

## Justice Committee

### Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill

#### Written submission from Matt Rodgers

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

At this time BTP have a specialist metal and cable theft investigation team (both uniform and CID) working full time in attempt to combat theft from the national railway infrastructure. This is further supplemented by a railway improvements project team and a full time team of officers whose remit is to educate and enforce law / new policy etc. throughout all scrap metal dealers in Scotland. All specialism's have provided an invaluable insight into metal theft/reset, the workings of scrap metal yards and the various criminal elements( both lower scale and organised crime groups) who are involved in the theft of metal/cable and the subsequent lengthy delays and disruptions heaped upon rail passengers throughout Scotland and the North of England.

Police Scotland have no such dedicated teams and their officers have no great understanding of either the workings of scrap metal yards or the railway infrastructure. It is my understanding that Police Scotland have no desire to retain the skills or services of any such valuable resources.

Scottish BTP public order trained officers (PSU) have participated in numerous events throughout the country for many years: Bradford race riots, G8, England football matches, numerous protest marches, demonstrations, several arms trade fairs at the Xcel centre in London Docklands, nuclear train movements, European football matches throughout the country, student protests in Central London etc. many of which have been level 1 deployments (wearing NATO style helmets, visors down, carrying shields, batons drawn etc.)

BTP training however, is conducted by the Metropolitan Police (Met) and tactics are compatible only with The Met and home county forces. Therefore it would not be possible to deploy Scottish PSU officers alongside their Police Scotland counterparts, thus their skills would be lost.

In conjunction with standard PSU training, Scottish BTP officers are further trained in additional PSU specialisms, such as evidence gathering, medics, PSU drivers. These training packages are delivered as per College of Policing guidelines, the training not being compatible with Police Scotland. This being further evidence that valuable skills would not be retained by Police Scotland.

A most unique skill some BTP officers possess is that as specialist body recovery officers (SBRO). This specialism has officers trained, in the correct circumstances and when authorised by officer of the rank of ACPO) to use whatever means necessary to remove a deceased person who may be entangled in a train following an accident or suicide. To this end trained officers have been issued with specialist

surgical equipment and require ongoing training and support from BTP specialist operations in London; I fear this will undoubtedly become another lost skill.

BTP Scotland have a large number of officers who are trained and in licence search trained officers (PST) and search team leader (STLS). As with PSU, their duties as such have involved searches throughout many parts of Scotland, England and Wales and with numerous ventures into central London. As Police Scotland have numerous PST officers, added to the fact it costs time, effort and money to keep PST officers in licence, it has been suggested that BTP officers will not be permitted to continue in their PST role when their current licence expires.

BTP also have their own federation representatives in Scotland. It has been confirmed by Police Scotland Federation that these roles will become redundant. The skills which will be lost as a result include officers:

- Trained in discipline matters
- Trained in welfare matters
- Trained in health and safety matters
- Trained and authorised to investigate and compile reports on all accidents/incidents involving injury/miss near to officers on duty
- PIP trained - trained by the Police Firearms Officers Association to act as a fed rep during post incident procedure, when death or serious injury occurs following police contact.

***The impact, if any, which the devolution of railway policing will have in terms of cross-border security arrangements:***

The current cross border arrangements allow for effective operational management of day to day policing. I would refer the SG to the information previously provided by the BTP Federation, when they stated that" *21 million journeys are made between Scotland and England each year and BTP's cross-border functionality allows all movements between the two nations to be policed in a manner that is unconstrained by the geographic boundaries or legal frameworks that the railway cuts across*"

As a matter of course Scottish based officers police late night trains between Carlisle and Dumfries, trains on the east coast between Edinburgh and Newcastle and provide prisoner escorts on train between Scotland and England, all seamlessly and with ease: the Airwave/communications network and control room command structure is in place and has been proven time and again to work effectively.

In November 2016 BTP officers escorted Scotland football supporters from Glasgow and Edinburgh through to central London and then onto Wembley for the World Cup Qualifiers: this task will be repeated in reverse in June 2017 for the return fixture, something which will not be possible should BTP be subsumed into Police Scotland.

***The implications, if any, for BTP officers who are currently contracted officers when they are transferred to Crown Servant status including any implications with regards to terms and conditions and pensions:***

The fact that different legal experts cannot decide upon how BTP officers & staff will be transferred is worrying.

The Scottish Government had advised that it was their intention, as far as was reasonably practicable, that any officer/member of staff being transferred across to Police Scotland would not be financially penalised. To this end, the SG are working with a document which lays out BTP's terms and conditions, in order this can be compared with that of Police Scotland officers. The problem with this however, is that the document has not been ratified, has not been laid before the executive board of the BTP Federation and some BTP terms and conditions are currently in dispute. Therefore the working document is flawed from the outset.

Various pensions experts have been tasked with providing opinion with regards to pensions transfer etc. but to date no solid advice has been forthcoming.

BTP Officers, as with Police Scotland officers, pay into several different pension schemes. There are a number of BTP officers still on the 30 year pension scheme, this option now closed to new entrants and transferees to Police Scotland. If these officers were therefore to be forced onto any new entrant/current pension scheme with Police Scotland there would obviously be a huge financial implication involved, this being in total contradiction of what the SG have stated in all published information.

Matt Rodgers  
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