

NPCC Drone Portfolio Update

Chief Constables Council

July 2023



NPCC VISION & OBJECTIVES

Our vision is to enable local forces and their partners to deliver a safe, efficient and effective drone capability that meets the air support needs of policing to keep the public safe

01

Establish a framework for scrutiny, oversight and regulation for police use of drones across the UK

02

To develop clear governance, resourcing and sustainable funding across the UK

03

Develop an efficient and effective pathway to achieve sustainable Beyond Visual Line of Sight capability

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Capture demand for drones against user requirements and highlight the value add of drone capability

05

Maximise the use of current drone technology and supporting development of future capabilities

06

Implement strategic internal communication plan across the UK to prevent duplication and ensure alignment

07

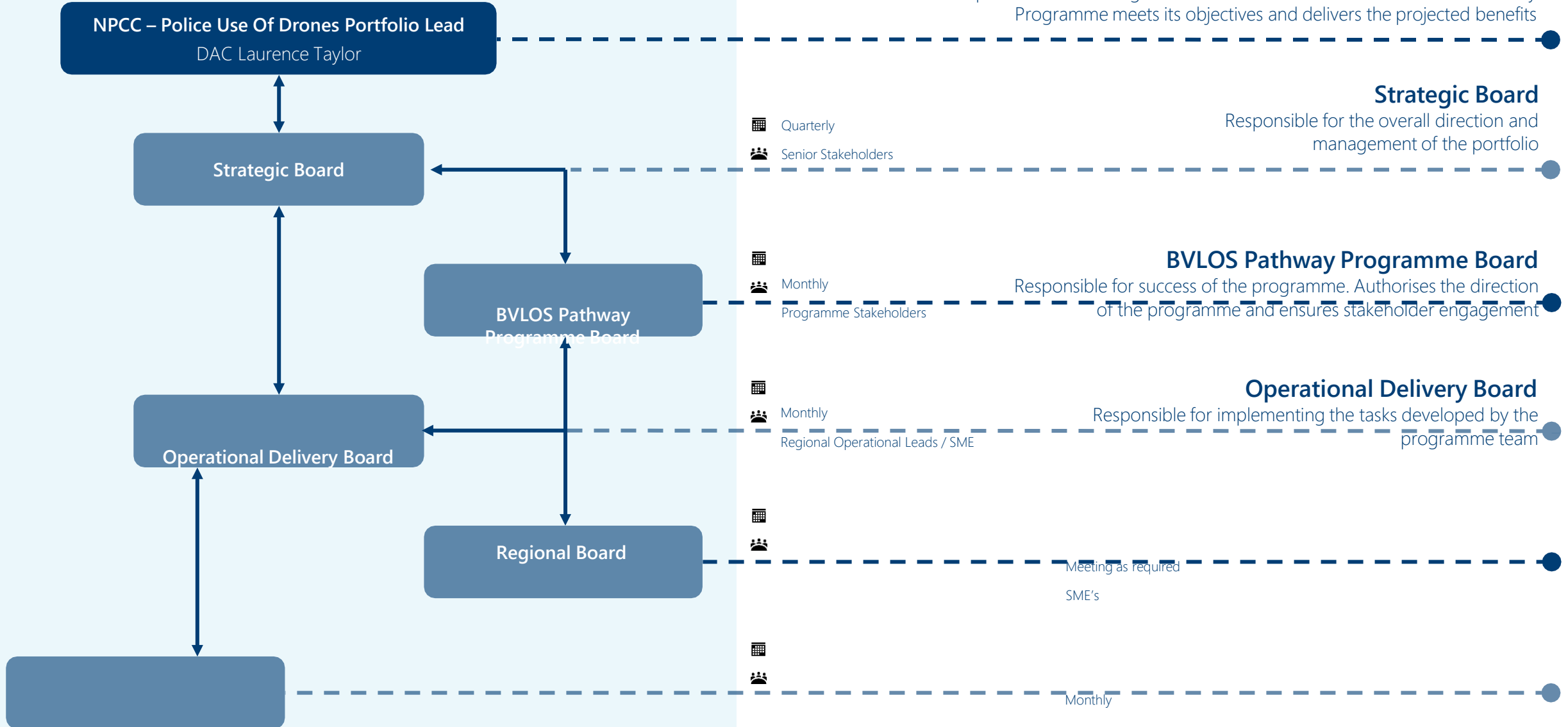
External communication strategy for partners and the public to ensure legitimacy and public perception of police drones

08

Establish consistent and reliable communication with key stakeholders to support police drone operations

PORTFOLIO GOVERNANCE

Responsibilities, Meeting Schedule & Attendees



Senior Responsible Owner

Responsible for ensuring that the NPCC Drones Portfolio & BVLOS Pathway Programme meets its objectives and delivers the projected benefits

Strategic Board

Responsible for the overall direction and management of the portfolio

BVLOS Pathway Programme Board

Responsible for success of the programme. Authorises the direction of the programme and ensures stakeholder engagement

Operational Delivery Board

Responsible for implementing the tasks developed by the programme team

Regional Operational
Leads / SME

B implementation of drone
V operations
L and ensuring regional buy-in to
O NPCC portfolio
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Responsible for delivering
the projects, workstreams
and tasks
as directed by the
Programme Board

Regional Board
Responsible for regional

POLICE DRONE OPERATIONS AT A GLANCE...

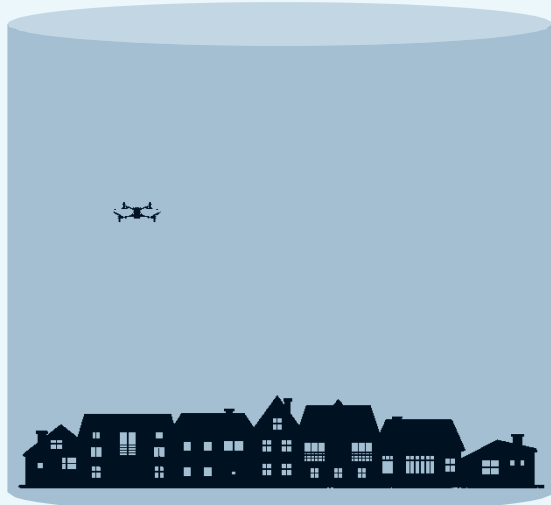
Every force in the UK either operate drones or are looking at starting drone operations in the short term. Variety of drone operations utilised by forces, ranging from small local pre-planned operations to 24/7 spontaneous demand operations. Drones are providing a very effective capability to frontline policing

Most forces are currently developing drone capability in silo. There is extensive duplication of work and increased costs. A range of research and development undertaken by forces without shared operational learning for wider application. There is a strong desire for police forces to develop BVLOS capability through NPCC programme

The biggest barriers to current and future drone operations have been identified as regulatory and funding constraints. Police forces also want further support with operational authorisations, training standards, procurement, governance and stakeholder engagement to remove the significant burden currently faced by operational teams

There is currently differing operating models utilised by police forces, ranging from full time drone teams to dual role officers. The majority of forces have accountable managers and role holders who are not fully aware of their responsibilities and want NPCC guidance and support to professionalise and standardise operations

POLICE DRONE OPERATIONS



Local Deployment

Local Area Capability
VLOS & BVLOS

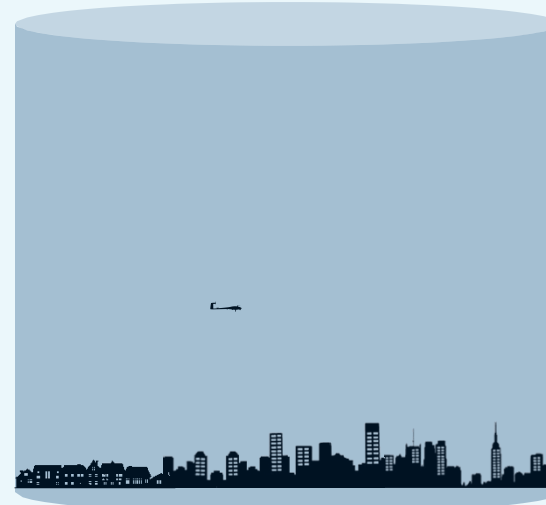
Tactical Drone Deployments



Short Range Deployment

Town/City Capability
BVLOS

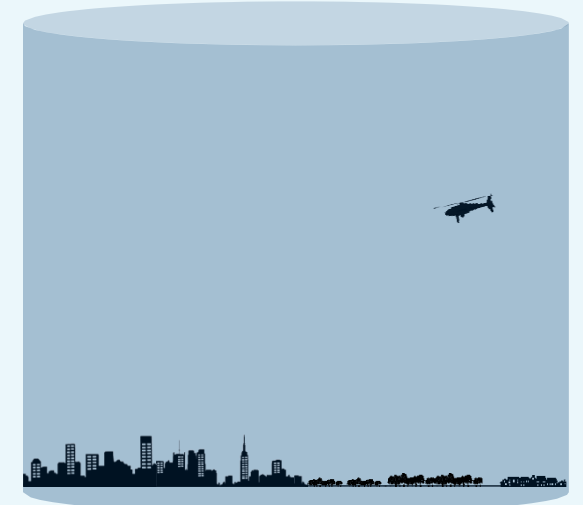
Drone as First Responder (DFR) / Drone in a Box



Long Range Deployment

Force/Regional Capability
BVLOS

VTOL / Drone in a Box



National Deployment

National Capability
BVLOS

Replacement of conventional aircraft

BVLOS Pathway Programme

National Strategy - Local Delivery



Deliver a consistent approach towards safe, effective and efficient operations across all 48 police forces



Development of a 'Centre of Excellence' for drone use that gains international recognition



Share and leverage local excellence to enhance police drone operations

BVLOS PATHWAY PROGRAMME

A single programme where the NPCC aim to achieve a safe, efficient and effective BVLOS capability for drones in policing. The programme will introduce robust governance, standardisation, professionalisation and sharing of resource and expertise across a wide and varied, but centrally co-ordinated, network of experts and practitioners.

Centre of Excellence

Alignment and standardisation of police drone operations. Delivered through a training project, development of an APP and template for operational authorisations



Operations

Implementing a core function of data & performance to highlight the value add drones provide to policing. Creation of an approved asset catalogue. Developing a 'Continuous Improvement' work stream that supports innovative concepts and sharing of best practice



Safety & Regulation

Establishing a strong working relationship with the regulator & DfT to support the development of BVLOS regulation and legislation. Enhance the safety awareness and culture within police drone operations



Uncrewed Aircraft Feasibility Study

Conduct a feasibility study on replacement of a conventional police helicopter with an uncrewed aircraft able to operate comparable on-board mission systems



People & Engagement

Support extensive internal and external communication and engagement. Develop strong public acceptance and legitimacy for the police use of drones. Establishing a just and safety culture within operations



BVLOS PATHWAY PROGRAMME PHASES

Alignment Phase

- Alignment and standardisation of drone operations for all UK police forces
 - Establishing training standards, asset catalogue & foundation course
 - Development of an Authorised Professional Practice
- Establish minimum data recording standards, monitor data & performance
 - Conduct extensive internal & external communication

Development Phase

- Localised Implementation of BVLOS Training, Trials & Standards
 - Supporting local force activity & innovation
- Enhanced project support for continuous improvement projects (DFR)
- Authorised Professional Practice updated for BVLOS operations
 - Enhanced training and awareness of safety & just culture

Expansion Phase

- Expansion of continuous improvement projects, innovative concepts, trials & equipment
 - Refine and enhance BVLOS training, operations & standards
 - Managed expansion of capability across UK police forces
 - Enhanced safety and risk mitigation during expansion
 - Strong focus on effective human factors and safety culture

Sustainable Phase

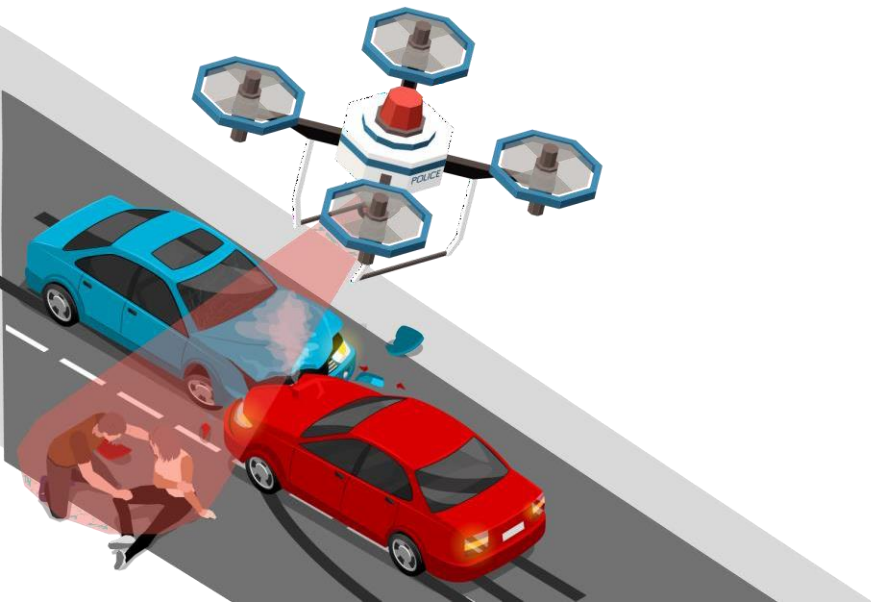
- Routine BVLOS operations with a focus on continuous improvement
 - Leading edge for operational delivery and innovative concepts
- Best practice and operational learning seamlessly shared amongst UK forces
 - Strong public acceptance of drone capability within UK policing

Drone as First Responder (DFR)

The Drone as a First Responder (DFR) concept is different to traditional tactical drone deployments. Instead of deploying a drone after an officer is already on scene, the DFR programme stations drones at strategic locations and responds proactively to emergencies as soon as they happen.

The intent of DFR is to get a drone on scene before responding officers arrive. Highly trained remote operators can evaluate the situation and relay information to officers on route to the incident. The drone can also provide high definition live-streaming of the incident to the control room and responding officers. This helps personnel to determine the best tools, tactics and resource to safely deal with the incident – often long before officers arrive on scene.

DFR gives first responders real-time tactical information and an aerial overview, proving to be a powerful de-escalation tool.



**Faster
Response
Time**

Strategically placed drone launch sites will ensure drones are able to quickly respond to support policing incidents in the local community, providing first responders with real-time information and situational awareness.



**Real-Time
Situational
Awareness**

Drones equipped with high resolution daylight and thermal cameras can provide real-time aerial footage of an incident, object or a person's movements, giving first responders a better understanding of the situation and allowing them to respond more efficiently and effectively



**Improved
Outcomes**

The rapid response time and enhanced drone capability will support the apprehension of suspects, locate missing people, and provide incident overview and awareness to first responders



**Increased
Efficiency**

Drones are a cost-effective tool as they can be deployed quickly and easily without requiring a significant amount of personnel or equipment. Drones can cover large areas effectively, reducing response times and increasing the efficiency of emergency response



**Increased
Responder
Safety**

Drones can provide aerial overview of an incident without exposing first responders to direct danger, reducing the risk of injury and enhancing safety. They can also reach remote or hazardous locations that may be difficult for first responders to access



**De-
Escalation
Tool**

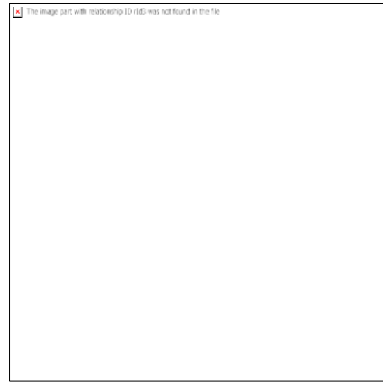
Real-time situational awareness allows officers to view potential hazards and develop a working strategy and tactics before rushing into a potentially dangerous situation. DFR will enable officers to make and implement appropriate decisions for the incident

Reputational outcomes



Leadership

UK Police use of drones is at the leading edge of delivery. They are seen as a 'go to' organisation for using drones to reduce crime and keep the public safe



Safety & Assurance

Police drones are flown by highly trained pilots, who are always focused on safe use, particularly the safety of people on the ground and other airspace users



Legitimacy & Consent

Police drones are always operated for policing purposes and in accordance with the regulations. They are audited regularly.



Operational Advantage

Police drones are an indispensable, proportionate and cost-effective tool for keeping the public safe and reducing crime