

Report to: Police Authority
Date: 8 December 2021
Subject: Board Effectiveness Evaluation
Sponsor: Chief Executive
Author: Head of Governance and Compliance
For: Information and Endorsement

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1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 This paper sets out the proposed structure for the 2022 Board Effectiveness Evaluation (BEE) for approval. It also reports on progress against the delivery of the action plan arising from the 2021 evaluation.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Code of Good Practice on Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments puts a requirement on Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) to conduct an annual review of board effectiveness. This provides a key opportunity to drive improvement by:
- Identifying areas of good practice/governance from within our board operations and from similar organisations and sharing them across the Authority and its committees;
 - Identifying areas of improvement and ways of delivering these improvements; and
 - Identifying areas for development whether at board, committee or an individual level to ensure the board development programme for 2022 focuses on the areas where the BTPA can add most value.
- 2.2 The annual evaluation of board effectiveness provides a focal point for this work in the year, but this is a continuous process with each evaluation building on the work done previously. The Executive has sought to ensure that the activity arising from the 2021 action plan focuses on improvements where they will add the most value and encourages efficient and effective ways of working.

3. Progress against 2021 Action Plan

- 3.1 Good progress is being made against the 2021 action plan which was approved in June. A full update is provided at Annex A, but some highlights are provided below:
- Since its reinstatement, the Chairs' Forum has met twice. The most recent meeting at the beginning of Q2 cycle of committee meetings

provided the opportunity to have a short-term forward look and to encourage greater cohesiveness between committee agendas.

- The newly established People and Culture Committee has met twice, with a particular focus on internal culture. It has provided an opportunity for richer conversations around the various workstreams and components which make up the People Strategy. The division of committee responsibilities is becoming more conducive.
- Work has continued to be developed on oversight mapping. One of the things we have done this year is put in place a broader range of oversight to respond to the gaps previously identified. One example of this is legitimacy oversight, which was agreed as being a category which should fall within the remit of all the committees, as well as Authority meetings. This has most prominently featured within the Performance and Delivery Committee, but this is being considered further with a view to the necessary refinements being made to all agendas.
- Four breakfast briefings have taken place, which have included educational inputs from BTP on the Manchester Arena Inquiry, Covert Policing, Unwanted Sexual Behaviour and Vetting. These briefings have been very well attended and received positive feedback. The Executive continues to identify appropriate subjects which support learning and the Authority's oversight function.
- The annual Member appraisal process has been refreshed with individual and collective objectives having been identified to support Authority focus outside of the formal committee structure.
- Following a Request for Quotation (RFQ) process a preferred supplier has been identified to support the BTPA in reviewing the financial delegations and service level agreements with BTP. This work will be key in ensuring that these elements of the Code of Governance are efficient and effective and provide appropriate empowerment.

4. 2022 Evaluation Proposals

- 4.1 It is proposed that the 2022 evaluation is driven by a number of different components as described below.
- 4.2 Meeting evaluations - these have formed part of standard agenda items for working groups, committees Authority meetings since the start of the performance year. Whilst feedback from the nominated reviewer has been considered and implemented throughout the year, this work creates an opportunity to revisit the comments with a view to identifying any recurring themes.
- 4.3 Questionnaires/Interviews – this approach provides an efficient way of obtaining individual feedback to facilitate follow up discussions. The template sourced from the National Audit Office (NAO) previously used is of less

relevance as we progress on our board effectiveness journey. Therefore, the Executive is designing a tailored questionnaire with a simplified format. The Executive intends to design a similar product to obtain observations from BTP focused on what BTP needs from the Authority, where this is achieved and where we need to work together to improve.

- 4.4 The Head of Governance and Compliance may follow up with a short interview where there is a theme that they wish to explore further as part of the thematic analysis of responses.
- 4.5 The BTPA Executive will also reflect on what it believes it does well and where improvements could be made.
- 4.6 Review of Effectiveness – the Authority meeting scheduled for 1 February has been identified as an appropriate forum to consider BTPA effectiveness, as well as forming part of the Member induction programme.
- 4.7 The intended objectives of this session are to clearly articulate what effective looks like for BTPA and how BTPA adds value to the delivery of policing the railways. It will also identify board development needs to ensure excellence in delivery and any changes needed to deliver the articulated objectives. The outputs from this session will form the basis of the next action plan arising from the 2022 Evaluation.
- 4.8 Focus Groups – this year the Executive plans to invite small groups to discuss/test different themes and opportunities arising from responses.
- 4.9 BEE 2021 outputs – key outputs and lessons learned from the current evaluation action plan will be fed into the discussions.
- 4.10 Independent Input - In accordance with good practice, the BTPA should engage with independent assessors to provide an input to the annual effectiveness evaluation every three years. The Executive has considered the various options for how this is accommodated including asking another oversight body to conduct a peer review, the use of existing auditors and seeking the support from external consultants specialising in Board Effectiveness Evaluations.
- 4.11 Members of the Authority will be aware from previous updates that the Authority is due to begin work with consultants to modernise the financial regulations and delegations and the split of duties across BTP/A. This significant piece of work has strong links to BTPA effectiveness and it is the intention to subsume the independent input for the BEE into this project.
- 4.12 Delays within the commercial process have meant that this work will not begin until January (the award is being offered to the preferred supplier at the time of writing) and is expected to take five months. Given that the BEE is usually reported to the June meeting, the intention is to press the consultants to reach conclusions earlier for the BEE relevant parts to ensure that the BTPA gets the benefit of an independent evaluation.

5. Timeline

5.1 The below table details the timeline supporting the proposals:

Month	Activity
December	Approval of 2022 BEE proposals.
January	Refined questionnaires sent to Members and COG.
February	Authority Meeting with effectiveness focus.
Feb/March	Follow up Member interviews and session with COG following receipt of feedback.
March/April	Focus groups.
April/May	Present key findings to the BTP/A.
May	Final reflections sought at private BTPA Board Development session on 25 May and final drafting.
June	Present final BEE report and action plan for approval at the Authority meeting on 29 June, prior to submission to the Department and publication.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Members are asked to note progress against the 2021 action plan reported at Annex A.
- 6.2 The Authority is asked to consider the proposals put forward for the 2022 Evaluation and offer endorsement if in agreement.