

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE AUTHORITY

MINUTES
POLICE AUTHORITY
TUESDAY 20TH DECEMBER 2005

at
GROUND FLOOR 1&2 - FHQ, CAMDEN ROAD

Present:

- Sir Alistair Graham (Chair)
- Sir David O'Dowd
- Mr L Adams
- Mr M Brown
- Mrs W Towers
- Ms C Knights
- Suzanne May
- Mr M Holden
- Mr C Foxall
- Mr R Gisby
- Mr J King
- Mr R O'Toole

In Attendance:

- Mr I Johnston, Chief Constable
- Mr A Trotter, Deputy Chief Constable
- Mr P Nicholas, Assistant Chief Constable
- Mr P Robb, Assistant Chief Constable
- Mr D McCall, Assistant Chief Constable
- Ms S Budden, Director of Finance and Corporate Services
- Mr P Zieminski, Chief Superintendent Strategic Development
- Mr P Hilton, Chief Superintendent
- Mr M Field, Detective Superintendent
- Ms V Delices, BTP Secretariat Manager

- Mr R Hemmings, Chief Executive & Clerk
- Ms D McGovern, Deputy Clerk
- Miss L Barrick, Meetings Manager and Minutes
- Mrs S Elvy, Research and Policy Officer
- Miss L Bryant, PA

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80/2005 MINUTES OF MEETINGS 25th OCTOBER & 8TH NOVEMBER 2005

Agenda item 1

The Authority received and **approved** the minutes.

81/2005 MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS OUTSTANDING

Agenda Item 2

All actions had been discharged, except for the Secretariat to write to the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Executive regarding the 2006 annual meeting in July.

Mr King noted that the SR&CS Committee would be picking up the lack of passenger consultation.

The Chair informed Committee members that item 3.3, the minutes of the special SB&PM of 13th December 2005, would not be going before the Authority as this was still in draft form, but would be sent out before Christmas and taken to January's meeting.

82/2005 COMMITTEE ISSUES

Agenda item 3

Strategy, Budget & Performance Monitoring Committee (03/11/05):

Sir Alistair, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee, told the Authority that at present the financial position and the 2004/5 accounts sign off by the NAO were major issues.

Ms Knights stated that when she had mentioned the North East Area having difficulty engaging TOCs with regard to theft of passenger property this was not now a concern and this was to be reflected in the minutes.

Sir Alistair did not give details on the indicative budget for 2006/07, as this would be discussed in detail at the Authority meeting in January and the minutes of the special meeting of 13th December would be sent out for this.

Mr Adams was concerned that the Force were being asked to go back and look at the same things. Sir Alistair said that the Authority did not want to put the Chief Constable under unreasonable pressure but that it had a duty to follow the new budget making process which had been defined. Sir Alistair felt that Members would understand when they saw the results of the process in January and that the process showed the industry that BTP was listening. As part of the process a standstill budget had been drawn up to consider the implications.

Sir Alistair concluded by informing the Members that the Committee would be coming to January's Meeting with a recommendation and any debate could take place there.

Audit and Corporate Governance Committee (16/11/05):

Sir David, as Chair of the Committee, explained that there had been

concerns about the level of expertise in the Finance department, which had resulted in the restructure in which 16 people left the employment of BTP to be replaced by 25 new people under a new structure. Sir David was unhappy about the level of support offered by the Strategic Rail Authority during the transition period when the Authority had been established in July 2004. Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) had been asked to undertake additional work because of these difficulties.

Sir David informed the Authority that the NAO had come forward with a fairly damning report. He reminded the Authority that the last members of the revamped finance team had not come on board until summer 2005 and the NAO had been looking accounts for the last financial year, not the current one.

PKF had been the internal auditors prior to PWC and had reported that the Finance function was 'fair', where as the NAO were reporting that there could be as much as a £5M surplus as a result of extrapolation errors. PKF claimed that they had not picked up on this as they were looking at controls and not transactions.

Following the meeting Sir David had met with Mr Hemmings, Ms Budden and her team on numerous occasions. The outcome of which was that it appeared the Force would get qualified accounts for 2004/5.

The Chief Constable said that as Accounting Officer he accepted full responsibility and planned to be more involved in the audit matters in future. The Chief Constable said that Ms Budden had done a fantastic job and that there had been massive overall changes. He had met with the Finance team that week and had great confidence in them. He pointed out it took the MPS 4 years to get an unqualified opinion.

Ms Budden said that the audit with the NAO was still in progress and that they would be reporting back at a special meeting on 24th January 2006. Ms Budden stated that audit adjustments identified so far came to around £300K, not £5M.

Mr O'Toole asked if the auditors had a clear brief. Ms Budden replied that the audit brief was now very clear. Ms Budden also confirmed that bank and balance reconciliations were now being carried out on a monthly basis.

83/2005

Agenda Item 4

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

The Chief Constable spoke to his report. The key points were:

- The Force was hitting 11 out its 11 targets, although 1 of these was very close to the target.
- At present BTP was operating at the 2nd highest threat level it had ever had.
- Following the arrival of Temporary Assistant Chief Constable

Pacey and the 3 new heads in the HR department there had been a huge improvement in the department. As a result of this the Chief Constable hoped that following the January intake the organisational objectives with regard to recruitment would be achieved.

- The Chief Constable was concerned that the Force was not attracting enough female applicants compared to other forces.
- The Rt. Hon Alistair Darling had announced that BTP were to receive the £3.6M following the bombings.
- The Commendation Ceremony for Officers following the London bombings had been a success.
- The final draft protective services review had been received and BTP had been praised for its work on counter terrorism and football, with the weaker area identified as pro-active major crime capability.
- The Chief Constable had received news that changes would be made to HMIC's baseline assessment to make it more relevant to BTP.
- The Chief Constable thanked Assistant Chief Constable Nicholas for his long and loyal service to BTP and confirmed that Temporary ACC Pacey would be covering Mr Nicholas' role temporarily.
- The Chief Constable announced that the Policing Plan was going to be looking at similar targets to last year.

The Chief Constable said that at present the real challenge was the recruitment of female officers as currently females were under represented. The Chief Constable believed that the lack of female applicants might be a product of the image of the Force. Mr Holden asked if there were reasonable career break arrangements for female officers who had children, to which the Chief Constable replied that there was. The Chief Constable said that next year there would be a special focus on this area to try and increase female applicants. Mr Foxall pointed out that the situation was not that different for the TOCs as their workforces were generally male dominated. Ms Knights confirmed that Ms Scott, who was due to start as HR Director in January, would be given this as a special brief. Ms May suggested that female officers could be made more visible to encourage other women to apply.

The Chief Constable discussed the Policing Plan and said that they were looking at similar targets to the present year for next year. The Chief Constable raised the idea of having area specific targets. However, Mr King was concerned about this as the Home Office review was at present looking at making strategic forces so he felt that it would not be appropriate. Mr Foxall seconded these sentiments. Mr Brown suggested that it could work well to have different targets for London with its separate priorities to other Force areas.

In the cases of interest Mr Gisby thanked the Chief Constable and his Force on behalf of Network Rail for their work in catching the

perpetrator in Operation Dart. ACC Robb said that the team that had worked on this case had been excellent, and that despite getting some admissions from the perpetrator they had also collected a lot of corroborative evidence, so a very robust case had been put together. ACC Robb pointed out that the offences had happened over 3 Force areas and had it not been for the policing arrangements of BTP they would not have been linked.

With regard to the officer who had died whilst training the Authority expressed their condolences to his family. Ms Knights asked that the HR&R Committee be kept up to date with proceedings. The Chief Constable confirmed that Surrey Police had been asked to oversee the formalities.

Mr Adams made it known that following the tragic accident at Elsenham BTP officers had dealt with the driver commendably. Mr Adams went on to say that the type of level crossing concerned was safe as long as people adhered to the warnings. Mr Foxall said that these sorts of crossings were one of the only affordable ways for wheelchair users to cross the tracks and that they are used all over Europe.

84/2005 **PROCESS AND PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGE PROGRAMME**

Agenda Item 5

The Deputy Chief Constable spoke to his paper. Mr Adams asked, of table 5.1, with regard to the Tadworth vacancies, if it was known that the salary was the problem why had it not been increased. The Deputy Chief Constable replied that 13 of the vacancies had been filled so for the present time there was an intention to continue to try and recruit as it stood.

The paper was **noted**.

85/2005 **POLICING PRESENTATION: LONDON BOMBINGS**

Agenda Item 6

Chief Superintendent Hilton gave a presentation on the London bombings. The presentation looked at what BTP had done well and at challenges that had been faced and how they had been overcome.

The Chair praised Chief Superintendent Hilton for an outstanding presentation.

86/2005 **EFFICIENCY REVIEW – UPDATE ON CURRENT PROGRAMME**

Agenda Item 7

Ms Budden spoke to her paper and said that the efficiency programme was effectively a 3-stage process, with savings first being identified, then making the savings and finally re-investing them. Ms Budden said that at present the Force were in between stages 1 and 2.

Ms Budden said that at this stage the figures were indicative and that

the report was to show how BTP was changing rather than to look at the quantum. She also informed the Authority that the report was looking ahead so there would not necessarily be many new things coming in the future. Ms Budden said that PWC were coming in to help develop the efficiency scheme.

Mr Holden thought that it was a good report signifying the thinking going on and how it was being pushed through the organisation. It showed that BTP was thinking about best value.

The Chair suggested that the paper be sent to ATOC as it showed how in a relatively short time BTP had managed to save a lot of money. Mr Holden felt that a shorter paper would be more appropriate for circulation. Mr O'Toole agreed but felt that at this time it was not appropriate to send the detailed paper to ATOC.

The Chief Constable said that he needed to take a look at the organisation as a whole for discrepancies and best practice sharing. Ms Budden said that each area would have an efficiency 'champion' to facilitate best practice sharing.

Mr O'Toole said that efficiency meant getting better value for money. Mr Holden endorsed this view and said there was scope for challenging whether savings were categorised as cashable or non-cashable.

The report was **noted**.

Agreed:

- The Force produce a précis document for circulation to PSA holders identifying the key themes and high level messages.
- Whilst wanting to ensure that the Force is funded properly, the Authority would continue to scrutinise cost effectiveness very critically and seek to secure value for money.

87/2005
Agenda Item 8

UPDATE ON POLICE FORCES RESTRUCTURING

Mr Hemmings spoke to his paper and informed the Authority that with regard to the Home Office review of police forces, decisions were expected early in the New Year. However, some Authorities fighting the new proposals may slow this down.

With regard to the DfT's review of BTP, Mr Hemmings explained that the review team had now completed their evidence gathering and submitted their findings to the Secretary of State for Transport. Mr Hemmings informed the Committee that there were 6 options on the table, ranging from total disbandment to no change. Mr Hemmings felt that BTP London being taken over by the MPS was unlikely following conversations with members of the DfT review team. The two main options believed to be considered were total disbandment or a refocused BTP. Mr Foxall pointed out that this really meant that all options were being considered, as total disbandment would leave the other options open.

Mr Hemmings told the Authority that the Secretariat had written to MP's and Peers explaining the situation faced by BTP at present, and that many letters of support had been received in return. Mr Hemmings also informed Members that as a result of this he and Ms McGovern had been to see a number of MP's and Peers who had expressed support for the continuance of BTP as the national Force for the railways.

With regard to the Home Office reviews, the Chair was of the opinion that it would be more cost effective to address the gap identified with cooperative agreements rather than the proposed mergers and BTP was a good example of how this type of policing worked.

The Chair was dissatisfied that neither the Authority nor Force had been given sight of any evidence collected by the review team, as it had been promised so that they could comment on the grounds of accuracy. The Chair was concerned that this was due to the tight timetable on which the review had been executed and he felt that it had been an unsatisfactory process in this respect.

Mr Foxall agreed the process had been unsatisfactory as there had been virtually no consultation with the Authority.

Mr Hemmings said that at present the main concern was what was meant by a refocused BTP. There was a concern that it would be suggested that BTP had individual Service Level Agreements with different TOCs as Mr Hemmings believed this to be unworkable in practice and he told the Authority that he had written to the DfT about the implications of this.

There was a concern from Mr Foxall, which was backed by Mr Brown, that some of the arguments for the retention of BTP in its present form were too subtle. Mr O'Toole suggested that the Authority needed to liaise more closely with ATOC, as they would have influence with the DfT with regard to a refocused BTP. The Chief Constable pointed out that the strategic plan concentrates on what is important for policing the railways.

The paper was **noted**.

Agreed

- **Secretariat to organise meeting with ATOC and Industry to discuss possibilities of a refocused BTP.**

Agenda Item 10 **CHARGING REVIEW – THE WAY FORWARD**

Ms McGovern spoke to her paper, explaining that it was to inform members of what stage the charging review had reached following consultation. There was some confusion over the proposed options and it was suggested that the matter be taken to the January meeting, as it was relevant to the budget discussions. Concern was also raised about the timeliness of resolving this issue.

89/2005 COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Agenda Item 9

Mr Hemmings told the Authority that he had requested this paper for their information. The paper included an appendix, which detailed all the formal and informal collaborative arrangements the Force had.

The paper was **noted**.

90/2005 RETIREMENT OF ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE PAUL NICHOLAS

Agenda Item 11

The Chair thanked Assistant Chief Constable Nicholas for his 40 years of loyal service to BTP and wished him all the best for the future. The Authority presented ACC Nicholas with a picture as a token of their appreciation. Mr Nicholas thanked the Authority and said that he had very much enjoyed his time at BTP.

91/2005 AOB

Non-Agenda

There was no AOB

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 10th January, 10.00am

Signed.....

Chairman

