



**Report of the Chief Constable to the Chair and Members
of the Operational Policing Panel
14th February 2012**

**Executive & Presenting Officer: Mr Sean White, Assistant Chief Constable
(Crime & Operations)**

Status: For information

Air Operations Unit Performance Update

1. Purpose

1.1 This report is to provide Members with an update on the performance and finance of the Air Operations Unit.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

3. Reasons

3.1 During the period 1st October to 31st December 2011, the aircraft has flown for 172 hours, attended 491 incidents and made 94 arrests. In the same period in 2010 the aircraft flew 169 hours, attended 447 incidents and made 74 arrests. The figures continue to show that we are getting improved results from the new aircraft compared to the old aircraft. These figures show for the same flying hours we achieved 27% more arrests.

3.2 A selection of highlighted incidents, from this period are shown overleaf:

Hartlepool District

- On 15th October, the aircraft was deployed to search for a vehicle and driver which had been involved in deliberately ramming another car. The crew located the vehicle travelling towards Hartlepool and directed officers causing the suspect to stop near Catcote Road, where the driver was arrested.
- On 14th December, the aircraft was on task in Hartlepool when a report of a shed burglary came in at The Grove. The aircraft re-positioned and commenced a search. A suspect was identified riding a pedal cycle away from the scene, officers were directed and he was arrested.

- During December, numerous target addresses were subject of thermal image scans to assist officers in a proactive drugs operation. Further imagery target analysis packs were produced for an operation on 19th December. Five persons were arrested for offences including supplying Class A and B drugs.

Middlesbrough District

- On 4th October, the aircraft was deployed to a theft in progress on the Tuxedo Princess. The crew located a van with three males making off. Officers were directed, the van was stopped and the suspects were arrested.
- On 6th November, the aircraft was deployed to West Lane, where two males had broken into a car and had been chased by the owner. The crew picked up two suspects on bikes and observed them cross over to Whinny Banks. The crew then filmed them breaking into a second car. They directed officers who arrested both males.

Redcar and Cleveland District

- On 4th October, the aircraft deployed to a report of two burglars making off from a burglary in New Skelton. The crew located the vehicle which rammed a police vehicle in an attempt to escape. Eventually, the two suspects abandoned the vehicle and hid. Officers were directed to them and they were arrested.
- On 27th October, the aircraft deployed to search for a suicidal male on Eston Nab. The crew landed and located the male and then after a foot pursuit, PC Fanning assisted another officer to talk the male down from a pylon, which he had climbed onto and tied a rope around his neck.
- On 26th November, the aircraft deployed to a vehicle pursuit in Saltburn. The car was abandoned and the male ran into Rift Woods. The crew located the male hiding up a tree. Officers were directed; however the male jumped down and ran into a nearby river. Officers were again directed and the suspect was pulled from the river and arrested.

Stockton District

- On 25th October the aircraft deployed to a pursuit involving a stolen 4 x 4. The aircraft sighted them in the A19/Norton area and directed officers onto the vehicle. The four suspects abandoned the car and ran off across gardens. Officers were directed and all four were arrested.
- On 19th November, the aircraft deployed to Lime Trees Close in Port Clarence regarding a violent disorder. Once overhead, the crew filmed and witnessed two females assaulting another person with a golf club. Officers were directed to them and they were arrested for sec18 assault.
- On 28th December, the aircraft deployed to assist officers to search for a suspect believed armed with a knife near Raleigh Road. The crew located the male hiding in bushes. Officers were directed and he was safely arrested.

- 3.3 The above incidents have been chosen to highlight the work of the helicopter. These types of incidents are happening every day around the Force and the helicopter is having a significant positive impact on many areas of Policing.
- 3.4 The revenue budget for 2011/12 is being monitored very closely and is forecast to come in on budget.
- 3.5 At the last two meetings we reported that there may be a potential issue with the hanger facilities at the airport. The position has changed significantly in that the airport is now up for sale and so the whole future of the airport is in doubt.
- 3.6 We understand from the airport that actual closure of the airport has not been considered, but if it occurred, it would take up to 18 months to close down. The Force has considered what contingencies exist if the airport closed and has considered some options. However any option would incur significant additional cost, at least in the short term.
- 3.7 Appendix A details the performance statistics and flying hours. The use of the aircraft has resulted in the equivalent of 140,376 officer hours being saved across the Force during October to December. This would equate to a cost saving of approximately £1,684,512 compared to officers on the ground being deployed to the same incidents.
- 3.8 During the period we have received 2 letters of appreciation and no complaints.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.2 Diversity and Equal Opportunities

There are no issues arising from this report to bring to the Members attention.

4.3 Human Rights Act

There are no Human Rights Act implications associated with this report.

4.4 Sustainability

There are no sustainability implications associated with this report.

4.5 Risk

There are no risks arising from this report.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The helicopter continues to provide an excellent service for all the Force. It manages to provide very positive results on many crimes, but has also become essential on many vulnerable missing persons and manages to save many thousands of hours for this high risk area of policing.

Jacqui Cheer
Temporary Chief Constable

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