

**Report of the Chief Constable to the Chair and Members  
of the Strategic Air Support Panel  
12<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

**Executive & Presenting Officer: Mr David Pickard, Assistant Chief Constable (Territorial Operations)**

**Status: For information**

**National Air Support Service Update**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To update Members on the latest developments with the proposals for a National Police Air Service (NPAS).

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

**3. Reasons**

- 3.1 Since the last report to Members there have been three meetings of note in connection with the proposed National Air Service and also a Chief Constables Council meeting. These meetings consisted of a finance meeting in Cleveland, a North East regional finance meeting and a North East regional Air Operations meeting chaired by ACC White.
- 3.2 The finance meeting in Cleveland was held as a result of ACC Pickard expressing concerns over the cost implications for Cleveland Police of the proposed air service. This meeting was attended by the Head of Finance and others from Cleveland Police, together with representatives from NPAS and the NPIA.

- 3.3 During this meeting the finance figures presented were largely the same as had previously been discussed. The figures estimated that by 2012 our revenue costs would be around £1.8million if we were to continue as a stand alone unit. If we joined the NPAS and reduced our operating hours, the costs would be around £1.6million. However, we would only start paying this lower figure from a future date up to several years after we joined the NPAS, as this would be after other savings have been made around the country.
- 3.4 The capital figures presented were the same as previously reported and showed we would need to pay an additional £399,000 per year, which we would continue to pay every year so that helicopters can be replaced. We would however get a payment back into Force, as compensation for us handing over the asset of our helicopter. These payments would continue until the helicopter is 10 years old.
- 3.5 The Head of Finance expressed concerns that the figures were based on data from 2 years ago and so would not be able to present them to the Force for consideration. The NPIA representative agreed to produce up to date figures, which are due to be presented to forces in May.
- 3.6 The second meeting was a regional finance meeting attended by finance officers from the 6 North East forces and was chaired by the NPIA. The Cleveland Police Authority Treasurer also attended this meeting.
- 3.7 The NPIA presented the same figures again, and explained that if South Yorkshire retains their helicopter, which had been identified as being cut, then this would add some further costs to all forces in the region. There was criticism from the attendees in connection with how the NPIA intended raising capital for the replacement of assets. The NPIA again confirmed that they would produce more relevant and up to date figures in May.
- 3.8 The third meeting was a regional meeting of all the forces in the North East. The main discussion at the meeting centred on NPAS and in particular the financial and operational difficulties. Of note all forces were expressing concerns, which is a change in position for the region. It was agreed that the chair (ACC White) would send a letter to the NPAS lead, expressing the concerns of the region.
- 3.9 At the current time it is understood that only two regions will be considering joining the National Police Air Service at the start, Central and the North West. Other regions have stated they cannot join at this time for a number of reasons, such as the forthcoming Olympic Games.

## **4. Implications**

### **4.1 Financial**

If the current NPAS proposals go ahead as planned, there are significant financial implications for the Force.

### **4.2 Diversity and Equal Opportunities**

There are no diversity or equal opportunities implications arising from this report.

### **4.3 Human Rights Act**

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

### **4.4 Sustainability**

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

### **4.5 Risk**

There are substantial risk implications arising from this report in connection with the financial risk, the reputation risk and also the operational cover issue.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 The plans for a National Police Air Service are still being progressed and it is felt we should be fully supportive and engaged as it has the potential to offer savings for the Force. However, the current financial proposals do not offer value for money for Cleveland Police as we would see a potential increase in our costs. The costing model needs to be revisited to ensure clarity and fairness prior to any decision over joining the NPAS.

Sean Price  
Chief Constable