

Report to: Stakeholder Relations and
Communications Strategy Committee

Agenda item: 9

Date: Monday 20 July 2009

Subject: Future Stakeholder Management

Sponsor: Deputy Chief Executive

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For: Information & Discussion

1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 To provide information on BTPA's statutory responsibilities for consulting its stakeholders, and remind Members of consultation exercises held by the Authority since its inception.
- 1.2 To invite Members to consider both BTPA's experiences to date and a series of proposals for the future in order to establish a firmer set of ongoing arrangements to engage the Authority's stakeholders.

2. Background

- 2.1 Under Section 62, subsection (1) of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, titled "Public consultation", the Authority is required to "make, and review from time to time, arrangements to obtain the opinions about the policing of the railways of" its stakeholders.
- 2.2 Under subsection (2), BTPA is also required to "make, and review from time to time, arrangements to invite the co-operation of the persons listed in subsection (1) in preventing crime on the railways."
- 2.3 The full section from the Act is listed in Appendix A.
- 2.4 The Authority's Consultation and Communication Strategy was finalised in early 2008. It identified five objectives which, in summary, are to:
 - Improve the consultation process with the railway community (as identified in the Railways and Transport Act 2003, Section 62);
 - Raise the profile of the BTP and BTPA among decision-makers in the industry;

- Improve internal communications between the BTP and BTPA, and between the BTPA and its Members;
- Ensure the BTPA is inclusive, and adopts all equality and diversity schemes;
- Ensure the resources necessary to achieving these aims are in place.

2.5 The Strategy is listed in Appendix B.

3. Overview of Authority consultations

3.1 The Authority has consulted and cooperated with its stakeholders on a large scale through various means since its establishment in July 2004. These included:

- Workshops, attended by Train Operating Company directors, which concerned BTPA's Strategic Plan or its budget;
- Questionnaires sent to the rail company directors;
- Individual meetings between Members and train company directors;
- An annual meeting with the ATOC board;
- Questions in the National Passenger Survey;
- Events at the House of Commons and Scottish Parliament, and dinners with industry representatives; and
- Newsletters distributed to PSA holders.

3.2 **Workshops:** BTPA invited industry representatives to attend a series of budgetary workshops for the 2005/06 and 2006/07 financial years to discuss their thoughts on BTP's use of its resources. A later workshop was held to consult industry members on the 2008-11 Strategic Plan.

3.3 **Questionnaires:** the Authority began working with Matrix Research, a consultancy, in September 2004. The following year, Matrix was asked to conduct a survey among rail companies of their attitudes towards its police charges.

Matrix additionally conducted a review of BTP's consultation activities with PSA holders, in particular its budget reports and newsletters, and reported back on these to the Stakeholder Relations and Communications Strategy committee on 08 August 2006. They found that most respondents felt BTPA's correspondence on the budgetary matters was useful, but that the workshops and documentations could be clearer. The survey also reported a large majority of respondents felt BTPA did not respond at all to their feedback on budget issues.

3.4 **One-to-one interviews:** in 2004, Authority members conducted individual interviews with 28 PSA holders, which constituted approximately a third of all PSA holders at the time. The aims of these interviews were:

- To establish a relationship between BTPA and the PSA holder;
- To explain BTPA's role;
- To discuss railway crime on the PSA holder's patch; and
- To explore the PSA holder's attitudes towards British Transport Police.

The resulting interviews – which represented the interviewee's first contact with either the Authority or its predecessor body - were comprehensive in subject matter. A BTPA report on the process in January 2005 said: "An enormous amount of useful information was captured, with virtually all stakeholders welcoming the contact from the Authority and inviting us to repeat the exercise in one year's time." However, the preparation and scheduling of the interviews was an intensive process both for Members and the Secretariat.

A subsequent round of interviews were held in 2006/07, with a report presented to the Stakeholder Relations and Communications Strategy Committee on 10 July 2007.

The Authority has since proposed meetings with its stakeholders as the need arose. It wrote to holding group directors in December 2008, shortly after the appointment of its new Chairman, to offer introductory meetings to each group. Favourable responses were received from the Go-Ahead group and Serco.

3.5 **Passenger surveys:** BTPA maintained a direct form of consultation with passengers until Autumn 2006 through a series of questions allocated in the National Passenger Survey. These have since been outsourced to the Force, which leads on negotiations and analysis of the data. A dedicated team now reports its findings to the Stakeholder Relations and Communications Strategy Committee.

3.6 **Newsletters:** the Authority has published a number of briefings as pamphlets, in the style of a newsletter, since its inception:

- Six "PSA briefings" have been produced since 2005. These were produced on a quarterly basis until 2006, when they switched to an annual cycle. The latest briefing was published in Summer 2008.

- One briefing was produced for parliament in March 2009. This was distributed to members of parliament in Westminster and Holyrood, as well as assembly members in Wales and London. Rail companies and PTEs were also sent copies.

3.7 **Parliamentary events** were held at the House of Commons on 30 June 2008 and at the Scottish Parliament on 01 October 2008. The intention was to liaise with MPs, Peers and MSPs and ensure they were aware of BTPA's existence.

4. Issues encountered

- 4.1 Past occurrences have demonstrated that interest in workshops among industry representatives is high only when they have specific issues they wish to raise. For instance, the first budget workshop, held in 2005, was marked by vocal concerns over the substantial rises in policing costs. For subsequent workshops, it has proved difficult to gather sufficient stakeholder interest. It has additionally proved difficult to strike a balance between providing a platform for train operators to express their concerns and keeping the workshop on topic.
- 4.2 There has been a similar downward trend in interest in workshops to discuss policing strategy. BTPA approached ATOC in 2008 proposing an event in this area, but was turned down on the basis that they had no specific issues to discuss.
- 4.3 It should be noted that a number of consultation activities with stakeholders are now undertaken by the Force. These are:
- BTP's National Passenger Survey questions are now overseen by the Quality of Service team within the Strategic Development Department;
 - The Force holds regular meetings with ATOC on a quarterly basis;
 - Two years ago, the Force began meetings between Area Commanders and local TOCs. This was a result of the Working Together group, which was formed as part of a recommendation of the Department for Transport to strengthen relations with the industry, and appears to be an approach that TOCs prefer;
 - Some Areas have held consultation dinners for local managing directors. A successful event was held in the North West area. Similar events in the London North, London South and Wales & Western areas were cancelled owing to insufficient interest.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 It appears that the rail industry's appetite has disappeared for workshop events in the immediate future. Any future workshops would require a distinct purpose and an agenda that is driven by the Authority during the event.
- 5.2 The offer of one-to-one interviews between Members and rail company directors, either in person or over the telephone, has found slightly more interest among industry representatives, although Members' time constraints would have to be considered.
- 5.3 Relations between BTPA and the industry are, at the highest strategic level, driven largely by issues, but are nonetheless healthy when they do occur. Similarly, there is good contact between BTP and the industry at an operational level. There is space to improve with the management level of train operating companies by updating them more regularly on BTPA's business.
- 5.4 There is no contact with the middle layers of TOC management, specifically those individuals likely to become managing and financial directors in the next few years.

6. Diversity issues

- 6.1 Our current procedure does not specifically exclude staff and passenger groups with such dedicated interests as race, disability and age, but future consideration of BTP's stakeholder policy may need to include a renewed approach to such groups.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to consider and discuss the following suggestions for engaging different groups of stakeholders.
- 7.2 **Rail companies** could be informed of the latest Authority business through PSA briefings published on a quarterly basis. These would be in the style of a newsletter, similar to the briefing to Parliament produced in March 2009, with "newsy" language and photography. These briefings would contain headline stories about how the Authority has held the Force to account in its recent meetings: for instance, a briefing produced recently could have covered the April 2009 Stakeholder Relations and Communications Strategy meeting, which did not endorse BTP's plans to pilot Taser outright and instead asked for a detailed assessment to the full Authority first.
- 7.3 **Freight companies:** BTPA's penetration and profile is considerably lower among freight operating companies than the TOCs. In addition to sending the briefings described in 7.2 to these companies, the Secretariat could propose organising a

workshop event for selected Members and representatives of freight companies, in order to attain a better understanding of their interests and longer term expectations of railway policing.

- 7.4 **Rail holding groups:** Members could be asked to consider appointing “BTPA champions” from among their number to be assigned to individual rail holding groups. These Members would be a first point of contact for the holding group’s enquiries, and would hold regular – perhaps annual – meetings with them.
- 7.5 **ATOC:** BTP chief officers already hold quarterly meetings with the board of ATOC. The Secretariat could propose appointing a Member to attend these meetings on BTPA’s behalf and perhaps hold a shorter, but separate meeting with the board immediately after the BTP meeting.
- 7.6 **The Force:** BTPA endures a low profile in the Force. Knowledge of the Authority and its activities is extremely limited among police constables and PCSOs, and even among the higher ranks there is confusion over BTPA’s exact responsibilities and the division of certain tasks between Authority and Force. The primary vehicles through which BTPA should communicate with the Force are the annual Policing Plan and Annual Report, which are required by statute to be established and published in the Authority’s name. To coincide with their publication, BTPA could write – not at length – to police officers and staff, describing why certain targets have been set and the Authority’s assessment of the Force’s performance over the last year. This is a model that has been used by other police authorities and raise awareness of BTPA’s role.
- 7.7 **Passengers:** under Home Office guidelines, the responsibility to explain the powers of police to stop members of the public falls to the police authorities. The APA has recently launched a consultation regarding its revised awareness campaign on Stop & Account and Stop & Search powers, and BTPA is due to respond to this with its feedback shortly. However, seeing as BTP is one of the most prolific users of Stop powers, the Authority could consider broadening the APA’s material for use on station platforms and trains. Network Rail could be approached for poster space at its mainline stations; a single TOC could be selected for inclusion in a pilot scheme to display posters and other material at the more regional stations. If successful, the pilot scheme could be implemented across the country.

8. Secretariat staffing

- 8.1 Work on the six strands of stakeholder engagement described in Section 7 would be led by the Communications Officer, albeit in close collaboration with the Business Support Manager (for

point 7.2) and the Research and Policy Manager (for points 7.3 through 7.7 inclusive).

- 8.2 Any engagement activity would be undertaken with the knowledge of the Deputy Chief Executive, and distributed following a final sign-off by the Chief Executive & Clerk.

Appendix A

Section (62) of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003:

62 Public consultation

(1) The Authority shall make, and review from time to time, arrangements to obtain the opinions about the policing of the railways of—

- (a) passengers on the railways,
- (b) groups of persons representing passengers on the railways,
- (c) persons providing railway services,
- (d) organisations representing persons providing railway services,
- (e) employees of persons providing railway services,
- (f) organisations representing employees of persons providing railway services,
- (g) the Scottish Ministers,
- (h) the National Assembly for Wales,
- (i) organisations representing local authorities in England,
- (j) the Strategic Rail Authority,
- (k) the Office of Rail Regulation,
- (l) the Rail Accident Investigation Branch,
- (m) the Health and Safety Commission,
- (n) the Health and Safety Executive, and
- (o) other persons with an interest in the railways whom the Authority thinks it appropriate to consult.

(2) The Authority shall make, and review from time to time, arrangements to invite the co-operation of the persons listed in subsection (1) in preventing crime on the railways.

(3) Before making or reviewing arrangements under this section the Authority shall—

- (a) consult the Chief Constable, and
- (b) have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

(4) The Secretary of State may—

- (a) issue guidance about arrangements under this section;
- (b) require the Authority to report to him on arrangements under this section;
- (c) require the Authority to review arrangements under this section.