

Decision No 2014/11



REPORT TO: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LANCASHIRE

REPORT BY: VICTOR ROBINSON – HEAD OF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

DATE: 9 JUNE 2014

TITLE: PROPOSAL TO BUILD A HYDRA IMMERSIVE LEARNING SUITE AT LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY TRAINING CENTRE

Appendix A refers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hydra is a training simulation system that provides officers and staff the opportunity to experience operational and leadership situations.

Hydra training gives everyone a chance to experience working with any type of incident, large or small, at any level, within a safe and challenging training environment.

The system has been in existence for several years and is installed in many Police Forces across the world.

Licensing of Hydra is provided at a cost of £1 from the Hydra Foundation.

Costs associated with the provision of a Hydra facility would include structural alterations, the supply and fit of video/audio and IT equipment and infrastructure.

A post of Blended Learning Officer already exists within the L & D structure. This post holder would lead on running Hydra. The post will be supported by an existing trainer post who would be dedicated to e-Learning and blended learning development.

Technical support would be provided by ICT.

Installation of Hydra equipment and software costs in the region of £60K dependent on the model and specification used.

The one-off essential cost to refurbish facilities at Lancashire Training Centre would

cost approximately £13K.

Detailed costs will not be known until the tendering exercise is complete.

The current cost of sending an officer to another Force to use the Hydra facility for Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme (ICIDP) is approximately £2000 per student per course. In 2014/15 this would equate to a £50,000 cost for ICIDP alone which would be avoided through the availability on an in house Hydra suite.

Given these potential additional costs, investment in a Hydra Suite would be paid back in approximately 18 months and result in cost avoidance in future years.

The College of Policing have indicated they intend to make the use of Hydra a mandatory requirement amongst a number of learning programmes including ICIDP (Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme) and DIDP (Detective Inspectors Development Programme). Both these programmes are essential within Lancashire Constabulary.

RECOMMENDATION

The PCC is asked to :-

- approve the proposal to build a Hydra Immersive Learning Suite at Lancashire Constabulary Training Centre at an estimated one-off cost of £73,000;
- note the forecast saving of £50,000 in potential additional costs;
- approve the use of the Investment Reserve to finance the cost of this "invest to save" project.

Decision taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire:

Original decision, as set out in the attached report, approved without amendment (please delete as appropriate)	YES	NO
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Original decision required to be amended and decision as detailed below:

The reasons for the amended decision are as detailed below:

Police and Crime Commissioner: Comments

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The PCC is asked to consider any personal / prejudicial interests he may have to disclose in relation to the matter under consideration in accordance with the law, the Nolan Principles and the Code of Conduct.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to legal advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation.

Signed: Police and Crime Commissioner Date:	Signed: Chief Officer: Date:
Signed: Chief Constable: Date:	Signed: Chief Finance Officer: Date:

APPENDIX A

PROPOSAL TO BUILD A HYDRA IMMERSIVE LEARNING SUITE AT LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY TRAINING CENTRE

Hydra is a training simulation system that provides officers and staff the opportunity to experience operational and leadership situations within a safe learning environment.

During training, candidates split into groups and work as a team through set tasks. Each group receive information about the relevant tasks via a TV screen, computer or printed sheets. Hydra is not set in real time so the clock can be stopped and started on request. After or during Hydra sessions groups will assemble in the briefing room and discuss how they did in their tasks. This system allows any decision making subject to be explored.

Hydra training gives everyone a chance to experience working with any type of incident, large or small, at any level, within a safe and challenging training environment.

The system has been in existence for several years and is installed in many Police Forces across the world.

Licensing of Hydra is provided at a cost of £1 from the Hydra Foundation.

Costs associated with the provision of a Hydra facility would include structural alterations, the supply and fit of video/audio and IT equipment and infrastructure.

Currently there are no Hydra facilities within Cumbria or Lancashire Constabularies

In Lancashire a Hydra Suite would consist of

- 4 Syndicate rooms including computer display and printer
- 1 plenary(debrief) room with display
- 1 Control Room with associated systems
- A wired network to connect all PCs together
- CCTV system with audio to monitor exercises and students as they work
- Hydra server software
- Hydra client software

It is proposed to utilise the ground floor of the Ellis building at Lancashire Constabulary Training Centre to house the Hydra facility.

A post of Blended Learning Officer already exists within the L & D structure. This post holder would lead on running Hydra. The post will be supported by an existing trainer post who would be dedicated to e-Learning and blended learning development.

Technical support would be provided by ICT. The Hydra system will not replace any courses currently run by Cumbria or Lancashire. but the model will however greatly enhance the existing training programmes run in Lancashire.

Learning Benefits

There are over 50 different exercises that can be used on Hydra. These range from IPLDP (Initial Police Learning & Development Programme) to Missing Persons to Multi Agency Child Investigations.

Forces can also design their own bespoke Hydra simulations to meet local need.

There are also a number of national leadership courses and modules that at present Lancashire Constabulary are unable to run as these are based purely on Hydra. This facility would allow the provision of these courses therefore enhancing leadership development.

Training simulators, such as Hydra, are extremely effective learning tools as they allow for reinforcement of learning theories. This provides opportunities for staff to put learning into practice within a safe environment. Mistakes made within this environment can be discussed and debriefed. It also allows staff to work together in teams dealing with 'real' operational situations, developing both their personal capabilities and team working skills. Staff can learn through experience in a controlled environment. Face to face classroom training is replaced by interaction with colleagues, skills building and structured feedback.

The ability to speed up and slow down time within the Hydra allows operational situations to be fully explored and debriefed so that staff can fully understand the consequences of their decisions and actions.

Hydra exercises are available from a national online library and can be run by any Force. They can also be written and developed in-house. Designing our own exercises would allow us to design scenarios prior to major operational events allowing for operational plans to be tested.

Reaccreditation of Silver Command Training can also be undertaken using Hydra ; this has the potential to increase the resilience of Silver Command training and reaccreditation within the force.

Financial Implications

Installation of Hydra equipment and software costs in the region of £60K dependent on the model and specification used

The one-off essential cost to refurbish facilities at Lancashire Training Centre would cost approximately £13K

Detailed costs will not be known until the tendering exercise is complete.

A partnership arrangement for the joint development of a Hydra Suite has been explored. However, this option would have restricted usage by ourselves to 50 days per year and therefore given the level of investment required it was not felt that this presented value for money.

For the past 12 months the College of Policing have indicated they intend to make the use of Hydra a mandatory requirement amongst a number of learning programmes, these include ICIDP (Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme) and DIDP (Detective Inspectors Development Programme). Both these programmes are essential within Lancashire Constabulary.

As Lancashire Constabulary does not have a Hydra facility we would have to send our officers to other Forces to be trained. The current cost of sending an officer to another Force to use the Hydra facility for ICIDP is approximately £2000 per student per course.

In 2014/15 this would equate to an additional £50,000 cost for ICIDP alone which would be avoided through the availability on an in house Hydra suite

Given these potential additional costs, investment in a Hydra Suite would be paid back in approximately 18 months and result in cost avoidance in future years.

The funding for this proposal is sought from the PCC's investment reserve on the basis that it meets the existing criteria associated with bids to the reserve, namely

- (i) to support developments and initiatives that will help deliver greater efficiencies and savings in future years.
- (ii) invest in IT equipment for officers to improve efficiency and reduce costs in the longer term

It is clear that investment in the Hydra facility meets the criteria.

Whilst there is no business plan to generate income through the provision of the facility it does allow consideration being given to offer this type of immersive training to partner organisations across the public service landscape.