

To: Professional Standards Committee
From: Chief Constable
Date: 13th May 2009

UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ADDITIONAL TASERS

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Committee in relation to the planning for the rollout of additional Taser capacity, further to the paper submitted to the Committee on the 12th February 2009.

2. Background

- 2.1 Members of the Committee will recall that the Home Office recently made available additional funds for the purchase of additional Taser devices for Forces across the country. Cambridgeshire Constabulary took the opportunity provided and subsequently received an additional 150 devices to supplement those already in use which are restricted in their deployment to our existing cadre of authorised Firearms Officers. The funding from the Home Office was limited to the purchase of the devices and an initial supply of cartridges. No further funds were provided for additional training or ongoing expenses.
- 2.2 Notwithstanding that the Taser is an electrical incapacitant, its deployment is often perceived as analogous to that for firearms and the Constabulary has therefore hitherto limited its use to Officers who are also trained as Firearms Officers. This recognises that the use of Taser is an important alternative to the use of lethal force in a number of operational scenarios. The training associated with the use of Taser has been restricted to authorised Firearms Officers, although the Taser training is completely separate to the training necessary for the accreditation for the use of firearms. The Constabulary is committed to ensure that any subsequent extension to the current deployment to Taser devices will not be rolled out without any further Officers receiving a consistent level of training in relation to its use.
- 2.2 Between the 1st January 2008 and 15th December 2008 the Constabulary recorded 433 Taser authorities with many more incidents occurring where Taser might have been authorised had the capacity been available. As a result of these authorities there were only nine actual discharges of the device.
- 2.3 The Constabulary needs to undertake further consideration in relation to the Officers to be identified and the exact training required. There is a full recognition of the important issue of providing reassurance to the public prior to any actual extension to the Taser deployment. This takes into account the differing views held about the appropriateness or otherwise for the deployment of the device in circumstances which might fall short of a clear firearms situation.

2.4 As a result of the considerable further detailed work required before any actual deployment, the Constabulary has formed a working group to oversee plans for a proposed rollout. The group is being led by DCC John Feavoyour and has representatives from the Safer Communities directorate including Firearms Officers, as well as Learning and Development, HR and Communications staff.

3. Progress and Implementation

3.1 The working group has met once and determined the framework of actions which need to be put in place for rollout. The actions include the following pieces of work:

- The development of an implementation team as mentioned above.
- An internal discussion forum to understand the views of Officers and staff.
- A communication plan to ensure that stakeholders and interested parties outside of the Constabulary are both briefed and given the opportunity to feed back into the deployment policy which will also meet the legal requirements under the statutory equality consultation provisions.
- A risk and threat assessment to review the current use of force recording machinery and potential health and safety issues.
- To establish a machinery to learn lessons from other forces from their use of Taser.
- Identification of the numbers, profile and skill set of Officers for whom Tasers are to be deployed.
- A review of the force training capability to ensure appropriate training.
- A further financial review to incorporate both training and live cartridge costs.
- Identification of storage and maintenance requirements.
- Review and update of aftercare issues including action taken and required in custody suites.
- Capture of a new policy and procedure document for the oversight of the use of Taser.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The existing use of Tasers within force by authorised Firearms Officers has led to some highly successful outcomes, avoiding the need for consideration of the use of lethal force. Individuals have also been detained without injury to themselves or Officers, which is the overriding consideration in Taser deployment.

4.2 It is also clear that there are other circumstances where Taser might have been deployed and as a result when funding was made available by the Home Office for additional devices the Constabulary has seized that opportunity.

4.3 The Constabulary also fully recognises the differing views about the use of Taser both inside and outside of the organisation, and as a consequence will not further deploy any Tasers to Officers beyond those with existing training undertaken in parallel to their firearms training, until a full policy review has been completed including internal and external consultation.

4.4 The working group overseen by the Deputy Chief Constable will ensure that this work is co-ordinated and taken forward consistent with the consultation mentioned above.

5. Recommendation

5.1 The Committee are invited to note the work now in train and a further update will be provided for information and comment before any further Taser deployment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document(s)	Contact Officer	Location
	Deputy Chief Constable John Feavyour (01480 422532) (PA)	Cambridgeshire Constabulary Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 6NP
<p>Originating OfficerDCC</p> <p>Is it considered that this report contains 'exempt information' and should be considered in private? No</p> <p>If the answer is "YES", please state the nature of the exempt information <u>and the relevant clause</u> in Part 1 of revised Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>The attached report has been cleared with the undermentioned Officers: (delete as appropriate)</p> <p>Deputy Chief Constable</p> <p>Others</p> <p>Submitted on29th April 2009.....</p> <p>A report will not be sent to the Authority unless this box has been satisfactorily completed and all necessary consultation carried out - the responsibility for which rests with the originator (except for consultation with the Chairman and this will be undertaken by the Chief Executive).</p>		