

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE AUTHORITY

Report to: Police Authority

Date: 6th May 2008

Subject: Policing Plan & Budget Consultation Process 2009-10:
Options

Sponsor: Chief Executive & Clerk

Author Sam Elvy

For: Decision

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 To invite Members to reflect on the current arrangements for setting the Force's annual Policing Plan and budget and to propose some options for the these processes for the 2009-10 planning cycle.

2. CURRENT PROCESS

- Policing Plan
- 2.1 For the last three years the Force's annual Policing Plan has been developed by a sub-group of the Strategy, Budget and Performance Monitoring Committee. The Policing Plan Working Group (PPWG) has been Chaired by the Vice Chair of the Authority and is attended by three Authority Members, the Deputy Chief Constable and additional representatives from the Force's Strategic Development Department and the Authority Secretariat.
- 2.2 This group meets three times between October and March each year to receive evidence from the Force, and external sources, on current national and rail specific policing pressures and the outputs from a number of consultation activities. The group explores both the structure and content of the annual Policing Plan and considers various iterations of the draft Policing Plan before recommending a draft to the Authority in March for final approval.

Meeting date	Purpose	Outputs
Meeting 1 Oct	To receive and consider; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outputs from BTP/A consultation activities ▪ Feedback on current Policing Plan ▪ Outputs from strategic assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreed shape of the Plan and indicative Policing Plan themes
Meeting 2 late Dec/early Jan	To receive and consider; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outputs from Area consultation activities ▪ A draft Policing Plan with indication of possible national and local themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreed themes, and likely direction of travel (e.g. maintenance, reduction or increase)
Meeting 3 mid Feb	To receive and consider; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A draft Plan with numerical targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft Plan recommended to the Authority for approval

Budget Consultation Process

- 2.3 The budget consultation process supports development of the Policing Plan and is the main mechanism by which the Authority formally engages with industry stakeholders on current priorities. To date the Authority has engaged with stakeholders at fixed points in the year following the consultation cycle as set out at Appendix A. In 2007-8 the Authority conducted formal interviews and hosted consultation workshops which focused on the development of the 2008-11 Strategic Plan. At its May 2007 meeting the Authority decided not to hold additional budget workshops but wrote to stakeholders inviting them to submit further feedback by post. At the same meeting it was suggested that the budget consultation process be revisited for the 2009-10 planning cycle.
- 2.4 To date, much of the Authority's budget setting consultation activity has focused on the tensions arising due to the substantial increases in the Force's budget between 2005 and 2008. The Authority has now given a commitment to PSA holders to limit increases in their charges to RPI only for the duration of the 2008-11 Strategic Plan. The relationships between the Authority, Force and our stakeholders have also matured and it may be that our stakeholders would wish to engage with us in a different way in the future. This paper explores options for future interactions with stakeholders on the Policing Plan and budget.

3. FUTURE OPTIONS

3.1 Policing Plan

The main mechanism for setting the Policing Plan is the process set out in 2.1 above which considers a range of sources of evidence including that produced by the Authority's budget consultation process. Feedback on the current Policing Plan arrangements has been positive and it is generally felt that having a dedicated working group allows priorities and proposals to be explored at a level of detail which could not be achieved as part of general committee agenda. The current arrangements also allow for flexibility in the timing of the work on the Plan and in the membership of the group. We would therefore recommend retaining the current process for developing the annual Policing Plan.

3.2 Budget consultation

Four possible future options have been identified, these are not necessarily mutually exclusive and each brings its own advantages and disadvantages;

Option 1: No change

The Authority could retain its current process as is (set out at Appendix A). The existing arrangements offer multiple opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us (and other stakeholders) about their current priorities and concerns. However, the current process is resource intensive, both in terms of time and financial cost; it may be perceived as being complex and may now be providing diminishing returns.

Option 2: Single workshop approach

The Authority would host a single annual consultation workshop in a central location which all PSA holders would be invited to attend. This single event approach would provide a clear focus for our consultation activities whilst still enabling stakeholders with different priorities to enter into dialogue with us and one another. Whilst a single event is likely to reduce current costs and demands on Members, Chief Officers and Secretariat staff, there is a risk that if consultees are unable to attend they may not feel able/inclined to engage with us in other ways and their voice will be lost. We could minimise this risk by having a long lead-in period and ensuring that ongoing communications about the event are effective.

Option 3: Member interviews

The Authority would engage with stakeholders via Member 1:1s with nominated senior representatives. This could be with all PSA holders or with owning groups only. The Authority has used this approach previously to carry out an initial stakeholder audit exercise and in relation to the early stages of developing the 2008-11 Strategic Plan. This method is popular with many of our stakeholders as it gives them

time to enter into in-depth dialogue with the Authority. However, it is a resource intensive approach which places a particular burden on Authority Members and does not allow for interaction between stakeholders with different interests.

Option 4: Postal/web based consultation

With this approach the Authority would communicate with stakeholders via a written consultation exercise, either by post or electronically by email or via the BTP/A website. The advantages of this approach are that it allows respondents the flexibility to respond in greater depth to the issues specified in the consultation documents and to respond at a time which is most convenient for them. There would be costs associated with developing and administering such a process but this is likely to be significantly less than hosting workshops and could be met from existing Authority resources. This option would not allow for interaction between stakeholders with different interests.

- 3.3 The Chair and Chief executive recently met with the new Chairman of ATOC, Mike Alexander, to discuss general issues. ATOC have been asked to provide a slot on their agenda on the autumn so that BTP budget and other issues can be discussed.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Refreshing the existing industry consultative arrangements may lead to increased costs in relation to administration, venues, catering and transport to and from meetings and consultative events; this will obviously be dependent on the approach selected.
- 4.2 The Authority will want to ensure that any proposed budget and Policing Plan consultation activities offer value for money and so will want to be sure that the adopted framework is effective and not duplicated by any other of the Authority or Force's existing processes.

5. DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The range of consultation activities the Authority chooses will need to ensure that it reaches a range of stakeholder groups, some of which may currently be underrepresented. The Authority will therefore need to consider the following during the planning phase;
- Who our stakeholders are and whether they are included in our current and proposed consultative processes
 - The accessibility of our consultative information – we may need to make information available in a range of alternative languages/formats

- The accessibility of any venues we choose for our consultative events. We will need to establish whether any attendees have any special access requirements and where reasonable to do so, we will try to meet these needs.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 By considering new consultation arrangements there is a risk that we may undermine the clarity of the structure and purpose of the current arrangements and our stakeholders may disengage. Without proper consideration of the inputs and outputs of any revised consultation process, activities may be duplicated and/or particular stakeholder inputs may not be captured at all. This risk could be mitigated by robustly planning and effectively communicating the structure and purpose of any new budget and Policing Plan consultation arrangements and the role each of our stakeholders are invited to play in it.

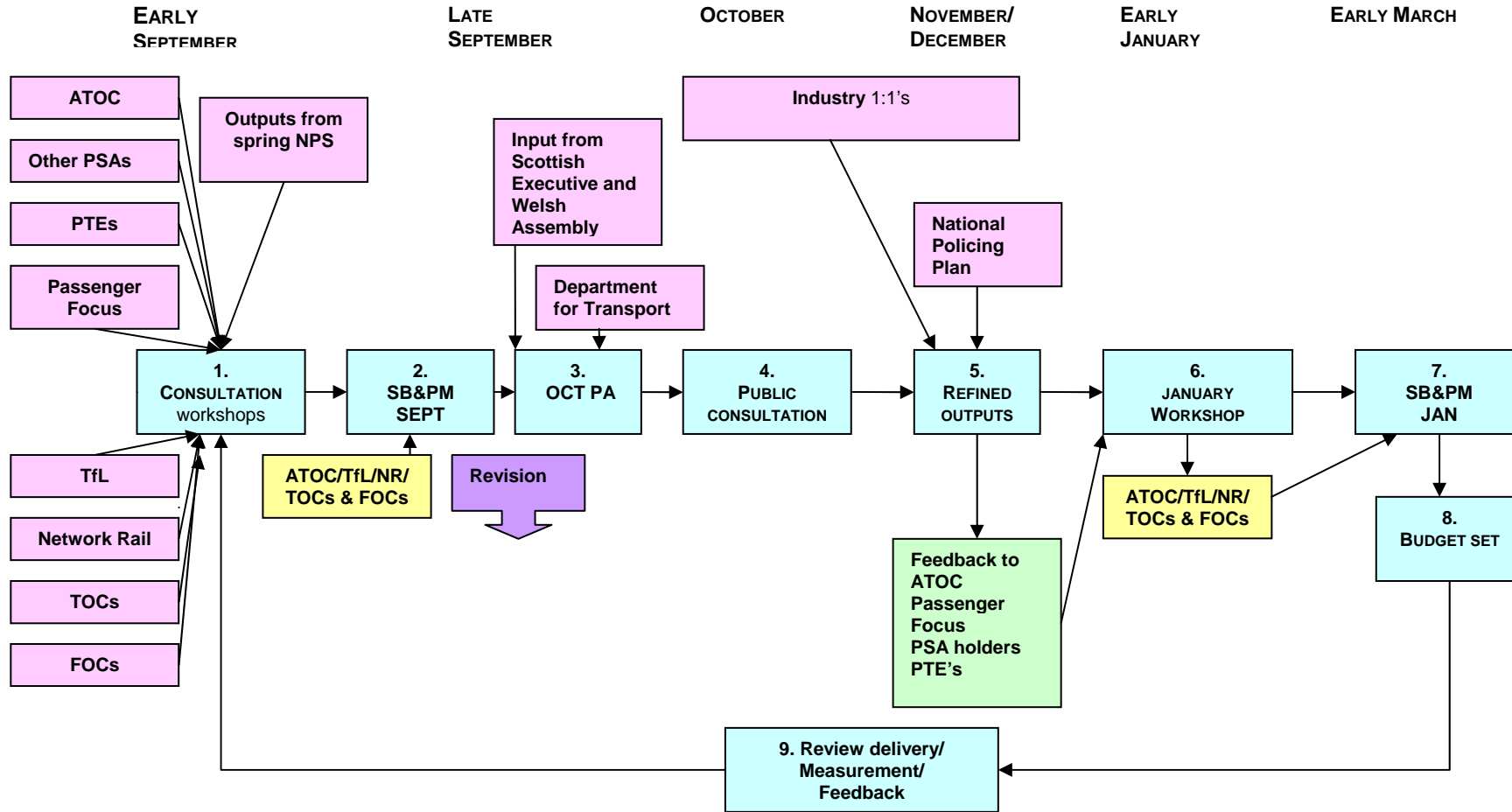
7. FOR DECISION

- 7.1 Members are invited to;
- Endorse the current Policing Plan arrangements or suggest ways in which the existing process could be improved.
 - Discuss the options as presented at section 3.2 above and approve one (or a combination of options) as the method by which the Authority will engage with stakeholders on development of the 2009-10 budget and Policing Plan. Depending on the range of Member views it may be useful to approach a selection of our stakeholders to obtain a steer on which engagement method(s) they would prefer us to adopt.

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APPENDIX A

BUDGET & POLICING PLAN PROCESS



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