

Minutes

Performance and Delivery Committee

Thursday 7 May 2020, at 2-4.30pm
Via: Videoconference / Teleconference

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Present:

Dominic Booth (Committee Chair)
Andy Cooper
Craig Mackey
Martin Richards
Stella Thomas

Apologies:**In attendance:**

Adrian Hanstock, Deputy Chief Constable, BTP
Simon Downey OBE, Director of Strategy & Change, BTP
Rachael Etebar, Director of People & Culture, BTP
Tracey Martin, Director of Finance & Commercial Services, BTP
Hugh Ind, Chief Executive, BTPA
Lucy Yasin, Head of Governance and Compliance, BTPA
Sarah McGarel, Chief Finance Officer, BTPA
Sam Elvy, Head of Strategy, Planning and Engagement, BTPA
Lynsey Marshall, Finance, Audit and Risk Manager
Jon Newton, Analyst, BTPA (minutes)

09/2020 Introductions

Agenda Item 1

1. The Chair welcomed attendees. There were no apologies.
2. There was a discussion about the timing of papers being submitted for the Committee meetings, taking into account where there are potential delays. It was highlighted that there were some lessons to be learned and options were being progressed for the sharing of papers in future.
3. The Committee praised the very good work being undertaken by BTP given the current, rapidly changing, times.

10/2020 Minutes

Agenda Item 2

4. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of discussions.

11/2020 Matters Arising

Agenda Item 3

5. Further to action 24, for the Committee to receive an update on call handling performance, the BTPA CEO informed Members that the Force

had provided a detailed presentation; however given its length and complexity it was decided that the CEO would provide a verbal update.

6. Members were informed that around 30% of non-emergency calls were being unanswered, which was too high. BTP has a comprehensive transformation programme in place, which has started to deliver improvements, with further developments expected over the next 12 to 18 months. With the current resource levels, however, the performance level might continue for another year or so. The CEO had speculated that, if an additional 8-10 temporary employees were taken on in the meantime, it might be possible to reduce the call abandonment rate while the transformation was being delivered. He had put this challenge to the Chief Officer Group. A paper will be shared with Committee Members providing more details and an update on the position of BTP in response to the CEO's challenge.
7. The Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) noted that the percentage abandonment rate appeared alarming, however, it should also be noted that there can be multiple calls across multiple channels relating to single incidents. There was also the potential for a cultural shift in the way people contact the Force, for example the industry using self-access portals could help to reduce the number of calls to the Force.
8. Further to action 15, for the Force to receive a synopsis of public, victim and rail staff survey results, a Member noted that, between 2015/16 and 2019/20, the victim quality of service survey showed a reduction in satisfaction from 81% to 69%. The DCC highlighted that during this time there had been an increase in the number of crimes which has been pushed out to an overburdened and less experienced workforce. There was also the potential to introduce an investigative service level agreement with victims as some crimes are likely to be unsolved, for example if a mobile phone has gone missing at an unknown point on a long journey. There were also a number of volume crimes reported online, where the victim does not have an expectation of follow-up, but when the victim survey results show that there has been no contact, this impacts on the survey ratings. It was noted, however, that there was a need for a better initial triage system, which remains part of the investigative plan for next year.
9. Members were informed that the treatment and behaviour related ratings, from the victim quality of service survey, were positive. The police response and actions category, however, was a concern and was indicative of the workforce profile at the moment; there was a need to get this back to an even level and focused on victims. The Learning and Development Team were looking to bring in online guidance to underpin this.
10. It was noted from the Rail Staff Survey results that members of rail staff who had received rail staff accredited training felt more secure. Members were informed that this training was provided to a specific section of rail staff and that there was a question around how it could be expanded for the operators who wanted to explore that option.

11. The DCC informed Members that the key issues of visibility, anti-social behaviour, violent crime, and counter terrorism, were highlighted in the public consultation survey. The Force was doing a lot of work in each of these areas and there was a need to increase awareness of this among the public and rail staff.
12. All other actions were noted as being in progress, completed or deferred to the September Committee meeting.
13. **Agreed**
 - 13.1 It was agreed that the synopsis of surveys would be shared with all BTPA Members.
 - 13.2 Ms Thomas to be informed of the male/female ratio for the rail staff survey.

12/2020 2019/20 Q3 Performance Update

Agenda Item 4

People and Culture

14. The Committee recognised the sad loss of Detective Constable John Coker. Members noted their great respect for Detective Constable Coker and passed on their condolences on behalf of the Authority.
15. The Committee was informed that the vacancy gap for police officers had reduced from 5% in Quarter 3 to 1% in Quarter 4. BTP was projected to be at full establishment in 2020/21 Quarter 1. The Force had continued to recruit and train new officers and PCSOs during the COVID-19 pandemic, with video recruitment and digital learning being implemented to reduce close contact. Members praised the work of the teams involved with the recruitment and training.
16. BTP had the highest BAME representation rate in the country of any police force, which matched the national BAME population figure of 14%. There had been a small increase in the number of female officers; however, it remained a struggle to bring in new female recruits. Details of an action plan were included in the Committee report; it included work on branding to reassure potential applicants, while being open about the realities of the job and options for part-time roles.
17. Employee turnover had reduced by 50% in the previous two months; this was being monitored to identify if it was COVID-19 related. In addition, applications for BTP positions had seen a large increase. The Force's branding was being developed following research from Penna. This will be focused on BTP being able to offer a customer focused role, with more opportunity to be involved in the community and more visible policing.

18. It was highlighted, in response to a Member query, that the Force had moved to telephone interviews and medicals. However, some aspects cannot be done over the phone. As such, the job offer letter outlines that the conditional offer is subject to those tests being successfully completed at a later date.
19. Sickness had increased slightly compared with the previous year and had mostly been in B Division, where there had been increased vacancy rates. It was thought that this was linked to increases in stress, as a result of covering vacancies. This was expected to reduce as a result of the vacancies being filled; however sickness levels will likely be affected by COVID-19.
20. BTP had seen fewer COVID-19 sickness incidents than many other police forces. BTP was down to 3.8% of employees currently being in self-isolation for COVID-19 related issues. Members agreed that this was a huge compliment to the workforce who were continuing to work during this period.
21. There was a discussion about how BTP's pass rate for the College of Policing officer promotion exams compared with the national data for other Forces. It was agreed that this data would be included in the report to the next Committee meeting.
22. The Chair requested that, for future meetings, the Inclusion and Diversity statistics also show the historical trends, to indicate performance against expectation. It was agreed that this would be provided for future meetings.
23. The Chair praised the work done to close the vacancy gap and encouraged the Force to take the opportunity to choose even higher quality applicants and to close the PCSO vacancy gap, due to the unfortunate economic circumstances leading to more applicants.

Professionalism

24. The Committee was informed that the Force was carrying on with business as usual with respect to Professionalism. The team was conducting vetting remotely, the vetting backlog had been cleared, and the vetting of new recruits was taking around 28 days. Some of the backlog had been outsourced to another police force, however, the department was now in a strong position.
25. Members received an update on professionalism cases and hearings. Grievances and civil claims were low for an organisation of 5,000 employees and tended to be around terms and conditions, rather than behaviour. There were currently three live tribunals, down from five at the time of writing the Committee report. This was considered to be a small number for the size of the Force.

26. Performance was good with respect to the timeliness of recording and investigating cases, and there were good adjudications. This meant that, if appealed, the IOPC were mostly agreeing with the Force's position and conclusions.
27. A Member praised the positive performance, noting that in recent months there had been a lot of change in the leadership of the Professional Standards Department (PSD).
28. The Committee was informed, in response to a Member query, that the Force was managing around 3,000 online expenses claims per month. The new system had allowed improved control and about 10% of claims were being pushed back. These were usually because they were incorrectly completed, being claimed for wrongly, or because the system had been misused, as it was still new and being learned. There had been a commitment to do a report on the new system and an audit is scheduled for later in the year.

Budget / MTFP

29. There was, with respect to revenue expenditure, a £600k underspend against the Q3 forecast, which was £7.7 million under the revenue expenditure budget. This was partly due to a lot of changes in Quarter 4, including the situation with COVID-19.
30. The reasons for this underspend include the Force's headcount profile being below establishment, the position with TfL and holding the number of police staff vacancies while going through the BTP2021 programme. It was noted that there had now been a large increase in officers and staff to close the vacancy gap. The Force being close to full establishment will require stringent forecasting for 2020/21, although the PCSO vacancy gap may allow for some flexibility in the short term.
31. There was a £600k overspend against the Capital Q3 forecast, largely caused by the IFRS16 accounting adjustments. Overall the capital spend was £1.4 million under budget. There will be some slippage into next year as a result of this underspend. The Force is assessing the potential impact of COVID-19 on its revenue and capital budget for 2020/21 and will be submitting its forecast, including risk and opportunities, into DfT.
32. The Force achieved around £6.8million of efficiencies against the revised target of £7.1 million, The £250k under-delivery will be carried into 2020/21.
33. There was a £38 million pound bank balance at year-end. This was expected to reduce once the PSA holder credits and wash-up charges had been taken into account. The cashflow was in a healthy position, and well above the threshold for escalation. The BTPA Chief Finance Officer will be circulating to Members a briefing paper on cashflow, how it is being managed, and whether there are any risks to income in 2020/21.

34. A Member queried whether the £3.3 million Op Defiant funding was still expected given the current economic picture. Members were informed that this funding had not yet been received, but the Force has received written confirmation of the funding.
35. It was noted that the Force had spent over £500k on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) purchases related to COVID-19, including masks and gels. This had reduced the overall in-year underspend. PPE was paramount to BTP at the current time and work was ongoing with respect to the supply chain.
36. It was noted that the PSA issues, with respect to TfL had been taken into account for the 2020/21 budget.

Policing Plan Performance

37. Crime had increased by 8% in 2019/20 compared to the previous year. This was largely driven by increases in theft of passenger property and violence against the person. The increase in violence against the person offences was in part linked to the Force's proactivity, with officers being in the right place at the right time to record crimes.
38. BTP's teams were still out on patrol at the current time; even though there were fewer passengers and crime has reduced, it remained busy. In some areas, there appeared to have been little impact on trespass and fatalities.
39. Members were informed that Operation Sentinel, to tackle serious violence, had been a good piece of work. Serious violence, where the victim was injured, was down by 1%, which was in comparison to a rise across the country and the 27% increase for BTP at the start of the year.
40. Robbery in London was an outlier and causing concern. The Force was responding to this with investigations and other activity, including a Force-wide day of action which had resulted in 27 arrests. The level of football related demand on the Force had reduced because of COVID-19 and the Force had been diverting these resources to counter robbery. In addition, there was some evidence of how some re-profiled patrols at key hubs outside of London had started to bring down patterns of crime.
41. Theft of passenger property was acute in London. If the increase had been more generally spread across the Force, it might have been seen as more of a reporting issue linked to the launch of online crime reporting. Op Farrier, set up to target these offences, had identified an organised crime element in London. The channel shift was there, however, but more problem solving was required; there was also a lot that could be done with industry partners, providing crime prevention advice and other options.
42. In response to a Member query, it was highlighted that there had been a 22% increase in vehicle crime. This was typically thefts from vehicles in car

parks. There had, however, been a slight disproportionate impact in the last quarter linked to joint activity with other police forces on cars being stolen.

43. The top 10 hotspot trespass locations had remained dynamic, and had included 24 locations throughout the year. Where problems have been solved and there had been reductions in trespass, the locations had dropped out of the list. There were 4 sustained areas that had remained in the list; however, work with the industry around engineering solutions had resulted in some significant reductions, such as Pitsea dropping from 40 incidents to 1, and Grays seeing a reduction of 58 offences.
44. It was highlighted that there had been a 25% reduction in juvenile trespass and that there had been reductions at 41 out of the 50 hotspot locations reviewed by the National Trespass Strategy Board. The 'You vs Train' campaign was to be relaunched, with this area continuing to be a focus.
45. Suicides were a continuing issue. The Force was taking a slightly more cautious approach in responding to fatalities, ensuring that officers have PPE to deal with potentially risky situations. There appeared to be a slight shift in the average handback times; a review was being undertaken to identify whether this approach was having an effect on the average times.
46. The DCC noted that as restrictions start to get lifted and rail usage increases, there was a potential requirement for the Force to then manage people queuing for journeys. There had been a lot of planning going on around that potential issue, including with industry colleagues.
47. **Agreed**
 - 47.1 BTP to share the outcome of the branding work with PENNA with Ms Thomas.
 - 47.2 Comparison of BTP's pass rate for officer promotion exams with the figure for other Forces to be included in the report to the September Committee meeting.
 - 47.3 Future reports to include inclusion and diversity trends alongside the latest figures, to indicate performance against expectations.
 - 47.4 The details of a legal case to be circulated to Members out of Committee.

13/2020 Strategy Update

Agenda Item 5

48. There was a discussion about the Strategy Update report to the Committee. It was agreed that the Executive would discuss with the Force the requirements for the Strategy Update, with an updated paper being developed for future meetings.

49. Members were informed that the Force was into the final year of the current strategy; the Strategy and Planning Committee and Transformation Working Group had discussed the strategic context and it had been agreed that a review of the current context and whether to roll forward the strategy for another year would be taken forward with the BTPA Executive.
50. There had been two significant issues to note from the Transformation Programme. These were the merging of two Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) positions and a change in the leadership in the IT and Digital business area, which both provided future opportunities.
51. It was noted that the COVID-19 situation has accelerated strands from the Digital Programme and there were capabilities planned for future years that had been brought forward. It had also impacted on how the organisation operates, for example around remote working and a change to the environment being policed. Changes put in place were being reviewed to identify if they will still be relevant and should be retained going forward.
52. **Agreed**
- 52.1 The BTPA Executive to discuss with the Force the requirements for the Strategy Update, with an updated paper including a higher level overview of progress being developed for future meetings.

014/2020 Reflection on effectiveness of meeting

Agenda Item 6

53. Mr Cooper informed the Committee that, notwithstanding Agenda Item 4.3, the meeting papers were received in good time. Attendance was good, with everyone there and on time. Where issues were raised, there were offers of action to close them off, which made the meeting more purposeful. Also, the meeting stayed to the Agenda, which kept it focussed.
54. The videoconferencing method had been quite effective, however, it was noted that not all were able to join via video. This was something the Force was working to improve.

15/2020 Any risks to be communicated to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Agenda Item 7

55. A Member queried whether the Force was able to adequately prepare all employees with the necessary PPE. The Committee was informed that BTP had more than a sufficient stock of PPE for the current time; however there was a need to monitor this for any sense of a more permanent requirement and as it gets busier across the network, as the Force could soon exhaust its stocks. BTP has been liaising with the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Public Health England, Scotland and Wales, to ensure its PPE meets the requirements for Policing. It was noted that all decisions on PPE are documented in the Gold Command Process.

56. Members were informed that a paper on income was being produced by the Executive, which will be circulated to Members in the week following the meeting.
57. **Agreed**
- 57.1 BTP to produce a note for Members to provide assurance around the process to supply adequate PPE to employees, and the BTPA Chief Executive to liaise with the Force to set out the requirements for this.

16/2020 Any other business

Agenda Item 8

58. Members were informed that a well-being pulse survey was being circulated to employees. There had been over 700 responses the day before it closed, with most being very positive. There were a few comments about the early provision of PPE, which had been resolved, and some around the technology not being as good as it could be. When ready, the report will be circulated to the BTPA.
59. The Committee recognised the excellent work of the Force during recent months and Members praised the Force's response during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was noted that the disappointing economic circumstances provided opportunities for employment, and that the changing circumstances meant that the Force will have to change some of its approaches, but the improved financial control provided the opportunity to see where changes could be made while staying within budget.