

## Minutes

### Scottish Railways Policing Committee

27 May 2020, 11:00 – 13:00

Held via Video and Tele-conference

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#### Present:

Bill Matthews, Chair

Willie Gallagher

Dominic Booth

Tom Halpin

Robert Hayes

#### In Attendance:

Hugh Ind, BTPA Chief Executive

Adrian Hanstock, BTP Deputy Chief Constable

Eddie Wylie, BTP Chief Superintendent

Mark Williams, Police Scotland Assistant Chief Constable

John McBride, Secretary to the Committee

Samantha Elvy, BTPA Head of Strategy and planning

Graham Stickle, SPA

#### Observing:

Brian McNulty      HMICS Lead Inspector

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### Welcome and apologies

#### Agenda item 1

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the Scottish Railways Policing Committee. The Chair noted the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the country which had caused the Committee to meet in a remote, virtual way. The reason for using this method, was explained, taking a similar route taken at Board level meetings in both Authorities. The constraints of the technology had curtailed the opportunity for public participation however a plan which included publishing all papers and reaching out to those who had previously shown an interest in the Committee's work explaining the rationale and offering a briefing following the meeting had been put in place. The Chair welcomed Brian McNulty from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Scotland

(HMICS) who had been invited to observe the committee. No apologies were received.

2. Both SPA and BTPA have existing registers of interest for members available on their respective websites. The Committee noted there were no further declarations of interest.
3. There was no business to be taken in private.

## **Minutes of 14 February**

### Agenda item 2

4. It was noted that the minute from 14 February should reflect the decision to take the CT briefing in private. Subject to that amendment the Committee agreed the minute from the previous meeting as an accurate record.
5. The Committee heard that the D division and BTP policing plans are likely to be revisited to test whether the plans and targets set remain valid given the current impact of COVID-19 and any future change to the policing environment as a result of the virus. Hugh Ind said the plans were agreed but given the pandemic, the decision was taken not to publish them at this time. BTPA is keeping this under review and its strategy and planning meeting, next week, will look at in-year commitments. A discussion ensued during which the following points were made; there had been a shift in crime types and calls for service, demand had reduced; a pragmatic approach would assist as BTP moves out of the lockdown. The following points were shared regarding Police Scotland's position; SPA and Police Scotland had commissioned John Scott QC to review the use of COVID powers by Police Scotland officers. A weekly oversight meeting had been established looking at COVID-related matters including call handling and deployment strategies. Information was regularly shared by the force to SPA
6. **Action 1: GS to circulate the information document**
7. It was noted that Police Scotland had also established a strategic oversight board looking at key areas in a post-COVID world including; the new policing demand, people and wellbeing, partnerships, communications and engagement, support and finance. Members heard that existing transformation work within Police Scotland would continue.

## **Matters arising / actions outstanding**

### Agenda item 3

8. The Senior Scotland Project Manager spoke to a circulated paper and explained the progress / updates on matters arising from February's meeting> All actions were noted as complete with the exception of the following which were deferred until September.

- 8.1. Action 2, preparation of a thematic report on mental health and protecting the vulnerable on the railway
  - 8.2. Action 7 A brief on international learning on railway policing
  - 8.3. Action 9 Build in timeline for audit and inspection
  - 8.4. Action 12 Engage external bodies to explore capacity
  - 8.5. Action 13 Develop effectiveness measure framework
9. Following a discussion, it was felt there was a need to understand in greater detail how resource levels were decided, although members noted that the allocation of resources was delivering a very good level of performance. The Chair asked whether the forthcoming BTPA annual report and accounts may provide options to assist with this. said the Chief Executive felt that it may well assist and asked whether Police Scotland may also have work that could inform in this task. Tom Halpin reminded the committee that there was keen interest from Scottish Government in ensuring Value for Money was achieved with the service provided by BTP in Scotland, and further updated that Police Scotland was scheduled to have a best value review by Audit Scotland and suggested that this may be useful and provide a suitable approach to take.
10. **Action 2: Chair, John McBride and Sam Elvy to review resource allocation drawing any learning from the imminent Best Value Review**
11. DCC Hanstock added that the annual report may not highlight areas of effective cross border activity that surge additional resource, including football, County Lines work and CT Protect activity. Chief Superintendent Wylie informed members that requests for additional resource had always been approved and confirmed that surge 'effect' is not reflected in the numbers as tabled.

## **Performance and delivery**

### Agenda item 4

12. Chief Superintendent Wylie spoke to his paper and highlighted the following points from the report. Overall here had been a slight increase in crime and disruption but overall crime rates per passenger journey remained very low and for serious crime types were much lower at just 0.2 crimes per million passenger journeys. Clear up rates for all crimes were encouraging and more for serious crimes compared favourably with the BTP average. Assaults against police officers had fallen over the previous year as had physical assaults against rail staff; and satisfaction rates for victims of crime were high. The committee reflected on the range of benefits arising from BTP officers and analytical staff within rail staff teams.
13. On County Lines work, Chief Superintendent Wylie highlighted interventions leading to positive outcomes with BTP sharing information with Police Scotland and the National Crime Agency to tackle this nation-wide problem noted that COVID has not stopped this crime type.

14. In terms of resources new police recruits were due to start on the division by mid-June having completed their initial training and a planned intake was due for special constables. Staff absence rates at the year-end was 9.43 days
15. Members noted the good solve rate and the excellent work in making life-saving interventions. They sought further clarification on the detection rate for verbal and physical assault on rail staff. BTP explained the lower crime rates allowed more investigative time to be allocated to these crimes, the availability of CCTV was also helpful and provided lines of enquiry. This can be affected by reporting route for different crime types with those using 61016 or 'Help Us Help You' methods not always providing investigative opportunities.
16. Dominic Booth highlighted the life-saving interventions and noted ongoing discussions between BTP and TOCs on the implications of a damaged economy, reduced employment and the known correlations to poor mental health. Robert Hayes noted that overall resource was not a problem, performance was at a very high level.

Members asked whether there were any emerging issues from the past 2 months during the COVID period; Chief Superintendent Wylie said vulnerability was much more visible and had allowed for more interventions; crimes such as graffiti and fly-tipping had increased and there was a need to reinvest in technology used for some of these disruption-related crimes and linking it to the Force Control Room and work was on-going with Network Rail to explore investment opportunities including unmanned aerial vehicles (drones). Members asked to be sighted on the funding requirements and use-case.

17. **Agreed: BTP to provide a briefing on technology investment.**
18. The Chair sought clarification on the new recruits and was informed that they train at the Scottish Police College, followed by local procedure training on railway specialisms when on Division. Further clarification was requested regarding the transportation options at the scene of fatal accidents. An update was provided on an incident in Dumfriesshire where use was made of a train as transport; this was noted as highly unusual and would only ever be used in extremis. The decision making considered the dignity of the deceased, the location, terrain and nearest access point. A review had identified some short comings in the communications on the decision to everyone involved at the scene. Unions and staff have been involved in the discussions and accepted the unique circumstances of this tragic incident.

## **COVID-19 update**

### Agenda item 5

19. DCC Hanstock spoke to a circulated paper and made the following points; it is unusual to have a national emergency where the police are not the lead agency. In BTP's case this emergency has led to the effective shut down of the operating environment . However, as the restrictions are now being eased policing is at the

forefront. BTP has focussed on hubs and surging capacity as customers begin to return to using the national rail system; recognising that it was important to reassure the public and support rail staff. Critical hubs had been identified across the network and work to mitigate threats to staff and passengers including disobedience of the regulations was underway. Officers and staff were engaging professionally concerning the new regulations which initially caused problems in a few cases; however, those were exceptional and in the main the public were compliant. Organisationally, there was a phase early on which led to an increase in staff self-isolating DCC Hanstock said he was struck by the sense of commitment to duty, which was really impressive and the force has seen a drop in absence levels. Now, everyone was working together to support the 'stand up' of the force and internal planning discussions included unions and the Federation.

20. Chief Superintendent Wylie explained the cooperation between the two forces on the COVID-related PPE supply chain and procurement and training in its use, that ensured compatible levels of protection for officers in Scotland.
21. The Chief Executive explained that BTPA had been working to support the force and was pleased to report that despite the COVID challenges recruitment had continued across GB which will put the force in a good position for what comes next. Governments support for the rail industry meant there was unlikely to be any short-term funding issues for the force.

## **Annual report text**

### Agenda item 6

22. The senior Scotland project manager spoke to the paper at 6.1 which outlined suggested text for inclusion in the annual report and accounts. Subject to one amendment in the opening paragraph to include reference to the Scottish Police Authority the paper was noted and the text agreed.
- 23. Agreed: Test for the 2019/20 Annual report approved subject to the noted amendment.**
- 24. Action 4: Secretariat to reflect the feedback and arrange for the text to be included**

## **Meeting reflection**

### Agenda item 7

25. The Chair invited Dominic Booth to lead on this item. Mr Booth reflected that the agenda had been covered, the meeting had been well-balanced in terms of time allocated to each item and the inputs from attendees and there had been debate from core points, an expansion on views which was welcome. The chair also reflected that the use of video technology to support this virtual meeting had worked well.

**Agenda item 8 AOB**

26. The Chief Executive shared with the Committee that an advert would appear on 01/06/2020 for a new Chief Constable.
27. HMICS lead inspector, Brian McNulty thanked the committee for the opportunity to observe the meeting and echoed earlier comments that there were strong links between BTP and Police Scotland especially in football and events policing operations and he said it was pleasing to see those links appear as strong as ever. HMICS remit was to provide independent scrutiny of Police Scotland and the SPA, it was useful to hear of the best practice of BTP locally and nationally and how they are linking in with Police Scotland.
28. BTP colleagues left the meeting with the exception of DCC Hanstock.
29. DCC Hanstock briefed the Committee on the circumstances surrounding recent media coverage of matters relating to the Divisional Commander's travel. He explained the steps that he had taken in deciding that no further action was required (following an internal whistleblowing case which predated the media coverage), and expressed his gratitude to senior colleagues in Police Scotland for their prompt attention to the matter. Committee members welcomed the update and DCC Hanstock's explanation of the challenges in balancing public health perception with operational matters.
30. There being no further business the chair closed the meeting at 13:05 hours