

27th March 2017

The Convener  
Justice Committee  
Room T2.60  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP



Chief Constable  
Philip Gormley QPM

**ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE**  
**Bernard Higgins**  
Police Scotland Headquarters  
Tulliallan Castle  
Kincardine  
FK10 4BE

Dear Convener

### **Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill – Request for Follow-up Information**

I refer to your letter dated 17 March 2017 in relation to the evidence session of the Justice Committee on 7 March 2017 regarding the Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill and the nature and type of training that Police Scotland is planning to provide to officers to allow them to operate in the railway environment. By way of a more detailed explanation of the matters discussed, I would offer the following comment.

#### **Initial Training**

British Transport Police (BTP) students attend at Scottish Police College (SPC), where they undertake the same eleven-week training course as Police Scotland students. They are required to complete all mandatory fitness and educational examinations during this time.

Police Scotland students then attend a one-week post-initial course, whereas BTP students attend a three-week post-initial course, during which they are given inputs on a number of rail-specific subjects, including personal track safety and railway legislation, as well as being exposed to rail industry stakeholders and partners.

Once Police Scotland and BTP Officers have finished their initial training, they are posted to their respective divisions to complete their operational training under the guidance of a Tutor Constable. During the two-year probationary period, both Police Scotland and BTP officers are required to attend modular training for mandatory testing, prior to being confirmed in the rank of Constable.

Therefore, currently, the only differential in probationer training relates to the additional two weeks at post-basic stage, where BTP officers focus on the rail-specific subjects outlined above.

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### **Police Scotland – Proposed Model (New Recruits)**

The training curriculum for new recruits at SPC is currently under review to ensure it remains flexible and relevant to meet current and future requirements.

In many ways, the timing of the proposed integration of BTP in Scotland into Police Scotland provides an opportunity to weave railway legislation, personal track safety and other associated elements into the curriculum for probationer training. This will allow every officer joining Police Scotland to operate safely in the railway environment.

It is therefore my intention to realign the curriculum and introduce additional training for all officers at a suitable date to coincide with the proposed integration. This will ensure that all officers have an understanding of the requirements of working on the railways, including legislative inputs, policing powers, safe systems of working, line disruption and track safety.

The finer detail of what this looks like will however require an in-depth Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to assess the continued relevance of the training currently received by BTP and to understand the logistics and delivery methods we need to consider at the point of integration. Full engagement with BTP and the rail industry will be undertaken to ensure that service delivery and safety standards are maintained and the needs of the rail industry are met.

### **Police Scotland – Proposed Model (Existing Police Scotland Officers)**

In terms of existing officers in Police Scotland, I propose to ensure that prior to 1 April 2019, all serving officers up to and including the rank of Inspector, who may be first responders to an incident on the railways, are 'upskilled' and provided with training relating to railways. The TNA will identify the most appropriate method of delivery, however online delivery has been a successful approach applied to many disciplines within Police Scotland over the years and may be the most appropriate method on this occasion. This will cover railway legislation and additional rail safety advice to complement the guidance currently provided within our Standard Operating Procedures. Chief Inspector's and above will also be provided with awareness training.

For many of the more rural areas where Police Scotland are often the first responders to an incident, this approach will provide an enhanced service to the one currently provided to the rail industry.

### **Ongoing/Refresher Training – Proposed Model (Transport Policing Specialism)**

As with all specialisms, there is an element of ongoing or refresher training that has to be built into the curriculum to ensure the specialism remains relevant and 'in-card'. Where ongoing/refresher trainings can be delivered through existing courses within the Police Scotland programme, it will be. For instance, prior to 1 April 2019, the Officer Safety Course (OST), and annual refresher training, will have an element of railway safety incorporated. Where alternative options have to be considered which mirror the current BTP set up, then again through the TNA mechanism, we will consult widely with BTP and the rail industry to assess the best means of delivery and content.

As officers move into Transport Policing, the proposal is to ensure the appropriate level of training is provided by means of augmenting the initial training outlined above. This will incorporate additional elements from the existing BTP training programme as well as anything further identified in the TNA.

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By way of comparison, Police Scotland Officers currently receive various practical and legislative inputs on Road Policing matters at the SPC during their probationary training, which allows them to deal with routine policing matters on Scotland's road network. They do not however undertake the five-week advanced driving courses, pursuit management training, vehicle examination or inputs on fatal/serious RTC investigation. These courses and many others specific to road policing, are only undertaken as they move permanently into that specialism. This model is replicated across all other Police Scotland specialisms, ensuring that every officer will have an understanding at a basic level and when officers transfer to their specialism, they will receive the necessary additional training to allow them to operate effectively in their discipline. This approach, which has worked successfully in the past in a number of areas, will be adopted for Transport Policing. Again, the TNA itself will involve dialogue with BTP and the rail industry from the outset to determine the content and logistics of the training programme.

It has been highlighted that there may be associated training costs relating to the introduction of the new legislation, however I can provide reassurance that Police Scotland is well versed in rolling out training when new legislation or changes to processes are introduced. The Victims and Witnesses Act, Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act and Air Weapons and Licensing Act are recent examples of this being achieved. To a degree, the roll out of the railway legislation and working practices will be business as usual for Police Scotland, with additional training being absorbed into existing structures and forums. However, should additional costs be incurred, which as stated we hope to avoid, then we would reserve the right to re-visit this.

In conclusion, it is my intention to ensure that the Transport Policing specialism is retained and that officers who operate within that specialism continue to receive the quality of training that is currently provided. With the assistance of our rail and BTP colleagues I am confident that we can deliver a programme which will be sustainable, relevant and provide an enhanced service to the rail industry as well as meeting the needs of our local communities

I trust this is of assistance, however should you require any further information please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Higgins  
Assistant Chief Constable  
Operations & Justice