

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE AUTHORITY

MINUTES

POLICE AUTHORITY WORKSHOP
FACILITATED BY CARET CONSULTING
TUESDAY 6th SEPTEMBER 2005 9.00AM

at
BMA HOUSE

Present: Sir Alistair Graham (Chair)
Sir David O'Dowd
Mr L Adams
Mr M Brown
Mrs W Towers
Ms C Knights
Ms S May
Mr M Holden
Mr C Foxall
Mr J King

Apologies: Mr R Gisby

In Attendance: Mr I Johnston, Chief Constable
Mr A Trotter, Deputy Chief Constable
Mr P Robb, Assistant Chief Constable
Mr D McCall, Assistant Chief Constable, Scotland and
Community Affairs
Mr A Pacey, Acting Assistant Chief Constable
Mr C Garbett, Deputy Director of Finance
Ms M Daniels, Deputy Head of Strategic Development
Ms V Delices, BTP Secretariat Manager

Mr R Hemmings, Chief Executive & Clerk
Ms D McGovern, Deputy Clerk
Mrs L Pike, Treasurer
Mrs S Elvy, Research and Policy Officer
Mrs O Ribina, Meetings Manager & Minutes

Mr O Nyumbu, Caret Consulting
Dr D Stanley, Caret Consulting

1/2005 INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

Agenda Item 1

The Chair opened the workshop by outlining the key objectives for the event. The purpose of this workshop was to clarify the general guidelines for the Chief Constable and his staff to develop next year's budget and Policing Plan. A decision also needed to be taken with respect to the continuance of the Strategic Plan.

The Chair stated that a more stable approach to the funding system was required. A meeting was set for Sir Alistair and Mr Hemmings to meet with the Secretary of State to brief him about the new budget process and discuss the issue of the sustainability of the present budget situation. Mr Armitt's suggestion of converting BTP's Strategic Plan into 5 year cycle would also be discussed.

2/2005 TAKING STOCK

Agenda item 2

The previous evening's discussion had highlighted the following assessment of the previous year by the Force:

- Genuine commitment from the Authority to the Force
- Courage, genuine fighting for BTP, advocacy
- More professional contribution to the Force from the particular skills of the Members
- Step increase in funding
- More focus on operational issues rather than costs
- Sense of common interest and shared purpose, which was essential to the Force
- Serious about improving performance
- Debate elevated from cost issues to wider operational issues
- Members of the Force felt much more motivated by the Authority's interest.

The Authority's assessment of the previous year was:

- Genuine interest by Authority Members to be involved in policing issues
- The openness of the senior team which creates a sense of being "on the same side"
- Benefits seen at lower level of the organisation leading to increased self-belief

Dr Stanley commented these were all positive elements and there had been a sense of unanimity in the 5th September discussion.

Sir Alistair stated that there had to be a consensus on the need to find a long term sustainable solution, to reduce the time and effort devoted to the collecting of monies without losing the discipline of a tight and robust budgeting process.

It was agreed that BTP were in a different situation now with the budgeting process than they were last year, and that the July 2005 events had a big impact on the budget process this year. Even after the budget challenge was resolved, there would need to be the flexibility to respond to changing priorities in the community. Another future objective was that consultation should extend beyond the train companies to the travelling public. The focus had been on consultation with PSA holders due to the significant increase in charges levied. Having objective evidence of the economic value of rail policing, as per the RSSB study, would be helpful.

3/2005

Agenda Item 3

PRESENTATIONS

The Chief Constable spoke to his presentation. His overview included:

- Performance against current plan
- Operational performance against targets
- Organisational objectives
- Operational issues
- Performance against budget

Issues highlighted included:

- BTP had less access to the community groups than other forces
- Strategic policy issues
- Budget pressures 2006/7
- Planned bids from 2005/6
- Capital funding
- Terrorism - this particular issue was highly resource intensive requiring adequate financing
- HMIC baseline recommendations
- Staff survey. This year's staff survey showed 58% response comparing to 40% last year. Significantly, this showed that minority groups were more satisfied than last year.

There was discussion around the technicalities of CCTV, and it was **agreed** this would be brought back as a paper to a future meeting.

It was noted that industry would be reluctant to invest into the unknown, and that some framework for the "new normality" would be needed in order to secure funding.

ACTION:

- 1) Need to define the "new normality" on counter terrorism as context for Strategic plan refreshment: risk assessment, cost / benefit, interaction with wider security picture**
- 2) CCTV to be brought back to a future meeting**

Mr Holden gave a presentation on the way in which the rail industry is funded. He focussed in particular on the bidding process undertaken

by TOCs and the impact this had on their receipt of Government grant/payments for the franchise. Some fixed costs (such as track access charges) can be routed through the DfT. Others cannot, these included the BTP costs. Income is either fixed or closely regulated, which means that increases in BTP's charges have to be met from a relatively small pot of money and have a direct correlation with profit margins.

Mr Hemmings briefed the Authority about the August workshops with the industry, and summarised the PSA holders own priorities, and how these fitted in with the Force priorities. In particular, the issue of affordability had been raised. It was suggested that the annual passenger survey feed into the budget planning process. It was agreed this would be facilitated by the three RPC members on the Authority, and that the Force could request questions on policing to be included. It was noted that theft of passenger property was not high on any of the TOCs agenda, which was in part because customers report the thefts to BTP rather than TOCs, hence they were unaware of the scale of the problem.

Mr King commented that operators and passengers had different agendas and passenger interests should be taken into franchises account. It was agreed that they were.

4/2005

Agenda Item 4

DISCUSSION

The attendees then formed 4 discussion groups to talk through the following points.

a) Has anything changed since the Strategic Plan was agreed last year?

- Terrorism picture changed but the Strategic Plan was still valid. The terrorism events had raised customer expectations with regards to visibility
- Performance levels
- Repayment of loan. Repayment of the £10m loan added 7% to the budget before anything else was taken into account
- Better briefings – communication with customers, victims etc
- Increase in potential conflict between TOC priorities and policing priorities
- Possibility of trading-off priorities
- Need for political acceptance of the need for change in the funding regime – there were alternative ways of funding. Current funding regime was not sustainable
- Stronger BTP entity

b) Does the Strategic Plan still represent the best basis for future planning?

The general opinion was positive, with the proviso that the Strategic Plan would be subject to a yearly review. It was noted that the Authority was required by statute to produce a 3 year Strategic Plan and a 5 year financial forecast. There was a mismatch between BTP's financial planning cycle and that of the PSA holders.

It was **agreed** that the 3 year Strategic Plan still represented that way forward and that the broad direction should not be altered.

c) Is any fine-tuning of the Plan necessary?

- Better use of investment in resources to demonstrate efficiency gains
- External assessments valuable as inputs
- Capture LU passenger survey data
- Aspects relating to counter terrorism
- Issues such as credit card fraud, fare evasion and investment in technology for the industry to resolve
- Partnership working - antisocial behaviour, route crime etc would benefit from better relations with community
- Risks: counter terrorism, profile, community, HR and growth agenda, detention rates

d) How can we bridge any gaps between different stakeholder priorities?

- Reduce some of the pressures on PSA holders by resolving the funding issue
- Better communication – some levels of TOC staff were not aware of BTP activities
- Benefit on fare box of improved security, especially counter terrorism
- Cooperation with Home Office forces
- Consider alternatives to police presence for reassurance, explore appropriate levels of policing on underused stations.
- Build on common areas of concern

The consensus of the Authority was that the Strategic Plan still represented the way in which the Authority and the Force should proceed. The decisions to address the infrastructure issues were, and remained, valid. The Force had the chance to grasp the opportunities given to make effective use of the new systems and resources in place to improve the outputs derived from the increased level of inputs. The Chair stated he expected the Force to be working hard on achieving cost savings and producing both cashable and non-cashable efficiencies.

The terrorist incidents of July 2005 had introduced a new dimension to policing with resulting extra costs in the short term and most probably

the longer term. The Force needed to define and make the Authority aware of what would constitute the “new normality”.

The Chair felt that the workshop had given the Chief Constable a clear steer for producing the first draft of the budget and Policing Plan for 2006/7. The next stage would be consideration of a draft for discussion with the industry in November.

The Chair thanked all the participants , and Caret consultants for facilitating the well structured workshop.

Signed.....

Chairman

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 25th October 2005,
10.00am, BMA House.**