
Report to: Police Authority
Agenda item: 8
Date: 23 June 2021
Subject: Chief Constable's Report
Sponsor: Chief Constable
For: Information

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 production.
- 1.2 Matters covered in this report include an update on operational matters, officer assaults, BTP's ongoing COVID-19 response, the Manchester Arena Inquiry, Smarter Working, the current staff survey and notable recognition.

2. Operational Matters

G7 Summit

- 2.1 The 47th G7 Leaders' Summit took place last week in Carbis Bay, Cornwall. World leaders were hosted at Carbis Bay, whilst neighbouring St Ives and other sites in Cornwall, such as Falmouth, hosted international delegates and media. BTP was an important partner in the policing operation (Op Trelawny) that was led by Devon and Cornwall Police. The security challenges were complex, with unique space, access, and geographic considerations.
- 2.2 Our officers carried out a security operation on the rail route adjacent to Carbis Bay and around the G7 venue, that was very close to the railway. We worked with Devon and Cornwall Police and other key partners, to provide a reassuring presence for the public and rail staff, whilst also disrupting and deterring criminal activity.
- 2.3 Several BTP specialist teams were deployed including policing at heights, dogs, firearms and protestor removal. One hundred and forty BTP officers were involved in the operation under the leadership of our force Gold, ACC Sean O'Callaghan and Silver Mark Cleland.
- 2.4 The deployment included the policing of the Royal Train that brought The Queen and Prince Charles to St Austell. On the day before The Queen's arrival, officers from the operation responded to a fatality between Truro and St. Austell, which was followed by a fatality on the Saturday at Exmouth. Fortunately, these incidents did not impede the Royal Train's movements.

Summer 21 & 'staycations'

- 2.5 With the current international travel restrictions still in place, it is inevitable that we will see an increase in the number of people holidaying in the UK this summer and with that, an increase in the number of passengers using the rail network to get to coastal towns and other locations, such as our National Parks.
- 2.6 A Strategic Assessment for the summer has been completed and is being used to inform our strategic operational approach to 'Summer21' and local operations, that will provide a highly visible and reassuring presence at key locations on the network.

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- 2.7 In addition, a specific operation is being planned by our County Lines Team, to address the potential influx of drugs into coastal resorts.
- 2.8 The South West will be especially busy this year and the limited number of routes in and out of the counties of the Devon and Cornwall, presents an opportunity to disrupt the movement of drugs from the North West, Midlands and London, to the many tourist locations found on the peninsular and safeguard the vulnerable. Additional Home Office funding has been secured for our County Lines activity and will be used to further develop the operation, in partnership with local forces and stakeholders.

Unwanted Sexual Behaviour

- 2.9 It has become apparent that across society, despite a drive to encourage greater reporting of sexual offences and unwanted sexual behaviour, there is still much work to be done, to ensure that women feel safe and secure on the rail network and have the confidence to report.
- 2.10 Working closely with partner organisations is the basis for success and tackling all forms of unwanted sexual behaviour on public transport is a priority for BTP, forming part of the Strategic Plan for 2018-2021, in terms of keeping the railways safe and protect people from crime, protecting and safeguarding people and building a skilled and specialist workforce.
- 2.11 Although sexual offence reporting has decreased by 7% in 2019/20 compared to the previous year, a Transport for London survey suggests around 1.2 million people have experienced unwanted sexual behaviour, of which 90% do not report it to the police.
- 2.12 Whilst as a force, we are one of the leading organisations in this space, often called upon to share some of our work and strategy with our stakeholders, industry partners and home office colleagues, there is still a need for greater focus on the sexual offending and unwanted sexual behaviour, both on the rail and underground networks. I also firmly believe that this will support the economic recovery of rail if we can deliver greater passenger confidence through a greater feeling of safety and security.

Suicide Prevention

- 2.13 There has been 18 suspected suicides reported on the rail and underground networks in May 2021 and 11 injurious attempts. There has been a notable increase in injurious attempts in May 2021 and an increase in individuals causing injury by jumping from height in comparison to April 2021. There have been 10 more injurious attempts in May 2021 in comparison to May 2020. Five injurious attempts in May 2021 were caused by jumping from height. In financial year 2020/21 there was an increase of 13 injurious attempts caused by jumping from height in comparison to 2019/20.
- 2.14 974 crisis interventions took place in May 2021, this is an increase of 220 in comparison to May 2020. There was a larger increase in females presenting on BTP than males in May 2021 in comparison to May 2020.
- 2.15 Whilst the interventions are positive news, the data does suggest a worrying increase in the number of people presenting at stations with mental health issues. Investment by the industry in mental health services, to allow dynamic decisions to be made in relation to those suffering from mental health problems, would free up police time to deal with other matters affecting the rail and underground networks. The use of data and sharing of that data from sources across the rail industry, will enable us to better prevent suicides and manage mental health incidents.

2.16 The impact of dealing with all fatalities on the network, including suicides, on our officers and staff, many of whom are probationers, is often significant. Our people deserve world class well-being support to help them manage the consequences of dealing with such traumatic incidents.

Bromley South Assault

2.17 A violent assault took place at Bromley South station, where several members of rail staff were injured, one of whom was stabbed seven times, when confronting a 17-year-old youth who dodged the payment barriers. The staff involved displayed incredible bravery in very challenging circumstances and their commitment is applauded. The suspect has been arrested, charged with several offences and has been in custody awaiting a plea and case management hearing.

2.18 With this case, there appears to be a lack of some Body Worn Video evidence, that would have greatly assisted the investigation of the offences. It is vital that we encourage our industry partners to invest more heavily in Body Worn technology and that they then encourage staff to wear it. I believe that with greater deployment of BWV, the network will be a safer place for staff and the public and I will continue to urge and persuade all our stakeholders to that effect.

3. Officer assaults

3.1 We continue to see unacceptably high levels of assaults against our officers and staff, that have led to serious injuries to several officers. Being assaulted should not be simply 'part of the job' for any police officer or member of staff. The table below shows the scale of the challenge we face.

Currently a 28% increase (+36) YTD compared to 2019-20 figures.

MONTH	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
APR	83	65	41	80
MAY	49	63	54	84
JUN	72	51	32	
JUL	57	51	57	
AUG	84	65	88	
SEP	47	46	67	
OCT	58	65	58	
NOV	63	79	67	
DEC	95	61	62	
JAN	54	50	49	
FEB	46	69	56	
MAR	92	47	90	

3.2 BTP's response to police assaults is Operation Hampshire, that ensures the force responds effectively to incidents where officers and staff are assaulted in the line of duty. As part of a seven-point pledge, officers and staff can expect the following in the event they are assaulted:

- Total Victim Care & Victims Code of Practice apply in all circumstances

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- Senior leadership to be informed of any assault
 - An assaulted officer must not be the Officer in the Case
 - Accident Management System must be completed
 - The injured person should not write their own statement
 - Best evidence must be presented to maximise the chance of prosecution
 - The incident should be debriefed
- 3.3 Our seven-point pledge is progress, but I am keen to see that any officer who receives a significant injury through assault or by way of accident at work, gets suitable medical treatment, without unnecessary delay. I would like to explore with BTPA, what options we have, that could expedite appropriate treatment.
- 3.4 The Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill, which is passing through Parliament at present, will provide a provision for a Police Pledge. The Bill is currently going through committee stage, but the provision of the Pledge will not apply to BTP officers and staff, unless there is an amendment to that affect. This is concerning to our officers and staff, as they will be treated differently to their Home Office colleagues. It should be noted that the Police Pledge also applies to retired officers and staff and so many thousands of BTP officers, staff and their retired colleagues, will not be covered by it.
- 3.5 BTP officers respond to and investigate all crimes that are committed on or related to the railway network, which include the most serious incidents. Unfortunately, BTP officers and PCSOs are often victims of assault when carrying out their duties. On average, 21.5% of BTP officers and PCSOs are assaulted each year.
- 3.6 The Covenant is not simply connected to assaults and covers well-being. The demand for health and wellbeing support is not surprising within BTP, when we consider that:
- Over 2,000 (40%) of officers or staff have been linked to at least one traumatic incident
 - Over 1,000 (25%) of officers or staff have been linked to two or more traumatic incidents
 - In 2019 there were 42 PTSD diagnosis and between January and October last year there were 30
 - From 1st April 2020 - 31st January 2021 there were 258 sickness absences attributable to depression, PTSD and stress.
- 3.7 My focus will remain on ensuring BTP officers and staff are not disadvantaged by exclusion from the Police Covenant and that they receive all the support provided in our pledge.
- 4. COVID-19**
- 4.1 To respond to increasing demand as the further releasing of lockdown into Step 3 occurred, BTP deployed additional resources across B, C and D Division in the week following lifting of restrictions. These deployments included the following:
- A continued dedicated continued dedicated Gold, Silver and Bronze command structure for RedCedar patrols

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- High visibility patrols at major rail hubs and on services across the network at morning and evening peak times
 - Refocus of late-turn patrols at major rail hubs for night-time economy travel
 - Enhanced protective security measures, including additional Project Servator deployments
 - Enhanced patrols by dedicated disruption officers during morning and evening peak times
- 4.2 During that period, there was an uplift of 500 officers across the week, plus the directed tasking of business-as-usual resources. There was also dedicated command structure and resources for the resumption of football fans within stadiums during the weekend.
- 4.3 Crime increased very slightly by 10% compared to the previous two weeks average. There were no exceptional raises in any crime types. Incidents demand continued the same rising trajectory we have seen throughout the easing of lockdown. The peak for incident volume came on Saturday 22 May, with 727 incidents record.
- 4.4 BTP undertook nearly 400 interventions for breaches of face covering compliance, gave 16 directions to leave a service / station and issued 2 fixed penalty notices. CCTV face covering analysis shows 91.4% compliance which is a 1% drop on the previous week. This is attributable to leisure travel compliance dropping 2.4% to 89.4%, whilst commuter travel compliance increased by 0.3% to 93.1%.
- 4.5 Throughout the remainder of May 2021, usual RedCedar patrols have continued with a focus on the busiest stations and in areas where variants of concern have been identified or case rates have been rising. Face covering compliance has remained above 90% for the month. Demand for calls to service has increased to pre-covid levels and crime reports have increased to 80% of pre-covid levels.

5. Manchester Arena Inquiry

- 5.1 The Inquiry is hearing Chapter 10 evidence now, but will publish the Volume One report on Thursday, 17 June. Along with colleagues, I will consider any implications for the Force.

6. Smarter Working

- 6.1 The COVID pandemic has taught us that there are viable, alternatives ways, by which we can carry out some of our business. Whilst it is a challenge to police across three countries, it has presented us with an opportunity to develop Smarter Working within an agile framework, that will enable the force to operate efficiently and effectively in a post-pandemic world. To do this we will need to invest in technology, innovate and train our people; but the outcomes will help us to protect the travelling public, in a way that was not previously possible.
- 6.2 We are reviewing our longer-term approach to Smarter Working and how we can exploit the opportunities we have realised already and mainstream these for the future. Part of this requires us to consider the remuneration associated with working in London when staff may be working in a much different way.

7. Staff Survey

- 7.1 I have now seen the results of the latest staff survey and whilst there are many positives in the responses, there are some clear areas for BTP to address. It is good to see that our officers and staff are proud of the contribution that they are making and how they work collaboratively to serve the public. More concerning is the perceived lack of communication, change that is 'done' to people and not 'with them' and technology issues. I am determined that these areas will be addressed.

8. Recognition

- 8.1 I was delighted to hear that two of our staff (Helen Turner and DC Henry Fowler) have been nominated for the Draper's Company Medal to recognise their endeavour and achievement in the support of training, learning, leadership and outstanding personal contribution. They will attend a ceremony at Draper's Hall later in the summer.
- 8.2 I am also proud to report that Chief Superintendent Dennis Murray has been awarded the Queen's Police Medal in the Birthday Honours 2021, for improving diversity within policing, and building trust and strong relationships with local communities.