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Project Servator Evaluation Study 2018/19

Report Prepared for the National Project Servator Team /
Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI)

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PROJECT
SERVATOR
TOGETHER, WE'VE GOT IT COVERED

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List of Terms and Abbreviations

ACT   Action Counters Terrorism (UK Government communication campaign)

ANPR   Automatic Number Plate Recognition (software used in cars for detection purposes)

ASB   Anti-Social behaviour

BIRA   British Independent Retailers Association

CCTV   Closed Circuit Television

CTSA   Counter Terrorism Security Advisor

CNC   Civil Nuclear Constabulary

CoLP   City of London Police

CONTEST   Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UK Government's counter-terrorism strategy)

CPNI   Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure

GMP   Greater Manchester Police

MDP   Ministry of Defence Police

Met. (MPS)   The Metropolitan Police Service

NCTPHQ   National Counter-Terrorism Police Headquarters

NIRSC   Northern Ireland Region of Shopping Centres

NPAS   National Police Air Service (England & Wales only)

NPoCC   National Police Coordination Centre

NPST   National Project Servator Team (based at the City of London Police)

PCSO   Police Community Support Officer

PNC   Police National Computer

POEM   Paid, Owned and Earned Media

QA   Quality Assurance (process used by NPST to evaluate force Project Servator performance)

REF   Research Excellence Framework (periodic UK government higher education institution research evaluation exercise)

SAR   Suspicious Activity Reporting

SCaN   See, Check and Notify (UK government security campaign for business)

SiSiS   'See it, Say it, Sorted' (UK government communications campaign)

TINYg   Terrorist Information New York Group (global terrorist information network)

WMP   West Midlands Police

WYP   West Yorkshire Police

1.1 Introduction and Study Evaluation Methodology

This report outlines the findings of an evaluation study undertaken to assess the effectiveness of Project Servator deployments and communications during the year from March 2018 to March 2019, specifically focusing on public and community audiences. The study was undertaken using 16 depth interviews with Project Servator co-ordinators for all the police forces that had undertaken Project Servator deployments between 2013 and 2018, and a series of informal discussions with the National Project Servator Team (NPST), which oversees Project Servator activities, based within the City of London Police (CoLP). The interviews were conducted in January and February 2019. The remit of the evaluation of Project Servator pertains to both the deployments and the supporting communications. The study was jointly funded by Cranfield University and the UK Government's Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) and conducted by Professor Paul Baines at the University of Leicester (see Appendix 1 for a biography of the author).

The in-depth interview conversations with each co-ordinator lasted between 22 and 60 minutes and were undertaken by telephone between 18th January 2019 and Friday 8th February 2019 with representatives from all 16 forces that had launched or were in the process of trialling Project Servator on or prior to December 2018. Several of these interviews were with officers responsible specifically for Project Servator policing in airports. In total, around 13 hours of interview conversations were transcribed. Informal interviews were undertaken with three members of the National Project Servator Team responsible for data analysis, the quality assurance process of evaluation visits, and national communications, either at the City of London Police headquarters or by phone in February 2019. During each depth interview, the following questions were asked of Project Servator co-ordinators:

I. Did you undertake a formal campaign evaluation exercise? If yes, can you provide me with a copy of this please? If no, did you informally determine whether or not your campaign was effective? How did you do this? If not, why not?

2. What lessons did you learn from the campaign?

3. What did you set out to achieve? Were these objectives formalised?

4. To what extent did you meet your objectives?

5. What campaign media did you use and why? What campaign media did you not use? Why?

6. What worked best in your Project Servator campaign?

7. What worked less well in your Project Servator campaign?

8. How could the campaign be improved?

The methodological protocol for the study underwent ethical scrutiny at the University of Leicester in December 2018. The following elements were noted.

- All participants were asked to provide their informed consent to show their willingness for the interview to take place and all provided this. All participants were briefed on the objectives of the research study prior to interview. Participants were reminded that they could end the interview whenever they wished.

- All comments from interviewees were anonymised.

- Recording of interviews: participants were asked for their consent to allow the interview to be recorded for the purposes of transcription.

1.2 The Object of Study: What is Project Servator?

Fifteen UK police forces and one British Overseas Territory police force implemented 'Project Servator' (Servator is Latin for 'watcher/observer') between 2014 and 2018 including the City of London Police (CoLP), British Transport Police (BTP), Police Scotland, Merseyside Police, Royal Gibraltar Police (RGP), Bedfordshire Police, Ministry of Defence Police (MDP), Greater Manchester Police (GMP), North Yorkshire Police (NYP), Sussex Police, The Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC), Avon & Somerset Police, Essex Police, the Metropolitan Police, West Midlands Police (WMP) and West Yorkshire Police (WYP). Project Servator operations are ongoing and a number of new forces are trialling Project Servator in 2019. For a detailed timeline of how Project Servator has developed since it was first set up in 2012, see Appendix 2.

Project Servator uses a range of policing tactics to reassure the public, encourage suspicious activity and unattended item reporting, and otherwise disrupt criminal/terrorist activity. It involves the use of highly visible but unpredictable deployments of specially trained officers and other police assets and incorporates the following components:

i. a mixed deployment of both specially trained uniformed and plain clothes officers, the former of which may or may not be armed, and dogs, horses, vehicles, closed circuit television (CCTV) and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology, in locations that could be attractive targets for terrorist or criminal activity and engagement with the general public to help inform and reassure – encouraging vigilance and reporting of suspicious behaviour;

ii. the intervention involves staging unpredictable operations to disrupt would-be criminals and terrorists, partly by integrating information collected from the public, community, CCTV, uniformed and plain clothes officers;

iii. to reinforce suspicious activity reporting, and to deter would-be hostiles, the campaign is promoted using media press releases, articles in traditional, electronic (e.g. websites), and social media (Twitter and Facebook), digital and physical posters in A-frames and shop windows, handbills (distributed by police officers), and internal advertising techniques (e.g. intranet articles on police websites). Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Community Liaison Officers are also briefed as are the business community, including the security industry and property owners. For a more detailed overview of Project Servator,
see: **https://www.counterterrorism.police.uk/servator/**.

1.3 Findings from the Interviews

The two key public-facing elements of Project Servator include (i) unpredictable police deployments and (ii) the supporting communications campaign. Each of these two core elements is evaluated in this report. The main objectives of Project Servator were identified to be:

1. To disrupt terrorist and other criminal activity by denying their ability to operate effectively, optimising detection of their activity, and deterring them from undertaking activity.

2. To encourage suspicious activity reporting.

3. To increase public vigilance.

4. To recruit business to support efforts to harden the security of potential target locations and leave a vigilance/suspicious activity reporting (SAR) legacy.

5. To co-ordinate Project Servator teams across the various police forces in the UK and its overseas territories to strengthen their collective presence.

The characteristics of deployment include: (i) sending out patrols of officers to a variety of unpredictable locations; (ii) using a range of police assets (as indicated in Section 1.2), (iii) using specially-trained officers and (iv) special training programmes for both the commander of Project Servator deployments and the co-ordinators of those deployments to help identify suitable deployment locations, plan these so that they are unpredictable, and identify the necessary personnel to undertake the deployments. The characteristics of Project Servator communications include: (i) orchestrating an appropriate media mix to support the deployments, (ii) developing relationships and communications targeting local businesses to encourage them to report suspicious activities and (iii) encouraging members of the public to be vigilant and report suspicious activity.

To support and co-ordinate the Project Servator teams in police forces throughout the UK, the National Project Servator Team (NPST), based at CoLP, provides Project Servator training, undertakes an annual quality assurance process, sets appropriate metrics (e.g. % positive stop/ search) and collects data from police forces, undertakes national business engagement activities (e.g. liaising with business owners, senior security staff) and co-ordinates with other agencies (e.g. CPNI). To assess the effectiveness of the deployments, NPST collects data on the number of deployments, number of engagements where key messages were delivered, the number of people stopped and searched (and the proportion of those that are reported positive, i.e. when searched, the individuals are found with items that could mean they are charged for an offence), the number of arrests, and the number of intelligence reports. To assess the effectiveness of the communications supporting the deployments, NPST collects data on the number of new items (on various social media), the number of views, comments, reach, and engagements on various social media. The NPST also encourages forces to conduct street-intercept surveys to evaluate public engagement in relation to deployments and the supporting communications. This provides an understanding of how the deployment and communications have changed public safety perceptions (if the survey is conducted before and after). In relation to evaluating the effectiveness of Project Servator, we also report on what barriers and enablers Project Servator co-ordinators perceived and what lessons they felt that they had learnt after having implemented Project Servator for a limited period, and consequently, what improvements could be made to improve the effectiveness of Project Servator.

1.3.1 Degrees of Evaluation Formalisation

It is worth noting that the effectiveness of Project Servator deployments and their associated communications can, and has previously, been analysed at several levels. This is not easy to undertake because Project Servator communication has dual effects. On the one hand, they serve to remind the public to be vigilant and report suspicious activity and, on the other, they serve to deter would-be criminals and terrorists. In this evaluation study, we focus on evaluating the processes associated with the former set of communications and not the latter.

These levels include the following:

- Level 1 – Perceptions of effectiveness *of the deployments* from the officers themselves.

- Level 2 – Perceptions of members of the public, *of the deployments and the communications*, as they encounter the deployments.

- Level 3 – Perceptions of members of the general public, *of the deployments and the communications*, as revealed in social media.

- Level 4 – Perceptions of business partners *of the deployments and the communications*, and their willingness to support Project Servator.There is some scope to standardise the evaluation of Project Servator's effectiveness at each of these four levels so that police forces have a common set of benchmarks, available resource sets, and guidelines on how to improve their performance more generally.

The interviews reveal that forces are not always evaluating Project Servator effectiveness across all the available levels. For some, this was because they felt that too little time had passed since Project Servator had been formally launched in their own police force or because they were still in the process of conducting a trial. All forces stated that they analysed Project Servator at Level 1, mainly through a debriefing following the end of the deployments. Such a debrief would focus on whether the areas deployed in were the appropriate ones, discussions about searches undertaken and arrests made. Some forces had undertaken a formal evaluation of the views of the general public (Level 2) using a professional market research company, but typically only when this was funded by CPNI, rather than by the force itself. Some forces did undertake so-called 'dip' surveys with small samples using their own resources although these tended to use small-scale convenience samples and are consequently unlikely to be accurate or representative snapshots of public opinion. One force reported that there were political circumstances that hindered them from undertaking surveys because another organization had been created by Statute that was responsible for public engagement. All forces undertook analysis at Level 3, because they were encouraged to do so by the NPST on a monthly basis. At Level 4, evaluations tended to be undertaken by most forces on an informal and ongoing basis.

1.3.2 Measuring Effectiveness

Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the different types of methodological approach that were adopted by different police forces when evaluating aspects of Project Servator. Note all of these approaches were mentioned at some point in the interviews, but no one force was using all of these approaches to evaluate the effectiveness of their Project Servator deployments and communications in any one period.
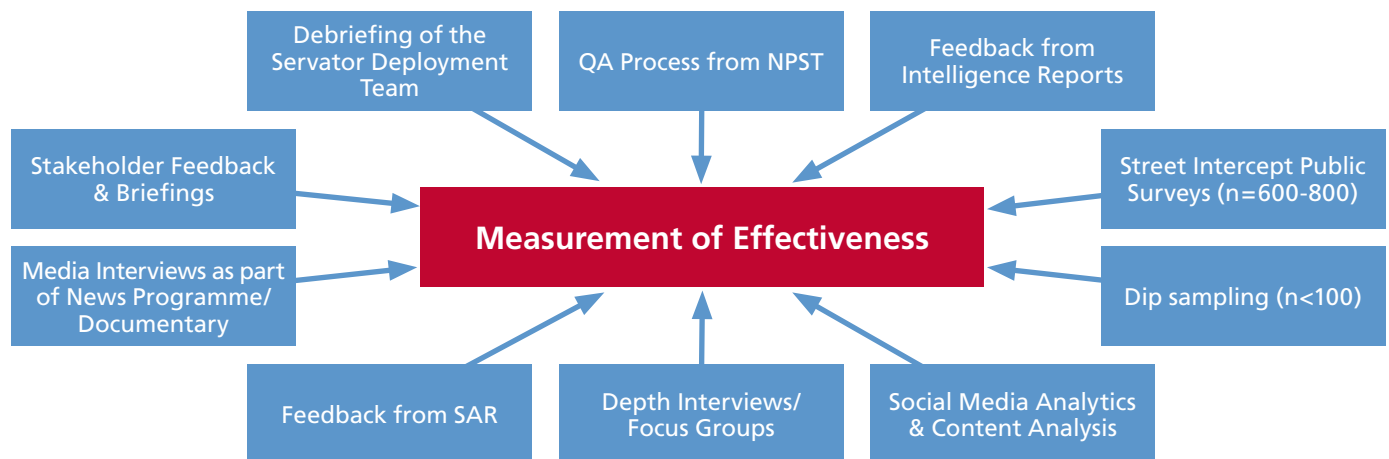

Figure 1.1: Measurement of Effectiveness Approaches

We outline how each of the approaches in **Figure 1.1** works in more detail below:

- Stakeholder feedback and briefings – this included meetings with businesses, shopping centre managers, stadium managers, private security teams, representatives from councils, representatives from government departments, representatives from other police forces, and others who have a part to play in seeing a positive outcome from Project Servator deployments and communications for any one particular police force.

- Debriefing of the Project Servator deployment teams – this involved a debriefing of the teams before and after they had deployed to ascertain what worked and what did not, from the perspective of those involved in the deployments.

- Quality Assurance Process from NPST – this is an annual process by financial year (e.g. April 2018 – March 2019) undertaken by the NPST to evaluate a force's Project Servator provision.

- Feedback from intelligence reports – this includes information provided by police informants, the Security Service, interrogations, queries undertaken of the Police National Computer (PNC) and so on.

- Street intercept public surveys – these were conducted to assess how the public feel about Project Servator deployments and communications, and to assess the relative effectiveness of those deployments

and communications, typically using a large-scale judgment sample based on those who had interacted with the deployments.

- 'Dip' sampling – police forces used small-scale surveys with few questions to assess immediate public reaction to Project Servator deployments and communications.

- Social media analytics and content analysis – an exercise undertaken by all forces, typically within their communications/media teams. The output of this type of analysis is submitted on a monthly basis to NPST for further evaluation.

- Depth interviews / focus groups – these were individual interviews or discussion groups held with members of the public or business representatives to assess their perceptions of Project Servator.

- Feedback from suspicious activity reports – includes feedback from 101/999 calls or from texts to BTP's 61016 text number. Could also include online submissions to the Security Service's website (**https://www.gov.uk/report-suspicious-activity-to-mi5**) or submissions via the ACT online reporting tool (**https://act.campaign.gov.uk/**).

- Media interviews as part of news coverage – occurs when, for example, a TV, press or radio station undertakes interviews of the public during Project Servator deployments at the launch phase of the campaign.

1.3.3 Use of Metrics and Effectiveness Measurement

To monitor the effectiveness of Project Servator, each force submits a series of metrics related to both the deployment and communications phases of their Project Servator campaigns on a monthly basis.

Table 1.1 provides an overview of what current metrics are collected by phase. From the deployments perspective, the NPST collects data on the number of deployments, the number of people engaging with key messaging, the number of people stopped and searched, the number of arrests, the number of intelligence reports (on crime, antisocial behaviour and terrorism activities), the number of 101/999 calls during deployment periods, and other measures obtained through surveys including, for example, whether or not respondents are reassured by Project Servator deployments and communications, and whether they are more likely to report unattended items or suspicious behaviour.

Table 1.1: Types of Metric in Use by Project Servator Phase

Project Servator Element	Metrics Used
Deployment Phase	# of deployments, # engaging with key messaging, # of stopped and searched (and % positive stop and search), # of arrests, and # of intel reports (crime and ASB, and terrorism). # 101,999 calls against deployment periods Survey metrics (e.g. % respondents reassured, % respondents who are more likely to report unattended items/suspicious activity)
Communications Phase	# of new items Reach/engagement/views Comment content analysis Specific social media (e.g. Instagram/YouTube)

Figure 1.2 indicates that the number of Project Servator deployments undertaken per month in the year to the end of March 2019 was between 1,592 and 1,994 across all 16 police forces, averaging 1,797 deployments per month, or around 112 deployments per force per month. There is little variation in when the deployments take place by month although September and December recorded the lowest numbers. There is no set level for the quantity of deployments that should take place; forces focus instead on the quality of the deployment, meaning that locations are selected and Project Servator deployment teams selected dependent on any intelligence collected, the conditions on the ground, and the type of location in which the team is being deployed (e.g. shopping centre, airport, city centre, iconic building, train station and so on).
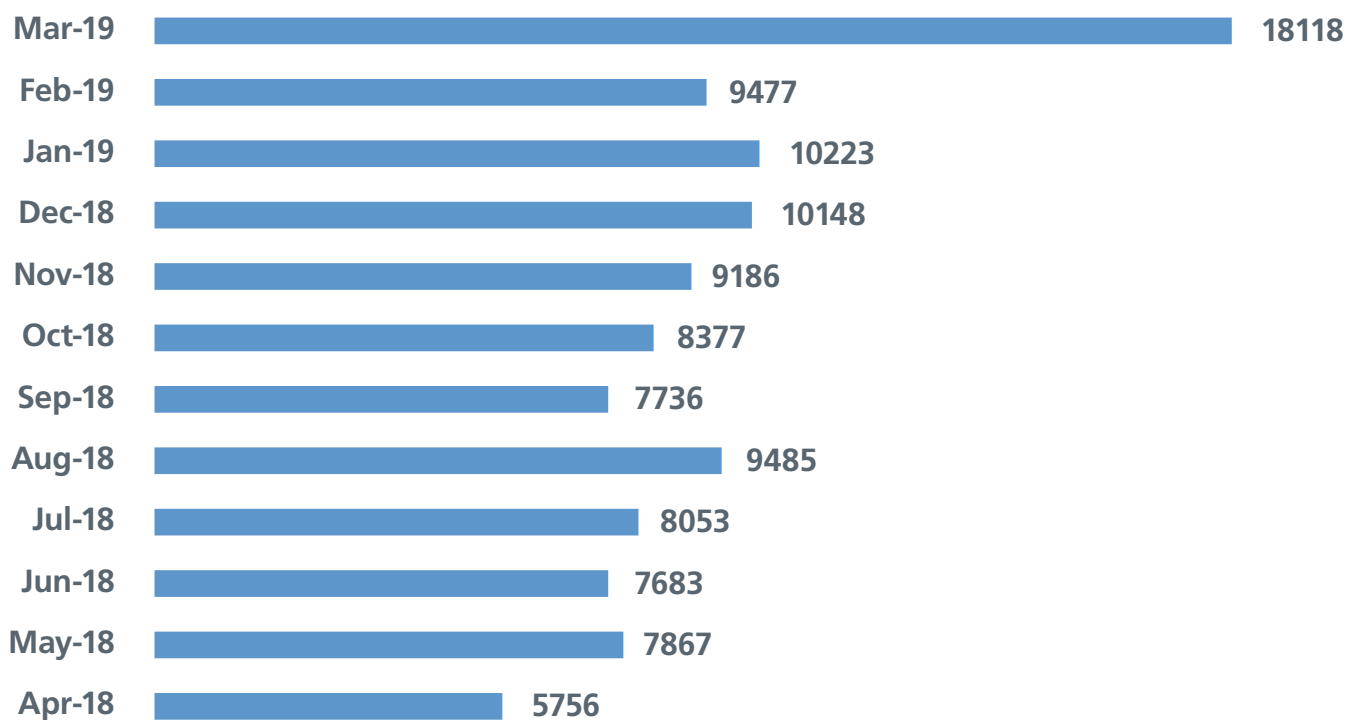
Figure 1.2 Number of Deployments Undertaken by Project Servator Police Forces in 2018/2019
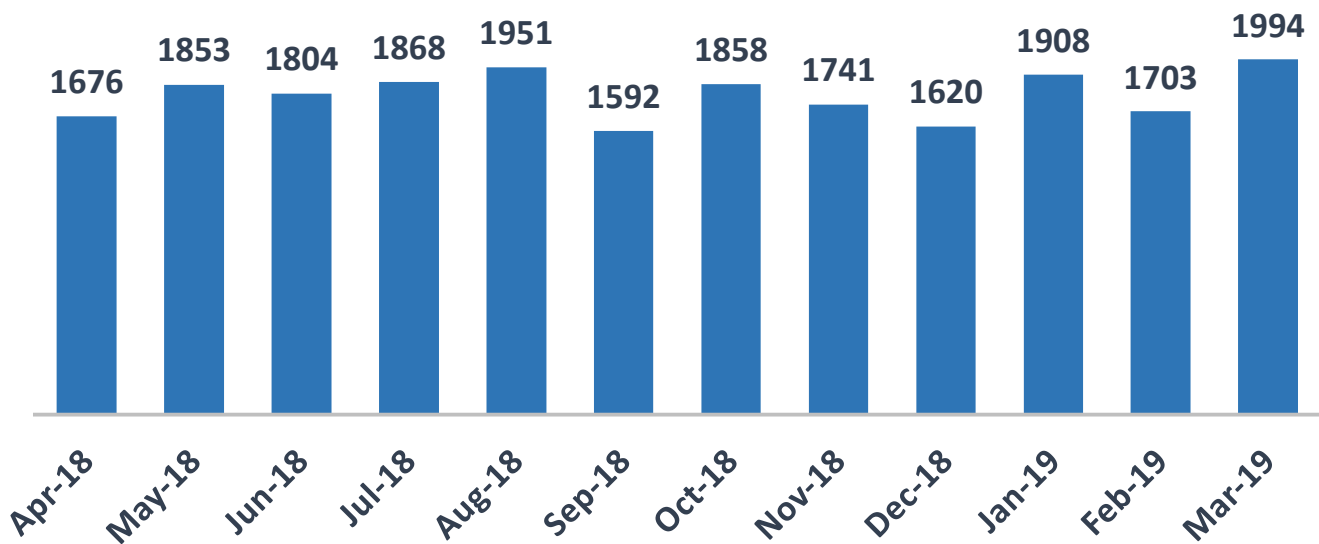
One key metric collected relates to the number of people engaging with Project Servator messaging. These data illustrate the numbers of members of the public spoken to during a Project Servator deployment. This figure is important for two reasons: 1) the larger the numbers of people taking notice of Project Servator and its officers, the more likely people are to report suspicious activity and/or unattended items and 2) the greater the number of people engaged, the more likely the police are to spot those undertaking suspicious activity and/or leaving unattended items. **Figure 1.3** indicates a very significant increase (a near doubling of messaging activity) during March 2019 as more forces come on board to deploy Project Servator. Prior to March 2019, the average number of people engaged with key messaging over the previous 11 months was 8,545 people per month.

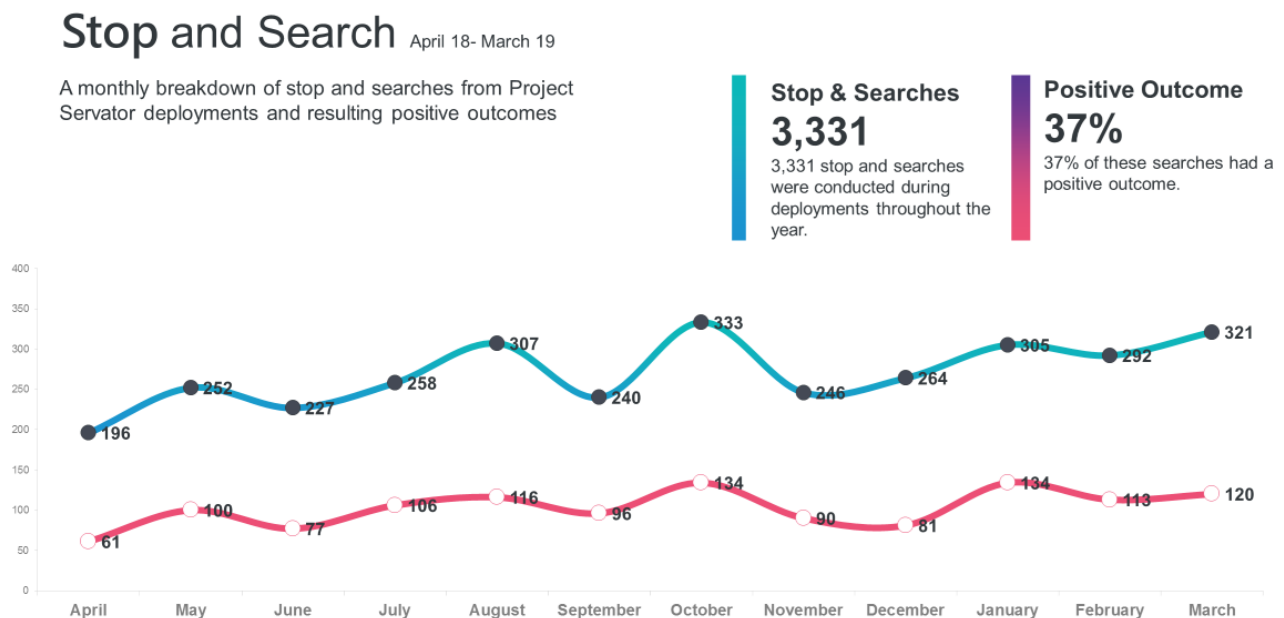**Figure 1.3 Number of People Engaging With Key Messaging During Project Servator Deployments in 2018/2019**

Month	Number
Mar-19	18118
Feb-19	9477
Jan-19	10223
Dec-18	10148
Nov-18	9186
Oct-18	8377
Sep-18	7736
Aug-18	9485
Jul-18	8053
Jun-18	7683
May-18	7867
Apr-18	5756

Another key metric is the number of people stopped and searched during a Project Servator deployment (see **Figure 1.4**) and within that the proportion of those who are stopped and searched and for whom a positive outcome is obtained (i.e. they possess a bladed article, or drugs and so on). The total number of stop and searches undertaken for the year 2018/19 was 3,331 by the 16 forces in question, and of these searches, just over one in three (37%) resulted in a positive outcome. This rate of positive stop and search is significantly higher than the national average positive outcome rate from stop and search which in England and Wales to the end of March 2018 was 17%[1]. Whilst this is not a direct comparison, because of the difference in years in which the data are collected, it does indicate that the techniques used by Project Servator officers to determine whether or not someone should be stopped and searched may be more, possibly even twice, as effective. The monthly positive stop and search outcomes range from nearly 31% in December 2018 to 44% in January 2019.

Figure 1.4 Number of People Stopped and Searched During Project Servator Deployments in 2018/2019

Figure 1.5 illustrates the number of arrests undertaken during Project Servator deployments. The number of arrests per month ranges from 36 in April 2018 to 105 in January 2019, averaging around 74 arrests per month across the 16 forces or around five per force per month.

Finally, the NPST also collect data on the number of intelligence reports made during Project Servator deployments on matters concerning crime, ASB, and terrorism. These are illustrated in **Figure 1.6**. This indicates that the number of reports across the 16 forces range from 158 per month in November 2018 to 246 per month in May 2018, averaging 201 per month or around 13 per month per force.

Figure 1.5 Number of Arrests During Project Servator Deployments in 2018/2019
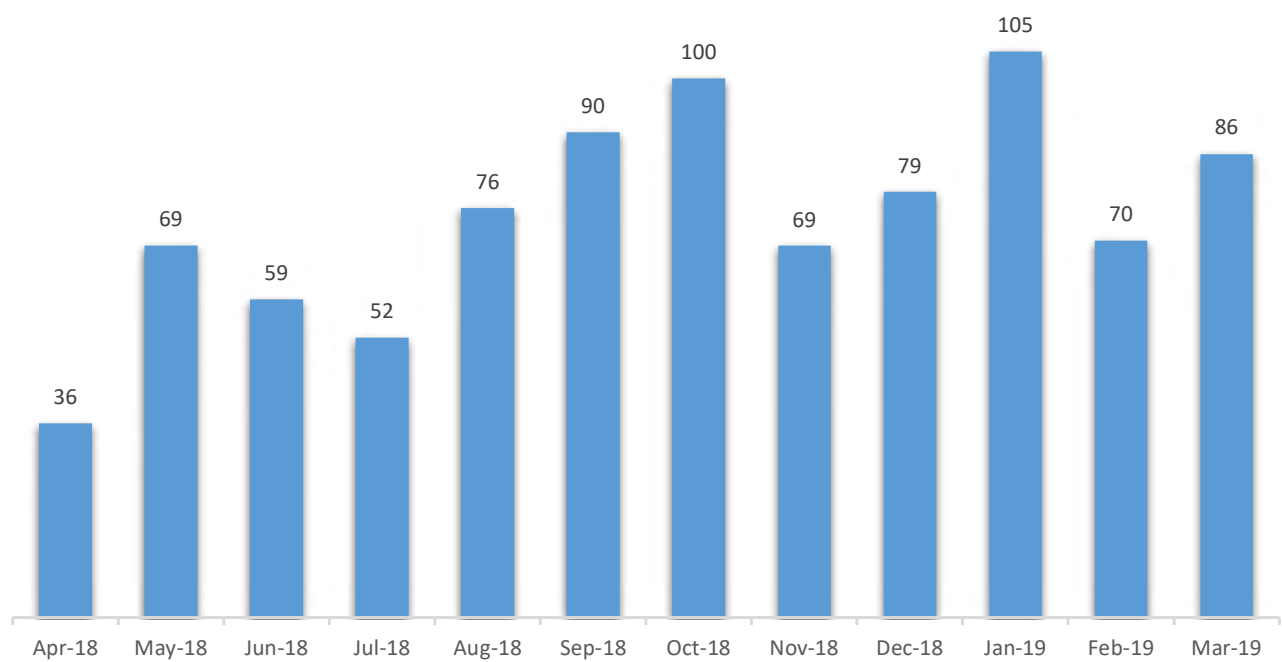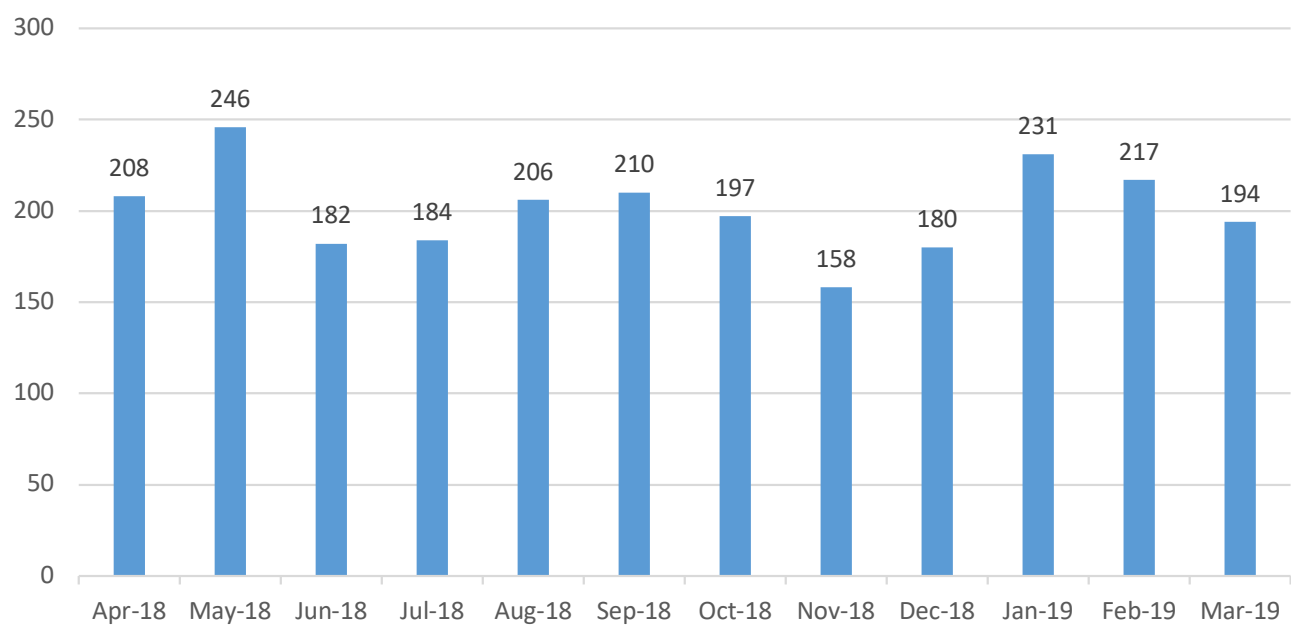

Figure 1.6 Number of Intelligence Reports Made During Project Servator Deployments in 2018/2019

Finally, the NPST also collect data on the number of intelligence reports made during Project Servator deployments on matters concerning crime, ASB, and terrorism. These are illustrated in Figure **1.6**. This indicates that the number of reports across the 16 forces range from 158 per month in November 2018 to 246 per month in May 2018, averaging 201 per month or around 13 per month per force.

Importantly, no forces undertook analytical work around whether or not 101/999 calls were affected by their Project Servator deployments. Partly, this was because there would need to be a mechanism to identify calls inspired by Project Servator deployments and partly also because there is likely to be a time lag between deployments and use of the number as the public become accustomed to the Project Servator message. In due course, it would make sense to set up a project looking into whether or not Project Servator activities have increased public engagement in reporting suspicious activity and unattended items.

Aside from national metrics, there is also some anecdotal evidence of impact. One Project Servator co-ordinator suggests that the police tactic has had a significant effect on retail crime in his area, as the following comment indicates:

> *"That's a sign of victory, isn't it? I'm looking at the impact it's had on other criminality. So, if you look at our retail thefts, for instance, it's gone down by 36% since we implemented [Project] Servator. So it does have an impact!"*

Over time, the NPST might evaluate Project Servator by undertaking sentiment analysis on comments made on social media by the public to ascertain how they are responding to Project Servator. This has been undertaken previously but requires continuous monitoring to assess changes in public sentiment. Similarly, it would also be useful to analyse the social networks that engage with Project Servator online to determine which people are influential in creating engagement. It is likely that these latter suggestions for further research would need to be undertaken nationally, as opposed to within local police forces.

Carrying on the concept of less objective measures of success for Project Servator, few forces were prepared to state that they had deterred a terrorist attack. Few forces were also sure that they had picked anyone up for terrorist offences whilst on a Project Servator deployment although one was and another thought they might have. Another force had arrested several people under the Terrorism Act but further action was not undertaken. Some Project Servator co-ordinators suggested that one metric for whether or not Project Servator was deterring hostile reconnaissance was an absence of attacks in their area. Most, however, recognised that this kind of thinking was complacent. Although it was not clear whether or not hostile reconnaissance was being deterred, one force articulated that sites ripe for terrorist attack were now no longer as easy to target as they had been, and that was a win in itself as the following comment illustrates.

> *"It's difficult to know if [a terrorist attack] would have occurred with or without Project Servator. The one thing I can be certain of is that we have made the airport a more difficult environment for hostiles to operate in and I feel more confident that any persons engaging in hostile reconnaissance at this site face a far greater chance of being picked up now that we have Project Servator than they would have otherwise."* [2]

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[2] See also the City of London Police's Annual Report 2018 on Project Servator, particularly the associated arrest statistics, available at: **https://www.colp.uk/annual-report-2018/**.

Police Community Support Officer briefs security staff at Gatwick Airport on Project Servator. Credit: Sussex Police

Another force indicated that Project Servator was working because his team had detected people behaving suspiciously in an airport when they were on a 'watchlist' and were trying to leave the country illegally. Yet another force in London felt that Project Servator was successful because:

"Within [our] area, there's a lot of moped enabled crime. When we looked at the hotspots what was evident was that our area of [Project Servator] patrol was clear of those robberies. That's to say there is a perception to say this is a policed environment. As [far as] detecting the hostile, as our level of skills grow and [through the] sharing of information and the messaging, I believe we achieved disruption … here with hostile reconnaissance in 2017 on at least two occasions."

One respondent goes on to discuss how on one of those two occasions his Project Servator team picked someone up who was carrying knives in his rucksack. Other forces have talked about how either they had stopped people or representatives from business partners had stopped those who appeared to be behaving suspiciously but turned out to be innocently surveying, photographing or videoing at iconic sites, because they had an occupational reason to do so or for some other non-criminal reason. Might analysis of terrorist interrogation transcripts reveal a further understanding of the deterrence effect or otherwise of Project Servator? CPNI are currently looking at how terrorists and criminals think, feel and operate and how protective security measures hinder their operations.

1.3.4. Project Servator: Aims and Objectives

Project Servator objectives are set out by the NPST, broken down by deployment and communication objectives. Not all Project Servator respondents mentioned the need to encourage suspicious activity reporting in the public, seemingly taking this for granted when it was mentioned by the interviewer. Most respondents also mentioned the importance and usefulness (often as a critical success factor) of generating intelligence from business partners at some point in the interview although not necessarily when directly questioned about Project Servator's aims and objectives.

Many respondents mentioned that it is difficult to ascertain whether or not Project Servator actually deters terrorist attacks, since it is difficult to 'prove a negative', meaning that a terrorist cell might be deterred by a Project Servator deployment but remain undetected. In that case, how would the Project Servator team know they had been effective in deterring a hostile reconnaissance cell? Such evaluation has previously been undertaken by CPNI but needs fully funding in order to ensure that it can be undertaken on a continuous basis by the forces themselves. There was discussion of anecdotal evidence of a reduction in crime more generally in areas in which Project Servator teams were deploying in the months after they had deployed but this is not being systematically measured in most forces, and so could be a focus of further research. Measuring crime figures before and after deployments in a select number of areas subject to Project Servator deployments would be a useful way of determining the effectiveness of the Project Servator approach in a more scientific way in the future (e.g. by evaluating Project Servator in an experimental or pseudo-experimental setting). This kind of analysis has previously been undertaken (e.g. by City of London Police). However, few forces have the necessary analyst resource or training to undertake such an exercise at present. Many force respondents also mentioned that they deployed their teams in areas based on intelligence from the general public, suggesting that they were successful in encouraging suspicious activity reporting, although it is difficult to determine whether this reporting would have happened anyway or if it was driven by advertising stimuli such as the campaign communications on A-frames, in handbills, via the tannoy, on social media and so on.

Police helicopters provide a mobile surveillance asset to Project Servator

1.3.5 Deployment: Asset Use and Frequency

The nature of deployment and the frequency with which they are run is impacted by where the deployment takes place (e.g. at an airport, in a city centre or at an event) although the tactics and available assets remain the same regardless of location. Maintaining the level of unpredictability of the deployments is a particularly important consideration when the location is static, e.g. at an airport or event, and this is maintained by deploying in different locations at different times with a different mix of police assets on any one occasion (see Figure 1.7). The respondents therefore mentioned the use of a range of police assets in their deployments. These assets, which fit into the four main categories of people, animals, vehicles and systems, were used in different combinations at different times to increase the deployment's unpredictability and power. However, some assets are more suitable for certain environments than others. Some forces do not have a horse or helicopter capability and so might integrate these from a neighbouring force that does or by calling in support from the National Police Air Service (NPAS). Motorbikes, particularly when traffic officers are present in the deployment, and cars/vans might also be used, particularly when part of the purpose of the deployment is to conduct vehicle checks. Cars/vans should display Project Servator livery where possible (some already do, including North Yorkshire Police) and cars have the added bonus of being able to deploy ANPR. Some respondents outlined how their forces used drones. These were regarded as particularly suitable for picking up imagery, which might then be used in social media posts and potentially to counter adversary use of drones for hostile reconnaissance. CCTV is used by police forces in evidence against perpetrators, or to corroborate a tip-off from a member of the public.

Figure 1.7: Physical Police Assets Used in Project Servator Deployments

- Host Site Security Staff
- Covert Armed Officers
- Armed Officers
- Traffic Officers
- Plain Clothes Officers
- Uniformed Officers/ PCSOs

People

Animals
- Horses
- Dogs

Physical Police Assets Used in Project Servator Deployments

Systems
- CCTV / ANPR

Vehicles
- Helicoptor
- Motorbikes
- Cars/Vans
- Drones

Police forces use drones to support Project Servator. Credit: North Yorkshire Police

1.3.6 Use of Paid, Owned, Earned Media (POEM)

Respondents were questioned about their use of media in relation to the communications component of Project Servator. For ease of understanding, this is broken down into the POEM acronym, POEM, short for Paid, Owned, and Earned Media. We consider each of these areas in further detail in the following sections.

1.3.6.1 Paid Media

Traditionally in marketing, this category relates to those third party media channels rented by the organization, e.g. ambient advertising (i.e. placing adverts in unusual places where you would not usually see them), outdoor advertising, TV, press, radio and online advertising, direct mail, and sponsorship.

1.3.6.2 Owned Media

Traditionally in marketing, this category relates to those media channels owned by the organisation, e.g. police force-owned pages in social networks (e.g. Facebook), YouTube channels, police websites and blogs, press releases, handbills, A-frame posters, pop-up banners, direct marketing via email, booklets for business partners (e.g. shops, licensees, restaurants), tannoy, face-to-face presentations to stakeholder partners (e.g. borough, unitary and city councils, non-Project Servator police staff in same force, business partners), and livery on police vehicles are some examples. Forces used a variety of campaign media, depending on their setting. All used handbills and these were particularly useful as "that ice-breaker" for officers to start conversations with the public, which might then lead onto a more detailed conversation about an individual's intent or a suspicious activity report. Another respondent suggests "face-to-face interaction, that's probably the most powerful. People will resonate [with the message] more when an officer hands them a leaflet". Forces also used their own forces' intranet sites, variants of social media (usually Twitter and Facebook), A-frames and sometimes posters. Physical assets such as A-frames are particularly, but not solely, useful in city centres and allow the deployment to "focus [the public's] attention and draw people's interest". One respondent also suggests they are particularly useful in stopping people to allow officers to talk to them, especially if they make use of striking colours. BTP make extensive use of the tannoy in train stations (for the related 'See it Say it Sorted' campaign but not for Project Servator) and police forces operating in airports tend to use this medium. Respondents' discussion of media use tended to focus particularly on the use of social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook. Twitter appears to be the main channel for most forces, particularly when Project Servator teams have their own access to this medium, rather than having to liaise and/or get permission from a media colleague to release a post.

1.3.6.3 Earned Media

Traditionally in marketing, this category relates to those media channels owned by third parties but given freely, e.g. press, radio, television and online news channels, and word-of-mouth. Many forces mentioned the importance of securing the attention of the press, particularly broadcast press teams, in order to disseminate the Project Servator message more widely. This was usually achieved by working with cooperative media partners including local newspapers and TV stations when they launched their campaign for the first time. In the context of Project Servator, many forces have been able to negotiate free space on stakeholder owned media sites because it is in that stakeholder's interest to improve security in that public space. This blurs the line between paid and earned media. Typically, however, because this stakeholder would normally earn income from the media site, media owners tend to only provide the police with media site availability at off-peak times or when fee-paying customers are not available at a specific time. For example, where posters or digi-boards were used, this was often achieved at no or low cost with media owners who offered space at times when that space was not being rented. Most airports provide the police with free use of their digital screens for the promotion of the Project Servator message although not all do. Respondents often mentioned that more use could be made of outdoor advertising for Project Servator teams operating in city streets, for example, on buses and taxis, on seats in taxis, and so on, although this required that such media partnerships be negotiated if these media sites were to be used for free. Engagement with businesses to promote the Project Servator message is much more extensive in city centres and there is the opportunity to display the Project Servator message on any screens owned by the local authority. Whilst tannoy could be used for message promotion in airports, it is not always but it does tend to be used extensively in train stations and on trains (albeit for the related 'See it, Say it, Sorted' message) and there is potential for it to be used more effectively if the message is delivered more informally. Because airports tend to be private property, owned by companies, securing agreement to promote the message with airport owners first is critical, whereas in a city centre, which is owned by the local authority, the space is public and access by the police is much easier to obtain. Generating creative ideas to get the Project Servator message out is critical to increasing public consciousness of the tactic. One particularly creative example of social marketing communication to reduce unwanted behaviours is Russian. Apparently, more than 30% of Russian drivers park in a space reserved for the disabled without being disabled. A campaign, Dislife.Ru, was developed to stop this using holographic and sensor technology so that when a car without a disabled sticker parked, a holographic image of a wheelchair user would appear and warn miscreants to respect disabled drivers[3].

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[3] See Oosterveld, E. (2015). In Russia, a hologram ghost teaches bad drivers a lesson. Vice, 12 October.
Retrieve from: **https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/qkwewp/in-russia-a-hologram-ghost-teaches-bad-drivers-a-lesson** (accessed 25 July 2019).

1.3.7 Enablers of Effectiveness: Best Practice

Forces provided teams of officers to supplement forces in other areas. This kind of joint working was regarded as a 'force multiplier'. Although each force has its own capabilities and must leverage these, given the success of the joint-working approach, it is worth considering how a system (online or otherwise) might be set up to allow forces to 'trade' staff and Project Servator assets/resources with each other as and when they need extra resources (as they inevitably will do when staff fall ill, for example). Thus, Project Servator skills could be added to the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) database so that forces could request these skills whenever necessary.

Forces highlighted the importance of building relationships through engaging with businesses. Most Project Servator respondents mentioned the importance of business engagement, as one of the most important tasks that could be undertaken by the Project Servator team. Another mentioned the importance of handbills in creating engagement with the public. Project Servator coordinators spoke of deploying the right mix of police assets, creating interaction with the public, targeting 'influencers' in social media to get the message to go viral, using consistent social media as a source of dialogue with the public to get the Project Servator message out and generate engagement, having a single point of contact in the operational deployment team, undertaking internal briefings so other officers in the force are aware of Project Servator, the link between the operational deployment and getting the message out on social media, creating more arrests/intelligence through Project Servator per full time member of staff than the rest of the force per full time member of staff, and the Project Servator training received and its link to effective operational deployment.

Project Servator respondents suggested that because Project Servator officers are highly trained, they are significantly more likely to identify people acting suspiciously. One member of the NPST argues that when Project Servator-trained personnel stop and search the public a positive outcome (meaning, for example, drugs or a weapon are found) is more likely than when compared with the national average for stop and search[4].

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[4] This is indeed the case, see Section 1.3.3.

1.3.8 Weaker Practice and Lessons Learnt

Barriers to effectiveness fall into three categories. Factors related to: (i) social media use; (ii) the supporting resource base; and iii) business engagement practice. In relation to social media use, respondents mentioned the need to improve their YouTube video effectiveness, supporting it with more resource, having a better system for approving and releasing social media messages more quickly, having the skills to write resonant social media posts in support of Project Servator and having a set of crisis management guidelines in case of a media crisis. Comments focused on the need to improve the resource base generally, and in relation to gaining more support from senior staff including financial support and from police officers not attached to Project Servator so that they can align with the message if they are engaged by the public on the topic. In relation to business engagement, respondents explained that it can take a very long time to get the communications structure in place with some stakeholders, for example getting a link to Project Servator from the client's web and intranet sites.

When asked about what lessons they had learnt since they had first launched, Project Servator coordinators highlighted many different, but often related, points. For example, there were several comments about the deployments, which suggested the need to: undertake regular full deployments when the Project Servator team was a small force, with staff fully trained, with the confidence to do stop/searches knowing they are skilled at it, and ensuring training is refreshed on a regular basis.

1.3.9 How Could Project Servator Be Improved?

Respondents provided many different ideas about how Project Servator could be improved. The suggestions broadly fall into suggestions for improving the deployments and suggestions for improving the communications. One respondent goes so far as to suggest that Project Servator should be compulsory for all police forces and another that officers should be kept up-to-date with training as the Project Servator approach evolves.

Given the importance of business engagement, a number of Project Servator respondents suggested that it would be helpful if NPST were able to help in the development of relationships with some businesses directly, e.g. by exhibiting at the Shopping Centre Management Conference (for shopping centre staff) and other umbrella retail bodies and contacting CEOs of large businesses directly (e.g. CEOs of football clubs, airport groups, local authorities). One force's Project Servator lead also suggests that business engagement processes could be improved by strengthening the relationship with businesses, which they think will happen through the SCaN training initiative[5]. Many of the respondents mention improvements that could be made to the communications side of Project Servator, particularly in relation to diversifying the messaging via social media platforms, particularly as it appeals to younger people, and monitoring the effectiveness of that social media engagement better. Others suggest using paid radio advertising, advertising via livery on police vehicles, using taxi advertising, and newspaper advertising and having an asset catalogue for advertising or social media engagement, to standardise and facilitate message dissemination. One Project Servator lead suggests that 'packaged' standard approaches to Project Servator launches could be developed by NPST, so that these can be customised by coordinators and these might, for instance, include a detailed overview of costs for different types of Project Servator deployment and social media dissemination. Guidelines on the numbers of personnel to be deployed by given population size might also be provided. Others suggest improvement could be made by: providing a text number to the public, for example, like 61016 but available nationwide[6]; undertaking more Project Servator effectiveness evaluation research using surveys,

increasing course availability so more people can be trained to run Project Servator teams and building awareness of Project Servator through school outreach programmes.

The QA process might also be improved by asking forces to provide a self-evaluation for the deployment approach prior to the spot visit (a process already undertaken for the communications component) and to ensure that this report is taken into consideration when the QA visit takes place. If a force fails the QA process, 'progression' issues are highlighted which if not tackled causes the grade to reduce on the next assessment. One suggestion would be to internally publish the grades for each force. By making assessments public in this way, it could generate a positive rather than negative incentive in Project Servator teams to improve, because there is evidence from the interviews that there is healthy competition between forces in displaying good practice compared with their neighbours. By the same token, performance across forces might be improved through an annual Project Servator awards ceremony. However, it is also imperative that Project Servator be fully funded as originally intended. This is because without such funding, full evaluation of the effectiveness of the tactic is not possible including public sentiment analysis, dip samples of the community, and public-intercept surveys.

Whilst arrest figures are collected during Project Servator deployments, the data collection process could be further improved. There could be a wider categorisation of offences for example. Finally, whilst a number of forces are coming on board (another 6 were in the pipeline between April 2019 and November 2019 including New South Wales Police Force in Australia), adding to the 15 that were already in place (16, including the overseas territory of Gibraltar). There are 45 territorial and three special police forces in the UK, meaning that there is considerable scope to roll out Project Servator further across the UK (and particularly in England and Wales). As a result, funding should be made available to support Project Servator development and deployment capability, particularly in undertaking the necessary training, and in hiring/training the necessary officers to undertake the deployments. Some thought should be given to providing would-be Project Servator forces with an implementation plan detailing costs, resources needed, timescales and training schedules. If there were full coverage of police forces across the UK, such that most were running Project Servator, there would then be a need to build up the resource available at NPST to cater for the increased evaluation and co-ordination work that would need to be undertaken too.

[5] SCaN is a training initiative to improve protective security measures at sites by providing some aspects of Project Servator training to representatives of businesses. This aims to build vigilance and suspicious activity reporting in order to increase the Project Servator presence so that it is well above and beyond the deployments.
For more details, see: **https://www.gov.uk/government/news/security-training-package-empowers-staff-to-see-check-and-notify-scan**.

[6] Running a nationwide emergency text service would require significant coordination. Who would run this, how would it be triaged with all the different police force control rooms, and might the public then be further confused?

1.4 Summary

Project Servator has been running for five years as a mechanism to use unpredictable police deployments, supported by a range of online and offline communications to disrupt terrorist and criminal activities. Police forces, including liaison forces overseas (e.g. New South Wales Police Force) are increasingly interested in adopting Project Servator tactics, ensuring their officers are suitably trained, and providing (some of) the resources necessary to make the tactic effective. This indicates Project Servator is a policing success story. Project Servator's effectiveness lies in the development of a countrywide 'patchwork quilt' of forces running Project Servator deployments to ensure that terrorism and criminal activity is deterred, not simply disrupted and/or displaced. The fact that there are now 22 Project Servator-enabled forces is a considerable achievement. As with all innovations, there is a diffusion mechanism as forces learn about the policing tactic and such diffusion typically accelerates over time as forces learn more about how it works and how to implement it. It is therefore likely that extra capacity will need to be developed in individual police forces and in the NPST to cater for this expansion as forces are more readily persuaded to come on-board.

With expansion comes the need for more rigorous assessment of individual deployments, particularly through greater use of public engagement surveys. The effectiveness of Project Servator deployments is particularly predicated on the development of relationships with local businesses and with media owners. Further thought needs to be given to how these relationships can be developed on a more systematic and industrial basis. In addition, there is a need for individual forces to make more use of different social media platforms to disseminate the Project Servator message, beyond Twitter. They are often hampered in doing so however, either by their relationships with their communication teams or by a lack of resource in those teams. The collection of a range of metrics to measure the performance of Project Servator teams is well-entrenched and a range of metrics are collected from each force. However, there is a need for further research in this area both to ascertain whether or not Project Servator deployments coincide with a drop in criminal activity in the areas in which they are undertaken and to ascertain what is happening to suspects of terrorist activity, handed over to counter-terrorism units. Finally, there is a need to fully fund the NPST so that it is able to undertake a full range of evaluation activities on a continuous basis to ensure the tactic remains effective.

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[7] ACT is a government communications campaign run by Counter Terrorism Policing to support the 'Protect and Prepare' strands of the UK government's counter-terrorism strategy. See: https://act.campaign.gov.uk/.

1.5 Recommendations

Generally, Project Servator co-ordinators were very positive about, and clearly believed in, the aims, objectives and effectiveness of Project Servator, despite the cuts in resources that they had experienced. They did however see room for improvement. The following 16 recommendations, divided into four themes, are a synthesis based on some of the comments made by both Project Servator co-ordinators and NPST staff, as well as interpretations of those comments made by the report author.

1. Injection into, maintenance and deployment, of resources.

i. Extra capacity ought to be made available in individual police forces and in NPST to cater for expansion of Project Servator across more police forces.

ii. With expansion comes the need for more rigorous assessment of individual deployments, particularly through greater use of public engagement surveys. The original proposal when NPST set up was for a central annual budget of circa £100,000 to be made available for evaluation, to include public surveys, business interviews, and social media content analysis. Moving forward, it is recommended that counter-terrorism policing headquarters (NCTPHQ) fully fund evaluation of Project Servator as originally intended. Some consideration ought to be given to how evaluation funds might be supplemented from other sources (e.g. with matched funding from forces).

iii. Set up compulsory biennial refresher training for Project Servator officers requiring completion in order to continue to practice.

iv. Encourage greater inter-force working on Project Servator to share resources, particularly on training and on deployments and co-ordinate this working from NPST and NPoCC.

2. Need for more systematic evaluation of Project Servator deployments and communications, and monitoring of associated performance metrics.

v. Few forces currently evaluate the effectiveness of their deployments using all the evaluation levels outlined, mainly due to the perceived lack of funding. Consideration should be given within forces' Project Servator teams to implementing more effective evaluation exercises within their own locations.

vi. Forces should be encouraged or required to conduct a trial phase of Project Servator deployments and communications before formally launching. The trial phase should be evaluated and forces newly adopting Project Servator encouraged to evaluate the trial using the appropriate evaluation techniques.

vii. Undertake a national-level survey to assess relative levels of awareness in the general population of Project Servator, versus other counter-terrorism communication campaigns such as the 'See it, Say it, Sorted' and Action Counters Terrorism (ACT)[7] to support HMG's efforts to deconflict these initiatives so that they are easier to understand by the public.

viii. There is a need for further research to ascertain whether or not Project Servator deployments coincide with a drop in criminal activity in the areas in which they are undertaken.

ix. Develop a set of absolute benchmark metrics for Project Servator forces to encourage forces to work to reach particular standards, e.g. in positive stop/search, in business engagement, and so on.

x. Use more spot-testing in the QA process (rather than providing advanced warning of a visit).

xi. Consider a one-day annual conference on Project Servator to bring together co-ordinators, including an award ceremony.

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[7] ACT is a government communications campaign run by Counter Terrorism Policing to support the 'Protect and Prepare' strands of the UK government's counter-terrorism strategy. See: **https://act.campaign.gov.uk/**.

3. Increased focus on business engagement.

xii. Give further thought to how relationships with local businesses, and media owners, can be developed on a more strategic basis.

xiii. Undertake more business engagement at the national level with high level contacts, e.g. with the Association of CEOs, representatives from the Northern Ireland Region of Shopping Centres (NIRSC) or the British Independent Retailers Association (BIRA) and so on.

4. Make greater use of a wider range of social media platforms and other media platforms to increase target audience awareness.

xiv. Individual forces to make more use of different social media platforms to disseminate the Project Servator message, beyond Twitter and YouTube, e.g. through Instagram, Snapchat, and so on.

xv. Forces to consider how Project Servator officers might be enabled to undertake their own social media curating and posting given the frequent lack of resources in their own communication teams or, and more preferably, develop a national Project Servator social media 'war-room' through which the force Project Servator communication respondents can work.

xvi. Consider developing a contingency fund to undertake paid advertising for Project Servator when threat levels reach 'critical'.

Appendix 1: About the Author

Paul Baines is Professor of Political Marketing and Associate Dean (Business and Civic Engagement) at University of Leicester. He is a Visiting Professor at Cranfield University and an Associate Fellow at King's College London. He is author/co-author of over a hundred articles, books and chapters on political marketing, public opinion and propaganda issues including the SAGE Handbook of Propaganda Volumes I-1V (SAGE, 2013, with Nicholas O'Shaughnessy), Explaining Cameron's Catastrophe (Indie Publishing, 2017, with Sir Robert Worcester, Roger Mortimore and Mark Gill) and the best-selling, Marketing 5e (Oxford University Press, 2019, with Chris Fill, Sara Rosengren and Paolo Antonetti) and the co-editor of the SAGE Handbook of Propaganda (SAGE Publications, 2020, with Nicholas O'Shaughnessy and Nancy Snow). He is a Fellow of the Market Research Society and the Institute of Directors (IOD). Paul's consultancy includes work for UK and US government departments on strategic communication projects as well as for small, medium and large private enterprises including IBM, 3M, and Saint Gobain Glassolutions, among others. He is also a non-executive director of the Business Continuity Institute and a Director of Baines Associates Limited.

Appendix 2: Project Servator Timeline

2012

The Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) begins working with the City of London Police to develop, test and refine the concept of Project Servator. Cranfield University helped to provide the research to evaluate the impact of Project Servator.

2014

February 2014

The City of London Police become the first police force to pilot Project Servator.

June 2014

Project Servator is used by Police Scotland at the XX Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

October 2014

The City of London Police fully adopt Project Servator and it becomes part of 'business as usual' across the Square Mile.

2015

August 2015

Essex Police trial Project Servator at V Festival in Hylands Park, resulting in 63 arrests and 248 people being ejected from the site.

September 2015

British Transport Police (BTP) trial Project Servator at three London railway stations, Waterloo, Paddington and Euston.

December 2015

British Transport Police (BTP) fully adopt Project Servator across the rail network in England, Scotland and Wales.

2016

April 2016

Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) trial Project Servator at AWE Aldermaston and HMNB Portsmouth.

July 2016

Essex Police begin Project Servator deployments at Lakeside shopping centre.

Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) begins Project Servator deployments at the Sellafield site and in the surrounding area.

November 2016

The Metropolitan Police trial Project Servator deployments in the Lambeth and Wandsworth boroughs.

Essex Police begin Project Servator deployments at Stansted Airport.

2017

April 2017

North Yorkshire Police fully adopt Project Servator and begin deployments in York and other parts of the county.

May 2017

North Yorkshire Police begin Project Servator deployments at Catterick Garrison - the largest British Army garrison in the world – with the Royal Military Police (RMP).

August 2017

Police Scotland carried out Project Servator deployments at Edinburgh Fringe.

November 2017

Essex Police begin Project Servator deployments in Colchester.

The Metropolitan Police begin Project Servator deployments at Heathrow Airport.

December 2017

Royal Gibraltar Police (RGP) begin a trial of Project Servator.

The Metropolitan Police begin Project Servator deployments at London City Airport.

2018

April 2018

Responsibility for overseeing and developing Project Servator nationally is formally transferred from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) to the National Project Servator Team (NPST), based at the City of London Police.

The Metropolitan Police fully adopt Project Servator across London and joint deployments with the City of London Police, British Transport Police and Ministry of Defence Police become business as usual in the capital.

May 2018

West Midlands Police begin a trial of Project Servator deployments at Birmingham Airport.

Greater Manchester Police begin a trial of Project Servator deployments at Manchester Airport.

Avon and Somerset Police begin a trial of Project Servator deployments at Bristol Airport.

The City of London Police provide mutual aid to Thames Valley Police for one of their largest policing operations ever for the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. Officers carried out deployments across Windsor in the run-up to the wedding and on the day..

June 2018

Royal Gibraltar Police fully adopt Project Servator across Gibraltar.

Bedfordshire Police begin a trial of Project Servator deployments at London Luton Airport.

Project Servator is featured on BBC One's Crimewatch Roadshow.

July 2018

Merseyside Police begin a trial of Project Servator deployments in the area around the Albert Dock, Pier Head and Echo Arena in Liverpool.

August 2018

Project Servator officers are deployed around London in response to an incident in which a vehicle was driven at cyclists, pedestrians and police officers near the Palace of Westminster.

September 2018

Following a successful trial, Project Servator is formally adopted by West Midlands Police at Birmingham Airport.

West Yorkshire Police begin a trial of Project Servator in Leeds city centre.

October 2018

Liverpool FC pledge their support for Project Servator.

November 2018

Following a successful trial, Project Servator is formally adopted by Bedfordshire Police at London Luton Airport.

North Yorkshire Police start deploying Project Servator in Harrogate.

Following a successful trial, Project Servator is formally adopted by West Yorkshire Police in Leeds city centre.

West Midlands Police start deploying Project Servator in Birmingham city centre.

December 2018

British Transport Police celebrate three years of Project Servator across the rail network.

Sussex Police begin trialling Project Servator at Gatwick Airport.

Project Servator forces support the festive ACT campaign – Action Counters Terrorism.

2019

January 2019

The first Project Servator conference is held in the City of London, organised by the National Project Servator Team and the TINYg (Terrorist Information New York Group) global information sharing network. The event was attended by 100 businesses.

First Bus starts displaying Project Servator adverts across its bus network across Leeds.

February 2019

Civil Nuclear Constabulary begin Project Servator deployments at the Hunterston site in Ayrshire.

March 2019

Police Service Northern Ireland begin trialling Project Servator in Belfast city centre and across the transport network.

The Ministry of Defence Police celebrate two years since its adoption of Project Servator.

April 2019

North Yorkshire Police celebrate two years since its adoption of Project Servator.

May 2019

Greater Manchester Police expand Project Servator into Manchester city centre.

June 2019

Cheshire Police begin trialling Project Servator in Chester city centre.

Avon and Somerset Police formally adopt Project Servator following a trial at Bristol Airport and expand deployments to Bath city centre.

Royal Gibraltar Police celebrate one year since formal adoption of Project Servator.

July 2019

Belfast Harbour Police begin trialling Project Servator at Belfast Harbour.

Police Scotland begin Project Servator deployments at Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Prestwick Airports.