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MINUTES

NATIONAL POLICE AIR SERVICE (NPAS)
NATIONAL STRATEGIC BOARD (MEETING NUMBER 37)
BUDGET SETTING

28 January 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 – West Yorkshire Police
James Flanagan (JF)	Head of Public Service Reform - West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alan Reiss (AR)	Director of Policy & Strategy - West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Glenn Shelley (GS)	NPAS Head of Business Services
Ollie Dismore (OD)	NPAS Director of Operations
Janine Nelson (JN)	Chief of Staff & Solicitor – West Yorkshire Police
James Cunningham (JCu)	NPAS Head of Aviation Safety
Jenny Walker (JW)	NPAS Head of Communications & Marketing
Ruth Langley (RL)	Finance & Commercial Services Director – West Yorkshire Police
Mike James (MJa)	Finance Business Partner - 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

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CC Rod Hansen (RH)	Chief Constable NPCC Aviation Lead - Gloucestershire Police - South West Region
T/ACC Jason Masters (JM)	NPCC Aviation Programme Board
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
PCC Peter McCall (PM)	Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria – North West Region
PCC Arfon Jones (AJ)	Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales
CC Darren Martland (DM)	Chief Constable, Cheshire Police – North West Region
Robin Merrett (RM)	Mayor’s Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC) - London
DAC Laurence Taylor (LT)	Metropolitan Police Service – London Region & Chair of NPAS IAG/Programme Board
PCC John Champion (JC)	Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia – West Midlands Region
Louise Williams (LW)	Regional Policy Officer – West Midlands Region
CC Rachel Swann (RS)	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
Aphra Brannan (AB)	National Police Capabilities Unit/CPFG Home Office
Lianne Deeming (LD)	Chief Executive BlueLight Commercial
Angela Harrison (AH)	OPCC Lancashire
Simon Efford (SE)	APCC Secretariat
Melanie Jaundziekars (MJ)	NPAS Executive Office Manager

APOLOGIES

NAME	REPRESENTING
Jenny Walker (JW)	NPAS Head of Communications
ACO Gary Ridley (GR)	Durham Police – representing NPCC Finance Committee

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1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, PCC Mark Burns-Williamson (MBW) opened the meeting and invited introductions from those joining the meeting via Teams. Apologies were noted and recorded.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

CC Rod Hansen (RH) advised members that he had been approached by the MCA Senior Leadership Team – it was agreed this item would be discussed under AOB.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 2 DECEMBER 2020

RH raised Item 6 within the Minutes where it referred to a joint paper from the NPCC Aviation Review Team and NPAS regarding the fixed wing airframes. As the paper was an NPAS only document RH asked whether a joint piece of work had been completed which involved the NPCC Finance Team. T/ACC Scott Bisset (SB) advised NPAS have engaged with the NPCC finance team over the costs of the fixed wing and how they would transfer in the budgets. A number of areas were discussed and it was agreed that further work would take place. It was also noted that a full agenda item on Fixed Wing was due to be considered later in the meeting.

4. ACTIONS

Please see Action list. Lianne Deeming (LD) advised that a Declaration of Impartiality had been issued to Board members which required a follow up in terms of the sign off. LD reminded members of the importance in signing the declaration as Board members would be party to sensitive commercial information in the Fleet Replacement deliberations. CC John Robins (JR) advised members that London and Central region (from the policing side) were looking at engaging with lawyers to help and assist with the signing of the Declaration and work is ongoing to get the document signed.

5. FIXED WING OPTIONS

Ollie Dismore (OD) presented the paper and summarised the position regarding the 4 airframes. As two aeroplanes are now committed to the future delivery of the North East Region User Requirement (UR) a discussion took place regarding the options for the two remaining airframes.

Option 1 – Short-term retention to supplement aircraft availability – the closest option to delivering the UR more quickly as opposed to waiting for fleet replacement likely to be in 2023/24.

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Option 2 – Partnership with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for their continued use – this would be cost neutral at best with no direct operational benefit to NPAS

Option 3 – Disposal - no direct operational benefit as lose the potential use of the two airframes but does reduce revenue costs and generates capital receipt for reinvestment.

Option 1 was proposed to the Board as the recommended option.

DAC Laurence Taylor (LT) advised that on behalf of the NPAS Independent Assurance Group (IAG) the view of the IAG was the operational perspective was there is no place for the fixed wing and all IAG members were not supportive of retaining the fixed wing.

Robin Merrett (RM) stated it was too big an expense when the money could be put towards the fleet replacement programme which would be of use to the service.

PCC John Campion (JC) raised concern that operational policing is deciding they do not want something before it is fully in service and before it has had chance to deliver what the original business case set out. JC advised he was supportive of the fixed wing fleet being retained and brought into service and asked that further work should take place.

SB advised the airframes could be fully operational in January 2022 and would provide two fully operational 24hr lines but a decision would be required in the next quarter to enable the recruitment and training of pilots to take place in meeting these timescales. The proposal is to ensure the North East region only pay for the direct cost for the two airframes they use with the use to cover the costs over and above this. If they are brought into service another £300k out of reserves would bring them into service for January 2022 and those costs would have to be met out of the core budget from April 2022 onwards. JC stated he would want a process in place that does the test against the current User Requirement and the original business case to establish if the benefits are achievable or not within the identified timeframe.

PCC Peter McCall (PM) stated he felt uncomfortable to be supporting the retention of the Fixed Wing when the operational advice from police officers is so opposed in the main and stated further discussions needed to take place.

JC supported the recommendation of Option 1 and stated that Option 2 and 3 provided no strategy for replacing the ageing fleet but have a tactic that can be used at a significantly reduced cost. JC stated that Option 2 and 3 remove that

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capability which leaves the significant problem of an ageing fleet which is available less and raised concern around the nature of the discussions and delaying a decision.

OD reminded members that once the airframes have been disposed of, they are gone and if the Board cannot make a case for what is the closest equivalent to BVLoS the police service and the Board may struggle to commission or accept the integration of alternative technology downstream. The Officers within NPAS are charged to deliver the User Requirement which forces will be paying for from 1 April 2021 but it is accepted that the current fleet is insufficient to meet that requirement and there will be times when aircraft will not be available.

A discussion took place and members voted as follows:

Option 1 – Received 6 votes (MBW, SW, JF, JR, AS, JC)

Option 2 – Received 2 votes (RM, JCa)

Option 3 – Received 6 votes (PM, DL, RS, SS, LT, DM)

As the decision had resulted in a tie, the Chair stated he had the overriding vote and voted for Option 1. RM requested to change his vote from Option 2 to Option 3.

JC stated views had been expressed and the Chair had broken the tie and wanted to remain with the decisions already made and did not believe there was a consensus to defer the decision following clear advice from NPAS officials and requested that it be clearly recorded within the minutes as to why the Board chose to go against the clear advice of those charged with advising the Board.

Janine Nelson (JN) clarified the governance and stated *the second vote is the Chair's vote in the event of a deadlock and in the event of equality of votes the Chair shall have the second casting vote. Before exercising this the Chair shall consider whether it is appropriate to defer the matter to the next meeting of the NPAS National Strategic Board.*

PCC Steve White (SW) stated the whole point of having a board of this size means the governance concerning how decisions are made has to be followed and the decision must stand otherwise it will be very difficult to justify in future occasions whether to go down a similar route.

Given the sensitive nature of the issue and debate, the Chair reluctantly decided to defer the decision to the next Board meeting and agreed to return the paper with two options as opposed to three.

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Action 37.1 - The paper is to be returned to the next Board with 2 options available for members to vote on. The MCA option should be removed and the paper re-presented.

6. BUDGET SETTING

Ruth Langley (RL) presented the balanced revenue budget for the financial year 2021/22 which has been calculated at £42,553m and includes the use of £1.55m of reserves. RL advised this was a transitional year moving towards the new user requirement, new base configuration and new staffing structure. RM asked instead of delivering a service at a reduced cost whether NPAS maintain the £44.495m cost this year and use the extra £1.9m to expediate fleet replacement.

LT raised why London was being charged at the highest cross charge rate and what would happen if the move to Lippitts Hill happened earlier and from an MPS perspective would rather spend the money on expediting the move back to Lippitts Hill than paying the increase cost for the helicopters. LT advised the MPS are keen to get back into Lippitts Hill before June 2021 and it is likely some of the cost of the £1.4m will go towards the South East.

CC Shaun Sawyer (SS) raised in terms of the leasing costs within the budget which is estimated at £500k per helicopter, if NPAS are confident it is within the tolerance in the variation of the leasing costs and is sufficient for an accurate calculation. SB stated that NPAS no longer lease any helicopters and all the airframes are owned.

Resolved

- 1. Board members approved the revenue budget of £42,553m for 2021/22**
- 2. The Board approved the use of reserves but noted that the future of the uncommitted Fixed Wing is still to be determined. The Board noted the cost of the 2 uncommitted airframes will still need to be met into the next financial year regardless of the decision to dispose or otherwise.**

MBW thanked RL and the finance team for the work in achieving the budget position and thanked Board members for their support in setting the budget.

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7. FUTURE SERVICE PROVISION BUSINESS CASE - BLC

Lianne Deeming (LD) gave a short presentation and summarised what had been discussed at the last Board meeting. LD advised the cost calculations had been based on the 2021 budget figures and reflected adjustments aligned to the 2021/22 budget which included the change in user requirements, the NPAS reorganisation and the proposed London region outsource of 1.5 lines. LD stated each of the options uses an appraisal period of 17yrs with the economic life considered to be 15yrs and uses discount factors which is aligned to Treasury Greenbook methodology. Home Office economists have also reviewed the business case and agreed with the preferred options and the approach which had been taken.

LD summarised the key conclusions for the preferred option:

- Enables flexibility to introduce technology
- Ability to meet the user requirement
- The OBC is not a savings case but Option 2 is the lowest PVC or MPV
- Ability to deliver at pace and the fastest way we can do this

Next steps

- To look at how we would engage with the market and the route to market;
- Looking at the procurement strategy, specification, development in the assisted contracts and start with putting in place the relevant governance and running workshops to agree the resource and the lead to start the process

LT thanked LD for the comprehensive report and was grateful to see a commercial option which is the right thing for London but due to the large amount of information was not able to come to a decision without time to digest the information.

JR stated NPAS are asking for the recommendations to be progressed by the Board due to the long outstanding case for fleet replacement and have limited options to deliver it. JR stated that in approving the progression of Option 2 to an FBC did not prevent the Board from providing further challenge in the future.

SS advised he had not had chance to consult and discuss with regional Chiefs and would want the regional Director of Finance to understand the costs.

RS stated the West Midlands region were open to exploring all the of the options but not at an increased cost or sacrifice to service delivery.

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Board members agreed that more time was required in order to consider the information in more detail and to enable the NPCC / BLC and NPAS to work closely together on some of the outstanding queries.

JR stated this will add further delay to fleet replacement and Board members are making that decision to delay approving the NPAS recommendation. To provide more detail and an opportunity to engage with the Business Case NPAS are to arrange two separate briefings for BLC / NPAS to brief Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners.

Action 37.2 – MJ to arrange two briefing sessions with Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners

LD raised transition costs and asked if the Home Office could consider what they think they can do to support the new arrangements.

Action 37.3 – AB is to discuss with Bethan Page-Jones as to whether the Home Office can provide any further position regarding the cost of change

It was agreed to hold an extraordinary Board meeting on the 25th February to allow time for further consultation with Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners.

MBW thanked LD and her team for the work involved with the outline business case.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

CC Rod Hansen (RH) stated it had been agreed at the Board meeting on 2nd December to progress several NPCC Aviation Programme governance recommendations. A governance working group has now been set up. Further discussion took place that the work is led and supported by the APCC. The first meeting is due to take place on 27th February chaired by PCC Llywelyn and the three key elements will be:

- To create a single national board for all forms of police aviation;
- To identify an independent chair for the new structures when agreed;
- To review the S22 agreement and transfer on to the new S22 template

The Board agreed that the APCC Working Group report outlining the recommendations be brought to the Board in due course subject to the Chairs approval. OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE OPERATIONAL

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RH advised he had been contacted by the senior leaders from the MCA on 26th January regarding a recent submission by the MCA to the Treasury regarding their future funding (SAR2G). RH stated the Treasury had posed the question as to why there is a different set of arrangements for police aviation and why are we not striving for a sovereign air service involving the police and the MCA. RH advised the MCA were posing a question around what is an appetite for a conversation about it and were thinking of a refined option just involving the MCA, an MCA option coupled with a police aviation lot allowing NPAS to come alongside at an agreed time in the future or a combined solution to be taken forward concurrently.

AB confirmed that she had spoken with the Treasury and at the present time these were simply questions and was not something that required spending a lot of energy and time on at this stage.

JR raised this was the first of hearing it today and reminded Board members that the MCA have no option but to outsource and is the only method as they do not have an ability to provide provision internally. JR stated that LD has been clear at Chief Constables Council and at Board meetings that it is not the recommendation of Bluelight Commercial to go to a national outsourced service

[REDACTED]

Date and time of next meeting: 25th February 2021