

Meeting	SPA Board Meeting
Date and Time	26 February 2014
Location	Roths Hall, Glenrothes
Title of Paper	Provision of Air Support
Item Number	20
Presented By	Allan Macleod
For Approval / For Information	FOR APPROVAL
Appendix Attached:	NO

PURPOSE

To invite members of the Scottish Police Authority to endorse the extension of the current contract with Bond Air Services for a period of up to twenty four months. This will allow a full options appraisal to be carried out and an appropriate procurement process to be undertaken.

Note that a further report will be submitted to the Scottish Government seeking authorisation for the extension to comply with the Scheme of Administration between the Scottish Police Authority and the Police Service of Scotland.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The contract with Bond Air Services for the provision of air support in the legacy Strathclyde Area will expire in September 2014. This contract is for the provision of a leased helicopter and all associated services.
- 1.2 Since the formation of the Police Service of Scotland (Police Scotland) and Scottish Police Authority on 1 April 2013, Bond Air Services have provided air support to the additional areas of Scotland.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON REPORT TOPIC

- 2.1 The Scottish Government is dedicated to ensuring that all public services work with maximum efficiency to deliver benefits to the people of Scotland. The Scottish Government expects every public body to deliver and report on efficiency savings during the course of the current spending review of 2014/2015.
- 2.2 It is paramount that Police Scotland examines the potential options available to achieve an acceptable level of air support service delivery across Scotland, while at the same time achieving all efficiency savings

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available.

- 2.3 The procurement process for the purchase of aircraft is time consuming. It may be possible to obtain used aircraft within a lead time of 6 to 9 months, however, there are risks associated with purchasing used aircraft. The services of a specialist engineer would be required to determine the condition of parts on any aircraft and the Scottish Police Authority must be able to satisfy themselves that available aircraft are suitable for the Service's needs.

The lead time for purchase of a new helicopter is approximately 24 months. While it might be possible to source a suitable used aircraft there must be sufficient timescales available to accept an offer for supply of a new aircraft.

- 2.4 Initial scoping exercises have identified a number of options to provide future air support services to Police Scotland. These include consideration of a Fixed Wing Aircraft in addition to the existing helicopter.

Police Scotland has experience of leasing helicopters for policing purposes. Helicopter capability is especially suited to quick deployment in urban areas. As there is more limited experience of using Fixed Wing Aircraft for policing purposes, the National Police Air Service (NPAS) are undertaking a feasibility study. Fixed Wing Aircraft have lower flying charges, and a longer flight range which would appear to be suited for policing purposes in more remote areas. However, there are more restrictions in the take-off and landing processes.

- 2.5 As part of the scoping exercise the type of deployments are being monitored to identify any potential amendments to the requirements in respect of the number of flying hours required and the variable costs associated with operating air support.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The purchase of a helicopter would be a capital outlay of £6.3 million (excluding VAT) for a new aircraft and approximately £4.3 million (excluding VAT) for a used aircraft depending on the age of the aircraft. Helicopters have an estimated lifespan of 15 – 25 years depending on the level of ongoing investment in upgrades and substantial maintenance over the period of ownership. This requires careful management and planning. A Fixed Wing Aircraft would cost approximately £2 million (excluding VAT) and would have an estimated lifespan of approximately 30 years.
- 3.2 The National Police Air Service (NPAS) is a Police led partnership that provides air support to ACPO Forces in England and Wales. NPAS has suggested that Police Scotland should consider joining the partnership which might offer significant savings against indicative costs of running a

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contracted Air Support Unit in Scotland.

The costs of participating in the NPAS partnership have not yet been finalised due to differences in the budget arrangements between Scotland and England and Wales. While the assets would be based in Scotland, there would be a different process for the deployment of air support.

4 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is anticipated that TUPE will apply to staff employed by Bond Air Services who are dedicated to the delivery of the current contracted service.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is no provision to extend the current contract with Bond Air Services, therefore specific authorisation would need to be granted by the Scottish Government to extend the current contract.

There is no current experience of legal personnel in handling a contract for the purchase of new or used aircraft.

NPAS Legal Representatives have confirmed that they do not foresee any prohibitive issues with the Scottish Police Authority joining the NPAS partnership. The Scottish Police Authority has not reviewed the legal implications of this partnership yet.

6 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

7 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no social implications associated with this paper.

8 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Scottish Police Authority are invited to:

- (i) Authorise the submission of a further report to the Scottish Government to seek authorisation for the extension to the current contract for the Provision of Air Support Services and Associated Services with Bond Air Services renewed in six monthly periods for up to a period of up to twenty four months at an estimated cost of £2.4 million per annum.
- (ii) Subject to obtaining approval from the Scottish Government authorise the negotiation of an extension to the current contract for the Provision of Air Support Services and Associated Services with Bond Air Services to allow full consideration to be given to the options available for the future of air support on Scotland.