

**BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT RAILTRACK PLC EUSTON SQUARE NW1
LONDON
ON THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2001 AT 2.30 PM**

Present

Mr J Jerram CBE (in the Chair); Dr Helen Atkinson; Mr D Heseldin;
Mrs Diana Lamplugh OBE; Dr M Mitchell; Sir Trefor Morris CBE QPM;
Mr S Osborne; Mr A Shooter; Mr D Smith;

In Attendance

Mr D J Williams QPM LL.B., Chief Constable; Mr C Somani, Finance &
Admin. Director BTP; Mr D Riddle, Clerk to Committee; ACC Paul
Nicholas

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1PL2001 MINUTES 14 DECEMBER 2000

The Minutes of the meeting on 14 December were approved.

2PL2001 CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

The Chief Constable's Report covered the quarter ended December 2000. Presenting the analysis of crime trends and force performance, the Chief Constable highlighted the following points –

- The comparison of crime trends with Home Office forces reflected in some instances the effect of changes in Home Office policies, for example in respect of drug related offences;
- The analysis of crimes in ratio to passenger journeys continued to present a favourable picture.
- The rate of detections was still unsatisfactory. This was being monitored by the Force Management Team to ensure that the new structures delivered results.
- The crime figures showed that the numbers of sex offences, line of route offences and ticket frauds were all declining. On the other hand the incidence of theft of personal property and robbery was increasing.
- Performance monitoring showed that the level of satisfaction amongst rail staff was dropping, and this was a matter of concern.
- The force had still to develop its approach to partnerships. Operation Fraser had illustrated that it harder to get resources allocated in a partnership involving a number of TOCs (when compared with Operation Farrow with LU). The force had yet to find the mechanism to share best practice across areas to enhance effectiveness of joint working.
- There was a need for an increased focus on trespass and vandalism at national level.

The Chief Constable advised the committee with regard to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, discussed at the last meeting, that West Mercia Police had been commended to him as a model of practice, and contact would be made with that force to see what could be learned.

- *ACTION*
- *FOLLOW UP ON WEST MERCIA REGARDING ASBO'S – CHIEF CONSTABLE*

3PL2001 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – 2000/1 MONITORING REPORT

The monitoring report from the Chief Constable and Finance Director forecast an underspending of £1.165m at the year end, taking account of the full effect of the reduced pensions contributions in the current year.

The Committee gave guidance to the Finance Director regarding the indebtedness of one police services user, to the effect that they should be given 14 days to pay the undisputed amount of their police charges, failing which legal proceedings should be commenced.

The Clerk advised the Committee, in response to a question, that work was in hand to compute charges for a new passenger TOC that had started operations in 2000, with a view to making consequential adjustments to the charges levied on other TOCs.

- *ACTION:*
- *CHIEF CONSTABLE TO REPORT ON OUTTURN AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE – FINANCE DIRECTOR*
- *LEGAL ACTION TO BE STARTED TO RECOVER ARREARS FROM SPECIFIED TOC UNLESS PAYMENT OF UNDISPUTED AMOUNT RECEIVED WITHIN 14 DAYS. – FINANCE DIRECTOR AND CLERK*

4PL2001

BUDGET 2001/2

The Chief Constable and Director of Finance presented their report with a proposed budget for 2001/2, in line with the outline given to the committee at its meeting in December, and in accordance with the Committee's guidance that there should be no increase in police charges.

The report recommended a budget for the year 2001/2 of £96.5m for the overground railway and £25.5m for London Underground. The figure for the overground railway represented a standstill budget, with no increase in police charges. This had been made possible, mainly, by the surplus position of the BTP Superannuation Scheme (for police officers) on its most recent actuarial valuation. Prompt action by the Force, the BRB and the Pension Fund Trustees resulted in agreement on a waiver of Employers' contributions for a period. This gave rise to a benefit of c£4.8m in 2001/2 for the force excluding LU Area.

Derek Smith confirmed that the proposed budget for LU Area was not yet formally agreed but was within LU's plans. A decision would be made by London Underground how it wished to utilise the benefit of reduced pension contributions in its area, by improving services or reducing costs.

In discussion on the proposals

- Members agreed that if the transfer to SRA has an adverse impact on the Force's position for VAT, then the SRA should be asked to make the necessary provision;
- Members considered that it was important to maintain the visibility of BTP at railway stations, and this should be taken into account in allocating funds for the capital investment programme;
- It was noted that the Force was planning to introduce modern methods for investment appraisal;
- The Finance Director was asked to circulate a note showing exactly what the budget would provide by way of growth in police officer staff.

The Committee decided that for this budget the whole of the benefit from reduced pensions contributions should be applied towards revenue costs. Taking account of other economies proposed by the Chief Constable, the budget at the level approved would provide full year funding for extra Constables and specials, whilst playing a part in assisting the industry recovery.

DECIDED

That the budget as set out in the report of the Chief Constable be approved

- ***ACTION:***
- ***BUDGET FOR 2001/2 TO BE DEVELOPED ON THE BASIS OF THE OUTLINE BUDGET BUT WITH A ZERO INCREASE IN POLICE CHARGES***
- ***FINANCE DIRECTOR TO CIRCULATE A NOTE ON PLANNED GROWTH IN POLICE NUMBERS – FINANCE DIRECTOR***
- ***SRA TO BE ASKED TO MAKE PROVISION FOR VAT IF NECESSARY – FINANCE DIRECTOR***

5PL2001

POLICING PLAN AND BEST VALUE PLAN 2001/2

The Committee received the draft Policing Plan for the year 2001/2, with the recommendations from the Policing Plan Working Group (that had met immediately before the Committee) that the plan be approved subject to a number of amendments.

The draft Plan contained objectives defined by reference to three main themes: Improving Personal Safety; Reducing Railway Disruption; Tackling Property Crime. The Plan would set specific targets, against which the force performance will be monitored, to reduce violence against the person, robberies and sexual offences; to reduce serious line of route offences; to reduce theft of personal property and vehicle crime; and to increase detection rates. It would also set targets to reduce sickness absence levels, and for recruitment of visible ethnic minority staff. The draft Plan

provided a framework for Area level objectives and targets set in consultation with local stakeholders and customer groups. The Area objectives would not be formally part of the Policing Plan but were presented for approval and subsequent monitoring by the Committee. The draft Plan also proposed how the force and the Committee should proceed in implementing Best Value in the year ahead, with a corporate review of all policing services, the development of new consultative machinery, and two pilot reviews.

The Working Group recommended that amendments should be made to address the following points –

- The target for reducing sickness should be set at a more challenging level for the force as a whole;
- The plan should clarify that the 2001/2 should be Year 1 of the Best Value programme for the force, and that the force would engage with Best Value reviews in the course of the year in order to produce results;
- Area targets should be expressed in terms that show them to be challenging and relevant.

The Working Group also recommended that the Plan be published widely in the industry and amongst passengers. They noted the intention that each of the Area Plans will be published within the Area.

DECIDED

The Committee approved the draft Plan subject to textual amendments to deal with the matters raised by the Working Group. The Chairman was authorised to settle the final text, in conjunction with the Deputy Chief Constable.

- ACTION
- THE FINAL TEXT OF THE PLAN TO BE SETTLED BY THE CHAIRMAN WITH THE DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE
- PLAN TO BE PUBLISHED WIDELY WITHIN THE INDUSTRY AND AMONGST RAIL STAFF IN PARTICULAR – CHIEF CONSTABLE

6PL2001 MOSSEND RAILWAY ACCIDENT

At the meeting of the Committee in December 2000, one Member questioned the force's handling of this incident, based on media reports and third party accounts of the event. The Committee asked the Chief Constable to present a report as to what had happened. Subsequently the matter was the subject of further adverse media coverage.

The Chief Constable had tasked the ACC (Territorial Operations) to carry out a full review of the incident. He interviewed all relevant police officers, the Rail Incident Officer from Railtrack, and relevant staff of Virgin Rail (the train operator). He also met the Chief Executive of Virgin Rail, Chris Green. He presented his review to the Committee.

The Chief Constable considered that the review pointed to a number of areas where the Rail Industry as a whole, including and with British Transport Police, could do better to look after the interests of passengers in incidents.

In the course of debate, a number of Members commented that the industry and media response to this matter exposed the undesirable tensions inherent in the current "user pays" arrangement.

Following a full discussion, the Committee unanimously thanked the Assistant Chief Constable for an exemplary report, which explained very fully what had happened and why. They accepted the Report in full, and agreed that it showed no grounds for criticism of any BTP officer. The Committee considered that a version of the report, omitting only the confidential material, should be prepared and given wide circulation within Railtrack and the TOCs.

The Committee also fully endorsed the view held by the Chief Constable, that there were lessons to be derived from the Moss End incident which the force could usefully discuss and develop with industry colleagues. In particular: -

- The emphasis that has been placed on the use of the expression *Crime Scene*, and the need to develop a shared understanding of the police role in the protection and preservation of evidence at an incident for the benefit of the technical investigators.
- Action to ensure that that key personnel representing the companies involved are aware of how to gain access to the inner cordon and/or to passengers, and to ensure that no unnecessary obstacles get in the way of the companies providing for the welfare of their customers.
- The need for, and the methods used in, recording the names and addresses of passengers.
- Ensuring that any subsequent alterations to respective Emergency Manuals are mutually compatible, and supported by Training Exercises.

In the course of the public debate about Moss End, the suggestion had been made that there should be a forum for joint working on procedures and passenger welfare, involving the industry, the RPC, BTP and other police. The Committee felt that had much to commend it, and will move forward towards convening such a forum for discussions and joint working.

- *ACTION*
- *A VERSION OF REVIEW REPORT TO BE PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION AND SENT TO INTERESTED PARTIES – ACC (TERRITORIAL OPS) AND CLERK*
- *PROGRESS TOWARDS FORUM FOR JOINT WORKING ON PROCEDURES AND PASSENGER WELFARE – CHIEF CONSTABLE AND CLERK*
- *CHIEF OFFICER TO MEET WITH RPC COUNCIL OR SAFETY TASKFORCE – CHIEF CONSTABLE*

7PL2001 MACPHERSON REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS – ACTION PLAN

The Chief Constable's report on action being taken towards implementation of the Action Plan was noted.

8PL2001 TRAVEL FACILITIES FOR POLICE OFFICERS

The Committee considered the recent agreement between the Metropolitan Police Service and ATOC to provide free residential travel for Met Police officers up to a radius of 70 miles from central London. The Chief Constable mentioned that the City of London Police had struck a similar deal. This meant that Met Officers now had better travel facilities than those BTP Officers who have been recruited since 1994 (when the former BRB travel scheme ceased for new entrants). The Committee noted that this would have an adverse impact on recruitment and retention of BTP officers, and agreed that an approach be made to ATOC for a similar level of travel facilities for BTP officers.

- *ACTION*
- *REQUEST TO ATOC FOR SIMILAR TRAVEL FACILITIES FOR BTP OFFICERS TO BE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE - CLERK*

9PL2001 POLICE RADIO SYSTEM – PSRCS

The Clerk reported that discussions were continuing with DETR and Home Office to secure funding for BTP participation on the national radio system.

10PL2001 STRATEGIC RAIL AUTHORITY

The Committee noted and approved an interim statement of delegated authorities, pending agreement on a protocol defining relationships between SRA and the Committee.

11PL2001 HMIC INSPECTION – SCOTTISH AREA BTP

The Clerk circulated a pre-publication copy of the Report of HMIC following the inspection of BTP Scottish Area, and agreed that the published version of the report should be circulated to all relevant interested parties, including government.

The Chief Constable will present his response to the HMIC Inspection to the Committee meeting in May.

12PL2001 STRATEGIC REVIEW OF RAILWAY POLICING

The Committee agreed to appoint a Steering Group to oversee the implementation of the strategic review of railway policing. The Steering Group will settle terms of reference for the review, and appoint appropriate advisers or consultants. Key stakeholders, including the SRA, will be consulted on the draft terms of reference. The Committee aim to gear up for the review to start as soon as practicable but so that the new Chief Constable can be involved from the outset.

- *ACTION*
- *REFINE DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CONSULT STAKEHOLDERS - CLERK*
- *CONVENE MEETING OF STEERING GROUP - CLERK*

13PL2001 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF CONSTABLE

The Committee noted with pleasure that Mr Ian Johnston QPM, currently an Assistant Commissioner in the Metropolitan Police Service, had accepted appointment as Chief Constable and would take up his duties on 1 May 2001. The present Chief Constable, David Williams QPM, would retire on 7 April but his last day at work would be 26th February. Between 26th February and 1st May, the Deputy Chief Constable, Mr. Tony Lake, would have command of the force.

14PL2001 COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE SUB COMMITTEE

Sir Trefor Morris presented the report of the Sub-committee. The Committee asked the Sub-Committee to arrange for a more detailed report on legal actions against the force to be submitted to a future meeting for consideration.

- *ACTION*
- *REPORT ON LEGAL CASES TO BE PREPARED FOR SUB-COMMITTEE - CHIEF CONSTABLE AND CLERK*

15PL2001 TRIBUTE TO THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked David Williams for his service as Chief Constable, and presented him with a retirement gift, expressing good wishes to Mr and Mrs Williams for the future.

Signed

Chairman

Date.....