Standard Operating Procedure for the Operational Deployment of Protestor Liaison Teams (PLT's) in the MPS.

1. Introduction.

In the MPS, the use of PLT's is a key element in the proportionate application of the National Decision Making Model (NDM) and in ensuring compliance with articles under the Human Rights Act.

PLT's are a new, yet key, tactic in effectively managing Public Order Policing Operations. Their deployment is detailed in the ACPO Public Order Authorised Professional Practice (APP) as follows:

PLT's provide a link between the police, protest organisers and protestors through dialogue with focus on:
- *Negotiation*
- *Mediation*
- *Initiation*
- *Communication*
- *Sensing*

Reduces potential tension and the risk of disorder (e.g. avoid misunderstandings and rumour)
Promotes confidence and trust between the police and protestors.

The introduction of PLTs is based on engendering "legitimacy" in the crowd to enable the police (PLTs) to operate in an environment where, traditionally, police would be seen as unwelcome.

From the significant number of PLT deployments, so far, in the MPS, the identified benefits are as follows:

- Open and clear routes of dialogue pre, during and post event to build trust and confidence with protestors.

- Enhanced knowledge of protest groups and their intentions providing opportunities for the scale of operations to be adjusted to the most appropriate levels

- Allowing Public Order Commanders earlier and fuller consideration of how relevant Human Rights Articles should be applied.

- Greater acceptance of police among protest groups where the PLT police presence in the crowd becomes the 'norm'
- Increased self-regulation within the crowd
- Increased opportunity to engage in dialogue, from within the crowd, with those groups who, historically, are reluctant to engage with police.
- Minimised potential for conflict through direct communication and mediation between protest organisers and PLT officers

- Significant improvement in intelligence flow and feedback to enhance future MPS operations

2. PLT's - Role Profile's.
A role profile for PLT Officers is currently being developed by the Police College. When this is approved, the role profile will be included within this SOP. Until this role profile is approved, it is generally accepted that PLT officers should possess the following competencies:

Essential
- PC to Inspector Rank (although the rank mix is not important)
- Be fully proficient at OST (due to the fact they operate from within the crowd)
- Fully understand the role, scientific / legal rationale and concept of PLTs
- Confidence and self-assurance
- The ability to work alone with minimal supervision and within a team environment
- Flexibility and empathic approach
- Sensitive to others' needs
- Has consistently demonstrated high professional standards, proven integrity and the ability to deal with sensitive issues in a confidential manner
- Excellent communication and listening skills
- Demonstrate a genuine commitment to the role

Desirable
- Have completed the PLT Course

The role of PLT Officer is hugely challenging. Selection should be by way of competency based selection based on Police College role profiles (once agreed).

3. Operational Deployments of PLT's
The deployment of PLT's is a tactical option for Silver as part of the pre-event and event day application of the NDM. However, it will be the responsibility of Silver to ensure that adequate command and control arrangements are in place for the event/policing operation to effectively govern the pre, during and post-event deployment of PLT's. It is also the responsibility of Silver to ensure that all engagement (not just engagement with protest groups) is holistic and inclusive. For larger operations, it is suggested that all pre-event engagement, including the pre-event deployment of PLT's sits under "Bronze Engagement".

4. Command and Control.
4a. Command and the Tactical use of PLT's

Previous experience from the deployment of PLT's tells us that getting the Command and Control arrangements for the deployment of PLT's right, leads to the productive and effective use of PLT's and the achievement of the Gold Commander's Strategic Intentions. This said, no two policing/PO operations are ever the same and event Silver Commander's must consider what works best for them and for their event.

In developing the plan for the deployment of PLT's, the Silver Commander must (or task another member of the Command Team with doing so) set a PLT strategy for pre-event (i.e. during the planning and negotiation phase), during the event and post-event (i.e. continuing liaison with the protest group(s) to build upon the policing operation).

Options for command and control arrangements around PLT deployments can be summarised as follows:

<u>4b. Command and Tactics for a Large Event (Extensive Command Structure, multiple geographic sector's and functional Bronze responsibilities) or Medium Sized Event (i.e. any event where a Bronze Engagement will be appointed).</u>
Pre-event.
A Bronze PLT should be appointed as soon as the event is known. For pre-event Command and Control purposes, Bronze PLT will report to Bronze Engagement (on the basis that protestor engagement / liaison is just one part of the entire engagement plan). This will ensure that all engagement is joined-up and exactly "who engages with who" is set, controlled and monitored by Bronze Engagement.

During Event.
Accepting that a significant amount of pre-event engagement with protest groups will have taken place prior to the event (and, as stated above) the overt deployment of PLT's on the actual days of the event is a PO tactic which is key to achieving the Gold Commander's Strategic Intentions. As such, on event days, consideration must be given to Bronze PLT being located in SOR, directly reporting to Silver and with PLT Team Leaders working, under protocol, to other members of the PO Command Team (i.e. Bronze March). The reason for this is straightforward. The deployment of PLT's in to a crowd or to a particular group is a tactic which, if successful, will prevent the deployment of PSU's performing other, more intrusive, PO tactics and/or the potential use of force. As a result, the member of the command team who has tactical responsibility for the plan (or that part of the plan) must be in direct control of the PLT's so they can control when the PLT's are deployed, when they are withdrawn and what they are tasked with doing. It would not be acceptable for another Bronze (i.e. Bronze Engagement) to be making tactical deployments of PLT's in, for example, a march, at the same time as Bronze March is considering deploying L1/2 officers to undertake arrest tactics in the crowd.

During any event where PLT's are deployed and the event is of the type which will move across Sector's, it is essential that the Command Team have in place

sufficient understandable protocols that allows the Bronze in whose area the PLT's are operating, sufficient clarity to control the tactical deployment of the PLT's and to task them accordingly (see also Section 5 below).

Post-Event.
Post-event protestor liaison is essential to developing long-term relationships and trust with protest groups and in reducing the prospect of conflict in the future. As a result, Silver must ensure that there is a post-event plan to liaise with protest groups.

4c. Command and Tactics for a Small Event (Static demonstration outside a specific premises, or a short march or any event where a Bronze Engagement is not appointed).
A PLT Team Leader (PS, Insp or CI) should be appointed as soon as the event is known. The PLT Team Leader will report directly to Silver or one of the Bronze Commander's appointed by Silver and will be responsible for all pre, during and post-event PLT activity. Again, as stated above for larger events, it is essential that the Command Team for all events have in place sufficiently robust and understandable protocols which governs the "event day" deployment of PLT's to ensure that the Bronze responsible for the tactical delivery in the area which the PLT's are deployed (or are likely to be deployed) can control the tactical use of the PLT's in order to achieve the Silver Commander's over-arching tactical plan and the Gold Commander's strategic intentions.

PLT Deployments.
In the MPS, PLT "Serials" will be denoted by the "Serial 1000 A, B, C, etc." (unless an event has more than 10 sector's). PLT's operate in teams with a designated team leader who will report to "Bronze PLT" for medium to large events. For other events, where Bronze Engagement is not appointed, the PLT Team Leader will report directly to Silver or a designated geographic or functional Bronze.

The PLT Team Leader should be at least Sergeant rank.

For medium to large events, "Bronze PLT" should be at least Inspector rank. For large events which present a high level of threat, Silver should consider whether Bronze PLT should be at least the rank of CI, PLT Trained and be a member of the Advanced Public Order Cadre (to aid effective liaison between Bronze PLT and other Bronze Commanders deployed to an event and to increase mutual understanding of tactics). Consideration should be given to "Bronze PLT" being supported by a PO Advisor.

For larger events, where "Bronze PLT" is physically located will be a matter for "Silver". Consideration should be given to location Bronze PLT in SOR to enable effective liaison with Silver and other key individuals such as Bronze Intelligence and to ease communications with geographic Bronze Commanders.

The "Size" of the PLT deployment and how they are configured will vary according to the event. A small event, for example, a demonstration outside a

embassy may only require 2 x PLT officers. A large march passing through a number of areas of Central London may require multiple teams of PLT Officers which would enable Bronze PLT to deploy teams and team leaders to multiple incidents/groups at the same time.

5. Operational Tasking of PLT's

It is essential that PLT's (whether pre, during or post event) are specifically tasked by the most appropriate member of the Command Team (see Section 4 above for operating models) with specific details of what the command team wish to achieve from the PLT deployment. For example, pre event, this could be to engage with "XYZ protest group, establish liaison, explain role of PLT and role of police in relation to public protest and establish the intentions of the XYZ group in relation to their planned protest on 25th December". In relation to a actual deployment during an event, the specific task could be "Please liaise with the XYZ protest group who are currently holding a sit-down protest in Oxford Street, please engage in dialogue and attempt to negotiate with the group with a view to clearing the obstruction and re-opening traffic". For pre and post event deployments, such taskings should be documented. For during event taskings, the task should be documented in the Decision Log of the member of the command team making the request and in the PO Action Book of the PLT Team Leader or PLT Team Member undertaking the task. All tasks given to PLTs must be realistic and achievable objectives and directly link to the attainment of the overall tactical plan. See also Section 7 below regarding PLT recording of activity undertaken.

In setting the PLT strategy for an event, Silver (or the Bronze Commander on who's sector the PLT's will be operating, must ensure Bronze PLT or the PLT Team Leader has a sound understanding of the tactical plan in order that the PLTs can seek to achieve the over-arching tactical plan and does not operate outside it.

6. Intelligence Gathering (including the operational deployment of FIT, EGT and PLT on the same event).

Intelligence Obtained.

The purpose of PLT deployments is to engage in dialogue and build trust with protest groups with a view to balancing the need to maintain the Queen's Peace whilst, at the same time, supporting the right to lawful protest and freedom of expression. As such, any suggestion that PLT's are intended to be "intelligence gatherers" is likely to undermine efforts to build trust and confidence amongst protest groups and individuals. This said, recent experience does tell us that PLT's do gather accurate intelligence in the normal course of their duties. This is mainly because, pre and post event they are engaging with protest groups and do elicit information in the course of these duties which could be regarded as intelligence. This could include: numbers attending, start and finish times, route, intentions of the group, others groups likely to associate themselves with the event, persons likely to attend, etc. Similarly, on the day of the event, the PLT's are likely to be working inside or around the group in question and, as a result, are likely to generate high-quality intelligence from the discussions they are having with group members.

As a result, all PLT officers must ensure all intelligence is recorded on Crimint (including pre and post event activity) and all intelligence obtained during an event, is fed-in fast time to Bronze PLT/PLT Team Leader who will ensure it is passed to Bronze Intelligence for analysis and dissemination to Silver and the rest of the Command Team (in the same way as any other intelligence).

Deploying PLT's, Forward Intelligence Teams and Evidence Gathering Teams on the Same Event.
Recent experience has shown that PLT's, FIT's and EGT's can be deployed on the same event with high levels of success, however, clear protocol's need to exist between geographic/functional Bronze Commander's, Bronze PLT and Bronze Intelligence.

If it is considered that FIT Teams are employed on an event to identify "threats" to that event. In the first instance, this could be achieved by deploying FIT's on the periphery of the event monitoring movement towards the event. Then, as higher threat groups/individuals are seen, this is fed-in to the intelligence system and disseminated to Silver (or Bronze depending upon the nature of the event) who, applying the NDM, considers tactical options to deal with that threat. One of these options (and probably one of the most proportionate and least intrusive) would be the deployment of PLT's. Then, the PLT's will be tasked with a specific objective (as in Section 5 above). Experience tells us that we have had problems in the past when PLT's and FIT's have operated "on top" of each other. This approach provides clarity of purpose and role and allows FIT's to "move on" and identify further threats leaving the tactical option of PLT's to attempt to counter the identified threat.

The deployment of EGT's alongside FIT's does, however, prove more problematic. Whilst it is accepted that a key element of EGT tactics is to film/photograph individuals / groups before the commit offences, undertaking such activity whilst PLT's are trying to engage/negotiate can undermine the efforts of the PLT. As such, EGT's should try and capture imagery prior to the PLT deployment (or after PLT's have been withdrawn in the case of an escalating situation).

As a result, it is essential to ensure that adequate protocols are in place between key Bronze Commander's regarding the deployment of PLT's, FIT's and EGT's.

7. Recording and Audit Trail.
It is essential that all activity by PLT's, PLT Team Leaders and "Bronze PLT's" record all activity undertaken and that all taskings of PLT's by Command Teams (as in Section 5 above) are also recorded in Decision Logs.

When a Bronze PLT is employed on an event, a PO Decision Log will be used

PLT Officers and PLT Team Leaders will use a PO Action Book for each event they are deployed on, including pre and post event activity.

All PLT engagement work, both pre and post event, including all meetings and telephone/email contact will also be recorded on Crimint.

8. Training

There is currently no formally recognised national training for PLT officers. The Police College have run a number of 'ad hoc' PLT Courses for the MPS to "pump-prime" the use of PLT's in London. Medium to long term, it is planned to run MPS PLT Courses with MPS, BTP and CoLP trainers being trained by Police College staff to enable courses to be run in London.

Learning from the deployment of PLT's in the MPS and nationally, the MPS "PLT Course" will include:

- Enhanced OST
- Understanding of crowd dynamics
- PO Command and control arrangements
- PLT theory and practice
- Negotiation skills
- Service policy
- Handling intelligence (including basic training to enable PLT officer to recognise when CHIS handlers need to be introduced)
- Media awareness (including Social Media)

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