

## Justice Committee

### Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill

#### Written submission from Robert Docherty

Firstly if I may, would like thank you for giving us the opportunity to have our say in the proposed merger with BTP (Scotland) with Police Scotland.

The British Transport Police (BTP) have for over 100 years successfully Policed the rail network year in year out with the full support of the travelling public and Train Operating Companies.

BTP continue to meet Objectives and targets on a regularly basis due to the policing style they have been doing for many a year, Hence no one has come up with a better way to Police the rail network, so they must be doing something right.

It has been reported that Police Scotland will have a £220million funding deficit in only a few years' time, so why does the Scottish Government (SG) feel that merging BTP (D Division) with Police Scotland makes sense, both finically and Policing?

BTP Senior management, Police officers, BTP Federation, Train Operating Companies, members of the public and other Professional Organisations have all given their views in recent months, and are all totally against the merger.

BTP have put various proposals forward (even suggested to change their name I believe!) but the Scottish Government have dismissed them all!

It seems that the Scottish Government are not prepared to listen to other views or proposals on this matter, you just have to look at the recent Consultation paper that was published!, with no feedback as yet from SG.

#### **If it ain't broke why fix it?**

*The impact, if any, which the devolution of railway policing will have in terms of retaining specialist skills and knowledge built up by British Transport Police officers.*

The skills that BTP officers have gained over the years, the local knowledge of depots, railway stations, Hotspots, the criminals using the network and community engagement will all disappear, allowing Police Scotland to utilise these officers in other areas other than the rail network, due to shortage of officers of their own.

The response times to these locations etc would dramatically change for the worse.

*The impact, if any, on ensuring consistency in delivering passenger safety and maintaining confidence within railway policing.*

The public who regularly use the network, do so with the knowledge and reassurance that BTP officers are always patrolling the stations for their safety, 24/7.

I'm not sure this would continue if the merger happened.

Allowing not only the travelling public to notice no police within the stations 24/7, but criminals would quickly realise this too.

With possible crime going up and passenger confidence going down.

Robert Docherty  
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