Steve Doel, Deputy Head of the UK Police National CBRN Centre, tells Gwyn Winfield how their current procurement is preparing them for future sporting events

# Quick's the word

**GW: What lessons about procurement have you taken from quick don? UK police are not used to having strategic capability buys, so how have you managed to balance the individual requirements of a force with the overall need/capability – which might not be a 100 per cent fit?**
SD: From day one – and by that I mean September 2001 – we have viewed the development of a police CBRN capability as a UK-wide issue; we have at no point had any problems convincing the police procurement community that this was, and is, the right way to go within CBRN purchasing. Indeed, our approach has been looked upon with some envy, and has been commented on favorably as we have progressed through many different strands of procurement. While this was our start position in 2001, we were able to hold true to that early concept when the work began in earnest with the current Programme in 2006 because of the work we have undertaken since then in defining requirements through extensive stakeholder engagement. The workshops, conferences, usability trials and committee-type consultations, supported by the drafting and publishing of doctrine and tactics, have meant that individual requirements, while understood and heard, have not been able to derail the development of a suitable national standard.

**GW: What are the concepts of operation (conops) for Quick Don? What is it going to allow police to do that either the CR1 or Tychem F don't?**
SD: It would be wrong for me to go into the detail of conops here for obvious reasons, but there are two principle factors we set out to achieve in the delivering of Quick Don – firstly the faster deployment of protected officers, and secondly protection and operational usability factors on a par with those offered by the CR1. Quick Don, in the form of the Remploy Swift Responder 3 (SR3), has achieved that for us.

**GW: What other equipment is Quick Don designed to work with? Have there been any integration trials with items such as dosimeters, the FM12 and the ER1(3)?**
SD: It was, and remains, important in purchasing to ensure consistency in what we buy, reducing or limiting the training burden and making best use of what we already have. The FM12 respirator is an integral part of the selected ensemble and the evaluation process, including usability trials. Where appropriate, the rigorous scientific protection and physiological testing regime have included the other items you mentioned above. It also included a wide range of other mainstream and CBRN-specific equipment, all forming part of the thorough choice mechanism we employed. There would be little value in putting the suit onto the street without officers knowing that everything has been tested in this way.

**GW: Where will the testing and evaluation of the suits be done? What standard will they be tested to and what level of washability/reuse are you looking for?**
SD: In essence we are at the end of what has been an extremely lengthy and rigorous scientific testing regime designed in conjunction with the Home Office Scientific Development

*Smarts the action! The UK's Quick Don procurement has been put through it's paces. ©PNCBRNC*

Branch (HOSDB) who have provided and co-ordinated all of the technical evaluation for the project, utilising the services of Dstl, Qinetiq, the Health and Safety Laboratory, Optimal Performance Limited and the Institute of Occupational Medicine, as well as continuous input from a wide range of experienced CBRN practitioners from both the police and partner agencies. While it would not be appropriate to disclose precise details of the testing undertaken or the test results for obvious reasons, we are more than satisfied that the SR3 meets or exceeds the requirements and extremely challenging standards set at the outset of the process. Hence the signing of contract with Remploy on 21 July– that does not, of course, mean we will not continue to quality assure what we have signed up to purchase and where appropriate seek improvements where necessary.

In terms of re-use following a CBRN event, this will always be subject to incident-specific scientific advice to maintain responder safety. Re-use where the ensemble is not contaminated or otherwise compromised was a requirement from the outset, and the operational ensemble can be reused many times if required and has an extended life once opened (two years) as long as it is repackaged appropriately. The training ensemble has been designed to be hard-wearing and launderable in a normal washing machine.

**GW: What is the user requirement for the SAS (Scene Assessment System) and how was it developed? How does it differ from the Scene Assessment vehicle devised by Surrey Police?**
SD: As with other procurement strands, we consulted widely in the early stages. We drew together representatives from operations departments across the UK, bringing managers and potential operators together. These were added to the team in the Centre who, it should be remembered, are in the main seconded operational police officers supported by fire and ambulance colleagues, with many years of emergency service experience to draw upon. This early work was then added to by seeking professionals to draft that user requirement. A full tender process was adopted at this stage, and Thales were awarded the contract to write the user requirement and system requirement documents for the system – Thales put a team of four staff into this work, and over four months working closely with us in the Centre and with the wider police and CBRN community produced a comprehensive suite of documents that will provide the right package for the next stage.

The SAS is a major project and we were and are acutely aware that it is both conceptually and technically demanding and because of this we also brought expertise into the Centre to support us in the critique of the Thales product. Once again this approach has been acknowledged as good practice. I would anticipate a similar approach as we move into the next phase.

The SAS is vastly different from Surrey's Scene Assessment Vehicle, not least because it is primarily a communications platform that is determined to inform all levels of command and into all agencies as deemed necessary. Again, it would be wrong to go into detail here but the aim is to provide the sort of analysis and detail that will ensure the right decisions can made, and made quickly – not relying on local interpretation of technical information but ensuring this reaches the right people quickly. Police officers at the scene can then utilise the analysed data to make the right decisions and co-ordinate the ongoing response, something they do best and in which they have years of training and experience. The SAS can do its job and update the wider CBRN community so they can advise on the next and subsequent courses of action. Unlike the Surrey vehicle the SAS, which is a system rather than a vehicle, will utilise scene information and push analysis as far back as possible so officers get on with immediate tasks.

**GW: Is there a concern that lodging command and control and assessment into one vehicle makes it vulnerable and valuable? Might you want to keep the two roles separate? Is there a concern that you end up with half a system of each, simply due to space requirement?**
SD: I'll deal with the second question first: no, I do not see it as a concern but it will be a challenge for industry in the prototype stages – space will be an issue that will need to be overcome but I have every confidence industry will rise to this challenge. As I said in answer to the previous question, decision-making from a command and control perspective will be made on the analysis that has taken place by technical expertise on a "reachback" basis. This reachback analysis will then feed tactical command decision-making again away from the immediate scene. So investment is in a whole system approach, not merely in the detectors that might be fixed to a vehicle or be left near the scene by the operators.

**GW: Is there any interest in doing mounted detection and the type of monitoring and mapping provided by military vehicles such as the Stryker or Fuchs? What fixed detection equipment will you have – chemical, or just radiation?**
SD: The intention is to secure the development of a system that provides fixed, portable and drop-and-go detection capability (both chem and rad). I do not believe these aspects will be challenges for industry – the real challenge will be in securing communication systems that will allow interpretation of data both at the scene and away from it. This detection capability is only part of the assessment process, with analysis taking on a far broader meaning than just detecting and identifying the nature of the agent released – assessment and communication of all aspects at the scene will form the basis for further early decision making both at and away from the scene. This aid to early decision making is the fundamental part of the system, but as the incident unfolds it may inevitably take on a broader role in terms of mapping and monitoring – the drop-and-go detection capability referred to in the user requirement makes this apparent.

**GW: Will the finished system be positive pressure/colpro enabled, or will the users have to wear PPE?**
SD: We are not seeking a colpro or positive pressure system – users will be issued with the new Quick Don

# Quick's the word

*The barrier control system will be used in many situations other than CBRN. ©Cobham*

been used to protect murder scenes, separate opposing football crowds and create sterile areas for other policing operations. More recently, the communication system was used by Avon and Somerset Constabulary at Glastonbury to provide crime advice messages to festival-goers. This is exactly what we want to see so, as you say, the training burden shrinks the more officers use them; deployment becomes the norm rather than the exception, and when they are needed for a CBRN incident there should be no scratching the head or searching for keys, etc.

To answer your concern over availability, we have two aspects which cover resilience. Firstly, we do hold a limited spare capacity but, more importantly, part of the procurement package negotiated with the suppliers, Cobham, is for a maintenance support chain that will see repairs conducted on a call out basis – a system which has already been tested and found to be successful. The strength in this project has been the level of liaison the Project team at Ryton have had with Cobham – once the company won the tender, their "open door" approach and a desire to fully understand the policing environment has been excellent. This has meant the products have met the police needs firstly for CBRN scene management, and then secondly for broader police use.

**GW: How is the cordon fastened to buildings at the side to stop it bowing under pressure? What roll tests have been done on it, considering the many people who will be trying to get around/through it?**

SD: A unique winch and chain system has been designed that will provide flexibility in allowing the securing of the system to other barriers or to other fastening points. The system has undergone extensive testing by the HOSDB in relation to its capabilities. Following the Hillsborough disaster, there are a number of recommendations and considerations that have to be factored in relating to the use of barriers. These have formed part of the testing review.

**GW: Is there a concern that the screen of the comms system is too small – that people might approach the barrier to read it? Could a larger screen be added? Are there any cameras or data collection software that could tell Command how many people are at the barrier, whether any non-ambulant, etc?**

SD: We are confident that the screen size is suitable for the purpose for which it was designed. The system has a screen with a high number of pixels that improves the clarity and also creates a wider angle from which the message can be read. The system has been trialled at a music festival to display crime prevention messages – the feedback from this trial was extremely positive and the force concerned reported a reduction of 50 per cent in theft from tents from the previous years. While it is not a CBRN environment, it is indicative of the manner in which the system will be used; those involved operationally were very pleased with the outcome. The manufacturers are also developing a CCTV system that can be fitted to the mast which is available to forces to purchase as an optional extra.

**GW: What are the next tranche of procurements after these three? Will there be any that link into the other emergency services?**

SD: I think we are now at an interesting time, and while the upcoming Olympics should not hamper development we are very keen to embed the capabilities we have delivered in time for 2012. The programmed funding comes to an end with the SAS, but we are already discussing with the Police Service and partners where the next tranche of development should be, and much of this will be governed by the threat picture. But what we have seen, I am sure you would agree, is a phenomenal development in capability for the Police Service and UK over the past three years. Government and the Police Service have put their trust in the Police National CBRN Centre to deliver on some significant projects, not just in procurement but also in developing sound doctrine, workable tactics and leading into effective operating procedures. The Centre has achieved this to date and will continue to work on further improvements, but as I said the focus now is on putting policy into practice – in essence embedding capability. We will do this by supporting forces and agencies with commander and responder training while also looking very much to support them in the testing and exercising regimes that will ensure the Police Service, and more importantly the UK, is ready to respond in the event of a CBRN attack from now until 2015.