

VIDEO IDENTIFICATION OF SUSPECTS: SUCCESSFUL BID FOR FUNDING**Joint Report of the Chief Constable, Clerk and Treasurer**

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise members of a successful bid for funding available from the Home Office to support the development in the video identification of suspects.

2 BACKGROUND

In 1999 the force developed the PROMAT Video Identification System. This is a stand alone system which requires management control and operation by the dedicated force Identification Suite based in Newcastle East. This system was selected based on its quality, efficiency of operation and cost.

In April 2002 and April 2003 the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, Codes of Practice were amended to make video identification the prime method of identifying suspects.

Since the force initially purchased PROMAT another video identification system, VIPER, has been further developed.

This system provides access to a comprehensive diverse image database which can be supplied direct to installations at Area Commands. It is centrally managed and provides a national network for video identification from the National VIPER Bureau.

For the financial year 2003/2004 the Home Office made funding available to support the development in video identification of suspects. This funding was specifically for the purchase of up to three VIPER systems per force, including installation, equipment and training costs until the end of March 2004. It also includes up to £12,000 for building/refurbishment work per site.

It is anticipated that to develop three video identification suites will cost approximately £80,000, therefore the force will need to contribute approximately £44,000 towards this project. Provisional funding of £48,000 has also been identified from the 2004/2005 revenue budget to meet ongoing running costs.

It is intended to install the VIPER system at Newcastle North, South Tyneside and South East Northumberland Area Commands, so that they can be operated alongside the Offender Management Project by 'designated' staff.

The introduction of the VIPER systems at these three Area Commands will provide on site identification to be undertaken without the need to transfer suspects to the existing identification suite, and will enable the force to maximise the use of 'designated' staff. PROMAT will continue to be used in the remaining Area Commands.

3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

4 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Although there are no direct human rights implications arising from this report, the development of video identification facilities will have human rights implications in that the force has a duty to promote the right to liberty and security by helping to prevent the unlawful detention of a person, and to promote the prohibition of discrimination against a suspect on the grounds of race, sex, colour or appearance.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Treasurer confirms that the unfunded element of the building costs for the development of these video identification facilities will be met from the 2003/2004 revenue budget.

The ongoing running costs of £48,000 identified from 2004/2005 onwards will be provided for in the 2004/2005 revenue budget.

6 RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note the contents of the report.