

HMICFRS study on air support – recommendations and Current NPAS Position

Recommendations (6 November)		Actions To Date
1	By March 2018, the NPCC lead for air support should publish an interim operational strategy for all currently-available forms of air support including drones, and publish a plan to improve communication on police air support between frontline officers, police managers, NPAS, chief officers and the College of Policing.	<p>The initial interim guidance document has been produced and is currently circulated to the working group and force representatives for feedback. It is planned for this to be completed and finalised by 9th April, when it will be circulated and communicated to forces.</p> <p>Feedback has been sought and provided by HMICFRS to ensure that we are delivering in line with their expectations. They have provided feedback which is in the process of being incorporated into a revised document.</p>
2	By July 2018, Chief Constables' Council should agree a high-level outline of the operational outcomes that air support (in all its forms) should enable. This should inform the development, by March 2019, of a new air support strategy by the NPCC lead for air support in conjunction with local policing bodies and NPAS.	<p>Following the development of the interim guidance above, the focus of the working group is to now develop the detailed user requirement which will encompass the operational outcomes.</p> <p>Once confirmed, the operational requirement will inform the demand for air support. With future needs likely to be significantly different to that currently, this will require a review and a re-balance of demand between the various air support options.</p>
3	There should continue to be separation between strategic leadership on police air support and the day-to-day management of NPAS. Both require contributions from chief constables and local policing bodies, according to their statutory responsibilities. But at least in the short term, the roles of the chief officer leading NPCC policy development and the chief constable responsible for the operation of NPAS should continue to be filled by different individuals.	<p>Complete.</p> <p>NPCC Strategic leadership for aviation will continue to be provided by CC Alec Wood as chair of the Operations Coordination Committee. In the current absence of the chair of the aviation portfolio, he will be supported by ACC Nav Malik from Cambridgeshire leading a project group to deliver against the HMICFRS recommendations. Day to day management of NPAS operations will continue to be provided through the lead force model, led by CC Dee Collins and West Yorkshire Police. This division of responsibilities ensures there is clear separation between strategic leadership and operational delivery.</p>

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4	To enhance confidence in the ability of the National Strategic Board to set strategic direction and to oversee performance management, as soon as practicable, a local policing body member of the board other than the lead local policing body should be appointed as chair of the board.	<p>This matter will be subject to further discussion by National Board members who may want to consider commissioning of work around future models.</p> <p>NPAS has sought the views of every Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable in the country as part of a fundamental review of the current S 22 document.</p>
5	As soon as practicable, the collaboration agreement should be amended to permit a British Transport Police chief officer and a representative of the British Transport Police Authority to join the National Strategic Board as voting members. The National Strategic Board should also invite a British Transport Police officer to participate in the Independent Assurance Group.	This matter will be subject of debate by National Board members.
6	Following analysis of force use of air support tactics and after receipt of subject matter expert advice through relevant NPCC portfolio leads, the College of Policing should update all references to air support in existing Authorised Professional Practice. The College should also update other APP modules identified after consultation with the NPCC lead for air support and NPAS, such as those concerning investigation and missing persons.	<p>The College of Policing are represented on the working group by Richard Bennett and consultation has started regarding the development of Authorised Professional Practice (policy guidance for delivery) in relation to air support. The early advice is that a series of different products should be developed to inform both at a strategic and operational level with these referenced in other areas of APP rather than developing a stand-alone Air Operations APP.</p> <p>These products can then be distributed for training delivery and briefing of staff and also linked via hyperlink to online resources such as POLKA. This review will produce these APP reference materials and ensure that they are accurate, up to date and fit for purpose.</p>
7	By July 2018, the NPCC lead for air support should oversee data collection and analysis in a limited number of forces (taking account of use of air support in proportion to population figures and any other readily-available data), with a view to uncovering the reasons for differences in the use of air support tactics. Chief constables should use the results from this exercise to review	<p>The police aviation questionnaire identified 20 forces who responded that they had internal audit processes in place to quality assure NPAS deployments. Further details have been received from these forces about their processes and results, however, there is a need for additional data collection and analysis to inform and develop this work further.</p> <p>From the initial work already undertaken to develop the interim guide, it is clear</p>

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	their use of air support.	that the lack of coherent national guidance, inconsistent decision making and, financial considerations are all factors that are influencing forces when making deployment decisions.
8	The NPCC lead for air support should work with other relevant NPCC portfolio leads and NPAS to produce, by December 2018, a comprehensive assessment of latent and patent demand for air support. This assessment should take account of the development of force management statements and be repeated from time to time to inform decisions on the composition and deployment of the police aircraft fleet.	<p>This recommendation is cross referred to recommendation 2 above.</p> <p>From the initial work undertaken, it appears likely at this stage that the overall demand for air support from the police will change as a consequence of a defined operational requirement. This may result in an overall reduction in demand or, a demand shift – with demand currently delivered by rotary potentially moving to fixed wing and drones.</p> <p>This remains work in progress.</p>
9	With immediate effect, the NPAS Chief Operating Officer should review the impact of shift changes and consider staggering shift changeover times at its bases, involving and informing forces throughout.	<p>The NPAS Chief Pilot has reviewed the operational impact of a shared shift pattern across NPAS rotary fleet to find that it has little or no negative impact. This is because crews are able to use discretion and continue to fly for between one and five additional hours, dependent on the circumstances.</p> <p>The primary ‘gap’ in current service delivery is the number of aircraft available. The military operate on 3 aircraft to 1 requirement, Search and Rescue 2.2 to 1- NPAS current has 1- 1.2/4.</p> <p>He has proposed overlaps with fixed wing shift patterns when this fleet becomes operational in 2018 to add greater resilience and mitigate risk.</p>
10	By July 2018, the NPCC lead for air support should carry out and publish a review of the NPAS deployment process. The review should consider how well forces comply with guidance on the use of air support as well as the timeliness of NPAS decision-making. The National Strategic Board should then decide whether any further action is necessary.	This action remains in progress and will be delivered as part of the next tranche of work by the working group

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11	By March 2018, NPAS should communicate to forces its plan for the use of fixed-wing aircraft. After a suitable period, there should be a review of their effectiveness and efficiency.	<p>NPAS are working on plans for the operational roll-out of this fleet in 2018. These plans will be shared with the NPAS National Board who will in turn consult within their regions before approval is given to move forward.</p> <p>NPAS plan to work with the NPCC Aviation lead and other portfolio holders to communicate the roll out, its metrics of success and seek active support to determine how to develop fixed wing assets as a specialist capability.</p>
12	The NPCC Specialist Capabilities Programme should co-ordinate activity so that, by March 2019, chief constables for all 44 forces contributing to NPAS are able to publish in a consistent format a detailed description of the air support each force requires.	This recommendation is likely to be delivered as a consequence of defining the operational requirement. Once completed, it will then allow analysis of historical data to determine the actual demand for each type of capability on a force by force basis.
13	As soon as practicable, the National Strategic Board should reinvigorate the development of NPAS performance reporting, including the balanced scorecard, to better demonstrate the contribution made by NPAS to force effectiveness and efficiency. NPAS should publish its performance information at national and force levels and include regional levels only when this adds clear value.	<p>Working with stakeholders, NPAS will complete development of performance metrics and outcomes for rotary and fixed wing fleets that with Board approval will determine both operational and fiscal success. This activity is reliant on the NPCC leads activity to determine what service requirement is required.</p> <p>NPAS plan to review the governance structure to maximise communication from regional leads to Chief Officers. This will include development and implementation of a Service Confidence strategy and consideration of the regional structure required to assess local NPAS performance.</p>
14	Before submitting its proposed costed fleet replacement plan to the Home Office, the National Strategic Board should ensure that all forces and local policing bodies are adequately consulted on the plan's operational and financial implications.	NPAS is developing a fully-costed fleet replacement strategy for Board approval (and within that, the approval of all forces through the regional consultation process) and submission to the Home Office within the 18/19 reporting period.
15	By March 2018, the National Strategic Board should support the reaching of agreement between NPAS, the police counter-terrorism network and the Metropolitan Police Service on how security, counter-terrorism and armed policing deployments will be differentiated, to facilitate appropriate sharing of the full costs	NPAS are working toward a definitive, funded service requirement of training and operational delivery from Counter Terrorist Command for the 18/19 fiscal period. The request must be underpinned by a reasonable expectation of what can be delivered within current funding and fleet capabilities.

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	of NPAS services.	
16	From 2018/19 onwards, for financial purposes the National Strategic Board should treat the police counter-terrorism network as though it were a police force, and should recover all relevant revenue and capital costs for support provided to that network. The cost of counter-terrorism tasks undertaken in support of force-commanded operations, however, should normally be met by forces.	A formal request for a costed revenue requirement has been made to AC Special Operations. This was considered by the CT Chief Officer Group on 27/11/17. At this time there is no change in the Board's position regarding capital finance and a costed service requirement is awaited.
17	As soon as practicable, the NPCC lead for air support should commission an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of police use of miniature and small drones, drawing on advice from the College of Policing and working with any other partners considered appropriate. This evaluation should produce an evidence base to inform subsequent guidance and decision-making.	Funding has been agreed with a 50% contribution by the working group and 50% provided by NPAS, to take this element of work forward. This piece of work is led by ACC Steve Barry as the drones lead, working with NPAS colleagues.
18	By December 2018, the NPCC lead for air support should design a methodology that can be used at force, regional and national levels to assess the benefits and risks of collaboration on air support with other emergency services and public bodies such as Border Force and Immigration Enforcement, including collaboration on the use of drones.	The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) sit on the working group as external subject matter experts, bringing experience of having delivered a major aviation change programme involving a £2 billion replacement of rotary assets. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is already in place with the MCA. The previous work on the Blue Light Air Support Programme has been paused following the need to deliver upon the priority recommendations. As part of the development of the longer term strategy, this will incorporate considerations for collaborative opportunities.
19	Chief officers and local policing bodies should urgently consider options for revising or replacing the existing NPAS collaboration agreement, if necessary commissioning scoping work through the NPCC Specialist Capabilities Programme before agreeing how to proceed. Regardless of the form in which the	NPAS has sought the views of every Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable in the country as part of a fundamental review of the current Section 22 document. The submissions made have been incorporated into a draft document for further

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	collaboration is to exist in future, the intention should be to take account of the building-block pieces of work we have recommended and to have improved arrangements in place within no more than three years.	consideration.
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