

Planning resources

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

First published 23 October 2013 Updated 25 May 2015

Written by College of Policing

9 mins read

When determining operational requirements, the current operational capability of the force should be the baseline for considering resource requirements and implications, including any need for receiving mutual aid.

Current operational capacity

This may include:

- operational and **command resilience**
- operational mobilisation (should be tested on a regular basis)
- **command structure** and facilities
- equipment and availability
- communications facilities
- mutual aid and regional/national requirements
- specialist advisors (**advisory and specialist groups**)
- planning team, logistics support, risk assessor
- specialist teams (for example, mounted police, **firearms**, investigative support)
- road policing
- bronze functions (for example, intelligence, media, crime)

Support structures

Appropriate support structures assist command decision making. The number of staff required for each support function depends on the scale of the police operation.

Regardless of the type of police operation, having appropriate support functions in place assists in managing potentially large numbers of resources deployed during a mobilisation event. Forces

should, therefore, ensure that they have sufficient numbers of staff identified to carry out these roles, and factor in resilience during a potentially protracted mobilisation event. In accordance with business continuity principles, forces may wish to consider the use of non-warranted staff to fulfil support function roles where appropriate.

Support structures should take account of the following principles (which form the mnemonic PIRLFL):

- Planning
- Information
- Resources
- Logistics
- Finance
- Legal

For further information see APP on [Mobilisation](#).

Planning

Forces should have either generic contingency plans or specific plans to respond to an identified risk. However, the police response needs to be flexible to allow modifications in response to changing circumstances.

Each level of command may wish to seek the advice and support of personnel and partners with experience, skills and knowledge appropriate to the unique circumstances applicable to the operation. It is rare for the command of an incident or operation not to require input from or liaison with external agencies, organisational bodies or forces. Where this is the case, however, a commander may decide to set up a gold group as an alternative to a strategic coordinating group (SCG). The gold group has the same function as the SCG but is made up of relevant police resources.

A tactical planning group, chaired by the silver (tactical) commander, may (depending on the scale and nature of the operation) be convened to develop a tactical plan that reflects the overall intentions of the gold strategy.

Strategic coordinating group

During a multi-agency response or complex police operation, the **gold (strategic) commander** should establish and chair an SCG to coordinate the police response.

The primary purpose of the SCG is to maintain a strategic overview of the operation, and deliver strategic leadership throughout its lifespan. To be effective, the SCG should remain focused on the overall picture rather than detailed tactical or operational decisions. The SCG uses a process of discussion and agreement to ensure that an appropriate strategy is delivered at the silver and bronze levels.

Careful consideration should be given to the number and role of people who attend the SCG. It must remain a strategic decision-making body, and the people who attend must have executive level decision-making authority on behalf of their organisation.

Role of the SCG

The SCG:

- agrees strategic aims and objectives for the police response
- determines policy for implementation by the silver commander(s)
- assesses and arranges for adequate resources
- prioritises allocation of resources to the silver commander(s)
- implements adequate financial controls
- acts as an interface with national government
- liaises with neighbouring police forces or regional partner agencies
- coordinates communications internally and to the public
- liaises with the media at a strategic level

Tactical planning group

The following functions/individuals can participate in the tactical planning group:

- relevant **bronze (operational) commanders** (for example, road policing, crime)
- uniformed operations
- specialist advisors
- planning coordinator
- relevant basic command unit/division commanders

- communications
- press office
- logistics
- intelligence
- support services
- welfare and staff association representatives
- legal services
- finance
- partner agency representatives (as appropriate)

The tactical planning group informs and supports the silver commander's tactical decision making.

Information

It is important to provide commanders at all tiers, and coordinating groups at strategic and tactical tiers, with accurate, concise and clearly understandable information throughout an operation.

Information and intelligence, combined with the experience of those responsible for directing the police response, assists in determining the most appropriate response to a given situation. The assessment of information is a dynamic and continuing process throughout the life of an incident or operation. All those involved have a responsibility for updating information and ensuring that, as far as possible, there is a full intelligence picture and that this is conveyed as appropriate.

Commanders need to be provided with an accurate assessment of an event. As an operation progresses, the information and intelligence may change. Relevant strategies and plans should, therefore, be continuously reviewed to ensure that they remain appropriate and proportionate to the circumstances.

Responsibility for decisions

Commanders and those involved with the assessment of intelligence, provision of tactical advice and relaying communications are legally and professionally responsible for the decisions that they make and any advice or directions that they give.

Such action shall be 'reasonable in the circumstances,' as stated in the [Criminal Law Act 1967 s 3\(1\)](#).

Decision makers should be aware of the general principles involved when ensuring compliance with Articles of the European Convention on Human Rights, including proportionality, legality, necessity and the pursuit of legitimate aims. The particular requirements vary according to the individual Article concerned, for example, the use of force must pass the test of absolute necessity as set out in [Article 2\(2\)](#).

Information gathering process

On occasions, limited information only may be available. It is, therefore, important to establish and maintain an effective information gathering process at an early stage.

For further information see the [APP on Information management – Collection](#).

Need for dedicated intelligence function

In protracted or complex incidents there may be a need to establish a dedicated intelligence function to support commanders. This provides flexibility and is scalable. It also takes account of potential differing locations of gold, silver and bronze (GSB) commanders during operations, as they may not always be situated in a control room and may require the intelligence function to be located elsewhere.

Management of police information

The management of information generated by an operation, including the collection, sharing, retention and disposal of that information, should be conducted in accordance with the procedures agreed by Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

Depending on the size and nature of the operation, information may have to be supplied to organisations and agencies outside the affected force area, for example, to the Cabinet Office briefing room (COBR).

In addition, following an event, forces are likely to receive freedom of information requests and have to manage disclosure. Forces should be aware of these types of information requirements and include this in their planning.

Resources

Resources are the appropriate personnel, equipment and supplies provided to meet the needs of GSB commanders.

It is necessary to ensure that the right people with the right skills and abilities are deployed to the appropriate roles. Training and **command accreditation** should be key factors in determining the suitability of a person for a specific role. In addition, there is the requirement to ensure that the right equipment is available for use by the personnel deployed, either in a command function or **command support** function. Managing such deployment, however, should be the responsibility of a dedicated resource and logistics cell or unit.

Staff resource considerations, such as the safety, health and welfare of the personnel deployed to an operation, need to be managed. The potential duration of the operation determines the scale and nature of the deployment of personnel. Resource management should include the ability to rotate and replace personnel, and this should be considered from the beginning of the operation. In protracted incidents, individuals and teams may feel the need to see the incident through to its conclusion. This may be beneficial in terms of continuity, but care must be taken to ensure personnel do not burn out or continue to work when they are excessively tired or where their judgement is in doubt. A duty is owed to personnel under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

A police force may be able to cope with an operational requirement from within its own resources. The scale and nature of an incident or the effect of incidents occurring concurrently, however, may mean that a force needs to consider receiving mutual aid to meet the resource requirements of the GSB commanders.

Logistics

Logistics means getting the right people and equipment to the right place at the right time. It includes the subsequent management of these personnel and equipment resources, and may include:

- managing the accommodation, refreshment and replacement of staff if an operation extends over a prolonged period of time
- providing locations for operating centres, strategic and tactical holding areas (THAs), and briefing and debriefing centres at short notice

- preparing and managing briefing and debriefing centres, rendezvous points and THAs
- arranging and providing relevant equipment and supplies
- arranging transport for convoy purposes

In larger operations, it may be necessary to establish an information unit within the logistics cell to provide deployed personnel with a central point of contact for general enquiries, such as the location of health centres. This applies particularly for personnel who are deployed from outside the affected force area.

The logistical requirements of an operation may vary, depending on the size and nature of the police response. Forces may have a directory of companies and organisations with the capability and capacity to assist in the response to an emergency or major incident. Local authorities may also have similar directories that can be used.

The force procurement policy, the legal framework surrounding contracts and the tendering process need to be considered.

Finance

The financial accounting arrangements for an operation should be clear.

Depending on the size of the operation, this may include defining the cost recovery processes for costs incurred. The response to an emergency or major incident is likely to incur significant financial costs for the police force(s) affected.

The **gold (strategic) commander** and **strategic coordinating group** (where applicable) should be given updates on expenditure during the police response. The financial accounting arrangements to be used should be clarified when the lead coordinating agency responsibility passes from the police to the local authority or other organisation.

These costs may have to be borne by the police force concerned, but it may be possible to reclaim them or a proportion thereof from another agency.

Cost recovery

Options for cost recovery include the **Bellwin Scheme**, which operates in England, and the **Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme**, which operates in Wales. The **National Police**

Chiefs' Council (NPCC) (2015) National Policing Guidelines on Charging for Police Services

provides a clear charging framework and advice on when and what to charge for police services.

Where an operation or incident has involved a private business or transport company, full or partial recovery may be possible from the owners.

Legal

Such is the scale and complexity of some police operations that the **gold (strategic) commander** may feel it appropriate to have access to objective legal advice during the police response.

Legal advice may be sought:

- on the requirement for authorisation of certain police powers (for example, authorisations made under the **Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000**)
- to limit a police force's exposure to civil litigation
- on how to comply with the law, so that an operational review does not become necessary in the future
- to assist in the interpretation of statutory or common law relevant to the police response

Tags

Operations