BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE

Agenda Item 6.1

REPORT TO:	**British Transport Police Authority**
DATE:	**30 September 2008**
SUBJECT:	**Planning Framework and National Policing Priorities**
SPONSOR:	**Deputy Chief Constable**
AUTHOR:	**Michael Furness**

1. PURPOSE OF PAPER

1.1 Under Sections 50-57 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, the British Transport Police Authority (BTPA) has a statutory duty to set policing priorities and targets and to publish a three year Strategic Plan, in line with guidance published by the Secretary of State.

1.2 New Home Office planning guidance has been published and came into effect on 14 March 2008. The Government's priorities for the police service have also changed, with a shift in focus towards fewer central targets, more local accountability and an emphasis on public confidence. Section 2 of this paper outlines the changes in planning guidance, whilst Section 3 summarises the change in national priorities for the police service.

2. PLANNING FRAMEWORK

2.1 Current Arrangements

Since 2005, British Transport Police (BTP) has complied as far as possible with the Home Office planning guidance document *'Best Value and Planning Guidance'*. This Guidance required forces to issue three year Strategic Plans as well as annual Policing Plans. BTP is currently in the first year of the 2008-11 Strategic Plan and is working towards a number of complementary operational objectives contained within the 2008-09 National Policing Plan. Each Area has an Area Policing Plan, which contains supplementary objectives which have been negotiated with local stakeholders and reflect local priorities and concerns.

2.2 This planning framework has worked very well for BTP over the last few years. Since 2005-06, overall notifiable crime has fallen by 11% and the notifiable detection rate has risen from 21%

to 32%. Detections per officer have risen from 5.9 to 6.8 over the same period. There has been significant success in targeting priority crime with reductions in areas such as line of route (22%), theft of passenger property (14%), staff assaults (14%) and robbery (46%). A detection rate of 52% for staff assaults has been achieved as well as a 48% detection rate for hate crime and 39% for robbery.

2.3 Particularly in the last two years, Area Commanders have been given increased autonomy over the make up of their local targets and have been encouraged to enter into meaningful dialogue with local stakeholders throughout the planning process. This, together with improvements in other areas such as the local tasking and coordinating meetings, has contributed to an improvement in relations between BTP and passenger and industry stakeholders on Area. There has also been an increase in the number of partnership targets and all Areas have a target around Neighbourhood Policing within their 2008-09 Area Policing Plans.

2.4 Revised Guidance

Home Office Circular 004 / 2008 *Policing Plan Regulations 2008 (Guidance)* commenced on 14 March 2008. It provides planning guidance to police authorities and chief officers under section 6ZB of the Police Act 1996 as inserted by the Police and Justice Act 2006.

2.5 Under this section, every police authority in England and Wales will be required to produce a plan before the beginning of each financial year setting out the authority's policing objectives for that financial year and proposed arrangements for policing in its area for a three year period beginning with that year (i.e. an annual, three-year rolling plan combining the Strategic Plan and Policing Plan). The authority's policing objectives will need to be consistent with the Secretary of State's strategic priorities set under Section 37A of the Police Act.

2.6 It is likely that revised guidance will be published later this year to consolidate some of the detail of the Green Paper, but this will not change the requirement for forces to move to three year rolling plans. Although there are some issues regarding the legal implications of these

amendments on BTP, the Department for Transport (DfT) has agreed in principle with representatives from BTPA and BTP that BTP would be able to mirror the requirements for Home Office forces as it currently does.

3. POLICING PRIORITIES

3.1 It is likely that the Home Secretary's Strategic Policing Priorities (SPPs) for 2009-10 will be based on the following SPPs:

- SPP1: Increase public confidence in the police through an emphasis on the implementation of the Policing Pledge and delivery of effective neighbourhood policing

- SPP2: Reduce crime in line with the national PSAs (23 and 25), including focusing on more serious violence (particularly involving the use of guns, knives, gangs and sexual offences) and anti-social behaviour

- SPP3: In line with PSA 24, work in partnership to deliver a more effective, transparent and responsive CJS for victims and the public

- SPP4: Work jointly to ensure that adequate capability and capacity exists across England and Wales to deliver effective policing to tackle serious and organised crime and to provide other protective services

- SPP5: Work with and through local communities to tackle counter-terrorism and violent extremism, in line with the CONTEST strategy and the counter-terrorism PSA

- SPP6: Police authorities and forces must maintain their focus on making the best use of resources, including achieving cashable improvements in efficiency and productivity, more effective deployment of the workforce and realising the benefits of new technology.

3.2 The recent Green Paper outlines the Government's key concern that, although crime has fallen steadily since 1995, with a further reduction of 18% achieved in the last four years, there has only been a relatively small rise in public confidence and satisfaction with the police.

3.3 In order to increase public confidence the Government is intending to move to a system in which the police service is held to account at a much more local level. The Policing Pledge and the publication of more local crime data (see Paper 6.4) is intended to better inform the public about the level of service they are receiving.

3.4 The Home Office has given a commitment that it will drop all top-down targets for police forces, with the exception of the issue of public confidence. The Government expects to see a substantial increase in public confidence over the next three years, reflected in the PSA indicator from the British Crime Survey that asks whether people think that the police and their partners are dealing with the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter locally.

3.5 BTP are reasonably well placed to integrate into this framework. The majority of operational targets are negotiated by Area Commanders and stakeholders and this fits well with the principle of local empowerment. Consideration could be given to devolving target setting to sector-level stakeholders or setting specific targets for Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

3.6 BTP's tasking meetings also provide a good forum in which the concerns of the local industry stakeholders and partners can be addressed. However, the views of passengers are not as well integrated into this system as they could be.

3.7 Although BTP cannot have the same public confidence target as Home Office forces (as this is measured by the British Crime Survey), the nearest equivalent is the Quality of Service target, which measures the overall satisfaction of victims of crime and has been a national target for three years. BTP has also been exploring the inclusion of future confidence indicators within the National Passenger Survey with Passenger Focus.

3.8 The key issue for BTP is the number of top down national Policing Plan targets, which are at present more than Home Office forces will have. Although these reflect the key concerns of stakeholders (i.e. fatalities, counter terrorism, crime reduction) and also key organisational activity (i.e. efficiencies, recruitment, diversity) in the context of the Green Paper they could be seen as being too numerous and not contributing directly to the key aim of increasing public confidence.

3.9 As mentioned in Section 2 of this Paper, the current planning process and performance regime has seen excellent returns, and has contributed significantly to the high levels of confidence that stakeholders have with BTP. The challenge in the future will be to keep those elements of the current process which have worked well and balance any shift towards a more 'citizen focused' approach with the needs and expectations of passengers and the rail industry.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 That a BTPA Policing Plan Subgroup is formed to work with the Deputy Chief Constable in producing the 2009-10 Policing Plan.

4.2 That the BTPA Policing Plan Subgroup consider the extent to which BTP could move towards a more 'citizen focused' approach to planning, whilst still meeting the needs and expectations of passengers and the rail industry.

4.3 That the BTPA Policing Plan Subgroup report initial findings to the 9 December 2008 BTPA meeting.

4.4 That BTP and the BTPA continue dialogue with the DfT with an aim to adopting Home Office planning guidance for 2009-10.