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Tracy Brabin
Mayor
of West Yorkshire
Policing and Crime

West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority



MINUTES

NATIONAL POLICE AIR SERVICE (NPAS)
NATIONAL STRATEGIC BOARD (MEETING NUMBER 42)

23 September 2021 – via Teams

PRESENT

NAME	REPRESENTING
PCC John Campion (JC) - Chair	Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia – Central Region
CC John Robins QPM (JR)	Chief Constable - West Yorkshire Police – Police Air Operations Certificate Holder (PAOC)
Alison Lowe (AL)	Deputy Mayor West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA)
Alan Reiss (AR)	Director of Policy, Strategy & Communications - West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA)
Rebecca Brookes (RB)	Head of Legal & Governance Services – West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA)
T/ACC Steve Cockwell (SC)	Chief Constable Dyfed-Powys Police - Wales Region
CFO Paul Butler (PBU) representing PCC Mark Shelford	CFO Avon & Somerset – South West Region
CC Shaun Sawyer QPM (SS)	Chief Constable Devon & Cornwall Police – South West Region
PCC Lisa Townsend (LTo)	Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey - South East Region
CC John Campbell QPM (JCa)	Chief Constable Thames Valley Police – South East Region
DAC Laurence Taylor (LT)	Metropolitan Police Service – London Region & Chair of NPAS IAG
PCC Jonathan Evison (JE)	Police and Crime Commissioner Humberside - North East Region

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CC Jo Farrell (JF)	Chief Constable, Durham Police - North East Region
Gary Ridley (GR)	Assistant Chief Officer, Durham Police – North East Region
PCC Peter McCall (PM)	Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria – North West Region
CC Mark Roberts (MR)	Chief Constable Cheshire Police – North West Region
CC Rachel Swann (RS)	Chief Constable Derbyshire Police – East Midlands Region
Aphra Brannan (AB)	National Police Capabilities Unit - Home Office
Lianne Deeming (LD)	Chief Executive, BlueLight Commercial
Katherine Johnson (KJ)	Assistant Chief Officer – Business Operations West Yorkshire Police
Ch Supt Vicki White (VW)	NPAS Transition
Glenn Shelley (GS)	NPAS Head of Business Services
James Cunningham (JCu)	NPAS Head of Aviation Safety
Steph McKenzie (SM)	NPAS Head of Technical Services
Pete Botchett (PB)	NPAS Head of Compliance
Scott Gallagher OBE (SG)	NPAS Head of Projects
Ruth Langley (RL)	Finance & Commercial Services Director – West Yorkshire Police
Caroline Fleming (CF)	Commercial Lawyer, West Yorkshire Legal Services
Louise Williams (LW)	Regional Policy Officer – Central Region
Caroline Peters (CP)	NPCC Aviation Programme Board
Simon Efford (SE)	APCC Secretariat
Melanie Jaundziekars (MJ)	NPAS Executive Office Manager

APOLOGIES

NAME	REPRESENTING
PCC Rupert Matthews (RM)	Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire Police – East Midlands Region
CC Debra Tedds (DT)	Chief Constable Warwickshire Police – West Midlands Region
PCC Dafydd Llywelyn (DL)	Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys Police – South West Region
Janine Nelson (JN)	Head of Policing & Crime – WYCA
CC Rod Hansen QPM (RH)	Chief Constable NPCC Aviation Lead - Gloucestershire Police - South West Region
Robin Merrett (RM)	Mayor's Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC)

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CC Nick Dean (ND)	Chief Constable Cambridgeshire Police, Eastern Region
T/ACC Scott Bisset (SB)	NPAS Chief Operating Officer/Accountable Manager

1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted and recorded.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were raised.

3. MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 21 JULY 2021

Minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

4. ACTIONS

All actions were discharged.

5. GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Caroline Fleming (CF) presented the report and outlined that there had been a change to the Terms of Reference which required the consent of the Board and a letter had been sent to all forces regarding the proposed changes. CF stated that the recommendation was that membership of the Board be increased from the 6 air support regions to align with the 9 policing regions increasing representation from 12 to 18. The lead local policing body and lead local Chief Constable would continue to have a seat and voting rights. CF advised the quorum of the Board is to be increased to at least 6 local police body representatives and 6 chief police officer representatives who are entitled to attend and vote which would also include the lead local police body and lead local chief constable. CF advised that no objections had been received from Forces regarding the proposed changes. CF highlighted an error within paragraph 10.4 which should now refer to the 9 policing regions and an amended Terms of Reference is to be issued. The paper was discussed by board members and included future reconsideration of voting rights.

Resolved:

Members agreed to adopt the Terms of Reference as amended and agreed this would be effective from 1 October 2021.

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6. TRANSITION UPDATE FROM THE GOLD GROUP

PCC Peter McCall (PM) advised members that both the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and West Midlands Police (WMP) have agreed to undertake due diligence process in order to expose exactly what it is they may be taking on and what the implications are. The key issue is the cost of going through the process and the suggestion was that whilst both forces are prepared to undertake the process, they were of the view that the cost for doing so should not be borne by their force. WMP did attach a series of additional requests to their potential bid and the view of the Gold Group is that is an issue for the Board to consider. PM stated the due diligence process is expected to take approximately 6 weeks.

Alison Lowe (AL) advised she could not support the paper in the current form as it lacked detail around the breakdown of any costs. AL raised why two due diligence exercises were to take place which would be a waste of public money and suggested that one due diligence exercise take place commissioned by NPAS and the Board. It was clarified that it proposed that only one due diligence process was being proposed.

DAC Laurence Taylor (LT) stated that if the due diligence did cost the MPS or WMP money to do then it would not be something they would undertake. He further added parties would like to agree the terms of reference within the next week. LT stated the MPS would be unhappy if the fleet replacement or the outsource stalled as a result of this as there is an operational imperative to fleet replacement taking places and this work needs to continue regardless.

JC raised that he would be exceptionally concerned about spending money on due diligence for a potential transfer if there isn't at least the explicit supportive expression of the governance as well as the operational side as would need the support of both. LT advised the due diligence work is expected to cost between £250k and £500k.

KJ advised there were different ways to fund the due diligence :-

- Separate agreement from the Home Office
- Using existing reserves
- Additional charges to Forces and PCCs

KJ advised if the £5m that was set aside could be used for the due diligence, entering the contract would be a matter for whoever the contracting authority was and for them to determine they are satisfied with the procurement process. KJ stated she would be supportive of this so long as the Board can be assured the value of the due diligence and the cost is value for money. KJ advised that

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a lot of the work for the due diligence will fall on NPAS and the support services within WYP around providing all of the information and KJ would be happy to feedback on the specification to Deloitte.

AB stated if the Board wished to spend some of the £5m on due diligence the Home Office would support this with the usual caveat being value for money.

AL asked about a process for commissioning the due diligence process, rather than just awarding to Deloitte and asked for this to be included in any proposal.

Resolved:

Board members supported the proposal and agreed in principle that due diligence should be undertaken, and that a more detailed proposal is put forward by the MPS (who would act as the contracting authority) including clear proposed financial costs, including proposed sources of funding with support of CF and KJ. Board members are to be consulted by email as to whether or not they support the proposal and a decision made prior to the next Board meeting on 20 October 2021.

A discussion took place regarding a potential Plan B. Members agreed they were not yet in a position to expedite the work in relation to Plan B and discussed in detail that some confirmation from the operational reps from the MPS and WMP that there is some support for the governance in relation to due diligence being committed and had a debate around the notice period. CC Mark Roberts (MR) raised the issue of seeking an extension of the notice period from the Mayor of West Yorkshire, JC committed to raise the matter with AL.

Action 42.1 - JC to discuss with AL outside of the Board meeting and report back to the Board around a possible extension to the timeline

JC raised the issue of the funding of the work already being undertaken and suggested the Board will be asking for the detailed breakdown in terms of what that funding is alluded to in order to make a decision as part of the virtual one that members are to make in respect of due diligence.

Ch Supt Vicki White (VW) advised that a lot of the work following the due diligence has been done and the first Transition Board will take place on the 29 October and will meet on a regular basis with updates provided to the Gold Group.

7. NPAS SAFETY UPDATE

James Cunningham (JCu) gave a presentation around fatigue and highlighted this peaked in August as predicted. A number of safety reports have been received from Barton due to having to cover extended distance due to a lack of

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resource. As a number of bases transitioned to the 1500-0300hrs shift pattern for TFOs, this has also generated a number of significant fatigue reports; this is being reviewed with the NPAS Head of Flight Ops and CI Pitman to see how much more tasking they are doing and whether any mitigations need to be put in place. JCu advised there is a lot of frustration and distraction at the Doncaster base around the uncertainty of fixed wing.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) will not endorse a shift pattern of 1500-0300hrs and NPAS are currently moving to 1300-0100 which the CAA have agreed and authorised for a period of six months as a trial to see how it works. The CAA's view was the fatigue level is simply too great on a shift pattern of 1500-0300hrs and would not approve that pattern.

JCu stated that Lippitts Hill has been placed under the same mitigations as the 12hr and 20hr bases whilst NPAS move into the base and operations commenced on the 14 September. A restriction on the flight time limitations (ftl) has been put in place for approximately three months and will be reviewed on a monthly basis and removed once it is safe to do so. JCu advised the MPS are to be co-located with NPAS within the hangar which is not normal practice for aviation and presents a risk around unintended influence, distraction and pressure. The CAA recently conducted their independent audit of the base and raised it as an observation. A separation protocol has been agreed to enable good liaison and be efficient and effective and have agreed a process which has been endorsed in principle.

NPAS are currently experiencing one Serious Incident Rate (SIR) every six months (the industry average is one every two years) and still await the report from the Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) regarding the heavy landing at North Weald, once the report is received this will be shared with Board members.

JCu advised that the CAA conducted their audit on 7 September with no findings or observations. The regulator commended that the management of change process and oversight was excellent and the risk management process was doing exactly as it should and informing people. The advice from the CAA is to not change the management structure. JC stated that NPAS will be operating at an increased level of risk caused by instability and complexity of the programme of change. JC stated the aviation environment that NPAS are operating in is also rapidly changing with the airspace becoming more saturated with drones and more congested and complicated.

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Resolved:

- Board members noted the content of the report and presentation provided.
- Board members noted the following recommendation from the CAA audit and to include it within their considerations for transition to alternative arrangements, namely “with the advent of a new lead force for NPAS it is strongly recommended that all efforts are made to avoid the possible breaking up of the CAA Accepted Management Team”.
- To support NPAS in its immediate steps to stabilise and consolidate the operating model before progressing further additional changes.

CC Shaun Sawyer (SS) suggested amending the recommendation and preferred the Board “notes” the following recommendation as felt by accepting it may affect negotiation to a new lead force.

CC Rachel Swann (RS) referenced the fact that the necessary safety changes has meant a reduction in hours and therefore resulted in reduced performance/coverage. Any options to improve this would come at additional cost, which had not been something forces had budgeted for. It was noted that this is different to what has been agreed at the start of the year for operational coverage or budget.

8. FIXED WING UPDATE

Glenn Shelley (GS) gave a short presentation and provided a brief summary as follows:

- March 2021 - the Board decided to dispose of 2 of the 4 aeroplanes and the broker is now preparing the advert for sale on aircraft 1 and 2;
- There is an average sale price of £810k and it was agreed that NPAS would retain the cameras which at an estimated value of £430k;
- NE region user requirement originally included two of the aeroplanes to fly 24/7 but have since written to the Board to remove that from their user requirement and as a result a decision is now required on the use of the aeroplanes;
- If the aircraft are used as a national asset this would provide resilience to operational coverage with fleet replacement unlikely to at least 2024 and ESN not complete until 2026;
- NPAS have an aircraft deficit of between 1.7 and 3 airframes each day

GS outlined that the second option is that all fixed wing flying ceases by March 2022 and NPAS progress immediately with the process to dispose of all 4 airframes, in doing so accepting the aircraft deficit and the drop in performance.

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Costs of disposing of all 4

The aircraft must be kept in good condition in order to be sold. In addition, NPAS entered a 25yr lease with Doncaster Airport and they have indicated additional costs of [REDACTED]

Costs of disposal would be between £1.13m and £1.247m depending on the maintenance option chosen.

[REDACTED]
but would need to spend some of that capital to make the aircraft saleable. NPAS have retained the cameras with an estimated value of just over £1.7m; the Doncaster base cost £2.87m to build with a total capital outlay of £12.87m.

JCu stated if the resource is to be removed the risk is likely to increase and from a safety perspective this would not be advisable.

Steph McKenzie (SM) advised members that they would need to consider the NPAS fleet are around between 1.7 and 3 aircraft short per day, and whilst one aircraft from the two fixed wing will help, there will still not be enough aircraft on the line consistently due to maintenance, repairs etc so could end up paying for one resource to be available but for NPAS not to be able to have it available at the point of need.

AB stated the Home Office are concerned about the whole situation as they provided the capital funding with an expectation that forces would cover the running costs and get use out of the assets. The Home Office have raised concerns about this and the handling and want to do further work to understand the audit trail and learn some lessons in terms of how they can provide capital funding and how that is spent.

AL expressed her concern that the Board had purchased 4 fixed wing aeroplanes and now wanted to dispose of them and the Home Office should be asking for their money back. AL felt the decision to dispose could not be justified on any basis and will cost even more public money if the Board choose to sell all 4 and the decision should be changed to retain all 4 aeroplanes.

PB raised that the aeroplanes can fly from other airfields and are not solely confined to Doncaster and Bournemouth.

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JCa raised that this changes some of the support and opportunity for value for money and a fundamental issue if the restriction on where it can fly from has changed and if there has been a misunderstanding would be keen to review the position.

MR raised if consideration should be given as to how the aircraft could be deployed as a national asset for specific operations that UK policing has to cover which could release some of the pressures in the rest of the system if the fixed wing could be deployed to provide aerial cover for specific operations such as G7, COP26 and the Commonwealth Games.

Resolved:

Members agreed that the current MRO contract be extended for a further three-month period until a decision is made on the future of the fixed wing

NPAS are to consider if we were to use the two airframes as a national asset to fill gaps in England and Wales (excluding London) what the impact of that would be in terms of benefit but also the cost and consideration of value for money.

Action 42.2 - It was agreed that NPAS Officers would bring a further report back to the October meeting of the board analysing the potential use the fixed wing airframes as a national assets to fill operational gaps in England and Wales (excluding London), what the impact would be in terms of benefit but also the cost as well as consideration of value for money.

9. NPAS PROGRAMME OF CHANGE UPDATE

GS provided an update on the programme of change following the approval of the user requirement in December 2020 which had been a significant piece of work for NPAS. NPAS have developed a new Performance dashboard which has been well received by forces along with the implementation of the direct cost charging model upon which NPAS would welcome a post implementation review. GS stated that RAF Altcar is now looking as a more positive proposition than the site at RAF Woodvale for a new base build within the North West and advised a business case would need to be developed and brought back to the Board for approval.

GS stated that NPAS were very disappointed with the view from the CAA regarding the shift pattern and stated that NPAS would be moving to the 1300 – 0100hrs shift pattern at the 12hr bases. At the 20hr bases in the short to medium term NPAS will leave the pilots on a 24hr shift pattern but only using the number of pilots agreed within the budget and backfill from the national line pilot pool whilst NPAS look at the options available.

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Resolved:

Members noted the implementation of the programme of change and the interim position at the 12hr and 20 hr bases.

10.NPAS FUTURES & INNOVATIONS PROGRAMME

Pete Botchett (PB) presented the report and advised a Futures and Innovations Board had been established co-chaired by VW and ACC Steve Barry (NPCC Drones Lead). NPAS have engaged with the regulator with a suggestion for an embedded resource within the CAA Innovation Hub to enable dedicated support to the NPAS Futures and Innovations Programme to assist in accelerating acceptance of safety cases which is required to demonstrate BVLOS capabilities for drones. PB stated that civil organisations and private companies are all striving to do this but it will be potentially 2024 before this work comes to fruition. Business cases have been received from Norfolk, MPS, WMP and potentially Avon & Somerset so receiving interest from forces that are already involved in this.

Resolved:

- **Board members noted the content of the report**
- **The Board supported the proposed governance structure for the approval of capital grant investment and approved that delegated authority is given to the NFIGB to approve the release of investment funding that any approvals are brought back to the Board for awareness**
- **The Board supported the establishment of the permanent role for the Futures and Innovations lead**

11.HOME OFFICE UPDATE

Aphra Brannan (AB) updated members on the work that the Home Office had undertaken on the potential for search and rescue services (including the Maritime & Coastguard Agency) to join with NPAS in the future. It concluded that this was not possible in the short-medium term but there are opportunities for closer working that should be explored.

Resolved:

Members noted the update provided

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12.NPAS PERFORMANCE REPORT

Ch Supt Vicki White (VW) outlined the key areas within the NPAS performance report:

- Aircraft availability during April and July was on a par with this time last year (69.5% average over the year) and now at 68.6% which is a slight drop but an improving picture from February 2021 onwards. VW advised the performance reporting will be amended going forward to reflect the 12hr and 20hr operating bases;
- Technical availability varies month on month predominately due to the age of the fleet and the differing requirements;
- Availability of pilots has been affected due to challenges with Covid, annual leave and realignment to bases but should start to show an improvement from September onwards;
- Attendance has increased from 41.2% to 48% but this is against a backdrop of decreasing numbers of requests;
- 76% of cancellations are before take-off;
- NPAS are looking at the number of internal flying hours as this is higher than predicted due to an increase in training for new TFOs to ensure the bases have the sufficient number of TFOs trained for operational use;
- P1 attendance is now measured from receipt of request to deployment

13.NPAS COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW (CSR) – CAPITAL SUBMISSION

Members were content with the report and noted that NPAS had submitted a CSR bid for the next three years to the Home Office.

Resolved:

Members noted the content of the report

14.NPAS REVENUE OUTTURN POSITION

Ruth Langley (RL) presented the report which showed an operating underspend against budget of £599k with a forecast outturn underspend of £493k.

Resolved:

- **Members noted the report and the current financial position of NPAS and supported the mid-year review of the direct cost charging model**

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- **Members noted the full reserve position from retained reserves and the full expected in-year reserve position including Fleet Replacement reserve**

As this was RL's last Board meeting prior to retirement, JR and the Chair (on behalf of the Board) thanked RL for her commitment to NPAS and wished her well for the future.

15. ITEMS FOR NOTING

Board members noted:

Minutes from the NPAS Safety Review Board held on 19 May
NPAS Work Programme

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

JC advised it was his intention to provide an update following Board meetings in an attempt to provide a communication tool for Chief Constables, Police and Crime Commissioners and policing body reps within the regions to ensure good basis for communication with colleagues. As the Covid climate changes the intention is to hold physical meetings as opposed to via Teams for which members will be given prior notice.

Date and time of next meeting: 2 December 2021