

**BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT FORCE HEADQUARTERS LONDON  
ON THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER 2001 AT 9.30 AM**

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**Present**

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

**In Attendance**

Mr I Johnston, Chief Constable; Mr. A Lake, Deputy Chief Constable; Mr  
C Hulley, 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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**CONTENTS**

<a href="#">56PL2001</a>	<a href="#">MINUTES 19 JULY 2001</a> .....	2
<a href="#">57PL2001</a>	<a href="#">INSPECTION OF THE FORCE 2001 – PRESENTATION BY MR. P WINSHIP</a> .....	2
<a href="#">58PL2001</a>	<a href="#">CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT</a> .....	3
<a href="#">59PL2001</a>	<a href="#">FORCE STRATEGIC PLAN</a> .....	4
<a href="#">60PL2001</a>	<a href="#">FINANCIAL RESULTS 2001/2 AND FORECAST</a> .....	5
<a href="#">61PL2001</a>	<a href="#">BEST VALUE REVIEW – SICKNESS ABSENCE</a> .....	5
<a href="#">62PL2001</a>	<a href="#">THE CULLEN REPORT – LADBROKE GROVE RAIL INQUIRY</a> .....	6
<a href="#">63PL2001</a>	<a href="#">CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR TERRORISM</a> .....	6
<a href="#">64PL2001</a>	<a href="#">AIRWAVE AND LONDON UNDERGROUND</a> .....	6
<a href="#">65PL2001</a>	<a href="#">FUNDING FOR AIRWAVE</a> .....	6
<a href="#">66PL2001</a>	<a href="#">POLICING PLAN 2002/3</a> .....	7
<a href="#">67PL2001</a>	<a href="#">APPOINTMENT OF ACC SCOTLAND</a> .....	7
<a href="#">68PL2001</a>	<a href="#">POLICE CHARGES – DISPUTES</a> .....	7
<a href="#">69PL2001</a>	<a href="#">STRATEGIC REVIEW OF RAILWAY POLICING</a> .....	7
<a href="#">70PL2001</a>	<a href="#">AUDIT PANEL</a> .....	7
<a href="#">71PL2001</a>	<a href="#">POLICE PAY</a> .....	8
<a href="#">72PL2001</a>	<a href="#">FORCE HQ RELOCATION</a> .....	8
<a href="#">73PL2001</a>	<a href="#">CIVIL CLAIMS AND EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL CLAIMS AGAINST THE FORCE</a> .....	8
<a href="#">74PL2001</a>	<a href="#">COMPLAINTS &amp; DISCIPLINE SUB-COMMITTEE</a> .....	8

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**56PL2001      MINUTES 19 JULY 2001**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July were approved.

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**57PL2001      INSPECTION OF THE FORCE 2001 – PRESENTATION BY MR. P WINSHIP**

Mr. Peter Winship, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, attended the meeting to brief the Committee on his Inspection of the Force during the summer of 2001. The full report of the Inspection would be published as soon as practicable. Inspector J Parfree accompanied Mr Winship.

The main areas covered by the Inspection, taking account of priorities expressed by the Chairman and Clerk on behalf of the Committee, were strategy and planning; relationships with the industry; crime management and detection; absences management; Best Value; Race and diversity; IT: and Complaints & Discipline.

He reminded the Committee that his previous Inspection in 1998 had made 12 recommendations. The Force had addressed 10 satisfactorily, but 2 of them (dealing with the grievance procedure and crime auditing) had not received adequate attention and he would be reiterating those recommendations.

He had found the relations between the industry, at all levels, and BTP to be much better than three years ago. There was a continuing mistaken belief in some quarters that BTP was a "response" police service, and a need to build wider recognition of the specialist, non-response, nature of the Force's role. He also considered that there was a need to develop the consultation by the force with the travelling public.

His Inspection had identified concerns within the Force about structure, and in particular, the balance between HQ and Areas. He remarked that the HQ Review initiated by the former Chief Constable had sound objectives and conclusions, but its implementation had failed to realise the potential. The review now appeared to be a lost opportunity. There were continuing significant concerns within the force about the degree of devolution of finance and personnel decisions to Areas, and about the slow and bureaucratic approach adopted by HQ on some issues. His overall assessment was that the organisation was ponderous, lacking a sense of urgency on organisational matters, and therefore taking too long to respond to issues and change.

He emphasised that BTP's reputation for dealing operationally with emergencies and major incidents was second to none.

The HQ Review had led to a strengthening of crime management resources in Areas, and to some innovative improvements in crime management, especially the recruitment of retired Detective Inspectors, which was an example to other forces.

He had concerns about the level of financial investment in policing on the railway, suggesting that the budget allocated to BTP might not be keeping pace with the need. There were concerns expressed within the Force about resourcing, and at Area level these were exacerbated by the experience of resources being sucked back to the centre.

Mr Winship reiterated his view that the current user pays system worked against the development of effective relationships, and suggested again that the Committee and Force should consider approaching DTLR to change the basis of funding the BTP.

The Inspection had found that the force medium term strategy was overdue for replacement, and Mr Winship was aware of the review currently being carried out within the force. He felt that there was a need for a corresponding medium term financial strategy. He complimented the structure and style of the Annual Policing Plan for 2001/2, although he commented that the targets were not focussed or clear enough in all instances. Area policing plans were in place, but it was not evident that those plans reflected sufficiently the local policing plans of other forces or the plans of local crime and disorder partnerships.

He identified a number of areas for improvement in relation to crime management. The Force crime strategy was out of date; there had been a delay in rolling out the National Intelligence Model and, as yet, inadequate standardisation of the model across the force; the force Crime System, PINS, was not up to the job and was now not always used to capture crime; lastly, there was a pressing need to carry out the audit of crime recording recommended in his last report, and to consider new methods of reporting (e.g. by phone) that will be more efficient. He commended the use being made of the intranet for communication.

In relation to crime trends, Mr. Winship commented that although crime numbers were down compared with previous years, detection rates had fallen back significantly compared with other forces. BTP was now 42<sup>nd</sup> in England and Wales. In his view, this was disquieting.

His Inspection had shown the need for a strategy to improve performance in the use of forensic science to aid investigation. He was also concerned about a substantial decline in referrals to the Victim Support Scheme, commenting that if it continued it would jeopardise the future of VSS for BTP.

Turning to Human Resources, Mr Winship reflected concerns expressed within the force about the effectiveness of the HQ HR function and the extent of devolution. The Grievance procedure was a point of wide concern. Also, the position of the force on sickness management was the worst in the country for police officer absences.

On race and diversity, his inspection has found no cause for concern. One of the specialist Assistant Inspectors of constabulary was working with the Deputy to develop the diversity agenda in the force.

He had reviewed the Force's position on IT and felt that there was a need for an updated strategy and for the creation of some executive machinery within the force to determine priorities and oversee programme management.

He drew attention to a reduction in the proportion of complaint cases dealt with inside the national target of 120 days, but otherwise complimented the work of the Complaints & Discipline Function in the force.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee, Mr. Winship summarised his assessment of the force as being that it could do better and it needed to do better. He commented that although his Report reflected stagnation by the force in some areas, and a number of lost opportunities over the past three years, this had to be set in the context of a clear improvement in relationships with the industry generally, and a number of worthwhile innovations in practice. He said that it should also be borne in mind that in the same period, the force had had to cope with three major rail accidents and investigations, representing very significant demands on operational resources and management effort.

Dr. Mitchell said that he considered that the Inspection findings would be disappointing to the TOCs. The poor performance of the force in relation to crime detection, and the position on sickness absence, would be of special concern. He felt that the Inspection Report heightened the need for the development of "Service Level Agreements" as a platform for stronger accountability.

The Chairman thanked Mr Winship and his inspection team for all their work. He said that this Inspection had underlined the vital role that HMIC can play in helping the Committee. He had in mind that the Committee would invite HMIC to carry out an Inspection in 2003, so as to give the proposed new Police Authority an up to date account of force performance, when it starts work in April 2004 (as currently expected).

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## **58PL2001 CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT**

The Chief Constable briefed the Committee on the security situation and the action being taken by the Force as part of the national security effort. Adrian Shooter asked that the Chief should arrange to brief the TOC MD's. In discussion it was proposed that the Chief attend an ATOC Board meeting for this purpose. Mike Mitchell asked for arrangements to be put in place for TOCs to be advised as to specific security risks. The Chief Constable agreed to consider how this might be done.

Since the last meeting there had been prompt action by the Home Office on CS Incapacitant, resulting in the Force now being authorised to use it. The representations about jurisdiction had also borne fruit and it now appeared that the necessary legislation would be included in a forthcoming Police Bill from the Home Office.

He had attended a national conference on trespass and vandalism recently. There was a commitment by all agencies to collaborate to tackle this problem, which was the single largest cause of deaths on the railway. A coordinated and targeted multi-agency programme would be worked up for implementation in April and May 2002, being the peak period for these offences.

The Chief Constable reported on the urgent action that had become necessary to find alternative accommodation for the scenes of crime unit. The Force Finance Director covered this in a tabled report. There would be an additional cost of about £200,000 p.a. which would be found from existing resources, and a capital requirement as yet undefined, to be met from the existing capital programme allocation. The Committee approved the action taken by the Chief Constable.

Arising out of the SOCO accommodation problem, the Chairman asked for a strategic overview of the BTP estate, to avoid piecemeal decisions that do not serve longer term strategic aims of the force, and to provide a context for decisions on accommodation issues, including relocation of Force HQ. The Committee also noted and supported the Chief Constable's view that there was a need to consider employment conditions that impact upon relocation costs.

The Chief informed the Committee of the steps he was taking to promote emphasis on performance across the Force, and of the obstacles he had identified. There were also emerging problems of unreliability of data, and solving those problems may lead to the appearance of further deterioration in performance in the short term.

The Deputy Chief Constable presented an analysis of Force performance to date in the year, against the targets in the policing plan. The Force was meeting 5 out of the 12 targets, and felt that on 2 other targets the current performance could be improved toward target. The target for railway disruption offences would not be met, as the target itself had been invalidated by the discovery of previous systemic under-reporting of offences in some Areas.

#### **DECISION**

***That the action taken by the Chief Constable in consultation with the Chairman and Clerk to secure accommodation for the SOCO Unit be approved and ratified.***

- **ACTIONS**
- **CHIEF CONSTABLE TO ATTEND ATOC BOARD TO BRIEF ON SECURITY (CHIEF CONSTABLE)**
- **CONSIDERATION TO BE GIVEN TO HOW TOCS CAN BE PROVIDED WITH SPECIFIC SECURITY ADVICE (CHIEF CONSTABLE – ACC TERRITORIAL OPS)**
- **STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF FORCE ACCOMODATION REQUIREMENTS TO BE PREPARED FOR REPORT TO COMMITTEE IN DECEMBER 2001(FORCE FINANCE DIRECTOR)**

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#### **59PL2001      FORCE STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Chief Constable presented a draft of the proposed Strategic Plan for the ensuing three years, explaining the process by which it had been produced including wide consultation externally and internally.

Members of the Committee warmly welcomed and approved the strategic vision reflected in the document, and felt that the re-direction of objectives was laudable and appropriate. There was however a general agreement that the document should include more specific and quantitative targets for performance in each year against the defined objectives. They felt that this would avoid misunderstandings about the intent or meaning of objectives, mobilise action towards implementation,

address the industry's concerns to see a clearer basis for accountability, and also facilitate a rolling periodic review of the Strategy. The Chairman suggested that it should be a dynamic plan, reviewed and republished each year for the ensuing three years.

The Chief Constable accepted the points raised by the Committee and agreed to bring back a revised draft to the meeting of the Committee in December.

- *ACTION*
- *REVISED DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN TO BE REPORTED TO COMMITTEE IN DECEMBER 2001 (CHIEF CONSTABLE)*

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#### **60PL2001      FINANCIAL RESULTS 2001/2 AND FORECAST**

The Report of the Force Finance Director projected that out-turn would be in line with budget, taking account of the action previously agreed by the Committee in respect of pension costs. The Committee noted that the current national security effort could have an impact on the budget.

The Finance Director alerted the Committee to a potentially serious problem arising out of rating revaluations of force premises, resulting in large rates increases. Advice is being obtained to try and minimise the impact but it is too early to say how successful this will be. The Chairman suggested an approach to DTLR for a form of transitional relief.

The Committee supported the proposal to deal with the implications of the review of fixed assets by offsetting against reserves, which is under consideration by SRA.

Mike Mitchell asked if expenditure on matters with a long-term benefit to the Committee, such as the Strategic Review of Railway policing, could be spread over several years. The Finance Director thought that it would not be possible under current accounting standards, but agreed to look at it.

- *ACTION*
- *SRA TO CONSIDER USE OF RESERVES TO OFFSET FIXED ASSET WRITE OFFS (FORCE FINANCE DIRECTOR AND TREASURER)*
- *CONSIDERATION TO BE GIVEN TO SPREADING REVENUE COSTS ON PROJECTS WITH LONG TERM BENEFIT OVER SEVERAL YEARS (FORCE FINANCE DIRECTOR AND TREASURER)*

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#### **61PL2001      BEST VALUE REVIEW – SICKNESS ABSENCE**

The Committee received the Report of this Best Value Project incorporating the proposed business improvement plan.

The Deputy Chief Constable emphasised the importance attached to the Report within the force, and the profile being given to reducing absence levels as an element of the force performance regime. He commented that the Review had drawn attention to looseness in the contractual specification of the present Occupational Health service. The Contract was due to be tendered again in 2002 and the specification would be tightened. The Chairman suggested that the Force consider two suppliers, to inject the element of competition.

The package of improvement proposals was agreed, subject to any refinements following scrutiny at the Challenge Panel. The targets proposed in paras 4.1 and 4.2 of the report were agreed. The Committee asked that similar targets be set for reductions in absences of support staff, and expressed the view that the ultimate target for those staff should be comparable with other white collar staffs at around 5 days a year.

- *ACTIONS*
- *CHALLENGE PANEL TO BE CONVENED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (CLERK)*
- *TARGETS FOR REDUCTION IN SICKNESS ABSENCES FOR SUPPORT STAFF TO BE INCORPORATED INTO THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE)*

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#### **62PL2001 THE CULLEN REPORT – LADBROKE GROVE RAIL INQUIRY**

The Clerk had circulated to all Members extracts from Lord Cullen's Report dealing with accident investigation and the role of the police.

The Chief Constable said that there were only two main points arising from the Report for BTP. First, the creation of a new Rail Accident Investigation Branch to lead the investigation of rail accidents, and second the need to develop a protocol for cooperation between BTP and investigative agencies including RAIB. He suggested that the experience of AAIB showed that the boundaries between the respective investigations of RAIB and police would not always be clearly drawn and that establishing good working relationships would be vital in the future as in the past.

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#### **63PL2001 CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR TERRORISM**

The Chief Constable reported on developments, and with his proposals for enhancing the force's capabilities in this area. The Committee approved his recommendations for resources, for inclusion in the budget.

- *ACTION*
- *BUDGET PROVISION TO BE MADE FOR EXPENDITURE IN LONDON AND AREAS AS RECOMMENDED BY CHIEF CONSTABLE (FORCE FINANCE DIRECTOR)*

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#### **64PL2001 AIRWAVE AND LONDON UNDERGROUND**

The Committee noted that the Chairman had met with PITO to seek their assistance in getting to a solution to the problem of interoperability, and that progress was being made towards a meeting of the various suppliers of equipment, at senior level. It was agreed that the Chairman should also write to the Minister of State Home Office to enlist his support, given the importance of radio communications for dealing with any emergency on the underground. The Chief Constable said that he had drawn this problem to the attention of the Minister for London at a recent meeting of the Civil Contingencies Committee.

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#### **65PL2001 FUNDING FOR AIRWAVE**

The Committee noted that the Home Office had still not decided whether to extend funding to BTP for the core service for Airwave.

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**66PL2001      POLICING PLAN 2002/3**

The Committee appointed a sub-group comprising Helen Atkinson, Adrian Shooter and Sir David O'Dowd to steer the preparatory work on the Policing Plan for 2002/3 with the Deputy Chief Constable.

- *ACTION*
- *CONVENE A MEETING OF THE SUB-GROUP (CLERK IN CONSULTATION WITH DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE)*

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**67PL2001      A POLICE AUTHORITY FOR BTP – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT BY DTLR**

The Clerk reported that the DTLR consultation document on the future of the Force and the creation of a new Police Authority had just been published by DTLR. A copy would be sent to every Member as soon as possible, and there would be an item on the Agenda at the December meeting for the Committee to consider its response to the Document. It was the intention that the Committee and the Force should make a joint response.

In order that the Committee should have a sound basis for a response in respect of the arrangements for funding the Force, the Clerk had commissioned Consultants to produce a reasoned critique of user-pays, an appraisal of the case for an alternative model or models of funding, including some element of central funding, and a recommendation as to a practicable alternative. This report would be available in time for the Committee's meeting in December. The Consultant's had been tasked to contact all Members of the Committee to get their individual views on the issues.

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**68PL2001      APPOINTMENT OF ACC SCOTLAND**

The Committee was advised that the Appointment Panel (which had met with HMIC Scotland during the lunch adjournment) had decided to re-advertise this post.

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**69PL2001      POLICE CHARGES – DISPUTES**

The Clerk reported on the latest position concerning the disputes with Arriva Trains, GNER, First Group and EWS.

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**70PL2001      STRATEGIC REVIEW OF RAILWAY POLICING**

The Committee noted that the Steering Group had invited detailed proposals from six firms of consultants. The closing date for proposals will be 9 November, and the Steering Group will then proceed to appoint a firm to undertake the assignment.

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**71PL2001      AUDIT PANEL**

The Committee received and approved the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Panel held on 4 October, which had been tabled. The Committee emphasised their agreement with the decision of the Panel that with effect from 1 April 2002, internal audit for BTP should be carried out by a firm with experience of audit work for other police authorities.

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**72PL2001 POLICE PAY**

The Committee authorised the Chief Constable to implement the pay award approved by the Home Secretary for all federated and superintending ranks of police officers, of 3.5% with effect from 1 September 2001, as detailed in the report presented. They also authorised the Chairman to implement the pay award for ACPO ranks.

- *ACTIONS*
- *IMPLEMENT PAY AWARD FOR FEDERATED AND SUPERINTENDING RANKS WITH EFFECT FROM 1 SEPTEMBER (CHIEF CONSTABLE)*
- *IMPLEMENT PAY AWARD FOR ACPO RANK OFFICERS (CHAIRMAN AND CLERK)*

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**73PL2001 FORCE HQ RELOCATION**

The Force Finance Director presented a paper outlining a proposed alternative location for Force HQ in an office block near Kings Cross. The report was noted. (See also Minute 58PL2001 regarding the need for a strategic overview of force accommodation).

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**74PL2001 CIVIL CLAIMS AND EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL CLAIMS AGAINST THE FORCE**

A report of outstanding Tribunal cases was noted.

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**75PL2001 COMPLAINTS & DISCIPLINE SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Complaints & Discipline Sub-Committee held on 11 October (which were tabled).

The meeting concluded at 2.40 p.m.

Signed .....

Chairman

Date.....