In answer to the consultation and as follows.

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

The BTP officers are all trained in track safety which means all Police Scotland officers will have to be trained. The cost implications will be high to guarantee success. The protocols concerning dealing with disruption of the railway services which include fatalities are highly critical to ensuring that service disruption is kept to a minimum. They are very time orientated and train operating companies are highly critical of failures as the impacts can be huge financially and cause disruption throughout the whole of the UK. This makes the responsibility at a National level throughout the UK not just Scotland.

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

It is my understanding that the Scottish government is not allowing BTP officers travelling on trains after the merger to have full Police powers. The BTP have stated if that is the case they will not allow their officers to travel over the border. This has a huge impact on the prevention of terrorism and crime. This is a huge mistake by the Scottish government and they will be solely responsible if an incident happened causing loss of life.

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

As above the implications are immense the continuity of safety will be at risk from terrorist and criminal groups. Police Scotland are not coping due to financial restraints civilian staff posts have been cut meaning Police officers are now covering the posts. This means fewer officers are now frontline again this will affect the response to incidents on the railway meaning confidence levels will plummet.

The possibility that officers tasked with railway policing in Scotland may be abstracted from their core rail policing duties in order to support wider operational roles within Police Scotland.

The Policing of the railways will be affected without a doubt because Police Scotland cannot cope with its responsibilities now never mind after a merger. The reduction of their budget has had drastic effects on their efficiency railway assigned officers will be diverted to attend non railway incidents as incident response will be a priority. As above this is inevitable due to the reduction of civilian posts in Police Scotland leaving short falls in front line Policing as mentioned above.
Whether there will be any difficulties in setting up new railway policing agreements with railway operators.

The Policing agreements need to be renegotiated with the train operating companies and this will mean UK national services. These agreements are all made on a National level how will these be arranged with the Scottish government as they have already restricted the movement of cross borders patrols.

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

My concerns and that of colleagues in the BTP are that any TUPE transfer is not appropriate and invalid. The spirit of TUPE again is not relevant as it has no legal standing and requires agreement from officers to be implemented. Officers over fifty years old near retirement will be adversely affected if changes to pensions and pay and conditions are made. As the Scottish government has already stated it would be a TUPE style transfer this has meant morale amongst the officers is rock bottom. Reassurances are required urgently that such officers will not be at a financial disadvantaged.

Derek Elder
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