BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE

Agenda Item 6.3

REPORT TO:	**British Transport Police Authority**
DATE:	**30 September 2008**
SUBJECT:	**Recent Reports on Policing**
SPONSOR:	**Deputy Chief Constable**
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1. PURPOSE OF PAPER

1.1 Over the last 12 months there have been a number of reports, which have implications for BTP and the police service as a whole. Given the scope and importance of some of the these reports it is important that the key issues are discussed as early as possible. This paper summarises the most significant recent publications and outlines some of the possible implications for British Transport Police (BTP).

2. RECENT REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

This section contains a high level summary of the key reports; Appendix A provides more detailed information and analysis.

Sir Ronnie Flanagan: *Review of the Police Service*

2.1 Sir Ronnie Flanagan presented to the Home Secretary his interim report of his review of the police service on 12 September 2007. His final report was published on 7 February 2008. The review arose from the policy review '*Building on Progress: Security, Crime and Justice*', launched by the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in March 2007.

2.1.1 The report focuses on the need to better manage risks in order to reduce the threat to the public and reduce the harm caused by crime. It recommends that this is achieved by:

- freeing up space by improving and strengthening the structures and systems that support policing
- improving performance and developing the workforce through better management of resources

- freeing up space by reducing unnecessary bureaucracy
- delivering in partnership through neighbourhood policing and involving local people.

2.1.2 Other key recommendations in the final report suggest:

- reducing the amount of information routinely recorded for many crimes
- an overhaul of the current stop and account process
- adopting standardised forms
- removing the floors and ceilings from the operation of the police funding formula
- strengthening accountability of the police at a local level.

2.1.3 The Home Secretary responded immediately to the report, introducing a series of measures including scrapping the lengthy form used to record stop and accounts, and introducing a new standard one page form to record crime. Many of Sir Ronnie's recommendations are echoed within the Green Paper.

Civitas: *The Public & the Police'*

2.2 On 30 May 2008, journalist Harriet Sergeant's report, '*The Public & the Police'* was published by the right wing think tank Civitas. The report is highly critical asserting that the police are putting government targets ahead of serving the public and as a result criminalising usually law-abiding citizens for minor offences. Examples of the incidents the report claims are being treated as crimes which would have previously been dealt with informally or ignored include children chalking on the pavement and playing ball in the street.

2.2.1 Furthermore the report states that the pursuit of targets is skewed as those set by the Home Office are not weighted and so the same value is given to the police for cautioning a child who steals a chocolate bar as to the arrest and charging of a murderer. The report portrays a target culture as one where police are less likely to concentrate on complex crimes and also means that officers exercise less discretion when dealing with members of the public. The

author warns that such actions are damaging public relations with confidence in the police being lost.

2.2.2 Ms Sergeant argues that targets miss the point of what the public wants. She states that the Home Office judges each police force by how many crimes they detect yet the public would rather see a reduction in crime.

Institute for Public Policy Research: *The New Bill: Modernising The Police Workforce*

2.3 The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) published a report in February 2008 regarding ways in which improvements in productivity in policing could be achieved. The report proposes that police workforce structures should be reconfigured to have a more skilled specialised workforce; there should be more use of mixed teams of warranted officers and specialist support staff and that training and development should be refocused to fill key skills gaps.

2.3.1 The report highlights a range of problems with current police reward arrangements stating that current pay arrangements based on length of service do not encourage the development of skills that are much needed in policing. It recommends that tenure-related increments beyond two, or at most five, years should be ended and the current competency related threshold payment scheme should be scrapped.

IPPR: *A New Beat: Options For More Accountable Policing*

2.4 The IPPR published its report 'A New Beat' in June 2008 and it considers the ways in which the police could be held more accountable. The document is a critique of the current tripartite structure and concludes that police authorities must be radically reformed. It asserts that police authorities are weak, unaccountable and remote, while elected local government has no effective say over local policing priorities.

2.4.1 The report identifies *'citizen focused policing'* and *'increased local accountability'* as ways of improving responsiveness and raising performance. Six options for increased accountability

are considered: directly elected police commissioners; directly elected police authorities; giving local authorities control of community policing, giving local authorities greater influence over community policing, a mayoral model and local police boards.

Local Government Association: *Answering To You: Policing In The 21st Century*

2.5 In anticipation of the Green Paper on policing from the Home Office, the Local Government Association (LGA) published this discussion paper which *"is very much the LGA's own 'Green Paper' on the subject, rather than the Association's definitive view on the issue of police accountability".*

2.5.1 The report identifies twelve components to improve policing. These include merging police authorities and local authorities, so local police accountability is exercised through local authorities; for merged police and local authorities to set the strategic context of police budgets, and to amend that context as necessary; for Basic Command Units (BCU) commanders to be given fully devolved budget responsibility, with existing BCU funds to be given to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Satefy Partnerships to commission services from their BCU commander; and for the concept of Chief Constables' operational independence to be replaced by operational responsibility.

Cabinet Office: *Engaging Communities In Fighting Crime*

2.6 This influential Cabinet Office review was undertaken by Louise Casey, the former head of the Government's Respect Task Force. Ms Casey sets the tone for this wide ranging report by declaring that *"Nothing short of a revolution is needed in the way that the consumer is served – and by consumer we mean primarily ordinary, law abiding citizens and victims of crime".* The report looks at five broad areas: putting victims, witnesses and other law-abiding citizens first; fighting crime and delivering justice for communities; a new approach to crime statistics; the citizen's role in tackling crime; and freedoms and accountability.

2.6.1 The review makes 32 specific proposals for change, including: the publications of monthly crime maps on the internet; giving more power to Police Community Support Officers; reducing

the police paperwork that keeps officers off the beat; the introduction of Community Crime-Fighters with the intention of involving the public; and dropping centrally imposed police targets and replacing them with a less rigid 'measure of public confidence'.

Overview

2.7 With so many reports being produced over a relatively short space of time and by groups with distinct agendas, there are inevitably conflicting recommendations and conclusions. However, several common themes can be identified:

- The police service should be more responsive to local concerns
- The police service should be more accountable to local communities
- The police service should have less central targets and should be free to concentrate on the priorities that matter to local communities
- Neighbourhood policing should be embedded within mainstream policing
- Red tape and bureaucracy should be reduced
- The tripartite structure should be reviewed, especially the role of police authorities.

2.7.1 Many of these themes also run through the Home Office Green Paper *'From the Neighbourhood to the National – Policing Our Communities Together",* which was published on 17 July 2008. The key aspects of the Green Paper are outlined in Paper 6.4.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That members note the contents of this Paper.