

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE AUTHORITY

MINUTES
POLICE AUTHORITY
TUESDAY 10TH JANUARY 2006
at
BMA HOUSE – HARVEY SUITE

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 D McCall, Assistant Chief Constable
- Mr A Pacey, Temporary Assistant Chief Constable
- Ms S Budden, Director of Finance and Corporate Services
- Mr C Garbett, Head of Finance
- Mr P Zieminski, Chief Superintendent Strategic Development
- Mr M Smith, Detective Chief Superintendent
- Mr S Rogers, Detective Inspector
- Mr S Brown, Partnerships Officer
- Mr N Khnich, Management Accountant
- Ms S Brown, Portfolio Manager
- Ms V Delices, BTP Secretariat Manager
- Ms M Campbell, PA

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

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01/2006 WELCOME

Non-Agenda

The Chair began by wishing everyone a Happy New Year. He also informed the Members that four BTP Officers had been included on the New Years Honours List, namely Nicholas Bracken, Deborah Russell-Fenwick, Glen McMunn and Stephen Mingay. The Chair told Members that he had written to the above extending his congratulations on behalf of the Authority. The Chief Constable echoed the Chair's sentiments and also said it was great to see that the awards had gone to frontline officers.

02/2006 PERFORMANCE AGAINST CURRENT PLAN

Agenda item 1

The Chief Constable informed the Authority that his Force were still hitting all of their operational challenges despite the numerous challenges they had faced such as London bombings, DfT review, New Year's Eve etc.

With regard to the organisational targets, although these were still not being achieved the Chief Constable felt that they were heading in the right direction. The Chief Constable said that the recruitment target was only failing for officers, PCSO recruitment was not an issue. Mr Foxall said that the Wales and Western area was particularly short of BME officers.

Sir David congratulated the Force on their improvements.

The report was **noted**.

03/2006 2006/07 POLICING PLAN TARGETS

Agenda Item 5

The Chief Constable began by inviting the Authority to set up a small group to meet with the Force team who were working on the next year's targets. The group would look at the scope of targets, types of crime to include, and whether targets should concentrate on actual crime or perception of crime, and on crime reduction or crime detection. The Chief Constable said his view was the focus should be on detection, as this would also impact on crime reduction.

The Chair suggested that the group should be made up of around 3 or 4 Members and that Sir David and Mr King had volunteered, so he felt that representatives of the rail industry would be most appropriate for the final members of the group.

Ms Knights asked why vehicle crime was not mentioned in any of the proposed targets. The Chief Constable said that this was an area where the biggest differences were more likely to be made by the TOCs themselves introducing such deterrents as CCTV, and security fencing. He also said that the number of targets had to be limited to a manageable number.

Mr Brown felt that an issue with the setting of targets was what he referred to as a "hierarchy of planning". Mr Brown pointed out that

different TOCs had different priorities and there had to be an awareness of this when setting policing targets. It was recognised that there were differences between commuter groups and long distance travellers, and between regions.

The Chair suggested that interactions between the public and the Force be measured. The Chief Constable replied that this was done through the victims of crime survey on an annual basis and reasonable levels of satisfaction were generally recorded. Ms Knights said that the Rail Passengers Survey looked at interaction with BTP and that the figure stayed fairly constant. Mr King felt that much more passenger consultation was required. Suzanne May pointed out that the passenger survey may ask people who have no interaction with the police, so victim of crime survey more appropriate for measuring satisfaction. The Chief Constable said that national figures show people have less enthusiasm for police once they have dealt with them, so the victims of crime survey was also a tougher measure in that respect.

Mr Adams said that some rail industry staff were concerned about cuts in the number of station staff which was causing an increase in fear of crime. Mr Adams said that staffing of stations should be considered, as this could affect policing.

Mr Holden felt the list of proposed targets was good and addressed the main issues faced by TOCs. He said 11 did not seem to be an unreasonable amount of targets to strive to, but that he would also like to see a specific target around vehicle crime.

Suzanne May said that she thought the targets were very worthwhile, but would also encourage the vehicle crime issue to be included, although she recognised that it was not entirely BTPs responsibility.

Mr Gisby asked what exactly was meant by level crossing offences mentioned in 3.1. The Chief said that this generally referred to car drivers and that it would be measured through numbers rather than percentages. Mr Gisby agreed with having on a target on this area but said that the Force had to be sure of what they were measuring.

Agreed:

- **Sir David, Mr King, Mr Brown and Mr Gisby to make up the group to consider the Policing Plan targets.**
- **The group give consideration to whether vehicle crime be included or not.**
- **The group be authorised to agree the targets inclusion in the draft policing plan which is to be presented to the March 2006 Authority Meeting.**

The Chair began by referring to item 2.1, the minutes of the special SB&PM, and the bullet points at the bottom of page 6 which recorded the decisions of the Committee. He proposed to the meeting that this should be the basis for the discussion.

The Chief Constable said that option 3a was a tough deal, as a number of items were deferred from last year to be implemented in 2006/7 and many of these would need to be deferred again, extending the strategic plan by a further year. Option 3a also required that a 1% efficiency saving be achieved. The Chief Constable gave some examples of items that would be affected, these included;

- Major crime unit, (which would result in a limited detective capability)
- Cutbacks on counter-terrorism initiatives
- Challenges for diversity
- Limited ability to address issues of visibility
- Changes in terms and conditions of support staff

The Chief Constable said that this option could cover PCSO supervision and extra officers for Scotland.

Ms Budden explained that the increase proposed in option 3a only included net growth of £4.5m. However it could be reduced to 16.5% by not repaying the loan instalment to the DfT. The table under 2.11 showed the detail of the proposed budget. Ms Budden said that the Force's internal scrutiny process had reduced a possible £16M growth down to £4.5M.

Sir David congratulated the Force as the budget had been a tough exercise. He asked whether anything had been heard from the DfT as yet with regard to the repayment of the loan. Mr Hemmings said that nothing had been heard from the DfT as yet.

Mrs Towers asked what impact going with option 3a would have on the 2007/8 budget. Ms Budden replied that they were in discussions with the DfT regarding the phasing of the loan. The Chair said that the SB&PM Committee had agreed a way forward but for it to work, it required the DfT to take a longer term approach to the repayment of the loan.

Mr O'Toole asked how the surplus identified in the 2004/05 draft accounts fitted into the budget making process. Ms Budden explained that this would not be finalised until the audit was complete. It would be for the Authority to decide how this should be used. Mr Foxall said that it should not be counted upon at this stage. Mr O'Toole asked that consideration be given to either returning any surplus to the TOCs or using it to decrease the next year's payments.

With regard to depreciation Ms Budden explained that this had to be included in the PSA charge in accordance with the Treasury Fees

and Charges Guide.

Mr Foxall asked what choosing option 3a meant in terms of performance. The Chief Constable said that it would be pushing the margins but that the Force was moving in a very positive direction so it was achievable. Whilst it presented a challenge around performance relating to detections in particular, he felt that moving the Force to the top half of performance within the police service was still achievable.

Ms Knights asked if there was any sign that there would be funding received for the new normality. The Chief Constable replied that the Government had put aside a sum of money for the Home Forces but that BTP was not included. Mr Hemmings made the point that the Government were also giving out money for pensions to Home Forces in next year's settlement.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion following explanations and clarification questions.

Mr O'Toole felt that the £5M instalment of the loan from the DfT should not be paid back at this time and the government should cover the debt. Mr O'Toole suggested that the implementation of year 2 of the strategic plan be delayed until the outcome of the review was known. Further, he felt that any surplus from 2004/05 should be used to offset some of the increased costs.

Mr Adams said that he was disappointed when he looked back at the strategic plan and the Chairman's foreword, as he felt that ever since it had been agreed, all that had been seen was ways to water it down. Mr Adams said that he appreciated the rail industry representatives' comments.

Mr King supported Mr Adams point about rebasing the figure again and that when the Authority set the strategic plan it knew it was taking on significant challenges. Mr King said he would not support a stand still budget or rephrasing the plan. He would support option 3a.

Sir David said that to rebase when the budget had already been rephased was not a good idea and that he would support option 3a.

Mr Gisby echoed Mr O'Toole's concerns that with the review ongoing the Authority should think carefully about its role in setting the budget. Mr Gisby said that there needed to be greater clarification about what the 2007/8 and 2008/9 budgets would look like.

The Chair stated that he did not feel it was fair to the Chief Constable and his team not to clarify the situation. The Chair said that the Authority had given assurances to the Chief Constable that it would continue to support the Force and until political decisions were made about the reviews, the Authority needed to continue with its obligation to address the legacy issues. The Chair reminded the Members that things had changed a great deal and the process had

been put in place for the industry to have more of a say on policing priorities and spending. The Chair said that delaying the implementation of the strategic plan would give entirely the wrong message to the Force when they have achieved so much. If the Authority wanted to provide incentives for continued delivery it needed to show support. The Chair said the Authority had listened to the industry and that option 3a demonstrated this by rephrasing the strategic plan over an additional year, after which small increases could be looked at to maintain the Force. The Chair expressed his support for option 3a.

Mr Foxall's view was that the SB&PM Committee had found a fairly sound middle way between the Force's needs and the industry demands, but that the caveat was the government should have it made clear that the present funding arrangement could not continue. Mr Foxall was in favour of going forward with option 3a but said that the Authority would have to think very carefully about the future. He further felt that it was unlikely that there would be an early decision on the review.

Mr Holden said that all agree BTP has made huge strides and no one wants to take anything away from that. However, ATOC do not entirely support the existing strategy and affordability is a big issue for the TOCs. As a percentage of costs against revenue, the policing costs were increasing. He expressed the need to find a pragmatic way forward.

Suzanne May felt it was unlikely that the Authority would have a decision on the review by March. She said she understood the difficulties faced by the industry but was very conscious of the responsibility of the Force to give a protective service. She felt that all the issues came back to funding and the fact that the Authority had not been given a lump sum to deal with the legacy issues.

Mr O'Toole said he believed that consultation on the strategic plan had been lacking. He asked what the implications were if the Force did not go ahead with the second year of the plan. Mr O'Toole was concerned that following the review by DfT, money may have been spent in unnecessary areas and that more money would have to be spent on the DfT's recommendations. The Chair responded that it was not a question of wasting money.

The Chief Constable said that the original consultation on the strategic plan had been extensive and that all TOCs had been written to, and rail industry members on the Authority had given the plan their support. The Chief Constable said that morale needed to be maintained as it translated into effectiveness and at this time of heightened security this was especially important. In answer to Mr O'Toole's comments about delaying the second year of the strategic plan the Chief Constable said that even if BTP were refocused following the review, there was unlikely to be anything contained within the budget that would be dropped, following the rigorous process the Force had gone through.

Mr King said that he felt there should be more debate around delivery and performance rather than most debates centring on money.

Mr Brown said that there was no doubt that having a consistent amount of funding going into BTP paid dividends.

Mrs Towers view was that the Authority should not wait for the review although she was a little concerned about what might come out of it. The Chair said that the Authority was hoping to hear more from the review team in February so would hopefully know more by March.

Ms Knights said that this was a big challenge for the Force but that they always seemed to rise to the challenge. Ms Knights did not feel that the budget was a middle ground as it was putting the Force under such pressure, but overall she supported option 3a.

The Chair said that the key recommendation was that option 3a be put to the Authority in March. This should be used as the basis for finalising the budget proposals bearing in mind the position over the repayment of the first tranche of the loan, the finalisation of the 2004/05 outturn and the implications of deferring parts of the 3 year strategic plan. Mr O'Toole said that he would oppose this option.

Mr Foxall pointed out that the minutes of the SB&PM on 13th December said that Authority was to recommend option 3 but noted that this translated into option 3a with the changes agreed built in. Mr Foxall also noted that this option was dependent on the DfT delaying or reducing the loan repayment.

Mr O'Toole said that he wanted to know the implications of delaying the implementation of year 2 of the strategic plan. The Chief Constable said that he would provide these details in writing to the Authority Members. Mr Hemmings reminded the Authority that at the time the loan was organised it was made clear to the industry that it would have to be repaid and that this in turn would force up the increases of future years.

Mrs Towers requested that the Authority receive more information on option 3a in order for them to vote confidently.

The recommendation for option 3a was **noted**.

Agreed:

- **A final decision on the 2006/07 budget should be deferred until the March meeting of the Authority, by which time it was hoped a decision would be available from the Secretary of State in response to the Authority's request for a deferment of the repayment of the loan that had been made to the Authority in 2005.**

- **The Chief Constable to inform Members of the implications of not going ahead with year 2 of the strategic plan in the budget report in March and to explain the positive value that would be achieved for the police force in the proposed investment for 2006/7.**

05/2006 POLICING PRESENTATION: THEFT OF PASSENGER PROPERTY

Agenda Item 4

Detective Chief Superintendent Smith gave a presentation on techniques employed in catching offenders involved in the theft of passenger property.

06/2006 UPDATE ON CHARGES REVIEW

Agenda Item 6

Ms McGovern introduced her paper explaining that it was to give clarification following the December meeting. She said that there had been representations from the industry that it was too late to bring in changes for the 2006/7 financial year. Further, the DfT review might affect the charging model. The Project Board had proposed that a revised charging model be held back and implemented for 2007/8. This would allow the outcome of the current review of BTP by DfT to be taken into account.

Mr Adams asked if this paper was related to item 7, the paper on disputes. The Chair said that this would not affect the current disputes. Mrs Pike said that the project was taking into account the arbitrators opinions.

Mr Holden was concerned that the review was taking a long time and felt that if the changes to charges were only minor it was not too late to implement a new model for the 2006/7 financial year. Mr Gisby seconded Mr Holden saying that it appeared the original scope given to Matrix had expanded. Mr Hemmings responded, saying that the project had been timetabled over 2 years. Ms McGovern explained that one of the criticisms of the current model was that it was put together in a matter of months, this revision of the model was to be thorough and attempt to cut off avenues for legal challenge to avoid further disputes.

Agreed:

(i) The recommendation that work continue without implementation in 2006 was agreed.

07/2006 UPDATE ON DISPUTES

Agenda Item 7

Ms McGovern spoke to her paper and informed the Authority that the paper was for information purposes. The Authority felt that the legal route was the appropriate action to take with EWS as they had exhausted the disputes process.

08/2006 AIRWAVE SERVICE CONTRACT

Agenda Item 8

Mr McCall spoke to his paper and explained every Force in the country was now in a position to finalise their Airwave Contract. Mr McCall assured the Authority that the contract had been checked against that of other forces and also assured Members that this project would not affect the budget, as all the money for Airwave was coming from the Home Office. Mr McCall recommended that the Authority endorse option 2 (paragraph 6.3) which involved entering into a contract with both O2 and the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) as this would finalise current arrangements between BTP, the service provider (O2) and PITO. It would also offer BTP the contractual protection required for such a service.

Agreed:

- (i) The Authority endorsed option 2.**

09/2006 AOB

Non-Agenda

There was no AOB.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7th March, 10.00am

Signed.....

Chairman

