Introduction to TransPennine Express

TransPennine Express connects the main town and cities of the North into/out of Scotland. It connects Edinburgh, Glasgow, Motherwell and Lockerbie via the West Coast Main Line with direct services to Cumbria, Lancashire, Manchester and Manchester Airport.

During 2017 additional train services will connect Edinburgh/Glasgow with Manchester Airport and stations in between. doing so this gives better connectivity for Lockerbie to/from Edinburgh/Glasgow early in the morning and late in the evening. From 2018 it will connect Glasgow directly to Liverpool via the West Coast Main Line. From 2019 it will connect Edinburgh direct to Liverpool and towns over the Pennines, such as Huddersfield, via the East Coast Main Line.

70% of the customers of TransPennine Express use these train services for leisure purposes. Passenger volumes are high in both directions as Scotland and the North of England use these services to connect with each other for employment, education and leisure.

TransPennine Express views on proposals to integrate BTP in Scotland into Police Scotland

TransPennine Express is supportive of any measures the Scottish Government raise to improve the policing of the railway. In doing so, the advantages of the UK wide policing system for the railways cannot be lost through integration of the BTP into Police Scotland. If integration is to take place, key statements of benefit must be met.

As Anglo-Scottish operator we are concerned over the timely response to incidents just north of the border (for example Lockerbie), the loss of a UK wide consistent approach to major threats (such as terrorism) and the disconnection of the current close working between BTP officers in Scotland and the North of England.

We are also concerned that the implementation of these proposals, and the effect they will have on the current skilled policed force, will have an adverse impact on train services and passengers.

To address these concerns, to achieve greater accountability and integration we would propose:

- The Scottish Government maintain the principle of a distinctive rail role within Police Scotland, recognising the unique skills and duties police officers for the railway have
• A Governance Board made up of representatives from the rail industry (all passenger and freight operators in Scotland), appointed by the Minister for Transport and the Islands, is established to monitor, approve and hold Police Scotland to account on the delivery of services to the railway
• There should be a very clear policing plan for the railway
• Senior police roles should be maintained for the railway to provide a clear line of leadership/accountability
• Train operators should have a specific Police Service Agreement in order to ensure they get the policing services they need, to have transparency and to hold Police Scotland to account
• Key Performance Indicators should be improved during the integration process, for example reducing the time taken to reopen the West Coast Main Line when responding to incidents. Such improvements should then be taken as best practice to influence improvements in the BTP for the North of England as the closest neighbouring force to Police Scotland

In terms of additional benefits, we would propose that the Scottish Government consider the following:

• As a part of any integration assessment, the costs of policing the railway in Scotland and the costs of policing the railway in England and Wales should not rise
• KPIs for policing the railway in Scotland must be improved as a result of the integration in order to provide a better and industry leading response to incidents and crime on the railway in Scotland
• To maintain cooperation, Police Scotland should enter into agreement with the BTP in the North of England. Such an agreement will outline how both forces will work together, how they will delivery greater efficiency in delivery of services and how staff can transfer from one force to the other recognising the cross-border career progression that exists today for BTP officers in Scotland and the North of England

Before integration takes place, we believe that several key statements should be met as follows:

• Integration of the BTP into Police Scotland will not increase costs for train operators in England and Wales
• Integration of the BTP into Police Scotland will improve performance with enhanced KPIs and response times
• Integration of the BTP into Police Scotland will maintain a UK wide approach in tackling issues such as terrorism
• Integration of the BTP into Police Scotland will maintain a clear career path across the UK for officers in railway policing
• Integration of the BTP into Police Scotland will have no adverse impact on the policing of the railway, on rail services in Scotland, England and Wales or on the passengers who use these services

A concern from these proposals is that the knowledge gained from career officers in the BTP is lost over time when fully integrated into Police Scotland. To attract the
best and to retain them there should be a clear career path, including the ability to work in the BTP in England and Wales. A number of the BTP officers who work alongside TransPennine Express today have been based in Scotland and in the North of England during their careers.

We consider that it is possible to achieve the integration and efficiency opportunities through integration into Police Scotland, while maintaining a ring fenced and protected unique rail policing force. An agreement with the BTP in the North of England will ensure the way in which both forces work together are clear with improvements through that close working relationship sought.

The policing of the railway is different to other policing requirements. Without a full understanding of how the railway operates and its structure the risk is that policing priorities are set against the backdrop of conventional policing rather than meeting the distinctive needs of the rail industry.

A commitment to maintaining joint working with the BTP on national issues such as terrorism prevention is essential. On areas of national interest across the UK we need Police Scotland to work alongside other BTP colleagues in the delivery of a consistent UK wide approach in handling issues rather than a specific Scottish response. A commitment to achieving continuous improvement and cost reduction is required. The rail industry cannot be expected to fund a service that does not match its funders in the same cost efficiencies that they are faced with.

The policing of the railway in Scotland should have tougher KPIs, such as clearing the West Coast Main Line after a suicide within 60 minutes rather than 90 minutes. Furthermore, if targets are tougher and efficiencies are made in Scotland, Police Scotland should work with the BTP in the North of England to ensure a consistent approach to develop further operational efficiencies that will benefit cross border passengers.

If changes are required to be made, communication with the officers who provide the service should be timely, open, honest and clear. All efforts should be made to ensure that any changes have no impact on the morale of officers or delivery of services.

The Scottish Government should consider the impact on the attractiveness of railway policing services as a career if pension provision is changed from current provisions for new recruits. An appropriate assessment should be carried out to consider the negative, neutral or positive impact from this.

TransPennine Express
16 March 2017