

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 061-24

Classification: Not Protectively Marked

Title of report:
Collaborative Service Agreement for the 7 Force Chronicle Skills Management Solution

Area of county / stakeholders affected:
Firearms / Public Order / Driver Training / Taser

Report by: T/Superintendent Steve Scott-Haynes

Chief Officer: ACC Rachel Nolan

Date of report: 15/05/2024

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1. Executive Summary

Chronicle is a modular ICT solution which is used to assist forces in ensuring specialist teams and staff are compliant with the College of Policing training specifications. It offers various modules including Firearms, Dogs, Public Order, PIP, Drones and Custody. Chronicle gives forces the ability to improve operational performance by enabling the monitoring of compliance in order to align resources to operational demand and to assist in developing future training requirements. Essex Police has adopted the Firearms, CED (Taser), Public Order, Driver, Armoury and Cabinets modules.

Chronicle has been utilised across the 7 Forces (7F) to support armed policing for many years and was originally hosted by individual forces. In 2019, driven by the College of Policing requirements for the 7F licence to deliver firearms training, hosting was consolidated with Norfolk Constabulary. This was further ratified by 7F Chief Constables' agreement that the driver management module would also be

hosted by Norfolk. This hosting arrangement has remained in place, with additional modules procured by individual forces, but hosted collaboratively.

The 7F Chronicle Collaboration Group, commissioned by the 7F Deputy Chief Constables, has developed a collaboration agreement under section 22A of the Police Act 1996, in order to formalise and professionalise the current hosting arrangements. The PFCC in Essex and the PCCs in the other force areas are invited to sign this agreement. The force acknowledges that this agreement is dated to start from 1st April 2024, however this could not be presented to the PFCC before June 2024 as it had not been finalised.

The cost of the system for Firearms, Armoury, Public Order and Issue & Return Stations is £30,350. The cost of the Driver Management & Interface module is £13,400. These costs are accounted for in force budgets.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the PFCC signs the s22A Agreement in relation to the 7 Force Chronicle system attached at appendix 1.

The cost to the force for the use of the system is £43,750 per annum as per the agreement between EP and the 7 Forces. The 2024/25 IT budget was increased to cover the expected contractual costs of this system and an additional growth bid for 2025/26 onwards will be submitted to cover any known increases. The current funding for this system is met from force budgets.

This allows the continued use of Chronicle with a formalised governance process and legislative agreement. The S22 agreement requires formal sign off and will be reviewed annually to ensure the agreement remains suitable. Further decision reports will be submitted, if needed, following such reviews.

3. Background to the Proposal

Chronicle, provided by JML Software Solutions Ltd, has been utilised across the 7 Forces to support armed policing for many years and was originally hosted by individual forces. In 2019, driven by College of Policing requirements for the 7F licence to deliver firearms training, hosting was consolidated with Norfolk Constabulary. This was further ratified by 7F Chief Constables' agreement that the driver management module would also be hosted by Norfolk (at the 7F CCs Meeting on 21st March 2019). This hosting arrangement has remained in place, with additional modules procured by individual forces but hosted collaboratively.

Chronicle allows individuals to be assigned specific role profiles and requisites for them to perform their role. It holds training records and tracks changes in an officer's status or performance. For example, an officer accredited as an Armed Response Vehicle Officer (ARVO) is required to pass their annual fitness test, to

complete a set number and type of training events and to requalify at pre-determined intervals. The Chronicle system allows that officer to be assigned an ARVO profile and then tracks compliance with the different training requirements. Where an officer has defaulted on mandatory requirements, the system flags that they are no longer eligible to deploy in that role. In addition, the system sends officers and managers notifications of upcoming training requirements or accreditations that are due to expire, to allow timely intervention and maintenance of skills.

As well as managing the role profiles, training records etc of officers and commanders, Chronicle is used to control access to armouries and issue of firearms. To gain access to an armoury and draw weaponry, a firearms officer must have the right authority on Chronicle. Where an officer is not eligible to deploy as a firearms officer, for example if they have not passed their annual fitness test, then access to the armoury is refused. In addition to access to armouries, Chronicle tracks the issue and return of all weapons, including Taser.

The Public Order module is currently used to administrate Specially Trained Officers (those accredited to use Taser) and the issue and return of Taser devices. This operates in largely the same way as the Firearms Module. The force has the option to expand use of this module to cover Public Order officers and commanders but has not yet taken up that option due to the associated administration required to maintain accurate records.

The Driving Management module has been adopted more recently to support more accurate record keeping for driving authorities. This has allowed the force to better link driving authorities with other requisites such as Fast Roads Training, to ensure we meet legislative and APP standards.

To remain effective, Chronicle must be kept up to date with officer and staff training records and other factors affecting their accreditations and authorities. For example, on completion of mandatory training, all firearms commander records need to be updated in a timely fashion to reflect attendance. Due to the reliance on Chronicle and volume of training and accreditation requirements, Firearms Training employs a full time member of staff as a Chronicle Administrator. Taser and driving records are maintained by staff within the respective training teams.

Chronicle has been adopted by the 7 Force Collaboration. All forces utilise the Firearms module and it is essential to effective governance of training and exercising across the region. The uptake of other modules varies according to force need. The system is hosted in Norfolk, but each force pays a contribution according to their usage. The proposal presented in this paper is to formalise this arrangement by way of a section 22A agreement.

4. Proposal and Associated Benefits

The section 22A agreement formalises the existing collaborative and hosting arrangements.

Save for the Driver Management module, which has been procured by the host force on behalf of the 7 Forces, and for any other jointly procured licences agreed by the 7 Forces, the forces individually contract JML for the provision of the modules that they require. This agreement relates to how the 7 Forces will work together to streamline, manage and develop the services they procure from JML (either jointly or otherwise).

The 7 Forces have a shared Chronicle database which currently hosts both the Firearms and Armoury module and the Driver Management module. The database is currently hosted by the joint Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary ICT Department. The 7 Forces wish to develop the use of Chronicle by the introduction of further Chronicle modules such as Public Order and CED (Conductive Electricity Devices).

The 7 Forces recognise that it would be effective and efficient to take a collaborated approach to the procurement, development, hosting, governance and management of the Chronicle solution for the 7 Forces. The benefits of this approach will be to reduce duplication of activity across the 7 Forces in the procurement, management, development and implementation of all modules and to enable consistent skills management across the 7 Forces. Unless otherwise agreed, individual forces will continue to procure licences from JML separately and Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary will continue to host the solution pending the scoping and development of options in respect of a transition to alternative hosting arrangements in due course.

The Chief Constables consider that the provision of the 7 Force Chronicle Management solution will secure good value for money in accordance with the duty under section 35 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, and will satisfy the principles set out in HMT's Managing Public Money guidance encapsulated in Annex B of the Financial Management Code of Practice for the Police Service of England and Wales pursuant to section 39A(5) of the Police Act 1996 (as amended) and section 17(6) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

This agreement shall come into force once signed and continue in force until 31 March 2029 unless, in advance of that date, the agreement is renewed with the written agreement of the 7F parties, or until terminated under the provisions set out in the agreement. This agreement can be terminated at any time by the agreement of the 7F parties but, where this agreement is terminated, the parties shall continue to participate fully for a further minimum of 12 months to facilitate the dissolution of this collaboration.

5. Options Analysis

Option1

Do not formalise the agreement. This would require that Essex Police exits the 7 Force collaboration for Chronicle and necessitate independent hosting of the

procured modules. This would likely present difficulties in relation to the College of Policing licensing of firearms training. It is also likely to require separate procurement of the driver module, a system requirement imposed by the force's motor insurer, and currently jointly procured by the 7 Forces. This option is therefore likely to incur additional costs and reduced value for money as the force would duplicate work carried out within the collaboration. Exiting the collaborative arrangements would also place additional pressure on Essex and Kent ICT to service and maintain Chronicle servers, a function currently carried out by Norfolk and Suffolk.

Option 2

Formalise the existing Chronicle collaboration with a section 22A agreement. This would realise the benefits described above and avoid the additional financial and opportunity costs presented with option 1. Chronicle has been hosted by Norfolk Constabulary since 2019 and the collaboration is working effectively. The Collaboration Agreement has been reviewed and endorsed by each of the 7 Forces, through the Chronicle Collaboration Board. The arrangements provide a good platform for further development of the system, for procurement of additional modules if required and for greater operational collaboration where appropriate.

6. Consultation and Engagement

Consultation has taken place with:

- 7 Force Procurement
- 7 Force - Specialist Operational Policing Workstream Lead
- Essex Police Corporate Finance
- Essex Police Legal Services
- Kent and Essex IT Department

7. Strategic Links

The provision of armed policing supports the Police and Crime Plan 2021-24:

Increasing collaboration – working with the 7 Forces to ensure value for money and the resilience and security of key IT infrastructure.

Further investment in crime prevention – securing a system that supports occupational and operational competence in a key area of policing with the potential to increase into other key areas.

Reducing drug driven violence – ensuring the future capabilities of key policing assets that drive down drug driven violence.

Protecting vulnerable people – giving Essex the governance to continue to protect vulnerable people with the correctly trained and accredited officers and commanders.

8. Police operational implications

The operational benefits of using Chronicle are significant. It provides a level of audit and control of high-risk functions that cannot be achieved within SAP or effectively maintained through Office 365 systems. It ensures the organisation complies with relevant legislation and prescribed procedures such as those set out within APP. It provides an audit trail of the issue and return of weaponry and a record of training that has a high level of accuracy and integrity and withstands scrutiny by courts and tribunals.

The system allows the force to maintain capability and capacity in key functions by clear notification of training requirements. Chronicle prevents the issue of firearms to officers who are not currently accredited or suitable to carry a weapon, ensuring public confidence in these specialist teams as well as the health, safety and wellbeing of authorised firearms officers.

9. Financial implications

The proposed agreement describes the sharing of costs.

Any costs incurred or money received in the operation of this s22A agreement, including any additional ICT costs above the ICT Baseline Service which provides for the running of the solution, will be apportioned based upon Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE) in any given year.

Each participating force will be responsible for the costs (licences and otherwise) of procurement, maintenance and renewal of their modules. The exception to this is the Driver Management Module which has been procured by Norfolk and Suffolk on behalf of the parties. The cost of these licences are recharged by N&S Finance on a cost share basis.

Costs associated with maintaining the solution (not relating to the ICT Baseline Service) will be reviewed annually in line with force financial budgetary setting processes. These costs will need approval by the Chronicle Collaboration Board and, where necessary, any increases will be met by the individual parties by NRE apportionment.

Any new modules will be subject to cost review by the Host Force and any arising maintenance costs will be met by the requesting force for the duration of the agreement.

The current costs for utilisation of procured Chronicle modules are:

Firearms, Armoury, Public Order and Issue & Return Stations Paid to 31/3/25 (contracted as individual forces)	£30,350
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Driver Management & Interface Paid to 30/9/25 (contracted through 7 Forces)	£13,400
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These costs are accounted for in the force budget as follows:

Chronicle Armoury – EIT61J6E (Application Licences) 640406 – IT maintenance software budget. This covers the period 01/04/24 - 31/03/25.

Chronicle Driver Management (7F) – EFM72J6B (7F IT collaboration projects) 640406 IT maintenance software budget. This covers the period 01/02/24 - 30/09/25.

10. Legal implications

There are no adverse legal implications identified by the legal department. The proposal is to use existing legislation to underpin and formalise existing collaborative arrangements.

Sections 22A and 23 of the Police Act 1996 (as amended) (“The Act”) enables the Chief Officers of one or more police forces and two or more policing bodies to make an agreement relating to:

- the discharge of functions of the members of the Chief Officers’ forces (“force collaboration provision”) and for such other provision as shall be referred to in this agreement. “Functions” comprise all and any of the powers and duties of police forces, and / or
- the provision about support by a policing body for the police force which another policing body is responsible for maintaining (“policing body and force collaboration provision”. “Support” includes the provision of premises, equipment, staff, services and facilities.

Provided that

- the Chief Officers think that such an agreement is in the interests of the efficiency or effectiveness of one or more police forces, and
- that the policing bodies think that the agreement is in the interests of the efficiency and effectiveness of one of or more policing bodies or police forces

The use of a section 22A agreement in relation to Chronicle would satisfy these requirements.

11. Staffing implications

There are no additional staffing implications.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications

The equality, diversity and inclusion implications to this decision have been considered, but there are none identified relevant to the matters to be decided upon.

13. Risks and Mitigations

There are no identified risks on the Force Risk Register in relation to the Chronicle system. There are no known risks to signing the s22A agreement.

As documented in section 9, there is a likely financial risk if the agreement is not endorsed as the force will need to host and procure Chronicle modules independently of the other 7 Forces.

There is a risk that future costs of Chronicle within the collaboration could increase (above inflation) to a level unacceptable to Essex Police. This is unlikely and the collaboration puts forces in a position of strength to negotiate collectively with the provider. Essex's position within the collaboration and membership of the Chronicle Collaboration Board ensures influence in decision-making and mitigates against unexpected changes in cost. The agreement allows for termination of the arrangements if necessary.

There is a risk that Norfolk Constabulary may decide to terminate the agreement and decline to host Chronicle on behalf of the 7 Forces. This is unlikely, but provisions within the agreement ensure that Essex Police would have a minimum of 12 months to consider other options in this scenario.

14. Governance Boards

The section 22A agreement presented in this report was reviewed and ratified for submission to 7F Police and Crime Commissioners at the **7F Chronicle Collaboration Board** on 23rd February 2024.

The agreement and associated decision report was ratified by the **Essex Chief Officer Group** on 1st May 2024.

This decision report will be presented to the PFCC at the June 2024 Strategic Board.

15. Links to Future Plans

There are no future liability issues identified. This has been reviewed and agreed by the legal team.

Chronicle has the potential to be used in other areas of policing such as Roads Policing and Public Order Policing with some forces within the region already progressing in these areas.

If signed, the agreement shall continue until 31 March 2029, subject to an annual review. The PFCC will be asked for a further decision for any extension beyond March 2029, or if there are substantive changes arising from the annual reviews.

16. Background Papers and Appendices

[Redacted content]

Report Approval

The report will be signed off by the PFCC's Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.



Chief Executive / M.O.

Sign:

Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 31 May 2024

Chief Finance Officer

Sign:



Print: Janet Perry

Date: 31 May 2024

Publication

Is the report for publication?

YES

NO

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'None' if applicable)

Subject to redaction, as set out below

If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1. Of Decision Sheet?

YES

2. Of Appendix?

YES

NO

NO

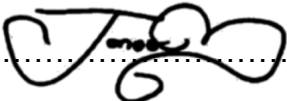
If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

The appendix has been marked OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE so is not to be published

Date redaction carried out:

Chief Finance Officer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.


Sign: 

Print: Janet Perry

~~Chief Executive~~ / Chief Finance Officer

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC

Date signed: 25/06/2024

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: