
Report to: Police Authority
Agenda item: 3
Date: 5 February 2020
Subject: Chief Constable's Report
Sponsor: Chief Constable
For: Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As requested by Members, the Chief Constable's report brings to the Police Authority's attention the most pressing issues for the Chief Constable at the current time. Matters covered in this report are the changing strategic landscape, resources, the 2019 People Survey, County Lines and stakeholder engagement.

2. Strategic Landscape

- 2.1 Significant change across the strategic landscape for the government, the railway and policing is immediately before us and predicted in coming years.
- 2.2 The Williams Rail Review, which is expected to be published in the early part of 2020 and may bring radical reform to the railway, is widely reported to be likely to end the current franchising model. It seems likely that a new strategic body will be created which acts as the guiding mind of the railway. In the meantime, with the prospect of more franchises coming under direct Government oversight there are both risks and opportunities that need careful consideration and the development of approaches that are strategically thought through and aligned.
- 2.3 The Government's agenda of investing in public services and infrastructure across the UK will result in material change. On 6 January the Transport Secretary committed to reinvigorating rail connections across the north-east, with Government confirming it will establish a £500m fund to explore reopening former routes which could benefit communities who lost vital transport connections. Plans under consideration involve major investments in new lines and services. While these are multi year programmes, it is clear that a much stronger focus on the north will form a key part of the Government's agenda. BTP resources and focus are strongly focused in the south

east, driven by current demand. We will need to consider how an increased focus in the north might affect the Force as a national body.

- 2.4 On the policing front, the Prime Minister (PM) has committed to reduce violence, reportedly by 20%. This will be very challenging to achieve on the railways, based on current and recent trends. The Government's commitment to increase officer numbers by 20,000 was confirmed with the police funding settlement for 2020/21 announced on 22 January which saw funding to police forces increase by approximately 7.5% on 2019/20, the biggest increase in police funding for a decade. None of this funding or resource is destined for BTP. The 7.5% funding increase represents only the investment needed for the first 6,000 of the 20,000 uplift. It is likely therefore that similar funding increases will follow in 2021/22 & 2022/23. Conversely, the budget set by the Police Authority for BTP for 2020/21 saw a decrease in funding of £2.6m compared to 2019/20 and a funding cap on BTP's budget below inflation across the MTFP period.
- 2.5 The wider policing landscape is also changing, The Serious Organised Crime (SOC) Review may propose a significantly different approach to the structure and funding applied to that issue. A Royal Commission will examine the workings of the criminal justice system and there have been calls for it to include a review of the current 43 force Home Office structure for policing. The PM also announced a review of the Police and Crime Commissioner roles.
- 2.6 Alongside this, specific crime challenges have attracted direct ministerial focus and enhanced funding. County Lines funding is dealt with elsewhere in this report, but it is clear that the National Crime Agency (NCA) and BTP are seen as important players in delivering outcomes on this front, which is entirely in line with a call for cross Government action.
- 2.7 The recent Chief Constables' Council spent significant time considering the implications of these various reviews and what that might mean for policing and law enforcement as a national network, including how a broader 'systems' approach to policing can better deliver outcomes, linking how local and regional geographic policing in England and Wales interacts with policing in Scotland, Northern Ireland and

with national bodies such as the NCA and BTP. In addition, there is greater focus within policing on wellbeing and safety, pay reform and the potential for a front loaded multi-year pay award, all of which have very real financial issues to consider.

- 2.8 All of these are matters that will need to inform future operational and organisational strategies and plans, not least of which is the ability of BTP to compete for officers and staff on an increasingly imbalanced funding context.
- 2.9 In a context where statute requires of BTP the effective and efficient policing of the railways, it will be important to build a wider joint understanding among the Force, Members and wider stakeholders of the evolving railways and policing landscape. The Chief Constable intends therefore to arrange a seminar with Members and senior industry partners to provide an opportunity to consider these challenges, broaden the collective understanding of them, and begin to inform thinking as to how best shape discussions around planning for them.

3. Resources

- 3.1 As reported to Members in December, frontline officers have been under discernible pressure due to the reduction in resources in 2019/20 brought about through the savings requirement as well as the rapidly expanding operational demand. At some locations officers are unable to deploy proactively as they are responding from one live incident to another and managing additional investigations due to the reduced numbers. Having reviewed the situation, the Chief Officer Group concluded that reducing frontline resources has limited the Force's ability to meet the increasing operational challenges and deliver the strategy.
- 3.2 To give Members an understanding of the increasing demand violence is up 9% on last year (an additional 280 offences), robbery has increased by 59% (an additional 295 offences), football related disorder and anti-social behaviour has increased by 34% this season, and volume crime has increased by 41% across B Division (just under an additional 900 offences – the increase in retail outlets at mainline stations such as London Bridge is a primary contributing factor to the increase in shoplifting). As well as responding to crime, the response to mental health related incidents and safeguarding the vulnerable across the railway remains a continuing priority. A

comprehensive update on performance will be provided to Performance & Delivery Committee on 12 February.

3.3 The Chief Officer Group is steadfast in its commitment to return officer numbers back to full establishment as a matter of priority to ease the pressure on existing resources, provide the necessary capability to respond to the increasing demand, and meet the industry's expectations of a visible presence. In terms of officer numbers as at Period 10 the Force had 156 police officer vacancies against an establishment of 3119 and 73 PCSO vacancies against an establishment of 309. Turnover of police officers at Q3 had reduced slightly from that at Q2, and turnover of PCSOs (excluding those who convert to police officers with BTP) also decreased.

3.4 The Director of People & Culture has developed a Recruitment & Retention strategy to continue to reduce turnover and increase recruitment in order to bring resource levels back up to the required number. Progress against this strategy is reported to COG each week. Work underway includes:

- Recruit training has been reduced from 20 to 18 weeks, utilising modern digital learning methods.
- Conversion courses for PCSO and Specials to PC have been launched. 27 PCSOs have commenced PC training with a further 25 due to commence the PCSO to PC conversion course in March.
- An increase in the number of intakes and an increase in the number of officers on each intake from 20 to 24. 121 officers are currently in training and an additional 237 new officer recruits and 30 PCSOs are forecast by 31 March 2020. Work has taken place to utilise existing estate, with intakes in Blundell Street, pop up classrooms in Spring House and meeting rooms at FHQ. Additional recruit trainer, PST and Tutor programmes have been run to ensure sufficient trainer capacity.
- Our first ever intake outside London has been arranged to take place in Liverpool commencing in March. Local stakeholders will be invited to give talks to the trainees and to attend the pass out parade. We will use this trial to develop further pop up training around the country.
- An innovative recruitment campaign targeting potential officers and PCSOs has seen assessment centres running every weekend with a large pool of candidates



to book onto intakes. PC applicants remain steady, but there is a noticeable fall in PCSO applications, due to every force recruiting for officers. BTP is exploring opportunities to use the funding for core PCSOs to recruit police officers.

- A returners programme aimed at part time officer roles, initially for Night Tube, but with a longer term aim to increase part time officer opportunities.
- A review of South East allowances against comparator forces and work underway with the Rail Delivery Group about travel concessions for officers and specials.

3.5 In terms of trajectory, the recruitment strategy will deliver full officer establishment in June 2020 or earlier if turnover continues to fall or transferee intakes increase, although Divisions and the industry will not see the full benefit of these new recruits until the officers have completed their training and been released to Divisions, which takes 6 months (18 weeks training plus 8 weeks tutoring to achieve independent patrol status).

3.6 In terms of police staff, vacancies were suppressed to redeploy employees displaced through the BTP2021 programme. The Force is now recruiting to establishment where restructuring has been implemented. The current Support Services restructure will see 69 permanent posts removed at the end of the financial year.

4. People Survey 2019

4.1 BTP's People Survey 2019 was undertaken by Durham University who conducted BTP's last people survey in 2017. This collaborative research project by Durham University involves 38 police forces and its aims are to identify common themes regarding culture, wellbeing, leadership and pride, and recommend priorities for action that can be tracked over time.

4.2 BTP's People Survey, which was open to employees for four weeks in October 2019, received 1,502 responses (29.1% of the workforce). The initial findings from the survey were shared with the Force Executive Board by Dr Les Graham from Durham University on 22 January.

4.3 The key strengths identified in the responses are:

- Employees viewed policing as meaningful work.
- There was a strong desire to keep people safe and make society a better place. Ethics scored highly.
- Employees feel able to play an active role in influencing change and taking responsibility for continuous improvement.
- The work to move towards a more supportive and empowering leadership style has made a positive impact.
- Employees feel the Force cares about them and supports them when they are subject to assault or trauma.

4.4 The key areas which require further work are:

- Whilst improvement has been seen in managing change, particularly for officers, there is room for further improvement. The period of transformation has understandable had an effect on our people.
- The work to remove the barriers which prevent the workforce from doing their job has made some progress but there is still much to do to remove the things that get in the way of people doing their job.
- Wellbeing remains a key priority.
- Better communication with the workforce through times of change.

4.5 Following receipt of the initial results the Force is working with Durham University to analyse the data further and provide further insight into areas for improvement. A video message from the Chief Constable summarising the results and outlining the next steps is due to be circulated to staff on 29 January. An action plan will be developed in response to the areas identified for improvement. This work is being led by the Director of People & Culture who will present further detail of the survey's results and next steps to Members at the Police Authority meeting on 24 March.

5. County Lines

5.1 On 1 October 2019 the Home Secretary announced targeted investment of up to £5m in 2019/20 and up to £15m in 2020/21 aimed at tackling the County Lines operating model. During this announcement the Home Secretary referred to investment for a dedicated BTP Taskforce on the railway at a cost of £1m in 2019/20 and £3.3m in

2020/21. A letter received from the Home Office on 24 January 2020 confirmed the allocation of £3.3m to BTP for 2020/21 for a dedicated County Lines Taskforce for the railway.

- 5.2 The use of the railway for County Lines is well established as it is perceived as low risk and provides the opportunity for young people carrying commodities to travel long distances, often anonymously. The County Lines Taskforce overarching objective is to make the railway a hostile environment for County Lines offenders through decisive enforcement action with others, reducing the use juvenile runners and safeguarding those children being exploited.
- 5.3 Operational activity is focusing predominantly on the four main County Lines exporting locations – London, Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester but deployments also include key import locations identified by intelligence and policing lines of route in between import/export sites to maximise disruptive impacts. The Taskforce works in close partnership with local BTP officers, Regional Organised Crime Units, NCA and Home Office forces. In addition to the Taskforce's core activities, joint opportunities are sought with the rail industry and the use of conventional policing activities such as revenue operations will be augmented through tactics including drugs dogs and knife arches within the County Lines Taskforce core areas of operation.
- 5.4 Since the establishment of BTP's County Lines Taskforce on 2 December 2019 the Force has delivered some exceptional results including over 100 arrests, 42 drug seizures, 13 weapons seizures (including a firearm and 8 knives), over £19k of cash seized, 87 phones seized and 24 joint operational deployments with Home Office forces.
- 5.5 The Home Secretary has shown a keen interest in the work to tackle County Lines activity. On 10 January the Home Secretary visited BTP Colchester and then undertook an on-train patrol with officers to Witham station (her constituency). The following week, on 17 January, the Home Secretary visited Merseyside to witness a joint County Lines operation between BTP and Merseyside Police at Liverpool Lime Street Station. The Chief Constable was present during both visits and was able to provide a detailed overview of the role of BTP and its specialist capabilities. The Home

Secretary was extremely positive about the activities of BTP's County Lines Taskforce and also the role of BTP more generally.

- 5.6 The Home Office have put in place arrangements to monitor the delivery and impact of this investment. BTP reports through the National County Lines Coordinating Committee as well as providing a monthly return to the Home Office Task & Finish Group which sets out activities and deliverables.

6. Stakeholder Engagement

- 6.1 Since the Police Authority meeting in December the Chief Constable has met with the following stakeholders – the CEO of GTR and his senior team to discuss organisational partnerships, the TfL Commissioner and Managing Directors of LUL and Surface Transport to discuss policing of transport across TfL, and a separate meeting with the Surface Transport Managing Director to explore technology opportunities for the prevention of crime.
- 6.2 Over the last month the Chief Constable has addressed a Retired Railway Officers Society event, attended Chief Constables' Council, attended The London Government dinner and City of London Police Committee dinner, and hosted two visits from the Home Secretary and a visit from the Director General of the Independent Office for Police Conduct.