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position to ratify any strategic or tactical decision made by the officers who have assumed initial command prior to formal authority being given.

- 6.35 This model is designed to supersede all previous arrangements where Borough Duty Officers take responsibility for firearms incidents in their locality.
- 6.36 This includes incidents where there is a specialist response i.e.
- SO6 DPG - response to Diplomatic and Government premises
 - SO14 Royalty - response to Royal Households
- 6.37 However, SO18 Aviation Security Command shall retain command responsibility for firearms incidents that take place at Heathrow or London City Airport for the following reasons: They are an armed command with their own geographical responsibilities; they have their own ARVs, they are in the extreme west of the MPS area, they are a key strategic site and there are specific requirements for the officers accessing airside locations.
- 6.38 There may be circumstances where public safety requires consideration of the immediate deployment of armed officers in order to save life. This applies to officers in a command position whether they are accredited or not, and applies to circumstances where there is not an opportunity to consult with an SFC prior to deployment. This eventually is covered under the self deployment criteria of the ACPO APP Armed Policing 2012.

Authorising an Armed Operation

- 6.39 Any officer may make an application for the authorisation of a firearms operation on form **FA1**, available via the Intranet forms site. However, in practice it is only likely to be made by an officer after consultation with their respective SLT. This form must then be submitted for assessment as to whether it meets the criteria for a firearms operation. The form should be as comprehensive as possible and should be accompanied by an oral briefing by the officer applying to the officer assessing. The assessing officer must be satisfied that there is a need for the police use of firearms, and to this end must ask probing questions of the applicant to establish if there are any other methods that could be used to accomplish the aims of the operation.
- 6.40 It is recognised that where rapidly emerging intelligence requires an armed response it may not be possible to complete an FA1 as fully as when more time is available. In these circumstances the minimum expectation is that the information and intelligence driving the need for the deployment of armed officers is shared with the on duty SC&O19 TFC who will brief the SC&O19 SFC to gain authority. A full FA1 should be completed as soon as is subsequently practicable. Requesting units should ensure that form FA1 is overseen by a supervisor prior

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Commanders

Strategic Firearms Commanders

6.80 Their role is to determine the strategic objectives and set tactical parameters. They must retain a strategic oversight and an overall command responsibility. They are also responsible for authorising specialist munitions when necessary.

6.81 The Strategic Firearms Commander;

- Has overall strategic command, with responsibility and accountability for directions given;
- Must set, review, communicate and update the strategy based on the threat assessment and the available intelligence;
- Should consider consulting a Tactical Advisor;
- Should consider any tactical parameters to be placed on the police response;
- Must ensure that the strategy for the armed deployment is recorded, including any changes to it, to provide a clear audit trail;
- Must authorise the deployment of AFOs, and ratify or rescind the deployment where it has already been approved by the TFC on **Form FA3/FA3A**
- Should ensure that all decisions are recorded, where practicable, in order to provide a clear audit trail;
- Must ensure that the firearms strategy complies with the wider strategic aims of the overall operation;
- Should test the tactical plan against the established strategy, where practicable and/or time allows;
- Is responsible for overall resourcing in respect of the deployment of AFOs;
- Where appropriate, will chair meetings of the strategic coordinating group when they are held during a multi-agency or multi-discipline response;
- Should set command protocols where appropriate;
- Should consider consulting with partners, stakeholders and interest groups involved (if any) when determining strategy;