

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE AUTHORITY

MINUTES

POLICE AUTHORITY

12th MARCH 2009, 10.00AM

at

G1 & G2 - FHQ 25 CAMDEN ROAD

Present:

Ms M Banerjee (Chairman)
Sir David O'Dowd (Deputy Chairman)
Mr L Adams
Mr I Dobbs
Mr R Culley
Mr C Foxall
Mr R Gisby
Mr M Holden
Mr J King
Ms C Knights
Suzanne May
Mr R O'Toole
Mrs W Towers
Mr J Weimar

In attendance:

Mr I Johnston, Chief Constable
Mr A Trotter, Deputy Chief Constable
Mr A Pacey, Assistant Chief Constable, Operations
Mr S Thomas, Assistant Chief Constable, London & Olympics
Mr P Crowther, Assistant Chief Constable, Crime
Mr D McCall, Assistant Chief Constable Scotland
Mrs S Burd, Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Ms L Scott, HR Director
Mr M Ripley, Area Commander Scotland
Ms M Daniels, Acting Head of Strategic Development
Mr A Clarke, Interim Head of Finance
Mr M Jennings, Finance Consultant
Mr S Peel, Performance Analysis Manager

Mr R Hemmings, Chief Executive & Clerk
Mrs E Pike, Treasurer
Mr P Haddock, Deputy Chief Executive
Mrs S Elvy, Research and Policy Manager
Miss L Bryant, PA
Miss L Barrick, Business Support Manager & Minutes

Ms N Oppenheimer, Odgers, Ray & Berndtson

PART I – ITEMS TAKEN IN PUBLIC

11/2009 BUDGET SETTING PAPER

Agenda Item 1

This paper was **noted**.

12/2009 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2009/10

Agenda Item 2

Letters from ATOC and Network Rail were circulated.

The Chair opened the budget discussion remarking that the Authority's role was to ensure that the Force was funded appropriately to deliver the outputs required. The Force had received considerable investment over the past few years to address the legacy issues of under funding and was now in a position that it could deal with further changes in the coming years. The Authority must now ensure that the investment was consolidated whilst bearing in mind the extreme economic circumstances that were prevailing. The constraints were that the policing plan objectives needed to be met as these reflected the needs of the consumers and citizens. There was also the national pay deal which was a fixed cost at 2.6%.

The Force explained that the budget recommended in the paper would leave them with significant challenges but they recognised the difficult economic climate. The recommendation of a 4.4% budget increase reflected the steer from the SB&PM Committee following initial proposals at the previous August's RPI rate of 4.8%, as previously agreed. The reduction increased pressures and demands on the budget but these would be managed whatever the settlement. To help in 2009/10 the £1.6M underspend resulting from VAT changes and other aspects would be used to offset part of the increase, which would result in a 3.6% increase in charges to PSA holders. This would in effect result in a standstill budget. The high priority growth proposals which could not be delayed would be funded through efficiency savings totalling £1.37M.

The question was raised as to how the standstill budget would affect the current *Frontlinefirst* efficiency programme. The Force answered that there would be scope to find cashable savings but it was not currently clear what volume of these there were left to be found. The Force was clear that it wanted to preserve the frontline and added that there were decisions to be made around some of the things that were being driven by external pressures. The key was not to lose the performance improvements that had been achieved.

There was a concern that the Authority could undermine the good work it had done following its inception in addressing the legacy issues. The Authority had an obligation to reduce crime and the fear of crime and this had to come first. There was also particular concern that if there was a major incident this could leave the Force in a very vulnerable position financially.

The Authority had listened to the industry's concerns regarding the economic climate, and had taken these into account by asking the Force

to reduce its proposals from the previously agreed RPI level. Whether this move had been enough was questioned by some who felt there should be further reductions in 2009/10 to help 2010/11. However, as a result of the uncertainty of the future economic situation this could not be answered and the budget had to be based on what the Force needed. There was also the likelihood that the recession would see an increase in crime and suicides on the railways.

The Authority discussed the reserve fund and how this money could be best used to reduce costs to PSA holders. There were varying opinions, with some considering a large proportion of the fund should be used to reduce charges to PSA holders further for 2009/10, whilst others considered it would be more prudent to retain the reserve fund as the need was likely to be greater for 2010/11. It was suggested that delaying projects and maximising efficiencies could be used as alternatives.

There was a suggestion that as a middle ground £200k of the reserves could be used to further help PSA holders in 2009/10. This would bring the PSA holder increase down to 3.5% from 3.6%. There were mixed views on this suggestion as the reserves may be needed in the event of a major incident and this would increase the level of risk going forward. An amendment to this was suggested, with the Force being asked to make a further £200k in efficiency savings by the end of 2009/10, and if this had not been achieved by the year end the money could be taken from the reserves. This proposal was agreed.

The 2010/11 budget was a serious concern for the Authority and a significant factor in the setting of the 2009/10 budget. The Members agreed following their discussion that continuing with RPI increases was untenable and a radical rethink was required.

There was a suggested amendment to the proposals to take the efficiencies out of the budget and try and make the non-cashable savings cashable whilst also delivering a 2% saving. This was rejected as it was considered too late for such a change but it was an important point of principle which would be considered in the 2010/11 budget setting process.

The London Underground Area budget was approved at £51.667M, with delegated Authority given to the Chief Executive to approve any minor adjustments should they be required. The budget was part of a 5 year plan.

The capital programme was approved as presented.

Agreed:

- **The Authority approved an overground budget of £201,315,000, representing a 4.4% increase in budget (representing a standstill budget).**
- **The projected underspend of £1.6M in 2008/9 would be applied to reduce the PSA charges on a one off basis. The Force would also increase its efficiency target of £1.375M by**

£200k with the opportunity to use the reserves for this amount at the end of the year if it is not achieved through efficiencies, enabling the increase to PSA holders to be kept at 3.5%.

- The high priority growth proposals totalling £1.375M identified in the report were approved to be included in the budget.
- A saving target to meet the cost of the growth be incorporated into the budget to be managed on the basis of the proposals set out in the paper.
- The London Underground Area budget be approved at £51.667M with delegated Authority to the Chief Executive to approve any minor adjustments if required.
- The capital programme as set out was approved.
- It was noted that the 2010/11 revenue budget still presented a significant challenge to the Force and an updated MTFP would be presented to the Authority at an appropriate time that timely consideration could be made of discussions with PSA holders on proposals for that and future years.
- The principle to take the efficiencies out of the budget and try and make the non-cashable savings cashable whilst also delivering a saving target would be considered in the 2010/11 budget setting process.

13/2009 POLICING PLAN 2009/10

Agenda Item 3

The Chairman thanked the Policing Plan Working Group (PPWG) and the Force for all their work on the targets.

Sir David said that the Policing Pledge was a statement of the values and what was trying to be achieved. Behind it were the national and local targets. The HR targets had been agreed by the HR&R Committee. The Scotland targets had been designed to mirror the other Scottish forces' style. Scotland would still be working to the national targets.

The Deputy Chief Constable said that the Authority involvement and challenge had been very helpful and the attention to detail had resulted in improvements to the Policing Plan. The Plan continued to reduce in top-down targets as industry consultation continued to favour local targets.

The HR targets had been developed from the data available and were stretch targets. The 2008/9 targets had been too aspirational and the new targets aimed to reflect that BTP was one of the top performing forces for diversity whilst continuing to push in this area. However, female recruitment was still an issue that required further study. The sickness target was renewed.

The HR&R Committee Members said that low morale had been an issue with the overly aspirational targets and they felt that the new targets would still drive the Force forward on BME and female recruitment whilst maintaining a motivated workforce. They had requested that there be

clear communications sent out with the targets explaining how and why they had been set.

In general Members felt that the Pledge was a better version than had been previously presented. However, there was still some uncertainty around having a crime reduction target without a figure around it. The Force felt that any figure would be arbitrary as they would be doing their best to reduce crime as far as possible.

Some Members questioned the absence of a vehicle crime target. The Force answered that from consultation with stakeholders this had not arisen as an overall priority. Some Areas did have local targets around vehicle crime where operators had requested these. The Force also had operations in some hotspot areas.

There was some discussion around the fatality management target and whether the time should be reduced from 90 minutes as the Force was achieving a lower average consistently. The Force responded that it would not want to reduce the target time further as it had to be sure that investigations were carried out thoroughly and it would not want to encourage fast driving or unnecessary risk taking.

There was a question raised as to why certain offences involved in theft from ticket vending machines were excluded from the targets around this. The Force said that they would look again at this in more detail.

There was a suggestion that the passenger voice in the consultation could be increased. The Force said that it would look into this for the 2010/11 process.

The overall crime reduction target would not include police generated offences, which were offences such as possession of offensive weapons or drugs that would not normally be discovered other than by proactive police activity. Members felt that if this was being excluded in the crime reduction target it should also be excluded from detection targets.

It was commented that the North East Area targets were around holding 'surgeries'. The Force answered that the real measure would be how the surgeries impacted on overall crime reduction and detection.

The targets for Scotland had been designed to match the target setting style of the Scottish forces. These targets were based around getting more closely involved with stakeholders for joint problem-solving in an attempt to give a more bespoke service. The Scottish Area would still be working to the national targets and its performance would be measured centrally. The target style would allow measurement of how many officers were involved in tackling a particular problem, how much any operation had cost and whether it had worked. The approach would also allow for involvement of local community groups.

Some Members had experience of the Scottish style and had found it to be very successful.

The Policing Plan and Pledge were approved subject to the below points.

Agreed:

- **Further work to be carried out researching why the Force has a low take-up rate by women.**
- **An explanation of the HR targets to be included in the Policing Plan and shared internally.**
- **The Force to look again in more detail at the ticket vending machine targets and any exclusions.**
- **The Force to look into increasing the passenger voice in the 2010/11 Policing Plan consultation process.**

14/2009 BTPA BUDGET PROPOSALS 2009/10

Agenda Item 4

There was a suggestion that as a small reduction had been made to the Force budget this should follow for the Authority budget. It was felt that this was fair.

The Authority questioned how the legal costs had been budgeted for. It was explained that these were very uncertain, because if the Authority lost the Judicial Review it might have to bear the costs of the other parties. The Members questioned how a potentially large amount such as that could be managed. It was suggested that further discussion of the budget be postponed until the Judicial Review item later on the agenda.

Agreed:

- **Further discussion of the budget be delayed until the Judicial Review position is clearer.**

15/2009 MINUTES OF MEETING 27TH JANUARY 2009

Agenda Item 5

Members considered the descriptions of groups in the minutes was unhelpful and requested that these be amended. This was also the case for the SB&PM minutes.

The minutes were **approved** following this amendment.

Agreed:

- **Minutes to be amended to remove any references to Members as groups.**

16/2009 MATTERS ARISING

Agenda Item 6

All matters had been discharged.

17/2009 CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

Agenda Item 7

The Chief Constable updated that since the paper had been published the Force had improved its target position and was achieving 17 of the 22 national targets. The recruitment and progression targets were the challenging area that remained, along with the call handling target.

The Force had performed well on cable theft. The price of copper had dropped which had reduced levels of crime in this area but the Force had also been successful in its detections. There was presently a commercial analysis taking place which was analysing worldwide copper demands to identify likely periods of increased cable theft in the future. Additional funding had also been secured by the ACPO cable theft group to help fight against the crime.

The Force performance in managing fatalities had continued in line with the previous year and was well within the target. There were some new initiatives in this area with work being carried out to monitor indicators of people who were considered at risk of contemplating suicide so that interventions could be put in place.

The Force was meeting its sickness target.

There had been a continuing downward trend in robbery with less than 3 a day across the rail network.

Olympics planning and preparation was progressing well. Assistant Chief Constable Thomas would no longer be going to the Home Office but was still well connected. The Force's position regarding accommodation at Stratford remained a risk. Mr Gisby said that he would look into the Stratford accommodation situation. It was noted that the Commonwealth Games were also taking place in Glasgow in 2014.

Lord Adonis had visited the Force and had helped to resolve the pensions problem.

The Force crime maps website had gone live. A variance in offences brought to justice between Areas was noted by Members. It was explained that the crime profile varied between the Areas and brought different challenges and the Force had regular performance meetings at which the performance data was drilled down into.

Agreed:

- **Mr Gisby to look into the Stratford accommodation situation.**

18/2009 FINANCIAL POSITION SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Item 8

The paper gave the period 11 results which showed the significant progress that the Force had made on the capital programme. The Force was still on track for a £1.6M underspend.

The staff costs were shown as being £1.9M overspent and Members questioned why this was. The Force answered that this was primarily a presentational issue as a result of how enhanced PSAs had been budgeted for and this had been resolved for the following year.

The report was **noted**.

19/2009 COMMITTEE ISSUES

Agenda Item 9

Stakeholder Relations and Communications Strategy Committee 20.01.09

There had been a presentation on BASS training which had been very informative. The Committee had requested that the presentation be repeated for the Authority and this would be happening soon.

The next SR&CS Committee meeting was taking place in Birmingham and included a visit to the new Force Control Room. All Members were welcome to join the Committee or forward any questions.

There had been a disappointing return on the Rail Staff Survey and some operators had refused to distribute it to their staff. Mr King requested that rail industry colleagues help to ensure as wider circulation as possible in future.

Professional Standards Committee 26.01.09

There were a number of ongoing items that were detailed in the minutes. The independent members for misconduct panels had been interviewed and 14 were being appointed.

Policing Plan Working Group 12.02.09

These were **noted**.

Strategy, Budget & Performance Monitoring Committee 06.02.09

These were **noted**.

Human Resources & Remuneration Committee 24.02.09

The Committee had been looking at the issue of the retention of PCSOs. The turnover rate was quite high but only 9% were leaving the police force completely and the next step was to look at how many were coming into BTP as police officers and how many were joining other forces as police officers.

The Committee would be looking at the Police Staff Employment Package Project (PSEPP) in more detail with a special meeting.

The HR Transformation Project was going well and the Business Partner positions had been recruited for with the successful candidates due to start on 23rd March.

A solution to the pensions situation had been found. This was not exactly what had been hoped for, due to the administrative burden that was associated with it, but it was a much better position than there had been. The solution involved a normal transfer with the pension remaining with the old force and the new Force would making its contributions into it.

The Learning and Development Strategy was available if anybody would like to request a copy.

The Committee had received a presentation on the Estate which had demonstrated the good work that had been carried out, but it was also clear that there was more to be done.

Agreed:

- **The Learning and Development Strategy was available if anybody would like to request it contact the Secretariat.**

PART II – ITEMS TAKEN IN PRIVATE

20/2009 UPDATE ON DISPUTES

Agenda Item 10

The Authority was updated that a draft judgement was still awaited but expected at anytime.

Agreed:

- **A working group be established to consider the risks and exposures of the Judicial Review and make recommendations.**
- **The Authority to meet again before the end of March to agree the Authority budget and discuss the Judicial Review further.**

21/2009 AOB

Agenda Item 11

There was no AOB.

PART III – MEMBERS ONLY

22/2009 STRATEGIC DIRECTION SETTING

Agenda Item 12

The Members discussed the strategic direction of the police force and the recruitment of a new chief constable.

Agreed:

- **The specification should be extended following the discussion.**
- **The Panel of Members established to interview candidates be authorised to make the final decision on the appointment.**

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 24th June 12.30pm venue TBC

Signed.....

Chairman