



Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	21 March 2024
Location	COSLA, Edinburgh
Title of Paper	SPA Chief Executive's Report
Presented By	Lynn Brown, Chief Executive
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes Appendix A - Summary report from the Scottish Railway Policing Committee - Tuesday 5 March 2024

PURPOSE

To update Members on activities carried out by the Authority's Chief Executive since the February 2024 Authority meeting.

Members are recommended to consider this report and to raise any matters for clarification or further detail with the Chief Executive.

1. Background

- 1.1. This report provides Members with an update on key Authority business not already covered elsewhere on the agenda.

2. Annual Delivery Plan 2024-25

- 2.1 Members approved the Scottish Police Authority [Corporate Strategy 2023-26](#) at the Authority meeting in March 2023. The strategy is underpinned by a three-year implementation plan, detailing the activities we have identified to support delivery of our strategic outcomes as an organisation.
- 2.2 As reported in March 2023, as part of our corporate approach we put in place an annual delivery plan containing key milestones and actions. This informs reporting of progress towards delivery of the Corporate Strategy through the Authority's Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee on a quarterly basis, and the annual assessment of the Authority's own performance which is included in the Annual Report and Accounts.
- 2.3 The annual delivery plan for 2024-25 is now in place, developed in consultation with the Authority's Corporate team. This plan reflects a focus on key priority areas and commitments and progress will be reported regularly to the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee.

3. Mental Health Distress and Policing

- 3.1 I updated members in my February report on work underway in relation to mental health, vulnerability and policing. Since my last update, two partnership workshops have taken place in NHS Highland and NHS Forth Valley with the final session, in NHS Lanarkshire, taking place in April. These multi agency workshops aim to identify examples of practice which are reflective of local needs and arrangements, areas of improvement and opportunities for collaboration. The output from all three sessions will inform a final report to be considered by Authority's Policing Performance Committee in June 2024.
- 3.2 The Mental Health Distress and Policing Partnership Delivery Group ensures alignment and coordination of the range of partnership activity underway in this area and ensures that further opportunities for collaboration are identified and progressed, such as the ideas being generated through the Police Scotland led unscheduled care mental health design workshops.

4. Scottish Railways Policing Committee

- 4.1 A meeting of the Scottish Railway Policing Committee (SRPC) took place on Tuesday 5 March 2024 in the Authority's Glasgow office. Tom Halpin and Mary Pitcaithly were in attendance and represent the Authority on this committee.
- 4.2 A report summarising the key issues covered at this meeting is included at appendix A. Further detail can be found on the [British Transport Police Authority](#) website. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Tuesday 4 June 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.

Summary report from the Scottish Railway Policing Committee

Tuesday 5 March 2024

SPA Members – Tom Halpin and Mary Pitcaithly

Strategic Risks

The Committee was presented with a revised strategic risk update presenting Scotland-specific narrative on each of the BTP/A Strategic Risks. Members welcomed this enhancement of the risk report, noting that it addressed previous requests for a Scottish focus and would improve the scrutiny of risk at future meetings.

The risk scores have currently been carried over from the BTP/A risk register, reflecting the overall position, however it was agreed that both target and actual scores would be reviewed in a Scottish context and updated where appropriate. Specifically the partnership risk may have a lower score in Scotland due to the positive partnership working with Police Scotland that is reported to Committee each quarter. It was also agreed that deep dive sessions on specific risks would be helpful, with the first one to focus on major incidents.

Members requested that further revision of the report take place to provide some detail of UK-wide mitigations that are relevant to Scotland, and to capture actions being taken to improve mitigation. This will be presented at the June 2024 committee meeting.

Policing Plan Performance Q3 2023/24

The Q3 performance report noted an increase in passenger footfall and less industrial action, marking the first example of a post-COVID 'new normal' for the railway. Members noted that while there had been an increase in crime during the quarter, the increase in footfall and additional services over the festive period meant that there had been a decrease in crimes when looked at as a ratio per million passenger journeys.

Members noted that there had been an 11% increase in violence against passengers when compared to the previous year, but commended the positive performance in relation to solve rates, with 60% recorded in relation to violence and 100% for weapon-enabled violence. Physical

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violence towards rail staff had increased by 10% overall, however only one incident in Q3 had involved even minor injury. It was noted that best practice from BTP divisions elsewhere in the UK had been identified and was being used to tackle these areas.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) fell by 15% in Q3 when compared to the previous quarter, and the report highlighted local good practice in Inverclyde where the multi-agency Community Hub regularly meets to review local crime and safeguarding concerns, and to create joint deployment plans around local risk.

Reports of sexual offences are 60% higher than last year, however the solve rate has also increased to 68%. The report outlined a variety of activities underway to encourage use of the Guardian App, including guidance on how to be an active bystander. This has contributed to the increase in the number of recorded offences.

Mental health demand remained high with 282 hours of BTP resource time spent on mental health detentions in Q3, which aligns with the high levels of demand being reported by Police Scotland and links to the work underway around mental health and policing. A separate item on the BTP response to mental health was included on the agenda and is detailed below.

Members noted that disruption incidents and minutes were both showing increases when compared to the previous year, with trespass remaining the single largest contributor to delay minutes. Increased and improved use of CCTV and introducing more barriered stations were identified as potential means for combatting this disruption, as well as the potential deployment of drones. It was noted that the use of drones in D Division may support swifter resolution of disruption incidents. BTP are currently appraising options for the introduction of drones within D Division and are giving early consideration as to whether in the future drones could be operated 'beyond visual line of sight' within railway policing. BTP advised that they are working closely with Police Scotland who have an existing code of practice in place for the use of drones. The committee will be updated as plans progress.

It was also noted that BTP employ an economist to analyse the economic and social impact of their disruption and prevention work. Members requested that Scotland-specific information from this analysis be included in a future performance report.

Joint working Police Scotland / BTP

Members noted the ongoing joint working relationship between BTP and Police Scotland, as well as collaboration with other emergency services including Scottish Fire and Rescue and the Scottish Ambulance Service.

The Railway Children charity, now active in Scotland, was noted as a positive example, with BTP working alongside Local Community Officers in city centre railway stations to promote their safeguarding work on vulnerable children who often use the rail network. Another positive example highlighted related to the West Lothian Community Policing Team and Special Constables from BTP carrying out evening foot patrols in Linlithgow in December 2023. This involved engaging with local residents and youths, and carrying out licensed premises visits, contributing to the ongoing reduction of ASB in the area.

Responding to Mental Health Thematic

DCI Arlene Wilson provided a presentation on the BTP Mental Health Crisis to Care approach and Harm Reduction Team (HaRT). It was noted that BTP are the suicide prevention lead for NPCC, and that their work was included as an example of best practice in the HMICS review of mental health.

Members commended the HaRT on their work supporting vulnerable people, as well as recognising the importance in relation to protecting police officers, train drivers and other staff working on the railways, and how this contributes to minimising disruption for passengers.

The Authority's Head of Strategy and Performance provided an update on work underway with Police Scotland, Scottish Government, the NHS and third sector around distress demand and the role of policing in relation to mental health. A Partnership Delivery Group has been formed, and it was agreed that BTP would be invited to join. It was also noted that DCI Wilson had already been involved in the Authority's Mental Health, Vulnerability and Policing Conference held in December 2022.

Industry Voice

Innis Keith from Network Rail presented to Committee on their Reducing Crime Framework, explaining that this focuses on three main elements of suicide vulnerability, trespass, and anti-social behaviour.

The crossover between Network Rail's framework and key discussions at SRPC were recognised by Members, who noted the value of having the industry voice heard as part of the quarterly meetings. Members welcomed the suggestion from Mr Keith that there would be benefit in linking strategies and agreeing a common language and target setting across the industry and policing, particularly in relation to trespass and disruption improvement.

Audit and Inspection Update Q3 2023/24

BTP is currently tracking 27 open recommendations from force-wide Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) audits and 66 from HMICFRS inspections. This is a marked improvement from the report presented at the previous Committee meeting, with 80 actions having been successfully closed in the last quarter.

Members noted that in D Division (Scotland) all property stores have achieved 100% compliance in property store audits throughout 2023-24, indicating that the stores are well managed with good intrusive management oversight. In relation to Crime and Incident Audits, it was noted that compliance ratings for BTP Scotland were 100% in all but one of the areas audited. The exception related to two recording errors relating to ASB (Personal) incidents. This level of compliance performance remains higher than across BTP as a whole, with D Division identified as a top performer.