

STRATEGIC AIR SUPPORT

A meeting of the Strategic Air Support Panel was held on Thursday 16 February 2011 commencing at 11.00am in the Members Conference Room at Police Headquarters.

PRESENT: Mr Peter Race MBE (Chair), Mr Ted Cox JP (Vice Chair), Councilor Ron Lowes and Mr Peter Hadfield.

OFFICIALS: Mr John Bage (CE)
Mr Sean White, Mr Simon Wilkinson, Mr Andy Summerbell and Miss Kate Rowntree (CC)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councilor Dave McLuckie (ex officio), Councillor Mary Lanigan, Mr Chris Coombs and Mr Dave Pickard.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2010

The minutes were held as a true and accurate record.

OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS

ORDERED that;

1. the Outstanding Recommendations were noted.

NATIONAL AIR SUPPORT SERVICE UPDATE

Members were informed on the latest developments with the proposals for a National Air Support Service. A briefing document was presented to Chief Constables Council on 15th October 2010 in respect of a National Police Air Service (NPAS) and this was supported by most Chief Constables. On the 20th October Chief Constable Marshall presented some elements of NPAS to Unit Executive Officers (UEO's) and other representatives from every unit in the Country.

The Unit Executive Officer informed Members NPIA reported that there had been a lot of concern from many Forces regarding the financial data within the paper that had been presented to Chief Constables Council. Much of the meeting was spent trying to explain how the financial assumptions had been made.

In January ACC Pickard met with Chief Constable Marshall and was provided with a further update regarding the national picture and it was suggested there was now less opposition to the plans than there had been previously. It was also agreed that NPIA would visit Cleveland Police and go through the financial data with the Force to try and explain the position.

The aims of the scheme appear laudable and with the present financial pressures there could be the opportunity to make significant savings for the Force. However, with the current understood financial proposal, this would actually significantly increase the cost to Cleveland.

ORDERED that;

1. the report be noted.

PROCUREMENT UPDATE IN RELATION TO 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 then present aircraft. The new helicopter is a Eurocopter EC135 P2i which was part of a bulk purchase of 6 aircraft. The specification of each of these aircraft was designed by bringing experts together from police aviation and procurement. The subsequent aircraft were all then identical which will save costs over their lifetime when it comes to any alterations that are required.

Following the acceptance process in December 2010, the aircraft was finally accepted on the 4th January 2011 and arrived in Cleveland the same day. The new aircraft is now fully operational in the Force area.

Members were informed that the purchase of a new helicopter is a major success for a relatively small force. The helicopter we now own and operate is the most advanced in the world and will have a major benefit to Policing in Cleveland.

ORDERED that;

1. the report be noted.

AIR OPERATIONS UNIT PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Members that the report was to provide Members with an update on the performance and finances of the Air Operations Unit. The performance data was attached at Appendix A to the report.

The new helicopter had been a success story for the Force and we now operate the most advanced Police helicopter in the world, after previously operating an aircraft type with the highest flying hours in the world.

ORDERED that;

1. the report be noted.