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HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS - No restriction on circulation

DISCLOSABLE (FOI / PUBLICATION SCHEME) - Yes



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**Report to:** British Transport Police Authority

**Date:** 01/10/2024

**Subject:** Chief Constable's Report

**For:** Noting

## 1. PURPOSE OF PAPER

- 1.1 This report brings to the attention of Members of the Police Authority items that I consider they will wish to note.

## 2. SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- 2.1. We have been involved in a number of high-profile events since my last update and BTP continues to be recognised and thanked by Home Office colleagues for our work.
- 2.2. On Saturday 7th September, Special Constable Gary Blackburn was stabbed whilst on patrol at Preston Railway Station. Thankfully, the attempted murder of a colleague is not something we have to deal with very often. Charlie and I visited Gary and his family at his home and although a little uncomfortable, he was in good spirits and pleased to be home in the care of his family. Gary, his wife and children have been overwhelmed with the messages of care and support he's received. I was pleased to hear their reflection on the kindness and support they have had from BTP who they described as a true family.
- 2.3. I would also like to publicly commend the actions of PS Stuart Maw who showed significant bravery, arresting the armed male and preventing further harm to those in the vicinity. I was humbled to chat with Stuart, whose actions were exceptional in detaining an extremely dangerous offender. I thanked him for his swift and professional actions and it was reassuring to hear from Stuart how effective Captor was.

- 2.4. Since my visit in early September, Gary continues to recuperate from his injuries. The male was charged with attempted murder and remains on remand with the next court hearing being 7th October 2024. Gary has been very complimentary about our response and is keen to return to his duties once he is fit to do so.
- 2.5. Notting Hill Carnival is one of our most complex yearly policing operations. There were changes to this year's operational plan which proved very successful with us achieving no overcrowding at key locations. I am aware that railway staff felt better supported however, there were several officers assaulted during the operation and investigations are ongoing to bring these offenders to justice. I would like to take this opportunity to thank ACC O'Callaghan who was the Gold Commander for this event, and Supt Twyford, who was in his 6<sup>th</sup> year as the Silver Commander. Whilst the weekend was very demanding I can never overstate the amount of work that the planning takes. Public Order is a discretionary skill and I am always grateful to everyone who volunteers to undertake public order roles.
- 2.6. From July through to the beginning of September, we ran Operation Zappa to support security for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This involved high visibility policing at St Pancras for the Eurostar as well as protective industry security patrols and our disruption teams working together. A fun part of the operation was the press events at St Pancras when medal winners returned to the UK. There was a real sense of pride.
- 2.7. The murders of Bebe King, Alice Dasilva Aguiar and Elsie Dot Stancombe, and attacks on several others, on July 29 in Southport were totally horrific. The violent disorder which followed was disgraceful. Op Navette, saw our public order and non public order trained officers deployed in support of the wider UK Operation. A number of our officers were assaulted and racially abused and investigations are ongoing to identify those responsible. The Secretary of State for Transport attended Hull to thank our officers deployed there for their bravery. I am grateful for the flexibility of officers and staff during this period.

### **3. FINANCE UPDATE**

- 3.1. Following an observation at Appointments and Remuneration Committee that pressures and funding opportunities are being discussed in different committees and would benefit from being in a consolidated single paper, I have written to the BTPA Chair outlining the situation.
- 3.2. I am clear that any pressures arising from over programming are our risk. To manage this area, proactive work has been undertaken including adjusting intake plans, reallocating people into funded EPSA roles where possible, ringfencing underspends and agreeing to restrictions

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on discretionary non-pay spend (e.g. travel and hotels, car hire etc). All possible options to reduce the £9.5m portfolio revenue budget have also been taken. £2.4m planned spend on transformative and innovative projects has been halted to address the in-year pressures and the remaining £5.9m is work which is a statutory, contractual or operationally necessary.

- 3.3. Any further measures will have severe, longstanding operational and reputational consequences.

#### 4. PERFORMANCE

- 4.1. June to August 2024 has seen 21,376 crimes recorded; an increase of 8% compared to same period last year. Recently published 2023-24 passenger journey figures show that 26.8 notifiable crimes per million passenger journeys were recorded, a rise on last year (24.4) but still showing the railway network is a safe environment. Whilst the volume of crime remains within theft of passenger property and public order, unfortunately some high harm offences have also increased. So far this year we have recorded 120 more offences of violence with injury, 419 more hate crime offences and 213 more staff assaults. Whilst some of these rises are linked to recent protests and national tension, they are concerning. Overall, the solved rate is slightly behind last year with 2231 solved compared to 2283.
- 4.2. Incidents in the last quarter have risen by 6% when compared to the same time last year. This equates to an increase in demand of 2,996 incidents. Whilst the majority relate to concern for welfare/mental health situations, ASB has continued to be a prevalent area of concern which is predominantly linked to youth behaviour with seasonal increases during summer months and school holidays.
- 4.3. Disruption remains a key focus for us, with monthly minutes increasing by 24% (+197,395 minutes) compared to last year. Trespass and fatality/injury incidents have the most significant impact and continue to rise. However, since April 2024, non-suspicious fatality management handback times have decreased despite challenging conditions, averaging 103 minutes. Additionally, there's been a 13% reduction in overall incident numbers (-13 incidents).
- 4.4. On 27<sup>th</sup> September we held a disruption workshop with industry to discuss how we can better manage disruption and delay across the rail network by working together to provide an efficient and reliable rail service to the public and to keep colleagues and vulnerable people safe. We were joined by industry partners from across the railway, officers and staff from BTP to develop

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and agree a joint action plan to proactively target and manage disruption incidents; reduce delays; manage vulnerability; and manage out offenders, where appropriate.

## **5. ESTATES**

- 5.1. The Estates team continue to work hard to deliver a cost effective, modern and inclusive estate. The DfT have appointed Mitie as their integrated facilities management service provider and the new contract will commence 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025. Although Mitie are DfT and BTP's existing provider, the new contract is expected to improve facilities management services.
- 5.2. This year has seen several refurbishment projects and relocations at Croydon and Doncaster. It is so important to show how we care for our people following feedback in our 'All People Survey'. Work has started on-site at Blundell Street to complete the repairs associated with past flooding events. The cost is £160,000 which has been fully recovered through our insurer. Regrettably we have had to reduce our original Estates Programme and have paused revenue spend on 13 major projects, saving £574k in year, and 7 smaller revenue projects saving a further £100k. This delay will impact our people who have been advised of the decisions.
- 5.3. In relation to the exciting and unprecedented London Estate programme, contractors are progressing at pace. The construction programme has now been updated due to planning permission being signed off by Westminster City Council, including the external windows. The only two items now outstanding are the front entrance ramp and HVM (hostile vehicle mitigation). The date for beneficial occupation of the first and second floor is currently scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024. The programme is overseeing the development and activation of business continuity plans linked to the exit from FHQ/Albany House prior to the complete occupation of 200 BPR. c1000 people will be disrupted as part of the move. Work is due to complete at Ivason House at the end of October 2024, allowing the Professional Standards Department to move over from FHQ. The fall-back Control Room move is due for completion on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2024, which includes a highly complex six-week technology install and user acceptance testing phase. Travel guidance has been prepared and shared with those impacted by the relocation.

## **6. A FORCE ON THE MOVE**

- 6.1. The portfolio is in its third year of delivery and continues to have an extremely ambitious and broad range of change programmes.

- 6.2. Our Drones Discovery ('Project Falcon') is now fully mobilised and developing a full business case based on the findings of proof-of-concept trials of a 'drone-in-a-box' (DIAB) solution. The BTPA Executive have been briefed on how the project aims to break new ground in the deployment of beyond-visual-line-of-sight (BVLOS). Industry interest in this project is high and the outlook for drawing in investment for both this initial rollout and the future scaling up of the capability is positive.
- 6.3. Projects which have been successfully delivered include those seeking efficiency and productivity gains through the deployment of technology (People Reporting; Net Zero Carbon Software) and new operating model designs (ID Suite Remodel, Driver Training School), responses to legitimacy (Warrant & ID Cards) and the Manchester Area Inquiry (Exercise & Testing), as well as innovations (Fleet Electrification Ph 1) and investments in the quality of accommodation for officers and staff (Sunderland Relocation, Liverpool Rail House Refurbishment). In addition, we have handed over into business-as-usual the primary efficiency schemes which have delivered savings being reinvested in the delivery of the transformation portfolio, including Layers and Spans (£1.89m pa) and the first phase of the Dogs Review (£500k pa).
- 6.4. In the lead up to December, the portfolio is developing its investment bid for future years as part of our new, integrated business planning cycle. The investment planning process will include a detailed prioritisation and challenge exercise. We continue to prioritise cyclical costs relating to annual replacement of the core assets which maintain our operations. Building, computer and infrastructure costs remain inflated; the annual cyclical 'bill' is now projected at c£9m of a £14m capital budget, leaving little remaining for transformational or progressive programming of projects. The underinvestment in capital budgets across policing was reflected on by HMICFRS.
- 6.5. In addition to cyclical costs, the forward plan we have been presenting since the start of A Force on the move continues to include a range of non-discretionary items with which we have little room for manoeuvre. Examples of these are the phasing out of the current Taser model (£5m), the replacement of our Body-Worn Video solution (£4m), the expansion of the College of Policing Personal Safety Training curriculum (£5m) and the forthcoming national programme for Digital Case Files (£1.5m).
- 6.6. Truly transformational projects to become data-led, improve performance etc. are paused.

## 7. OPTIMISED POLICING MODEL

- 7.1. The Optimised Policing Model (OPM) is now entering a conclusive period within the design phase, which will require some critical 'go / no-go' assessments aligned to its central interdependency with the recent MTFP 25/26 commission from BTPA.
- 7.2. Detailed scenario planning is now underway to understand the scale and scope of the OPM's impact in light of the affordability scenarios within the BTPA commission. A critical factor to the success of the OPM is the 'operational viability factor' and this will be discussed with the BTPA over the next month in order to agree/or not the viability of the OPM and the required investment. The DCC continues to engage throughout with industry stakeholders.

## 8. TECHNOLOGY

- 8.1. This quarter has seen continued maturity around IT transformation, and a focus around enabling new capability into BTP whilst continuing to address our legacy estate. We are nearly ready to move beyond Fixing the Fundamentals to provide a function that supports modern principles and technologies and can enable the exploitation of technology.

The Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) refresh was concluded in July. The Datacentre Relocation Project is nearing completion and has seen the migration of our physical estate from FHQ, which is a critical enabler of the move to Buckingham Palace Road. This has also seen considerable modernisation of our technology estate, allowing for greater business continuity and improved ways of working. I have been truly impressed with the hard work of everyone involved.

The National Enabling Programme (NEP) is making progress. This will transform the way we work, collaborate, and use technology in a consistent, secure and trusted way across policing. The roll-out of individual issue laptops and the rebuilding of the current laptop estate will begin shortly. We are in the final stages of delivery of the Unified Communications Project to remove old legacy platforms. All contact centres are live with First Contact Centre being the last one scheduled for migration at the end of September. The transition to Microsoft Teams continues and is due to be completed at the end of September.

- 8.2. The annual cyber IT health check is nearing completion, addressing key cybersecurity issues. At the beginning of the year, our rating was poor, and our security assurance for policing (SYAP) report was below the national average. We have now surpassed the national average

Security Classification and Handling Instructions of document are detailed on page 1 and are preparing for the next assessment. Our Cyber Security Team has improved user and access management, addressing lessons learnt from 3rd party cyber-attacks.

- 8.3. As a result of the TfL cyber-attack, BTP Technology implemented their cyber incident response plan and put in additional measures to ensure the TfL intruder(s) could not enter the BTP domain. Measures will remain in place until the incident has been formally closed. The BTP Cyber Crime team and BTP Technology team have updated processes as a result of learning undertaken.

## **9. HMICFRS INSPECTION PLAN**

- 9.1. I am aware of correspondence between HMICFRS and BTPA regarding this year's inspection programme. Although it is for the Authority to judge what assurance they require to discharge their functions under s19 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, my position remains that an effective audit and assurance plan for 2024-25 and beyond, owned and overseen by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, is essential for both BTP and BTPA. Due to a significant increase in costs for inspection activity, HMICFRS have now adopted a full cost recovery approach. The BTPA CEO has written to HMICFRS to inform them of the decision to delay inspection. BTP/A will continue to work with HMICFRS to set out an affordable inspection plan for 2025/26 onwards.
- 9.2. I met with Lee Freeman, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, earlier this month. We discussed various inspection activities and follow-ups related to vetting and counter-corruption, as well as future inspection activities specific to BTP. HMICFRS will conduct follow-up activities on vetting and counter-corruption recommendations on October 30-31, with a newly assigned inspection team. Additionally, HMICFRS plans a rapid review of policing responses to recent disorder, focusing on preparedness, mobilisation, and officer resilience, with initial engagement starting immediately. As the "half PEEL" inspection will not be undertaken for the 2024/25 financial year, I have discussed with the BTPA CEO the need for the BTPA to have confidence in the audit and inspection that is taking place. We have conducted a pre-assessment in anticipation of the PEEL inspection, and I have advocated that this is brought to the attention of Audit and Risk Committee.

## **10. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

- 10.1 There are currently 35 officers suspended and a further 24 restricted in BTP, meaning as a result of conduct investigations 59 people are unable to undertake the role they are employed

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to carry out. This is reviewed every 28 days by the Deputy Chief Constable. There are also 116 ongoing PSD investigations in total.

10.2 Performance management of complaints remains extremely positive when compared nationally. Highlights from the Quarter 1 Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) complaints bulletin show we have had less use of force complaints this quarter, and discriminatory behaviour as a complaint category is very low compared with the national average. We only assessed 7% of complaint allegations as requiring an investigation. The vast majority of matters simply needed an explanation. Nationally, 12% were investigated.

## **11. GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT**

11.1. Since the new Government was elected in July, I have had a number of conversations, including a meeting with the Secretary of State, Louise Haigh, to discuss their priorities. The Government wants to move at pace with Rail Reform, and both the Department for Transport and the Home Office have a renewed focus on VAWG. We have briefed the Secretary of State, Number 10, and I will shortly be meeting with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls to discuss our priorities.

11.2. The recent riots temporarily shifted focus for the Government but renewed attention on BTP. I attended the roundtable at Number 10 chaired by the Prime Minister to discuss the policing response to the disorder. The Rail Minister, Lord Hendy, has asked how the Department can make changes to legislation to enable BTP to confront this type of disorder more effectively, and I have written to the Department to that effect.

## **12. PARTNERSHIPS**

12.1. Following his move into the Network Policing role, ACC Charlie Doyle has been meeting with Train Operating Company (TOC) Managing Director's to understand their priorities and how BTP can support them in achieving these. Divisional Commanders also continue their regular engagement with industry, keeping them updated on our OPM project, and hosting our annual Policing Plan meetings, providing industry an opportunity to feedback on our operational objectives for 2025/26. We have taken a refreshed approach this year, to deliver an engaging, interactive series of meetings, and the feedback so far has been useful.

12.2. I'm pleased to say that all 14 TOCs sponsored by the DfT are now accredited by BTP's Safeguarding on Rail Scheme. The Scheme was launched in 2021 and aims to accredit TOCs



who prioritise safeguarding on the railway and protecting vulnerable people who use the network.

12.3. The unrest that took place in August understandably created concern among our industry partners, and we set up a daily call for stakeholders to update them on how we were tackling disorder, protecting passengers and infrastructure, and our plans to tackle future unrest. Sean recorded a reassurance video message for industry which was well received.

### **13. ALL PEOPLE SURVEY**

13.1. I'm pleased to report that for the second year in a row our response rate for the All People Survey grew to a strong 65%. Our Engagement Index Score (EIS) which is based on the four questions in the 'Objectives and Purpose' factor increased by 2% to 58%, 'I am proud to work for BTP', 'I would recommend BTP as a great place to work', 'I know how my work contributes to BTP's strategy' have all increased by 3%. 'I feel I am part of one BTP' has stayed the same. This is consistent across officers, staff and specials. To note, PCSOs engagement score has dropped 3%, and the question 'I feel I am part of one BTP' has decreased for them by 11%.

13.2. There was an increase in favourable scores across all eight of the survey factors with the exception of 'our senior leaders' which remained the same as last year. Across our divisions, engagement index scores were up across A, C and E divisions.

13.3. Feedback was strong across a number of themes including technology improvements, my manager, I still see myself working for BTP in two years' time, the effective management of misconduct by PSD, wellbeing support achieving some of the highest scores, and the availability of flexible working opportunities. We've also seen positive change in areas we committed to drive forward in our 2023 action plan, including uniform, recognition, and fleet.

13.4. Areas which scored lower and which offer us the greatest opportunity to improve engagement were: leadership visibility; recognition to ensure we're doing more to recognise those who deliver good work; and addressing the 'us v them' culture divides that are evident from colleague feedback such as leaders v us, staff v officers and division v division. Feeling on the slow progress on decision making across free/concessionary travel remained a strong theme.

### **14. CHIEF OFFICER UPDATE**

14.1. After 34 years of public service, Paul Furnell is leaving BTP and policing to continue his passion for safeguarding those most vulnerable in society and tackling Violence and

Intimidation against Women and Girls (VIAWG) elsewhere. Paul has done a tremendous amount of work leading our endeavours on child protection including exploitation via county lines, and driving forward action against modern day slavery, hate crime and sexual harassment. He's also helped drive measurable impact in suicide prevention and missing persons through the Harm Reduction Team. His commitment and passion for safeguarding and protecting vulnerable people has ensured it is part of our DNA and something we are very proud of. Paul's last working day with BTP will be 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and I am sure Members will join me in thanking Paul for all he has achieved at BTP.

14.2. Members will recall that in May we announced that Karen Findlay's start date had been delayed and that Charlie Doyle would be leading Network Policing, whilst Paul Furnell would continue to act as Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Public Contact, Specialist Investigations and Criminal Justice. Following Paul's decision, I have agreed with the Chair that, to ensure leadership resilience, it is now no longer tenable to have an open-ended delay to the start of a Chief Officer. Karen's offer of employment has therefore been withdrawn and an offer has been made to another senior officer, which is subject to successful vetting clearance.

14.3. I would like to thank the BTP Federation for hosting me at their annual conference. I thoroughly enjoyed the excellence awards and felt very proud of all the recipients. It was also good to hear from those present their concerns and reflections during the Q&A session.

14.4. As always, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our people across BTP who are working tirelessly to deliver our strategy.

## **15. RECOMMENDATIONS**

15.1. It is recommended that the content of this report is noted by Members.