

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE OPERATIONAL
Recipients Only

RESTRICTED



MINUTES

NATIONAL POLICE AIR SERVICE (NPAS)
NATIONAL STRATEGIC BOARD (MEETING NUMBER 39)

18 March 2021 – via Teams

PRESENT

NAME	REPRESENTING
PCC Mark Burns-Williamson OBE (MBW) – Chair	Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire Police – Lead Local Policing Body
CC John Robins QPM (JR)	Chief Constable - West Yorkshire Police
T/ACC Scott Bisset (SB)	NPAS Chief Operating Officer/Accountable Manager
Katherine Johnson (KJ)	Assistant Chief Officer – Business Operations West Yorkshire Police
Alan Reiss (AR)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
James Flanagan (JF)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Glenn Shelley (GS)	NPAS Head of Business Services
Janine Nelson (JN)	Chief of Staff and Solicitor, OPCC
James Cunningham (JCu)	NPAS Head of Aviation Safety
Steph McKenzie (SM)	NPAS Head of Technical Services
Ruth Langley (RL)	Finance & Commercial Services Director – West Yorkshire Police
PCC Dafydd Llywelyn (DL)	Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys Police – South West Region
CC Shaun Sawyer (SS)	Chief Constable Devon & Cornwall Police – South West Region
CC Rod Hansen (RH)	Chief Constable NPCC Aviation Lead - Gloucestershire Police - South West Region
Julian Kern (JK)	Finance Lead - NPCC Aviation Programme Board
T/ACC Jason Masters (JM)	NPCC Aviation Programme Board
Caroline Peters (CP)	NPCC Aviation Programme Board
Richard Brandon (RB)	NPCC Aviation Programme Board

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE OPERATIONAL

**OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE OPERATIONAL
Recipients Only**

RESTRICTED

Acting PCC Steve White (SW)	Acting Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham - North East Region
CC Jo Farrell (JF)	Chief Constable, Durham Police - North East Region
ACO Gary Ridley (GR)	Durham Police – representing NPCC Finance Committee
PCC Peter McCall (PM)	Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria – North West Region
CC Darren Martland (DM)	Chief Constable Cheshire Police – North West Region
Robin Merrett (RM)	Mayor’s Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC)
DAC Laurence Taylor (LT)	Metropolitan Police Service – London Region & Chair of NPAS IAG/Programme Board
PCC John Campion (JC)	Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia – Central Region
Louise Williams (LW)	Regional Policy Officer – Central Region
ACC Steve Cooper (SC) on behalf of CC Rachel Swann	Assistant Chief Constable Derbyshire Police – East Mids Region
PCC Anthony Stansfeld (AS)	Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley - South East Region
CC John Campbell (JCa)	Chief Constable Thames Valley Police – South East Region
Lianne Deeming (LD)	Chief Executive BlueLight Commercial
Simon Efford (SE)	APCC Secretariat
Melanie Jaundziekars (MJ)	NPAS Executive Office Manager

APOLOGIES

NAME	REPRESENTING
CC Rachel Swann	Chief Constable Derbyshire Police – East Mids Region

1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, PCC Mark Burns-Williamson (MBW) opened the meeting. One apology was noted and recorded. Members were in agreement to the meeting being recorded.

MBW referred to two letters that had been received and emailed to Board members prior to the meeting from Kit Malthouse MP and Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP (HM Treasury) which alluded to decisions later in the meeting.

RESTRICTED

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD 28 JANUARY 2021 & 25 FEBRUARY 2021

Minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

4. ACTIONS

All actions were discharged – please see Action list. MBW recognised the amount of work required since the previous Board to produce the papers for today's meeting in trying to bring as much clarity in a covering report as possible and thanked everyone who had contributed.

5. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

Ruth Langley (RL) presented the revenue monitoring report which showed an underspend of £1.32m with an expected forecast out-turn of £1.26m against the approved 2020/21 budget of £44.6m. The main reasons for the underspend were due to an increase in vacancies and the high level of attrition in January and February of staff due to reorganisation. RL advised the underspend has been partly offset by agency pilots and cost of redundancy. NPAS continue to benefit from low fuel costs but has seen an overspend in maintenance which is due to one aircraft being in pre-scheduled maintenance for some time.

There has been a large increase in insurance premiums due to market pressures in the insurance industry and an overspend in tools and equipment due to significant helmet upgrades and other maintenance.

Resolved:

Members noted the financial position and the forecast outturn position for the financial year 2020/21.

6. NPAS CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Glenn Shelley (GS) presented the report and provided an update on the Capital programme in 20/21 and a revised programme for 21/22. GS advised there had been a significant overspend on aircraft parts due to a number of obsolescence issues. The spare parts budget for 21/22 has increased even though there will be lower flying levels under the new user requirement as the maintenance schedule for next year is largely already dictated by the flying undertaken during the financial year 20/21.

RESTRICTED

ESMCP is currently behind schedule and there will be a significant underspend on Estates in 20/21. GS advised members that the Home Office have granted NPAS a further £1m this financial year for additional work on BVLoS drones and a report will be brought back to a future Board setting out how the approach to BVLOS development could take place for the benefit of the wider Service. The Home Office have requested that NPAS carry forward £500k of the remaining funding into next year which GS advised can be done through the pre-payment of 21/22 capital credits in 20/21.

Resolved:

- **Members noted the Capital programme update for 2020/21**
- **Members approved the prepayment of airframe credits from 21/22 in 20/21**
- **Members approved the revised Capital programme for 21/22**

7. NPAS SAFETY UPDATE

James Cunningham (JCu) advised members the NPAS Safety Management System (SMS) is still performing well and the Safety Review Boards now occur every three months as opposed to half yearly due to the scale and complexity of the programme of change within NPAS. JCu stated that reporting for NPAS has increased by a further 5% showing good growth which is welcomed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

NPAS are seeing a significant increase in fatigue reporting this year and the start of the increase is in relation to the start of the organisational change programme which was expected as staff become accustomed to the new operating model. JCu advised NPAS are seeing a similar trend with distraction and an increase in Airspace Infringements due to a change in regulation and the way in which Airspace Infringements are now reported.

JCu stated the top 3 risks for NPAS are:

- Organisational change
- Reduction in performance – human error
- Air proximity incidents

JCu advised the Serious Incident Rate (SIR) for NPAS was in line with the industry standard of one SIR every two years. The Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) investigated seven police forces in 2020 for serious drone incidences and investigated NPAS once in 2018 and one is currently underway following a heavy landing at North Weald. The AAIB have 16 investigations relating to drone incidents.

RESTRICTED

Safety statistics for the fleet for each EC135 receive around 24 safety reports per airframe and 22 safety reports for each EC145. For each P68 NPAS receive 10 safety reports and from a comparable point of view the P68 is the safest platform.

JCu stated that NPAS still has the best safety record in the 36-year record of police aviation and are doing well compared to other organisations. The greater the scale of change and the greater the complexity will influence risk significantly, and increase risks negatively. This means that during the change programme the organisation is a state of heightened risk, which will last for the duration of change and beyond until the organisation new operating model becomes stable. This situation was the assessed and indicated; independently by Cranfield University, when it provided professional considerations to the Aviation Review and to the NPCC. The SMS is now evidencing that the risks are increasing as the change is initiated.

MBW thanked JCu and the team for the work involved and for providing a comprehensive report regarding NPAS safety.

8. FUTURE SERVICE PROVISION/FLEET REPLACEMENT

Scott Bisset (SB) advised this was a joint piece of work to produce a combined report between NPAS, NPCC Aviation Review Team with support from BlueLight Commercial and the finance teams to try and address areas of disagreement.

Lianne Deeming (LD) gave a short presentation around the market and the strategy for going forward. LD advised Option 2 would be easier to go through the process quicker than Option 7 which would require more definition to go to market and it was not considered to be good practice to consider two options.

Aphra Brannan (AB) advised the Home Office could provide some cost for support of change potentially up to around £5m to be spent over the next few years but required a clear decision on either Option 2 or Option 7. AB stated the Policing Minister was keen for work to be progressed and required assurance in terms of the longer-term home of NPAS.

A conversation took place and CC Sawyer asked if Options 2 and 7 give greater uncertainty and if the likelihood changes significantly by it being Option 7 and 2. JCu stated that his professional opinion supported by the feedback from Cranfield University, and evidence based shows a full outsource would cause the greatest likelihood and the highest risk. JCu advised all three potential scenarios bring risk and all 3 options will move us into the approved category and therefore there is risk inherent with whichever option is decided but Option

**OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE OPERATIONAL
Recipients Only**

RESTRICTED

7 will bring more risk and trying to run Option 2 and 7 together will bring the greatest risk of uncertainty.

LT stated the MPS would be happy to host a contract in the future as an intelligent client but did not want the wider operational management responsibilities which West Yorkshire now held.

Members considered the following options and voted as follows:

Option A – progress Option 2 to final business case – outsource London with NPAS fleet replacement of 7

Option B – progress Option 7 to final business case

Option C – progress both Option 2 and 7 at the same time

Option A – JC, SW, PM, MBW, JCa, JF, DM, SC, JR

Option B – RM, LT

Option C – DL, SS

AS – stated he did not support either option and abstained from voting

Resolved:

As the majority voted for Option A it was agreed that Option 2 would now be progressed to Final Business Case.

CC Hansen asked if there was any clarity in relation to the Home Office position on capital to revenue for leasing and whether the leasing costs could be seen as capital costs and therefore paid from the Home Office Capital grant. AB advised she had sought clarity and it is dependant on the arrangements of the leasing contract and the extent to which it can be seen as capital. If seen as a long term asset for NPAS then it could potentially be counted as something that could be paid from capital but would depend on the exact lease and whether there is an option to purchase the helicopter at the end of the lease.

LT stated London have always been very clear that their focus has been in relation to performance rather than overall cost. At present performance is affected and risks with the 145's potentially mean it will get worse. This will not be acceptable to the Commissioner so very keen to understand what measures NPAS will put in place to mitigate this while Option 2 is developed.

9. MRO CONTRACT QUARTERLY REVIEW

Steph McKenzie (SM) gave a short presentation and advised issues with Covid and Brexit had caused delays with obtaining spare parts due to the processes with the change in importation and customs despite best efforts. AHUK are

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE OPERATIONAL

**OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE OPERATIONAL
Recipients Only**

RESTRICTED

working to put more efficient protocols in place and the position should start to improve by April 21.

Mission equipped availability has increased by 3% since the last quarter which is mainly due to improvements on the 135 fleet. Overall aircraft serviceability increased from 70% to 76% which is primarily down to the 135 fleet doing well at 81%.

A conversation took place regarding the damaged aircraft at North Weald following a recent heavy landing. LT stated the incident causes concern and if there are issues with the 145 fleet this puts a significant risk on air operations over London and is keen to understand what the issues are and one that needs monitoring. SB outlined that it is too early to state whether the incident was related to technical or other issues.

Members noted the content of the report and the presentation provided.

10. WEST YORKSHIRE DEVOLUTION UPDATE

Alan Reiss (AR) presented the report and provided members with an update on the West Yorkshire devolution process. The Order creating the Mayoral Combined Authority and paving the way for an election on 6 May went through Parliament at the end of January. AR advised the West Yorkshire Mayor will become the relevant local policing body but are not a corporate sole and therefore cannot own land or assets. Asset ownership would sit with the Combined Authority.

AR advised that the present assumption is that until future governance arrangements are agreed by the joint Working Group, the Mayor or Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime will Chair the Board meetings going forward and the Combined Authority will continue to provide support to the Board. AS advised members that the leaders of the five West Yorkshire Councils and MBW wrote to the Home Office asking them to come forward with proposals for an alternative model of delivery for NPAS within two years and there is still a requirement for that work to be brought forward at pace. The Mayor/Combined Authority will want to work with the Board, WYP, NPAS and the Home Office for swift development of a future delivery model and transition.

In relation to the governance working group, PCC Dafydd Llywelyn (DL) stated that decisions were made previously in relation to an independent Chair and various sub groups have met and work undertaken is taking cognisance of the fact that there is a discrepancy in terms of current representation from a regional perspective.

Board members noted the update provided.

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE OPERATIONAL

RESTRICTED

11. FIXED WING OPTIONS

CC John Robins (JR) requested that Board members supported NPAS and the Board's objectives of providing air support to England and Wales and asked members not to reduce the fleet capacity of NPAS and not to sell the two uncommitted airframes and was cognisant of the fact that there is financial implications in retaining them.

Members considered the following Options: -

Option 1 - To retain and supplement fleet availability until the end of the financial year 2024/25

Option 2 - Disposal of the two uncommitted aircraft realising capital receipts and reductions in ongoing revenue costs

MBW raised the letter from the MCA and in the short term looking at what partnering options there may be with the fixed wing aircraft. AB advised the Treasury had written to the Policing Minister and Maritime Ministers advising he was approving the next generation of the Search & Rescue procurement process but on the condition that the Department for Transport and the Home Office work together to consider if there are options of greater consolidation and would want to look carefully at that and see what could be of benefit to police aviation. AB advised a working group had been established with representation from NPAS, NPCC Aviation Review Team and BlueLight Commercial in terms of how that fits into the fixed wing decision. Given that discussions have not yet taken place with the MCA these decisions could take time and if members wanted to wait until that concludes this would mean retaining the fixed wing for another year.

MBW advised the consequences of Option 2 means there would have to be a revisit of the existing two airframes within the North East region as highlighted by JF.

Board members commented that the fixed wing does offer a good service but it was for budgetary reasons that they were voting against keeping them.

Members voted as follows:

Option 1 – JF, JR, AS, SW, MBW

Option 2 – SS, DM, SC, JCa, LT, RM, PM, JC

Resolved:

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE OPERATIONAL

RESTRICTED

As the majority voted for Option 2 it was agreed that NPAS would progress the disposal/partnering options of 2 fixed wing airframes.

As DL had left the meeting his vote could not be counted.

Action 39.1 - It was agreed that further conversations regarding the fixed wing within the North East region would need to take place and a further report brought back to a future Board meeting due to a significant risk of the cost base changing as a result of the allocation of costs.

12.ANY OTHER BUSINESS

PM thanked MBW for chairing the Board meetings very even-handedly which had often involved very complex and difficult issues.

MBW thanked Board members and stated he was proud of the service that NPAS have provided and all board members should not forget the staff who provide the service on our behalf day in day out for policing across England & Wales.

Date and time of next meeting: 24 June 2021