

**BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT FORCE HEADQUARTERS LONDON  
ON THURSDAY 10 MAY 2001 AT 2.30 PM**

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**Present**

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

**Apologies**

Mrs Diana Lamplugh OBE

**In Attendance**

Mr I Johnston, Chief Constable; Mr. A Lake, Deputy Chief Constable; Mr  
A Forrest, Assistant Chief Constable; Mr C Somani, Finance & Admin.  
Director BTP; Mr D Riddle, Clerk to Committee; Inspector W Baker;  
Miss K Sanderson, Chief Accountant SRA

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## **16PL2001 MINUTES 15 FEBRUARY 2001**

The Minutes of the meeting on 15 February were approved.

In connection with Minute 2PL2001, the Chief Constable confirmed that action was in hand to follow up the West Mercia procedures on anti- social behaviour orders. D. Heseldin commented, with reference to the same Minute, that national initiatives were being planned by the industry with HSE and RPC to combat vandalism. Dr. Mitchell mentioned the increase in graffiti vandalism on First Great Western trains.

Dr. Mitchell advised the Committee that ATOC had not yet considered the request for travel facilities for BTP police officers equivalent to the facilities granted to the Metropolitan Police (Minute 8PL2001).

## **17PL2001 CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT**

Mr Johnston presented the report, expressing pleasure at his arrival in post. He reminded the Committee that period covered was to the end of March 2001, which preceded his arrival.

The Chief Constable highlighted several areas for concern, notably the increases in robbery in London south, the continuing low level of detections, and the decline in satisfaction levels amongst railway staff. He also shared the concerns articulated previously about sickness levels in the force. He drew attention to the favourable trends in line of route offences, but cautioned that the figures could be misleading because of classification errors in recording.

Mr. Johnston briefed the Committee on the part played by the force on May 1<sup>st</sup>, which had drawn praise from the industry and government. The cost of the deployments that day was about £450,000. He also commented on the progress of the inquiries into the murder of a traveller at Euston following robbery. This incident had generated a good deal of publicity about BTP officer numbers. To put the incident in perspective, he advised the Committee that offences involving theft from the person occurred at the rate of only 1 a week at Euston.

The train derailment at Charing Cross on 1<sup>st</sup> May had given him opportunity to witness how BTP dealt with such incidents. From his own observations at the scene and discussions later with industry representatives (which had included an explanation of the costs incurred by the industry as a result of such incidents) he was clear about the need for further thinking about, and a changed approach to, BTP's response to such incidents. It was suggested that at Charing Cross, the performance penalties would have been halved had only two, rather than four, platforms been taken out of use by the police. The use of the expression "crime scene" had once again provoked criticism, and he assured the Committee that work was in hand to develop an alternative expression that would be meaningful to other emergency services.

The Chief Constable gave the Committee his very preliminary observations on the state of the force and relationships with the industry. He explained that he was stressing within the force that a new emphasis had to be given to Quality, Integrity and Performance.

In discussion on the report, the following main points arose: -

- The comparison of notifiable offences in Section 1.1 should in future be presented only once a year.
- Dr. Atkinson proposed, and it was agreed, that the level and trend of recorded offences should, once a year, be examined over a five year retrospective period, and against policing plan targets over the same period, as context for target setting for the forthcoming year.
- D. Heseldin drew attention to the problematic increase in violence at Leeds station and on night trains on the trans – Pennine route.

- Objective 3(a) had been met; the report was corrected.
- The Chief Constable commented that ethnic recruiting would remain a major challenge for the force in the year ahead, despite meeting the overall target to date.
- Sickness absence remained an area for vigorous action. The scale of the problem was equivalent to 100 police officers. Performance on sickness was to be reported to each meeting alongside the policing plan targets

The Chairman reminded the Chief Constable that the committee would in future be looking for frank and open accounting for performance, and, in any case where targets were not being met, for an explanation of the remedial action being taken. The Chief Constable responded that the force was striving to put those disciplines in place throughout the management chain.

- **ACTION**
- **COMPARISON OF NOTIFIABLE OFFENCES WITH HOME OFFICE FORCES SHOULD BE REPORTED ONLY ONCE A YEAR AT THE MEETING FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF HOME OFFICE DATA – CHIEF CONSTABLE**
- **ONCE EACH YEAR THE COMMITTEE SHOULD RECEIVE A REPORT SHOWING THE LEVEL OF RECORDED OFFENCES OVER THE PRECEDING FIVE YEARS AND COMPARED WITH POLICING PLAN TARGETS OVER THE PERIOD – CHIEF CONSTABLE**

#### **18PL2001 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – ESTIMATED OUTTURN 2000/1 AND MONITORING REPORT 2001/2**

The Finance Director reported that the provisional outturn for 2000/1 was for an underspend of c £100,000 for the railway and £400,000 for LUL after full allowance for the effects of the pensions contribution holiday. The outturn had been affected by the costs incurred in the Selby Rail accident, which would be up to £600,000 over the two financial years.

The Committee noted the improvement in debtors resulting from the outsourcing of credit control, and requested that the performance of the credit managers should continue to be closely monitored.

In considering the budget for the current year, the Committee noted the report of the Finance Director that a provision of £2.9m was required as a result of advice from Auditors about the accounting treatment of the pensions holiday. The Chairman recommended that as this was concerned with an accounting entry rather than a cash cost, there was no justification for any adjustment to the police charges for the current year. When charges were next reviewed it would be a matter for consideration whether and to what extent the provisions should be reflected. It was agreed unanimously that, subject to any issue arising from the interpretation of the PSA, the matter be dealt with by appropriate accounting provisions.

Dr Mitchell asked if the costs of policing May 1<sup>st</sup> could be recovered from any third party. The Chief Constable advised that in his view the force had to bear these costs for protecting the railway and underground.

- **ACTION:**
- **THE PERFORMANCE OF THE CREDIT CONTROL MANAGERS BE MONITORED – FINANCE DIRECTOR**
- **PROVISION TO BE MADE FOR THE PENSIONS HOLIDAY AND NO ADJUSTMENT BE MADE TO CHARGES IN THE CURRENT YEAR – FINANCE DIRECTOR**

#### **19PL2001 HMIC INSPECTION SCOTLAND – REPORT AND ACTION PLAN**

ACC Forrest presented a report showing the response of the force to the recommendations of HMIC, and the work underway to address the recommendations. The Chairman complimented the ACC and the Area generally for achieving such a satisfactory inspection.

- **ACTION**

- *FOLLOW UP REPORT ON ACTION TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS IN NOVEMBER 2001 – CHIEF CONSTABLE*
- *HMIC AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES TO BE ADVISED OF RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS – CLERK*

**20PL2001      BEST VALUE PLAN 2001/2 – PROGRESS**

The Chief Constable asked the committee to approve the proposed overall approach to Best Value, including the use of challenge panels for each Best Value Review.

The Deputy Chief Constable spoke to the proposal for the review of Sickness, emphasising that this was intended to be a practical study with beneficial outcomes, rather than an academic exercise. Much of the work shown had already been started, and he estimated that it would take about 6 weeks to complete the review. The Chief Constable commented that managing sickness was already on the agenda for the force management, and that action would not be postponed pending the BV report. However, he agreed with the Deputy's assessment that it was important that the BV Review be conducted thoroughly as a basis for future processes to manage sickness better.

- *ACTION*
- *CHALLENGE PANELS TO BE IMPLEMENTED – DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE AND CLERK*
- *TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR BV REVIEW OF SICKNESS APPROVED; REVIEW TO PROCEED – DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE*
- *REPORT ON THE REVIEW TO NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE – DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE*

**21PL2001      MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The Clerk withdrew the circulated report on this subject, explaining that it was now known that DETR would soon be promulgating a Code of Conduct for Members of, inter-alia, Police Authorities, which should be used as the basis for a Code for the Committee. He would report to the next meeting with a proposed Code of Conduct.

The Committee asked that a draft of the proposed Code be circulated in advance to all Members in order that any comments could be fed back in good time.

- *ACTION*
- *REPORT TO NEXT MEETING WITH DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT BASED ON DETR MODEL FOR POLICE AUTHORITIES - CLERK*

**22PL2001      STRATEGIC REVIEW OF RAILWAY POLICING**

The Clerk reported on draft terms of reference for the review, and on the favourable responses to consultation from HMIC, and the SRA.

The Committee agreed to the appointment of a Steering Group to oversee the appointment of consultants and the progress of the review, with a view to getting the resulting Report on the Review for consideration at the December 2001 meeting.

The Chief Constable stated that he welcomed the concept of the strategic review, and would want to make a full contribution to the review. He told the Committee that he intended to embark on the preparation of a strategic plan for the force to provide the context for the Policing Plan for 2002/3. He considered that this would be entirely compatible with the strategic review, and that it would form part of the force's input to the strategic review. He would share the strategic plan with the committee in due course. Members agreed that both exercises could proceed in a complementary way.

- *ACTION*
- *STEERING GROUP APPOINTED COMPRISING THE CHAIRMAN, SIR TREFOR MORRIS, DR. MITCHELL, SIMON OSBORNE AND DEREK SMITH – CLERK*
- *SEND COPY OF LETTER TO ATOC TO DR. MITCHELL – CLERK*
- *REPORT ON FORCE STRATEGIC PLAN TO A FUTURE MEETING – CHIEF*

*CONSTABLE*

## **23PL2001 STRATEGIC RAIL AUTHORITY – RELATIONSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Clerk reported on the outcome of discussions with the SRA about the respective responsibilities of the SRA and the Committee, with proposals for some enhancements in the arrangements for governance of the Committee. The Committee approved the recommendation to appoint a Treasurer (and appointed Miss Karen Sanderson, Chief Accountant of the SRA), and authorised the Chairman to approve a service level agreement with the SRA. The Committee also agreed to establish an Audit Panel, but did not agree that this Panel should have responsibility for Best Value, preferring that all Best Value business be dealt with by the full Committee.

- *ACTION*
- *THE COMMITTEE APPOINT MISS K ANDERSON AS TREASURER ON THE BASIS OUTLINED IN THE REPORT - CLERK*
- *THE CHAIRMAN BE AUTHORISED TO APPROVE A SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH SRA – CLERK*
- *AN AUDIT PANEL BE APPOINTED WITH TERMS OF REFERENCE AS OUTLINED IN THE REPORT BUT EXCLUDING HMIC INSPECTIONS AND BEST VALUE - CLERK*

## **24PL2001 POLICE RADIO SYSTEM – AIRWAVE – PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee noted with pleasure, from the report of the Clerk, that Government funding had been obtained for the costs of the radios and other hardware, and that the bid for revenue funding equivalent to Home Office forces was progressing. The Chairman expressed the Committee's appreciation of the support received from DETR officials, and from the Force.

The Chief Constable reported on progress towards implementation of the national Airwave project.

The Committee was concerned that little progress had yet been made towards the objective of having a single radio that would operate above and below ground for officers on London Underground. This required cooperation between the suppliers of the new radio system for LUL and BT and the radio suppliers for BTP. Derek Smith confirmed that LUL also attached great importance to this objective and were taking steps in respect of their suppliers.

The Chairman suggested that all the organisations should treat this issue as of the utmost importance. He was willing to seek to convene a meeting of the senior executives of the suppliers concerned to secure a dialogue and progress. Sir Trefor indicated that PITO was well aware of the problem and would work with BTP towards a solution, in view of the importance for the Metropolitan Police and other emergency services. He had urged the Force It Manager to commission a technical study.

It was agreed that the Clerk and the Assistant Chief Constable should prepare a paper outlining the key issues and the steps that needed to be taken to secure a solution, as soon as practicable.

- *ACTION*
- *PAPER OUTLINING THE PROBLEM AND ACTIONS REQUIRED TOWARDS SOLUTION – CLERK AND ACC SUPPORT SERVICES*

## **25PL2001 POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER DATABASE AUDIT**

The committee noted the report of the Chief Constable about issues concerning the data integrity of the Police National Computer system and the work required of all forces, including BTP, to remedy matters.

**26PL2001      FORCE HQ RELOCATION**

The Committee noted the progress on identifying an alternative location for Force HQ, and stressed that the Chief Constable should undertake a vigorous review of the functions that needed to be at HQ, as part of the planning process before any decision is taken about the space requirement.

- *ACTION*
- *REVIEW OF HQ FUNCTIONS/SPACE TO BE CARRIED OUT - FINANCE DIRECTOR*

**27PL2001      HMIC INSPECTION OF THE FORCE**

The Clerk reported that HMIC would shortly commence the triennial Inspection of the force in England and Wales, and would be focussing on a number of topics reflecting areas of concern to the Committee.

**28PL2001      DNA SAMPLING PROGRAMME – FUNDING**

The Committee noted with pleasure that the Home Office has acceded to the request that BTP should have funding for additional sampling, on the same basis as other forces.

**29PL2001      PASSENGER CARE FORUM – RAIL ACCIDENTS**

Following the discussion on the Mossend rail incident and the publication of the ACC's Report, the Committee agreed that the Chairman should convene a preliminary meeting of interested parties.

- *ACTION*
- *CHAIRMAN TO CONVENE MEETING - CLERK*
- *ISSUES PAPER TO BE PREPARED - CHIEF CONSTABLE*

**30PL2001      COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE SUB COMMITTEE**

Sir Trefor Morris presented the report of the Sub-committee. The Committee were reminded that a detailed report on legal actions against the force was to be submitted to a future meeting for consideration.

The Sub – Committee has considered a report from the Clerk following preliminary inquiries into a complaint against senior officers made by a former BTP Constable. The Sub-Committee had made decisions on the matter, which they requested the Committee to endorse. The Committee endorsed those decisions.

- *ACTION*
- *REPORT ON LEGAL CASES TO BE PREPARED FOR SUB-COMMITTEE - CHIEF CONSTABLE AND CLERK*
- *DECISIONS MADE BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE IN CONNECTION WITH COMPLAINT AGAINST SENIOR OFFICERS ENDORSED - CLERK*

Signed .....

Chairman

Date.....