

Strategic Policing Requirement

Hertfordshire Constabulary

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Introduction

The *Strategic Policing Requirement* (SPR) was issued in July 2012.¹ This document sets out the Home Secretary's view of the national threats that the police must prepare for and the appropriate national policing capabilities that are required to counter those threats. The SPR respects the operational independence of the police service, advising what, in strategic terms, it needs to achieve, but not how it should achieve it.

The particular threats specified in Part A of the SPR, and referred to as the national threats in this report, are:

- terrorism;
- civil emergencies;
- organised crime;
- public order threats; and
- large-scale cyber incidents.

Part B specifies the policing response that is required nationally, in conjunction with other national agencies, to counter these threats. This policing response is described in the SPR as follows:

*“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. Police and crime commissioners and chief constables must have regard to this aggregate capacity when considering the respective **contributions** they will make to it;*

*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 with, 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 co-ordinated or mobilised, together and with those of other*

¹ In accordance with section 37A Police Act 1996. Available from www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-policing-requirement

agencies – such as the Security Service and, from 2013, the National Crime Agency. The combination of consistency and connectivity forms the basis for interoperability between police forces and with other partners.”

We report the findings from this inspection of Hertfordshire Constabulary which took place during September 2013 against each of these requirements.

The breadth of requirements that are set out in the strategic policing requirement are outside the scope of a single inspection. Therefore, it has been necessary to plan a series of inspections over three years so that the police response to all the national threats can be examined individually and in-depth over that period.

This year, HMIC has examined how well police forces have established arrangements to respond to strategic policing requirement threats and has conducted in-depth examinations of the police response to two of the national threats: the threat to public order; and the threat of a large-scale cyber incident.

We have produced the following three national reports, available at <http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic>:

- The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of the arrangements that police forces have in place to meet the requirement;
- The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of how police forces in England and Wales deal with threats to public order; and
- The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of how police forces in England and Wales deal with threats of a large-scale cyber incident (including criminal attack).

This report sets out what we found when we examined the arrangements that Hertfordshire Constabulary had in place to meet the strategic policing requirement and follows the format of the first of the national reports listed above.

Hertfordshire Constabulary Police has formed a strategic alliance with Bedfordshire Police and Cambridgeshire Constabulary. The strategic alliance has developed arrangements for providing joint protective services². These arrangements support the three forces' capabilities to meet the strategic policing requirement.

² The 2005 HMIC report 'Closing the gap' describes the term 'protective services' as police forces' capabilities to protect the public from threats of a serious nature like serious organised crime, terrorism, public order and civil emergencies. This is explained as being in contrast to local policing where the police work **with** the public at the neighbourhood level to tackle anti-social behaviour, or where the police work **for** the public in dealing with volume crime.

Capacity and contribution

Terrorism

The chief constable understands his role in tackling the threat of terrorism. The force, together with the counter-terrorism network, has the capacity it needs to contribute to the national counter-terrorism effort.

Hertfordshire Constabulary has documented its assessment of threats that it faces from terrorism and domestic extremism within its force strategic assessment, which records a range of threats faced by the force. The strategic assessment provided to HMIC was last updated in August 2013. Terrorism is also included as one of several priorities within the force's control strategy.³ The force's operational policing plan includes a commitment to counter threats of terrorism, by making sure there are sufficient specialist resources available to meet demand.

The strategic alliance recognises the importance of preventing people from becoming radicalised for violent extremism and the joint protective services counter-terrorism and domestic extremism unit has produced a 'prevent' tactical delivery plan, which outlines how the forces will work to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The force is linked to the national counter-terrorism network through the regional counter-terrorism intelligence unit. Bedfordshire Police is currently responsible for oversight of the unit, which together with the network, provides most of the force's specialist counter-terrorism capability. Special branch officers working within the joint protective services unit co-ordinate local intelligence gathering and provide links between national counter-terrorism activity and force staff.

Civil emergencies

The force, together with Hertfordshire Resilience, the local resilience forum, has the capacity to respond to local civil emergencies and to contribute to national emergencies.

The force's strategic assessment considers threats posed by civil emergencies. Specific risks faced by the local resilience forum are recorded on the community risk register. The document provided to HMIC was dated December 2012. Hertfordshire Constabulary's response to civil emergencies features within the operational policing plan, which also contains a commitment to make sure there are sufficient specialist resources to meet demand.

³ Control strategies are high-level plans that set out how police forces intend to manage threats and risks identified within their strategic assessments of threat and risk.

Hertfordshire Constabulary is represented within the local resilience forum executive group by the assistant chief constable responsible for leading the force's response to civil emergencies. In 2013, the force accepted responsibility for vice-chair of Hertfordshire Resilience.

A civil contingency unit has been established, in partnership with Bedfordshire Police, located within the joint protective services operational planning support unit. This unit links with the Department for Communities and Local Government to implement national policy.

Through the strategic alliance Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire forces, have sufficient trained staff to provide the roles required for responses to civil emergencies. Records of officers' skills are maintained by the alliance operational planning support unit. The Eastern Region Information and Coordination Centre, based within Essex Police headquarters, co-ordinates cross-border mobilisation for public order and most specialist skills on behalf of the Eastern region. Norfolk Constabulary manages chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear responses on behalf of the region. The alliance operational planning support unit links with the Eastern Region Information and Coordination Centre, the National Police Coordination Centre and Norfolk Constabulary for the cross-border mobilisation of resources.

Serious organised crime

Hertfordshire Constabulary has appropriate capacity to meet threats from serious organised crime, either with its own trained staff, or through its regional organised crime unit, known as the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU).

The constabulary has included serious organised crime threats within its strategic assessment and applies a nationally approved methodology for disrupting organised crime groups.

Hertfordshire's operational policing plan contains a commitment to reduce opportunities for organised crime to take root by strengthening enforcement activity and safeguarding local people and their businesses. The plan includes specific objectives for dismantling organised crime groups and disrupting their criminal activity.

The strategic alliance's response to serious organised crime is led by the joint protective services unit's assistant chief constable. Each force within the strategic alliance has its own tasking and co-ordinating methods to make sure that resources are deployed against the most serious organised crime groups. The joint protective services unit receives requests for assistance from the three forces and co-ordinates responses to the most serious organised crime groups with the regional organised crime unit.

Agreements about the resources that are allocated against the most serious organised crime groups within the region are reached at the regional organised crime unit monthly task-allocation meetings attended by representatives from all six Eastern region forces.

Chief officers across the Eastern region are co-operating to increase the capabilities of the regional organised crime unit in accordance with recommendations issued by the national lead for tackling serious organised crime.

Public order

The chief constable understands his role to provide police support units⁴ to deal with public order incidents across force boundaries and to make a contribution to the national requirement.

Hertfordshire Constabulary had not completed a public order specific strategic threat and risk assessment in accordance with nationally issued guidance at the time of our inspection but it had assessed the potential for public disorder in its strategic assessment. A regional public order threat and risk assessment was being constructed during our inspection. It was not clear how the force decided the number of police support units that it needed to respond to local threats at the time of our inspection.

The force's operational policing plan also contains a commitment to ensuring sufficient specialist resources to meet demands to counter threats to public order or safety.

For each force, HMIC compared the number of police support units the force said they had, with the number of police support units that it told us they needed to respond to local outbreaks of disorder. The force assessed that it needed three police support units to respond to local threats and it could provide six. The constabulary is able to provide its police support units to support national mobilisation.

The force has sufficient staff to support public order policing, including specialists and senior officers to command responses to major events and public disorder.

⁴ Police Support Units are the basic formations used by the police service for the policing of major events. The composition of a police support unit is standardised across all of the 43 police forces in England and Wales and consists of one inspector, three sergeants and 18 police constables, plus three drivers trained and equipped to carry out public order tactics to national standards, with three suitably equipped personnel carriers. Formations of a sergeant and six constables are referred to as serials.

The use of mutual aid – the provision of support between police forces – is another indicator of the extent to which police forces either have or do not have sufficient trained public order resources. Data provided by forces on their provision and receipt of mutual aid for 2011/12 and 2012/13 show that Hertfordshire was one of 31 forces that were net providers of public order policing mutual aid.

Large-scale cyber incident

The constabulary's plans to respond to the threat of a large-scale cyber incident were still under development at the time of our inspection.

The force had not assessed the extent of cybercrime or the nature of cyber threats that it faces. However, the operational policing plan includes a commitment to increase resources dedicated to responding to the increased threat of cybercrime.

Hertfordshire Constabulary has not undertaken an assessment of threats or the potential impact of a denial of service⁵ attack on the force's systems. However, the force's IT department monitors cyber intrusion against the force infrastructure and the force has suffered an interruption to a neighbourhood policing website. It is therefore aware of the risks.

There are business continuity plans⁶ to deal with IT system outage but these plans are not specifically linked to the effects of a cyber-attack on the force network. The constabulary is part of a three-force information and communication technology partnership. In the event of a loss of command and control capability, business continuity plans allow the constabulary to use one of the other forces' systems.

The force has a limited understanding of the extent of cybercrime within its area and has not, therefore, developed a material capability to investigate. If it were to be faced with a significant cyber threat, it would rely upon the regional organised crime unit and national capabilities to assist in providing a response.

Hertfordshire Constabulary has recognised that it needs to improve its capacity to investigate cybercrime and has increased its number of staff trained to examine computers. The force has prepared a proposal for further improving its capacity and capability to tackle cybercrime, which focuses on investigation. The force has not prepared a comprehensive plan that considers how victims and potential victims could be supported through prevention, preparing for recovery and protection of systems.

⁵ A denial of service attack is an attempt to make a computer or network of computers unavailable to its users.

⁶ Business continuity plans set out how the force will operate following an incident and how it expects to return to business as usual in the quickest possible time afterwards.

Capability

Terrorism

Hertfordshire Constabulary has, or has access to, the necessary capability to conduct complex investigations into terrorism. It has the systems in place to manage the training of special branch officers to maintain the necessary skills to provide specific counter-terrorism capability.

The head of the counter-terrorism and domestic extremism unit, and analysts in the joint protective services unit contribute information for the strategic threat and risk assessment for each of the forces within the strategic alliance.

The strategic alliance recognises the importance of preventing people from becoming radicalised for violent extremism and the joint protective services counter-terrorism and domestic extremism unit has produced a plan, which outlines how the forces will work to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

All four strands of the CONTEST⁷ strategy are co-ordinated by a strategic board chaired by the joint protective services unit assistant chief constable. The strategic board is supported by a tactical CONTEST group which implements the strategy.

The training lead for the joint protective services unit manages training requirements. Counter-terrorism staff are trained to national standards and their skills are recorded on a database maintained for the joint protective services unit by the head of training. This supports managers in their planning to maintain skill levels for the unit.

Hertfordshire Constabulary has access to sufficient trained staff to support all four strands of the counter-terrorism CONTEST strategy.

Civil emergencies

The constabulary is meeting the strategic policing requirement to provide capability to meet civil emergencies which span the borders between Hertfordshire and surrounding forces.

Hertfordshire resilience forum members prepare the community risk register and agree what needs to be done to manage the risks that have been identified. Action to respond to the threats is detailed in the Hertfordshire resilience strategic plan, which includes plans for exercising and performance measures.

⁷ Contest – The government's counter-terrorism strategy. The four strands are: pursue, prevent, protect and prepare.

Hertfordshire resilience activity is co-ordinated by an executive group, which meets twice a year and is chaired by Hertfordshire County Council's director of community protection and the chief fire officer. The executive group is supported by a management group and two working groups which deal with response and planning, and people and communities.

There is sufficient trained staff within the force to deal with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents. Maintenance of capability for the three strategic alliance forces is managed by the operational policing support unit. It is accepted that the police response to a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident in the Eastern region would be regionally co-ordinated by Norfolk Constabulary.

Serious organised crime

Hertfordshire Constabulary has the capabilities required, either internally or through officers provided by the regional organised crime unit, to meet threats from serious organised crime.

The force confidential unit handles sensitive intelligence from which it produces tactical assessment documents and identifies organised crime groups for management in accordance with national policy.

Force leaders are part of regional arrangements for tackling serious organised crime and attend governance meetings for the regional organised crime unit. HMIC found that, in the Eastern region, chief constables have agreed their detailed plans for the further development of the regional organised crime unit.

Capabilities to conduct complex investigations and disrupt the activities of organised crime groups are co-ordinated in accordance with the level of harm that the groups threaten. There is a way to intensify the response by the force, joint protective services unit and the regional organised crime unit to ensure that the most appropriate resources are used.

Public order

Hertfordshire Constabulary has the capabilities required to respond to public order threats. Each force has its own public order resources which is co-ordinated through the operations team on behalf of the strategic alliance. The force's public order capability is shared with the strategic alliance and is led by an assistant chief constable. He represents the three forces at the Association of Chief Police Officers⁸ Eastern region public order public safety working group.

⁸ The Association of Chief Police Officers is the professional body that co-ordinates the leadership of the police service, develops policy and establishes standards.

The force did not provide HMIC with a self-assessment of its public order capability using the College of Policing capability framework at the time of the inspection, although the force had completed the exercise.

Public order training for the three strategic alliance forces is provided by joint protective services unit public order trainers who are accredited to national standards. A memorandum of understanding formalises arrangements for public order training delivery between Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Essex Police, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Norfolk Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary, specifically for the delivery of a number of command and specialist courses and sharing of accredited trainers.

Records are maintained by the operational policing support unit about staff public order skills, training and accreditation.

At the time of our inspection, six senior police officers within the force had been trained and were accredited as silver commanders⁹. This number has, in the past, been found to be insufficient to deal with public order demands.

HMIC tested, without notice, the force's capability to mobilise and conduct mutual support across boundaries to outbreaks of public disorder. The force would be able to deploy sufficient resources for an initial response and deal with simultaneous incidents. Control room staff did not at the time of this test have access to information about officers' skills and would rely on the operational planning unit, which is available during office hours, to identify trained staff. While the operational planning unit has information about the staff who are trained to deal with public order problems, they would not be able to identify easily which of those staff were on duty. It was unclear how quickly the force could deploy public-order-trained staff to the scene.

Information was available within the control room about the availability of senior leaders trained to command public order responses, so they would be able to arrange the leadership for the police response. Control room staff were also aware of how to secure assistance beyond the force's capability. Contingency plans are not accessible on the command and control system but are available in hard copy in the control room.

We inspected one of the constabulary's police support unit carriers and found it to be fully functioning and equipped to national standards.

⁹ Silver commanders are the senior police officers responsible for implanting tactics to achieve the overall police strategy in dealing with major events or outbreaks of public disorder.

Large-scale cyber incident

Hertfordshire Constabulary, like most forces, is not yet able to identify or understand fully the threats, risks and harm posed by cybercrime. The force is not yet taking full advantage of opportunities being made available to train its staff to deal with cybercrime.

The force had received four reports of cyber attacks within its force area over the previous twelve months.

The force has an appointed lead for cyber investigations who actively participates in the regional organised crime unit and plans to develop a regional cyber investigation capability.

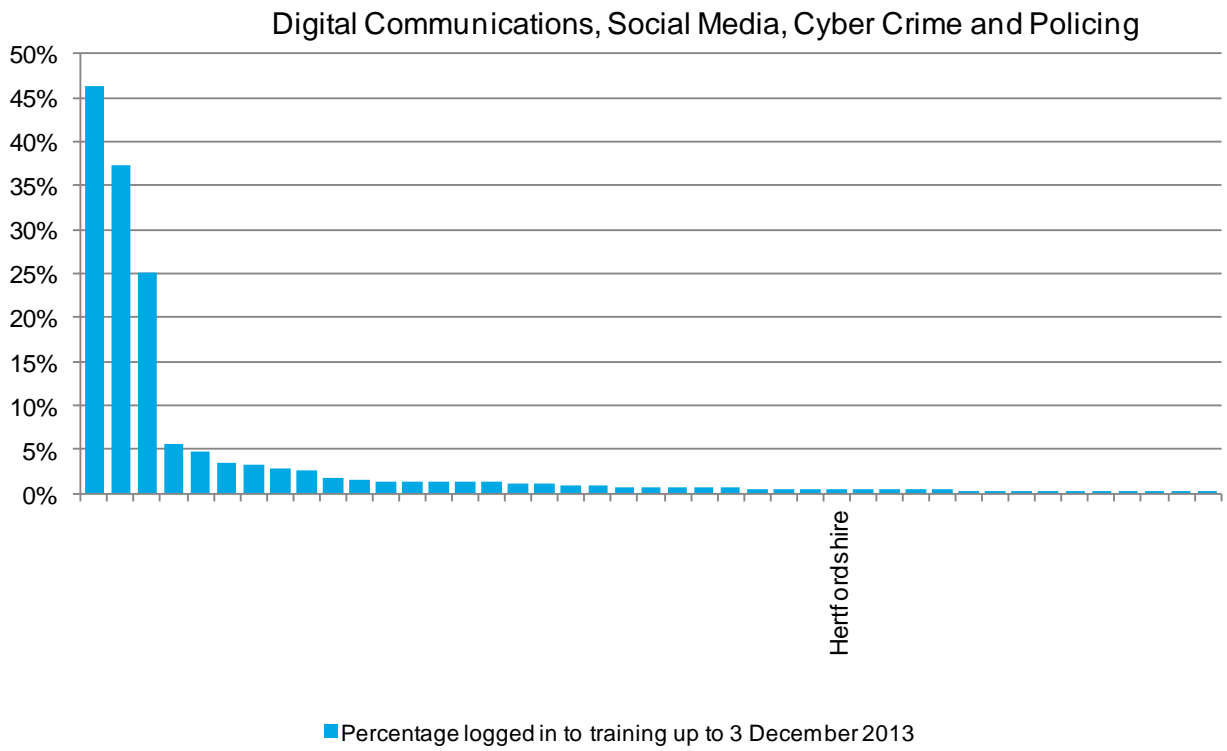
Hertfordshire is confident that it has the skills to investigate lower level cyber issues, but recognises that it would need to refer more serious incidents to the regional organised crime unit and national units. The force hi-tech crime unit assesses the skills, training and equipment that it needs to be effective and computer forensic examiners have an internal system of continuous professional development. Force senior leaders state that they place a high priority on maintaining staff skills by updating training and attending workshops and conferences. There has been a clear directive from senior managers that tackling serious organised and cybercrimes are priorities.

The force has not taken steps to improve its cyber skills profile by working with academic institutions, undertaking specific recruitment or looking for volunteers or special constables with the requisite skills.

The College of Policing has developed eight computer-based training courses to improve the police service's knowledge and skills to deal effectively with cybercrime. Data have been provided and analysed to understand the proportion of the workforce who have sought the training up to the beginning of December 2013.¹⁰ Tables that show the proportion of staff, for each force, who have signed in for the training are included in our national report on the police service's response to cyber threats. The following charts demonstrate how many of Hertfordshire's workforce enrolled for three of the eight e-learning courses designed to improve awareness. The courses were selected to be representative of the force's commitment to this aim for both general front-line policing (Digital Communications, Social Media, Cybercrime and Policing introduced in April 2013 and Cybercrime and Digital Policing – an Introduction introduced in August 2013) and for investigators (Introduction to Communications Data and Cybercrime introduced in July 2011).

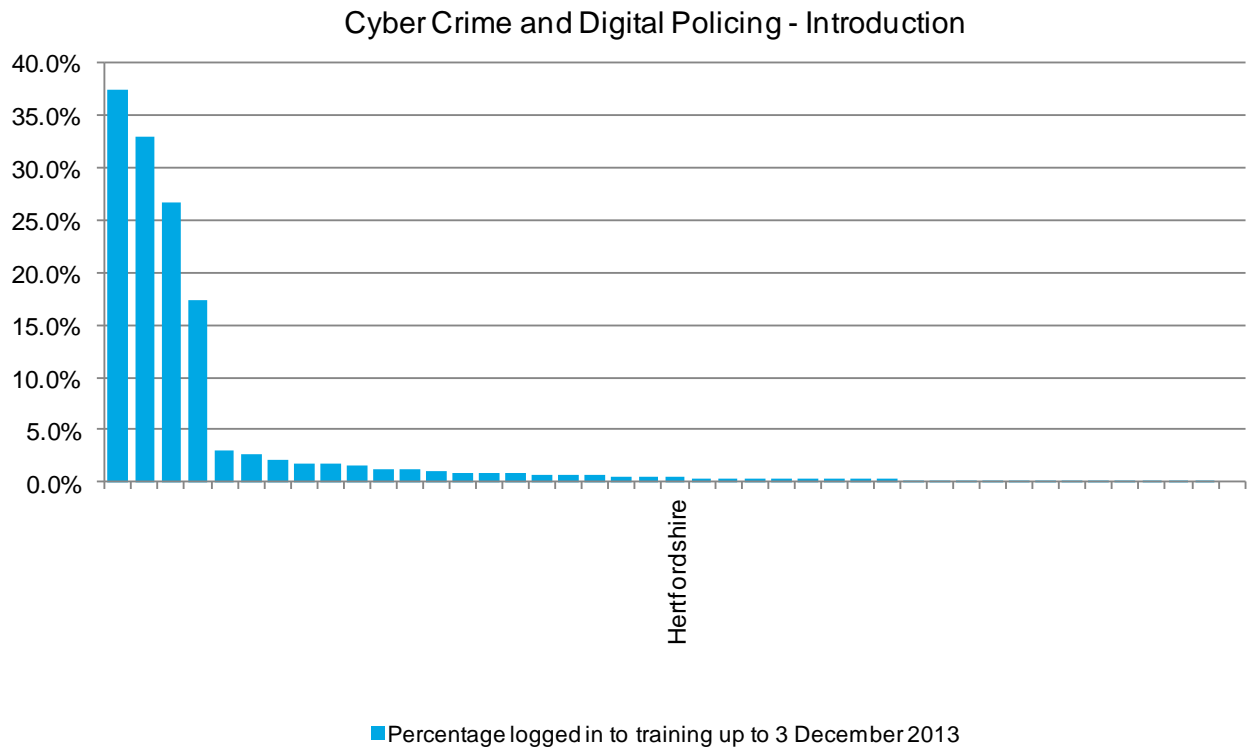
¹⁰ Information provided by the College of Policing dated 10 February 2014 – completion figures for Communication Data and Cybercrime Modules (Period Ending 31 January 2014).

Figure 1: Digital Communications, Social Media, Cybercrime and Policing¹¹



¹¹ This course, designed for all staff, aims to develop awareness of digital communications technology and its impact on different areas of cybercrime, social media, law enforcement and policing.

Figure 2: Cybercrime and Digital Policing – an Introduction¹²



¹² This course is designed for all police officers, special constables and other individuals in a law enforcement community. It is aimed at helping them develop a general awareness of the types of emerging threats and risks from criminals exploiting technology. The training is linked to relevant legislation and also covers cybercrime prevention.

Consistency

Public order

Arrangements to train public order officers and procure public order equipment are consistent across all forces in the Eastern region.

Hertfordshire Constabulary purchases public order protective equipment in accordance with national standards and there is a joint procurement unit for the strategic alliance. Public order specialists from all three forces agree the specification for equipment that is procured by this unit. There is consistency in the equipment used by all three forces.

Officers from the three forces train and exercise their skills and tactics together. In the event of mobilisation, staff from the three forces will respond and act as mixed units; often a police support unit will consist of police officers from all three forces. Those responsible for commanding police responses to public disorder also train and exercise with units from the other forces and take responsibility for leading aspects of public order policing in other force areas.

Responding to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents.

Hertfordshire Police is able to operate effectively together with other emergency services to respond to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents.

The force's chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear equipment is compliant with national standards and is consistent with that used by other forces. Interoperability has proven effective when the force's resources have been deployed with those from other forces.

Connectivity

Terrorism

The constabulary and its neighbouring forces in the Eastern region have effective ways to co-ordinate and mobilise resources to deal with incidents of terrorism. These are supported by secure information technology and radio communications.

The joint protective services unit has the capability to communicate securely with the counter-terrorism network and other agencies. They are also able to access intelligence systems across all of the three strategic alliance forces.

The force has daily counter-terrorism management meetings where information about counter-terrorism and domestic extremism activity is discussed and measures agreed to deal with them. Force daily meetings link joint protective services unit and counter-terrorism intelligence unit daily management meetings. There are also effective task-allocation and co-ordination arrangements which co-ordinate the allocation of resources between forces, the strategic alliance and the Eastern region.

Civil emergencies

Hertfordshire Constabulary is able to communicate with other local resilience forum members in the planning of responding to civil emergencies.

A multi-agency support group links local resilience forum members and emergency services. Hertfordshire Constabulary staff recognise that the government-led joint emergency services interoperability programme offers opportunities to improve the way that emergency services work together and are consulting with other organisations on their proposals. The joint emergency services interoperability programme is developing a training programme that will improve consistency in language and operating practices between the three emergency services when responding to incidents. All three strategic alliance forces are contributing staff to help deliver this training.

Hertfordshire resilience has drawn learning from several incidents including rail accidents and the Buncefield fire. Hertfordshire Constabulary contribute to annual joint exercises, organised by the local resilience forum, to test partnership responses to a range of scenarios.

Serious organised crime

Hertfordshire Constabulary communicates effectively with other forces in the region and with the regional organised crime unit about the mobilisation of resources, sharing of equipment and tactics, and communication with other partners. Also it is participating actively, through the regional organised crime unit, in the national tasking arrangements.

Hertfordshire Constabulary uses the Police National Database to access intelligence from other forces. The three strategic alliance forces are working to develop common technology to improve the sharing of information.

The region has an effective way to prioritise organised crime issues that require operational activity, allocate tasks to officers at either a constabulary or regional level, and co-ordinate activity across the region. There was evidence that resources are prioritised to deal with the most serious organised crime groups.

The constabulary are able to share intelligence securely with the regional organised crime unit ERSOU.

Public order

We found that the chief constable of Hertfordshire Constabulary is co-operating with the arrangements for cross-boundary mobilisation of officers to deal with public order incidents.

The Eastern regional mobilisation protocol provides arrangements for Essex Police to mobilise regional public order resources in response to national or regional public order events. Contact would be made with the operational policing support unit within the collaborative unit should resources be required from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire or Hertfordshire. Agreements have been reached with the City of London and Thames Valley police forces for the provision of police horses should they be required to police public order events.

Hertfordshire has tested its arrangements to mobilise public order resources during the past two years.

The force has contributed resources to policing major events on a number of occasions and has well-rehearsed plans to do so. During the past two years, the force has received support from other forces to police major events or deal with public disorder in the form of 11 police support units¹⁴ and, in turn, the force has provided 20 police support units to other forces during the same period.

¹⁴ This analysis excluded three major policing operations – the 2011 widespread disorder experienced in England in August 2011, the London Olympics 2012 and the removal of the residents at Dale Farm, Essex in 2012 (Operation Cabinet) – as they were exceptional incidents that skewed the results.

Large-scale cyber incident

Hertfordshire Constabulary has not been faced with a large-scale cyber incident that would require a joint response. Staff in the constabulary were aware, however, of where they could get help if it was needed.

The force has not had to investigate or deal with the consequences of a serious malware¹⁵ attack. Force leaders recognise that, if they were faced with such a challenge, they would seek access to national expertise through the National Cyber Crime Unit of the National Crime Agency or the regional organised crime unit.

¹⁵ A computer program designed specifically to damage or disrupt a computer, mobile device, computer systems or computer network and can include programs designed to gain unauthorised access to data held on these devices