

Education and Home Affairs Panel

Police Use of Tasers

Telephone & email comments

1. Michel Julé (telephone)
 - He doesn't believe that Tasers are warranted in Jersey.
 - The Police have too much power already. He said that he had had his arm broken by the police for resisting arrest over a trivial matter and had been taken to St Saviour's Hospital.
 - He also complained about the misuse of an electroencephalograph (EEG) test which he claimed that the police had authorised and imposed on him. The police slang for this was 'being chipped'. He claimed that people had suffered bad after effects including noises in their head and delusions. He said that he had made over 30 letters of complaint to the police but had not a reply. He had also contacted Deputy Pryke and Constable Murphy who had promised a response but nothing had resulted.
2. Tina Collins (telephone)
 - in favour of Tasers
3. Anonymous (telephone)
 - Very much against. There is no need for them on the Island, given low levels of violence.
 - They can be dangerous when used on people with cardiac problems.
4. Marcel Kermin (telephone)
 - Tasers are not appropriate for Jersey as there is not the same level of crime as in large cities.
 - There have been a number of serious accidents with Tasers in the USA and in the UK.
 - Jersey should not just copy other places.
 - Tasers are not a priority when there is a need to reduce States spending. The Police don't seem to be cutting back on expenditure – the Police Chief has been able to get other things which not appear necessary eg the return of police motorbikes.
 - Training officers will also be expensive.
5. Stephanie Sanderson (telephone)
 - against the use of Tasers in Jersey.
 - She acknowledged that the Island was no longer as safe as it used to be. She gave the example of her husband who had suffered an unprovoked attack from a group of young people at the Weighbridge because he had refused to give them a cigarette.

- However, she believed that the Police would misuse Tasers and did not trust the Police to use them only on armed people, despite the training given to Police Officers.
- She believed that the answer to violence was to have a greater Police presence so that problems with violent youths could be dealt with before they escalated.

6. Mike Alexandre (telephone)

- The Police were itching to have CS spray made available but to his knowledge it has only ever been used on one occasion when it was accidentally used on the wrong person during a domestic dispute.
- This demonstrates that there is not enough experience locally either at decision level or operational level for proper use of such weapons.
- With regard to the armed police squad the last occasion they were called out was to deal with a man with a knife and meant that two streets were closed off. He believes that this was unnecessary over-reaction on the part of the Police.
- He said that the Police must give clear information about the number of occasions when the firearms unit has been deployed in recent years and the number of occasions when it might have been appropriate to deploy Tasers.
- He is licensed to hold firearms. He pointed out that questions 10 & 11 in the survey mention 'using' and 'suspected of carrying' a firearm. He wished to point out that many people use firearm legitimately for sport.
- He has witnessed Police training at Crabbé and believes that the amount of time the firearms unit spend training is over the top.
- He believes that having Tasers will increase the separation between the police and citizens – and move the Police further away from their role as 'social watchdog'.
- He gave the example of being stopped by the Police who checked his breath for alcohol. The overall impression of uniform and helmet as the officer lent into his car to smell his breath was oppressive.
- He said there is a fine line between having a militia and the police and he feels that the police often cross that line.
- He believes that once the Police have Tasers they are likely to use them on an increasing basis.
- The Police tend to request equipment because it is available, not because it is necessary.
- The Police must show without any doubt that Tasers are required and appropriate to the Island – but he doubts that they can.

7. James Hunter (telephone)

- Police using Tasers in Jersey is ridiculous as the levels of violent crime do not warrant their use
- Once they start using them they will use them more and more often

Email/post

8. Jill Ruby (email)
 - I think the Police should have Tasers to protect themselves and others - they deserve better protection from violent people and especially those carrying knives
9. Campbell Davidson (email)
 - I personally think it's the worst thing that could happen in Jersey introducing tasers to the police force in Jersey. They are already contemptible to the general public in the way you are treated.
 - Let's stop bleating because the police force in the UK are having tasers for real crime committed there.
 - What are they going to do with them , all they seem to do is target the poor motorist with their speed traps ,
 - Let's taser everyone for the minor crime we see in Jersey
10. Sandra Vibert (email)
 - As local born people we wish to say "NO" to tasers. We have a very large police force, who, we assume are trained to a high degree, so should therefore be able to control a crowd of drunken people
 - Jersey is not like an inner city, people can't phone another crowd of yobs as back up to whatever crimes they are committing. Tasers can be very dangerous weapons, not to be used on the whim of someone in authority.
 - A fire engine with a large jet of cold water would probably do just as well and not cost us anything either.!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
11. Edward Trevor (email)
 - I fully support the acquisition of Tasers by the States of Jersey Police. I am assuming that there will be clear rules for their use which will be easily identified when needed.
 - To control mobsters and the unruly it is necessary to have the use of all modern equipment. With Social Networking and the ability of miscreants being able to call up a lot of people at short notice to cause mayhem it is necessary for the police to have a means of controlling them. Water cannons may not always be available and are not as mobile as tasers.
 - Those against the tasers are probably people against whom they may be used or do-gooders who don't think that wrongdoing should be either controlled or punished.
12. J.P.V.Falle (email)
 - I am opposed to the introduction of taser guns in Jersey for the reason that this weapon is inappropriate for Jersey. Jersey is not London or Birmingham. We do not have criminal gangs as there are in some of the large cities in the U.K. where they may be useful.
 - Also the cost of investing in these weapons, which would not out of necessarily be ever used, makes their purchase inappropriate.
13. Name indecipherable (card)

- Please no Tasers in Jersey – we do not have any need for them and would make violence much worse. Do not treat people like animals – makes matters worse!

14. Maureen Rose (letter)

- Thank you for giving us all the opportunity to give our views on Jersey Police using Tasers
- I strongly feel Tasers should not be used by our police force. This is because, although used only for extreme violence to begin with, all can become very similar to America – where more and more I have seen tasers used on defenceless ordinary citizens as a ‘quick arrest’ scenario.

15. Jean Falle (email)

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16. Mr. T. Underwood

Respectfully the States of Jersey should authorize the issue of “Taser” to the States of Jersey Police; Jersey has not thankfully been subjected to the escalation of violence directed at the Public at large and the Police that has been seen across the United Kingdom.

To date all those occasions where firearms have been issued since the States Police introduced the issue of firearms in line with the strict Home Office guidelines, no individual has been shot and wounded or subject to lethal force by the local Police. Which is as much a testament to the tactics deployed at such incidents, as the strict adherence to the training and the law which effects each individual Police Officers action in all such circumstances.

It must be clearly remembered that each individual Police officer is accountable under the law and must therefore take sole responsibility and account in a court of law for his actions, the split second decisions made sometimes under extreme stress which at this moment in time allow only the lethal threat option.

However the inclusion of a non lethal option such as “Taser” must be welcomed by any right thinking person, it allows flexibility of Police response, the deployment of such specialist equipment must however remain the subject of all the existing guidelines and should only be deployed by those officers already trained in the use of firearms and should not be considered for any form of General issue.

The States of Jersey Police should under those restrictive circumstances be allowed to obtain and deploy “Taser” as a Non lethal option.

17. Ruth Curzon

- Regarding your request for our views regarding the Jersey Police being issued Taser guns. My opinion is that our Police Officers deserve to be protected this day

and age against a greater number of the public who carry weapons. I think a bolt with a Taser would quiet an aggressive person and enable them to be detained safely. I am FOR Tasers.

18. Marilyn Melvin

- The proposition of introducing tasers into an island of this size is likening the island to the problems of an inner city twice the size. Has the rate of violent incidents increased so much in the last 10 years? The recent events in Hope Street suggests that either common sense is lacking in training these days or it is the deliberate intention to have a near militarised police force.
- Tasers should not be necessary if proper communication skills are employed in the training programme. The UK police force seems to be gearing towards a more military style policing as opposed to care and protection of the public. Jersey seems to be following the UK even though we don't have the same scale of crime. The more weapons introduced into the way of policing, the more chance of them being misused.
- I am against having tasers in Jersey and the heavy handed over reaction to the recent stabbing incident reinforces this.

19. Darren Emerson

Dear Sir, I wish to express my concern that we are considering using public money to arm Jersey police with Tasers.

My concern is when they will be used. In the US they are used as an alternative to lethal force, e.g. life threatening situations when an officer would normally be armed. Because the health effects of tasers are NOT FULLY KNOWN any use of a taser otherwise would be deemed as excessive force.

Please explain the regularity of when these situations occur in Jersey? They are not used when 5 men are hiding in a house after 1 of them has stabbed someone with a screwdriver, they would not have prevented last year's Polish knife attacks.

We are not in LA or Brixton. Jersey police DO NOT face the dangers that LA cops and the MET do. Tasers are overkill in Jersey.

I believe we will set off down a dangerous road if we bring Tasers into Jersey as recommended by I Le Marquand. Somebody who is on an authorising committee will want to see bang for their buck and they will end up being used in inappropriate scenarios by overzealous police officers.

I can see no reason for their introduction.

20. Bridget Murphy

I believe that the Taser is a facility that should be in the police armoury – to be operated in appropriate circumstances by highly trained special police officers. The taser is an alternative to the firearm and is overall protection for the targeted individual, whether guilty or innocent. It is also a more civilised option and also a significant protection of Human Rights for all concerned in a situation where an otherwise firearm would be used.

As for those who might argue that we don't have situations like this in a place like Jersey – we should all know that, life wherever we live, can be unpredictable.

I trust that my views will be useful to the Panel.

21. G. Meikle

I am in favour of the introduction of tazer guns for the exclusive use by Police.

These men and women have little by way of self-protection in a 'combat/confrontation' situation. The tazer would allow them the opportunity to disarm a potential aggressor, both aimed at them and others, without having to bring in the ultimate deterrent, the fire arms team who might mortally wound a suspect (whom it may turn out to be was not guilty).

The tazer would hopefully also deter the aggressor from rash actions towards the police and public, knowing that the police had something in their armoury to subdue such action (eg. knife-wielding, or other threatening object/individual).

I believe the introduction would signal to the police force that their well-being is being taken into consideration as they put their lives on the line to maintain a civilised order in our community. It would also give hope to a potential criminal that there is a way to have a situation de-fused with a more hopeful resolution.