

# Record of Decision

ORIGINATOR: Chief Executive

REFERENCE: OPCC.D.023.19

TITLE: Increase in Taser trained officers

OPEN  CONFIDENTIAL

*Reason if Confidential:*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violent crime and assaults on officers have risen over recent years and frontline officers are increasingly dealing with a criminal element who think nothing of carrying – and using – knives against each other, their victims, and ultimately those who stand in their way: the police. Home Office figures show there were 1,112 assaults on police officers in 2017/18.

Up until now, Kent Police has maintained specially-trained teams of officers armed with Taser who were able to assist their colleagues whenever called upon. However, based on an assessment of risk to officers, the public, and the growing trend of violent criminality, the Chief Constable has decided to extend this provision by offering any officer in a public-facing role the opportunity to carry a Taser. To do so, officers will have to successfully complete the force's rigorous training and accreditation programme. Guidance also states the weapon must be used proportionately and reasonably. No officer will be mandated to carry a Taser.

The use of Taser remains very low in the county, and the force will continue to routinely scrutinise and examine each circumstance in which it is used.

The deployment of more Taser-trained officers will enhance Kent Police's ability to robustly deal with incidents involving bladed weapons, making officers and the public safer.

The extension of Taser provision will be funded from the 2018/19 financial year carry forward. In total £1m will initially be set aside, with approximately £0.75m for the capital purchase of equipment and £0.25m for ongoing revenue costs, including training. The £1m is an initial estimate based on all eligible officers requesting a Taser; it is unlikely all officers will do so, and therefore the final costs may vary.

## RECOMMENDATION


The Commissioner is recommended to support the extension of Taser provision and approve funding of up to £1m for associated capital and revenue costs.

## DECISION

To support the Chief Constable's decision to extend Taser provision so officers have the equipment they need to keep themselves and the public safe, and approval of up to £1m funding for associated costs.

**Chief Finance Officer:**

**Comments:** Funding for the roll out of Tasers has been identified and is available to equip all officers should they require one. This has been absorbed within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

**Signature:** 

**Date:** 20/03/19

**Chief Executive:**

**Comments:** The deployment of additional Tasers to officers is primarily an operational decision for the Chief Constable. It is a significant cost to the force and the Chief Constable requires your support and authority for this expenditure. The request is affordable and one that supports the safety of both officers and staff, and assists in protecting the public. The expenditure is justified and lawful.

**Signature:** 

**Date:** 20/03/19

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR KENT**

**Comments:** Pleased to support Kent's officers in staying safe and protecting the public.

**Signature:** 

**Date:** 20/3/19

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

Kent Police Business Case

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

Police and Crime Plan  
*(please indicate which objectives decision/recommendation supports)*

Supports delivery of the Safer in Kent plan by ensuring frontline officers have the equipment they need to keep themselves and the public safe when combating organised crime and gangs.

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed?

Yes  No  *(If yes, please include within background documents)*

Will the decision have a differential/adverse impact on any particular diversity strand?  
*(e.g. age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity)*

Yes  No   
There will be no differential/adverse impact on any particular strand of diversity. When Taser, or any other force is used on an individual, officers are required to justify their actions as being necessary and proportionate under the law. Kent Police will continue to routinely scrutinise and examine each circumstance in which Taser is used.