

To: Professional Standards Committee

From: Chief Constable

Date: 8th March 2010

TASER UPDATE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The intention of this paper is to provide an update on the Force plans for the extended operational deployment of taser for specially trained Officers, excluding authorised firearms officers. The paper will provide summary of the decisions made at the Force Executive Board (FEB) in November 2009, identify cost implications and give an overview of progress to date.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Home Secretary has authorised the use of taser by specially trained units and the Constabulary has 150 taser units (funded from a 'one off' funding bid from the NPIA) stored awaiting deployment to trained staff in non firearms situations involving violence or threats of violence of such severity that Officers would need to protect the public, themselves or the subject/s.
- 2.2 Taser is not a replacement for existing personal safety tactical options but is an option that is considered alongside other personal safety options such as negotiation, batons, incapacitant sprays and dogs. The Conflict Management Model contained within the ACPO Personal Safety Manual of Guidance sets out the process whereby a measured and appropriate response can be made to any situation involving conflict.

3. Overview

- 3.1 In November 2009, the FEB considered proposals for the roll out of taser to specially trained Officers. It has been determined that 120 Officers across the Force will be trained in the use of taser and that this will include 30 Road Policing Unit Officers and 30 Officers from each of the three Divisions (Central, Northern and Southern).
- 3.2 The FEB has supported the extended rollout of taser to manage the professional responsibility placed on the Police Service to intervene in potentially violent situations to protect the rights of all persons, the need to ensure that human dignity and rights are upheld and that firearms should only be discharged by Police Officers when absolutely necessary.

The Force will ensure the standards of competence, accreditation and operational practice contained within the Home Office (2003) Code of Practice on the Police Use of Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons, the ACPO (2009) Manual of Guidance on the Management, Command and Deployment of Armed Officers and the ACPO (2008) Policy for the Roll Out of Taser to Specially Trained Units.

- 3.3 The roll out of taser will be compliant with the recommendations of the HMIC 'Adapting to Protest' reports (July 2009 and November 2009). Parallel work is implementing the report conclusions into Constabulary policies and processes. An integral part of this is the development of a long term strategy to map the use of taser as a personal safety tactical option against this and future learning.

4. Deployment

- 4.1 The issue, deployment and use of taser will confirm to the well-established guidance already laid down in the ACPO Manual of Guidance on the Management, Command and Deployment of Armed Officers and the ACPO: TASER Operational Guidance December 2008. Taser deployments will be carefully managed and will be subject to strict command and governance arrangements as currently in place for taser use by Authorised Firearms Officers.
- 4.2 The Home Office continues to monitor the extension of the use of taser and reports will be submitted on taser usage by authorised firearms Officers and by specially trained units. The Home Office Scientific Development Branch continues to review the operational use of taser and this continues to be supported by ACPO and the Home Office.
- 4.3 Between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2008 authority for armed Officers to deploy with taser was given in Cambridgeshire 492 times. During this time taser was discharged in Cambridgeshire on only 8 occasions.
- 4.4 Between 1st April 2009 and 3rd December 2009 taser was authorised 338 times this financial year. During this time taser was discharged on only two occasions. Both discharges this year followed deployment to violent domestic situations where threats were made by a subject with a knife. On both occasions the subject was subdued and arrested.
- 4.5 Comparative data on taser use by all Forces between 22nd April 2004 and 30th June 2009 has been produced and this information is published quarterly by the Home Office Scientific Development Branch. This shows that Cambridgeshire has discharged taser on 21 occasions during the last 5 years. With the two recent deployments within the county the Chief Firearms Instructor, Sgt Peter Davies, confirms a total of 23 discharges within the county.

5. Project Roll Out

- 5.1 A Project Management Group chaired by Head of Operations, Superintendent Vicky Skeels, has been established to oversee the roll out of taser to specially trained units.
- 5.2 A Project Working Group has been established to take forward the implementation of the Project Management Group action plan.
- 5.3 An extended operational deployment of Taser policy covering issue, deployment, use and post incident procedure is being drafted for the approval of the Project Management Group, along with a staff selection policy and procedure.
- 5.4 The Project Management Group is working with divisional representatives to identify and approve storage locations.
- 5.5 Quality assurance and performance reporting are being explored through the potential linking of governance to existing 'Use of Force' oversight.

6. Costs

- 6.1 The Constabulary will identify and promulgate good practice in all matters concerning the police use of firearms in order to improve safety, efficiency and effectiveness and will support the continuing development and improvement of police responses to potentially violent situations and the management of conflict.
- 6.2 The FEB has determined that the management of the taser roll out will be managed within existing training capacity and the project group is now determining a simple and cost effective way forward.
- 6.3 There are financial implications regarding taser roll out which have been considered by the Project Team and Star Chamber process. Anticipated set up costs include: approximately £45k total for backing boards, target faces (all for training purposes), vests and lanyards for officers, evidence kits, storage cabinets and software for downloading information plus cost of cartridges £52k (which have already been purchased for this year). The cost will be found from within existing budgets.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The Committee is invited to note the force plans to implement the extended use of taser to specially trained units.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document (s)	Contact Officer	Location
	DCC John Feavoyour (01480) 422532	Cambridgeshire Constabulary Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 6NP.

Originating OfficerDCC

Is it considered that this report contains 'exempt information' and should be considered in private? No

If the answer is "YES", please state the nature of the exempt information **and the relevant clause** in Part 1 of revised Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

The attached report has been cleared with the undermentioned Officers: (delete as appropriate)

Chief Constable and Chief Executive

Others

Submitted on25th February 2010

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).