

British Transport Police Authority Members' Handbook

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Chair's Introduction

As Chair of the British Transport Police Authority (BTPA), I welcome you as a new Member of the Authority. I look forward to working with you and the existing Membership over the coming months, until the conclusion of my term in March 2026, as we work with the British Transport Police (BTP – the 'Force') to help the Force enhance its reputation within policing for its innovative and bold approach, whilst simultaneously challenging BTP to deliver its service efficiently and effectively. We will do all of this whilst also having an eye to the future of the wider rail and policing agendas, specifically BTP/A's future place within and operating alongside Great British Rail (GBR).



The relationship between the BTPA and BTP is the key to successfully delivering our mandate of ensuring efficient and effective policing for the railway. It is, therefore, imperative that BTPA and BTP work collaboratively in our different roles with trust, openness and transparency at the core of our relationship. At the same time Members must be prepared to ask challenging questions and fulfil the role of critical friend, ensuring balanced and healthy debate to achieve the best possible outcomes.

This handbook provides a general introduction to the Authority and complements both the onboarding programme and any Committee-specific onboarding materials relevant to your role.

Ron Barclay-Smith
BTPA Chair

Chief Executive's Introduction

Welcome to the British Transport Police Authority. I'm delighted to have you on board. You are stepping into a vital role at a pivotal time, and your insights, experience, and oversight will be instrumental in shaping the future of policing across the rail network.



As we approach the end of the calendar year, our immediate priorities include agreeing a budget settlement and establishing a medium-term financial plan for 2026–2029 that encourages innovation and efficiency. We will also be considering a refresh of our Strategic Plan, which alongside the Policing Plan is the framework through which the Authority holds the Force to account. This plan ensures that policing remains effective, efficient, and responsive to the needs of passengers, rail staff, and the wider industry.

Your contribution will be key in strengthening our democratic accountability, supporting sound financial stewardship, and upholding public confidence in the Force's performance.

My Executive Team and I look forward to working closely with you as we navigate these important responsibilities together.

Hugh Ind
BTPA Chief Executive

The British Transport Police Authority

The British Transport Police Authority (BTPA) and the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003

BTPA was established under the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (RTSA2003) as an executive Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Transport (DfT). It became operational on 1 July 2004.

BTPA's core function is to ensure the maintenance of an efficient and effective police force for the railways in England, Scotland and Wales. This includes strategic oversight, budget setting, senior appointments and risk management, working all the while with the Chief Constable and the Chief Officer Group (COG) team of BTP.

Under the RTSA2003, the BTPA should be composed of an odd number of between 11 and 17 Members appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport. Members will represent, variously, rail passengers, rail staff, the rail industry, and persons using the railway in Scotland and Wales. At least one Member will have recent operational policing experience.

When complying with its statutory duties under the RTSA2003, the BTPA incorporates priorities set out annually by the Secretary of State for Transport into business planning. These are typically communicated via letter to the Chair and the most recent [one can be found here](#).

BTPA as an effective Arms-Length Body

The BTPA seeks to maximise its effectiveness reviews through conducting annual board effectiveness reviews of a subset of 15 metrics defined in [Cabinet Office guidance on board effectiveness reviews](#). We aim to cover all 15 metrics across a three-year cycle, with the current cycle scheduled to be concluded in 2026. [The most recent board effectiveness review \(June 2025\) \('BER2025'\) can be found here](#). At the time of writing in October 2025, the BTPA Executive Team is drawing together recommendations arising from the BTPA BER 2025, the Secretary's of State's letter on priorities for BTPA (August 2025), and a forthcoming Government Internal Audit Agency internal audit on governance (November 2025) to inform BTPA's workplan for 2026.

The BTPA Executive

BTPA Members are supported by the dedicated BTPA Executive, a small team led by the BTPA Chief Executive. The staffing of the BTPA Executive and their contact details are set out as an appendix, and covers areas of finance, commercial, audit and risk, performance, complaints and misconduct, Member engagement, People and governance. The Chief Financial Officer also serves as Treasurer under the RTSA2003.

The BTPA Executive works closely with its DfT Sponsor Team and is guided in its ways of working by the Framework Document adopted by the BTPA Executive and DfT Sponsor Team. At the time of writing in October 2025, a revised Framework Document is due to be published shortly. [The current Framework Document \(2018\) is here](#).

The Strategic Plan and the Policing Plan

Under the RTSA2003, the BTPA is obliged to set a 'three-year strategy plan' setting out the BTPA's medium- and long-term strategies for policing the railways during that period. [The current Strategic Plan covers the period 2022-2027](#) and, at the time of writing in October 2025, is undergoing a refresh for the period 2026/2029 to align with the planned Medium-Term Financial Plan period, and

the tenure of the current Chief Constable. Delivery of the Strategic Plan is overseen by the Strategy and Planning Committee.

The objectives of the Strategic Plan 2022-2027 are,

1. Crime Prevention and Safeguarding to reduce likelihood of people coming to harm on the railways
2. Target our efforts to ensure fewer victims of the most serious crime
3. Innovate and collaborate with our stakeholders to reduce disruption
4. Build the trust and confidence of passengers and rail staff to defeat criminality together
5. Generate value for money through the exploitation of technology, adapting to meet the future
6. Build a modern and inclusive workforce where our people are well equipped, well trained, well led, well cared for and reflect the best of our communities.

Similarly, under the RTSA2003 the BTPA must issue an annual policing plan setting out the proposed arrangements for the policing of the railways during that year. [The current policing plan covers the period 2025-2027](#). The plan covers a period of more than one year but is subject to annual refresh to be compliant with the RTSA2003. The plan covers a period of more than one year as past experience has shown that core policing priorities rarely change substantively year-on-year, and a longer-term approach to planning fostered a more effective engagement with policing plan stakeholders. Whereas development of the Policing Plan is overseen by the Strategy and Planning Committee, delivery of the policing plan objectives is overseen by the Finance, Legitimacy and Performance Committee.

The priorities of the Policing Plan 2025-2027 are to address,

1. High harm offences and protecting vulnerable adults
2. Disruption and delay
3. Violence against women and girls

Strategic Finance - Police Services Agreements and the Medium-Term Financial Plan

As set out in the RTSA2003, BTPA is required to defray the expenses of the Force. This is done by BTPA entering into Police Service Agreements (PSA) with rail operators (both freight and passenger), infrastructure managers and some light rail and tram operators, and then using a cost allocation model to determine their charge. This supports the continued application of the user pays principle. In December each year, BTP submits their Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to the Authority for review and approval. This then sets the expenditure budget for both BTP and BTPA for the following year, and it is this amount which is defrayed using the model. Alongside the core PSA income, BTPA also receives income from grants from public bodies, Enhanced Police Service Agreements (EPSA) where additional policing services are requested, and other income generation activities.

Governance: The British Transport Police Authority and its Committees

Aside from the RTSA2003, the BTPA further articulates its governance and scheme of delegations through the [BTPA Code of Governance \(December 2024\)](#). The Code sets out in detail how the BTPA should operate its managerial and financial framework, alongside the terms of references of its various Committees, and working protocols with BTP. Members are appointed to Committees by the BTPA Chair, and in anticipation of you being allocated to Committees, during the course of your onboarding you are first invited to observe a meeting of each of the Committees to get a sense of

their business and help determine whether you have an ambition to serve on a particular Committee. [The schedule of formal BTPA meetings is available online here.](#)

Full Authority

The Full Authority is the term used to describe, in effect, the board of the BTPA and is the main decision-making body. The Full Authority meets formally four times per year, and on a further two occasions for informal board development sessions. Whereas the Full Authority delegates aspects of oversight of the Force to its Committees, it remains the primary decision-making forum for the BTPA and will, for example, approve the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in December each year, and the BTPA Annual Report and Accounts in June each year. [Its terms of reference are available online here.](#)

Appointments, Remuneration and Appraisal Committee

The Appointments Committee is primarily concerned with considering and agreeing the annual pay award made to police officers and police staff. It does this in consultation with the People and Culture Committee. The annual pay award is based on the [Police Remuneration Review Body's](#) (PRRB) recommendations to Home Office forces, and BTPA has chosen to follow precedent (since 1979) of following the PRRB's recommendations. The Appointments Committee's other primary role is to make appointments to the Force's Chief Officer Group - police officers of the rank of Assistant Chief Constable and above, and police staff of the role of Director and above for both permanent appointments and temporary ones expected to last more than six months. [The Committee's terms of reference are available online here.](#)

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The Audit Committee oversees and scrutinises BTPA's and BTP's approach to risk management, compliance, counter-fraud and internal audit. The Committee also appoints, annually, the Comptroller & Auditor General as the BTPA's external auditor. This in effect makes the National Audit Office (NAO) the BTPA's external auditor, albeit NAO in turn delegates much of the external audit to a private partner, which at the time of writing in October 2025 is KPMG. [The Committee's terms of reference are available online here.](#)

Finance, Legitimacy and Performance Committee

The Finance Committee is responsible for monitoring BTP's financial performance against its budget, performance against its policing plan, and the extent to which BTP uses its policing powers legitimately and proportionately. [The Committee's terms of reference are available online here.](#)

People and Culture Committee

The People Committee scrutinises the Force's approaches to people and culture. In practice, this equates to an annual workplan encompassing People Performance data dashboards, oversight of the Force's People Strategy (at the time of writing, due for a refresh for 2026 to align with the overarching Strategic Plan), Wellbeing, Health and Safety, the Force's All People Survey, scrutinising draft BTP/A Regulations, pensions, and business cases relating to police training. [The Committee's terms of reference are available online here.](#)

The People Committee also serves as the parent committee of the BTPA Group Personal Pension Plan (GPPP) Committee. This sits outside of the BTPA's formal governance structure but nevertheless provides feedback regarding the direct contribution (DC) pension scheme that all new BTP staff join when they commence their role with BTP. The GPPP Committee is formed of representatives from

the BTPA Executive, BTP, the Transports Salaried Staffs' Association and nominated members of the pension scheme.

Scottish Railways Policing Committee

The Scottish Railways Policing Committee was established in 2019 in response to the Scotland Act 2016, which gave the Scottish Parliament powers over the policing of the railways in Scotland. In theory, this will see BTP in Scotland amalgamated into Police Scotland but in practice, this has yet to happen. As a compromise arrangement, and at the direction of the Scottish Justice Secretary, the BTPA and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) drafted and signed a Memorandum of Understanding governing the operation of a Scottish Railways Policing Committee to oversee railways policing in Scotland. Whereas it is a BTPA Committee, two SPA Members are among its membership. [The Committee's terms of reference are available online here.](#)

Strategy and Planning Committee

The Strategy Committee scrutinises the drafts of the Strategic Plan, Policing Plan, and MTFP prior to their submission to the Full Authority for approval. The Committee also reviews Outline Business Cases and Full Business Cases for major programmes, projects and contracts and refers these on for approval by the Full Authority, where appropriate. Moreover, the Committee monitors performance against the Strategic Plan (leaving the Finance Committee, above, free to focus on monitoring policing plan performance). [The Committee's terms of reference are available online here.](#)

Complaints Review Panel

The Complaints Review Panel is not a BTPA Committee, but rather the independent body established by the BTPA to re-examine the outcome of a police complaint to determine if BTP's handling of the complaint was reasonable and proportionate. If the Panel upholds a complaint, it can make recommendations to the BTP to improve its service. The Panel is drawn from a pool of nominated BTPA Members, and staff from the BTPA Executive.

Decisions in Correspondence

Where the need for a decision arises in between scheduled Full Authority/Committee meetings, the BTPA Code of Governance allows Members to take a decision in correspondence. In practice, Members are provided a paper detailing the proposals and recommended decision via their board portal software and provided five working days to pose questions / seek feedback and, ultimately, come to a decision.

The British Transport Police

Structure of British Transport Police

BTP is formed primarily into Divisions, each led by a Chief Superintendent.

- A Division - HQ and specialised functions
- B Division - London and Southeast England
- C Division - England and Wales
- D Division - Scotland

BTP Chief Officer Group

The Force is led by the Chief Constable, Lucy D'Orsi, alongside a chief officer group (COG) comprising the Deputy Chief Constable Stuart Cundy, Assistant Chief Constable Sean O'Callaghan (Specialist

Capabilities), Assistant Chief Constable Charlie Doyle (Public Contact, Specialist Investigations & Criminal Justice), Assistant Chief Constable Ian Drummond-Smith (Network Policing), Director of People and Culture Vanita Patel¹ and Director of Corporate Development Steff Sharp.

History of the BTP and the BTPA

The first mention of railway police dates to the Stockton & Darlington Railway Company in 1825. This early definition of railway police encompassed both the maintenance of law and order, but also the safe movement of trains – echoed today by BTPs role in liaising with rail industry partners to mitigate disruption. Following the amalgamation of railway services into the Big Four² in the early 1920s, each of those railway companies established their own police forces, often responsible not just for the railways but associated docks. The Big Four were in turn nationalised into British Railways in 1948, subject first to the Railway Executive of the British Transport Commission (BTC) and then the British Railways Board (BRB). It is the BTC that the BTP can attribute its name to. Even under BRB auspices, BTP remained responsible for wider transport policing, including waterways, docks, British Transport hotels, and London Transport. Over the years each of these roles have fallen away to make BTP the specialist force for the railways.

Whereas BTPA came into being on 1 July 2004, it is the latest iteration of oversight of railways policing dating back to 1939, when a consultative committee was established to advise the Railways Executive Committee for the duration of World War 2. Substantive dedicated oversight was established by the British Transport Commission in 1957 when it established the British Transport Police Committee to oversee British Transport Police. The BTP Committee was handed over to the British Railways Board in 1963 and continued to oversee the Force, albeit in an increasingly diminished capacity, during privatisation of the railways in the 1990s up until its final meeting immediately prior to the first meeting of the BTPA on 1 July 2004.

The Role of BTPA Member

As noted above, the Full Authority is composed of between 11-17 Members appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport. BTPA Members are not Non-Executive Directors (NEDs), albeit they are, much like a NED, called upon to offer critical challenge and insight on matters put to them by BTP and the BTPA Executive. Where they differ is the fact that BTPA Members are also called upon to take executive decisions governing strategic finance, senior appointments, and strategic planning.

BTPA Members are expected to hold themselves to the standards set out in the [Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies \(November 2019\)](#) and the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), both their conduct in person and in their use of social media. BTPA Members are entitled to hold their own political views, and those personal political views do not need to be aligned with the views of the government. However, as a public office holder BTPA Members are held to a high standard and they should always be conscious of their general public responsibilities and exercise proper discretion.

The BTPA Chair is contracted to provide 60 days towards the BTPA each year, the Deputy Chair 50 days, and BTPA Members, 30 days. BTPA Members are expected to attend scheduled meetings of the Full Authority and its Committees, as well as make themselves available for board development and training, and to undertake engagement opportunities on an individual basis with BTP and wider stakeholders, in consultation with the BTPA Executive. BTPA Members are politely requested to

¹ [REDACTED]

² London and North Eastern Railway, Great Western Railway, Southern Railway, and the London, Midland & Scotland Railway.

notify the BTPA Executive when they are expected to be on leave and/or unavailable to consider BTPA business.

Use of Board Intelligence

The primary source of information for BTPA Members is the BTPA's chosen board portal provider *Board Intelligence*. It is on this secure board portal that Full Authority and Committee papers are published, alongside wider briefings and reference material. Guidance on how to use *Board Intelligence* will be provided as part of your onboarding programme.

Use of BTP Information Technology

Whereas *Board Intelligence* can be used on a personal device, BTPA Members are also issued a BTP email address, laptop and/or phone. This BTP IT allows Members to access the Force's intranet and internal communications ('Tracks') and PowerBI (not to be confused with *Board Intelligence*) data dashboards.

Training

As noted above, the BTPA undertakes two board development sessions each year, typically in January and May. Members of the Audit Committee also undertake short training sessions immediately prior to each quarterly meeting of that Committee. During the course of their appointments to the BTPA, BTPA Members should keep under review their training requirements and advise the BTPA Executive of any training needs.

Member Oversight and Engagement

As noted above, Members are expected to fulfil part of their 30-day annual commitment through undertaking engagement and oversight activities in between meetings of the Full Authority and its Committees. The BTPA Chair is clear that Members are welcome to visit any area or activity of the Force, although BTPA Executive recommend Member oversight or engagement is,

- Arranged in consultation with the BTPA Member Engagement Manager
- Aligned with the forthcoming BTPA Member Oversight and Engagement Framework

Engagement with external stakeholders is undertaken in the first instance by the Chair and Deputy Chair. Any Member engagement with external stakeholders should be undertaken in consultation with the Chair, Deputy Chair and BTPA Executive.

Expenses

As well as the remuneration for their time, BTPA Members may also claim reasonable expenses incurred during their BTPA duties in line with the BTPA Expenses Policy. BTPA Members should ensure they read and understand the [BTPA Expenses Policy](#) before incurring any expense.

If booking any travel and accommodation, BTPA Members should in the first instance use BTP's Travel Portal, CTM North. Support and guidance on how to access this portal will be made available to BTPA Members as part of the onboarding and ongoing support provided by the BTPA Executive.

Appraisal

The BTPA Chair will meet with each BTPA Member at least once a year to conduct an annual appraisal. This will be an opportunity for both parties to discuss their roles on the BTPA, their

ambitions, and how best their contribution can enhance the decision-making and oversight exercised by the BTPA as well as identify development opportunities.

Recommended Reading

[BTP Strategic Plan 2022/27](#)

[BTP Policing Plan 2025/27](#)

[BTPA Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25](#)

[BTPA Code of Governance](#)

[BTP/A Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy](#)

Useful Links

[Police Visual Handbook: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms](#)

[BTPA Website](#)

[BTP Website](#)

[Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003](#)

[Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Website](#)

[College of Policing Website](#)

[National Police Chiefs' Council Website](#)

Key Contacts – BTPA Executive

Role	Name	Contact
BTPA Chief Executive	Hugh Ind	
Head of Chief Executive's Office	Fiona Mackie	
BTPA Chief Financial Officer	Sarah Church	
Contracts and Compliance Manager	Vicky Tanner	
Risk and Assurance Manager	Lynsey Luthra	
Head of Governance and People	Susan Kohler	
Member Engagement Manager	Raquel Cortes	
Board & Governance Secretary	Alistair MacLellan	
Head of Legitimacy and Performance	Kate Carr	
BTPA Analyst	Jon Newton	
Professionalism and Complaints Manager	David Browning	