

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO. AP13/40

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL -
13 AUGUST 2013**

SUBJECT: INCREASED TASER COVERAGE IN SUFFOLK

SUMMARY:

1. A Taser is an electronic stunning device which can be used by police officers to subdue offenders in dangerous, or potentially dangerous situations, and provides a less lethal option to the use of firearms by the police. Tasers were first introduced in Suffolk in 2005, and until 2009 were only available to Authorised Firearms Officers. In August 2009, the use of Taser was extended to include additional specially trained officers.
2. Tasers provide police officers with a wide range of options to protect themselves from violent or dangerous offenders thereby enabling them to provide greater public protection.
3. The Chief Constable commissioned a piece of work to consider whether the Constabulary had sufficient officers trained to use Taser to maximise coverage across Suffolk.
4. A number of options for increasing coverage were explored and discussed by the County Policing Command (CPC) Team.
5. Following consultation with Assistant Chief Constable Tim Newcomb it was recommended that additional Taser officers are trained increasing numbers to:

Bury and Lowestoft Neighbourhood Response Teams (NRT) 4 per shift (40)
Ipswich NRT 5 per shift (25)
3 officers trained per shift across the remaining 6 NRT bases (90)
Automatic Numberplate Recognition (ANPR) Team (6)
6. Although not increasing the number of devices, this will increase the number of Taser trained officers on duty at any time from 13 to 31 at the NRT bases. This is likely to improve morale in terms of officer safety and considerably reduce response times to events that require a Taser resolution resulting in greater public protection.
7. Total increase in costs = £41,500 (one off) plus £7,500 per annum. One off costs will be met through the Chief Officer Contingency Fund and on-going revenue costs will be built into base budgets for 2014/15 onwards (plus costs associated with providing the additional training courses).

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to note the content of this report.

DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1.1 When Tasers were issued to non-Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) in Suffolk, the plan was to provide coverage at the three main Neighbourhood Response Team (NRT) bases as follows:

Ipswich 5 Taser officers per section	= 25
Bury St Edmunds 4 per section	= 20
Lowestoft 4 per section	= 20
+ Tactical Support Team (TST)	= 7
Total	= 72

(With some additional on other teams increasing the funded number to 86)

- 1.2 As time progressed some officers moved stations, specialized or were promoted. This led to a situation where some officers trained to use Tasers were deployed at Stations which were not equipped to store the Tasers. To remedy this, appropriate safes were installed at all of the NRT bases.
- 1.3 Currently there are some 86 non AFO officers listed as trained for Taser. Of these 86 trained, there are a number who are now in roles which do not require Taser as a skill (such as Custody Sergeants and Detectives).

The current picture shows:

Ipswich	= 20	} <i>Some 16 less than originally planned</i>
Bury St Edmunds	= 16	
Lowestoft	= 13	
+ Tactical Support Team (TST)	= 4	
ANPR Team	= 4	
Subtotal	= 57	
Other NRT Bases	= 13	
Total	= 70	

- 1.4 Of the remaining 16 shown as trained, 5 are on area in non NRT roles, the rest work in roles such as the PIC, Crime and the Contact and Control Room (CCR) where the skill is not used.
- 1.5 A number of options for increasing coverage were explored and discussed by the County Policing Command (CPC) Team. All centred around the premise that as NRT's provide 24/7 response to incidents, it would be most appropriate to embed any increase in Taser trained officers within the NRT's. In addition, those officers no longer on NRT's should not retain Taser authorisation and should surrender their lanyards and vests so that they can be re-used.
- 1.6 It was recommended that additional Taser officers be trained increasing numbers to:

Bury and Lowestoft Neighbourhood Response Teams (NRT) 4 per shift (40)
Ipswich NRT 5 per shift (25)
3 officers trained per shift across the remaining 6 NRT bases (90)
Automatic Numberplate Recognition (ANPR) Team (6)

1.7 This equates to:-

161 officers – 66 currently funded (and on NRT/ANPR) = increase of **95** Taser trained officers.

1.8 It should be noted that there will be no increase in Taser devices available for deployment, but by increasing the number of trained officers coverage across the County will be enhanced. This is expected to result in increased officer safety and provide the capability to enhance public protection.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS.

Initial training cartridges	95 x £350 = £33,250
Annual refresher cartridges	(161-86) x £100 = £7,500 per annum (As funding already in place for 86 refresher courses)

Vest & Lanyards	75 x £110 = £8,250
Initial training	95 x 3 = 285 days
Annual refresher training	75 x 1 = 75 days per year
Trainers for	95/12 = 8 additional courses (initial training)
Plus another 7 refreshers courses per year.	

Total increase in costs = **£41,500 (one off) plus £7,500 per annum**
(Plus costs associated with providing the additional training courses.)

3. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

3.1 The Chief Constable has requested that a full evaluation is conducted in relation to the extended roll-out of Taser to establish the benefits of increased coverage, and to understand the perceptions of officers and the public. The evaluation will assess the following:-

- Officer perception
- Assaults of police officers
- Complaints against police
- Public perception
- Use of force
- Deployment
- Effectiveness of deployments
- Training regime
- Cost.

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	No
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	Yes
Have human resource implications been considered?	Yes
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	Yes
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	Yes
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	Yes
In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission?	Yes