

STATES OF JERSEY

Education and Home Affairs Panel Taser Review Session

FRIDAY, 24th APRIL 2012

Panel:

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour (Chairman)
Connétable M.P.S. Le Troquer of St. Martin
Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade
Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade (Co-opted panel member)

Witnesses:

President, States of Jersey Police Association
Civilian Administrator, States of Jersey Police Association

Also Present:

Mr. M. Haden (Scrutiny Officer)

[12:01]

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour (Chairman):

Hello and welcome. Thank you for coming, members of the panel and the speakers who are to speak to us today, and welcome to you, members of the public and the media. If I could if I could draw everyone's attention to the code of conduct for members of the public that is displayed on the wall; in particular that all electronic devices including mobile phones should be switched to silent; the taking of visual images or audio recordings by the public will not be permitted; if you wish to eat or drink we ask that you leave the room. I also ask that members of the public do not interfere with the proceedings of the hearing and as soon as the hearing is closed please leave quietly. Members and witnesses may wish to make themselves available afterwards but any communication should take place outside the building. For the sake of the witnesses can I ask you to confirm that you have read the statement before you so you are aware of the rights and privileges that you do have while speaking to us? Thank you very much. If I can just check: are we ready for the recordings? Thank you. Something which I do wish to make clear: sometimes in the Scrutiny Hearing when we are pursuing a line of questioning, it is for us to gain evidence; that does not mean to say that the panel is expressing any particular view one way or another. We are simply challenging positions that come to us. Sometimes people can feel quite upset that the panel is taking one particular line. But I just want to reassure that we have not made a decision and we are taking any particular line. It is for us to find the evidence. So thank you that, and thank you very much for coming to speak to us today. Just for the sake of the transcripts I will just ask everyone to introduce themselves. So I will start. I am Chairman of the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, Deputy Jeremy Maçon of St. Saviour, and ...

Connétable M.P.S. Le Troquer of St. Martin:

Constable Michel Le Troquer, St. Martin.

Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade:

Constable Steve Pallett, St. Brelade.

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I am Deputy Montfort Tadier from St. Brelade.

Mr. M. Haden (Scrutiny Officer):

Mike Haden, Scrutiny Officer.

President, Police Association:

President of the Police Association.

Civilian Administrator, Police Association:

I am the Civilian Administrator for the Police Association.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you very much, and thank you very much for your submission. It has been very interesting. If I can begin, Tasers are described as more effective or less lethal alternatives to conventional weapons. Do you agree that the States of Jersey Police require these devices and that without them there would be a tactical shortfall in the ability to manage firearms incidents safely?

President, Police Association:

There are 2 parts to your question there. The first answer I would like to give is that yes, I consider that they are an important less lethal - and I cannot stress enough less lethal - option and my understanding is we are some way behind other forces in the introduction of Taser. They enjoy that tactical option; we do not. The only option we have to deploy in a firearms incident is firearms and you do not need me to tell you that if an individual is shot there is likely to be one outcome only and that is fatal. If the individual is tasered clearly there is a less likely outcome of a fatal outcome.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I challenge that? Presumably there something called shoot to kill and shoot to injure; so that is not an inevitable outcome that if you use a firearm you will kill somebody.

President, Police Association:

What I can say is firstly I am not a trained firearms officer. My understanding is that forces have steered away from shoot to kill policies. Shoot to stop is the policy I believe, but the Chief Officer this afternoon may well be in a better position to answer that. I can tell you that trained firearms officers are trained to fire 2 shots to the critical body mass. That is the way the training is. That is national accredited A.C.P.O. (Association of Chief Police Officers) guidelines. Therefore it necessarily follows that if you receive 2 shots to this body mass index here the likely - and I say the likely - outcome is that you will die.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I ask something? Obviously you have got your association. I just wanted to read you one or 2 things from the Metropolitan Police Federation website. It does say on this: "Anything that can do everything expected of a conventional firearm yet leaves no one dead or injured is going to be a prize piece of equipment. The Taser is just that". Also: "It shows

that the Taser is devastating, effective, easy to use and safe.” Do you agree with those statements?

President, Police Association:

Much has been said about the use of Taser and whether it is safe or not, and clearly there will always be the exceptional circumstances in relation to Taser. But what I will say is that from my limited knowledge about the use of Taser, because clearly I am not trained in the use of Taser, it provides an effective alternative to the conventional firearm. I think it is important, and I do digress slightly and apologies for that, to point out that we are not talking about the police officer walking up and down King Street with a Taser. What we are talking about are highly trained specialist firearms officers who are trained to A.C.P.O. guidelines that will have access to these weapons.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I just stress your one point now? Does the association believe that Tasers leave nobody dead or injured? Or do you accept that injury is a possibility of using Tasers?

President, Police Association:

Absolutely.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So you do not agree with that statement?

President, Police Association:

I think we are all aware of certain circumstances where Tasers have led to a fatal outcome.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I ask, it seems to me that there are sometimes contradictions in the arguments put forward for Tasers being an alternative or a replacement for a gun because on the one hand we are told it is less lethal than a gun. But it seems also quite clear, and police officers have told us this, that the circumstances in which a Taser might be deployed are not always going to be the same circumstances as guns. It may be completely inappropriate to use a Taser, for example, if someone is holding a gun at your head. That is not going to be an alternative. What does a Taser replace?

President, Police Association:

It provides another tactical option. So where a firearms officer may consider drawing and firing at a suspect they have that less lethal option, except that there are circumstances where Tasers may not be appropriate, some option. That is accepted; yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

But it could not take place in a siege situation for example, if you have a great distance between you. I think the capacity, is it 30-odd feet?

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Six metres.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Six metres; so it is 18 foot roughly. So it is fairly limited.

President, Police Association:

I think it would be wrong for me to comment on the tactical options because I am not a tactical adviser; I am not a firearms officer.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That is understood.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Have you been a firearms officer?

President, Police Association:

A long time ago I was a firearms officer; yes.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

And Mr. Underwood, yourself?

Civilian Administrator, Police Association:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

A long time ago?

Civilian Administrator, Police Association:

I was an instructor.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

An instructor; thank you. When you spoke about highly trained firearms officers carrying the Taser, what about the specially trained units? These would not be firearms officers as such. If the Island goes down the line like it has in the U.K. (United Kingdom), especially trained units, these are not highly trained firearms; these are just another police officer who has got a qualification or a training behind him.

President, Police Association:

My understanding is the proposal and the Chief's suggestion is that it is limited to trained firearms officers.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Is it the case that that is how your association wants it to stay?

President, Police Association:

Yes, absolutely. As I said in my submission, we support ... If I kind of rewind a little bit, just tell you a little bit about myself and what I do: I am a member of the body that represents the interests of police officers. In effect I am their union representative. Two hundred and thirty-three-ish police officers at the moment; with retirements and what have you it goes up and down; 28 of those are trained firearms officers. So I represent the 233 that include the 28 trained firearms officers here. The proposals that we have seen and that we have been consulted on suggest that the trained firearms officers are given that additional option of

having the Tasers and we support that. No other proposition has been put forward to us and no other discussion has taken place about extending it to the wider force.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I ask, very quickly, to do with figures: so you have 233 members in total. I think you said in your submission that there is unanimous support for the introduction of Tasers into Jersey.

President, Police Association:

Yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I find that statistic quite remarkable, because in any group of such a size that there is not one person among them who has reservations or says Tasers are not needed. That certainly would not be the case for the Honorary Police. I know they are not necessarily comparable. But is it really the case that not one person ... and has everyone been approached?

President, Police Association:

What we have done is we have sought the views of all the membership and the majority - and I cannot give you the figures - have replied, all to the positive, and so we have had no negative responses.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

When you majority, what type of split is that? 60, 70, 80 per cent, roughly?

President, Police Association:

I do not have the figures to hand, but I think it is somewhere in the region of about 70 per cent of those responded. Mr. Underwood would probably know and so will Michel, that police officers are very limited or very relaxed in responding when you ask them something; it is a one-liner generally, a yes or no.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I completely appreciate your position that of those who have responded they have all been positive, but there is potential that some are less positive and have not responded.

President, Police Association:

That is accepted. There is a potential, yes, although nobody has voiced that.

Deputy M. Tadier:

No, I can appreciate that. You can only go with the responses.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Other than being obviously a less lethal option for use in incidents, could you outline what are the justifications the association and the States of Jersey Police themselves feel there is for the introduction of Taser in Jersey?

President, Police Association:

Firstly, I am not here to justify their introduction. What I am here to do is to ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think that is what it boils down to here is, we really need to know from the police what justification there is for introducing them in Jersey. We understand the less lethal option view, but we would like to have a view of police officers as to what justification there is over and above that for their use in Jersey.

President, Police Association:

I believe that the Chief Officer will talk to you about the justification for their introduction. From my point I represent the interests of my members and anything that provides them and the public whom we serve protection has to be a good thing, and that is the basis that we support the proposition.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is that your core justification?

President, Police Association:

That is our core justification, yes, because that is our remit, representing the interests of our membership.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Public and officer safety.

President, Police Association:

Yes, absolutely.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I ask you about that particular point? I note in your submission one of your key points is “preventing serious injury to any of our membership as well as the public,” but if we were to compare that to the statistics that we have received from the States of Jersey Police, we do know that the number of injuries to officers is very low. In 2007 officially it has not received over 10, although the number of assaults on police roughly average around 40 for the past 5 years. With that obviously I think it, to an extent, is an occupational hazard being in the police; working in that environment is a career choice. When you look at the potential fall introducing Tasers, the statistics would seem to suggest that at the moment there is a very low level of threats to the police. Would the introduction of Tasers eradicate what is already there?

[12:15]

President, Police Association:

I think I am not wishing to avoid your question. I think the introduction of any weapon or any procedure will never, ever eradicate that one instance and my view is that any police officer who is assaulted is a police officer too many. It was mentioned before that it is an occupational hazard and we are not risk averse. That is totally accepted; we are not risk averse. One thing that did cause me concern was it was suggested that if a police officer were to get shot, well, that is life. I totally dispute that. I find that comment pretty offensive on behalf of my membership, to be fair.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just pulling on from that in terms of the number of incidents in Jersey, in this document we have had some great details of incidents involving weapons in 2011. There were only 9

incidents. I know every incident is a serious incident, but there were only 9 incidents. In those incidents 4 were sprayed and I am just having a look at one or 2 of them. One a knife was not found; others knives were dropped, but there were only 9 instances in the whole of 2011. Again, I would have to ask the question, where is the justification for the use of Taser considering there are so few involving weapons in Jersey each year?

President, Police Association:

Again, your point is accepted, but I would rewind to what I said to Deputy Maçon, that one incident is too many. Whether that results in serious injury to the police or the public, that one incident is ... You know, I was at a conference recently where it was mentioned - and I like the analogy and I make no apology for using it - we have to be match fit for the "what if" and we do. We have to be match fit; we have to be ready for any event.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I agree with that, but getting back to these instances, nobody was injured in any of these instances. Had Taser been used there is a good possibility somebody may have been injured.

President, Police Association:

Yes. I do not necessarily think in those incidents they are talking about the deployment of firearms though, are they?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

They are not. It is incidents involving weapons.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Which is one of the criteria for the deployment of arms.

President, Police Association:

Yes; and I would argue that if firearms officers were deployed in those incidents (and again, I was not there; none of us were there at those incidents) and they had chosen to use lethal force, the only option was to use a conventional firearm. The only option is to draw that conventional firearm. Had they attended those incidents there would have been an option for the less lethal. You know, there would have been a need for the less lethal option. They have got that ability to draw the Taser.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I challenge the assertion about this idea that one incident would justify the introduction of Tasers in Jersey, because certainly from a political point of view it is very difficult to make legislation or make significant changes on the basis of one hypothetical event. So you could, for example, say we are going to introduce zebra crossings every stretch of road every 100 metres because if it saves one child's life that justifies it. Do you accept that is not a correct precedent to take? It is about proportionality.

President, Police Association:

Yes; and I am not suggesting that one incident is a justification for the introduction of Tasers. What I am suggesting is one incident that results in injuries to police or a member of the public is one incident too many. That is what I am suggesting.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Has your association considered the converse? That perhaps one incident in which an innocent person is tasered and gets injured or has a fatality, would that also be one incident too many?

President, Police Association:

It would be regrettable; yes, it would.

Deputy M. Tadier:

So really we are in a difficult position here because we are talking about saving police officers' lives versus putting the public's lives at risk and their health and safety, et cetera. There really is a trade-off to be made.

President, Police Association:

I think you could also say that if they do not have the option of Taser and they fire 2 rounds into the actual critical body mass and the person dies, that is also regrettable. We are talking hypothetically, you could rewind and say: "If I did not have to fire 2 shots into that critical body mass and I had the option of Taser the chap may not die." So I take the point.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

The point is made: there is always that potential.

President, Police Association:

Indeed. Absolutely.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Going back to the point, just playing devil's advocate, if you like, on the survey of members of the association, were the replies confidential to you? I mean, the Chief Officer saying: "I want Tasers" and members of your staff saying: "Well, we do not really, but ..."

President, Police Association:

I can assure the panel that had there been an overwhelming voice to say: "We do not want Taser" I would have brought it to the Chief's attention. I have not shared it because ...

The Connétable of St. Martin:

No, is it people thinking they have to agree or support the Chief Officer?

President, Police Association:

No. I see your point. It is worth sharing with the Chief. This was a totally separate independent piece of work that we carried out, the Police Association carried out. We are not answerable to the Chief, by the way, the Police Association, and I am sure he will tell you at times we do differ on our views.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is the association aware of the assaults that took place on its officers last year?

President, Police Association:

I would think we are aware of most of them; yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Right, because the thing is it indicates there were 38 assaults on police officers last year. Could you give us any idea on how many occasions it might have been appropriate to use Tasers in those situations? Or could they possibly have been deployed in those types of situations?

President, Police Association:

I do not believe that on any of those occasions firearms were deployed. So it would not have been appropriate for Tasers to have been used.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Tasers would not have been involved in those incidents.

President, Police Association:

Absolutely. I mean, I stand to be corrected, but I do not believe that on any of those occasions firearms would have been deployed.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I ask if any consideration was given to public relations? Part of a policeman's armoury is their relationship with the public and hopefully if they command the respect of the public they will not be in a situation where they need to use force. Has there been any feedback about potential for Tasers being carried which have then had a negative clear impact on the public?

President, Police Association:

If we were talking about the bobby walking up and down King Street, then I think we would have received that feedback. But because we are talking about issuing them to such a limited number of police officers, we are not talking about issuing them any more overtly than we are talking about issuing firearms. It is the same guidelines for firearms, it is just, if you like, a substitute. Other than when they deploy to a firearms incident, you are not going to see police officers with these weapons.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I just get back to the 38 officers that were assaulted? Of those 38 officers, they were all the officers that were assaulted during 2011 and you are saying firearms were not deployed at those incidents ...

President, Police Association:

To the best of my knowledge they were not.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

To the best of your knowledge. Then in terms of providing safety to your officers, they would have been absolutely no use at all because they would not have been deployed to any of those incidents.

President, Police Association:

On those 38 incidents you are right.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But that is all the incidents that involved police officers being injured.

President, Police Association:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So there is going to be no safety to officers with Tasers because basically it looks like virtually all these occasions where your officers have been injured are outside of firearms incidents.

President, Police Association:

Yes, based on those 38 incidents you are absolutely correct. But we have to bear in mind that at some stage in Jersey - and I know that up until now we have never fired a shot in anger and let us hope that continues - but at some stage in Jersey that may well happen. If Taser provides my membership with that added protection without the fatal consequences, in my view it has to be a good thing.

Deputy M. Tadier:

My question is that I do not necessarily think it follows that Tasers would always be deployed in circumstances where guns would be deployed, for reasons that I explained before. It seems to me if we are concerned about safety, let us throw human rights out the window so that you would want to employ Tasers during these 38 incidents, or at least have the option to use it, because it could potentially stop those assaults taking place on your members.

President, Police Association:

If those 38 incidents involved firearms and a firearms deployment, then yes I think they should have been an option. But if there is no firearms deployment then I would not support it being an option.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Even though it could protect your officers.

President, Police Association:

Yes, because I would not want to see people tasered or fighting with the police necessarily or punching a police officer or spitting at a police officer.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I think this is where the devil is in the detail, because we are not necessarily sure what the Minister and what the Chief of Police is proposing would necessarily match your vision of that.

President, Police Association:

My vision is primarily the protection and providing ... as Michel said earlier on, you know, the guidelines say if the police officer shoots somebody they are taken away, they are ostracised. They are taken away from their colleagues; they are treated like a criminal, and it is right that they should be subjected to that level of examination and the use of the firearms should be questioned. But they are placed in a white suit; they are removed from front line duty. So it is only right that that level of scrutiny should be employed. I guess my point is that if Tasers are deployed in exactly the same way, I would expect the same strict guidelines to be imposed.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So in terms of your officers and the association itself, you do not see any situation developing where use of Taser would be used for general restraint?

President, Police Association:

No. My understanding is that is not the proposal.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is something that your officers would not support.

President, Police Association:

No; not at this time, no. What we are talking about is issuing Tasers. The discussions that we have had are surrounding issuing Tasers to trained firearms officers as a supplement or an alternative option to that lethal option. That is all we are talking about at the moment. We are not talking about any wider issues about deployment across the force or anything like that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just a quick one: in the U.K., just going back on to the police complaints, in the U.K. all use of Taser goes straight to the Independent Police Complaints Authority. In Jersey the word used is “maybe”. Would you support that any use of Taser automatically would go to the Complaints Authority?

President, Police Association:

I would not necessarily say automatically; no.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just follow up, because I think it is really useful to talk to you as a representative of officers at all levels? There is a draft proposition which the Minister has given to us and the first part of the proposition does say a Taser will only be deployed in circumstances where firearms officers are authorised to carry firearms. Then it goes on to say: “Or (b) where there is specific physical violence to any person which requires a Taser to be made available” et cetera. So the part (b) is really a lot lower test than part (a), and it seems to me that you are supportive of part (a) essentially. You want quite a high level of checks and balances in place and for the same safeguards to apply for firearms. But our concern perhaps as a panel is that the proliferation of part (b) being included is essentially to do with compliance, and it is a lot easier to say: “Well, this person was about to punch me; was about to spit at me” or whatever - hopefully not the latter - “and so I deployed the Taser.” Would you feel comfortable with that second scenario?

President, Police Association:

I am open to correction here, but I think that second part is almost a mirror image of the firearms’ deployment as well. So I would support it mirroring the firearms guidelines; yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Okay.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I shall have to check that. Michel, did you have ...? Moving on to the training part of our terms of reference, first of all from your association do you feel that the firearms training which is given is sufficiently resourced?

President, Police Association:

Absolutely. Terry is probably more qualified, having been a trainer, but our instructors are trained to A.C.P.O. standards and have to regularly attend refresher training in the U.K. I do not know what the standard is, but there is a minimum standard that they have to achieve, otherwise they are what we call “red pinned”; they are not allowed to deliver training. The same goes for firearms guys themselves; they are trained to the A.C.P.O. standards.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Why should we think that the A.C.P.O. guidelines are of a good standard?

President, Police Association:

Every police force in the U.K. adheres them and they are supported by the Home Office.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

The Chairman can help me there. Does the association get sight of the comments that are made on line about the Scrutiny?

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

No. That is kept internally unless it has been published, and some of them would have been published.

Mr. M. Haden:

They will be published in due course, when the survey is finished which comes to an end on Monday and we move to a summary and publish all of the comments.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

It takes us slightly off-line on the topic, I suppose, but the comments that come out, people are very much in favour of the introduction of Tasers. But there is quite a criticism of the police force generally, and not just seeing the style of dress but the behaviour on the street. It is very difficult to read 300 or 400 of these. They are not all like that, but there are many.

[12:30]

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I will give you a chance to respond to that, but perhaps something more focused which may be better. From the Police Complaints Authority latest report it says that complaints regarding the excessive force from police showed a significant increase in the last year. Complaints regarding harassment, threatening behaviour or abuse of the authority also increased. Would you agree that this might give grounds to concern about heavy handed behaviour of the States of Jersey Police and explain public concerns about the proposal for allowing officers to use a new weapon?

President, Police Association:

I take on board the figures that you are quoting, but do you have the figures of how many of those complaints were substantiated?

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Some of them are still pending. Some of them, yes, have been withdrawn.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am only speaking from memory, but I think they was a proportional amount so it is what you would expect.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thirty-five made, 5 were substantiated or partly substantiated; I do not know if that quite the same as upheld, 17 are still outstanding. So 8 were withdrawn, 1 was vexatious, although 4 they were unable to pursue due to lack of evidence.

President, Police Association:

Yes. The very nature of the job you are going to attract complaints from members of the public. I think it is a reflection of how open we have become as a police service, that we would encourage and record complaints now, whereas before (I may be speaking out of turn) maybe we would not have so openly encouraged those complaints and recorded them, and maybe we would have dealt with them differently. Maybe the Desk Sergeant would have dealt with them perhaps, so they would not necessarily have been recorded. But because we are becoming more transparent, everybody is becoming more accountable, not just the police service. I think anybody that makes a complaint now, it is only right that it is recorded; whereas before it may have been dealt with informally.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

So I am surprised you did not seize on it: if only 5 out of the total have been upheld, and even then only 35 complaints have been received, I am surprised you did not seize on the opportunity to say: "I think these are surprisingly low statistics."

President, Police Association:

I think my point was made when I said how many were substantiated.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Fair enough.

Deputy M. Tadier:

There was a documentary on Channel 4 that shows that in recent years there has been an increase in the use of Tasers; I think it has gone up by 800 per cent, although it does not give a timeframe. Do you see the proliferation of the use of Tasers as inevitable, or do you think in Jersey it is something which would be very strictly controlled?

President, Police Association:

I think it should be. It is inevitable, but it should be very strictly controlled; yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I know it is only just across the water, but do you have any close contact with your Guernsey counterpart?

President, Police Association:

Not a huge amount. We have more contact with the Police Federation of England and Wales.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of Guernsey, I know you say you have not had a lot of contact with them, but do you have any views or observations? They have got them in Guernsey. Do you have any views from them as to how successful it has been?

President, Police Association:

No, I have not heard.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I think as Deputy Tadier is saying, it is the creep that is worrying - that things just gradually creep up and it is used once and like CS spray might be used a couple of times. I think it is a worry of the replies that people have come back with. That it will change, that the Chief Officer would change the policy; the public will not know, maybe, the change in policy.

President, Police Association:

We certainly have not been consulted or even led to believe that it is going to be extended to the wider police force. If it was I think that is a whole separate debate and would require a whole different amount of research.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

We will have that this afternoon, I think.

Deputy M. Tadier:

There is a question of accessibility, though, because presumably if we are going to have Tasers introduced it is important that irrespective of whether every officer has them or whether they are in a car, whether it is a special unit, that they be accessible. They would be able to be deployed very quickly, otherwise it is perhaps pointless. Do you accept that it is perhaps academic really who has them? It is about how quickly and how often they will be used.

President, Police Association:

I do not think it is academic as to who has the weapon. It is important that it is restricted to the firearms officers because of the level of training and the level of vetting that they go through. Just to touch on the point you make about being in vehicles, we have one armed response vehicle with, for want of a better description, an armoury inside the vehicle. It is an approved store, safe, very secure, and I think the Chief may talk to you more about this this afternoon, but I think we are looking at long-term plans to be able to have that available to deploy at a moment's notice 24/7 as that reactive option.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

When you say about that vehicle, that vehicle exists now?

President, Police Association:

Yes. It has done for some time.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Out in the streets now?

President, Police Association:

No, not routinely out in the streets.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

It could be driving around or it is at the police station ready to go.

President, Police Association:

Yes.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I just ask about the process, which will be very similar for Tasers, for firearms when the call is made? Going on from Deputy Tadier's question, when the call is made to when all the work behind the scenes happens, to the eventual approval and then deployment, for your members that you represent at the moment, are they consider that to be a concern in the sense that it perhaps takes too long?

President, Police Association:

No, because I think that decision, and Constable Le Troquer will be able to tell you from experience, is something that can happen very quickly because most inspectors now I think are trained up to the level that you were, to be able to authorise that deployment. So there is an inspector on duty 24/7 and if not, there is somebody at A.C.P.O, the Chief, the Deputy Chief or one of the Superintendents who are on 24-hour call-out.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I think it has probably changed so the inspector now can authorise. Is that just a deployment, not for use?

President, Police Association:

Just the deployment.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

And what about tactical adviser?

President, Police Association:

There is an on-duty tactical adviser again. Again, I think we have 4 and they do a rotating 24/7 call-out system.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

So you do not know if the use of Tasers was authorised, would it be under the control of the tactical adviser or the inspector or should we ask the Chief Officer this afternoon?

President, Police Association:

I think that is an area that I am not ... I am not trained in tactical advice, so I would not be able to ...

The Connétable of St. Martin:

So you could have somebody the rank of inspector - you do not know - authorising the use of Taser?

President, Police Association:

Authorising the deployment.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Authorising deployment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just looking at a question that was asked by Deputy Baudains in 2007, I will just read a line from it: “The police use a conflict management modal. Authorised firearms officers have to take into consideration a range of less lethal options before resorting to lethal force.” In terms of those skills, communication skills, primary control skills which are talking to the subject, restraint, I presume those are always looked at at every incident before firearms officers are deployed. Would that be true?

President, Police Association:

I would like to think so. Yes, yes; it should be. Every officer is trained in conflict management, conflict resolution and they should always consider those tactical options when dealing with somebody who offers a level of violence or resistance.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That is standard training for everyone.

President, Police Association:

Absolutely. Twice a year, or certainly once a year it is a refresher. I think it may even be twice a year that we have refresher training in that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Probably go on to Mr. Underwood: in terms of firearms training for Taser, is that a lengthy process or is it an easier device to use compared with firearms, for example?

President, Police Association:

I think we have something here about the training. Again, that is not our area; we are not involved in training.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No. I only asked the question because, you know, you have some expertise in it.

Civilian Administrator, Police Association:

If I can answer that, I was an instructor some considerable time ago. I have been formally retired from the States of Jersey Police for 7 years. Introduction of Taser throughout the U.K. has come about since I left training, so I cannot make any formal comment in relation to the training for Taser because it was not introduced when I was an instructor.

President, Police Association:

I may be able to help you here just from some notes I have here that the A.C.P.O. guidance for training in Taser is set at 18 hours per student, delivered over 3 days, subject to schematic assessment pass or fail; and then officers would need to reclassify twice a year to retain their authorisation to use.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is there a minimum requirement to be able to go on to use Taser or is that generally ... obviously in Jersey it would be firearms officers, but would you know in the U.K. is there a minimum requirement in terms of ...?

President, Police Association:

I do not know. I would expect that they would have to have had some basic firearms training before that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Something was mentioned this morning in terms of psychological assessment. Is there a psychological assessment for firearms officers?

Civilian Administrator, Police Association:

They undergo a degree of psychometric testing.

President, Police Association:

Throughout the course.

Civilian Administrator, Police Association:

Throughout the course.

President, Police Association:

Yes, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would you expect that to be given to any officer using Taser?

President, Police Association:

Well, it would necessarily follow that they would because they are only going to be issued to firearms officers.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am sort of broadening the question somewhat: if it was to be broadened in use, I presume there would be strict guidelines as to ...

President, Police Association:

We are talking hypothetically. If it was then I would expect the same levels of selection and training to be employed as are for firearms officers.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can you tell us, the CS, is that issued only to firearms?

President, Police Association:

CS spray is issued to all operational police officers subject to their training.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I have said this before and I will probably say it to Chief of Police, but it seems to me that Taser is more akin to the CS spray because first of all it is less lethal. It incapacitates you, it is a very nasty experience but it is temporary which is different from firearms. So I am slightly confused as to why constantly you are putting it in the category of a firearm, because it seems that we want an alternative to firearms. Presumably if somebody draws a knife on one of your officers then you can deal with that there and then from a safety aspect. I would partly expect your association to want a greater use of Tasers, not simply to be limited to those who can carry firearms.

President, Police Association:

At this time the association is only supporting the introduction of Tasers to authorised firearms officers.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just on one other weapon that is mentioned here is the baton launcher, the baton gun. Is there some particular reason that is not used as a more of a less lethal option rather than going down the Taser route?

Civilian Administrator, Police Association:

To be perfectly honest, the baton is used for very, very specific purposes and it is not ideally used as an anti-personnel weapon. If you see a 40mm plastic bullet fired from a baton round, there are very strict guidelines about it and I think I would rather be tasered than shot directly with a 40 mm baton round. I do not want to be either.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are they issued?

President, Police Association:

Baton rounds? It is a capability that the firearms team have. They do have that capability.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Just going back to the communication skills, just so we have it on the record: for an ordinary officer, how many hours of training do they get for the kind of conflict resolution training?

President, Police Association:

I have been a police officer for 21 years so it is a long time since I did my initial training, but initially it is built into what they call their post-foundation course. So when they join the police service I think about a week is set aside. I stand to be slightly corrected, but it is roughly a week is set aside for this kind of conflict resolution we talk about. Thereafter certainly once a year officers have 2-day refresher training every year, and it is non-negotiable. You do it; you have to do it.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you. Do any other members have any questions? I always give you the opportunity. Is there anything else which you feel you would like to comment to us? Perhaps you feel we have the wrong end of the stick somewhere, or if there are any closing comments that you might like to make, now is your opportunity.

President, Police Association:

Obviously I would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak to you this morning. Just one thing I wanted to touch on very briefly and I think you kind of hit the nail on the head yourself. I think you need to be very careful about using the recent incident in Hope Street or Bond Street as a benchmark. I do not know the full details of that incident. I do not know what was known to ... I do not know the content of that initial call was. It is an ongoing investigation. So I think we need to be very careful about drawing comparisons or setting the benchmark with that particular incident.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you. Just before you close, on behalf of the panel I do hope that you will communicate back to your association how much we do appreciate the hard work which is done by the

police. I know that sometimes it does not always feel that way. It is not always necessarily expressed, but I do hope that will be communicated.

President, Police Association:

Thank you. That is appreciated.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

On that I will close the hearing and I will ask the members of the public and the media to withdraw from the room.

[12:45]