



BRITISH
TRANSPORT
POLICE

Agenda Item 8

REPORT TO: Stakeholder Relations & Communications Strategy
DATE: 20 July 2009
SUBJECT: Deployment of Taser
SPONSOR: Assistant Chief Constable (Operations)
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1 PURPOSE OF PAPER

- 1.1 To update the Stakeholder Relations & Communications Strategy (SR&CS) Committee on the proposals for the deployment of Taser within BTP.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 British Transport Police (BTP) has now conducted consultation widely with the industry and community groups. Presentations have been made to the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) Police and Security Group and individually to various Train Operating Company (TOC) management teams. An invitation was sent to all TOC Chief Executives for briefings to their respective management boards. So far the feedback from Train Operating Company management teams on this issue has been generally supportive.
- 2.2 Presentations have been made to the National Independent Advisory (NIAG) Group and the London Independent Advisory (LAN) Network. Both groups have been generally supportive although there were a number of concerns around the effect of Taser on specific medical conditions and on the operational monitoring of Taser usage, in respect of diversity issues and excessive use of force. These issues have to been addressed as far as is possible and responses have been supplied to the relevant advisory groups. For information, all persons who have been subjected to Taser must see a medical examiner as soon as possible.
- 2.3 The additional safety testing commissioned by BTP has been completed by the Home Office Scientific Development Branch (HOSDB), a copy is attached. The conclusion to this testing is

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Version 1.0 Dated 24/06/09



that there is minimal risk from the third rail system. There is a risk that if the Taser wire made contact with overhead line equipment but this will be covered fully within the training programme. It is strongly felt that this particular risk can be well mitigated due to the height of the overhead wires. Network Rail and London Underground formed an essential part of this testing. The results have been fed into the Risk Assessment process which is currently underway and methods for mitigating these risks will be built into the training package.

2.4 The SR&CS have requested the statistical information which is listed below:

- Analysis of firearms incidents within BTPs jurisdiction:
 - Recorded Crimes:
 - 2007: 120
 - 2008: 133
 - This includes crimes recorded using imitation firearms (2007: 34, 2008:25)
 - The table below shows the annual breakdown by Area:

Area	2007	2008
LS	47	21
LN	27	56
LU	10	23
NW	13	8
NE	7	5
WW	7	15
SC	9	5

- The combined three London areas show the largest recorded firearms crimes.
- In both years the most common firearm type was Incapacitant Spray (CS, Pava, Pepper, etc). The relatively high rate of incidence involving this type of firearm is likely down to the confiscation of these weapons at the Eurostar security checks. There is work ongoing with European counterparts to address this issue. This also explains the



drop in recorded firearms crimes for London South Area and the increase for London North Area (Transfer of Eurostar from Waterloo to St Pancras).

- Analysis of non-firearms, weapons incidents within Force jurisdiction:

- Recorded Crimes:

- 2008: 377

- The table below shows the annual breakdown by Area:

Area	2008
LS	131
LN	93
LU	78
NW	18
NE	17
WW	23
SC	16

- The highest recorded weapon type was a knife or blade (335 records)

- Over 1000 incidents were recorded in relation to non-firearms weapons but only 377 qualified for recording as a crime.

- Weapons used in assaults (Serious Assault, Robbery and Attempted Robbery):

- 2007: 263
- 2008: 196
- The most common weapon type for both years was a knife or blade.

- Weapons associated arrests (including firearms):

- 2007: 155
- 2008: 149

- This data will form part of BTPs Firearms Threat and Risk Assessment. On first analysis these figures support BTPs current position that the costs and resources required to form and maintain a firearms capability nationally would not justify the operational return. At present



local Home Office and Scottish forces provide the required response to the low number of firearms incidents which may have qualified for an armed policing response.

- Whilst the number of non-firearms, weapons crimes is falling, the knife or blade is still seen as an attractive weapon, both within BTP jurisdiction and nationally. Taser provides officers deployed to violent incidents with a tactical option which provides a much greater distance separation between them and the subject than any current options available within BTP.
- In-BTPs Pilot Plans:
 - BTP will be in a position to start a controlled pilot of the device at five selected locations, once Chief Officer Group has given approval, by August 2009.
 - Instructor and operative training would be conducted in August and September 2009, with a parallel workstream of installing storage and equipment at locations.
 - All use of Taser is monitored nationally by the Home Office Scientific Development Branch. Additionally internal use of force monitoring will ensure that accurate data is collected on Taser usage during the pilot, which is proposed for 3-6 months.

2.5 An APA circular (03/2009) has been sent to all Police Authorities which provides useful background. The circular is clear that the decision to equip officers with Taser is at the Chief Officers discretion, but offers areas of operation that the Police Authority will probably want to monitor.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The investment currently offered by the Home Office to BTP equates to £500,000.

3.2 Depending on the deployment options selected by the Force, this funded equipment would be sufficient to deploy Taser for about 2 years, with a further £25k per year investment required.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There is some risk associated with the use of Taser in terms of community relations and public perception. Consultation with the rail industry will go some way to dispelling myths around the



use of Taser and highlight the benefits to front line staff in terms of having an effective tactical option for the resolution of violent incidents. In addition, the deployment of Taser would mean a potential reduction in the time taken to resolve incidents due to (a) the effectiveness of the device over other tactical options and (b) the reduced need to rely on other forces for the supply of this tactical option.

5 DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 Through the discussions with community groups it is clear that there are concerns relating to wider policing issues but which have been connected to Taser, such as the judgment shown by officers in applying force (i.e. G20 fall out issues), and how police deal with people with disabilities and mental health sufferers. These are not Taser specific issues and apply equally to other use of BTP tactics.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 For Members to note the content of this report.