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**REPORT TO:** British Transport Police Authority  
**DATE:** 14 May 2009  
**SUBJECT:** Border Policing  
**SPONSOR:** Chief Constable  
**AUTHOR:** Mark Wilson

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## **1. PURPOSE OF PAPER**

- 1.1 This paper is to outline to Members British Transport Police's (BTP's) position regarding the creation of a UK border police force and the implications for BTP if such a force was established.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 There are a number of different models for policing the UK border that are currently being discussed. The main options are those expressed by Lord Stevens and by ACPO.

## **3. BTP's POSITION**

- 3.1 BTP supports the creation of a UK border police force and BTP's Chief Constable was an advisor to Lord Stevens' Border Security Advisory Committee.
- 3.2 BTP believes that the future strategic approach in relation to UK borders should be to manage all aspects of border control jointly. It is considered that this is best expressed in Lord Stevens' original report.

## **4. LORD STEVENS' MODEL**

- 4.1 Lord Stevens' model was published in July 2008 and would form a new, integrated, uniformed Border Police Service (BPS). The BPS would amalgamate the relevant elements of the existing bodies involved in border control and security – the police service, the UK Border Agency and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. This would encompass some 30,000 staff and officers.



## 5. THE ACPO OPTION

- 5.1 An alternative to Lord Steven's model is proposed by ACPO in a report prepared by ACC John Donlon last year. This model would create a separate National Border Police Service (NBPS) in England and Wales that would focus on all aspects of security and law enforcement at the borders, under its own Chief Constable. This model would only amalgamate existing policing arrangements at the border into one force.
- 5.2 The NBPS would operate in parallel with the UK Border Agency and would consist of around 3,000 police officers who currently operate at the borders carrying out Special Branch, protective security and general policing roles.
- 5.3 There are, however, concerns over whether the NBPS would have the required capacity and critical mass to make a real difference. In particular, the NBPS would not cover Scotland or Northern Ireland and there is no mention of additional resources to enhance its operational role. The NBPS would have to work closely with the UK Border Agency, continuing the separate management of the 'control' and 'security' aspects of border management.

## 6. BTP AS FORCE MODEL

- 6.1 BTP's structure is a suitable model for a national border police service to be mapped on to as it spans the whole of the Britain. BTP has a national IT and radio communications network and works closely with other police forces throughout England, Scotland and Wales. It is also able to operate seamlessly between the Scottish legislative framework and that of England and Wales and is comfortable working with the private sector and the focus that this gives policing activity, understanding the economic effects of its policing decisions. BTP is uniquely funded by train operators under the 'user pays' principle. This model could be transferred to a border police service, if it is felt appropriate.

## 7. RECENT EVENTS

- 7.1 At the Seventh Homeland Security Round Table held in London in October 2008, ACC John Donlon spoke to the attendees and was questioned on the future of border policing. Mr Donlon stated that he sees only a limited window of opportunity to create a UK border police force prior to the Olympics in 2012. His view is that unless such a national border



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police force is created within the next year to 18 months, plans and preparation for the Games will take priority. The window for change will then remain shut until at least 2013.

- 7.2 Lord Stevens has recently asked Mr Johnston for further advice on border policing as the Conservative Party wants more detailed work done on the coverage and functions of a future UK border police force. One of the options the Conservative Party have asked Lord Stevens to look at now is the creation of a UK Border Police Force that would include the protection of the UK infrastructure. Such a force would police the national rail network and would therefore absorb BTP in its entirety.
- 7.3 At a launch event in February 2009 for the Reform report '*A New Force*' the Shadow Police Reform Minister, David Ruffley MP made clear that the Conservative Party's focus on police reform was currently on reorganising policing of the UK borders, with the creation of a UK national border police force.
- 7.4 ACC Donlon confirmed at a 'Policing the Borders' Conference on 27 April 2009 that ACPO's position on this issue has not altered. At the same meeting Michael Fuller, the Chief Constable of Kent Police, stated that the collaboration between his force, Essex Police and other partners was such that he would prefer to see Border Policing organised on a regional rather than a national basis as preferred by ACPO.

## **8. RISK AND IMPACT ON BTP**

- 8.1 Under both Lord Steven's and ACPO's models the risk and impact to BTP would be limited. Only those areas of policing BTP provides in connection with the operation of high speed trains through the Channel Tunnel would be affected although there would still be a need for BTP to police the domestic high speed services operating from Ebbsfleet to St Pancras. The exact numbers of officers (and funding) that BTP will lose is unclear although it is estimated to be no more than a handful of officers.
- 8.2 However, an expanded UK Border Police Force that would include the protection of the UK infrastructure as described in 7.2 would completely subsume BTP.



## 9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The most likely factor to influence the future of UK border policing will be financial considerations. Barring a catastrophic event such as a multi centred terrorist attack on the UK which highlighted major failings at the border; the present poor economic conditions and the lack of available public finance will be the deciding factor on whether to create a national border police force.

## 10. RECOMMENDATION

10.1 That Members note this report and the further assistance requested by Lord Stevens.

10.2 That the Chief Constable keeps Members updated on developments in this area and how they might affect BTP.