Home Office

The Strategic Policing Requirement

March 2015

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Foreword by the Home Secretary

Local policing is rightly the preserve of police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and chief constables who are grounded in the realities of their communities. Sometimes, however, threats to public safety can assume such grave proportions that they place unforeseen demands on local resources and can only be addressed by forces acting in concert and mobilising their resources across boundaries.

I issued the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) in 2012 to ensure that when threats and harms to public safety assume national dimensions, the police can deliver an appropriately robust, national response.

Crime and terrorism have no frontiers. It stands to reason, therefore, that the tools we use to combat them should be equally wide-ranging and extensive. The SPR continues to provide an effective framework to inform the strategic assessment of threat and risk, and planning of cross-boundary capabilities for national threats. However, the policing landscape has changed immeasurably since the SPR was issued. The College of Policing and National Crime Agency (NCA) have been established; PCCs are in office and the incidents in Rotherham have altered our understanding of what is needed to safeguard children from harm.

We consulted PCCs, chief officers and wider policing partners last summer on the scope of an SPR refresh. I have considered the responses to the consultation as well as recent developments in policing.

In view of the dramatic surge in the number of alleged rapes and sexual assaults against children and the sheer magnitude of reported child sexual abuse (CSA) cases, both recent and historical, I have decided to include CSA as an additional national threat in the SPR.

This will empower forces to maximise specialist skills and expertise to prevent and resolve CSA cases. It should help to alleviate budgetary pressures through the provision of more effective resourcing solutions and the development of good practice that is consistently applied and sustainable. It should also go some way towards reassuring victims and the public that the protection of children is a matter of national importance and that the police are prepared to take swift, collaborative action where necessary.

Last but not least, I would like to thank those who have helped to shape the new version of the SPR and all those on the frontline who give new impetus and meaning to its principles on a daily basis.

Theresa May
Home Secretary

1. Introduction

1.1 The SPR was issued in 2012 in execution of the Home Secretary's statutory duty to set out what are, in her view, the national threats at the time of writing and the appropriate national policing capabilities required to counter those threats[1]. Whilst many threats can be tackled by individual police forces within their own force areas, national threats such as terrorism, civil emergencies, serious and organised crime, public order, and a national cyber security incident[2], require a coordinated or aggregated response in which resources are brought together from a number of police forces. Forces often need to work collaboratively, and with other partners, national agencies or national arrangements, to ensure such threats are tackled effectively.

SPR review

1.2 In April 2014, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) recommended that the SPR should be periodically reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

1.3 The Home Office has consulted policing partners to consider the validity of existing and emerging threats and ensure that the SPR remains current and fit for purpose.

1.4 The recent unprecedented increase in reporting and investigation of CSA calls for a joined-up approach by forces to provide an integrated, robust policing response, by ensuring skilled investigators are available and that all victims have access to justice. Lone offenders, groups and gangs can commit offences across police force boundaries and local instances of CSA can be so serious that they are of national importance and cannot be countered by a single force acting alone.

1.5 In view of this, the SPR identifies CSA as an additional national threat. This will encourage forces to build collective understanding of the capabilities required to address the threat; share intelligence and develop resourcing solutions, either by working in partnership or through local prioritisation; to ensure that the most vulnerable members of our society are protected.

SPR framework

1.6 The SPR supports chief constables and PCCs[3] to ensure they fulfil forces' national responsibilities. It:

- helps PCCs to plan effectively, in consultation with their chief constable, for policing challenges that go beyond their force boundaries;
- guides chief constables in the exercise of these functions; and
- enables and empowers PCCs to hold their chief constable to account for the delivery of these functions.

1.7 The SPR is structured in two parts – considering threats and response respectively. Part A articulates the risks of criminal or terrorist threats and harms or other civil emergencies that require a cross-boundary policing response – for which

[1] This is in accordance with s37A Police Act (1996) as amended by s77 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

[2] The term 'large scale cyber incident' in the previous SPR has been replaced with 'national cyber security incident' in line with updated Cabinet Office guidance.

[3] The term "police and crime commissioners" is used as shorthand so as to make reference to police and crime commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in the Metropolitan Police District and the Common Council of the City of London. Reference in this document to a "chief constable" is intended to apply to every chief constable in England and Wales, the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, and the Commissioner of the City of London Police.

PCCs and chief constables are expected to plan and prepare together or in support of national arrangements.

1.8 Part B outlines the policing response that is required nationally to counter these threats, in partnership with other national agencies. It briefly sets out:

- the combined national **capacity** of all police forces to respond to these threats, expressed in terms of the outcomes sought – these are drawn, wherever possible, from publicly available national Government strategies. PCCs and chief constables must have regard to this aggregate capacity when considering the respective **contributions** they will make;
- the **capabilities** that police forces, often working collaboratively, need to maintain in order to achieve these outcomes;
- the requirement for **consistency** among forces for certain key specialist capabilities where the resources from more than one police force need to be integrated, or work effectively alongside each other. In some instances this requirement for consistency may need to involve other key emergency services and agencies; and
- the **connectivity** arrangements by which resources from several police forces may effectively be coordinated or mobilised, together and with those of other agencies – such as the Security Service or NCA. The combination of consistency and connectivity forms the basis for interoperability between police forces and with other partners.

Statutory obligation

1.9 PCCs are required to have regard to this SPR when issuing or varying their police and crime plans. They must keep the police and crime plan under review in light of any changes made to the SPR by the Home Secretary. Chief constables must have regard to both the police and crime plan and the SPR when exercising their functions. PCCs will hold them to account for doing so.

1.10 It is not uncommon for legislation to require public bodies to "have regard to" guidance, codes of practice or other material. The effect is that the PCC and chief constable should follow the SPR unless they are satisfied that, in the particular circumstances, there are good reasons not to. It does not mean that either the PCC or the chief constable has to follow the SPR blindly, but they should not depart from it without good reason (and should be prepared to be able to justify any departure from it on a case by case basis).

Roles and responsibilities

1.11 The implementation of the SPR is the responsibility of the chief constables in England and Wales and PCCs. The Home Secretary remains legally accountable for national security and the role that the police play within the delivery of any national response. HMIC provides assurance that the preparation and delivery of those requirements set out within the SPR have been subject to a proportionate and risk-based testing and inspection regime. Further detail regarding specific roles and responsibilities for the Home Secretary, chief constables, PCCs and police and crime panels is contained within the Policing Protocol Order 2011.

Police professional assessments

1.12 The SPR is focused on what, in strategic terms, the police need to achieve rather than how they should achieve it. When having regard to the SPR, PCCs and chief constables are advised to consider professional assessments of the capabilities needed to deliver the SPR, developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing. These professional assessments provide the national planning assumptions that set out the appropriate policing capacity to respond to the threats described in part A of the SPR and are subject to challenge by PCCs.

Application

1.13 The SPR applies to police forces in England and Wales only; however, many of the risks set out in SPR affect all parts of the United Kingdom. Nothing in the SPR is intended to impact on the current arrangements for provision of mutual aid between police forces, including those outside of England and Wales[4].

1.14 The SPR underpins the relationship between police forces in England and Wales and the NCA. It is available for adoption by non-Home Office police forces in England and Wales. In order to meet interoperability challenges across the UK, other forces are encouraged to have regard to the SPR's assessed threats insofar as they are applicable to their jurisdictions.

Frequency of review

1.15 The SPR will be reviewed from time to time and in doing so the Home Secretary will seek advice from policing partners, as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

1.16 In preparing this document, the Home Secretary has consulted the police, Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), PCCs (including Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and City of London), the College of Policing, National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC), NCA, HMIC, the Security Service, British Transport Police as well as other government departments such as Cabinet Office and Department of Communities and Local Government, with an interest in the SPR.

[4] As provided for in sections 24 and 98 of the Police Act 1996.

Part A
2. National threats

Part A sets out threats to national security, public safety, public order, and public confidence that are of such gravity as to be of national importance or can be countered effectively or efficiently only by national policing capabilities. PCCs and chief constables are expected to plan and prepare, together or in support of national arrangements, to address these threats.

2.1 For the purpose of this SPR, threats have been assessed and selected from the National Security Strategy (NSS) and other assessments of threat and risk. Threats have been identified on the basis that they either affect multiple police force areas, or may require resources to be brought together from multiple police force areas in order to be countered efficiently and effectively[5]. While treated separately, many of these threats overlap. The threats are:

- **Terrorism,** which the NSS identifies as a Tier One risk.
- **Serious and organised crime,** which the NSS identifies as a Tier Two risk. Organised crime is serious crime coordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain. Organised crime groups are responsible for the trafficking of drugs, people and firearms, organised illegal immigration, large-scale and high-volume fraud and other financial crimes, counterfeit goods, organised acquisitive crime and cyber crime. The NSS identifies cyber crime as a Tier One risk; it covers both cyber-dependent crime and cyber-enabled crime[6]. Serious and organised crime also includes serious crimes which demand a national coordinated response, notably online child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- **A national cyber security incident,** which the NSS identifies as a Tier One risk and which may require an aggregated police response under the guidelines set out by the UK's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-UK) with appropriate links to NCA, civil contingencies and public order policing as needed.
- Threats to **public order** or public safety that cannot be managed by a single police force acting alone.
- **Civil emergencies** that require an aggregated response across police force boundaries.
- **Child sexual abuse,** whilst this is not a threat to national security as identified in the NSS, it is a threat of national importance. Its potential magnitude and impact necessitate a cohesive, consistent, national effort to ensure police

[5] This is in accordance with section 37A of the Police Act (1996) as amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

[6] The NSS identifies a hostile attack upon UK cyber space by other states and large scale cyber crime as a Tier One risk. Cyber-dependent crimes can only be committed using computers, computer networks or other forms of information communication technology. Cyber-enabled crimes can be conducted on or offline, but online may take place at unprecedented scale and speed.

and partners can safeguard children from harm. CSA covers actions that entail forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities; encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways; or grooming children in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

2.2 Child sexual exploitation offences that are attributed to serious and organised crime, including those which take place online, will continue to be captured under the existing serious and organised crime threat in the SPR.

Part B
3. Policing response: 5Cs

Part B outlines the policing requirement to counter the threats set out in Part A, in terms of the 5Cs: capacity and contribution, capability, consistency and connectivity. The operational detail is set out in professional assessments drawn up by the police, working in conjunction with PCCs and the College of Policing.

PCCs and chief constables are expected to work collaboratively across force boundaries to determine the most effective and cost-efficient manner of implementation in order to maintain sufficient levels of appropriate resource to meet operational needs. PCCs should hold chief constables to account for each of these five areas and must have regard to the requirement for each national threat when setting their local police and crime plans.

4. Capacity and contribution

This section outlines the combined number of police assets and resources available to respond to SPR threats, expressed in terms of outcomes sought, and drawn from the relevant national Government strategies (for example the Counter-Terrorism Strategy, CONTEST and the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy). PCCs and chief constables must have regard to these expected outcomes when considering how they will ensure they are able to fulfil their force's contributions to this national capacity. In doing so, PCCs and chief constables may find it useful to consider other professional assessments made by the police.

4.1 Together, PCCs and chief constables must consider the areas set out in this SPR and must satisfy themselves that they:

- understand their respective roles in preparing for and tackling shared threats, risks and harm;
- agree where appropriate, in agreement and collaboration with other forces or partners, the contribution that is expected of them; and
- have the capacity to meet that expectation, taking properly into account the remit and contribution of other bodies (particularly national agencies) with responsibilities in the areas set out in the SPR.

4.2 In doing so, they must demonstrate that they have taken into account the need for appropriate capacity to:

- Contribute to CONTEST by working with partners to:

  Pursue: identify, disrupt, and investigate terrorist activity, and prosecute terrorist suspects;

  Prevent: identify and divert those involved in or vulnerable to radicalisation;

  Protect: protect the UK border, the critical national infrastructure, civil nuclear sites, transport systems, and the public; and

  Prepare: lead the immediate response after or during a terrorist attack, including responding to incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN), firearms and explosive material.

- Contribute to the Government's **Serious and Organised Crime Strategy** by working with partners to:

  Pursue: prosecute and disrupt people involved in serious and organised criminality;

  Prevent: prevent people from engaging in serious and organised crime;

  Protect: increase protection against serious and organised crime;

  Prepare: reduce the impact of this criminality where it takes place.

- Respond adequately to a spontaneous or planned event, or other incident, that requires a mobilised response in order to keep the peace, protect people and property, and uphold the law. PCCs and chief constables need to ensure they can keep the peace by preventing and managing **public disorder**, and both facilitate peaceful protest and protect the rights and safety of wider communities when responding to large scale public protests.
- Respond adequately to **civil emergencies** requiring a national response as set out in the National Resilience Planning Assumptions for events threatening serious damage to human welfare as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This should include, but is not limited to, Tier One risks such as those causing mass fatalities on a significant scale, and chemical, biological and radiological incidents.
- Respond adequately to a national **cyber security incident** (for example, in line with the guidelines set out by CERT-UK for the management of national cyber security incidents) by maintaining public order and supporting the overall incident management and response, recognising that the response to a national cyber security incident may call for a multi-agency approach which could depend upon joint working by local authorities, hospitals and the police.
- Respond adequately to reports of **CSA**, including the systematic or institutionalised abuse of children by individuals, groups or gangs, collaborating where appropriate, to secure specialist assets, skills and intelligence, or effectively targeting local resources to deliver an adequate response to all victims.

4.3 PCCs and chief constables are advised to consider the national planning assumptions in professional assessments developed by the police when considering the appropriate policing capacity to respond to the threats outlined above.

4.4 PCCs are also reminded of the responsibilities of their chief constable as a category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the duties this confers, including a duty on chief constables in local resilience forums and strategic coordination groups.

Part B
5. Capability

This section sets out what the police will need to be capable of doing in order to achieve the outcomes described in section 4.1. PCCs and chief constables will need to consider the skills and training required to ensure that each force's contribution to the national requirement is effective. Some of these capabilities will be delivered locally by police forces but may need to be brought together nationally through collaborative arrangements between forces or with other partners when the threat or risk demand joint working. In some cases they are combined to provide an ongoing regional resource, that provides a national network of capabilities to disrupt serious and organised crime, e.g., through Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCUs).

5.1 PCCs must hold chief constables to account for having, or having access to, the following capabilities that have been identified as critical to the planning of an effective and proportionate response to the national threats identified in Part A. This may also include the necessary collaborative provision of joint capabilities to respond to threats, in particular terrorism and serious and organised crime. These may include the provision and maintenance of training (e.g., skills to gather and assess intelligence), equipment (e.g., in relation to public order) and technology (e.g., adopting standards and services that allow for the efficient and appropriate transfer of information across law enforcement and the criminal justice system). In addition, this may also include those capabilities identified and agreed by chief officers as being necessary for the prevention, investigation and disruption of serious and organised crime to be delivered through ROCUs.

5.2 The capabilities are those needed to:

- identify and understand threats (including emerging ones), risks and harms and ensure a proportionate and effective response (including at times of elevated or exceptional demand);
- conduct complex investigations (eg cyber crime and CSA) that require specialist resources, including the capability to do so across force boundaries;
- conduct digital investigations, including on a collaborative basis, with the capability to do so across force boundaries and with national agencies;
- gather, assess and (where appropriate) report intelligence – including the capability to do so across force boundaries and with national agencies[7];
- respond to critical incidents, emergencies and other complex or high impact threats;
- provide trained and competent command and control of major operations, including the coordination of joint multi-agency responses to emergencies;
- protect covert tactics, witnesses and resources;
- provide armed support, where necessary, to an operation through the use of firearms and less lethal weapons;
- provide police support to major events.

7 This capability, in respect of counter-terrorism, currently resides with Special Branch.

5.3 Forces should have the knowledge, skills and supporting equipment to operate effectively at the specialist levels required in respect of the capabilities outlined in paragraph 5.2 above. PCCs and chief constables should ensure that supporting technology is adopted in a manner that supports collaboration and data sharing both locally, nationally and with the wider criminal justice system. When making local decisions, they should be aware of how local decisions impact on national capabilities.

Part B
6. Consistency

This section sets out the requirement for certain key specialist policing capabilities to be delivered in a consistent way across all police forces or, in some cases, with other partners such as other 'blue-light' emergency services or national agencies. This is necessary where those capabilities need to be brought together to operate effectively alongside one another without significant obstacle. For example, riot officers should be able to work effectively with officers from any other police force (with consistent skills and kit) just as police officers responding to an emergency should be able to work effectively with ambulance and fire officers.

6.1 PCCs and chief constables must have regard to the need for consistency in the way that their forces specify, procure, implement and operate across all SPR threats.

6.2 Consistency should be reflected in common standards of operating and leadership disciplines set by the police in conjunction with the College of Policing.

6.3 Consistency requires police forces to be able to operate effectively together, for example, in ensuring officers can operate to acknowledged standards to 'go forward' and restore peace using a graduated range of tactics.

6.4 PCCs and chief constables should take the lead in identifying and establishing the appropriate way of bringing together local authorities and other agencies, to ensure the full range of powers and all available information is brought to bear against those engaged in organised criminal activities.

6.5 It also requires chief constables to fully consider the compatibility of their capabilities as part of work to improve interoperability between the police and other 'blue-light' emergency services as well as with other partners, for example in responding to CBRN incidents or other significant emergencies. Due regard should also be taken to ensure that those capabilities being delivered on a regional basis as part of the ROCU network, are developed in accordance with national police guidance to ensure their continuing interoperability and integration with national tasking processes.

Part B
7. Connectivity

This section sets out the requirement for policing capabilities to be effectively joined up. There are two elements to this. Firstly, policing resources need to be effectively connected together across force-boundaries and through national, and when appropriate, regional arrangements. Secondly, policing capabilities should be able to connect effectively with key partners, particularly when planning for and responding to civil emergencies. For example in counter-terrorism, police forces need to be able to share information effectively with other police forces, national policing structures and with the Security Service.

7.1 Chief constables must have regard to the requirement for resources to be connected together locally, between forces and nationally (including with national agencies and through national collaborative services) in order to deliver a concerted and comprehensive response.

7.2 They should consider taking the lead in identifying and establishing the appropriate way of bringing together all relevant partners, including local authorities and other agencies, to ensure the full range of powers and all available information are brought to bear in the provision of a national response to national threats. This includes interoperability of ICT systems where critical information can be readily shared and accessed across force and organisational boundaries and with national agencies in a secure manner, e.g. Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), Security Service, NPoCC and ROCUs. Where possible, it should also include having regard to the connectivity and interoperability benefits that can be gained through the co-location of ROCUs, the NCA and regional Counter-Terrorism Units.

7.3 Chief constables must have regard to the role of the Security Service and the national police coordination arrangements for countering terrorism.

7.4 Chief constables are under a reciprocal 'duty to cooperate' with the national coordination and tasking arrangements led by the NCA, in accordance with the provisions provided for in the Crime and Courts Act 2013. ROCUs are the primary interface between the NCA and policing, supporting the coordination and tasking of the collective effort against the serious and organised crime threat. Chief constables should ensure that there is a collaborative approach to the provision of counter terrorism and serious and organised crime capabilities by aligning resources where appropriate to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their collective efforts. They should also have regard to the guidelines set out by CERT-UK for the management of national cyber security incidents.

7.5 In response to incidents of public disorder, large-scale public protests and civil emergencies chief constables must cooperate with mutual aid arrangements that enable the effective cross-boundary mobilisation of force resources.

7.6 Chief constables must, in particular, have regard to the requirement for consistency and connectivity with other Category 1 responders and key partners in order to meet their responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 for coordinating the joint response to civil emergencies and otherwise for the management of major incidents. This should be supported through work to improve interoperability between the police and other 'blue-light' emergency services, for example sharing information to enable an effective joint response to civil emergencies.

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