BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE

Agenda Item 3

REPORT TO:	**British Transport Police Authority**
DATE:	**1 November 2010**
SUBJECT:	**Chief Constable's Report**
SPONSOR:	**Chief Constable**
AUTHOR:	**PI Robin Edwards**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an overview of activity within British Transport Police (BTP) since the last report to the British Transport Police Authority (BTPA) meeting on 30 September 2010.

2. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

2.1 Overall notifiable crime is down 3% when compared to the same period last year with 35,628 recorded during 2010/11 (1 April 2010 to 24 October) 2010 to compared to 36,799 over the same period in 2009/10. Total notifiable and non notifiable crime is down by 2.9% which equates to a reduction of 1,670 offences. Other areas of note are a 7.7% reduction in Serious Public Disorder offences, 3.6% reduction in Less Serious Public Disorder offences, 3% reduction in Staff Assaults, 12.5% reduction in Serious Line of Route offences, 11.4% reduction in Criminal Damage, and a 9.3% reduction in Robbery offences. There has been an increase in Sexual offences with a rise of 5.7% which is reflected nationally across Home Office forces. Appendix A contains the Policing Plan Executive Summary which details BTP performance against its National and Local targets.

2.2 Live cable offences remain a challenge for BTP, compounded by an increasing copper price to a high of £5249 per tonne during October 2010. The correlation between the price of copper and cable is reflected in the number of offences recorded, although the level since august is lower than the offences recorded between April and July despite the rise in copper prices. 790 Live Cable offences have been recorded year to date, against a yearly target of 878 offences.

3. 7 JULY 2005 LONDON BOMBINGS INQUEST

3.1 The Inquest into the 7 July London Bombings commenced on 11 October 2010 at the Royal Courts of Justice. Evidence is being heard by The Right Honourable Lady Justice Hallett, who is sitting as Assistant Deputy Coroner. The evidence is being heard in sequential incident order – Aldgate, Edgware Road, Russell Square and Tavistock Square.

3.2 Operation Pendulum has been set up to prepare BTP's evidence to the Inquest and has provided the Coroner's legal team with a significant amount of material in one of the largest disclosure exercises ever carried out by BTP. Twenty four BTP witnesses are giving evidence to the Inquest out of a witness schedule that totals nearly 600 people. On 20 and 21 October 2010 the first BTP witness, Detective Inspector Barker gave his evidence.

3.3 One of the themes emerging from the Inquest is criticism levelled at the emergency services regarding delays around the speed of response. As the Inquest develops, further issues that are of concern to the families, survivors and Coroner may emerge which could impact on BTP. The issue of preventability will be examined in 2011, and various individuals and interested parties will be expected to detail their knowledge of the intelligence that was known about the four suicide bombers prior to the bombings. The Inquest is expected to run until March 2011. The Coroner's Inquests into the deaths of the four suicide bombers have been adjourned indefinitely.

4. COUNTER TERRORISM

4.1 The Security Services have raised the threat level of an attack from a Dissident Irish Republican Group on the mainland to substantial - this means that an attack is a strong possibility. In all previous Republican campaigns terrorists have sought to attack and disrupt the rail network. Contingency plans are in place within BTP to deal with such an attack and the Force is working jointly with the industry and other agencies in response to this increased threat level.

4.2 Widespread media reporting of the threat of an Al Qaeda inspired attack are further reminders that the national threat level indicates that an attack is highly likely.

5. HMIC

5.1 HMIC conducted an inspection of BTP week commencing 4 October. The inspection covered four domains - local crime and policing, protection from serious harm, value for money, and confidence and satisfaction. The HMIC team visited London Underground and North Western Areas, as well as conducting interviews with members of the Strategic Command Team, Force Headquarters departments, BTPA members, as well as holding a number of staff focus groups. The initial feedback from the inspection team was positive and indicated there are no high risk areas for improvement. The draft HMIC report is expected at the end of October and a formal debriefing with the Deputy Chief Constable has been arranged for 3 November.

6. VISIT OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

6.1 Pope Benedict XVI's visit during 16-19 September 2010 was a challenging operation for BTP. The numbers of visitors and possible protestors who used public transport to attend the organised events and line the Pope's route over the four days was significant. The operation required a flexible plan to deal with the uncertainty of the numbers attending, the level of any protest, and the emotional response of the attendees.

7. MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Awards Ceremony

7.1 The Chief Constable awarded Certificates of Commendation, Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medals, Judges Commendations and a Police Bravery Award at a ceremony held at Force Headquarters on 27 September 2010. The ceremony was an opportunity to recognise the achievements of BTP officers and staff, as well as rail staff and members of the public who actively assist police officers carrying out their duty and keeping the railways free from the fear of crime.

Chief Constable's Seminars

7.2 On 8 October 2010 the first of a series of Chief Constable's Seminars took place in London. The Chief Constable is using these seminars to brief officers and police staff on his vision for BTP, the challenges facing the Force, and the role all BTP employees in responding to these challenges. A stakeholder has also been invited to speak at each seminar to provide staff with a rail industry perspective. So far representatives from Southern, Southeastern, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and London Underground have spoken at these events and provided informative and well received updates on life in the industry, what they expect from BTP, and the challenges ahead. To reduce the cost of these events we are not using hotels this year and have sourced cheap, and sometimes free, alternative venues from our stakeholders. Further events are taking place during October and November in each of BTP's Areas.

Stakeholder meetings

7.3 The Chief Constable continues to meet with train operating companies and over the past month has met with Mark Hopwood, First Great Western and Andy Cooper, Cross Country Trains. Feedback from both was very positive about the service provided by BTP, but both expressed concern about incidents that cause disruption to the rail network, including metal theft and fatalities.

The Chief Constable met Kenny MacAskill, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure & Climate Change when he was in Scotland on 18 October. Both in the past have been critics of BTP but due to the time invested by Assistant Chief Constable McCall in developing the relationship with Scottish Government, both are now complementary about the policing service provided by BTP and recognise the value in having a specialist police force for the railways.

8. OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

Cable thieves jailed in Sheffield

8.1 Two men who admitted stealing signalling cable from a location near to Masbrough Station, Rotherham on 12 January 2010 were each jailed for three years at Sheffield Crown Court. The men carried out the theft in the early hours of the morning and stole 150 metres of cable that they later sold to a local scrap dealer for £69.

8.1.1 The theft caused 127 trains to be cancelled, delays totalling over 20 hours and £28,000 of repair costs. The men were detained after being caught on CCTV dragging a distinctive tool box away from the lines. Officers followed the wheel tracks of the tool box to a local housing estate where the suspects were arrested.

8.1.2 Judge Robert Moore said in his summing up, "The police do their best and the courts must play their part. Let the message go out that people who steal signalling cable from the railway will be locked up with heavy sentences."

Graffiti Offender Jailed

8.2 The offender struck numerous times at railway sidings near to Southend Victoria station, spraying his tag 'WEAR' on trains under the cover of darkness. He used his phone to video himself vandalising the trains and to take pictures of himself posing with several large cannabis plants he had grown in his back garden. He caused damage to 11 trains in total, all of which had to be taken out of service and professionally cleaned. The offender was first arrested on 8 October 2009 after he was challenged by a train driver who had spotted him by a train with a freshly painted 'WEAR' tag on it. He ran off, but was later detained and arrested outside the station by two BTP officers. His mobile phone contained footage of him spray-painting trains and photos of him with cannabis plants. Detectives continued their investigation and found a picture of the offender posing by a wall covered in graffiti on a social networking site.

8.2.1 The offender was bailed during the protracted enquiry, but continued to offend on railway ground, committing further offences in April and May 2010. He was charged with five counts of criminal damage and one count of cannabis cultivation. A further graffiti offence, at Grove Park depot in South London on 3 June 2010 was taken into consideration. As a result of the investigation, the offender was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment.

Graffiti Offenders Arrested

8.3 An offender who was identified by covert CCTV cameras was linked to other prolific offenders responsible for criminal damage. An investigation commenced involving covert technology, forensic examination, liaison with other police forces, and the collation of numerous statements. As a result of the investigation four active graffiti vandals were charged with conspiracy.

8.3.1 Strict bail conditions were imposed on the offenders arrested which resulted in a considerable reduction in the number of graffiti offences reported. The defendants were alleged to be responsible for numerous offences of criminal damage across London and Essex over a substantial period of time. The offenders were charged with conspiracy to cause damage and received sentences ranging from nine to eighteen months which were suspended for two of the offenders and fines totalling £3000.

Aggravated Burglary

8.4 A man was sentenced to an indeterminate jail term for the protection of the public at Cambridge Crown Court on 6 October 2010. On 11 January 2009 the offender travelled to Biggleswade station. When he arrived at the station he cut the station's telephone lines and alarm system, before breaking into an office. Once inside he waited for station staff to arrive for the morning shift, when he confronted them wearing a mask. He shouted at the member of staff to hand over the keys to the safe, while threatening him with a hammer. He then tied the member of staff up and locked him in a toilet before emptying the safe of a substantial amount of cash and making his escape.

8.4.1 The investigation was challenging as the offender had carefully planned the crime and left no forensic evidence at the scene. As well as conducting enquiries in the local area, officers

received information from two witnesses who identified the offender, who walked with a distinctive gait. Following arrest he denied any involvement with the offence but was subsequently charged with aggravated burglary and false imprisonment. It took a jury just 90 minutes to return a unanimous guilty verdict.

Attempted Murder in Scotland

8.5 On 25 September 2010 a 35 year old man was attacked by three offenders as he left Drumfrochar station. The victim attempted to escape by running back into the station and along the platform where he was knocked to the ground by two male attackers. They then proceeded to kick, punch and strike the victim with a bottle several times to the head and body. One of the attackers left the scene to pick up a brick and on his return he struck the victim several times to head. During this incident a female ran the full length of the platform to join in the attack by kicking and stamping on the victim's head. The assailants left the location but as they did the victim was seen to move and struggle towards the exit of the station at which point one of the assailants returned to stamp on the victim's head and again strike him several times with the brick. The ferocity of the attack caused the brick to break up on contact with the victim's head. Miraculously the victim was not seriously injured.

8.5.1 As a result of a BTP investigation one of the males and the female were detained by officers, charged with attempted murder and committed for trial. A second male suspect has been identified and following discussion with the Procurator Fiscal a warrant has been issued for his arrest.

Operation Tawny

8.6 In January 1998 a 19 year old female was seriously assaulted whilst travelling on a train between Hastings and Charing Cross. Her injuries were so severe that she was in a coma for five days following the attack and left partially paralysed. Despite an extensive investigation, the offender was never identified and the case remained unsolved.

8.6.1 In September 2008, Sussex Police contacted BTP to inform them that an inmate at Broadmoor Hospital had intimated that he was responsible for the 1998 attack. The inmate was interviewed by BTP and gave them details of the attack that suggested that he may have been the assailant. There was no forensic evidence from the initial investigation and the victim had been so traumatised that there was no possibility that she could visually identify her attacker. A careful examination of all the information from the initial investigation established details of the attack that could only have been known to the assailant.

8.6.2 The officers presented a strong, although circumstantial case to the Crown Prosecution Service who agreed to prosecute for attempted rape and attempted murder. The inmate eventually pleaded guilty to both offences. He also pleaded guilty to the murder of two women in Hastings around the same time period as the offence on the railway. He was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum tariff of 21 years.

Serious Assault at Rugby

8.7 On the morning of 15 August 2010, rail staff at Rugby railway station found a pool of blood outside the main entrance. This was reported, and BTP made commenced enquiries to identify the victim. Later that day a male contacted Warwickshire Police stating that his son had been attacked at the station in the early hours of the morning, and was suffering from serious head injuries. BTP officers attended the informant's home address and located the victim who required hospital treatment.

8.7.1 The victim named his attacker and as a result of this information a suspect was arrested. CCTV footage was seized which showed a male attacking the victim with a baseball bat at the front of the station and the weapon was recovered from the suspect's home. The suspect was taken to Rugby police station where he was interviewed and fully admitted his part in the attack. The suspect was due to be sentenced on 22 October at Warwick Crown Court.

Anti Social Behaviour Operation

8.8 The 20.30hrs Transpennine Express service from York to Middlesbrough has been regularly subject to passengers behaving in an anti social manner on Saturday evenings as a result of afternoon drinking sessions in York City Centre.

8.8.1 On 2 October 2010 BTP officers and Special Constables carried out a high profile operation to combat the anti social behaviour. Despite the police presence one individual began shouting and swearing at passengers and threatening officers with violence. The male became extremely violent lashing out at officers resulting in Captor being deployed whilst the train was in motion. A male and female attempted to prevent officers from arresting the suspect which resulted in their arrest for obstructing police in the course of their duties.

8.8.2 As a result of the problems experienced by passengers on this service, Operation Night Owl, a North Eastern Area led initiative focusing on the reduction and detection of anti social behaviour was introduced. This operation will run from October through to December and will focus on reducing instances of disorder on Saturday evening problem services.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That Members note the contents of this paper.