

STRATEGIC AIR SUPPORT

An meeting of the Strategic Air Support Panel was held on Thursday 12 August 2010 commencing at 2.00pm, in the Members Conference Room at Police Headquarters.

PRESENT: Mr Peter Race MBE (Chair), Mr Ted Cox JP (Vice Chair), Mr Chris Coombs, Councilor Ron Lowes

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS Mr Geoff Fell

OFFICIALS: Mr John Bage (CE)
Mr Dave Pickard, Mr Simon Wilkinson and Miss Kate Rowntree (CC)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councilor Dave McLuckie (ex officio)

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS INFORMAL MEETING HELD ON 27 MAY 2010

The minutes were held as a true and accurate record

AIR OPERATIONS UNIT PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Assistant Chief Constable Crime Operations informed Members that the purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the performance of the Air Operations Unit.

Members were informed that during the period May to June 2010, the aircraft had flown for 188 hours, attended 541 incidents resulting in 98 arrests. The detailed performance figures were shown at Appendix A to the report.

The Assistant Chief Constable Crime Operations informed Members that in the first year of operation, the Cleveland Air Support Unit flew to approximately 60% more incidents in Cleveland than when they were part of the North East Air Support Unit (NEASU).

Members were informed of a number of incidents that the Unit had dealt with and were further informed that the helicopter is having a large impact on crime arrests, but separately is continuing to have a big impact on missing person's searches. Such incidents can have significant resource issues for the Force, which are greatly reduced by utilising the helicopter.

Members were informed that for the reporting period, there had been 9 letters of appreciation and one minor complaint regarding noise whilst flying over Elton Village.

The Assistant Chief Constable Crime Operations informed Members that as it was now summer, they had seen a large increase in the number of requests for the helicopter to attend public events. The

helicopter had attended a number of these, and they have been extremely well received with very positive feedback and are a good way of engaging with different sectors of the community.

Members commented that they had seen the helicopter at the recent Cleveland Show and that it had generated a great deal of positive interest and feedback from the public.

ORDERED that:

1. the report be noted.

NATIONAL AIR SUPPORT SERVICE UPDATE

The Assistant Chief Constable Crime Operations informed Members that following a previous update, Cleveland Police had written to the Home Office detailing the Force's approach to participating in any National Air Service. However the Force had not been involved in any further meetings or work in connection with this area.

Members were informed that the Force had requested an update from T/Superintendent Richard Watson who had been working on the project under the authority of Chief Constable Alex Marshall who is the national lead. Members were given an update.

The Assistant Chief Constable informed Members that there were two main aspects to Governance arrangements, the Air Operations Working Group and the National Police Air Service Management Board. However Cleveland are excluded from having any representation on these groups. Chief Constable Marshall will be delivering the project proposal to his Chief Officer colleagues at the Chief Constable's Council meeting in October 2010.

Members expressed concern that Cleveland had no representation and were excluded directly from either of the Governance arrangements put in place.

Members felt that such a lack of representation could have a critical effect on future air operations across the Cleveland area.

ORDERED that:

1. the Assistant Chief Constable Crime Operations write to Chief Constable Marshall to seek an explanation as to Cleveland's direct exclusion from the National Air Operations Governance process, be agreed.
2. the report be noted.

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PROCUREMENT UPDATE IN RELATION TO THE PURCHASE OF THE NEW HELICOPTER

The Assistant Chief Constable Crime Operations informed Members that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the purchase of the new helicopter.

Members were reminded that in September 2008, Cleveland Police Authority placed an order for a new helicopter to replace the present aircraft. The new helicopter is a Eurocopter EC135 P2i.

Cleveland's new helicopter has now arrived in the UK and is at the Eurocopter factory at Oxford. The UEO attended Oxford at the beginning of July and went through a short acceptance procedure. This consisted of checking the aircraft has been built to our specification. It is a fully working helicopter but will now go through several months of being kitted out with police role equipment. The new helicopter is expected to be received in Force in either December 2010 or January 2011.

ORDERED that:

1. the report be noted.