Skills Retention

All BTP officers are currently in possession of a Personal Track Safety (PTS) Certificate. Any person who wishes to lawfully and safely be present on the railway infrastructure, MUST be in possession of a PTS.

Will every Police Scotland officer be trained in order to receive a PTS? It takes two days training annually to gain this which means 34,000+ training days per year to get Police Scotland up to scratch.

- How much will this cost?
- Where will the funding come from?
- Who will provide the training?
- Where will it take place as there must be an aspect of railway familiarisation?

Holding a PTS is a must. Police Scotland officers who access the railway without this will most certainly put their own as well as other lives in danger.

All BTP officers are well versed in railway specific legislation including Byelaws. Again, all Police Scotland officers will require to be trained in this in order to better equip them to operate in the railway environment.

The BTP officers who currently hold the PTS and are familiar with the railway legislation will end up losing these or having them diluted as they find themselves being taken away from their core duties of railway policing in order to backfill and shore up Police Scotland.

Further, many BTP officers in Scotland have worked hard to achieve and maintain additional skills such as Search, Public Order etc. Will there be guarantees from Police Scotland that officers in possession of these skills be allowed to retain them? This will come at a financial cost in terms of additional training but why should BTP officers be penalised?

Cross Border Security

As it stands, BTP officers regularly carry out cross-border patrols, especially for major events and at times of heightened security. They are able to do this as they are part of a GB-wide force with an appropriate support network, ie national control rooms, national IT systems, the ability to communicate quickly and directly with colleagues in England and the ability to use offices in England.

Should a major incident occur cross-border, officers from Scotland can deploy to England or vice versa, at little or no notice and with minimal impact.
This will not be the case if BTP in Scotland is assimilated into Police Scotland as ultimately there will be arguments about who will be liable to pay for what.

Ultimately the travelling public will be the ones who pay as there will be a noticeable lack of Police officers travelling on trains and those that do will certainly not cross into Scotland.

The worst case scenario would be terrorists boarding trains at Carlisle/Newcastle knowing full well that they would be able to travel directly into busy rail termini whether it be Glasgow or Edinburgh where they could potentially detonate explosives or carry out marauding terrorist threats at busy times of the day, undetected until it is too late.

**Passenger Safety and Confidence**

Passenger Safety will directly suffer as a result of getting rid of BTP.

With the presence of Police officers within mainline stations and those doing dedicated on train patrols, BTP Scotland has ensured that crime on the railway is low and passenger confidence is at a high.

As soon as Police Scotland overtake the policing of the railway, the numbers of railway officers will decline as those who are supposed to be tasked with railway policing and patrols will ultimately find themselves being taken away from their core duties to fill gaps left elsewhere in Police Scotland.

**Relationships with Rail Operators (TOCs)**

BTP over the years, have built up an excellent working relationship with Network Rail and the many TOC’s which operate within Scotland. Many of whom operate cross-border services. The break-up of BTP in Scotland would lead to the break-up of these relationships, with vital contacts being lost between Police and the Railway community.

The TOC’s will see a marked difference in the service that they receive from Police Scotland. For example, if an offence begins at Carlisle and crosses over into Scotland, it could pass through several Police Scotland divisions. Which division will attend the call? Which division will be responsible for the investigation of any offences which have taken place over multiple Police Scotland divisions?

While details like this are hammered out and the buck is passed from one supervisor to another, which is exactly what will happen as no one wants to commit scarce resources to an incident that isn't 'theirs', the victim will suffer.

By retaining the BTP in Scotland, you will ensure that this does not happen and that victims receive the response that they deserve.
Role and Terms & Conditions of BTP officers

The main concern of BTP officers and Rail industry partners is that the BTP officers will be taken away from their core function of policing the Railway infrastructure in order to backfill for Police Scotland divisional officers as they simply do not have sufficient front line operational officers.

Will there be written guarantees that this will not happen? I doubt this and as a result, once again the travelling public will suffer.

BTP officers in Scotland have different pensions and different Terms and Conditions than their Police Scotland colleagues.

Again, will there be written guarantees that these be maintained and if not, why not?

Failure to guarantee this will result in a loss of BTP officers who will leave rather than move across. Once again, this will directly impact on the travelling public as specialist knowledge and skills will be lost.

In summary, policing on the railway WILL suffer as a result of this move.

You only need to look at the number of offices in provincial towns and indeed cities which have either closed or now operate on limited hours, to see how Policing in Scotland is in decline. Do not allow this to happen to railway policing. Members of the public will suffer.

The Chief Constable of BTP has already stated that should the status quo remain, he will be happy to report to the Justice Committee as often as they would like.

A member of the Scottish Police Authority could also sit on the BTP Authority ensuring transparency and fully enabling cooperation between both forces while ensuring that the policing of the railway continues, unhindered.

John Paul O’Kane
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