short but instead just got abusing, which begs the question why were they needed in the first place? In addition, getting the same staff back was a nightmare. They were taken away at the drop of a hat but then, to get them back, the Divisions demanded the obligatory 28 days' notice even though all of the staff were happy to waive that."

Others reported feeling that more staff were redeployed to operational roles than actually necessary, and ended up doing very little while departments those staff came from were quickly overwhelmed by work and few resources. It was suggested a more targeted approach was required, to utilise officers in areas of work where they could have assisted most and ensure the required level of support was provided.

Practice 6
The utilisation of all staff to support 'frontline' roles was recognised as good practice but future re-deployments should be 'need' focussed with clear and targeted objectives identified.

Conversely, some response shifts felt a lack of support, as they heard repeated commitments to provide additional resources to bolster the frontline but which never came to fruition. Additional force resources, such as probationers from Tulliallan, or the force reserve, did not actively respond to incidents so no real impact on demand was felt.

2. Communication

A number of responses highlighted that line managers and supervisors lacked access to clear and concise information. Due to the constantly changing picture around restrictions, processes and legislation, clear messaging got lost in the sheer volume of communications.

It was a common perception that the force Intranet was not set up quickly enough, resulting in updates and bulletins being communicated via numerous daily emails, sometimes mid shift. This was found by some to be confusing and overwhelming. Some responses stated that face to face updates were greatly appreciated by teams, while others reported that receiving directives via word of mouth, rather than through 'official' communication lines left staff unsure what information was correct.

An issue of particular concern was the confusion caused by contradictory guidance.

Overall the main responses in this section opined that the intranet site was "messy and hard to navigate" and even provided out of date information at times, meaning that guidance was at times left open to interpretation. Published memos were at times "rescinded in part", meaning some content of the memo was still relevant, while some was not, leading to additional confusion.

"Updates to changes to COVID regulations and rules didn't filter down well to the frontline. I got more info via the news and Scottish Government than through PSOS."

A significant number of responses provided that the briefing products were updated fairly regularly, but were found to be too lengthy, meaning the actual nature of the updates was potentially lost in a huge PowerPoint attachment, which appeared to afford equal prominence to all rules and regulations. Alternatives suggested included a 'just the updates' product, or simply focussing on the key restrictions and regulations officers would need at particular points of the pandemic response.

It was suggested that the Outbreak Management Team could have been better informed and trained, in order to provide more consistent advice and support. It was felt that there was very little guidance given when an outbreak occurred in an office.

Some responses stated that Operation Talla staff were "woefully slow" at answering questions, and often demonstrated a lack of awareness of other department's needs and at times were perceived as going against NHS guidance on self-isolating creating an image of a lack of shared protocols and joint understanding of risk amongst partners.

A small number of business areas noted a concern that during the pandemic, there seemed little focus on capturing Organisational Learning and no commitment to learn, as there was no way of feeding information back in to the Op Talla cell / team. It was suggested a rolling debrief would have been beneficial to establish what was working and what wasn't.

"We very quickly drop back to a business as usual approach, and often don't take the time to do a lessons learned."

A common concern was the apparent lack of consistency, or even logic, in the organisation's policies and processes. There was a sense of irritation in responses over rules and restrictions being applied to some and not others within the organisation.

An example provided was that some stations were being released early from work to go home to prevent staff crossover, while other stations were required to stay on, find areas in the station without computers, and merely stand and wait to avoid crossover during shift handover times. Other examples included officers regularly arriving at custody in full PPE to be greeted by custody staff wearing very little PPE. There was a view from many respondents that clear and consistent policies (particularly regarding PPE) across all areas of policing should have been introduced and enforced, including on the mask wearing policy. This was particularly important in regards to who was exempt from wearing masks and under what circumstances, with no set process to follow and no reporting mechanism to record or highlight decisions or concerns. It was suggested that the treatment of some staff in this regard could possibly have been seen as disability discrimination.

Recommendation 8

PSoS should consider the adoption of a learning capture process at the outset of any major event/incident response. The process should afford easy access to the work force to provide feedback on efficacy of policy, procedures and practices in 'live time'.

Some officers reported there could have been clearer guidance at the outset in relation to processes for authorising and recording any isolation / absences / testing / fit for duty / WFH etc. Disseminating changes to these processes via email was difficult to keep track of, and it was suggested a dedicated intranet page with only up to date information should have been the first point of contact for any such queries.

Concerns were expressed from staff that COVID isolation was being marked as an absence, so could affect their Bradford score, or have a detrimental impact on their absence record. Many respondents understood the limited capabilities of SCOPE in this regard, but felt that clearer communications early on would have addressed these concerns.

"Absence recording for staff following Government mandated rules around self-isolation and track and trace felt unfair at best and draconian at worst. Where rules are made at a national level to protect national infrastructure, staff should not have been penalised for following this."

Similarly, some responders stated that communications around roles and responsibilities could have been improved with some staff and officers seemingly unaware of postings and duties until the first day of their deployment, then didn't receive any formal briefing on arriving.

Communications with some Resource Deployment Units was described to be poor, which caused stress for some officers who required to change shift pattern/times for legitimate personal reasons, sometimes even if notice was being given weeks, even months ahead of time.

3. ICT, flexible/agile working and WFH

While acknowledging the challenges faced by the organisation, a significant number of responders stated that the organisation was too slow to implement WFH with many providing they felt that the roll out of ICT to support was too slow, inefficient, and required too much form filling and chasing up of requests.

A number of responses provided that some areas of business were not as quick as others to adopt flexible working with some actively not encouraging it, even in the face of staff evidencing its feasibility.

Furthermore, some reported instances of senior officers and managers attempting to make staff return to office working, during the height of the pandemic because they 'missed the face-to-face'. The responders highlighted this position created a sense of mistrust from managers toward their teams in terms of expecting staff to work as effectively from home. These individuals felt they were put at unnecessary risk.

Welfare for those WFH was left with existing line management. It was reported by some that home-working could be very isolating. Not having social contact with colleagues was felt to be an issue.

Some suggested that a clear force wide Agile Work Policy is necessary.

In numerous responses there is a recurring sense of 'unfairness' between those who were able to work from home (or who were sent home but without requisite IT equipment), and those who had to remain in offices / public facing.

"Frontline officers didn't always feel valued or considered essential. Non frontline workers were perceived by some to receive preferential treatment."

"Police officer managers who were still office based made demeaning references to home working being a holiday. This caused a lot of upset when people were working hard to find a way of doing things and maintaining service."

Some respondents seemed aggrieved that many members of the workforce were permitted to work from home, allegedly "doing very little", and felt a real lack of appreciation or support. A repeated complaint was their having to carry on working full shift patterns, taking on the work of others, while other departments were sent home, and a proportion of the general public were on furlough.

"Some departments benefitted from "unaccounted" days at home prior to the official home working ability. When operational officers are working flat out under such stress it is not fair for them to read others Facebook profiles glowing how they could go on bike rides and have afternoon naps on a working day (as they are at home). There was no recognition of the hard work done by front line policing with no additional goodwill RRD's whilst some sat at home for many weeks"

A number of responses state that a result of some of the workforce working from home it has become difficult to get quick answers from some departments, which they state continues to this day.

4. Staff support and absence management

A notable number of responses highlighted a frustration and disbelief caused by the Government decision not to prioritise Police for early vaccination which created stress for officers and their families and negatively impacted on morale.

There were comments that the Chief Constable or the Executive in general should have done more to assert pressure on Government to obtain priority access to vaccines for officers. Similarly, a view was that there was no apparent push from the Executive to support getting police onto the level 1 of 'essential workers' which impacted officers, who had to make efforts to get kids into nursery in order to attend work.

One response raising this issue stated,

"No one appeared to 'have our backs' during the pandemic."

A very large amount of views expressed that the PSoS response to COVID was too slow, with delays in providing information and equipment being of particular concern.

The organisation seemed to take months to fully stand up in response to the pandemic.

"The initial response was radio silence. This needed to be a lot quicker and more decisive. Other organisations had already mandated WFH a month before anything came out in PS. It seemed like there was no coordination or leadership at the start. Needed to be seen and heard and make decisions a lot quicker."

There was a broad view that quicker decisions around facemasks and social distancing should have been made and implemented across the organisation. A large number of responses indicated that the mask wearing policy was brought in too late, when it was obviously on the horizon.

Similarly, respondents felt the purchasing of sanitiser should have happened much earlier. Divisions were reportedly advised not to purchase their own, as procurement was being done force wide, but BSU's were later advised to order their own as no stock was available anywhere, which was a source of frustration.

There was some genuine fear felt on the frontline and a perceived lack of understanding or recognition from Senior Managers around the level of fear amongst officers who had no choice but to deploy without full PPE.

A number of responses gave a sense that front line staff did not feel that the Organisation's leaders were 'with them' during a prolonged period of stress and uncertainty.

"Colleagues were also at times cc'd in to email trails which included comments from upper management about how nice it was to be working from home, having a glass of wine in the garden, organising quizzes for themselves over Teams etc. This led to staff feeling undervalued and inconsequential."

On a related theme, one response highlighted that some officers did not wish to receive the COVID vaccine, citing genuine concerns over the safety or efficacy, which proved challenging for supervisors who wished to look after all staff under their remit.

A number of responses provided that supervisors faced difficulties in managing how staff could adhere to social distancing and mask wearing in common areas or vehicles. It was suggested that checks and enforcement of adherence at Police stations should have been more stringent, as certain areas or departments seemed to be very lax.

There were a number of responses that reported complacency, and outright avoidance, amongst some officers and staff in certain offices, who didn't use PPE or

adhere to restrictions when moving around stations. It was said that station compliance was just a "tick box exercise".

An example provided was custody staff using signs and barriers to clearly denote restricted areas, which were ignored by officers. When challenged by custody staff, they received unprofessional responses, discouraging any further attempt to enforce rules and there was a lack of support from management.

Some guidelines were extremely difficult to implement operationally, for example, regular interior cleaning of vehicles. Sometimes due to handovers or operational demands, officers only managed quick wipe downs before vehicles went out again.

Responders highlighted a lack of consistency, logic, or clarity on how to apply rules and restrictions within workplaces with confusion around at times conflicting rules resulted in adherence being viewed as merely tokenistic, for the benefit of public perception, rather than for staff wellbeing and examples provided include;

"Allowing people to take their mask off when they were sitting 1 meter away from one another but requiring them to put the mask on when they were standing 1 meter apart didn't make sense."

"Having to wear masks in outdoor spaces appeared to be an overreaction for the benefit of public perception. This also including wearing face masks in vehicle, however we did not have to wear them sitting next to each other in the station."

"COVID procedures and policy only applied until it wasn't convenient…it was utilised to suit the organisation as opposed to officer safety and welfare, e.g. only 4 people allowed in a public order van due to social distancing, unless there was a football match in which case 9 was fine."

A number of comments were made about Health and Safety (H&S) staff attending offices. It was felt these visits occurred too late into the pandemic, and should have been carried out at the outset. Some reported H&S officers appeared to be obstructive often highlighting issues without providing helpful solutions. Some opined that the H&S visits should have been more frequent and supportive in nature, rather than simply compliance checks.

The implementation of regular, dedicated cleaning regimes and practices was viewed by many as being initially too slow. When cleaning routines were in place, many respondents viewed them as being ineffective, or minimal at best.

Ineffective use of available buildings / estate was put forward by a number of people. They reported being frustrated at being unable to use desks or terminals or offices in busy operational stations, while some stations and buildings lay mostly empty, but staff were prevented from utilising these. Similarly, car parking spaces at some offices were empty with attending staff prohibited from using them.

A significant number of responses provided that better guidance around absence reporting and categorisation would have assisted some supervisors. It was raised that SCoPE could possibly have been better used for identifying and recording

isolation periods, and could have indicated any staff suitability to continue working from home during this time.

It was remarked that PSoS close-contact policy was far more restrictive than that of the NHS. Some respondents felt that the organisation could have been more pragmatic, and instead seemed to "completely overreact" in certain situations by enforcing possibly unnecessary 10 day isolation periods, impacting severely on shift numbers.

*"***One such example…was two officers arresting a male known to have COVID. These officers were fully masked, suited and wearing goggles. On termination of duty both were instructed to stay off for 10 days...This was challenged and COVID Hub locally told officers that there was a risk that they had been exposed so had to stay off…Why wear the protective gear?"**

Some responses argued that staff and officers could easily and regularly did abuse the self-isolation policy by alleging they were in proximity of an infected colleague just to get additional days off work, isolating. As no verification was required from NHS or GPs, the system was considered by some as being open to possible abuse.

(It is noted that no specific examples of this appear to have been provided in any survey responses, but such comments highlight a general sense of unfairness and distrust that existed within the organisation during the pandemic.)

A small number of responses highlighted the impact on staff who had underlying medical or health issues, some of whom reported feeling unsupported, unfairly treated, or 'ostracised'. A respondent reported an incident where a staff member had a medical condition disseminated to colleagues without consent, requiring management to issue an apology due to the breach of GPDR and Data Protection.

A lack of clear policy to support pregnant members of staff was highlighted in a notable number of responses. Some commented their line managers were supportive, but this was despite any clear and consistent policy across the organisation. Not having clear information caused stress and anxiety for these staff members, some of whom felt at risk, being told to come into work after initially being sent home. One respondent reported that even after logging calls via the HR portal, there was no guidance forthcoming.

There were a number of staff who remarked on the Outbreak Management Team and absence reporting line not being available 24hrs a day, particularly during Op Urram.

A number of responses stated that the differing policies and practices in comparison to other partner agencies, in particular NHS / SAS with regards wearing of PPE was perceived as a lack of joined up, consistent, multi-agency approach.

Examples provided included officers attending hospitals in full COVID suits, while NHS staff were in just II-R masks, which resulted in officers often being refused access to hospitals, for fear of causing alarm amongst patients.

Many respondents stated that they experienced stress and anxiety during the pandemic, low morale, and sense that the organisation or management did not have staff welfare as a priority. A number of staff reported going weeks, even months without any sort of welfare check from their line managers, or felt their health and safety came second after the requirements of the job. Many state that their hard work, dedication and resilience have not been appropriately acknowledged or rewarded by the organisation.

Recommendation 9
PSoS should consider the provision of clear guidance on implementation and enforcement requirements for supervisors/managers in any future event/incident response, requiring the establishment of constraints of activities or duties, the use of PPE or any other change to normal working practices, to protect public health and wellbeing of the work force.

5. Partnership working and service delivery

Further to earlier comments on issues raised by an apparent lack of consistency across partner organisation in respect of PPE policy and guidance a number of responders also provided there was an expectation that PSoS should have improved joint working with partner agencies to provide a better service to the most vulnerable.

Responses included;

"**More could have been done working with NHS and Scottish Ambulance to decide the best resource. For example, a concern for person call where it is apparent from the outset the person needs a mental health specialist should go to SAS/NHS not Police and minimise agencies involved.**"

"**Full engagement with disability partners before implementing new police powers, could have minimised distress/uncertainty regarding how officers would deal with individuals who were exempt from certain restrictions or required additional reassurance, support and appropriate communications.**"

A response in respect of the use of technology to engage with communities was raised highlighting challenges where community groups, individuals and community councils utilised communication platforms other than Microsoft Teams. It was provided that the organisations position not to allow the use of other applications for teleconferencing, such as Zoom or Google, hindered vital relationships.

Many respondents felt the front line needed more support in terms of number of officers, and that deployable officers in back office roles should have been used more effectively to assist their public-facing colleagues. From the survey, there is a sense that some officers or staff perceived some colleagues were *"getting free days"*, rather than being used to bolster or backfill front line departments.

Response officers reported they were still picking up diary calls and attending homes when many such calls could have been dealt entirely via telephone. Shifts were of the opinion that calls and incidents at the start of pandemic were not being

appropriately triaged, or call handlers were not getting correct details regarding person(s) having COVID, before Police arrival. It was felt this put staff in danger and increased stress. Officers expected call handlers to be stricter with obtaining answers to COVID questions before accepting a call.

Some officers felt that there was lack of condemnation for certain gatherings and protests that were permitted during the Pandemic (most notably; guarding the statues at George Square, BLM protests, Immigration protests). It was perceived such mass gatherings were permitted only due to being 'political' in nature, and the perception that they proved to be super-spreader events, placing officers' health at risk. This occurred while officers were also being asked to break up funeral gatherings and potentially fine participants. This was seen as undermining the organisation and showed hypocrisy.

Conversely, a respondent shared an experience of seeing dozens of funeral mourners congregating during the most stringent lockdown period, apparently with police in uniform watching. This reportedly destroyed local trust in police and undermined any sense of 'we are all in it together'.

"I would argue that the police must always be seen to act 'without fear or favour' and that our response on this issue fell far short of that."

A small number of responses expressed concern that the organisation will still not be fully prepared for similar events in future, and there are expectations of better business continuity planning for future long-term, multi-phased major incidents (e.g. stockpiles of PPE for initial response phase.)

There were a small section of responses which commented on business continuity plans (BCP) reporting that PSoS plans did not focus enough on the impact on staff and officers, and instead focused more on physical things like building/IT failure etc.

"The day 1 response set the tone for phase 1 where there was no evidence of a considered Business Continuity Plan; the feeling being that the response was being made up as it went along. This could have been improved by a more developed BCP"

A number of responses provided that the cancelling of essential training courses was viewed as being impulsive, excessive and unnecessary, and there were concerns this decision will have created a backlog which will take years to clear. There were comments who felt that other delivery methods / formats should have been explored to ensure the continued delivery of training.

A number of responses stated that prisoner processing times were poor, and particularly impactful on officers who travelling considerable distances before queuing for hours while wearing full PPE. Inconsistencies in Custody suites were highlighted, such as being required to sit in full PPE to watch a prisoner who had COVID, yet custody staff who served the prisoner meals were in normal uniform. Similarly, carrying out interviews of suspects with COVID required officers to wear full COVID PPE. The suits were cumbersome and uncomfortable, particularly when interviews

lasted for hours, and one respondent highlighted their peripheral vision was affected by the googles which they raised as an officer safety risk.

Recommendation 10
Review appropriate Business Continuity Plans to ensure the likely impact on staff is included rather than the infrastructure or function alone.

WHAT CHANGES TO POLICY, PROCEDURE OR PRATICES SHOULD BE RETAINED?

1. Personal safety

The majority of responses indicated that officers are keen to retain "cleaning and sanitising procedures." This included PPE, cleaning protocols and the use of FFP3 masks.

Several responses expressed a wish for COVID PPE to remain in place citing their perception of PPE being invaluable when attending incidents such as "spontaneous dirty protests". It was provided that PPE such as masks and gloves were readily available and can be easily donned in instances such as dealing with medically vulnerable public, in medical settings, suspected COVID instances and being in close proximity of those "displaying cold/flu symptoms".

It was also indicated that step by step cleaning procedures for vehicle sanitisation was beneficial to minimising risk of infections and should be retained.

The request for face masks to remain and be readily available, for those that wish to wear them, was further emphasised in relation to FFP3 masks. It was suggested these be utilised when attending "higher risk infectious incidents".

A number of responses indicated the desire to retain the ability to access lateral flow tests (LFT) to allow staff to test themselves, if feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, thus reducing the spread of COVID or other illnesses. It was noted that the guidance of how to obtain LFT's remains unclear for the whole organisation.

Recommendation 11
PSoS should consider that in addition to the maintenance of the enhanced cleaning regime (Recommendation 1) they should continue the provision of appropriate PPE for staff to use in response to other hazardous situations beyond COVID response.

2. Communications

Significant feedback commented positively on the availability of the Line Manager Toolkit and requested it remain, with "regular updates being published". This framework was reportedly "helpful for managers to brief their staff."

It was stated that the briefings were reportedly "beneficial overall" with staff eager these be retained as they saved officers from missing something published on the intranet although some provided there was frustration regarding repeated or duplicated information, which could result in officers being "bogged down" and suggested communicating direct to team leaders with the TL log/Ops Log, could be a solution.

The responses supported the view that there was a major change in the organisations communication process as a direct result of COVID and the use of technology. This has resulted in a number of positive replies indicating there are less requirements for face to face interactions.

A large portion of responders commended the use of MS Teams for meetings and training. The majority of responses emphasised being in favour of continuing its use instead of reverting to "face to face meetings and training".

Staff identified that using MS Teams for such has been popular for staff working in remote location. This has resulted in time and financial savings for both individuals the organisation on costs such as "fuel, overtime and vehicle expenses".

It was further highlighted that utilising Teams for meetings and training to reduce travelling, provides other staff access to service vehicles, while improving staff wellbeing due to the reduction in time spent travelling.

Responders observed that the ability to use Teams from their mobile devices, was beneficial when making online calls and attend meetings. The "overreliance on Teams to achieve daily business" was also recognised as a risk but there was strong view that its use was advantageous if utilised correctly.

Indeed several responders highlighted that the use of Microsoft teams allowed for "stronger relationship[s] with colleagues and with multi agency partners" to be formed as a direct result ease of attendance to meetings stating the platform was,

"very helpful as the team are all over the country and very rarely in the office, allowing the individual officers to "still feel like part of a team".

Some responses indicated that communicating "with the camera function has proved more popular than the use of telephone communication" while some stated the opposite view stating Teams calls were being used when a phone call would have sufficed.

Recommendation 12
PSoS should confirm the use of technology as an alternative option, to 'in person', is supported by senior management and encourage its use for wider delivery of other training events where the current delivery methodology of 'in person' can be seen to be non-essential in achieving outcomes.

3. ICT, flexible/agile working and WFH

A substantial amount of responses from staff highlighted their desire for the agile working and WFH policies to be retained. This centred on working from home in a flexible capacity with the option of hybrid working available also.

The responders stated that there was evidence available to show WFH has shown staff productivity has significantly increased and staff absences have reduced. Furthermore, it has been suggested that relationship dynamics within the office environment has improved with a direct correlation with staff working from home.

Some responders stated that the recording of the impact of WFH in regards to productivity, may be of benefit to senior officers, with the onus on management to evidence higher productivity when working in the office. It was suggested that the

business may find evidence strongly indicating that there is "no downturn in productivity".

Several participants indicated that having the option of WFH would allow them to continue to be productive, rather than incur a sickness absence, if they were feeling "a little under the weather" and it would greatly reduce the risk of infection to colleagues in the office environment.

It was further noted that staff with vulnerable medical conditions felt safer being able to work from home as they felt at risk when working from the office.

A substantial number of staff supported hybrid working, highlighting such a blended flexible working arrangement, would allow for a balanced home and working environment, thus improving wellbeing. Some officers suggested that a

"hybrid policy is necessary to ensure the organisation is running at [its] best."

Several responders reported on the environmental sustainability factors associated by incorporating a flexible working approach. Staff are seeing a "reduction in carbon footprint" associated with vehicle journeys and a "reduction of energy usage" with less officers on duty within workplaces.

In addition, time management factors were also raised as an advantage of flexible working with staff gaining time to "focus on work" as a result of time saved from traveling to/from the office.

Both managers and staff have highlighted a desire to maintain "regular wellbeing checkpoints" for those WFH.

Several participants highlighted the benefits of issuing laptops and RAS tokens. This was deemed a "popular contingency", allowing staff to work remotely, either from home, or at other locations away from their base office.

The availability of such ICT support, alleviated the need for staff to locate a terminal to log into when working away from their base office. It was reported this solution allowed officers to "work at partner agency buildings" when accessing emails and documents.

The request process for ICT has seen a great improvement throughout the pandemic. This has resulted in some responses indicating the system is now "fit for purpose". The system has allowed WFH structures to continue to be effective, providing "appropriate ICT infrastructure and support" is present.

A good number of responses indicated that the use of mobile phone as laptops must be "prioritised" going forward. It was suggested this would reduce the "demand on frontline" officers.

Another suggestion raised, was that all staff should be issued with laptops and RAS tokens to facilitate the transition of staff when "transferring between departments and divisions." It was indicated such ICT availability would limit the workload required to on-board new members of staff when they "commence in the department."

4. Operational and service delivery

Several suggestions requested that a Business Continuity plan be "retained and managed live by corporate functions" so that any mass deployment away from a

base post (pandemic, major incident, death of monarch etc.) are smoother to administer**.**

This would primarily inform officers prior to being deployment and assist them being properly equipped with uniform and appointments, thus allowing them to essentially be redeployed immediately.

A number of responses stated that maintenance of accurate and up to date Business Continuity lists should also be continued. Accurate lists of available officers for deployment would effectively "meet the demands of mass mobilisation". For this to be effective, officers emphasised that accurate and up to date information is "vital." This crucial data should be both held and constantly reviewed/updated on SCoPE.

The desire to retain and/or improve communication to staff through a "joint approach" between Federation and Staff Associations etc and the Organisation was highlighted and suggested this would inform officers of requirements in terms of immediate redeployment (with appropriate reward) to" any place/time/shift". It was stated that the lack of communication on requirements meant that officers were largely "unaware of what Regulation says and can require of them".

Recommendation 13
PSoS should consider the development of a stand-alone business continuity plan that covers the provision of logistical support in response to a major event/incident. The plan should include aide memoire covering potential logistical support requirements and how this is communicated timely to the work force, with live time monitoring process built into the plan.

A significant number of responders provided that the following areas of operational adjustments due to the pandemic should be retained;

a. Court Stand by

Responders professed that the policy of court stand by during Op Talla was a "big success" and many now feel frustrated it has been rescinded with many reporting they rather it had been retained as this would allow staff to continue with essential work and only be called if required. Furthermore, it was suggested that reinstating would mitigate "over-crowded court buildings and waiting rooms".

It was proposed by some, that should staff be assigned work mobile phones, this would allow "immediate contact" were they to be required. Microsoft Teams are also a viable option, allowing "PF to speak directly with officers" rather than attend court. This would "free resources to carry out enquiries" supplementing "resources to ongoing enquires."

It was observed that the practice of the reporting officer attending the court with others on standby, had a positive impact on resourcing levels and minimised disruption to officers busy working schedules".

(Note Recommendation 5)

b) **Electronic Warrants**

The electronic submission of warrants was seen by many as a *"fantastic concept."* Several officers would like to see this procedure remain. For these responses, they confirmed that it reduced "unnecessary waiting and interaction" with the crown.

(Note Recommendation 6)

c) **Phone statements**

The ability to take statements over the phone where appropriate, was also viewed by many as beneficial. A result of which has prompted the suggestion this "not be rescinded" due to the enquiry time saving aspect, viewed by many as an *"absolute premium"* adding that the issuing of a caution/charge/ticket over the phone or via post to should continue as this also frees up more time for officers.

Recommendation 14
PSoS should explore what duties, currently conducted 'in person', that could be the revised to be delivered through technology such those highlighted during the debrief, namely the taking of statements or administering certain cautions over the telephone or other electronic means.

d) **Shift Cross Over**

Reducing shift cross overs, reportedly provided a "morale boost" for officers and assisted in overtime claims. Several responders believed this "gave reassurance" to officers that they were being more protected from contracting COVID or the flu.

WHAT CHANGES TO POLICY, PROCEDURE OR PRACTICES SHOULD BE REVIEWED

1. Personal safety

A significant amount of responses indicated the frustrations over the current FFP protocols and the need to be clean shaven in balance with their personal wishes. The overall consensus was the wish to review the protocols to consider allowing officers to have facial hair whilst wearing a FFP3 mask.

The majority viewed the clean shaven policy as "very unpopular" and suggested its review, questioning if it was "still necessary and proportionate" to the risk of officers health wearing a facemask whilst sporting a beard.

A suggestion raised to address this was offered, for officers to sign a waiver, this was countered with a smaller number of responses in favour of clean shaven protocols for use of FFP3 remaining mandatory.

PPE was raised in a number of responses. Its usage, stock and roll out highlighted a number of concerns from officers and also brought with it suggestions to streamline processes.

A number of responses focussed on concerns and frustrations with the system of ordering PPE and its subsequent roll out. Some stated it was a complicated system and others stating that once orders were placed it was difficult to follow with a lack of audit trails. It was suggested to streamline the system and introduction of "a flow chart and/or arrange for PPE to be dispersed from nominated hubs, with named staff in each department given responsibility of procuring and distributing PPE.

Several staff indicated they felt that there should have been a system to "monitor staff unable to wear PPE" with some requiring medical exemptions from either masks or gloves.

In general there was a feeling that health and safety policies and protocols needed reviewed, to consider the COVID "working environment." Several concerns stemmed from fire safety protocols and the limited number of fire wardens who could not be in the office regularly due to

 "restrictions on numbers, with some responses highlighting frustrations of the messaging around the number of people in rooms "contradictory.""

Several responses indicated confusion over how cleaning of hot desks should be carried out to minimise risk of COVID spread, with suggestions of a "standard clean down" guidance to be put into writing. This was of particular concern to several teams in regards to hot desking policy.

Recommendation 15
PSoS to review its health and safety procedures including supporting policies/procedures as relating to the use and wearing of PPE, with clear instruction on appropriate exemptions and a process to identify potential vulnerabilities.

It was further raised that clearer guidance and "more support from senior management" was needed to enforce and encourage officers to follow COVID protocols. A number of respondents highlighted that communications regarding "requirements" were open to interpretation. It was suggested that an easy to find "dedicated page on the intranet" could offer staff guidance on policies and procedures.

2. ICT, flexible/agile working and WFH

A substantial amount of responses from line managers and supervisors highlighted the wish to review the current flexible/agile working policy, with the main focus on WFH and the impact this has upon officers working from an office base.

A high number requested that WFH cease as it "puts pressure on staff in the office" with a reduced amount of officers covering departments and dealing with public enquiries. It was further noted that elements of certain roles are not feasible to be carried out from home primarily, due to a lack of technology such as mobile phones.

Additionally, some stated there was a feeling of unfairness with some managers choosing to work from home and creating a feeling of "them and us situation" within departments.

Some responses indicated that there is a need for greater information and training on how to support people WFH, including WFH policy to be adopted rather than "guidance being issued through global emails."

Of particular concern was the need to review the criteria for working from home to ensure it is "balanced against the [organisational] need and workforce wellbeing". There was a feeling that inconsistent approaches had been taken when allowing some staff to work from home and the reasoning behind the request, with one example being "to save fuel".

A substantial number of officers supported WFH with a common theme indicating that a blended, flexible/agile working arrangement, would allow support to colleagues in the office. It was provided that a hybrid working policy could parity and a needed "culture change" throughout organisation.

For example, the option to WFH would allow staff to support with urgent childcare or a dependants illnesses without greatly affecting workloads.

It was requested that a detailed procedures for hybrid working policy be produced as "staff are keen to understand what the future hybrid model will look like" and incorporate items such as a guide on how booking hot desks in the office.

A suggestion promoted the practices around meetings "now that we are in a hybrid environment", to allow officers working from home the opportunity to interact virtually by use of technology, to engage within in-person meetings in the office.

Some responses indicated that ICT should incorporate a Business Continuity Plan to safeguard against future similar events. This may address a common theme which highlighted that a particular concern was the inability to contact officers working from home due to a lack of police issued mobile phones.

(Note Recommendation 3)

3. Staff support and absence management

A number of responses raised a particular concern for officers stemming from the recording of sickness absence during COVID. These related to self-isolation protocols, monitoring of sickness absences and the impact this had on colleagues.

Several responses highlighted that the sickness absence recording required "tightening up" and clear, uniformed approach used throughout departments. It was suggested that self-certification was "open to abuse" with the possibility of colleagues misusing the system to have several episodes of time off work whilst isolating. It raised the question of "disparity between officers who were vaccinated and those who were not" in regards to amounts of days off, duties and levels of workloads. Furthermore there was concern that sickness absence may have been double recorded.

To address these issues, several comments were raised including the use of a 24hour online portal to report sickness, having more ICT provisions such as laptops or mobile phones would allow officers to reduce sickness absence for those having to self-isolate without symptoms which would also allow staff to report back "fit for duty" even although working from home.
(Note Practice 4)

4. Organisational response to COVID

There were a number of organisational responses to the COVID pandemic that officers considered in their answers. With systems adapted to ensure that policing continued to be carried out effectively, significant responses relating to the reporting of sudden deaths, use of electronic signatures, court attendance and the introduction of virtual meetings were highlighted**.**

A significant number of responses suggested frustration from officers in how the reporting of sudden deaths had moved from GPs to themselves, indicating this duty should be reverted back to NHS/GPS.

Many responses welcomed the usage of electronic signatures, with a request from several officers for "wet signatures for moodles to stop". This new method saved time.

A common theme for virtual meetings via MS Teams for officers to be rescinded was present, whilst some acknowledged it had its merits with "statements and appointments being utilised on certain occasions rather than by lengthy road trips" however the majority indicated that in person meetings were "better for staff morale" and for "health and wellbeing" as staff could work several days without seeing another person.

Many responders felt that a review of policies and procedures should be carried out more often, to ensure consistency of messaging and fairness across departments.

It was suggested that the creation of a generic staging post document would allow senior officers to have set processes of how to carry out duties remotely in an emergency situation. This would enable them to quickly establish procedures and designate roles to support their teams.

WHAT WAS THE MOST VALUABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN RESPONSE TO COVID AND FOR WHAT REASONS?

This question generated a significant level of response, with many responders following key themes and in some cases providing conflicting viewpoints. In a few cases, the responses were clearly emotive and extremely negative in nature. The outline below provides a flavour of the response and for ease of reading we have, where appropriate, structured the responses into key themes, in line with the other sections of the report.

Personal safety

An overwhelming view of the responders stated that they were surprised about the positive impact and benefits secured from keeping vehicles and stations cleaned and introduction of new cleaning products being made available and many supported this practice should be retained.

(Note Recommendation 1)

In line with the section of 'what we could have done better' a number of responses to this question also highlighted the opinion that PPE should have been secured and distributed quicker.

Communication

The need for 'consistent and clear messages' is key, in particular when there is a fast moving and constantly changing situation with the added health risk.

In regards to internal communication the responses took two different routes with many complimentary about the level and extend of information provided to them by the organisation stating it was appropriate and reassuring. On the other hand, many stated that the communication to 'frontline' officers was particularly ineffectual and was either confusing or overwhelming.

There was a view provided that police may have benefited from being more visible in the public communication sphere suggesting that other partners were very forward leaning in presenting the stalwart actions of their staff in the face of major personal risk with comments such as;

'what discussions took place between high ranking officers and senior government officials, …while other roles were publically supported by Scottish and British politicians, I do not recall police being vocally supported often while we were placed in a very vulnerable position of having no choice but to have close contact with members of the public (who were often violent) when PPE options were limited due to the immediate nature of the calls to police.'

A number of responses provided a perception of poor communication from senior managers and a lack of leadership shown by them in dealing with an ever changing environment, with little in way of support provided by communication.

ICT, flexible/agile working and WFH

A significant response provided that the most valuable learning was the ability to quickly stand up ICT provisions for our significant workforce and the adoption of flexible/agile working arrangements and the introduction of WFH.

Many responders stated that the learning from the benefits provided through technology should transfer to further investment in ICT and technology to support more innovate ways of working with potential for increase in efficiency and better work life balance together with potential for savings.

Some responses suggested a risk-assessed approach to the prioritisation and distribution of laptops, in timely fashion, would have ensured staffing was maximised and staff wellbeing was supported.

Similarly to the section within the 'what we did well' the common theme through this section was very supportive of the flexible/agile working and WFH, with overwhelming responders, stating that it was been proven that you do not need to be in the office to be effective and efficient. Further, it was provided that contrary to some initial angst it is clear that productivity has not suffered and in some areas improved. Additionally WFH has bolstered the sense of trust from management and increase in a work versus life balance, which is opined to support wellbeing and morale.

Further responses state that they have learned that they are more productive thanks to the use of technology, with fewer distractions that they experience within the office and lost time in travelling to and from meetings. Further, a number of responders stated that the use of technology for meetings has improved team work with some National units/departments or those with staff working remotely are now more inclusive as all are using the technology, rather than the pre COVID space when they were excluded, as they were not able to attend all in person meetings.

A number of the responses indicated that the acceptance of flexible working and WFH was not universally accepted by management and remains with notable rationale including;

'It would be extremely disappointing if our mind-set towards hybrid working and technology defaulted to pre-pandemic views. This experience has genuinely afforded the opportunity to work more flexibly and explore platforms and skillsets that were never used before. This allows current and future roles to be more diverse/accessible and creates a better work-life balance for all involved. This will help recruit and retain good staff and help compete with other organisations. The way staff have adapted to conduct work remotely and also communicate online have been the most valuable learning experiences. It has allowed more flexibility for both staff and the organisation. People can work more effectively in some cases however appreciate that this does have an impact on operational officers. '

And

'staff can be trusted to work without being in a police building or micro managed by supervisors being physically present. Technology is sufficiently able to provide contact from a remote perspective and should be retained / built upon instead of throwing it away. Those people who don't work will not change their behaviour regardless and staff should not be penalised for the actions of a few. '

Staff Support and absence management

This question provided a raft of emotive responses which included pride in the work-forces ability to adapt and 'go the extra mile', the incredible support of management

and trust and empowerment given to the staff, whilst at the other end of the spectrum, many stated there was no valuable learning and suggestions that leadership/management were absent.

The mixed view can be seen in feedback such as;

'There was unwillingness of some corporate function officers and managers to help the front line meet service demand. Many were helpful and genuinely wanted to assist. Others including senior managers were obstructive, whilst it is understood they have a core function to protect.'

'Management were not supportive of their staff, it was an uphill battle to get working from home in place within the department and staff were left with very low moral throughout the process.'

'organisational trust shown to staff to facilitate home working and manage risk and information management concerns appropriately empowered the staff to take ownership and rise to the challenge.'

And

'Welfare and health and safety became front and centre of decision making, which was a positive note.'

A number of the responses provided that the key learning for them, was their perception of the organisations commitment to wellbeing was not as it seemed, falling short of the promise and what is portrayed in its literature and said by management.

There was a similar contra-view with many responders providing their key learning was linked to the support provided by their line management and the organisations willingness to adopt flexible working and WFH as well as the commitment to ICT provision in very challenging times with statements such as;

'Staff commented positively on feeling trusted to be able to get on with a task of work.   They felt supported by their Line Management and appreciated regular check-ins either on a 1:1 basis or as part of a wider team / group discussion - staff felt it was important for regular and open communication to be maintained in order to ensure that no staff were feeling isolated or marginalised.'

A significant number of responses highlighted valuable learning linked to their perception that too many officers were employed in 'back office' roles, that do not require 'warranted officer's'. It was provided that the redeployment of 'back office' resources to the 'frontline' was positive and allowed them to cope with the demand and increased their morale.

It was further provided that many of the 'back office' officers being redeployed to the 'frontline' suffered as they had been too removed from current policing practices and some required to be taught the basic skills that 'frontline' officers take for granted.

A number of departmental/office responses provided that their valuable learning was recognition that there was a lack of listening by their management, citing their

opinions and expressed fears, being dismissed and insistentence that they must continue attending the office. Some added that the lack of listening was influential in the numbers of staff leaving the organisation.

Call attendance and response protocol

A significant number of the responders provided that the most valuable learning for them was in relation to the changes in call attendance meant they spent less time on time-consuming non-crime calls and were able to focus on the traditional police roles of protecting life and property, preventing and detecting crime.

There was also a number of responders that stated they could not understand some of the initial response protocols, which they thought undermined public trust and faith by criminalising decent members of the public for being out and about, shutting down people's livelihoods and enforcing guidance.

Partnership working and service delivery

A number of responders stated that the key learning for them was the need for police to take a much more assertive stance with partner agencies with the view that

'all too often police are now left carrying the resource burden and associated risk for tasks which in the past have sat squarely within the remit of those agencies'.

Many responders highlighted the perception that the police cannot say 'no' and provided examples of covering for lack of shortcomings within the service delivery of partners specifically NHS with some supporting the view of;

'we can be the service the public want and deserve, if we defend the boundaries of our role and remit with partners.'

Many responders stated that they thought the police got their policing tone and style right and thus maintained public confidence with praise for 4 E's structure which they stated helped officers in Scotland to use decision making skills when applying the coronavirus powers.

Planning

A number of responders opined that the organisation does not adapt well to change and was unprepared for the enormity of the challenge.

Some provided that the most valuable learning was that the organisation needs to be better prepared for such events and have more consistency in its response and consider the 'stockpiling' of protective equipment.

A significant number shared the viewpoint of;

'we were not prepared for a pandemic, It was felt that although Police Scotland coped with the pandemic, there could have been far better preparedness/ business continuity measures put in place. COVID was one of the catastrophic events regularly discussed in the world of Emergency Planning.'

As in other areas, the negative view was countered with a strong positive view that the organisation was better prepared than others partners, with a view that;

'It showed that through Police Scotland's Emergency Planning background that they are quicker to respond to a pandemic scenario than other public bodies and protect members of the public.'

Organisational Learning

A number of the responders expressed a desire for the organisation to learn valuable lessons and asked that the organisation ensured that any required changes are embedded across the organisation. It was also opined that the organisation should have been routinely monitoring delivery and identify lessons as they happened, to change things not working quicker.

It was stated that;

'Learning from Op Talla means that there is now a blueprint for national emergencies across all critical areas of the Force'

And the learning and plans should be robustly tested.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICES/RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS

Practice 1
It was widely recognised that the earliest possible introduction of social distancing, organisation wide issuing of PPE and the establishment of COVID marshals was good practice and in this response served to enhance the staff sense of safety and being well looked after.

Practice 2
The establishment of an enhanced cleaning regime and the supply of appropriate cleaning materials to support the sanitising of vehicles and work stations, was highlighted as best practice and one that should be maintained.

Practice 3
The establishment of the Op Talla direct telephone line to provide staff access to information and relevant briefing material was recognised as good practice.

Practice 4
The introduction of temporary changes to SCOPE and absence management policy was recognised as best practice in extremely challenging circumstances.

Practice 5
The use of an emailing system for court standby avoiding the need for officer attendance together with the ability to secure warrants by email following a telephone consultation with a Sheriff was recognised as effective and efficient practice.

Practice 6
The utilisation of all staff to support 'frontline' roles was recognised as good practice but future re-deployments should be 'need' focussed with clear and targeted objectives identified.

Recommendation 1
PSoS to consider the retention of the practice of enhanced cleaning regime across the service including the provision of cleaning materials through-out the service estate. In line with Practice 2.

Recommendation 2
PSoS should consider the early establishment of an overarching governance structure in response to any major event/incident. The structure should include a mechanism to provide a single route for the provision of up to date and detailed information including clear strategic direction to keep the workforce informed, similar to the role provided by the Op Talla structure.

Recommendation 3
The 'working from home' policy should be reviewed to establish its adoption as normal working practice, where appropriate.

Recommendation 4
A review of the impact on PSoS service delivery, as a result of the presumption of non-attendance policy and use of diary calls, should be undertaken to establish the viability of retaining and/or expanding the practice.

Recommendation 5
In line with Practice 5, above, PSoS should consider the retention of the email system in support of court attendance/standby.

Recommendation 6

In line with Practice 5 above, PSoS should consider the adoption of a process whereby warrants can be secured via email following appropriate consultation with relevant judicial representative (Sheriff/Justice of the Peace).

Recommendation 7

PSoS should consider the establishment of an 'in person' team, to support any future major logistical work stream, in line with that performed at staging/briefing hubs. The team should be led by appropriate command/managerial level to enable dynamic decisions and escalation process.

Recommendation 8

PSoS should consider the adoption of a learning capture process at the outset of any major event/incident response. The process should afford easy access to the work force to provide feedback on efficacy of policy, procedures and practices in 'live time'.

Recommendation 9

PSoS should consider the provision of clear guidance on implementation and enforcement requirements for supervisors/managers in any future event/incident response, requiring the establishment of constraints of activities or duties, the use of PPE or any other change to normal working practices, to protect public health and wellbeing of the work force.

Recommendation 10

Review appropriate Business Continuity Plans to ensure the likely impact on staff is included rather than the infrastructure or function alone.

Recommendation 11

PSoS should consider that in addition to the maintenance of the enhanced cleaning regime (Recommendation 1) they should continue the provision of appropriate PPE for staff to use in response to other hazardous situations beyond COVID response.

Recommendation 12

PSoS should confirm the use of technology as an alternative option, to 'in person', is supported by senior management and encourage its use for wider delivery of other training events where the current delivery methodology of 'in person' can be seen to be non-essential in achieving outcomes.

Recommendation 13

PSoS should consider the development of a stand-alone business continuity plan that covers the provision of logistical support in response to a major event/incident. The plan should include aide memoire covering potential logistical support requirements and how this is communicated timely to the work force, with live time monitoring process built into the plan.

Recommendation 14

PSoS should explore what duties, currently conducted 'in person', that could be the revised to be delivered through technology such those highlighted during the debrief, namely the taking of statements or administering certain cautions over the telephone or other electronic means.

Recommendation 15

PSoS to review its health and safety procedures including supporting policies/procedures as relating to the use and wearing of PPE with clear instruction on appropriate exemptions and a process to identify potential vulnerabilities.

NEXT STEPS

- Development of Action Plan
- Proposed Governance / Ownership
- Proposed Timescales
- Proposed Review Date

OPERATION UNICORN

Operational, Tactical & Strategic Debrief Report

Debrief Date	15th & 22nd December 2022
Sponsor/ Owner	ACC Mark Williams
Author	Royal Standard Planning Team

Revision History

Date	Version	Summary of Changes	Author
16.12.22	V0.1	Documented Created	CR
17.01.2023	V0.2	Document updated.	CW
28.01.2023	V0.3	Feedback incorporated from RSPT	CW
31.01.2023	V0.4	Final review prior to submitting to SMARTEU	CR
01.02.2023	V1.0	Feedback reviewed from SMARTEU & finalisation	CW
06.02.2023	V1.0	Final review prior to approvals	SO
21.02.2023	V1.1	Additional comments as per feedback from Gold	CR
06.06.2023	V1.2	At request of Executive protection marker reduced.	CW

Approvals

Name	Signature	Title/Rank	Date	Version
SCOTT OLIVER	Scott Oliver	T/Ch. Insp	07.02.2023	V1.0

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:-

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Operation Unicorn is part of the wider United Kingdom plan (Operation London Bridge) for the death of the reigning Monarch. Unicorn is the Scottish plan that is activated should the Monarch die whilst in Scotland.

On the 8th September 2022, the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was announced. Her Majesty was in residence on the Balmoral Estate at the time of her death. Operation Unicorn was activated upon this announcement.

Police Scotland has been planning and preparing for this event for a number of years with a dedicated planning team established over the past four years to oversee its development and delivery.

The Operation Royal Standard planning team had the overall responsibility for the planning and delivery of the policing plans, in addition to supporting and working with a range of key partners in the planning and delivery of their plans.

The structure of the operation was the nationally recognised and well-established Gold – Silver – Bronze structure, with a number of sub-bronzes also identified due to the scale of some of the plans. Gold and Silver were consistent over the past few years, with the Bronze commanders being specialist and divisional leads.

The planning phase of the operation was a 'hub and spoke' style model in that the Operation Royal Standard planning team were the 'hub', providing expert information, an overview of all plans and ensuring de-confliction. The 'spokes' were the Bronze commanders, with them developing the plans for their area of business and feeding these into the 'hub'.

Background to Operation

At 1830hrs on Thursday 8th September 2022, the formal announcement was made that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had passed away at Balmoral Castle, Aberdeenshire.

On this announcement, Operation Unicorn was activated. Operation Unicorn saw Police Scotland support the overall Royal Household plan (London Bridge) and subsequent plans under this banner. This required an unparalleled no notice activation of officers from across Scotland and the wider United Kingdom to deliver the policing aspects of this operation.

Throughout the planning phase, the day of death was referred to as 'D-Day'. This was the point in which all plans were to be activated.

On the day Her Majesty passed, His Majesty King Charles III announced that 'D-Day' would not commence until 0900hrs, Friday 9th September. Thursday 8th September became known as 'D-day minus 1' and had not previously been planned for.

Brief overview and timeline:

DAY	DATE	BRIEF ACTIVITY
D-Day-1	**Thurs 8th Sept 2022**	• **Arrival of all senior members of the Royal Family at Balmoral.** • **Initiation of Activation Plans.**
D Day	**Fri 9th Sept 2022**	• **All police plans activated.**
D+1	**Sat 10th Sept 2022**	• **Continued implementation of plans in preparation for following days.** • **Movement of The King to London.**
D+2	**Sun 11th Sept 2022**	• **Movement of cortege from Balmoral Castle to Palace of Holyroodhouse.** • **Proclamation events at four locations.**
D+3	**Mon 12th Sept 2022**	• **Arrival of The King in Edinburgh.** • **Cortege moves from Palace of Holyroodhouse to St. Giles' Cathedral.** • **Service of Reflection.** • **Motion of Condolence at Scottish Parliament.** • **Start of 24 hour period of Lying at Rest at St. Giles' to allow public to pay respects.** • **Departure of most senior members of Royal Family from Scotland.**
D+4	**Tue 13th Sept 2022**	• **Departure of The King from Scotland.** • **End of Lying at Rest.** • **Private Prayer Service at St. Giles'.** • **Cortege moves from St. Giles' to Edinburgh airport.** • **Departure of The Queen from Scotland by RAF.**
D+5 – D+10	**Wed 14th – Mon 19th Sept 2022**	• **Scale back of Scottish based operations.** • **Deployment of staff to London to support Operation London Bridge.**

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

<u>Aim</u>

The overarching aim of the debrief process is to examine both the planning and delivery phases of operation Unicorn.

<u>Objectives</u>

- To ensure that both the planning stage, the activation and delivery process are analysed;
- To ensure that processes are in place to retain and transfer knowledge;
- Capability, capacity and effectiveness of partnership working arrangements;
- Implement appropriate partnership and guidance mechanism to incorporate HMICS and SPA observations and learning;
- To analyse the operation and identify the lessons learned;
- Ensure that reports and briefings are developed;
- Ensure all governance requirements are completed;

3. DEBRIEF SCOPE

Two separate debriefs were carried out capturing firstly the operation and tactical level of command followed by a later debrief capturing the strategic level of command. The findings of both debriefs are contained in this report.

<u>Themes</u>

The debrief focused on the following themes:-

- Planning stage;
- Activation;
- Mobilisation;
- Information flows;
- Wind down / Return to BAU.

Participants were encouraged to discuss any other wider issues identified during the debrief session.

<u>Participants</u>

Representation was requested from all policing areas and functions at bronze command level along with Silver and strategic level. The debrief sessions were due to be held in person, however moved to Microsoft Teams following estates issues at the Scottish Police College. A 'Hot debrief' form had previously been circulated to all business areas who were invited to this debrief session.

<u>Constraints</u>

Nothing was excluded from inclusion in the Debrief discussions.

Reporting

Following the debrief, comments and discussion around the themes has been captured and categorised as follows;

- Practices – Where something either did happen and was regarded as good practice, or considered should happen in the future;
- Observation – An issue identified that may be considered for action, or an issue affecting an external agency or organisation;
- Recommendation – Where an issue is considered to require tasking for development or action.

The report will be submitted to the Sponsor for consideration and acceptance of 'suggested owner' for allocation of recommendations. The Sponsor will be requested to sign off the report and for it to be disseminated to attendees and other relevant persons.

Recommendations, practices and observations will be progressed and considered for incorporation into future operations. The governance of these points will be through the operation Gold Commander, with practical application overseen by the Royal Standard Planning Team.

4. IDENTIFIED ISSUES

4.1   What went well?

Planning Stage

The establishment of a national planning team operating as a hub and spoke model with the planning team being the hub and the divisions, specialist departments and partners operating as the spokes worked very successfully. The team provided support to not only Gold and Silver but also to the Bronzes. It worked well and provided the necessary confidence that both localised policing plans and specialised plans were being developed in tandem.

In hindsight the planning team should have been increased in later years as the focus on Her Majesty's health intensified. This would have assisted with areas of outstanding work and also built in additional resilience.

Practice 1
National planning team structure and function worked well with the hub and spoke model being duplicated for future Operations to provide continuity, confidence and overarching knowledge / support.

Recommendation 1
The size of the planning team should constantly be reviewed and realigned if required.

The planning for the operation had been undertaken over many years with strong relationships being formed with partners. These strong relationships meant that partner

plans were developed alongside localised policing plans. There was a clear understanding between the national planning team and the localised planning team regarding roles and responsibilities.

Practice 2
Involvement from local planning / specialised teams is essential to ensure relationships with partners and development of partner's plans.

The frequency of Gold and Silver meeting structure coupled with Silver led testing and the encouragement of internal testing resulted in plans being better developed and refined. Continuity, where possible, of Bronzes led to most Bronzes being fully conversant in their plans which showed during the delivery stage.

It was recognised that success of the operation would rely on having the right people with not only the correct skill set but importantly competence and experience in key roles. A Command Structure had been in place for a number of years containing named Gold, Silver and Bronze individuals which provided this clarity. This structure was regularly updated to address the raft of internal moves or retirements and any newly appointed Bronzes were offered a briefing by the planning team to assist them in being brought up to speed.

Practice 3
Regular Command meetings should take place supported with a testing and exercise process.

Practice 4
The plans should be developed to a high standard to allow Commanders with limited knowledge to comprehend their role and responsibility and deliver on activation.

Recommendation 2
A job description and role requirements with detailed responsibilities pertinent to the operation should be defined and agreed with officers undertaking that duty. This will identify training needs.

Recommendation 3
For future resilience a pathway for current Inspectors / Chief Inspectors requires to be developed to allow these officers to gain experience at a multitude of events by being deployed nationally.

By developing and approving the plans in advance allowed confirmation over resource numbers meaning that officers in specialist roles, or named functions, could be pre-identified and briefed. This also allowed for the development of scope modules and storm systems to be prepared in advance not only reducing work load on activation but also allowing local divisions to prepare for activation in advance regarding loss of personnel.

Practice 5
Resource numbers to be identified in advance allowing for Scope and Storm work and where possible pre briefings carried out.

Practice 6
Having one person identified, and pre briefed, as SPOC for NPOCC and SPICC within Armed Policing worked well.

Activation

The activation coincided with a period of Command Resilience of officers with the right experience and skill set. This created comfort not only with the operational command team but also provided resilience force wide to deal with other unrelated incidents.

Due to the 'need to know' information that was being provided to police over the course of the activation day specific localised plans were activated prior to official notification being provided. This worked well in allowing plans to be scaled up without creating any risk in relation to loss of control of the ground.

National support to more specialised functions worked well as these were planned for and understood.

A text system alert adopted by Armed policing worked well allowing for a streamlined process saving on time and demand at an especially busy period.

Practice 7
Text alert systems assist in mass activation.

Recommendation 4
Consideration should be given to all specialised areas, where pertinent, to utilise and manage a text alert system.

The commitment and attitude of staff to support each other and the operation must be applauded within all roles. The work that was required, and pressures placed upon, Resource Deployment Unit (RDU) was immense and they performed incredibly well.

Observation 1
It should be recognised that the commitment, attitude and enthusiasm to support the operation is potentially down to the actual nature of the operation and may not be replicated for other mass mobilisation operations.

The support afforded to Gold and Silver during an operation of this size and magnitude was proportionate and worked well. The support team provided 'shadow' Gold and Silvers who were able to deputise when necessary and act as a 'critical friend'.

Recommendation 5
A similar support structure should be implemented for Gold and Silver at future events of this size and scale.

During the planning stage work had been ongoing with the national planning team and a cadre of loggists pulled from the national loggist cadre. The swift deployment of these officers coupled with their bespoke knowledge provided Gold, Silver and Bronzes with the confidence that they required.

Recommendation 6
Police officers trained as loggists should be managed nationally, potentially within EERP, to ensure experience and competence. This can be done with CPD and regular deployment.   Refresher training of these officers, if deemed necessary, would still be undertaken by SMARTEU.

Mobilisation

Fettes being dedicated solely to the operation, with non-operation business being removed, worked well providing sufficient space for all departments and commanders involved in delivery. Having representation from nearly all the specialised departments within the POCC meant that swift resolution discussions, or contingency planning, could take place when required. Separating the MACC and the POCC provided the necessary space physically and mentally for this to occur. Taking of the roads outside Fettes provided necessary additional parking space and reinforced the security within the building. The building was located out with the event space but still within the geographical area close to the main event arena providing easy access to most partners. It has been noted from partners own debrief sessions, that some felt the MACC/POCC split was not conducive to fully integrated partnership working. This point will be explored further with partners as discussions continue around the development of future operations. No recommendation has been made in relation to this as the C3 function and establishment vastly differs depending on the nature of the operation.

Practice 8
Having representation from most partners and police departments within one building which was dedicated to the operation created the correct working environment.

Practice 9
Having corporate services located close to Gold and Silver works well when requiring to finalisation discussions and proposals.

Recommendation 7
Decisions regarding Police estate requires to be carefully considered to future proof the provision of suitable locations for multi-agency mass operations.

Contained within the C3 plan was specialised support for various aspects including systems support and airwave Tactical Advisors (Tac Ad). It had been recognised that these staff members were not required to be based within Fettes and could be remotely located which removed additional personal pressures on Fettes.

Practice 10
Co-location of command, support including, Tactical Advisors etc., is recognised as best practice and as such accommodation for housing such events should have this in mind.

Scottish Government were the lead agency in relation to this operation especially in relation to media communications. During the planning stage an agreement was reached that a representative from Scottish Government communications team would be present in Fettes to work alongside the Police corporate communications team. This worked well.

Practice 11
The co-location of a representative from the lead agency communications team within the police corporate communications team is good practice.

Prior to activation it was identified that the police estate within the north east of the country was not suitable to support the logistics aspect of the operation. Discussions with a private company in relation to utilising their building and facilities were undertaken and proved a positive action, albeit the legal agreement, was not formally signed off until after the initial activation.

Officers from various office based departments had been pre identified in providing support to the wider logistics plan, numbers were known in advance of the operation activating. This prior agreement meant that the office based departments were aware of the impact that the operation would have on their department and allowed for internal contingency planning to be undertaken in advance.

Practice 12
Early identification of required supporting departments allows these departments to create plans minimising disruption to them.

Recommendation 8
To assist with future mass mobilisation supporting office based departments should be identified now with agreed parameters drafted.

The lack of available hotel accommodation following activation and mobilisation coupled with the requirement to supplement previously agreed resource numbers cumulated in an early

decision undertaken by Gold to activate the contingency accommodation plan. The Scottish Police College provided required accommodation and due to a previous Gold decision, which was to cancel all training, additional staff as the probationary officers were in a position to be deployed to the operation.

Practice 13
Early decision to utilise probationers and free SPC for accommodation was necessary and worked well.

Incorporating learnings from Operation Urram resulted in a plan being developed to include a community reassurance and engagement cell. This was stood up early and whilst it provided support to the Gold and Silver meetings there was not a high demand for it.

Observation 2
Each operation should be planned on its own merit as the same overarching approach is not always required.

Practice 14
Advance sharing of Royal Standard Planning Team logistical plans, transport and staging posts, with Operation Urram allowed these to be tested and learnings gleaned, prior to being activated for Unicorn.

Guidance from the Royal Household during the planning stage was that public business was to continue as normal following activation with no direction given with regards to the continuation or cancelation of any scheduled concerts, sporting events etc. Depending on the scope and scale of the additional event this could create challenges for PSoS with regards to resources. On activation an ACC Strategic Resilience successfully undertook the overall management of competing concurrent events.

Practice 15
The role of managing conflicting events requires to be identified at the planning stage and a suitably qualified person nominated to undertake this.

Information flows

The amount and type of information that was shared during the Gold and Silver meetings provided a good understanding of what was happening in the wider operation. A significant part of this information was gleaned from officers utilising special relationships with partners.

Practice 16
Officers and staff involved in the delivery of major or significant operations/ events should recognise the benefit in and actively develop, close working relationship with other key partner representatives in particular in the area of information sharing and situational awareness.

The introductions of Silver assurance meeting's, which were held the day prior to a major event, were incredibly beneficial. These meeting's clarified that all police functions who had a part to play were fully versed in what the requirement was and that they had no unforeseen issues with their previously agreed and approved plans.

Practice 17
Where pertinent, during periods of lengthy events, Silver assurance meetings work well in confirming status and omitting last minute avoidable risk.

Given the scope and geographic scale of the operation both internally within PSoS and externally with partners information flows would have significantly been challenged had it not been for the existence of Microsoft Teams. Having Microsoft Teams installed within the two main meeting rooms within Fettes by the national planning team prior to activation was crucial in aiding delivery.

Recommendation 9
Microsoft Teams should be continued to be utilised across PSoS. If this is to be replaced it must be with a multi-agency accessible system.

The Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable(s) integrated well into the Operation and their roles were quickly identified. Whilst a plan was in existence for the Chief Constable this was somewhat extended and elaborated on during delivery but this did not create any issues.

Recommendation 10
Full and frank discussions take place with senior leaders to determine the level of their involvement and develop plans to incorporate this from the outset.

Wind down / Return to Business as Usual (BAU)

The work that RDU continued to undertake showed in the ability to smoothly transgress from the major mass mobilisation to business as normal at division.

The mutual aid request for officers to support London was significantly greater than had originally been expected. Logistics, RDU and Scottish Police Information Co-ordination Centre (SPICC) worked well together to fulfil this request while managing resourcing of the operation and the various divisions.

4.2   What did not go well?

Planning Stage

As the operation evolved it was evident that not all aspects of the plans, both specialist and local, were as effective as anticipated. As such proactive reviews were carried out resulting in amendments and adjustments undertaken to the previously agreed plans. Challenges identified included contingency planning for all eventualities, including lighting for hours of

darkness in static point locations, and additional specialist niche roles being recognised as being required to support the Bronze commanders. This particular operation required a significant number of VIP escorts, the information of which was received with limited notification. During the operation members of the public were found in the possession of eggs, their intention were to throw these at the VIP and escorting vehicle. Had these protesters succeeded there was no contingency plan in place to clean the vehicles should the opportunity have arisen.

Recommendation 11
All plans should be developed with consideration to all weather scenarios and hours of darkness as additional lighting may be required.

Recommendation 12
Within Road Policing consideration should be given to the need for additional roles i.e. Support Bronze and convoy SPOC where there a large number of convoys to be carried out. Contingency plans are required to maintain the presentation of convoy vehicles should items be thrown during a protest.

Whilst task cards and briefing packs sat with specialist departments and localised planning teams to develop not all of these were completed or had recently been revised and updated. This meant that there was a lack of information available to officers involved in the operation and on occasion some of the information that was available was inaccurate and out dated.

Recommendation 13
Greater importance should be given to developing briefing and tasking cards ensuring accuracy of their content.

The focus on public safety as per learning from Operation Urram was the correct approach. However, this led to additional work on certain plans which had not been finalised come activation, which led to additional issues and pressures with resourcing and partner support.

Recommendation 14
Timely development of critical plans is imperative due to the knock on impact on both internal/external planning functions

Through the planning stage for this operation most Bronzes appointed a person within their area that had planning experience to assist them in developing their own individual departmental plans. This also provided resilience within those areas with an understanding as to why or how plans had been developed in a particular way coupled with the them being in a position to internally brief any change of Command. Public Order did not have a planner identified and following the focus of public safety the introduction of such a person may have assisted with the completion of such plans in a timeous fashion.

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Recommendation 15
The identification of a Public Order planner would have assisted in further developing the public order plans with the focus on public safety and provide valuable support to the PO Commanders.

The lack of a full time Counter Terrorism Security Coordinator (CT SecCo) resulted in some areas of work having not been developed fully causing unnecessary pressure and additional work especially with resourcing on activation.

Recommendation 16
A full time CT SecCo requires to be aligned to an operation of this scale and magnitude.

Logistics had requested that all areas provide their logistical needs during the planning stage however on activation a number of additional logistical demands were received which created an unnecessary burden on certain divisions especially the Digital Division.

Recommendation 17
A process requires to be developed detailing that following activation any logistical needs submitted should be scrutinised by the logistics Bronze for approval prior to being forward to specialist divisions.

Following on from learning from Operation Urram, a work force agreement should have been developed, agreed and understood at the planning stage. This could have been developed in tandem with overtime guidance.

Recommendation 18
Ensure the development and have approval of a work force agreement in place with clear overtime guidance.

During the planning stage it was clear that not all partners were as advanced in the development of their plans, including Scottish Government and the Scottish element of the Metropolitan plans, as Police Scotland. Numerous meetings, letters, emails and other forms of engagement had been carried out by all ranks in an attempt to resolve these issues however come activation this had not been resolved. This led to further and unnecessary challenges on activation.

Had these issues been resolved then responses to questions and queries put to the partners may have been received in a more timeous fashion allowing for internal progress to be maintained and enhanced. Crucial guidance documents were non-existent including an agreed Concept of Operations and Silver partnership governance.

During the delivery stage a Silver partnership group was established with daily meetings. This group had previously been held during the planning phase but had fallen by the way side in

recent years. The lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities was one of the reasons for this but continued attendance would potentially have brought the lack of progress into focus.

Observation 3
Roles and responsibilities for all partner agencies including other police forces require to be clarified prior to planning commencing.

Observation 4
Consideration should be given to raising future issues with Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) if the usual channels are not providing the required response.

There requires to be an awareness that PSoS currently utilises different terminology in comparison to the rest of the UK especially in relation to specialised roles within armed policing. The armed policing plan required a set number of Trained Rifle Officers who were trained and skilled at various levels. This information was shared with NPoCC but the lack of clarity around the terminology was not established until activation which led to last minute changes required to the armed policing plan as not all the requested mutual aid officers could be provided. The numbers required did not exist nationally. Conversations had taken place between NPoCC and RSPT, and information shared, with requirements on an annual basis and it is not understood how this was not highlighted previously.

Recommendation 19
Where specialist trained officers are required to fulfil a mutual aid request conversations should take place with NPoCC at the planning stage, by the requesting department, to establish the request if fully understood and can be met.

Activation

Complications regarding activation were introduced due to the public announcement of Her Majesty the Queens ill health and the information shared in early multi-agency meetings that were held. The Cabinet office notification system, Everbridge, did not operate as it should have.

On activation D day minus 1 was introduced at the request of the Royal Household. Whilst there had been discussion that additional days may be added to the known timetable there had never been discussion around an additional day at the start. This additional day, whilst creating breathing space for some, also caused confusion and challenges. It meant that on duty officers were required to be scoped and allocated to the operation for a longer period than was required and the failure to activate the logistics plan, or parts of it, resulted in a lack of accommodation availability in the required geographical areas.

At this point it was not recognised that certain plans, Borders for example, were being impacted but they did not have support from the official operation to carry out the increase in demand placed on them resulting on them having to create a work around.

Recommendation 20
Should an additional day be introduced a one type approach should not be implemented but rather each area / plan should be considered on its own merit.

During the planning stage a weekly sheet had been maintained providing a list of named individuals who were required to be notified on activation. The mobile numbers of these named individuals were captured on a text message alert system managed by C3. The reason for this was to provide the named individuals with advance notification that a potential meeting invite and activation phone call was imminent. On activation there was an unreasonable delay in the text system being implemented and due to technical failings within the system not everyone listed was notified. The advance notification theory works well however the current text message software is problematic. This requires to upgraded or replaced.

Recommendation 21
PSoS should consider reviewing the text message system with a view of upgrading or replacing.

The pre-agreed arrangements held by C3 to source resources already on duty within A and E Division took longer than anticipated to achieve during a highly pressurised time, with direct intervention for the Divisional Commander required to resolve the issue, in respect of E Division.

In addition, C3 had to draw on the key learning from Op Urram and their close relationship with Op Urram team to deliver on expectations of the MET and RASP despite last minute submissions at a time of high critical demand.

Certain plans failed at first contact either due to lack of investment from Bronze commanders at the planning stage or due to restructuring changes that had occurred within departments. These were however able to be rectified due to the flexibility of personnel in charge at time of activation and a fairly solid understanding of the overarching operation.

Mobilisation

Whilst there was a RDU plan drafted for the Operation this had not recently been reviewed and signed off by Silver. During mobilisation it was found that there was not one approach with scoping officers for duties as this varied geographically and within specialist departments. Previously agreed skill markers which were held on Scope to provide a 'ring fence' were ignored leading to some officers who were required for a specialist skill being scoped for non-specialist duties. There were delays in updating the Scope system which also led to officers being double scoped creating additional work and confusion. Some national divisions reported that the lack of geographical and local knowledge by RDU members led to officers being scoped to undertake duties that were out with reasonable travelling distances or travel times which impacted on the delivery of the operation and officer welfare. Due to

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the lack of awareness in the process there were occasions where supervisory officers were informing officers of what their duties were however they were inaccurate and this was causing difficulties for RDU and officer engagement.

Recommendation 22
A fully agreed national process requires to be created in relation to resource mobilisation that all members of RDU, and specialist departments, require to be aware of and in agreement off.

The increase in officer numbers and mutual aid from the previously agreed plans created issues within C3 as the required operations modules and call signs had not been created for these officers. This led to additional work within C3 that had not been included in plans.

Recommendation 23
Contained within the C3 plan should be a cell dedicated to mass mobilisation to support and work through any issues that arise.

Whilst Fettes worked very well in providing a POCC and MACC both in building structure and location the size of the POCC was limiting and had too many persons congregating there. There was insufficient space for each Bronze along with their support team alongside the controllers and others.

Recommendation 24
PSoS should review the role and responsibilities of those required within the MACC and/or POCC including their support and advisor access with a view to either amend the C3 model given the limited space available or if deemed operational vital for efficient and effectively delivery a change of venue be identified.

The national planning team, which consists of 5 officers, undertook 24 hours cover during delivery splitting themselves with 3 covering dayshift and 2 covering nightshift. The roles that were undertaken by the national planning team was not as expected as they were required to step in and complete tasks that others were failing to perform. It should be recognised that the role carried out at the planning stage is different to the requirement during delivery.

Recommendation 25
Clear role, responsibilities and expectations of the planning team and other support roles require to be fully understood and agreed in advance of an operation activation.

Partner plans had been shared with the national planning team and localised planning teams however unexpected issues still arose during delivery. In one particular area members of the public were allowed to congregate on the roadway when it had been previously agreed that this would remain open. This road was essential to allow convoy movement through it for refuelling.

Observation 5
Continuous engagement is required to identify any changes implemented to partner plans to ensure that these are being considered, so that any interdependencies or negative impact can be assessed and risks mitigated.

The MACC and POCC were ran on a 24 hour basis however numerous partners were not present during the night within Edinburgh which would have caused issues should an incident had occurred.

Observation 6
If the nature of the operation dictates it there should be partner representation 24 hours should it be required.

The validation and accreditation plan had been approved by Gold and accepted by partners with the onus of security clearance being mainly based on a SPOC within each individual partner agency coupled with support from Scottish Government. It had been previously agreed that access would be granted to members of the emergency services in Uniform and need confirmed through the control room if required. The plan proved to be too complicated for partner agencies and raised many challenges during the delivery stage.

Recommendation 26
Establish a simple but effective validation and accreditation plan that partners understand and can work with.

As the logistics plan was still being developed for this operation on activation a flurry of work was required to be carried out last minute. Key staff members were instrumental in their ability to utilise previous relationships with companies or providers which assisted in the overarching delivery. Without this knowledge or previous contracts logistics would have struggled to deliver to the same level.

Recommendation 27
A mass mobilisation plan requires to be developed which includes MOUs, or contracts, with national and localised companies, and providers, to assist delivering future operations.

The current guidance around drones was found to be confusing and the authorisation requirements and process was unclear.

Recommendation 28
Drone guidance requires to be reviewed and clarified.

Information flows

Operation Urram had utilised a National Coordination Centre the main remit of which was action management, this relied on the Clio software. Recommendation was that this same approach should be utilised for Royal Standard Operations. Plans were developed with the selection of named personnel selected who had the necessary experience and skill set.

The Clio system has many positives and brought benefit to the operation however it is limited by the limited number of trained and competent officers within the force. It provided a clear audit trail, decisions could be clarified however if you were not trained or competent in its use it was a hindrance and a risk.

During delivery it became apparent that very few officers were trained and competent in Clio and this was further enhanced with disparity nationally. Confusion arose with the introduction of loggists being asked to utilise Clio by Commanders. Currently loggist training does not include officers to be trained and competent in Clio.

If Clio is to be more readily used this skill should be included but experience will be required to remain competent in its use.

Recommendation 29
Regardless of system used, exploration of how we ensure a timely, accessible and legible record of all command decisions in a complex operation requires to be undertaken

Incorporated within the National Coordination Centre was a briefing cell and support to Gold and Silver including Clio support however this did not work.

Discussions regarding a briefing document template had taken place between various departments resulting in an agreement being reached. During delivery the briefing document was found to be duplicating information already being provided by Intelligence and not fit for purpose. Roles and responsibility for this document requires to be clarified.

During the planning stage the planning team had sought the approval of meeting agendas and invitees for both Gold and Silver. During delivery the previously agreed meeting agenda templates and invitee list was drastically changed and this change continued for a number of days. This led to confusion and additional work at an already intensely pressurised period.

Recommendation 30
An operation template in relation to briefing document, agenda, and invitation list, along with clear responsibilities should be established for future mass mobilisation events.

It was the opinion that the NCC did not deliver fully in its expected function or role which was due to a lack of understanding, lack of experience and lack of support IT i.e. establishment of grouping email address created unnecessary issues and delays.

Recommendation 31
A National Coordination Centre template should be developed along with defined roles and responsibilities. Consideration should be given to developing a cadre of suitably trained officers / staff who are utilised regularly to provide relevant operational experience.

National partner agencies had not established a daily rhythm in respect of meeting structure or nor had there being an understanding drafted with who was expecting what type of information.

Observation 7
Partner agencies require to have basic meeting structures and information sharing agreements in place to manage expectations.

Officers who were being contacted, to undertake predominately front line duties, had not been pre briefed with any information regarding this operation due to perceived sensitivities in relation to this. On activation this created additional pressure on the RDU who were contacting and activating the officers as additional information was being asked from them. The officers were unaware of the Operation Royal Standard SharePoint site which held amongst other things logistical information, tasking cards and briefing packs.

Recommendation 32
Consideration should be given to sharing basic deployment information that will assist officers in their knowledge and understanding of the role and also lessens the pressures on other departments.

The collation of specific information, mainly arrests, did not appear to sit with one sole department. This meant that during the operation there were variations within the information shared provided which was not professional and potentially damaging to PSoS. Whilst there was a Crime Bronze, and team, they appeared not to be undertaking the role that Gold was requiring.

Recommendation 33
Crime Bronze to be a Superintendent with a cell and a Detective Sergeant to review arrests, charges, court disposals and to record those in a single location for post incident review. This cell would activate and coordinate during an operation. Within this should be parameters as to what cumulates an offence in relation to the operation.

Discussions have taken place with regards to the posts made during the operation on social media. There are two very distinct trains of thought regarding how to manage social media from; not engaging, to react, under direction. By knowing and understanding what is gaining traction online the force can respond with proactive social media which would allow certain topical reports to be clarified and minimised due to the correction of mistruths. Consideration could be given to utilise the Force website for additional clarity surrounding an incident.

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Recommendation 34
The power of social media requires to be understood with plans developed on how to manage it in a positively beneficial way.

Wind down / Return to BAU

In April 2022 departments had been asked to provide plans for D+5 through to D+11 to allow for an understanding of resource requirements and associated requirement from support departments. Not all areas had completed this work and as such the proposed plans had not been fully signed off by Silver come activation. There was a degree of uncertainty around partner plans for this time frame and this was illustrated by the introduction of a large screen within Holyrood Park for D+10 which though had been previously discussed had unequivocally removed from plans by partners. This coupled with the uncertainty in public behaviour led to the wind down process and return to business as normal being slow.

Recommendation 35
All departments should be involved in, or fully cited in, discussions where uncertainty lies in relation to changes from previously agreed plans.

Observation 8
All partners and stakeholders should recognise changes to collectively agreed plans potentially create issues and challenges to others. They should seek discussions with relevant partners prior to implementing any change to ensure minimal risk and maximum mitigation.

Following the operation there was a significant demand placed on the planning team with internal and external information requests. Externally there was a significant number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, letters of complaint from both the public and politicians. Internally there were a number of briefing notes requested in relation to the external requests and guidance being sought regarding both overtime and also force direction on recognition of staff or partners.

Recommendation 36
A post incident plan, with policy decisions, requires to be created regarding information flows following an operation and the scrutiny thereafter placed upon them. A process requires to be developed that captures the FOIs, letters of complaints etc. following an operation. What is responded too and who this best sits with should be identified.

It is recognised that following an operation of this magnitude has a significant impact on the body and mind. There was no welfare in place to support officers transitioning from this frantic pace to a more steady business as usual pace.

Recommendation 37
It should be recognised that a period of adjustment is required following an operation of this magnitude and appropriate welfare should be put in place to support officers with this.

Following the operation there were a number of letters of thanks from members of the public, persons of status and also the King. A letter of thanks from the Chief Constable was recorded on the force intranet however, understandably, this was quite generic. Some departments undertook their own bespoke approach to thanking staff and on occasion partners however there requires to be one clear process followed. This should also include staff who had additional pressure placed upon out with the operation by maintaining a service to business as usual.

Recommendation 38
Clear guidance requires to be drafted with regards to thanking staff, and partners if pertinent, following a significant operation.

5. SUMMARY

In Summary whilst a number of areas are identified that could have gone better recognition should be given to the examples of good practice that are also highlighted and the overarching success of the operation.

A number of the challenges faced during this operation, both in the planning and delivery stages, were due to key partner plans not being properly developed. The lack of clarity surrounding roles, responsibilities and ownership within these partners having been agreed.

There is still a culture within partner agencies that the Police will host Command and control centres however in the current climate there requires to a realisation that police estate is limited and a different model may need to be adopted.

The delivery stage demonstrated that PSOS can be flexible when faced with challenges and undertake the resolution of these successfully. Public safety, officer welfare and safety were not compromised during this operation and public confidence was maintained.

A number of recommendations and observations have been identified in response to the operation and will be reviewed and worked on to ensure that Police Scotland can provide a smooth and efficient logistical delivery to any incident or operation in the future.

6. PRACTICE SUMMARY

Practice 1	Action /Suggested Owner
National planning team structure and function worked well with the hub and spoke model being duplicated for future Operations to provide continuity, confidence and overarching knowledge / support.	RSPT
Practice 2	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Involvement from local planning / specialised teams is essential to ensure relationships with partners and development of partner's plans.	RSPT & LOCAL / SPECIALIST PLANNING TEAM
Practice 3	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Regular Command meetings should take place supported with a testing and exercise process.	RSPT, SMARTEU & BRONZES
Practice 4	**Action/ Suggested Owner**
The plans should be developed to a high standard to allow Commanders with limited knowledge to comprehend their role and responsibility and deliver on activation.	RSPT
Practice 5	**Action/ Suggested Owner**
Resource numbers to be identified in advance allowing for Scope and Storm work and where possible pre briefings carried out.	RSPT, RDU BRONZE & C3 BRONZE
Practice 6	**Action/ Suggested Owner**
Having one person identified, and pre briefed, as SPOC for NPOCC and SPICC within Armed Policing worked well.	ARMED POLICING BRONZE & EERP BRONZE
Practice 7	**Action/ Suggested Owner**
Text alert systems assist in mass activation.	C3 & EERP BRONZES
Practice 8	**Action/ Suggested Owner**
Having representation from most partners and police departments within one building which was dedicated to the operation created the correct working environment.	RSPT & EVENT ORGANISER /OWNER
Practice 9	**Action/ Suggested Owner**
Having corporate services located close to Gold and Silver works well when requiring to finalisation discussions and proposals.	RSPT & CORP COMMS
Practice 10	**Action/Suggested Owner**

Co-location of command, support including, Tactical Advisors etc., is recognised as best practice and as such accommodation for housing such events should have this in mind.	RSPT & SPECIALIST DEPARTMENT
Practice 11	**Action/Suggested Owner**
The co-location of a representative from the lead agency communications team within the police corporate communications team is good practice.	RSPT & CORP COMMS
Practice 12	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Early identification of required supporting departments allows these departments to create plans minimising disruption to them.	EERP LOGISTICS (MASS MOBILISATION PLANS) BRONZE
Practice 13	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Early decision to utilise probationers and free SPC for accommodation was necessary and worked well.	GOLD
Practice 14	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Advance sharing of Royal Standard Planning Team logistical plans, transport and staging posts, with Operation Urram allowed these to be tested and learnings gleaned, prior to being activated for Unicorn.	RSPT
Practice 15	**Action/Suggested Owner**
The role of managing conflicting events requires to be identified at the planning stage and a suitably qualified person nominated to undertake this.	GOLD
Practice 16	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Officers and staff involved in the delivery of major or significant operations/ events should recognise the benefit in, and actively develop, close working relationship with other key partner representatives in particular in the area of information sharing and situational awareness.	GOLD, SILVER, BRONZE & RSPT
Practice 17	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Where pertinent, during periods of lengthy events, Silver assurance meetings work well in confirming status and omitting last minute avoidable risk.	SILVER

7. RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Recommendation 1	Action/ Suggested Owner
The size of the planning team should constantly be reviewed and realigned if required.	GOLD & SILVER
Recommendation 2	**Action/ Suggested Owner**
A job description and role requirements with detailed responsibilities pertinent to the operation should be defined and agreed with officers undertaking that duty. This will identify training needs.	SILVER
Recommendation 3	**Action/ Suggested Owner**
For future resilience a pathway for current Inspectors / Chief Inspectors requires to be developed to allow these officers to gain experience at a multitude of events by being deployed nationally.	EERP
Recommendation 4	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Consideration should be given to all specialised areas, where pertinent, to utilise and manage a text alert system.	ALL, SUPPORTED BY C3
Recommendation 5	**Action/Suggested Owner**
A similar support structure should be implemented for Gold and Silver at future events of this size and scale.	GOLD, SILVER & RSPT
Recommendation 6	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Police officers trained as loggists should be managed nationally, potentially within EERP, to ensure experience and competence. This can be done with CPD and regular deployment. Refresher training of these officers, if deemed necessary, would still be undertaken by SMARTEU.	EERP BRONZE
Recommendation 7	**Action/ Suggested Owner**
Decisions regarding Police estate requires to be carefully considered to future proof the provision of suitable locations for multi-agency mass operations.	FORCE EXECUTIVE
Recommendation 8	**Action/ Suggested Owner**
To assist with future mass mobilisation supporting office based departments should be identified now with agreed parameters drafted.	EERP LOGISTICS (MASS MOBILISATION) BRONZE
Recommendation 9	**Action/Suggested Owner**

Microsoft Teams should be continued to be utilised across PSoS. If this is to be replaced it must be with a multi-agency accessible system.	DIGITAL DIVISION
Recommendation 10	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Full and frank discussions take place with senior leaders to determine the level of their involvement and develop plans to incorporate this from the outset.	GOLD & FORCE EXECUTIVE
Recommendation 11	**Action/Suggested Owner**
All plans should be developed with consideration to all weather scenarios and hours of darkness as additional lighting may be required.	RSPT & LOCAL PLANNING TEAMS
Recommendation 12	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Within Road Policing consideration should be given to the need for additional roles i.e. Support Bronze and convoy SPOC where there a large number of convoys to be carried out. Contingency plans are required to maintain the presentation of convoy vehicles should items be thrown during a protest.	ROAD POLICING BRONZE
Recommendation 13	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Greater importance should be given to developing briefing and tasking cards ensuring accuracy of their content.	RSPT
Recommendation 14	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Timely development of critical plans is imperative due to the knock on impact on both internal/external planning functions.	GOLD, SILVER & BRONZE COMMANDERS
Recommendation 15	**Action/Suggested Owner**
The identification of a Public Order planner would have assisted in further developing the public order plans with the focus on public safety and provide valuable support to the PO Commanders.	PUBLIC ORDER BRONZE
Recommendation 16	**Action/Suggested Owner**
A full time CT SecCo requires to be aligned to an operation of this scale and magnitude.	GOLD
Recommendation 17	**Action/Suggested Owner**
A process requires to be developed detailing that following activation any logistical needs submitted should be scrutinised by the logistics Bronze for approval prior to being forward to specialist divisions.	EERP LOGISITCS BRONZE
Recommendation 18	**Action/Suggested Owner**

Ensure the development and have approval of a work force agreement in place with clear overtime guidance	GOLD & STAFF ASSOCIATIONS
Recommendation 19	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Where specialist trained officers are required to fulfil a mutual aid request conversations should take place with NPoCC at the planning stage, by the requesting department, to establish the request if fully understood and can be met.	NPoCC & SPiCC
Recommendation 20	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Should an additional day be introduced a one type approach should not be implemented but rather each area / plan should be considered on its own merit.	GOLD, SILVER & BRONZES
Recommendation 21	**Action/Suggested Owner**
PSoS should consider reviewing the text message system with a view of upgrading or replacing.	C3 BRONZE
Recommendation 22	**Action/Suggested Owner**
A fully agreed national process requires to be created in relation to resource mobilisation that all members of RDU, and specialist departments, require to be aware of and in agreement off.	RDU & EERP LOGISTICS BRONZE
Recommendation 23	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Contained within the C3 plan should be a cell dedicated to mass mobilisation to support and work through any issues that arise.	C3 BRONZE
Recommendation 24	**Action/Suggested Owner**
PSoS should review the role and responsibilities of those required within the MACC and/or POCC including their support and advisor access with a view to either amend the C3 model given the limited space available or if deemed operational vital for efficient and effectively delivery a change of venue be identified.	SILVER, EERP BRONZE, C3 BRONZE & RSPT
Recommendation 25	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Clear role, responsibilities and expectations of the planning team and other support roles require to be fully understood and agreed in advance of an operation activation.	GOLD & SILVER
Recommendation 26	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Establish a simple but effective validation and accreditation plan that partners understand and can work with.	CT SecCo & RSPT

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Recommendation 27	Action/Suggested Owner
A mass mobilisation plan requires to be developed which includes MOUs, or contracts, with national and localised companies, and providers, to assist delivering future operations.	EERP & PROCUREMENT
Recommendation 28	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Drone guidance requires to be reviewed and clarified.	SUPT DARREN FAULDS
Recommendation 29	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Regardless of system used, exploration of how we ensure a timely, accessible and legible record of all command decisions in a complex operation requires to be undertaken	GOLD, EERP POLICY
Recommendation 30	**Action/Suggested Owner**
An operation template in relation to briefing document, agenda, and invitation list, along with clear responsibilities should be established for future mass mobilisation events.	EERP BRONZE, RSPT
Recommendation 31	**Action/Suggested Owner**
A National Coordination Centre template should be developed along with defined roles and responsibilities. Consideration should be given to developing a cadre of suitably trained officers / staff who are utilised regularly to provide relevant operational experience.	EERP BRONZE
Recommendation 32	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Consideration should be given to sharing basic deployment information that will assist officers in their knowledge and understanding of the role and also lessens the pressures on other departments.	GOLD & SILVER
Recommendation 33	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Crime Bronze to be a Superintendent with a cell and a Detective Sergeant to review arrests, charges, court disposals and to record those in a single location for post incident review. This cell would activate and coordinate during an operation. Within this should be parameters as to what cumulates an offence in relation to the operation.	CRIME BRONZE
Recommendation 34	**Action/Suggested Owner**
The power of social media requires to be understood with plans developed on how to manage it in a positively beneficial way.	CORP COMMS / GOLD

Recommendation 35	Action/Suggested Owner
All departments should be involved in, or fully cited in, discussions where uncertainty lies in relation to changes from previously agreed plans.	RSPT
Recommendation 36	**Action/Suggested Owner**
A post incident plan, with policy decisions, requires to be created regarding information flows following an operation and the scrutiny thereafter placed upon them. A process requires to be developed that captures the FOIs, letters of complaints etc. following an operation. What is responded too and who this best sits with should be identified.	GOLD
Recommendation 37	**Action/Suggested Owner**
It should be recognised that a period of adjustment is required following an operation of this magnitude and appropriate welfare should be put in place to support officers with this.	GOLD / WELFARE BRONZE
Recommendation 38	**Action/Suggested Owner**
Clear guidance requires to be drafted with regards to thanking staff, and partners if pertinent, following a significant operation.	GOLD

8. OBSERVATION SUMMARY

Observation 1
It should be recognised that the commitment, attitude and enthusiasm to support the operation is potentially down to the actual nature of the operation and may not be replicated for other mass mobilisation operations.
Observation 2
Each operation should be planned on its own merit as the same overarching approach is not always required.
Observation 3
Roles and responsibilities for all partner agencies including other police forces require to be clarified prior to planning commencing.
Observation 4
Consideration should be given to raising future issues with Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) if the usual channels are not providing the required response.
Observation 5
Continuous engagement is required to identify any changes implemented to partner plans to ensure that these are being considered, so that any interdependencies or negative impact can be assessed and risks mitigated.
Observation 6
If the nature of the operation dictates it there should be partner representation 24 hours should it be required.
Observation 7
Partner agencies require to have basic meeting structures and information sharing agreements in place to manage expectations.
Observation 8
All partners and stakeholders should recognise changes to collectively agreed plans potentially create issues and challenges to others. They should seek discussions with relevant partners prior to implementing any change to ensure minimal risk and maximum mitigation.