

Justice Committee

Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill

Written submission from Rob Clark

I am responding to a request via BBC Scotland on opinions of members of the public On the proposed merger of British Transport Police with Police Scotland.

I am also an ex-police officer myself and have some knowledge of the workings of the B.T.P and have in the past worked closely with officers from that service.

On this date in 1988, I was, along with many others from around Scotland including B.T.P. officers Deployed to the town of Lockerbie, I was there around 9pm that evening and remained there for days, gathering evidence and the remains of the passengers and crew. It remains with me to this day.

Years later I was also involved in the Terrorist attack at Glasgow airport where I was responsible for Sifting through all the messages received by police on the incident.

I've witnessed first-hand the effects of terrorism on our transport systems and the chaos that ensued including the police.

I have serious doubts that an all-encompassing Police Scotland would be able to respond in the way that B.T.P [Who are dedicated to the vital rail and transport hubs not only of Scotland but in the U.K.] are capable of.

My problem is the lack of confidence in the way Police Scotland is currently operating and performing and I refer to recent events where Calls made to Police Contact centres seem to have gone unheeded e.g. death of couple on M9.

The advantages of having the B.T.P are that they are a national force with resources that can be deployed from South of the Border, working independently from Police Scotland , they are less likely to be deployed elsewhere as happens currently from what I hear. The danger is that side of Policing disappears from Scotland along with budget and resources and I think it would be less likely to see any officers at all.

Although I read and hear that they are extra officers on our streets and extra patrols – I don't see them and often wonder where are they?

Rob Clark
Ex Detective Sergeant
Strathclyde Police
22 December 2016