

SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY – THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2012

Update on base options for the National Police Air Support Service

REPORT BY CHIEF CONSTABLE

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on specific issues raised by Sussex Police Authority following the meeting on Thursday 13 October 2011 where the National Police Air Service (NPAS) was considered and incorporates further considerations raised from a meeting held on 3 February 2012 between NPAS, members and officers of Sussex and Surrey Police Authorities and Sussex Police

1.2 From the meeting on 13 October the following areas were raised:

1. Location of air support bases
2. Retention of Consortium Partnership
3. Operational coverage
4. Financial costs and benefits
5. Governance

and from the 3 February the following additional points made were raised.

6. The proposal by the NPAS project team to bring forward the date of transition from July 2013 to October 2012
7. The reassurances that NPAS will cover costs of change
8. Purpose of NPAS Air Support

1.3 The recent comments made by the Policing Minister regarding mandation are a clear indication of the intent of government to support NPAS

2. Location/Coverage NPAS (points 1 and 3 above)

2.1 Sussex Police Authority expressed reservations regarding the location of the proposed NPAS base at Dunsfold Aerodrome (Surrey). They expressed the principle that the NPAS target of 97% of population covered within 20 minutes be delivered. Of particular concern were the flight times to Hastings from the proposed site at Dunsfold (24minutes) and that within acceptable tolerances this should be maintained or improved when compared to SEASU (19 minutes).

2.2 Further work has been undertaken to identify alternative base options to Dunsfold Aerodrome, both by NPAS and Chief Superintendent Paul Morrison in conjunction with SEASU.

2.3 Geographically the best location for the proposed NPAS base would be to the south of Gatwick and near to Horsham. Such an approach would require confirmation of a suitable site together with the subsequent planning and building process. This is likely to be a lengthy course of action as well as

requiring investment to make it suitable for aviation purposes. The key benefit would be a purpose built facility in the best geographic location.

- 2.4 It was thought that utilisation of existing aviation sites may help to negate the issues highlighted above. Redhill Aerodrome and Gatwick Airport have therefore been considered, both of which have merits of their own.
- 2.5 Operating from a major international airport has been successful in other parts of the country but the costs associated with using this as a base may be prohibitive. In terms of airspace management, NPAS already have sites where helicopters fly from commercial airports.
- 2.6 Having considered best fit, Redhill Aerodrome (RA) which is located to the north of Gatwick Airport is the preferred option. RA already has two commercial helicopter operators flying from the site: there is space within the perimeter fencing for the NPAS helicopter and additional security arrangements, if needed, will be funded by NPAS from monies they had set aside for Dunsfold. The site meets the SPA principle for 97% of Sussex population reached in 20 minutes and has in place a proven infrastructure to support the operational requirements of NPAS. The proximity to Gatwick has been considered and operational flights which need to cross the Airport can be accommodated.
- 2.7 In terms of response time to Hastings these are comparable to the SEASU flight times. (SEASU 19 minutes, NPAS from RA 19 ½ minutes)

3. Partnership with the South East Coast Ambulance Service (point 2 above)

- 3.1 The South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAmb) has been a long standing partner to the former Sussex Police Air Support Unit. This relationship has continued successfully with the SEASU.
- 3.2 SECAmb provides a revenue contribution and the equivalent of 3 FTE observer posts. The total value of this is some £250,000 or approximately one twelfth of the total budget for SEASU.
- 3.3 The crew for the SEASU aircraft based at Shoreham Airport is one pilot, one police observer and one paramedic observer. It has a dual role in providing a service to both police and SECAmb.
- 3.4 Meetings are held with SECAmb management and at the last one in January 2012 it was confirmed that their position will change in April 2012. From 1 April 2012, trauma will be divided into two categories, 'Serious Trauma' and 'Trauma Other'. Serious Trauma will be sent to a small number of key hospitals which include Brighton and Southampton. The use of air ambulances is critical to supporting this model. The supporting role of HEMS from SEASU or NPAS is now to be re-considered.
- 3.5 At the moment existing air ambulances are limited to day light operations only. This position is likely to change in the future, but the SEASU aircraft at Shoreham provides a unique night time capability.

3.6 NPAS has indicated that the continuation of this partnership is something that will be considered. The aircraft to be placed at RA will be the one currently being used at Shoreham Airfield and so the capability for Helicopter Emergency Medical Support (HEMS) will be maintained. SECAMB have agreed to continue funding/staffing commitments to SEASU for 2012/13 but realise this may change as their own service model changes. It is due for formal re-negotiation in September 2012. This re-evaluation of value added is equally applicable to NPAS and SEASU.

4. Financial implications (points 4 and 7 above)

4.1 The cost to individual forces will arise in the form of capital and revenue contributions to NPAS.

4.2 The proposal provides a degree of fairness and recognises that Forces without current air support stand to benefit. There are 16 Forces for which contributions would increase, namely those Forces who currently do not have air support units, of which there are 10, and Forces who receive a larger percentage of the current funding formula. Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire are not in this group.

4.3 In terms of financial benefits to Sussex, from the figures provided by the NPAS project team the following benefits are outlined:

	Capital £K	Revenue £K
Sussex budget: (SEASU 12/13)	335 (see note)	1,155
NPAS:		
12/13	90	
13/14	120	598
14/15	80	797

Note: This represents the capital sum which would need to be set aside per annum in order to replace the airframe.

4.4 Since the 8 December the HO have been considering Forces representations to the capital top slicing proposal. On the 31 January they notified Forces of their decision to enforce capital top slicing as per their original paper with immediate effect for the outstanding period of the CSR. On the data provided the cost of a comparable air support is around £350K cheaper (revenue).

4.5 In terms of covering the costs of change. The issues created by TUPE and moving staff have been a factor which SEASU has had to manage. The process has taken since October 2010 until now to be finalised to enable the establishment to be rationalised and staff to be employed on the right terms and conditions. NPAS needs to provide assurance that the cost of change, which may well involve TUPE and redundancy, will be met or covered as a cost of change provision.

4.6 The airframe which would move to RA is the Shoreham based aircraft.

5. Governance (point 5 above)

- 5.1 In order to operate, NPAS needs to be able to employ staff and own assets, and therefore requires a legal identity. With the HO intentions of setting aside the NPIA, an alternative legal body needs to be identified. NPAS wrote to all Forces inviting offers to be the 'host force' for NPAS. West Yorkshire Police has stepped forward and agreed to fulfill this role.
- 5.2 However, the governance of NPAS would not fall to West Yorkshire. It would sit within a National Strategic Board which operates within a framework of Regional and Unit Level boards. Our expectation is that Sussex would be represented at these lower boards.
- 5.3 The NPAS project team recognises that Service Level Agreements (SLA) and perhaps a new legal instrument in support of the Section 23 provisions will need to be considered. It is recognised that a proper legal framework is required to be in place before transition and that within these arrangements Forces and Police Authorities/Commissioners need to be clear how challenges are made and managed where the SLAs are not met at local level.
- 5.4 NPAS Asset management would mean that retained airframes would move across to the host force. The arrangements and governance of how this would be managed need further detail. On 3 February Police Authority members raised their concerns around one force having the ability of managing the assets of another force.
- 5.5 In summary this is an area which needs further clarity and reassurance that service at local level is maintained.

6. Moving NPAS forward to October 2012 (point 6 above)

- 6.1 At a recent NPAS project Board meeting the proposal was that in order to secure funding to facilitate NPAS moving forward, the SE region would need to be moved forward in sequencing. The proposal was that this would move from July 2013 to October 2012.
- 6.2 In terms of the original NPAS modeling, the move of other airframes to operating sites in Hampshire (Bournemouth), Thames Valley (Benson) would be accomplished. However the move of the airframe at Chelmsford, Essex to Southend would not take place before October. The impact of this delay would be offset with the move from Dunsfold to RA and the coverage to Sussex not relying on Southend.
- 6.3 The impact on SEASU staff is acknowledged and if this proposal is agreed then informing affected staff needs to be a priority.
- 6.4 In terms of operational impact, if RA is agreed as a viable airbase by the Police Authority, then the timing of the change would have little impact. However the questions are still outstanding with regard to governance, funding and the cost of change and answers will need to be forthcoming within a short space of time.

7. The purpose of Air Support under NPAS (point 8 above)

7.1 The following list, which is presented in no particular order of priority, has been identified as 'high priority' tasking for SEASU.

- Vulnerable person searches
- Suspect searches
- Public order / public safety policing
- Vehicle pursuit in progress
- Pre planned armed incidents
- Spontaneous armed Incidents / stops
- HEMS (Sussex Airframe)*
- Crimes in action
- Command and Control

7.2 The NPAS model has the following broad themes for air support

- Still imagery
- Moving Imagery (inc thermal image drug cultivation searches)
- Command and Control
- Transportation

The tasks which SEASU carry out are mirrored within these broad themes for NPAS. The access to airframes for transportation outside of HEMS has operational benefits for policing in terms of response. NPAS, with a national position, can seek to work in broader partnerships with other bodies such as Air Rescue and with access to different airframes including fixed wing, offers benefits that Forces would find expensive to hold themselves or in small consortiums.

7.3 The SLAs and reporting would be essential to ensure that current service is being delivered under NPAS.

Recommended - That

- (1) The development of the National Police Air Service Model should continue to be supported
- (2) The option of using Redhill Airfield is agreed by the Authority as an effective location for the Region and Sussex.
- (3) To note the change in sequencing being proposed

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Who (initials)	Date
Record of amendments	

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Diagram showing coverage from Redhill Airfield

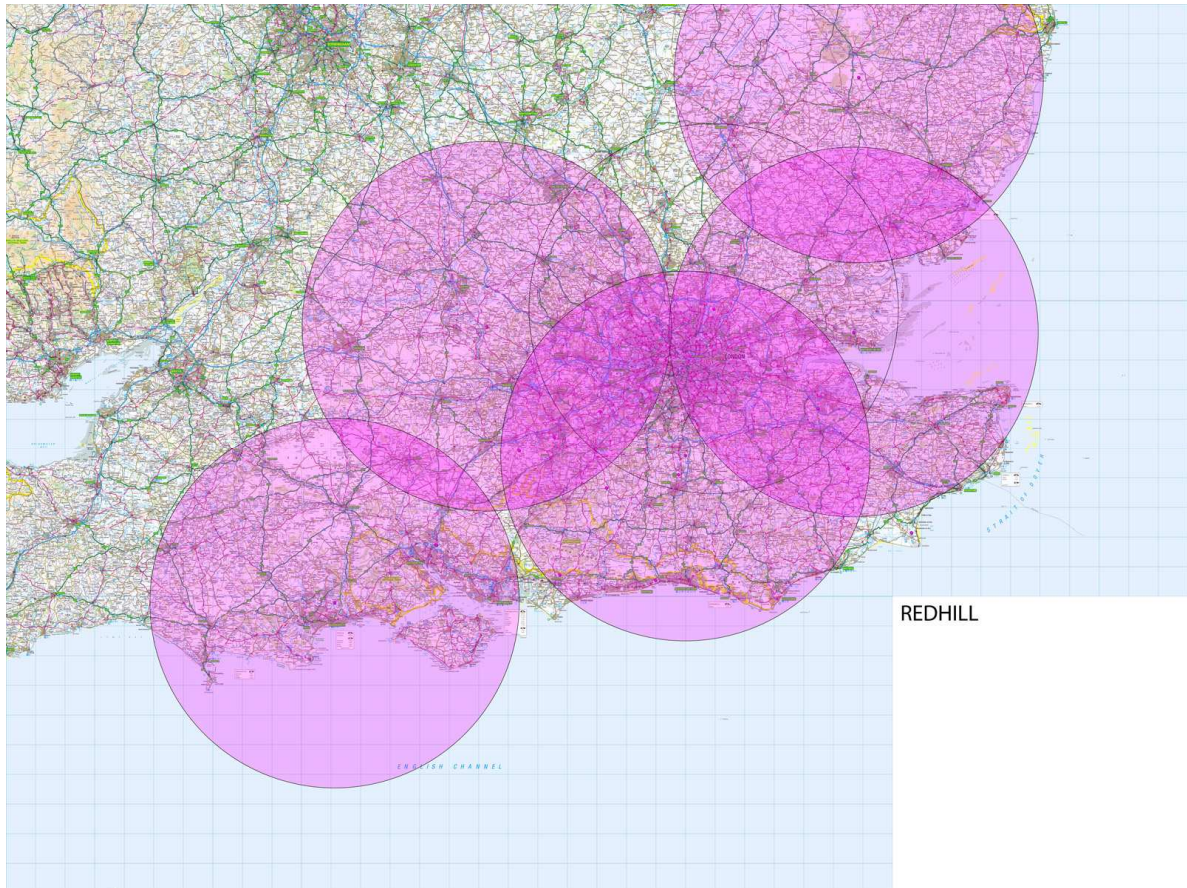
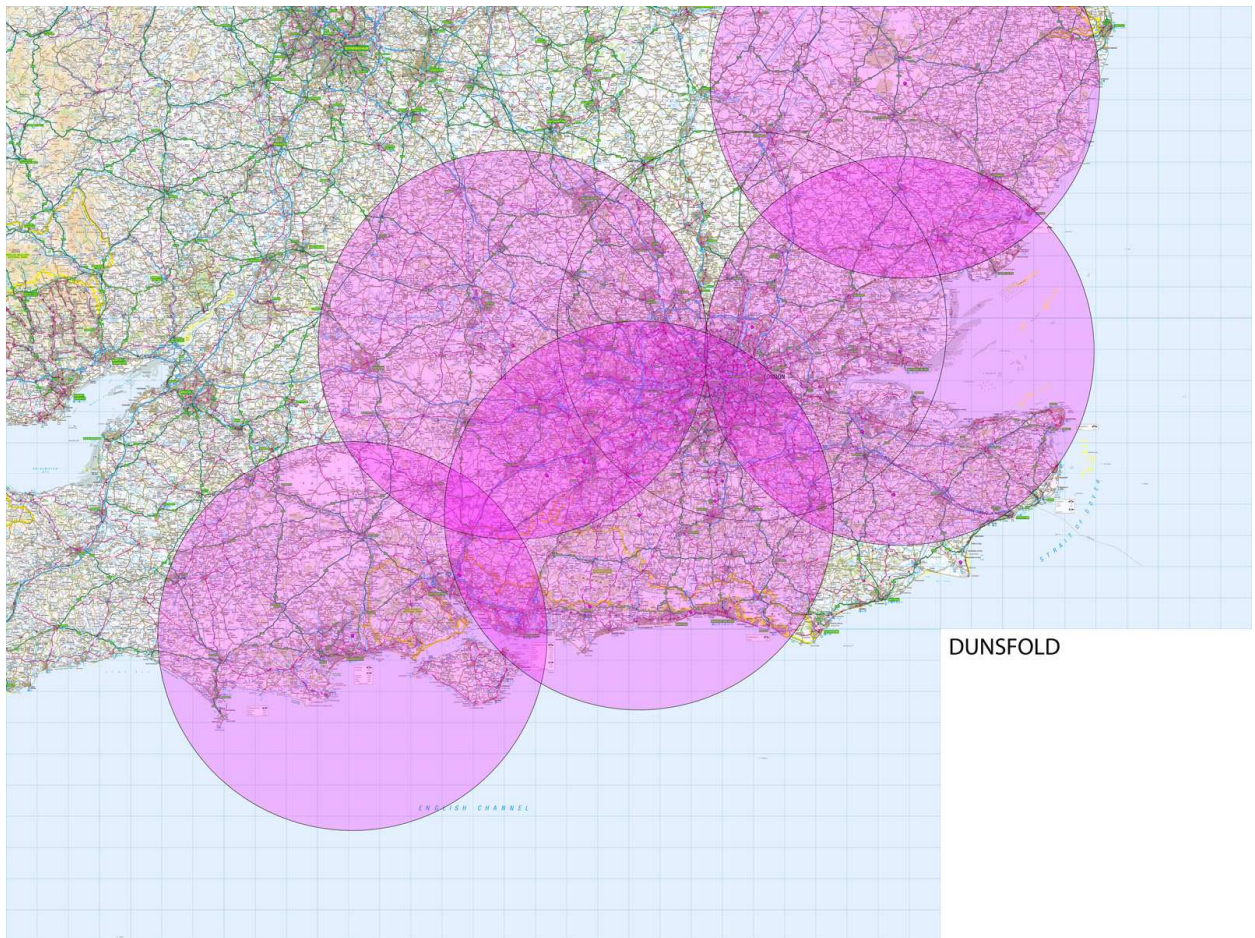


Diagram showing coverage from Dunsfold Aerodrome



Response times comparisons

Operational Tables – Alternative bases

Sussex

Dunsfold

	Current base Odiham & Shoreham (miles)	Flying time (mins)	NPAS base Dunsfold (miles)	Flying time (mins)
Brighton	6.85	5	26.57	13½
Hastings	37.8	18½	51.27	24
Eastbourne	25.66	13	42.88	20½
Bognor Regis	17.13	9½	23.45	12
Crawley	19.83	10½	15.12	8½

Redhill

	Current base Odiham & Shoreham (miles)	Flying time (mins)	NPAS base Redhill (miles)	Flying time (mins)
Brighton	6.85	5	27.58	14
Hastings	37.8	18½	40.00	19½
Eastbourne	25.66	13	36.40	18
Bognor Regis	17.13	9½	37.89	18½
Crawley	19.83	10½	7.47	5

Population coverage

	% in 10 mins	% in 15 mins	% in 20 mins
Current	67	89	100
Dunsfold	22	73	82
Redhill	23	66	100

Operational Tables – Alternative bases

Hampshire

Dunsfold

	Current base Odiham & Shoreham (miles)	Flying time (mins)	NPAS base Dunsfold (miles)	Flying time (mins)	Alternative Bases			
					Bournemouth (miles)	Flying time (mins)	Benson (miles)	Flying time (mins)
Aldershot	7.84	5½	13.76	8	-	-	-	-
Basingstoke	6.16	4½	26.1	13	-	-	24.59	12½
New Forest	37.28	18	48.5	23	13.09	7½	-	-
Portsmouth	30.97	15½	32.64	16	32.73	16	-	-
Southampton	30.4	15	40.61	19½	20.88	11	-	-
Isle of Wight	40.15	19½	43.84	21	24.56	12½	-	-

Redhill

	Current base Odiham & Shoreham (miles)	Flying time (mins)	NPAS base Redhill (miles)	Flying time (mins)	Alternative Bases			
					Bourne- mouth (miles)	Flying time (mins)	Benson (miles)	Flying time (mins)
Aldershot	7.84	5½	27.12	13½	-	-	-	-
Basingstoke	6.16	4½	40.95	19½	-	-	24.59	12½
New Forest	37.28	18	-	-	13.09	7½	-	-
Portsmouth	30.97	15½	-	-	32.73	16	-	-
Southampton	30.4	15	-	-	20.88	11	-	-
Isle of Wight	40.15	19½	-	-	24.56	12½	-	-

Population coverage

	% in 10 mins	% in 15 mins	% in 20 mins
Current	30	80	100
Dunsfold	20	79	100
Redhill	9	71	100

Operational Tables – Alternative bases

Surrey

Dunsfold

	Current base Odiham & Shoreham (miles)	Flying time (mins)	NPAS base Dunsfold (miles)	Flying time (mins)	Alternative Bases			
					Benson (miles)	Flying time (mins)	Lippitts Hill (miles)	Flying time (mins)
Reigate	32.1	16	16.49	9	-	-	30.34	15
Staines	23.29	12	22.25	11½	27.94	14	27.26	14
Woking	17.64	9½	14.12	8	30.87	15½	34.06	17
Guildford	16.3	9	8.67	5½	34.55	17	38.42	18½

Redhill

	Current base Odiham & Shoreham (miles)	Flying time (mins)	NPAS base Redhill (miles)	Flying time (mins)	Alternative Bases			
					Benson (miles)	Flying time (mins)	Lippitts Hill (miles)	Flying time (mins)
Reigate	32.1	16	3.82	3½	-	-	30.34	15
Staines	23.29	12	21.77	11½	27.94	14	27.26	14
Woking	17.64	9½	19.29	10½	30.87	15½	34.06	17
Guildford	16.3	9	18.59	10	34.55	17	38.42	18½

Population coverage

	% in 10 mins	% in 15 mins	% in 20 mins
Current	46	100	100
Dunsfold	70	100	100
Redhill	74	100	100

To SPA meeting 16/2/12

Update briefing note regarding NPAS

By Mark Baker and Paul Morrison C/Supt SEASU Management Board

The following briefing notes sets out the latest information available financial implications on the proposal Sussex transfer to NPAS based on information received this week from the NPAS Project Board.

Following Board meeting on 31 January and subsequent letter received this week the proposal is for Sussex and SEASU to join NPAS in October 2012 (a year earlier than previously proposed). Otherwise proposals are as set out in the report to SPA.

Financial Implications based on October 2012

SEASU Transfer to NPAS

	Capital £'000	Revenue £'000
2012-13	130	381
2013-14	180	762
2014-15	110	762

The capital figures (representing the amount top sliced from the Home Office capital grant) have been updated and reflect the figures in the budget report. The revenue figures have not changed significantly except in respect of timing. On the basis of this the Force could expect to save over £0.3m running costs in a full year plus reduced capital contributions for airframe replacement.

Until such time as Sussex, Surrey and Hants sign the SLA there is no agreement but NPAS has given an undertaking that costs to forces will be less than is currently spent on air support.

It has now been confirmed by NPAS project team that redundancy costs and associated costs re buildings are factored into the proposals. The only caveat to this is that NPAS will not meet any costs where it considers the force has failed in a duty to maintain aircraft/facilities.

This annual saving takes into account the current net cost to Sussex including use by SECAMB and MMO. We expect NPAS to continue the partnership with SECAMB but this will be subject to negotiation with SECAMB particularly around the delivery of the service at Redhill. If this case were to change the cost would not fall directly to Sussex. We do not know if the current arrangements with MMO can or will continue under NPAS.

NPAS intentions are to develop a local project team to manage the withdrawal from Odiham and Shoreham. The cost of developing the base at Redhill has been accounted for in the programme and capital has been set aside should buildings security or other infrastructure be required. These costs will be met by NPAS and not by SEASU.

The principle re aircraft transfer has been communicated with all authorities. An aircraft of less than 10 years old will attract a rebate payment but this does not apply to Sussex aircraft. The Surrey aircraft will be utilised as a reserve aircraft under NPAS (held at their cost). In addition when the aircraft is due for replacement which is sooner rather than later for both they will be replaced at national cost with no greater contribution from the SEASU forces.

Any subsequent sale then of the asset and who benefits is still to be decided. Letter from NPAS dated 23/12/11 shows that this is a real concern for the project board and it refers to doing a rapid piece of work on this issue.