

DMPC Decision – PCD 919

Title: Funding to support the Review into the use of Tasers

Executive Summary:

The Police use of tasers has been a concern for some people over a number of years. The use of tasers has received support from leaders across Government and Policing, including the Mayor of London.

All recognise that the use of force should be avoided where ever possible, but when officers are required to apply force it is only right that they have effective tools at their disposal: the option of walking away from the threat is rarely open to a police officer.

However, it is recognised an area of concern has been that the use of force data indicates that it is used in terms of race disproportionately. The NPCC lead for Less Lethal Weapons, which includes Taser, has secured agreement to conduct a review into this aspect of its use. The Review would develop a strong evidence base concerning the use of taser and this would be used to inform policing practice.

The Home Office are part funding it, and other parties are being engaged with to assist. MOPAC has been approached to consider part funding this work..

Recommendation:

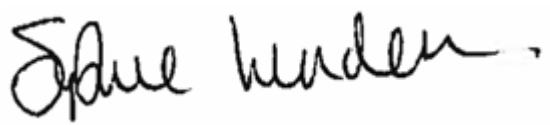
The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to approve that MOPAC grants £50,000 from this years budget to support the NPCC led review into the disproportionate use of tasers.

Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct. Any such interests are recorded below.

The above request has my approval.

Signature



Date

25/01/2021

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DMPC

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Tasers are a Home Office approved weapon for the police. The deployment of tasers is a matter for Chief Officers, who will conduct a strategic threat and risk assessment to determine its distribution. Tasers are only issued to officers who have been trained in their use and who pass to the required standard.
- 1.2. Tasers offer officers another tool that they can use when dealing with a violent threat. In over 90% of cases when they are 'used', and that term applies widely to include unholstering the weapon, they prove to be effective without the need for the Taser to be discharged.
- 1.3. However, it is recognised that Tasers remains a polarising issue, and in spite of wide engagement with the community, concerns remain. These in many cases include questions over the disproportionate use of taser between different ethnic groups.
- 1.4. The NPCC recognise that when asked to account for these variations they struggle to explain them. All individual use of force has to be justified and are open to scrutiny, often in courts. However, if the NPCC are to draw out strategic issues and learning from the data, the evidence base has must be developed.
- 1.5. This research will be led by the NPCC and the College of Policing who will commission a ground breaking and independent programme of research to understand the causes and consequences of race disproportionality in the use of tasers.
- 1.6. This plan has been approved by Chief Constable's Council, and the work will support the NPCC Plan of Action on Inclusion and Race Inequality.

2. Issues for consideration

- 2.1. This work will help to build an evidence base about how and when tasers are used. An Independent Advisory Panel will scrutinise all aspects of the research that is to be carried out.
- 2.2. The current thinking is that the work wil include:
 - Test officer biases in a 'laboratory setting' and realistic Taser simulations
 - Examine real-life decision-making captured on body-worn video footage
 - Explore how taser deployment is affected by police demand, crime and neighbourhood characteristics using cutting-edge statistical analysis.
- 2.3. The ambition is to produce a body of research that has the potential to transform out understanding of tasers, and provide the evidence needed for the Police to improve policies, procedures, processes and practices.
- 2.4. The Mayor's recently launched Action Plan that focuses on building trust and confidence in Policing will undoubtedly benefit from this research.
- 2.5. MOPAC will have a seat on the Advisory Group for this research, so ensuring the Mayoral views are represented and that learning is available between this work and the Mayoral Action Plan
- 2.6. An independent member of the community has agreed to Chair the Independent Advisory Group.

3. Financial Comments

The grant from MOPAC towards this work will be £50,000. The programme will be funded from underspend within the Strategy Directorate's 2020/21 core budget.

The overall cost of this work is estimated to be £350,000. The Home Office have given a grant of £75,000. Other funding applications have been made to the IOPC and through the APCC.

4. Legal Comments

Paragraph 4.8 of the MOPAC Scheme of Delegation and Consent provides that the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC) has delegated authority to approve all bids for grant funding.

5. GDPR and Data Privacy

- 5.1. MOPAC will adhere to the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and ensure that any organisations who are commissioned to do work with or on behalf of MOPAC are fully compliant with the policy and understand their GDPR responsibilities.

6. Equality Comments

- 6.1. MOPAC is required to comply with the public sector equality duty set out in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This requires MOPAC to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations by reference to people with protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.2. The purpose of this work is to better understand the causes of disproportionality in the use of taser. MOPAC will ensure that an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is completed with regard to this programme of work by the NPCC.

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and will be made available on the MOPAC website following approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered as likely to be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a **Part 2** form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION

Tick to confirm statement (✓)

Financial Advice:

The Strategic Finance and Resource Management Team has been consulted on this proposal. They have stated this can be a decision taken at Director level.

✓

Legal Advice:

Legal advice is not required.

✓

Equalities Advice:

Equality and diversity issues are covered in the body of the report.

✓

Commercial Issues

Commercial issues are not applicable

✓

GDPR/Data Privacy

- GDPR compliance issues are covered in the body of the report

✓

Director/Head of Service:

The Director of Strategy has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the MOPAC's plans and priorities.

✓

Chief Executive Officer

I have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that financial, legal and equalities advice has been taken into account in the preparation of this report. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

Signature



Date 20/01/2021