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**SCOTTISH POLICE
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Mr John Finnie MSP
Convener
Justice Sub-Committee on Policing
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

5 February 2021

CO/008/2021

Dear Mr Finnie

POLICE SCOTLAND'S USE OF REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (RPAS)

I refer to your correspondence addressed to the former Interim Chair, David Crichton, of 26 January 2021 regarding Police Scotland's use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS). I have now taken post as Chair of the Authority and provide below a response to the further information you have requested.

Procurement

Regarding the Scottish Police Authority's (SPA) oversight of the procurement of RPAS, I can confirm that the Authority's approval was not required. Approved financial delegations in place allow Police Scotland to proceed with procurement for purchases not exceeding £500,000. As the purchases of RPAS and associated ancillaries was below this limit, the purchases did not require to come through the Authority's formal governance processes. This is the case with the purchase of the DJI Phantom 4 and DJI M210 RPAS.

RPAS Costs

In respect of the costs of the drones you refer to, I can confirm that the £7000 cost of each RPAS refers to the base unit only, and excludes the associated ancillaries required for operation and the imaging equipment which the RPAS carries.

RPAS Activities

The Authority's Policing Performance Committee has requested a resubmission of Police Scotland's RPAS Evaluation Report to its meeting on 9 March 2021. The

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Authority has been clear that this report should detail all RPAS activity since the systems were introduced for operations on 1 May 2019. The assurances and assessments in terms of Data Protection and Equalities and Human Rights Impact are equally applicable to all RPAS operated by Police Scotland and copies of the latest revisions will be provided directly to the Justice Sub-Committee by Police Scotland. These will also be considered by the Authority in March.

RPAS Safety Issues

Police Scotland report to the Authority that they are satisfied that the recall and repair carried out by DJI on the three DJI M210 allows the continued use by Police Scotland without any need to return the systems seeking a refund. Police Scotland have also reported that they take a risk based approach to considering the operation of RPAS in variable weather conditions in a similar way to that when operating the police helicopter, taking into account the capabilities of the aircraft in the prevailing weather conditions.

Finally, you have requested a copy of the report considered by the Authority at its meeting in December 2017. I enclosed that paper to this correspondence.

I trust this information will be of assistance to the committee's consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Martyn Evans
Chair

Enc. Police Scotland Report: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) considered at Authority meeting 19 December 2017.

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