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**Report to:** Police Authority  
**Agenda item:** 4  
**Date:** 23 September 2020  
**Subject:** Chief Constable's Report  
**Sponsor:** Chief Constable  
**For:** Information

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## 1. Purpose of report

1.1 The Chief Constable's report brings to the attention of Members of the Police Authority the most pressing issues for the Chief Constable at the time of producing the report. Matters covered in this report include an update on two major incidents, BTP's ongoing COVID-19 response, the Manchester Arena Public Inquiry, race and legitimacy, stakeholder meetings and recognition.

## 2. Operational matters

2.1 Passenger numbers on the network are slowly increasing but remain around 25-30% of normal usage. However, reported crime and calls for service continue to increase towards pre-COVID levels. For the week 14-20 Sept 2020 compared to the same week in 2019, crime is now sitting at **85%** (1,073 in 2020 compared with 1,269 in 2019.) Despite the consistently low passenger journeys, public order sexual offences and violent crime are currently presenting at comparable levels. Criminal damage, robbery and drugs related offences are currently presenting higher instances than the same period last year. Similarly, calls for service are sitting at **93%** compared to the same period in 2019. Most incident types are comparable, including mental health and vulnerability. Fatalities remain slightly down on 2019 figures (71%) although clearance times are comparable.

2.2 An area of key operational focus which has remained consistently high is county lines activity. In September's 'Week of Intensification' officers have carried out dozens of operations to tackle drugs gangs and protect vulnerable children on the rail network. This is in addition to the long-standing proactive county lines operations undertaken by BTP's County Lines Taskforce, since funding from the Home Office was received in December 2019. The Taskforce has, to date, arrested nearly 600 people, made 288

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seizures of drugs, and seized £220,000 in cash. In addition, 33 children have been referred to the National Referral Mechanism as victims of human slavery.

- 2.3 The 'Week of Intensification' presents an opportunity for all forces to combine county lines activities and target gangs wherever they operate, whilst raising awareness of the impact of county lines, the violence created, and children exploited at the hands of these gangs.
- 2.4 Major Incidents: In recent weeks, the Force has responded to two major incidents involving train derailments. On 12 August 2020, BTP responded to a major incident on the line at Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire, where a train travelling from Aberdeen to Glasgow Queen Street had derailed. Tragically, three people were pronounced dead at the scene, including the driver of the train. Six people were taken to hospital to be treated for injuries. BTP deployed extensive resource from across the Force to support the operation, including the Major, Serious and Organised crime team and Disaster Victim identification (D.V.I.) personnel.
- 2.5 The Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) has directed that the investigation will be led by Police Scotland (P.S.). Given the specialist nature of such an investigation and the knowledge and skills required BTP and the Office of Rail and Road are conducting a joint investigation with P.S. The investigation will be carried out under the direction of the COPFS, parallel to the independent safety investigation by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB).
- 2.6 On 13 August 2020, ACC Doyle visited the scene alongside Supt David Marshall. On this day, the Scottish Government Transport Secretary, Network Rail Chief Executive and the UK Secretary of State for Transport also attended the scene where they separately met with BTP officers and other emergency services teams to express thanks for the outstanding multi-agency response in harrowing circumstances. The following day, HRH Prince Charles attended the site to thank those involved.
- 2.7 Those involved in the recovery at Stonehaven are being supported through the appropriate channels.
- 2.8 LLangennech Fire: On 26 August 2020, BTP responded to another major incident on the railway in LLangennech, Wales, where a freight train carrying large quantities of diesel caught fire and a number of carriages had derailed. Thankfully no injuries were reported but a significant environmental risk complicated the response and recovery operation.

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- 2.9 Working together with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Dyfed-Powys Police, BTP were deployed to manage the scene, to investigate the cause to eliminate criminality, mitigate damage to the surrounding area and ensure the safety of all those living nearby. As a precaution, Dyfed-Powys Police led an initial evacuation of the surrounding area which was later brought to an end, with residents allowed to return home.
- 2.10 ACC O'Callaghan led the operation as Gold commander for BTP, but also chaired the important multi-agency strategic co-ordination group. An investigation was launched with BTP assisting the Office of Rail and Road and RAIB to establish the precise circumstances behind the incident. BTP's initial findings were that the derailment is not believed to have been caused by criminal activity. As a result, on 1 September, the Force handed primacy of the scene to the Office of Rail and Road so that it can carry out a specialist investigation into the circumstances.
- 2.11 Both the above incidents required specialist investigative expertise to rapidly secure and collect technical and physical evidence, some of which is highly perishable. They exemplify the network wide policing model operated by BTP and the need for specialised knowledge and experience, requiring the mobilization of resources from across the force.
- 2.12 The additional cost of both incidents has been collated under incident specific cost centres. They are likely to exceed £500k.

### **3. COVID-19**

- 3.1 The Force's operational response to COVID-19 continues. Since the update provided to the Police Authority meeting on 24 June, the established Gold Group has continued to uphold a robust approach to risk management whilst maintaining operational effectiveness. The Force is fully linked in to Public Health England, resilience forums and the National Police Chiefs' Council in interpreting the latest position.
- 3.2 Operational activity is directed through the Gold, Silver and Bronze structure to ensure that BTP can meet all business as usual demands, major incident response, and nationwide policing requirements brought about by a range of indirect Covid impacts or other demands. For example, BTP have responded to a number of Unlicensed music events, either related directly to railway property or in support of local forces, and to a

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number of public protests. As new and updated iterations of Health protection regulations have been issued, including those relating only to England, Wales or Scotland, BTP has where appropriate contributed in some cases to the drafting process, and issued regional operational guidance to colleagues across the Force.

- 3.3 In addition, together with industry, BTP are appropriately focusing on the locations, times and services to reinforce the expectation of compliance with the Health Protection Regulations. The BTP approach remains in line with the 4E's plan - to engage, explain, encourage or as a last resort to enforce. This includes the approach to the wearing of face coverings, explaining the regulations and the public health benefits to the wearer and other passengers and encouraging members of the public to comply. If an officer establishes a person does not have a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering (there is no requirement for a passenger to provide evidence), enforcement is pursued. Following the 4E's graduated approach, enforcement includes giving a direction to wear a face covering, requiring person to leave a vehicle, or to issue a fixed penalty notice.
- 3.3 Up until the 10 September 2020, within this stepped approach, there have been **51,614** interventions made across the network, where BTP officers have engaged with persons regarding face covering. In those instances, 93% of people challenged have either claimed a lawful exemption or have put on or obtained a face covering when asked. There have been **3,611** instances whereby further enforcement action has been necessary and people have been directed to leave any relevant place, in line with legislation, for not complying with the regulations. **66** Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued. A conclusion that may be drawn from such results is that the graduated approach works, achieving compliance without unnecessarily criminalising people, and that a much higher level of compliance can be achieved if people are politely but regularly asked or reminded of the face covering requirements, at every stage of their journey from entry to exit.
- 3.4 To gain insight to wider passenger compliance, a sample of 12 stations have been monitored remotely by the BTP live viewing CCTV unit. Using samples of 1000 passengers per station, per viewing timeframe, spanning both commute and leisure travel timeframes a benchmark of compliance has been established. This allows comparable analysis week to week and informs intelligence led tactical deployments.

- 3.5 With the introduction of local lockdowns and insights into non-compliance across the network, the incremental approach to enforcement is under continuous review.
- 3.6 The direct and indirect financial effects of COVID-19 are increasingly significant. The direct revenue costs total £5.9m; arising from overtime costs for maintaining business as usual staffing levels through a time of extraordinary staff absence, provision of sufficient and suitable PPE, additional cleaning of premises, enhanced operational activity through Op Big Wing deployments and other incidental overtime/mileage claims. The funding provided by DfT to support the periods of enhanced resourcing is being drawn down where appropriate. Of the £3m settlement provided, £1.1m has been spent to date, with the remaining £1.9m planned for later in 2020/21.

#### **4. Manchester Inquiry Public Inquiry**

- 4.1 The Manchester Arena Public Inquiry is a public inquiry into the terrorist attack on the 22 May 2017. BTP has policing responsibility for the Arena and many BTP officers responded to the attack; a suicide bomb detonation which killed 22 people.
- 4.2 The Inquiry commenced on 7 September 2020 and is expected to last around eight months. There are 34 BTP witnesses including officers and staff who attended on the night, control room operators and officers who have since left the Force. ACC O'Callaghan is representing BTP at a senior level, which will provide necessary strategic context to the evidence presented. ACC O'Callaghan has provided three statements at the request of the Counsel to the Inquiry.
- 4.3 BTP have been collating and providing evidence to the Inquiry for the past two years, working closely with the Force Solicitors and an expert QC. Legal representation and costs are forecast into financial profiles. There is also a dedicated BTP team supporting the Inquiry and ensuring that there is comprehensive welfare support for BTP witnesses and other staff who may be impacted by the Inquiry. BTP's opening statement will be read on 28 September 2020, with BTP witnesses scheduled to give evidence on the week commencing 12 October 2020.
- 4.4 The Chief Constable can provide additional information to Members as appropriate.

## 5. Race & Legitimacy

5.1 The Chief Officer Group has spent time reflecting on how we can make a significant cultural change to our Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority employees' experience and to our policing posture for the communities we serve, in order to maintain legitimacy, and ensure proportionality of approach. A five-fold approach has been developed:

1. Delivering an internal action plan called 'Moving the Needle', which focuses on internal inclusion, progression and employee experience
2. Introducing a new senior role as Lead for Trust, Legitimacy and Community Policing. This is a strategically important role which will consider all internal and external BTP activity through the prism of race. The postholder will join the Chief Officer Group meetings and provide valuable and welcome challenge strategic thinking. The recruitment campaign attracted considerable national external interest and a very strong field of candidates was assembled. Following a selection process, which included a 'people panel' comprising some of our BAME employees which took place on 11 September 2020, an individual with exceptional experience has been appointed on a conditional basis.
3. Tendering for an external expert in inclusion to facilitate a conversation about race with the wider workforce.
4. Developing a comprehensive pack of data covering policing activity by ethnicity, in order that we can baseline our operations and measure what interventions we make and whether they address any areas of disproportionality.
5. The Chief Constable has also held three virtual group conversations with approximately 180 BAME employees across the Force, which provided the opportunity to share our thinking behind the Moving the Needle action plan, to seek their views and most importantly, to hear about their lived experience at work and in their own communities.

5.2 A comprehensive overview of progress to date was provided to the Performance & Delivery Committee on 8 September. Work will continue to develop and embed this important workstream over the coming months, under the leadership of the Chief Officer Group and the Lead for Trust, Legitimacy and Community Policing.

## **6. Stakeholder meetings**

- 6.1 COVID-19 has continued to play a prominent role in stakeholder engagement, with regular meetings with Directors at DfT and MDs through the regular JEOT calls and calls with Number 10. Whilst industry, Government and the public work towards returning to business as usual, there is need for regular engagement with both industry and Government as BTP provides a key role in providing public confidence as well as to keep passengers and rail staff safe. Meetings and engagements often happen at short notice to respond quickly to emerging trends and new regulations.
- 6.2 There has continued to be extensive engagement to inform politicians of BTP's county lines work, with meetings with over 10 MPs including members of the Home Affairs Select Committee, Cabinet Office Minister and members of the Labour Shadow Justice team. BTP has arranged high profile operational visits including from Lord Chancellor Rt Hon Robert Buckland MP, attracting notably media attention, and the Policing Minister. The sessions provide a great opportunity to raise general awareness of BTP's wider role.
- 6.3 The Force has worked with industry partners to highlight the importance of this work and to highlight the work of the rail industry in safeguarding. This was particularly successful with some TOC MDs joining the site meetings with Members of Parliament, including those with the Lord Chancellor and the Policing Minister.
- 6.4 BTP has also maintained regular stakeholder meetings, including strategic level engagement with South Western Railway, Great Western Railway, Network Rail, GTR, LUL and TfL. In September, the Chief Constable held virtual meetings with Matthew Parr (HMICFRS) and Gill Imery (HMICS) and met the Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP in his role as Shadow Rail Minister to highlight the role of BTP.

## **7. Recognition**

- 7.1 Whilst regular BTP ceremonies such as the Make the Difference Awards, Long Service and Commendation Awards have been postponed due to the current social distancing measures, alternative methods are being explored with the intention to reintroduce regular, formal recognition ceremonies to commend officers and staff.
- 7.2 In a recent online ceremony, BTP's Resources team was presented with the Best Social Media Campaign Award as part of the PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards 2020. The campaign was designed to attract new recruits to BTP
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through social media, for varied roles in the Force for new student officers, PCSO's, Specials and Police Staff. The campaign resulted in over 650 new starters joining BTP since its launch and was praised by the PPMA for its creativity and innovation, pushing the boundaries of what social media can deliver.