

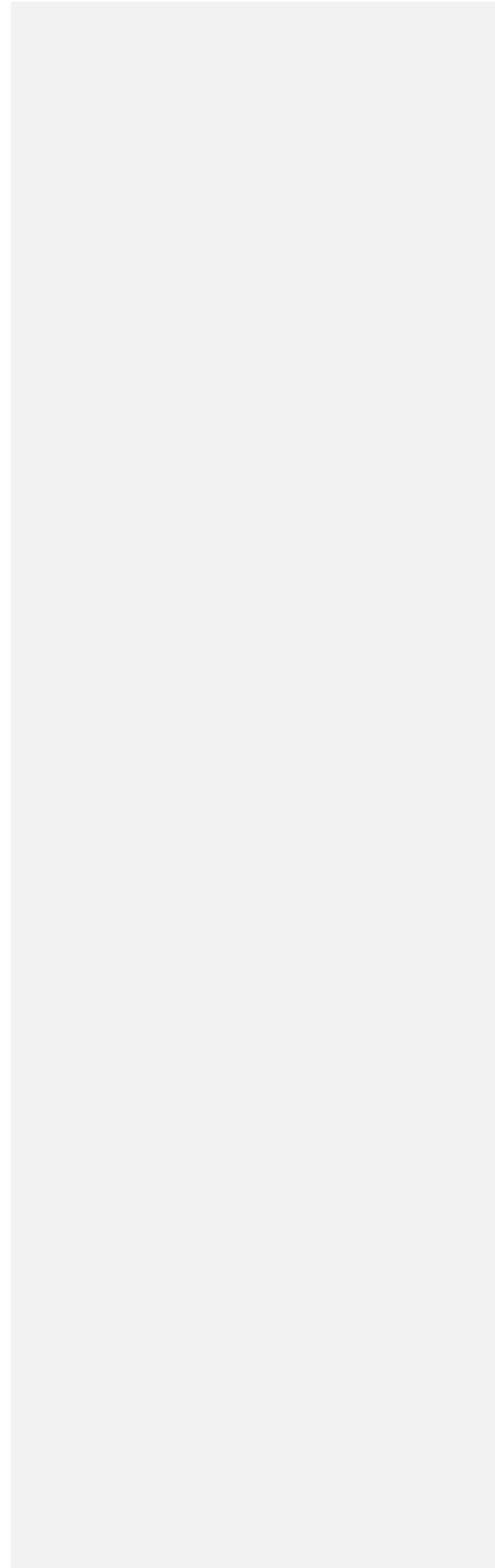
STRUCTURED DEBRIEF REPORT

OPERATION TREBOR

THE RESPONSE TO DRONE DISRUPTION AT GATWICK AIRPORT DECEMBER 2018

Contents

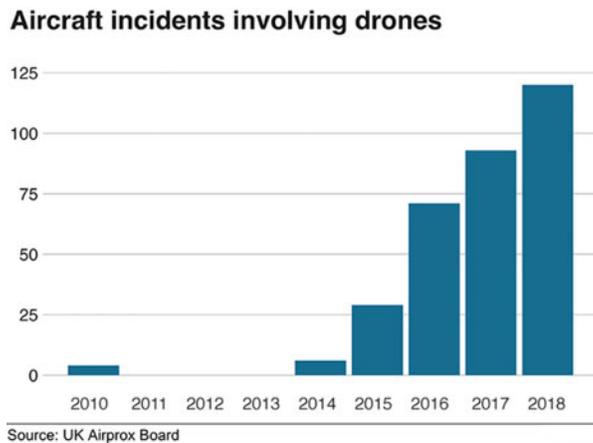
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Introduction

The United Kingdom is at the centre of a readily developing unmanned aerial vehicle (drones) market and the subsequent use of drones for unlawful or nuisance purposes has long been a concern for UK Policing and enforcement agencies along with the UK aviation industry. The National Police Chiefs Council recently published figures identifying a 40% increase in incidents involving the use of drones in the period 2016 to 2018.

The UK Airprox Board is responsible for assessing incidents involving drones and have also reported an increase in related incidents as shown in the below table;



Between Wednesday 19th and Thursday 20 December 2018, Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) became the first airport to suffer an incident of this type or magnitude, when hundreds of flights were cancelled, following drone sightings close to the runway.

The incident caused major travel disruption which lasted for several days, affecting more than 140,000 passengers and over 1,000 flights.

It was the biggest disruption since ash from an Icelandic volcano shut the airport in 2010.

The police received a large number of sightings, including from many credible witnesses, of what was reported as a commercial type drone.



After reported sightings of drones near Gatwick Airport, thousands of passengers were left stranded due to flight cancellations; and a number of flights were diverted to other airports. It is believed the drone operator(s) intentionally disrupted flights, as whenever the runway was about to re-open, the drone reappeared.

The military were deployed on Thursday 20th December following a Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) request from Sussex Police for assistance [REDACTED]

At 23:30 on Thursday 20th December, the airport confirmed the runway would remain closed and all flights were cancelled for the rest of the evening because of continued reported sightings.

It reopened with limited capacity at around 06:00 on Friday 21st December, although disruption due to potential further sightings, displacement of crews and aircraft continued for several days.

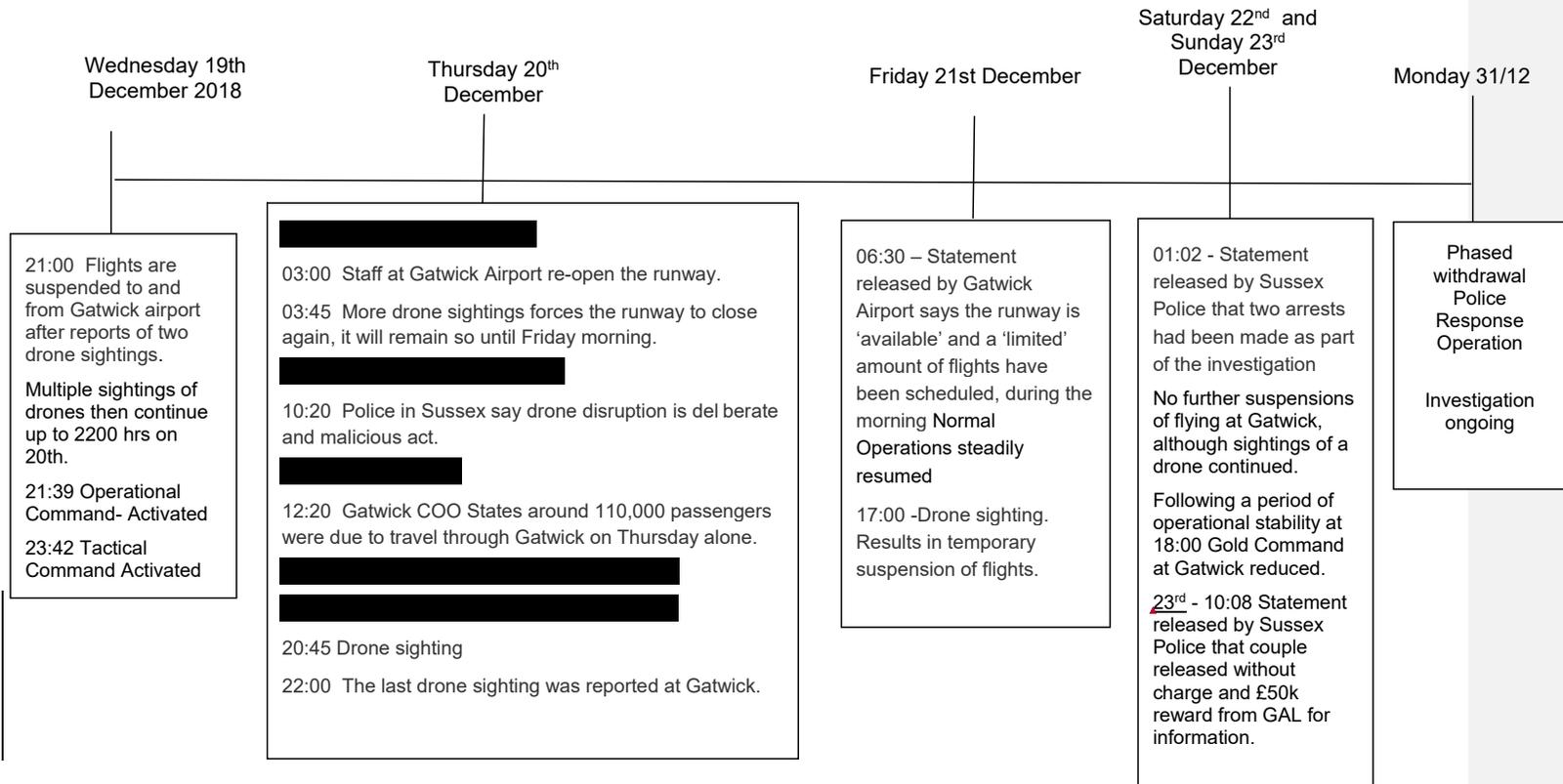
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The incident presented a range of challenges at all levels for those agencies delivering the response. The impacts on communities and on individuals were significant and varied and required responding agencies to develop and deliver, often at short notice, flexible approaches to emerging issues.

The response was delivered against a background of intense local, national and international media coverage and debate, along with detailed and continuing central Government involvement, and political interest with commentary at all levels, often seeking rationale for or querying of operational decisions and activity.

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TIMELINE



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Debrief Parameters

The parameters of the structured debrief covered the period from Wednesday 19th December to examine the below elements of the response;

1. Strategic and Tactical Command
2. Operational Command and Initial Responders
3. Strategic Partnerships
4. Duties, Resourcing, Mutual Aid and Logistics
5. Investigation and Intelligence aspects

All original source material will be retained by Sussex Police and marked as Official Sensitive. Sussex Police retain electronic copies of returned debrief questionnaires.

Structured Debrief Team

[REDACTED]	College of Policing
[REDACTED]	Lancashire Police
[REDACTED]	Greater Manchester Police
[REDACTED]	City of London Police
[REDACTED]	Gloucestershire Police

The debrief process was conducted during the week of Monday 25th February 2019.

Executive Summary

The College of Policing was commissioned by Sussex Police to co-ordinate a structured debrief of its response to the Gatwick incident known as Operation Trebor.

A structured debrief is standard practice in UK policing to capture good practice and learning.

Feedback was captured in a series of five debrief sessions facilitated between Monday 25th and Thursday 28th February 2019.

It is noted that the circumstances surrounding this incident were unprecedented nationally, and set against the back drop of an extremely busy Christmas and peak annual leave period.

Public safety was appropriately maintained as the priority. However, the impact on the public was acknowledged as being unacceptable in terms of disruption.

The debrief has shown that the unique policing arrangements, including the joint working with private sector partners and the need for joint arrangements to manage what is critical national infrastructure, mean that Gatwick Airport and Sussex Police would have benefited from greater clarity and direction on drone incursions, from a national level, in relation to;

- Division of responsibilities [across Government, policing and the commercial sector] for prevention, detection and response
- Mitigation measures available
- How best to respond and investigate such an incident

It is clear from the debrief sessions that, even though a large number of learning points/recommendations have been made, many of these have already been or are being implemented by Sussex Police and GAL and information has been shared with partners to assist in future operations both Nationally and Internationally.

This document draws specifically on the submissions and comments from the participants in a number of debriefs of various aspects of the incident, and does not make comment on matters that may have been raised within other debriefs or post operation reports. Debrief areas were;

1. Strategic and Tactical Command
2. Operational Command and Initial Responders
3. Strategic Partnerships
4. Duties, Resourcing, Mutual Aid and Logistics
5. Investigation and Intelligence aspects

The following points raised in this summary and appended spreadsheet have been drawn from comments made by the participants during their feedback and discussion during the structured debrief process.

Areas for development and improvement are highlighted together with the main areas that went well. Based upon the structured debrief a number of recommendations have been made to assist Sussex Police and its partner agencies to prepare for and coordinate the response to future operations. The themes highlighted in the debrief process have assisted in the compilation of a total of 21 recommendations for the future planning and response to similar events.

The debrief highlighted a number of areas that worked well and should be replicated in future events.

- Command and Tactics
- Resourcing
- Planning
- Knowledge/Learning

Command and Tactics

- It was identified that the operation established after initial response benefited from clear structured handovers and these were effective and every effort should be made to replicate these in future.

█ [REDACTED]

█ [REDACTED]

█ [REDACTED]

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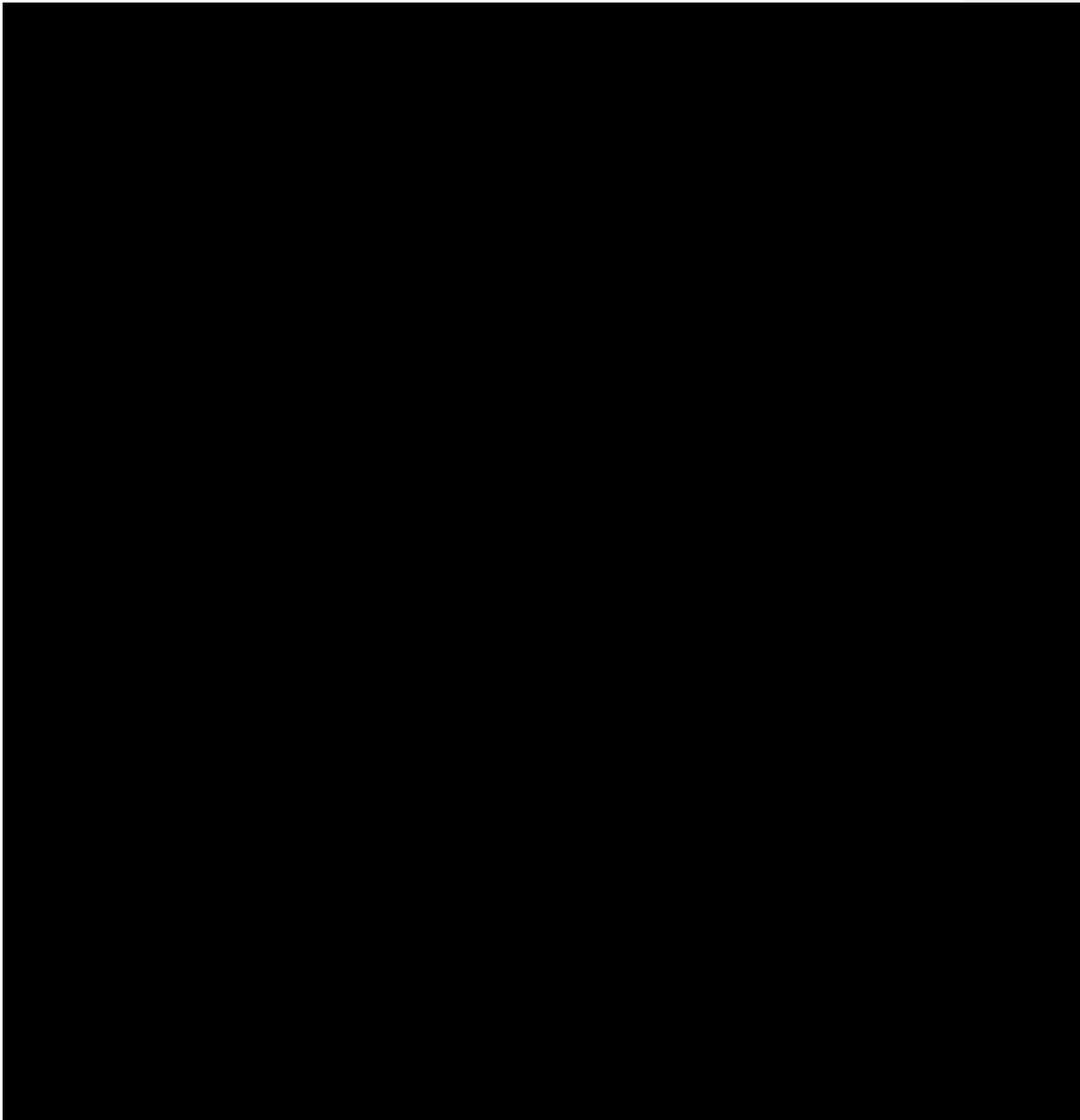
- It was identified that there was decisive action by the SIO [REDACTED]
- It was identified as good practice to use a PIP 4 advisor supporting the SIO in reviewing decisions and provided a buffer between the SIO and Gold Command.

Resourcing

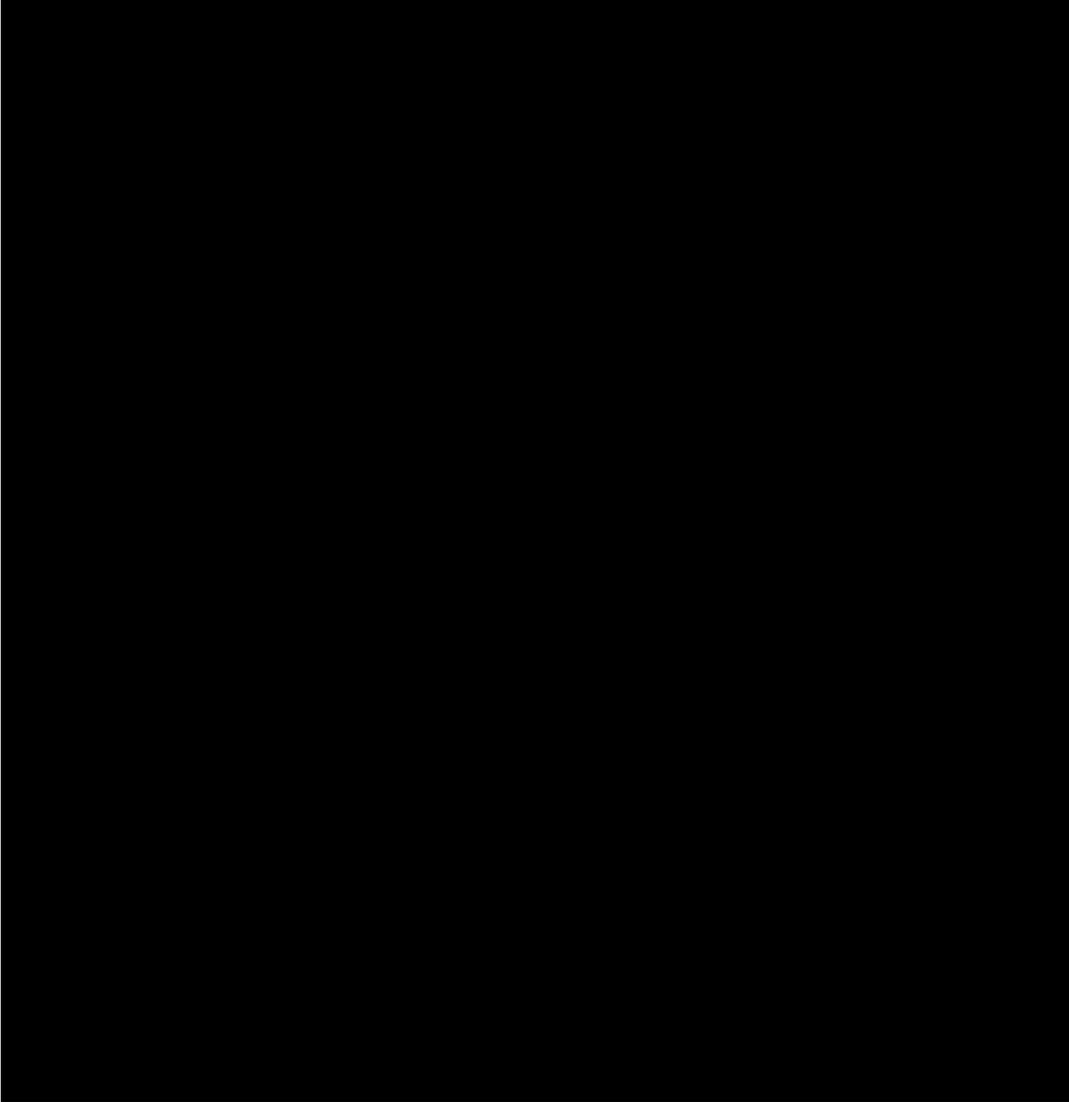
- It was identified that ensuring the Major Investigation Team has consistent suitably skilled, qualified, experienced personnel in dedicated roles assigned for continuity of investigation was good practice.
- It was seen as best practice to continue to resource the airport with appropriate levels of officers/staff over the Christmas and busy holiday periods.
- It was identified that the Military deployment worked well. They had the right access to what they needed [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] The work of the analysts was excellent in supporting the investigation.
- [REDACTED] This was seen as good practice.
- It was identified that the unique environment of the airport meant that the use of detectives working at the site day to day was important in supporting the SIO and the investigation as well as the staff coming onto the enquiry on mutual aid. A network of airport policing exists nationally and the support was excellent. These networks should be maintained and developed.
- It was identified that staff were brought in at short notice over the Christmas period to work long hours. All staff engaged were enthusiastic, professional and committed to ensuring the complex investigation was

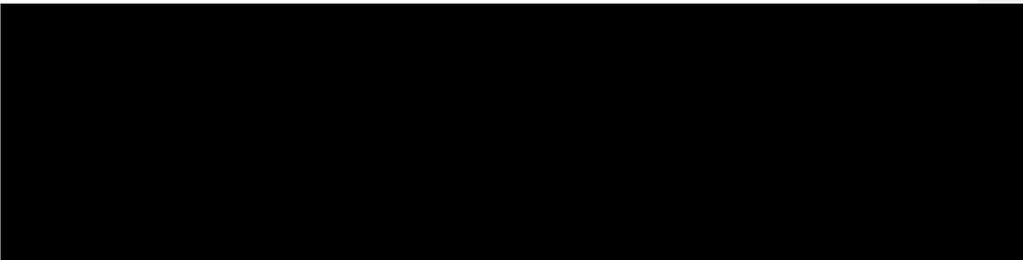
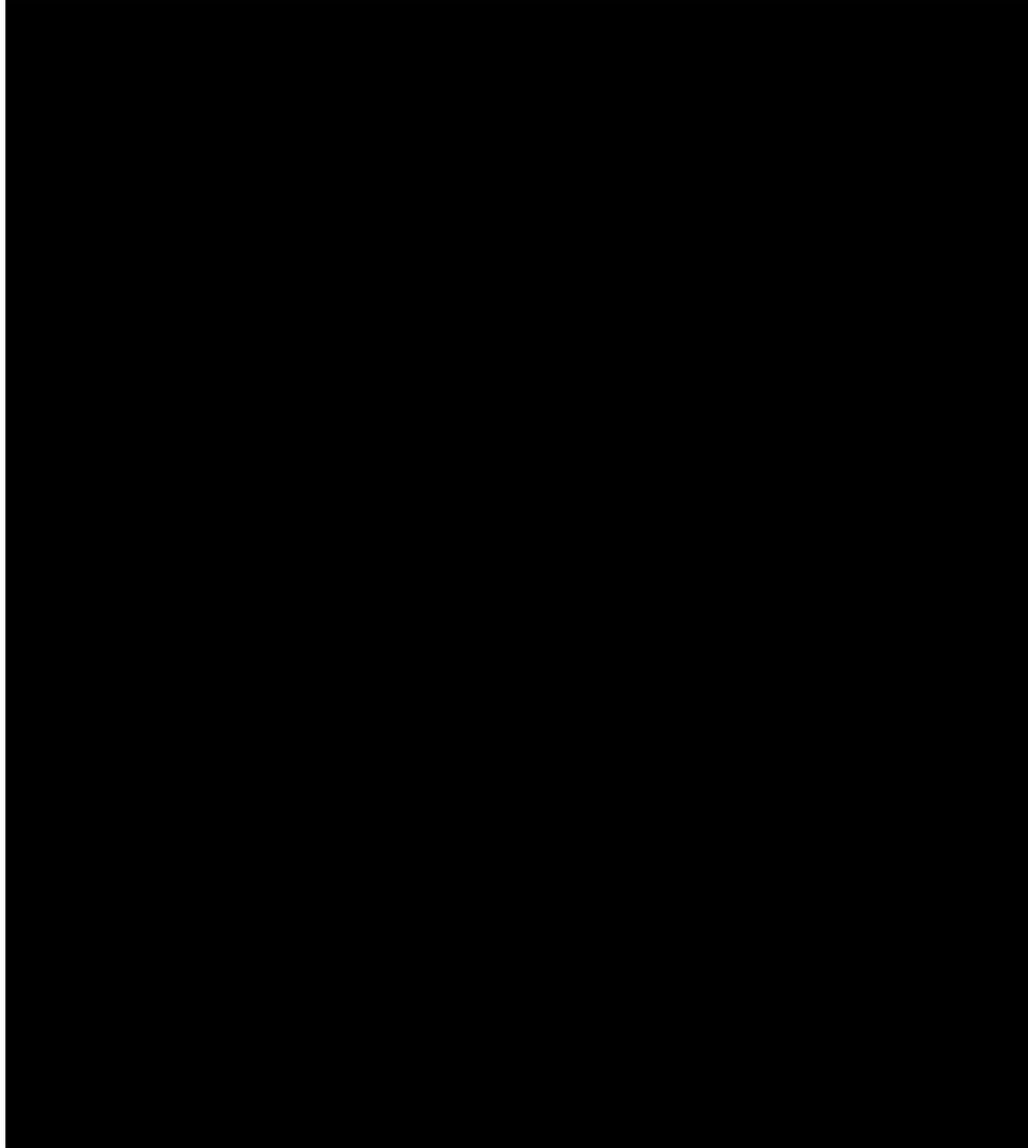
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conducted in difficult circumstances. Once the investigation was established the welfare support for staff was excellent



The key areas of improvement highlighted during the debrief were as follows;

- Strategic Coordinating Group Arrangements
 - Infrastructure
 - Stakeholder, Political and Media Involvement Arrangements
 - Communications
 - Roles and Responsibilities.
 - Investigation and Intelligence
 - Planning
 - Welfare
- 



[REDACTED]

Stakeholder, Political and Media Arrangements

[REDACTED]

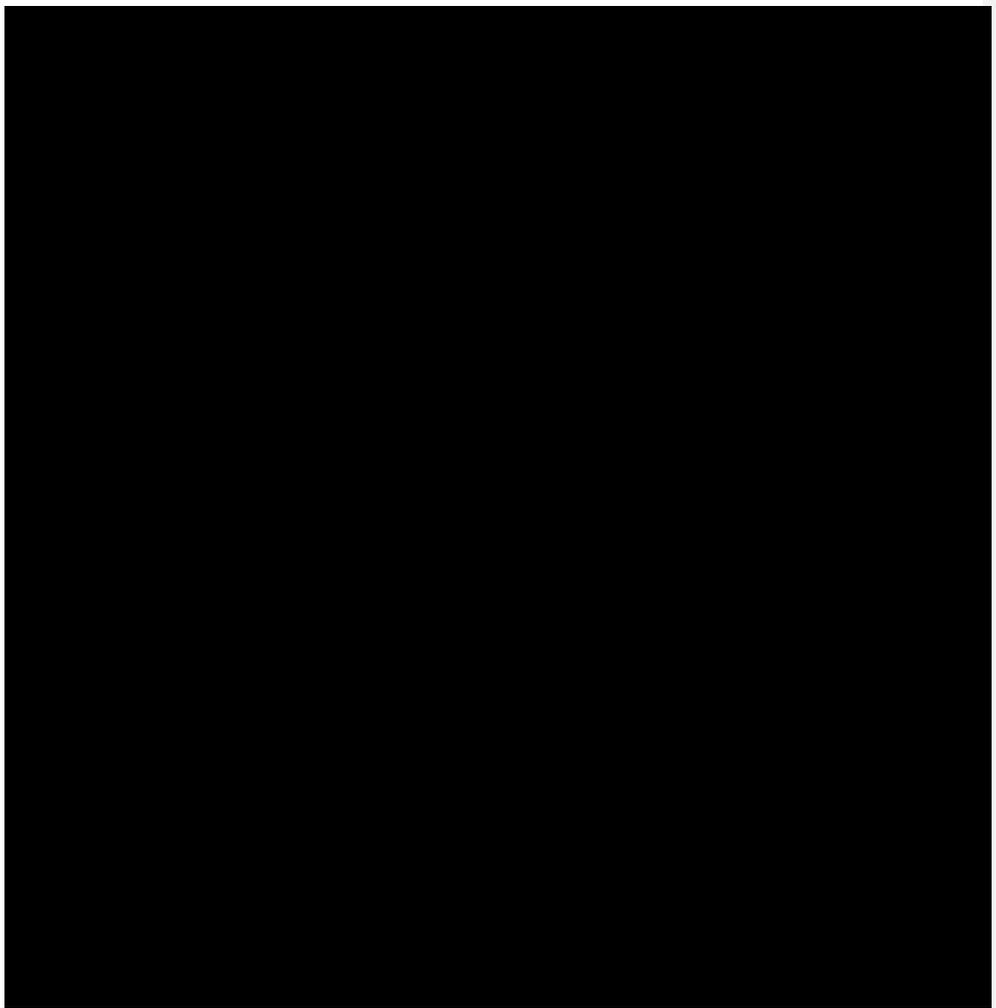
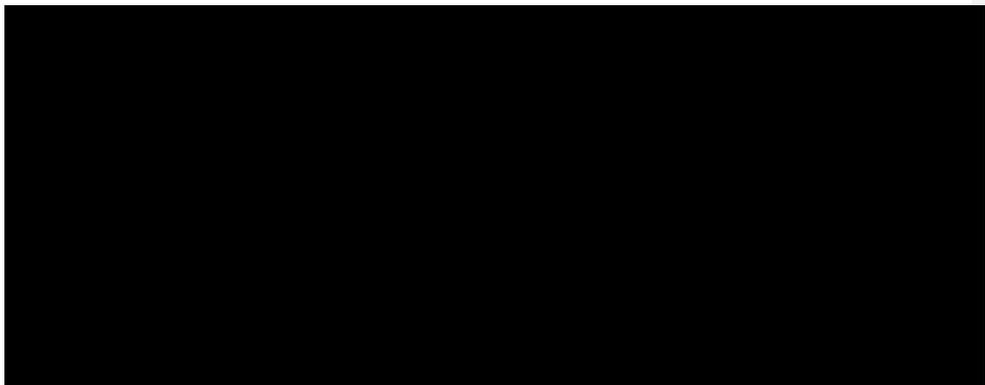
- It was identified that there was no established corporate media plan for an incident of this nature [REDACTED]
It was identified that a number of different senior officers were conducting media interviews; this and a lack of rigour around key messaging at times created a perception of inconsistency. There was a discussion around the media and how it was approached with a feeling that regular joint briefings (police and airport) generally worked well but that the absence of a digital media strategy and not deploying a Media Bronze to the airport initially were missed opportunities.
- It was identified that due to the Christmas period, the Sussex media team were running at reduced capacity and it was highlighted that difficulties were experienced in obtaining trained media staff on mutual aid.

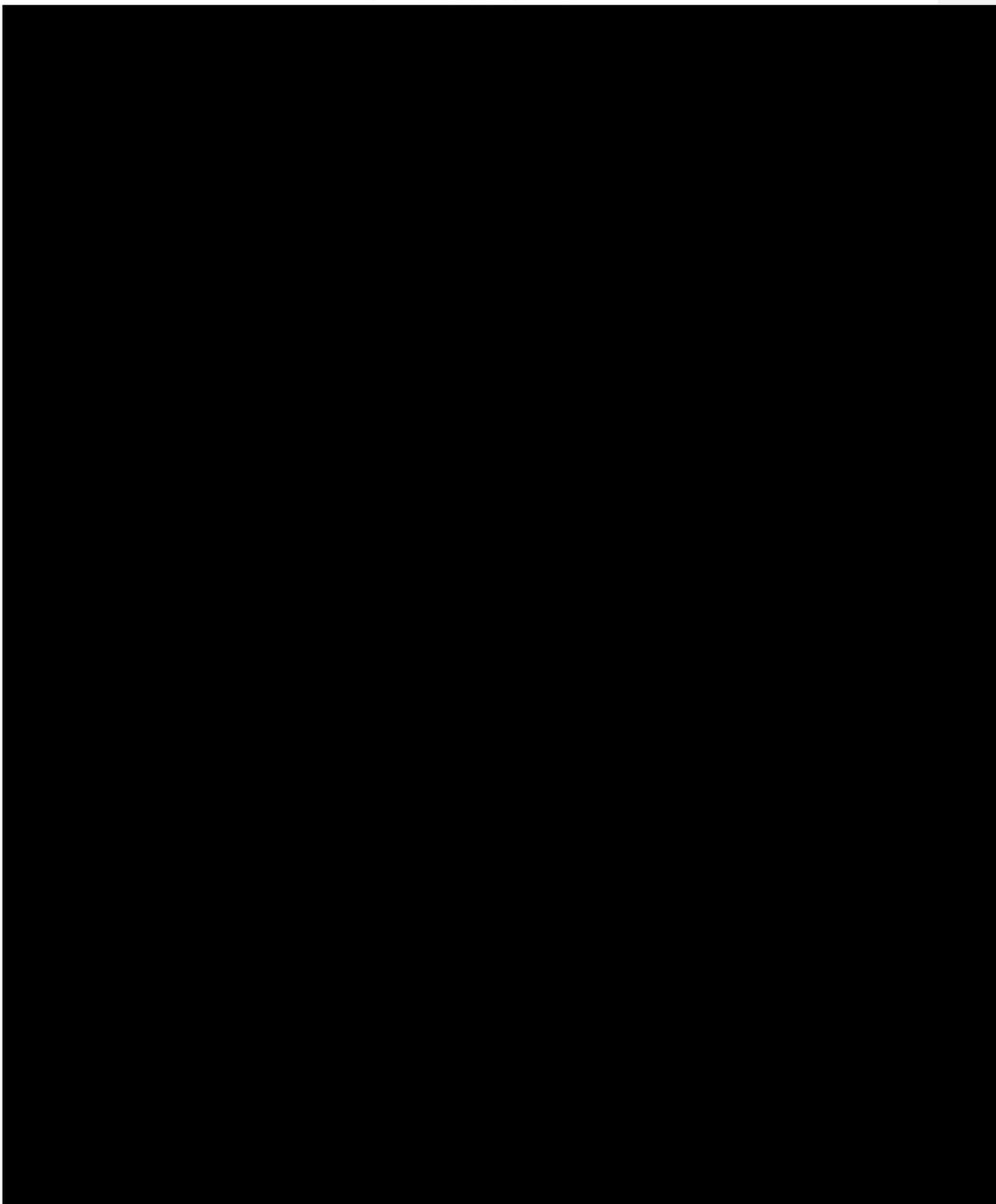
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]





Planning

- It was highlighted that consideration needs to be given to allow the airport police planning team and the Sussex operational planning team to understand each other's areas of business. This will provide additional

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resilience to the Force during incidents at the airport as they will have practiced and rehearsed plans.

[REDACTED]

- The office space and accommodation available for the investigation team was inadequate.
- The investigation was unique and required specific and scientific knowledge about drones and drone operations which has now been established and should be maintained.

Welfare

- It was felt there was an inconsistent welfare approach, and the incident would have benefited from an appointed Bronze welfare officer. Issues were reported around inconsistent feeding, some staff reported they weren't catered for as part of the response.
- Whilst many people involved in the operation appreciated the level of visible leadership from senior management it was felt by some that there was a lack of recognition of the hard work that everyone involved in the incident response was delivering, especially over a peak holiday period and under increasing pressure and scrutiny.

In summary the debrief process has produced a number of key themes which will allow Sussex Police and partners to consider and action as appropriate.

[REDACTED]

This document has been produced as a result of the structured debrief conducted specifically in response to Operation Trebor. The process was conducted in accordance with recognised College of Policing structured debrief procedures and the terms of reference between Sussex Police and the College of Policing.

[REDACTED]

College of Policing
March 2019

[REDACTED]

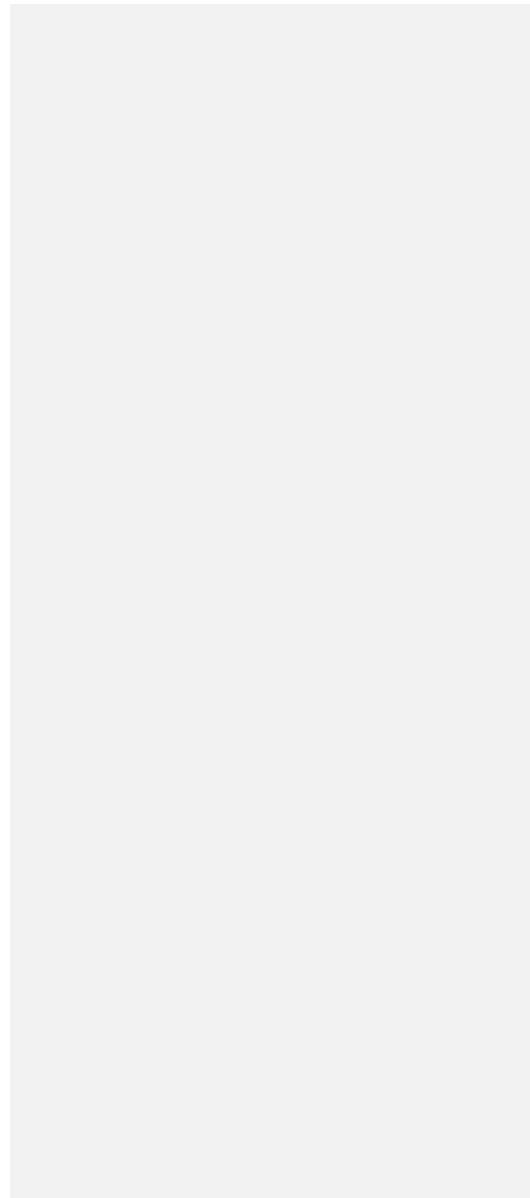
Sussex Police
March 2019

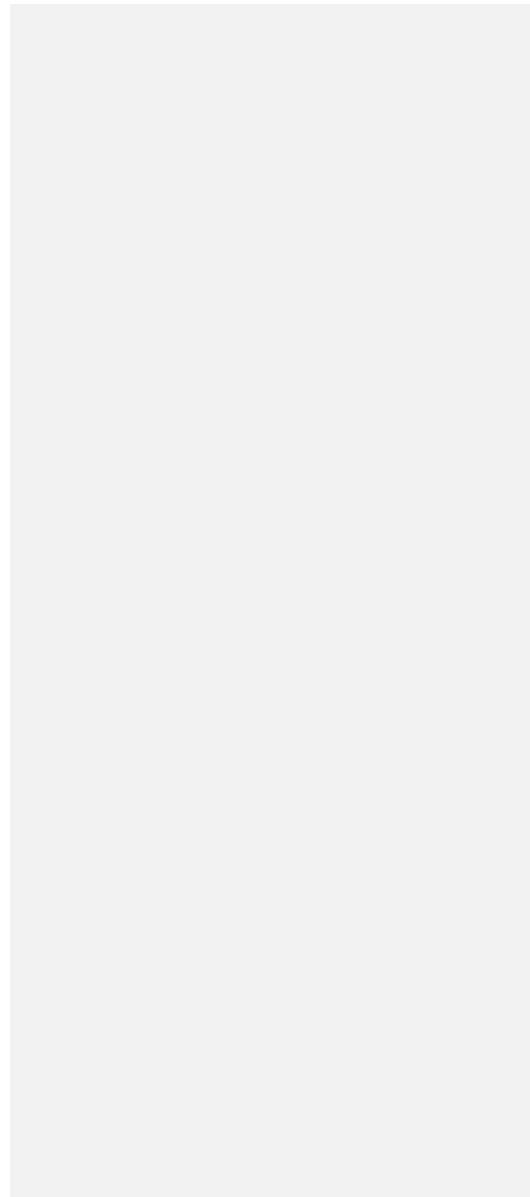
APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS

A total of **21** recommendations for the future planning and response to similar events have been made as a result of the debrief process.

There are also a number of other points which should be considered for review and best practice. These are contained in a separate appendix





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No.	LEARNING RECOMMENDATIONS	OWNER	COMMENTS
21	Efforts should be made to ensure that the learning from the incident is shared with existing networks of airport commanders in order to support the importance of continuing to work with the network of other airport policing teams nationally and internationally to share best practice and embed learning was identified.	Sussex	



College of Policing
March 2019

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