

Justice Committee

Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill

Written submission from Clive Meredith

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed changes to British Transport Police.

In the first instance the case for change has not been satisfactorily explained to MSP's or explained sufficiently to the general public. Furthermore, BT Police all have expertise and skills in their particular area (transport, trespass, Network Rail, and station/building security) and this will be either lost or severely diluted if the two forces merge.

Secondly, any proposed savings may not actually materialise. When Police Scotland was formed, changes in budgets had a profound negative impact on operational and strategic decision making.

Thirdly, the BT Police are seen as distinct and separate from Police Scotland by the travelling public. They have more confidence in the BT police at stations than the Scottish Police.

Finally, I suspect this proposed change is being driven more by political ideology (centralisation/rationalisation) rather than practical concerns. The SNP government is a minority government, and I suspect that this matter is NOT high on people's political agenda! Food banks, child poverty, the economy and job opportunities ARE high on people's lists. So is this just another way of detracting people's attention away from SNP failures?

I trust these comments will not be ignored, like so much of public opinion these days.

Clive Meredith
4 January 2017