

DMPC Decision – PCD 1382

Title: National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) – Home Office Grant Funding – Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) Drones

Executive Summary:

This paper seek approval to accept Home Office grant funding in 2022/23 for a programme to develop national capability for safe and effective operation of Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) Drones. In addition the paper seeks approval to bid for and accept Home Office funding of £656,450 for this programme of work in 2023/24 and up to a ceiling value of £5m p.a. in future years.

Recommendation:

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to:

1. Approve the acceptance of £656,450 grant funding from the Home Office for the NPCC BVLOS Drone programme for the period 01/04/2022 to 31/03/2023.
2. Approve to bid for and accept Home Office grant funding up to a ceiling value of £5,000,000 per annum to support the programme in 2023/24 and future years.

Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

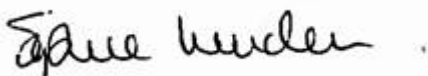
I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct. Any such interests are recorded below.

The above request has my approval.

Signature

Date

15/03/2023



PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DMPC

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. MOPAC hosts the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). The Home Office has made an offer of grant funding to the NPCC, and under the Collaboration Agreement MOPAC must consider requests to approve the acceptance of grant funding.

2. Issues for consideration

- 2.1. The NPCC is seeking to develop a BVLOS capability for police drone operations. This programme will aim to achieve a safe and effective BVLOS capability for drones in policing across all police forces in England and Wales. It will achieve this through robust governance, standardisation of procurement, training and operational guidance and the sharing of resource and expertise across a wide and varied, but centrally co-ordinated, network of experts and practitioners.
- 2.2. Currently all drone operations are limited both by technological capability and a restrictive safety framework that insists on a drone operator maintaining a visual line of sight (VLOS) with the drone at all times. A BVLOS capability would enable drones to be deployed for longer, with less operational burden in terms of vehicles and officers' support at a scene, at a dramatically reduced cost.
- 2.3. The work undertaken by the programme will provide a pathway for all police forces in England & Wales to follow to achieve an enhanced air support capability to police their communities.

3. Financial Comments

- 3.1. The grant award for 2022/23 is £656,450, and the NPCC has assured that has been/will be spent within the financial year.
- 3.2. The NPCC also seek approval to bid for and accept Home Office grant funding in respect of this programme for 2023/24 and future years up to a ceiling value of £5m p.a.
- 3.3. NPCC assure that spend will be contained within the HO grant, NPCC budget and reserves, and that there is no financial liability to MOPAC.

4. Legal Comments

- 4.1. The legal powers applicable to MOPAC acceptance of the Grant will be under Schedule 3, Paragraph 7 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 which provides that,
 - 7(1) The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime may do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of the Office.
 - (2) That includes—

- (a) entering into contracts and other agreements (whether legally binding or not);
- 4.2. Paragraph 4.8 of the MOPAC Scheme of Delegation and Consent provides that the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC) has delegated authority to approve all bids for grant funding.
- 5. Commercial Issues**
- 5.1. There are no commercial implications.
- 6. GDPR and Data Privacy**
- 6.1. MOPAC will adhere to the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and ensure that any organisations who are commissioned to do work with or on behalf of MOPAC are fully compliant with the policy and understand their GDPR responsibilities.
- 6.2. NPCC assure that the programme does not use personally identifiable data of members of the public, so there are no current GDPR issues to be considered.
- 7. Equality Comments**
- 7.1. MOPAC is required to comply with the public sector equality duty set out in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This requires MOPAC to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations by reference to people with protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.2. NPCC assure that this business case has undergone an initial equality screening. Due regard has been taken of the Equality Act's Public Sector Equality Duty. Real consideration has been taken to assess equality impact caused by the proposed business changes. As a result no positive or negative impact has been identified to any individual and/or group safeguarded by a protected characteristic and those who are not.
- 8. Background/supporting papers**
 - Appendix 1 MPS Report - NPCC Drones Beyond Visual Line of Sight

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and will be made available on the MOPAC website following approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If yes, for what reason:

Until what date:

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered as likely to be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a **Part 2** form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION	<i>Tick to confirm statement (✓)</i>
Financial Advice: The Strategic Finance and Resource Management Team has been consulted on this proposal.	✓
Legal Advice: The MPS legal team has been consulted on the proposal.	✓
Equalities Advice: Equality and diversity issues are covered in the body of the report.	✓
Commercial Issues Commercial issues are covered in the body of the report.	✓
GDPR/Data Privacy GDPR compliance issues are covered in the body of the report .	✓
Drafting Officer Alex Anderson has drafted this report in accordance with MOPAC procedures.	✓
Director/Head of Service: The MOPAC Chief Finance Officer and Director of Corporate Services has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the MOPAC's plans and priorities.	✓

Chief Executive Officer

I have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that financial, legal and equalities advice has been taken into account in the preparation of this report. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

Signature

Sanakuched.

Date: 13/03/2023

NPCC Drone Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) Programme

Report by DAC Laurence Taylor on behalf of the Chief of Corporate Services

Part 1 – This section of the report will be published by MOPAC. It is classified as OFFICIAL – PUBLIC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Police Chiefs' Council, hosted by Metropolitan Police Service, has been offered a grant from the Home Office to support their BVLOS Drone programme.

This programme will aim to achieve a safe and effective BVLOS capability for drones in policing across all police forces in England and Wales. It will achieve this through robust governance, standardisation of procurement, training and operational guidelines and the sharing of resource and expertise across a wide and varied, but centrally co-ordinated, network of experts and practitioners. The grant from the Home Office will enable this work to progress at pace to develop this enhanced capability.

Recommendations

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is asked to:

1. **Approve the acceptance of £656,450 grant funding from the Home Office for the NPCC BVLOS Drone programme for the period 01/04/2022 to 31/03/2023.**
2. **Approval to bid for and accept Home Office grant funding up to a ceiling value of £5,000,000 per annum to support the programme in 2023/24 and future years.**

Time sensitivity

A decision is required from the Deputy Mayor by February 2023. The NPCC Drone portfolio has been provided a grant from the Home Office for use within 2022/23 financial year. This grant will allow critical work to be undertaken within the remainder of the fiscal year to support the NPCC Drone programme.

Non-confidential facts and advice to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

Introduction and background

1. The NPCC Drone portfolio have been successful in securing £656,450 of funding for fiscal year 2022/23 in order to initiate their 'Beyond Visual Line of Sight' (BVLOS) drone programme.
2. This programme will aim to achieve a safe and effective BVLOS capability for drones in policing across all police forces in England and Wales. It will achieve this through robust governance, standardisation of procurement, training and operational guidance and the sharing of resource and expertise across a wide and varied, but centrally co-ordinated,

network of experts and practitioners.

3. The work undertaken by the programme will provide a pathway for all police forces in England & Wales to follow to achieve an enhanced air support capability to police their communities.
4. The programme is currently securing a grant from the Home Office for fiscal year 2023/24.

Issues for consideration

5. The NPCC is seeking to develop a BVLOS capability for police drone operations. Currently all drone operations are limited both by technological capability and a restrictive safety framework that insists on a drone operator maintaining a visual line of sight (VLOS) with the drone at all times. A BVLOS capability would enable drones to be deployed for longer, with less operational burden in terms of vehicles and officers' support at a scene, at a dramatically reduced cost.
6. A BVLOS drone could provide covert and overt coverage of policing operations for extended periods, reducing noise and pollution; improving evidential capture; and removing the need for officers on the ground to put themselves in harm's way. In doing this a BVLOS capability could free up policing resources; better protect the public; and directly contribute to improving our outcomes at court.
7. The grant funding from the Home Office is key enabler for the NPCC to deliver this programme for police forces.

Contributes to the MOPAC Police & Crime Plan 2022-25¹

8. The programme will support all police forces in England & Wales. Whilst this work will focus of national implementation and support, the Metropolitan Police Service will benefit from the programme outcomes.
9. The development of drone capability to allow BVLOS operations will enable the MPS to better support victims of crime by enhancing the police response. This in turn will lead to an increase in confidence and trust in the service that the MPS provides to the people of London. This will also reduce and prevent violent offending by improving the capture of evidence against high harm offenders who engage in such activity.

Financial, Commercial and Procurement Comments

10. The NPCC BVLOS programme has secured a grant from the Home Office to conduct its work. The programme will be funded entirely by the Home Office grant. The grant is split between a £105,000 capital grant to support purchase of equipment and technology for enhancing drone operations towards BVLOS capability. The remainder of the grant, £486,563 is revenue and will support consultancy and revenue costs for the programme. The Home Office grant will be spent within this financial year.
11. Future year bids will depend on available Home Office aviation grants. In 2023/24 fiscal year this is expected to be £1.9m but may be significantly higher depending on Home Office funding available later in the year.
12. The spend of the programme will be within the Home Office grant and there is no financial liability to MOPAC.

¹ [Police and crime plan: a safer city for all Londoners | London City Hall](#)

13. Subject to MOPAC approval, these arrangements will be formalised between MOPAC and the Home Office with a grant agreement based on standard Home Office terms and conditions. This will be overseen by MPS Commercial Services.
14. The programme will contribute to the London Anchor Institutions' Charter² by accelerating delivery of a cleaner, greener London. The development of enhanced drone capability will see a reduction in the use of police helicopters and therefore support this objective.

Legal Comments

15. MOPAC approval is sought pursuant to Paragraph 4.8 of the MOPAC Scheme of Consent and Delegation which provides the DMPC with delegated powers to approve all offers made of grant funding.
16. The legal powers applicable to MOPAC acceptance of the Grant will be under Schedule 3, Paragraph 7 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 which provides that,
7(1) The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime may do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of the Office.
(2) That includes—
(a) entering into contracts and other agreements (whether legally binding or not);
17. MOPAC has an obligation to publish a grant agreement pursuant to Schedule 1, Paragraph 3(g) of the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) (Amendment) Order 2012

Equality Comments

18. This business case has undergone an initial equality screening. Due regard has been taken to the Equality Act's Public Sector Equality Duty. Real consideration has been taken to assess equality impact caused by the proposed business changes. As a result no positive or negative impact has been identified to any individual and/or group safeguarded by a protected characteristic and those who are not. As the intention of this document is to seek additional funding for an existing function, there is no real organisational change. Further reviews will be conducted and if as a result any new Equality Impact is identified, a full Equality Impact Assessment will be initiated.

Privacy Comments

19. The MPS is subject to the requirements and conditions placed on it as a 'State' body to comply with the European Convention of Human Rights and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018. Both legislative requirements place an obligation on the MPS to process personal data fairly and lawfully in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals.
20. Under Article 35 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Section 57 of the DPA 2018, Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) become mandatory for organisations with technologies and processes that are likely to result in a high risk to the rights of the data subjects.
21. The Information Assurance and Information Rights units within MPS will be consulted at all stages to ensure the programme meets its compliance requirements.
22. The programme does not use currently personally identifiable data of members of the public, so there are no current GDPR issues to be considered. If the programme uses personally identifiable data of members of the public or staff at a later date DPIA's will be

² <https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/londons-recovery-coronavirus-crisis/anchor-institutions-charter>

completed as needed.

Real Estate Implications

23. The NPCC Drone portfolio will be housed within MO7 Taskforce and they will use shared office space on the MPS estate as authorised. There are no real estate implications.

Environmental Implications

24. The [MPS Environment Policy](#) has been taken into consideration and appropriate waste collections guidance for end of life drones will be provided to forces. The waste hierarchy will be taken into consideration.

Background/supporting papers

PIB Decision Paper

Report author: PS Stuart Lawless, NPCC Drones