

SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY

Meeting	Public SPA Board Meeting
Date	Tuesday 19 December 2017
Location	City Suite, Apex City Quay, Dundee
Title of Paper	Armed Deployment Model
Item Number	6.3.2
Presented By	DCC Johnny Gwynne
Recommendation to Members	For Noting
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide the Scottish Police Authority with an overview of the proposed amendment to the current Armed Response Vehicle (ARV) deployment model.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 1 October 2014 Police Scotland released the following media statement:

'Chief Constable Sir Stephen House has approved the recommendation of the Armed Policing Monitoring Group that the national standing firearms authority should continue. In addition, having listened to concerns expressed by politicians and some members of the public and having assessed the current operational challenges faced by Police Scotland, the Chief Constable has directed that firearms officers attached to Armed Response Vehicles will now only be deployed to firearms incidents or where there is a threat to life.'

- 1.2 Further internal guidance ensured that armed officers would also respond to crime / offences that they detected whilst on patrol or that occurred in their immediate vicinity.
- 1.3 ACC Higgins also established the Armed Policing Deployment Model Working Group (APDMWG) to review the types of carriage for both side-arms and Tasers, and the deployment of Armed Response Vehicle Officers when not deployed to firearms incidents. APDMWG submitted a preliminary report to the quarterly Strategic Armed Policing Monitoring Group (APMG) in January 2015.
- 1.4 In January 2015, The SPA Scrutiny Enquiry Group report entitled 'Inquiry into the public impact of Police Scotland's Standing Authority' stated, *'There is an opportunity for policing in Scotland to demonstrate that it is more open and accountable than at any time in its history and for the SPA and Police Scotland to work together to build on the existing high levels of public confidence in policing'*.
- 1.5 It further identified benefits in adopting a stronger and more effective communication strategy on emerging policy and that Police Scotland should build on its existing confidence with the community.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

- 2.1 Previous reports in the media have highlighted situations where armed police officers are seen in public and, whilst not in contravention of Police Scotland's Policy, have engendered headlines that infer some members of the public are alarmed at the

sight of officers carrying guns in an environment where there is no identified armed threat. In order to counter this concern, explanations have been provided on the following as to why there needs to be an armed police capability in Scotland:

- The Strategic Threat and Risk assessment underpins the Standing Authority;
- There is a severe threat from international terrorism;
- There is a severe threat to Police Sector;
- Scrutiny by HMIC indicates that an armed police capability is the 'Best and Safest' way to protect the public;
- SPA have scrutinised and fully support the current armed deployment model;
- There is a need to ensure equal access to consistent and specialist support throughout Scotland;
- There is known possession and use of weapons by Organised Crime Groups across Scotland;

2.2 There is support from communities across Scotland for armed officers, however cognisance must also be taken of those who express alternative views.

2.3 There is a requirement to continually review Police Scotland's development and implementation of firearms policy, to ensure this positively impacts on the levels of protection afforded to communities across Scotland. The approved Armed Policing (AP) Uplift programme, has been widely reported and is in the process of implementation. With the increase in capacity and a greater ability to support and contribute towards local policing priorities, there is a need to review the current deployment model in order to meet the demands of communities. This is in line with the policing principles as set out in the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, which Police Scotland must account for and promote:

- The main purpose of policing is to improve the safety and well-being of persons, localities and communities in Scotland;
- That the Police Service, working in collaboration with others where appropriate, should seek to achieve its main purpose by policing in a way which is accessible to, and engaged with, local communities and promotes measures to prevent crime, harm and disorder.

2.4 To ensure more police resources are available to meet sustained high levels of public demand it is proposed to remove deployment

constraints on ARV crews whereby, in certain instances, they can be deployed to more than just firearms and threat to life incidents.

This revised deployment model will continue to see Armed Response Vehicle (ARV) officers armed at all times with Self Loading Pistol (SLP) and Taser (Conducted Energy Device/CED). However, these officers will be tasked to attend non firearms incidents only after determination by a professionally qualified, operationally and occupationally competent Initial Tactical Firearms Commander (ITFC). Such developments will follow the application of the National Decision Making Model (NDMM), risk assessment and consideration of the working environment. The use of the NDMM is accepted UK wide, and has been well tried and tested across all UK police forces for many years in firearms environments. At any time there are only three on duty ITFCs (East, North and West) thus reducing the likelihood of any inconsistency in approach and deployment.

It is difficult to be absolutely specific as to the nature of every call that will be attended by ARV crews, not least because there is significant variety in the circa 1.8 million incidents responded to by Police Scotland per annum. That said, the following broad principles will be used by the ITFC in deciding the appropriateness or otherwise of an ARV crew attending a specific incident:

- Priority One (assessed as requiring the most urgent police attention where an untasked ARV is the nearest available asset).
- Any call requiring a need for a speedy initial response (but not just Priority One calls).
- And/or any call in which there is a degree of vulnerability present, perhaps because the victim is elderly or otherwise particularly vulnerable.

It should be noted that attendance at incidents does not just include those where someone has complained of a crime being committed.

Examples of incidents ARV officers may attend, after the changes to the deployment model would include:

- ARV officers become aware of a vulnerable missing person and have good knowledge of the local town centre. ARV officers would provide assistance to search for the vulnerable missing person, returning to their core duties thereafter.

- ARV officers on patrol become aware of a road collision and are the nearest police resource. ARV officers would provide assistance to ensure the safety of persons involved. A local, conventional resource should thereafter attend and continue the enquiry
- A report of an ongoing domestic incident is received, ARV officers on patrol are the nearest resource and as such would attend to initially provide assistance. A local, conventional resource should thereafter attend and continue the enquiry.

ARVs will also be available for pre-planned patrols, initiatives and operations. They will be an asset accessible for such pre-planned events through the current Operational Support weekly tasking process.

These examples provide an illustration of the types of incidents and taskings which ARV officers will attend following the changes in deployment model. This list is not exhaustive and ITFCs will scrutinise the deployment of ARV crews to ensure they are properly utilised prior to ARV officer deployment at incidents. It must also be stressed, the core duties of ARV officers will remain a priority at all times.

- 2.5 This revised approach will ensure a positive contribution to Local Policing priorities providing an effective and efficient deployment of valuable resources. This will also negate any perceived 'de-skilling' of Armed Policing Officers in their core function as a Police Constable.
- 2.6 In terms of governance, as is current professional practice, Armed Policing command will review all activity undertaken in the previous 24 hours ensuring compliance with Force policy (i.e. the attendance of ARVs at firearms, self-tasked and now non-firearms related calls / taskings).
- 2.7 The Standing Authority actively works towards 3 of the 6 policing priorities of violence/disorder, serious and organised crime and counter terrorism. The revised model will further enhance the ability to respond to other priorities such as protecting people from risk of harm and road safety/road crime.

- 2.8 The proposed change has clear links with the objectives of Policing 2026 and will improve public contact, engagement and response through a revised deployment model which reflects current threat and demand.

Officers will be empowered through a greater ability to positively, efficiently and effectively support and contribute towards local policing priorities in direct support of Divisions and communities.

The introduction of change to the current deployment model will enable Police Scotland to recognise and respond appropriately to the needs of individuals and communities, with a continued commitment to localism. This will ensure Police Scotland achieves maximum impact with available resources and will enhance its culture to empower and support effective decision making at a local and national level.

- 2.9 Any change to the current deployment model is expected to produce media, legal and stakeholder scrutiny.

As a result, engagement has already taken place with with key stakeholders including:

- Scottish Police Authority
- Scottish Government
- Opposition Parties (through Scottish Parliament Justice Committee)
- HMICS
- Staff Associations
- Local Authority Chief Executives
- Council Leaders
- COSLA

- 2.10 For the avoidance of doubt, this change will not itself affect the number of firearms officers on the street at any one time. Rather, it will routinely affect how they are used better in support of community needs.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this paper.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications in this paper.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are reputational implications associated with this paper.

6.2 In order to maintain confidence in our armed policing model Police Scotland will continue to engage with key stakeholders as the model is being implemented.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are social implications associated with this paper.

7.2 It is anticipated that the changes proposed will have a positive impact on communities across Scotland. Alongside the uplift programme it will support local policing and assist in addressing ongoing demand.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1 There are community implications associated with this paper.

8.2 Increased visibility (but not numbers) of armed officers may result in an amplified comment by politicians, national press and members of the public.

However initial engagement with briefings to politicians and other parts of the public service, have attempted to explain the public protection dividend from these changes.

8.3 National community impact is examined and reviewed on a quarterly basis through the strategic Armed Policing Monitoring Group (APMG) chaired by an Assistant Chief Constable and forms part of the considerations for the continuation, or otherwise, of the Standing Authority. At the last meeting of the APMG, held on 15th September 2017, it was noted that the impact on the community of police officers overtly carrying firearms was assessed as low.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

Note the information contained within this report.