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Board Effectiveness Evaluation Report and Action Plan 2019/20

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Authority completes an evaluation of its effectiveness annually with independent input every three years. This is in accordance with the HMG's Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of good practice. The purpose of the exercise is to gain insight into the ways in which the Authority can operate more effectively identify good practice. The evaluation achieves this through thematic analysis of the perspectives of the Authority Members, senior leadership within the Authority's Executive Team and the BTP Chief Officer Group (COG). This information is gathered through questionnaires and interviews, to identify those qualities and actions necessary to improve the effectiveness of the Authority.
- 1.2 This year an additional stage has been added to the process, with the initial findings being subject to a detailed discussion at the Authority's board development session on 21 May. The aim of this being to provide the Executive with an opportunity to test the initial findings with the Members and begin to collectively develop a clear, concise and fully supported action plan.

2. Context

- 2.1 To provide some context before moving on to discuss the findings, the focus of the Authority's activity and significant events in 2019/20 are outlined below:
 - Having operated throughout the majority of 2018/19 without a permanent CEO, the Authority appointed Hugh Ind who took up the role as permanent CEO from 3 June 2019.
 - The Authority has sought to improve its engagement with its stakeholders and work more closely in partnership with BTP on this important area, developing a joint stakeholder database.
 - The Authority has sought to strengthen its relationships with central government and other policing organisations to ensure that BTP is included in the drafting of policing legislation and funding discussions over and above exiting budgets.
 - There has been a greater focus on pensions due to the need to establish a new Scheme for Police Staff and due to the valuation of the Officer Scheme representing a potentially fundamental financial challenge for the Authority
 - The Authority has also welcomed four new Members who have provided a fresh perspective on Authority business and this recruitment have broadened the skillset and experience within the Authority Membership.

- Alongside the above the Authority has been working to fulfil its statutory duties, including but not limited to;
 - Setting a Railways Policing Plan
 - Setting a Medium-Term Financial Plan and approving the 2020/21 budget
 - Defraying the expenses and recovering the cost of policing the railways
 - Laying our Annual Report and Accounts
 - Holding BTP to account on behalf of the public through our committees and Member portfolios

3. The Evaluation

Methodology

- 3.1 The Evaluation methodology relied upon questionnaires, with follow up interviews with Authority Members. Completed questionnaires were received from all Authority Members, some of the senior leadership team as well as a collective response from the BTP Chief Officer Group (COG) and two individual Chief Officer responses.
- 3.2 The questionnaire was split across three key areas, including:
- Leadership, Purpose and Strategy.
 - Assurance.
 - Board operation and Development.
- 3.3 These themes were split down further into sub-sections with a quantitative rating requested for each but was focused more towards qualitative feedback to assist a thematic analysis and provide richer data.

Findings

- 3.4 The scoring of the 'assurance' section of the questionnaire was high across all respondents and the qualitative feedback was very positive. The two exceptions which were identified as needing improvement were:
- 3.4.1 business case quality and process.
- 3.4.2 a widening of oversight, ensuring all important areas are given sufficient attention (such as use of force and equality & diversity).
- 3.5 The scoring in the 'leadership, purpose and strategy' and 'board operation and development' areas showed a marked difference between that of the Members and Executive versus that of the collective COG response. The COG responses generally provided a lower score and a high proportion of less favourable commentary in comparison. This feedback has been taken into account in identifying the key areas for action, along with further

representations having been made from the Chief Constable received outside of this process.

3.6 Having analysed all of the quantitative and qualitative feedback four themes have been identified as the areas in which investment of time and resource would provide the biggest improvements in effectiveness. The table below lists these themes and provides a breakdown of some of the feedback from which these themes have emerged to aid understanding and assist in directing action to be taken.

Theme	Theme emerges from the following feedback
Roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity on the role of Members, Executive and COG required. • A discussion on what the Authority is here for and what it wants to achieve and to set objectives for the year would be helpful. • The organisation needs to consider how it best engages to deliver efficient and effective policing. • Identify how the BTPA can best demonstrate value added.
Governance, oversight and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps identified in oversight (detailed in section 5 discussion points). • Possible need for a further committee focused on legitimacy/ethics identified. • A need to consider how Members and the Executive best spend their time outside of the formal meeting structure. • Portfolios were reported to not be working for all. • The TfL budget setting process to be formally recorded. • Increased understanding of the charging process amongst membership and BTP required. • There is a need to better understand how the Force sets its culture and behaviours to meet the Standards of Professional Behaviour but also how this is linked to delivery of the Strategy. • An identified ambition to modernise culture of BTP and need to look at how the Authority can best feed into and support this work.
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger Member ownership of stakeholder engagement and participation in its delivery was

<p>and communication</p>	<p>recommended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in proactive communications from the Executive to the Members to keep them informed. • A need for Members to have more time together to coalesce. • A desire for Members and BTP to spend more together informally to discuss large scale strategic matters.
<p>Efficiency /transformation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to more modern agile ways of working such as live streaming/video recording Authority meetings and use of more modern technologies to drive flexible working. • Procure improved board software with a higher level of security and chat functions to enable Members to correspond openly with confidence. • Co-locate with BTP to reduce estate footprint and associated costs to BTPF. • Review governance around meetings and recruit a dedicated Secretariat resource the Executive.

Table 1: Distillation of feedback into high level themes

3.7 The action plan can be found at Annex B.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The Authority remains confident that it is meeting its statutory duties but recognises that there are always improvements to be made to governance processes to ensure that these are focused on the most relevant areas, recognising that these can change year on year as the external environment is ever evolving.
- 4.2 Authority Members and the Executive remain of the view that the current governance model is fit for purpose. This was explored further at the Authority’s 21 May session where it was agreed that the Authority should develop a list of roles and responsibilities to identify and determine whether/how these are being delivered and if there is a more efficient or effective approach.

Annex A: The questionnaire

1. Leadership, purpose and strategy					
Theme	Questions				
1.1 Strategy, direction and leadership	1. Does the operation of the Authority set the right tone for the wider organisation? Please explain your view. 2. In setting the Strategy does the Authority have sufficient focus on ensuring it is well aligned to the remit of the Authority and the capabilities of the Force? 3. How does the Authority ensure that the balance between the focus on immediate issues and long-term success is appropriate? 4. Does the Authority devote sufficient quality time and have an effective mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Strategy?				
Comments and suggestions for improvement					
The Authority performs well in the areas of strategy, direction and leadership	5 Strongly disagree	4 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	2 Agree	1 Strongly agree
1.2 Culture, values and behaviours	5. Is there sufficient understanding of the culture, values and their alignment with the Strategy? 6. Has the Authority had sufficient input into setting the values and behaviours for BTP?				
Comments and suggestions for improvement					
The Authority performs well in culture, values and behaviours	5 Strongly disagree	4 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	2 Agree	1 Strongly agree
1.3 Stakeholder relationships	7. Has the Authority sought input from enough stakeholders to be comfortable it has a rounded view? 8. Has the Authority listened properly to the stakeholder voice and how has this impacted on Authority decisions?				
Comments and suggestions for improvement					
The Authority performs well in	5 Strongly	4	3 Neither	2	1 Strongly

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stakeholder relationships	disagree	Disagree	agree nor disagree	Agree	agree
1.4 Performance measurement	<p>9. Is performance information sufficiently integrated with financial reporting?</p> <p>10. Are you content that the areas of performance exception are being reported to the Authority - both positive and negative? If not, what is missing?</p>				
Comments and suggestions for improvement					
The Authority performs well in performance management	5 Strongly disagree	4 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	2 Agree	1 Strongly agree
2. Assurance					
Theme	Areas to explore				
2.1 Financial management, audit and propriety	<p>11. Is the Authority content that there is adequate review (internal and external) of the operation of key controls, including fraud and propriety issues?</p> <p>12. Is the Authority satisfied that it receives full and timely notification of all significant losses, special payments and other leakage and takes appropriate action to address weaknesses or failures?</p> <p>13. Is the Authority satisfied that it receives regular updates and post-evaluation reviews for all programmes and projects it has approved, and others judged high risk?</p>				
Comments and suggestions for improvement					
The Authority performs well in the areas of financial management, audit and propriety	5 Strongly disagree	4 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	2 Agree	1 Strongly agree
2.2 Risk management	<p>14. Is the Authority satisfied that adequate internal policy and controls are in place for risk and that these are reviewed annually?</p> <p>15. Is the Authority satisfied that full account of risk is taken when taking major decisions? Please provide examples.</p>				
Comments and suggestions for improvement					

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The Authority performs well in risk management	5 Strongly disagree	4 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	2 Agree	1 Strongly agree
3. Board operation and development					
Theme	Areas to explore				
3.1 Skills and structure	<p>16. Is the Authority the right size and equipped with the right skills and experience to fulfil its duties and functions effectively? If not, why?</p> <p>17. Could the governance structure, including the committee structure and portfolio arrangements, be improved? If so how?</p>				
Comments and suggestions for improvement					
The Authority's skills and structure are optimal	5 Strongly disagree	4 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	2 Agree	1 Strongly agree
3.2 Decision-making	<p>18. Is the Authority appropriately briefed at an early stage on significant items that will come for approval to ensure assumptions are able to be challenged and concerns shared well before the point of decision?</p> <p>19. Does the Authority have a sufficient understanding of alignment with strategy and values and impact on stakeholders when taking decisions?</p>				
Comments and suggestions for improvement					
The Authority performs well in decision-making	5 Strongly disagree	4 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	2 Agree	1 Strongly agree
3.3 Board culture	<p>20. Is there a culture of openness, ability to express dissenting points of view and a collegiate way of escalating and resolving differences?</p> <p>21. Is there a culture of accountability for delivery of committee and individual work plans?</p>				
Comments and suggestions for improvement					
The is culture of the board is open and collegiate with collective accountability.	5 Strongly disagree	4 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	2 Agree	1 Strongly agree
3.4 Operation of governance	22. Is the programme of the full Authority driven by				

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structure	<p>strategy and focused on the right issues?</p> <p>23. Are papers of sufficient quality, appropriate length, clarity and focus to support effective discussion and decision-making? Please state any areas requiring improvement.</p>				
Comments and suggestions for improvement					
The Authority performs well in the above area	5 Strongly disagree	4 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	2 Agree	1 Strongly agree
3.5 Board development agenda for 2020/21	<p>24. What are the main strengths of the Authority?</p> <p>25. What are the main areas for improvement/development?</p> <p>26. What are your three main actions to develop the Authority in the next year?</p>				
Comments and suggestions for improvement					
The Authority performs well in the above area	5 Strongly disagree	4 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	2 Agree	1 Strongly agree
Further comments/suggestions					

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Annex B: The action plan

Ref	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
1	<p>The Executive to develop a list of the key roles and responsibilities for the Authority to agree and determine whether/how these are being delivered and if there is a more efficient or effective approach. To be taken at a workshop with the aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crystallise the Authority's raison d'être by being clear about collective and individual roles. • assist the Authority in working towards becoming a high-performing board by ensuring the right balance of activity. • Provide the basis for updating the Code of Governance. 	<p>The BTPA to participate in the workshop.</p> <p>BTPA Executive to compile list and logistics</p>	September 2020	
2	<p>Recruit an experienced Board Secretariat to ensure a consistent approach to the governance of meetings and to support the implementation of review arrangements including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The possibility of live streaming or recording Authority meetings and committees and providing access via the web. • Updating the process for approval of minutes and the look at the possibility of an audit trail of comments and formal process for managing unresolved observations. • Reviewing the way that conflicts of interest are considered and declared before each meeting, including confirmation of any new interests and a specific confirmation regarding potential conflicts in respect of any item on individual 	<p>Head of Governance and Compliance</p>	September 2020	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meeting agenda. • Reviewing and documenting the appointment process of Committee Chairs to demonstrate how the Authority considers the potential perception of conflicting interest. • Review the use of private Members only meetings to determine whether there is conflict with the formalised governance structures, consultation requirements, and perceptions of openness and transparency. • Consider a declaration of compliance with statutory consultation requirements in the Annual Report and in Authority meetings (e.g. statement of consultation undertaken in setting objectives in the Policing Plan sub group, statement of consultation in the budget approval decision in respect of budget setting). 			
3	<p>The Authority to take a more prominent role in stakeholder engagement as the contracting body. Members to drive discussions with stakeholders to ensure the Authority is recognised as such.</p>	<p>Members with Head of Strategy Planning and Engagement leading for the Executive</p>		

4	A coherent planning cycle including BTP Fund calculation to be developed to capture how the statutory consultation will be completed and how the various elements of the Fund will be approved.	Head of Governance and Compliance and CFO	October 2020	
5	The Authority to identify the best way to work with BTP to modernise the culture and ways of working to help drive a more modern and agile organisation through transformation.	CEO		
6	The Authority and BTP to work to build trust and respect through the use of informal sessions and more collaborative working across Members, the Executive and the Chief Officer Group.			