

## Minutes

### Policing Plan Working Group

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009

**Venue:** Holiday Inn, Camden Lock

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#### Present:

Sir David O'Dowd (Chair)

Mr I Dobbs

#### Apologies:

Suzanne May

Mr J Weimar

Mr J King

Mr C Foxall

Mr L Adams

Mr R Gisby

#### In attendance:

Mr P Crowther, Deputy Chief Constable

Mr M Furness, T/Head of Strategic Development

Mr S Peel, T/Head Strategic Services

Ms C Crabtree, BTP Principal Analyst

Mr P Coen, Interim Chief Executive BTPA

Mrs S Elvy, Research & Policy Manager (Minutes)

Mr M Daventry, Communications Officer BTPA

### 01/2009 INTRODUCTION

#### Non Agenda

The Chair opened the meeting by thanking all attendees for their support in preparing the background materials. He updated the group that this year he had opened the Policing Plan process up to the all Authority Members and there had been significant interest in being involved. Due to unforeseen

circumstances some of the interested parties had been unable to attend; however they had forwarded feedback on the proposals to be taken under Agenda Item 2 (note in file).

The Chair then explained that he was seeking to achieve two outcomes from the meeting, first to agree the basic principles and direction of travel for future work on the 2010/11 BTP Policing Plan; second that the group knew what further progress and information to expect from the second meeting of the group in mid January. The Chair further explained that he believed the Force was the key driver of the Policing Plan process and that the Authority's role was not to rubber stamp a plan but to provide both challenge and support at key stages throughout the process.

By way of scene setting for the discussions to follow, the Chair wished to highlight a number of issues which would need to underpin the process of developing the 2010/11 Plan. First he asked for a view from the Force if, in the context of the 2008 Flanagan report, BTP was likely to be more or less risk averse in terms of a move towards greater local discretion. Second that in developing a Plan, the Force - and Authority - would need to be mindful of the financial framework that BTP would need to operate within. Also that this in turn would increase the need to robustly demonstrate outcomes delivered.

A further issue was how well placed the Force was to deliver on monitoring its work around a confidence agenda given its historic quite narrow focus on victims of crime/quality of service. Finally he stated that the general feedback received from stakeholders so far was that they were looking for the Force to broadly continue with its current approach and any significant departure from this would require some clear supporting communications. The Chair invited the Deputy Chief Constable to provide some introductory thoughts on the proposals to be discussed in more detail under Agenda Item 2.

The Deputy Chief Constable explained that the Force was conscious of its achievements in previous years but was also aware that a continuing focus on improving on past results might encourage dysfunctional behaviour. The feeling amongst the Senior Command Team was that maintaining current performance levels would itself be a challenge and

that perhaps a stage had been reached where the role of professional judgement and local discretion needed more detailed consideration. The Force also fully acknowledged the need to be mindful of the current financial operating context.

Key external/political drivers for the Force identified so far were the Home Office's move to a single confidence target, the HMIC's future inspections on this topic and the forthcoming rounded assessment process. The Force needed to be aware of both of these pieces of work and mindful of the challenges Home Office forces were having in terms of the time and money invested in making these measures of policing performance meaningful.

Also by way of scene setting, the Deputy Chief Constable also referred colleagues back to the representations made at the Authority's planning meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009. At this meeting, invited representatives from the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC), the Department for Transport (DfT) and Passenger Focus (PF) all encouraged the Force to focus on policing activities which would have a positive impact on passenger perception scores on the National Passenger Survey (NPS). This could involve activities related to minimising disruption to the rail network and in improving personal security. He suggested that it was therefore essential that there was synergy between these emerging stakeholder priorities and any Plan developed. Perhaps this could perhaps be captured in an overarching commitment within the Plan to reduce disruption and improve perceptions of personal security. This approach would also support the new Chief Constable's emerging 'Protect and Serve' vision for the Force and his desire to continue to refine the Force's focus on the activities and issues which had greatest impact on its industry and passenger stakeholders.

Mr Dobbs reported that this approach had received broad support at the ATOC Board meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October and confirmed that this focus on preventing disruption and improving perceptions of security was what the railway community wanted to achieve. Mr Dobbs added that although it had an extensive reach he wondered if the NPS was actually the best vehicle for measuring the Force's performance.

## **02/2009 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### Agenda Item 1

The proposed terms of reference for the Group were **agreed**.

## **03/2009 BTP PROPOSALS**

### Agenda Item 2

The Chair invited the Deputy Chief Constable to talk the Group through the proposed shape and themes for the 2010/11 Policing Plan. In doing so he also invited feedback from the Force on what work it had already done or planned to do to in relation to the following;

- Stakeholder communications on any significant changes in approach
- Balancing plans against the financial framework for the Force
- How baseline confidence data would be identified or captured if none currently existed
- Whether the model used by Scottish Area would be rolled out to other BTP Areas
- Any concerns about the bureaucracy involved in monitoring any proposed targets

The Deputy Chief Constable reiterated the need to consider the Force's proposals in terms of the external backdrop of a move at the Home Office towards a single confidence measure target and the need for BTP to at least consider this approach. In doing so the Force wanted to bring forward proposals around both 'reducing disruption' and 'improving confidence and personal safety' targets that brought together a number of indicators/measures as set out in section 3.5 of the supporting paper. The Force would also consider a range of locally developed targets though these would be fewer in number than in recent years. He further explained that this approach would enable BTP to have a meaningful dialogue with HMIC on the confidence agenda and to better evidence the work it was doing to improve experiences for rail passengers, staff and operators.

The Chair referred the Group to Mr Foxall's written representations (copy in file) on possible reservations

about/limitations of using the NPS as a vehicle for collecting data with which to evaluate the outcomes of the Force's activities. Specifically in terms of affecting changes in rail passenger confidence. He further asked what contingencies were in place should this approach prove problematic. The Deputy Chief Constable explained that the single confidence measure as evidence by an NPS score would be underpinned by a number of primary, secondary and tertiary indicators which were all part of the Force's future work on the citizen focus agenda. A draft suite of indicators was in development in support of early work on this topic (note circulated by Mr Furness in file).

The Deputy Chief Constable stated that the Force shared colleague's nervousness about whether PF could collect the information the Force needed and whether the NPS score could be used to measure the Force's performance and had considered a number of alternatives. At this stage one option offered by the Force was to make the NPS score a background indicator rather than a Policing Plan target. While undoubtedly a useful vehicle for collecting a large amount of data from rail passengers, Mr Dobbs advised exercising more general caution around an overly strong focus on the NPS and what influence its results actually had on operator behaviours.

Mr Coen suggested that it was essential for the Force, and Authority, to ensure that there were no gaps between the data the Force collected and what data was used to report performance to Area Commanders and stakeholders. It was also crucial that data wasn't being collected specifically to meet external drivers if the information wasn't itself a useful management tool. He asked whether the proposed questions on the NPS would actually allow the Force to get at the data which was police specific.

Mr Peel agreed that it was a challenge to frame appropriate question/questions on the NPS which would allow the Force to identify those issues upon which it actually had some leverage/influence. The Chair added that much of what was currently revealed by the NPS was the totality of the impact of activities of multiple partners. If further, and more prescribed, partnership working was needed to drive delivery of a confidence target (using NPS scores as an indicator) was this the right economic climate to be asking for more commitment from industry partners? Mr Dobbs agreed that this was relevant

concern and added that it was also unlikely that there would be much of an appetite at the moment for additional survey work if new data needed to be collected.

The Chair asked whether the proposed timeframes for adding/amending questions on the NPS were deliverable if this proposal was pursued. Mr Furness confirmed that although there were some concerns about this the Force was in regular dialogue with PF and they had been given reassurance that this was workable. The Chair asked whether similar data could be collected for London Underground Area as this was not captured by the NPS. Mr Furness explained that a similar survey was carried out on the Area by Transport for London and the NPS question(s) could be replicated on this survey.

Mr Dobbs alerted the Group to the fact that responses to questions about 'security' or 'policing' would not be specific to BTP as the travelling public did not generally identify BTP as distinct from Home Office forces nor did they distinguish between the different agencies involved in a whole range of activities related to personal security. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that the Force was mindful of this and that this was why a suite of underpinning indicators was currently being scoped to allow the Force to get the best possible data to allow it to track the impact of its own activities.

The Chair asked whether the Force was planning to undertake any work to gather any additional/new data from specific problem or hotspot areas across the rail network. The Deputy Chief Constable replied that although this would undoubtedly be a useful exercise it was unlikely to represent best use of resources at the present time.

The Chair asked what engagement had been planned with HMIC on the current proposals. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that the intention was to build in discussions with HMIC on the forthcoming plan at an early stage.

Mr Coen asked to return to the debate about the challenges of moving to a customer satisfaction indicator particularly when the data collected might not allow the Force to separate out the impact of its own inputs. He asked whether there was actually an opportunity view such performance information as

an indicator of BTP's contribution to the 'whole' personal security agenda on the railways? Accepting the limitations/reservations already expressed this was potentially more powerful information for the Force and Authority to have to hand when having discussions with PSA holders.

The Deputy Chief Constable asked for clarification about the process for agreeing HR related targets for 2010/11. He stated that his preferred approach would be for the Authority's HR Committee to have detailed discussions on the proposals and for recommendations to be brought back to this Group for consideration at a later stage. The Group agreed that this was the best approach and that the HR Committee was best placed for detailed discussions on such targets.

**Agreed: BTPA HR&R Committee to undertake initial discussions on HR targets for the 2010/11 Policing Plan.**

In response to the Chair's introductory remarks about the Force's response to the Flanagan report and acceptance of risk the Deputy Chief Constable also asked the group to note that internal discussions had taken place about the potential impact of the proposed change of focus away from notifiable crime volumes and detection rates. There was obviously an increased risk if local discretion was to be encouraged and this needed to be acknowledged at this early stage but would not necessarily prevent the Force from exploring this option.

Mrs Elvy asked whether the proposals for local targets referred to a roll out of the Scottish model used in 2009/10 or a continuation of the long thin targets other Areas had negotiated for the current year. The Deputy Chief Constable clarified that his message to Areas was to continue to build on the work had been done with local stakeholders in recent years and to plan to continue with the approach that they had taken in the current year. This was subject to remaining open to new opportunities and listening to feedback from local consultees.

Mrs Elvy then referred to the proposals to mirror the Home Office confidence question on the NPS. Acknowledging the earlier points made on the limitations of this approach, she asked the group to note that BTP did not have access to the same Home Office funding provided to territorial forces to support their piloting and roll out of survey work on public confidence. As the Deputy Chief Constable had stated earlier

in the meeting this would put BTP at something of a disadvantage in terms of having the resources to explore options for gathering new performance data.

The Chair referred the group to Mr Gisby's note on level crossing related incidents and asked what the Force's proposed approach was. The Deputy Chief Constable explained that while considerable progress had been made, this remained an important issue at a national level. That said the Force's approach was unlikely to be a simple reduction target next year and specific proposals required careful thought. As such BTP would plan to enter into dialogue with Network Rail at a national level and with individual operators and other stakeholders at a local level in developing any targets around this issue. Mr Dobbs added that this was actually a broader issue than just the role of the police and was linked to a range of historic risks so a collaborative approach on developing and delivering targets was essential.

The Chair asked for confirmation that the Force would continue to provide the lead on developing a draft Plan and any emerging targets to be considered at the next Group meeting. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that this was the case and that the emerging Policing plan would be reflected in the Force's departmental plans and would also draw on Ms Crabtree's current work on the Strategic assessment.

The Chair asked whether the key messages emerging from this meeting would be captured and reflected in external communications on the forthcoming Plan. He also asked that the Force would confirm that the issues of Counter Terrorism and the 2012 Olympics would remain high on the Force's agenda. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that he was meeting with the Force's Communications Team shortly to begin discussions on which key messages needed to be drawn out in the Plan and these points would be reflected in that discussion.

The Chair returned to the submissions provided by Members unable to attend and asked that the Group confirm that all issues raised had been captured in the discussion. Mrs Elvy noted that in addition to the issues already addressed Suzanne May wanted to register her support for the Force's proposals to focus on 'off peak' visibility as this activity resonated with issues that had been identified in a number of external studies



she had read. The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that work was ongoing around this indicator and further information would be brought back to the next meeting of the Group.

By way of providing feedback on the submissions made by Members who were unable to attend the Chair asked that Mr Furness provide an update for Mr King on the ongoing discussions about the inclusion of confidence questions on the NPS and the possible confidence target.

**Action: Mr Furness to provide some feedback for Mr King on the ongoing discussions on the inclusion of confidence questions on the NPS and any related Policing Plan target.**

Mr Dobbs then drew attention to Mr King's comments on a proposed target on football disorder. He recalled that discussions had taken place last year about considering a qualitative target on this subject. The essence of last year's discussion was that indicators such as 'numbers of banning orders' were internally useful they didn't reflect perceptions of improvements in the experiences of train staff and passengers. The Deputy Chief Constable explained that in reality the coming year would involve a process of carrying out baselining work in this area of work and this would need to reflect the issues raised by members of the group. The Chair asked the Force to provide some feedback to Mr King on the issues he raised on football policing and the collection of qualitative data.

**Action: Mr Furness to provide some feedback for Mr King on the issues he raised on football policing and the collection of qualitative data.**

The Chair asked whether members of the Group were content with the proposed timescales. Mr Dobbs offered an observation that there might be an opportunity to review the current planning structure in terms of evaluating whether the links between the Policing Plan and budget were appropriate. He proposed that the Policing Plan process could start earlier in future years to allow delivery of the Plan to be fed into later discussions about resources. Mr Coen confirmed that ideally the budget discussion should flow from the Policing Plan and that the ties between the two could be more explicit. However

this would need to be part of wider discussions about business processes to take place elsewhere.

**Agreed:** The Force to continue work on the development of a Plan as set out in proposals at Agenda Item 2 subject to the issues raised in the discussion under this item.

**04/2009 FEEDBACK FROM ATOC BOARD MEETING 15.10.09**

Agenda Item 3

Discussions during the introductory part of the meeting, and under Agenda Item 2, were **noted**.

**05/2009 AOB**

Agenda Item 4

There was no AOB.

The date of the next meeting is **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January**.