



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Justice Committee

**Tuesday 7 March 2017**

**Session 5**



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**JUSTICE COMMITTEE**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2017, Session 5**

**CONVENER**

\*Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Mairi Evans (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)

\*Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab)

\*John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green)

\*Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)

\*Ben Macpherson (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD)

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con)

\*Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

\*Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Chief Constable Crowther (British Transport Police)

John Foley (Scottish Police Authority)

Assistant Chief Constable Bernard Higgins (Police Scotland)

Charlotte Vitty (British Transport Police Authority)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Peter McGrath

**LOCATION**

The Mary Fairfax Somerville Room (CR2)



## Scottish Parliament

### Justice Committee

*Tuesday 7 March 2017*

*[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:32]*

### Decision on Taking Business in Private

**The Convener (Margaret Mitchell):** Good morning and welcome to the eighth meeting of the Justice Committee in 2017. We have apologies from Liam McArthur and Oliver Mundell.

Agenda item 1 is a decision on whether to take item 5, which is a discussion on our work programme, in private. Do members agree to take that item in private?

**Members indicated agreement.**

### Justice Sub-Committee on Policing (Report Back)

09:33

**The Convener:** Item 2 is feedback from the convener of the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing on its meeting of 23 February 2017. Following the verbal report from Mary Fee, there will be an opportunity to make brief comments or ask questions. If there are any specific areas of work that members wish the Justice Committee to consider in more detail, that can be discussed under the work programme agenda item at the end of the meeting. I refer members to paper 1 and ask Mary Fee to provide feedback on the meeting.

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** The Justice Sub-Committee on Policing met on 23 February 2017 and took evidence from Her Majesty's chief inspector of constabulary, Derek Penman, on "Independent Assurance Review Police Scotland—Call Handling Update Report". The sub-committee heard about the significant progress that Police Scotland has made since the first report on call handling was published by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary in Scotland towards the end of 2015. The sub-committee plans to return to the issue of call handling at a later date.

I am happy to take any questions.

**The Convener:** Members do not have any questions, so we shall move on to the next item.

## Limitation (Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Bill (Witness Expenses)

09:34

**The Convener:** Item 3 is witness expenses for the Limitation (Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Bill. Do members agree to delegate responsibility to me to arrange for the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body to pay, under rule 12.4.3, the expenses of witnesses who have provided evidence on the bill?

**Members indicated agreement.**

## Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill: Stage 1

09:35

**The Convener:** Item 4 is our first session of evidence taking on the Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill. I refer members to paper 2, which is a note by the clerk, and paper 3, which is a Scottish Parliament information centre briefing.

I welcome today's witnesses, who are Charlotte Vitty, interim chief executive of the British Transport Police Authority; Chief Constable Paul Crowther, British Transport Police in the United Kingdom; Assistant Chief Constable Bernard Higgins, operations and justice, Police Scotland; and John Foley, chief executive of the Scottish Police Authority.

I thank the panellists for their written submissions. We will go straight to questions.

**Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Mr Foley, how important to the Scottish Police Authority is integration of the BTP and Police Scotland?

**John Foley (Scottish Police Authority):** Integration is very important for the SPA. We have engaged and participated with colleagues on it since the outset.

**Douglas Ross:** On the subject of engagement and participation, why did the SPA not respond to the committee's call for evidence?

**John Foley:** The SPA felt that it was more appropriate to give oral evidence to the committee.

**Douglas Ross:** Is it the SPA's standard practice not to submit written evidence prior to giving oral evidence?

**John Foley:** No—there is no standard practice.

**Douglas Ross:** So this would be an exception.

**John Foley:** It is not an exception. The SPA views each—

**Douglas Ross:** Has the SPA ever only given oral evidence in the past?

**John Foley:** The SPA has done that in the past.

**The Convener:** I ask the member to let the witness reply in full.

**Douglas Ross:** I am trying to get replies.

**John Foley:** The SPA views each matter separately. In this case, it took the view that it is participating heavily in the implementation plan, which is governed by the programme board of which the SPA is a participating member. I sit on

that programme board; that is how we govern this matter at the moment.

**Douglas Ross:** ACC Higgins, do you believe that your submission to the call to evidence was fair and impartial?

**Assistant Chief Constable Bernard Higgins (Police Scotland):** Yes.

**Douglas Ross:** Your submission says that the move is "sensible" and that there will be "no detrimental impact". Does that suggest that you already support the plans to integrate the BTP with Police Scotland?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** It is a sensible move. The full submission says that Police Scotland currently looks after the entire transport network in Scotland—the sea ports, the airports and the road network—so it is sensible for it to look after the rail network as well.

**Douglas Ross:** You told the committee on 1 November that you would take no decision prior to Parliament making its view clear. Parliament has not done that. Do you agree that your submission makes it abundantly clear that Police Scotland supports the move without waiting for Parliament to take its decision?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Police Scotland would never be so presumptuous as to take a decision on a matter that is still to go through the parliamentary process. The written submission asked for my view on whether Police Scotland could police the rail network efficiently and effectively; my response reflects that.

**Douglas Ross:** The SPA has suggested—not through written evidence—that any concerns over the integration of the BTP in Scotland and Police Scotland will be offset by the experience of merging eight police forces. Mr Foley, what are the top three issues from that merger that will offset concerns about the possible implications of merging the BTP and Police Scotland?

**John Foley:** The first concerns would relate to people matters, which it is important to address. The British Transport Police Federation has raised concerns about clarity in relation to pensions and terms and conditions. That view is absolutely acceptable, and we support it. One of the workstreams that are governed by the programme board is looking at that issue. We are awaiting clarification from the Scottish Public Pensions Agency, which is due to give an update at a meeting at the end of the month. The logistics are very important, and we need to make sure that we get those right. Also—this is not associated with the merger of the eight forces—we will need to sit down with the railway organisations and form a relationship with them.

**Douglas Ross:** Sorry, but my question was quite specific. I asked you to give some reassurance to the committee, members of the Scottish Parliament and people watching this meeting who have concerns about the merger of the BTP with Police Scotland. You have said that those concerns are valid but that you have had the experience of merging eight police forces and two other bodies into a single police force. However, I am asking for cast-iron examples of how you will offset those concerns based on that experience. You might believe that that merger has been a success, but others believe that it has had failures and is still having failures and difficulties. They therefore have concerns about the integration of Police Scotland with another body.

**John Foley:** We are extremely confident that we will deliver the merger successfully. My view and that of the Scottish Police Authority is that we successfully delivered the merger of the eight forces. I accept your point that other people might have a different view, but that is my view. We have experience of exercises like the proposed merger and I am absolutely confident that we will be able to work with partners, including the Scottish Government, the British Transport Police, the British Transport Police Authority and Transport Scotland, to deliver.

**The Convener:** ACC Higgins, do you want to come in on that?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Yes. Having referred to my written submission, I want to clarify my answer to the question that Mr Ross asked me. The committee asked us to assess the impact that integration would have, and it implied that we had to look into the future and say how Police Scotland would cope with the merger after it had taken place. My answer therefore reflected the question's intent and did not necessarily support a process that has still to go through the parliamentary process.

**Douglas Ross:** It is interesting that your evidence has changed within five minutes, having allowed yourself to—

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** No, I do not think that it has, sir. I do not accept that at all.

**Douglas Ross:** I believe that your first answer was that your written submission—well, we will not go into that.

Before I move on to their British Transport Police colleagues, I would like to hear the response of both ACC Higgins and Mr Foley to what DCC Hanstock said to the Transport Committee in Westminster about merging the BTP into Police Scotland. DCC Hanstock said:

"We have not been able to identify any operational or economic benefits."

Do you agree with that view?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** That is Mr Hanstock's view, and I respect his opinion and I respect him as a professional police officer. However, the reality is that Police Scotland is the second-largest force in the United Kingdom, with some 17,000 officers and assets that are simply not available to the British Transport Police D division. Although at present we will deploy those assets on request, they will be routinely deployed should integration take place. That will lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency and, in my view, a greater ability to deploy more resource to locations that currently do not receive them. That is my view but, as I said, I respect Mr Hanstock as a police officer and I respect his professional opinion.

**John Foley:** Like ACC Higgins, I respect Mr Hanstock's view. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on operational policing matters, which I believe are reserved to police officers, and I am not a police officer. On the economics involved, I have seen nothing to date to suggest that there would be a detriment but, clearly, we are still working through that aspect of the proposed merger, so I cannot comment in full on it.

**Douglas Ross:** Chief Constable Crowther, are assets available to D division at the moment that are not and would not be available to Police Scotland?

09:45

**Chief Constable Crowther (British Transport Police):** Police Scotland has the full range of specialist capabilities available to it, as we would expect any police force to have. The point that we have consistently made in evidence is that it is the network-wide approach to policing that is probably the most difficult element to replicate under the proposals for merger. In terms of operational capabilities, Police Scotland has everything that it needs; the issue is more to do with the network-wide assessment of need and the cross-border policing elements, which are more of a tactical manifestation of the assets that are available.

**Douglas Ross:** Is that why, at paragraph 2.3 in your evidence, you say that

"BTP's analysis reveals that offences involving cable theft take on average 33% longer to manage"

and

"fatal incidents can take ... 50% longer"

with non-specialist policing?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Yes. That data emanates from research that we did in, I believe, 2011 that looked at a range of incidents that were attended by geographic forces. In our experience,

cable thefts or similar incidents that are attended by non-BTP resources typically take one third longer if dealt with by a geographic force. In the case of fatalities, incidents can take 50 per cent longer and, in the case of security-related incidents such as an unattended item or a threat, typically, a geographic force will err towards closure of the station rather than a risk-based approach. That research was not specifically on Scotland but was UK-wide.

**The Convener:** Can you wind up this line of questioning, Mr Ross, because I want to bring in other members? Fulton MacGregor has a supplementary.

**Douglas Ross:** Okay. I have a final question, which is for Mrs Vitty. It is fair to say that Mr Foley was not able to give any concrete examples of how he will offset any of the concerns about the merger, despite the SPA's experience of merging eight police forces. However, Mrs Vitty states clearly in her evidence that the proposal is not the same as merging eight police forces but is quite different. Will you expand on that for the committee?

**Charlotte Vitty (British Transport Police Authority):** Absolutely. The chief constable alluded to the fact that we are a specialist police force and we have different capabilities from the Home Office forces, certainly in relation to our approach to the railway. That alone makes us unique in comparison with the Home Office forces. How we approach our strategy and how we integrate and operate with the rail companies are strong qualities of ours, and we get a lot of value from that close relationship.

**Douglas Ross:** So the reassurances from Police Scotland do not necessarily mitigate all your concerns, because you see the mergers to establish Police Scotland and the merger to bring the BTP into Police Scotland as being distinct and separate.

**Charlotte Vitty:** As part of the programme board, we are absolutely putting forward our approach to our business, because we think that, to make this a success, it is vital that the Scottish Police Authority understands our approach, so that it can potentially mirror and align with it.

**The Convener:** We have three supplementary questions. I ask members to be brief. If your question is too long and I think that you are wandering off, I will stop you.

**Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP):** It is a very brief supplementary, convener. Is it the understanding of the panel members, as it is mine, that all political parties agreed to this devolution through the Smith commission? A brief answer will do.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I totally accept that the Smith commission recommendations, as taken forward in the Scotland Act 2016, bring about the devolution of the functions of the British Transport Police in Scotland—there is no doubt about that and we totally support it. The subject of this debate is the means by which that is done. The British Transport Police will support whatever Parliament's decision is to make that happen.

**The Convener:** Obviously, there was a choice of legislative or administrative approaches, or a mix of both.

**John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green):** Good morning. Thank you for your evidence.

I have a quick supplementary for Mr Crowther. You have referred to the evidence on the time that it takes the police to attend an incident if it is not BTP officers who attend. Would the merger provide an opportunity for that better experience to happen more widely? I understand that the BTP has an excellent record, particularly on dealing with fatalities. I represent the Highlands and Islands, which is a vast tract of land. It would be inappropriate to discuss the resources that you have in that area, but the reality is that Mr Higgins's officers attend in the overwhelming majority of instances.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** The approach that we take to dealing with incidents is steeped in what I call the transport policing ethos. There is something substantially different about transport policing from geographic policing because it requires a comprehensive understanding of the impact of how the organisation fulfils its statutory functions. Our approach has been embedded in the organisation over decades of transport policing. Transport policing is our single focus and, therefore, our expertise.

That ethos can be shared, and there is no doubt that, at the point of merger, the people who would transfer into Police Scotland would have it. The challenge is how we maintain that ethos and continue it beyond the first year. The BTP turnover figures, including the figures for people who will be approaching retirement age around the proposed merger date, show an interesting and significant outflow of expertise and transport policing ethos, which need to be replenished. They are replenished in an organisation that has transport policing as its sole focus, but it would be a real challenge to replenish them in an organisation whose focus is on many other areas of policing.

In the first instance, I have no doubt that the people who would transfer across would continue to adopt the same approach. The question is how that would be sustained in the future. Indeed, although it would be beneficial for those people if they were able to move into other functions in



Police Scotland, as is proposed, that might diminish the transport policing ethos. Those are some of the challenges that we have pointed out.

On your second point, it is a fact that, in some areas of Scotland—as in other parts of the United Kingdom—the geographic force is often first at an incident; the BTP then adopts those cases and implements its approach. I gave the example of how it has been demonstrated that geographic forces can take longer to deal with incidents. Our aim is to get there as quickly as we can, implement our transport policing ethos and ensure that the policing of the transport network is done in a way that takes account of the impact on the running of the railway.

**John Finnie:** The incident could be a considerable distance away from BTP resources and could involve a three or four-hour drive, whereas Police Scotland could have resources along the road.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Absolutely.

**The Convener:** Was there some mention of a specialist fleet of high-performance cars to ensure that the BTP can get the officers who have the expertise to a particularly challenging incident?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I am not familiar with that.

**The Convener:** Right. I was led to believe that, given the geography involved, high-performance vehicles were available to the BTP because the people with the expertise have to cover a large distance. That would address the point that the issue is not necessarily about who is geographically nearest but about ensuring that the person with the right expertise attends.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Absolutely. There is no doubt that, throughout the UK, geographic forces often attend in the first instance on behalf of the BTP. Often, we influence situations in the background and speak to control rooms about what the approach should be to such incidents, but I do not for a minute dismiss the support that we get from other forces.

**Mairi Evans (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP):** My question follows on from the point that John Finnie raised. How are British Transport Police officers currently deployed in Scotland? Where are their bases? I represent a rural area, where the geographical force is likely to be the first on scene. Chief Constable Crowther talked about how the BTP ethos could be shared, and I ask Mr Higgins to address the concerns around maintaining that ethos beyond the initial transfer and to say how the service would operate into the future with that ethos continuing to be part of Police Scotland, if the plans go ahead.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** BTP resources are distributed at a number of locations across Scotland. The major bases are in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and there are also bases in Dundee, Perth, Aberdeen and other locations. The resources are concentrated in the major conurbations and cities. We have not said at any stage that much of the day-to-day policing of incidents that happen on the railways cannot be dealt with by Police Scotland. We make a particular point about the challenges that we have identified around specific disruption-related incidents, particularly those involving cross-border services between Scotland and England. It is a particular focus of mine in any transfer of responsibilities that those arrangements, and the policing powers that will exist for officers whichever way they travel across the border, are fully protected so that police can effectively protect the public going forward. I hope that I have answered your question.

**Mairi Evans:** I understand what you say about having your resources focused on each of the city areas, but what does that look like from day to day? Further up north, outside the central belt, what sort of numbers are we talking about?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I do not have the numbers to hand, but I can certainly supply them to the committee. Resources are more thinly spread in the outlying areas, without a doubt.

**Mairi Evans:** If the BTP were part of Police Scotland and we were able to train more officers, would the first response to incidents be better, as we would have more trained officers available on the ground to deal with transport-related situations?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** You have hit on one of the issues that we are taking forward through the joint programme board. People who operate in the railway environment have specialist training requirements around track safety and how to operate in a dangerous environment. The challenge is not insurmountable by any means, but a great deal of thought is required on how those officers should be trained and distributed across Police Scotland such that they can respond to and deal effectively with things in a different environment. The challenge is not insurmountable, but it is one that has been highlighted.

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Ms Evans has raised a couple of points that I hope I can clarify. The first is about ethos, and Mr Crowther is correct to say that there is a very strong ethos in the BTP, which we would want to retain. However, Police Scotland has the same ethos across the whole force area. It is about keeping people safe and protecting Scotland's communities, which is the same as the BTP's desire to protect the travelling public in Scotland. One of Police

Scotland's strengths is not necessarily our single ethos or aim of keeping people safe, but the multiple cultures that we have within the organisation. The culture of policing in Mr Finnie's area, in the Highlands and Islands, is completely different from the culture of policing in Glasgow city centre or Edinburgh city centre, and the culture in my firearms unit will be different from the culture of our community safety officers. The diversity of cultures within policing is a strength, because it reflects the communities that we serve right across a third of the UK land mass.

10:00

We will be embracing what is clearly excellent good practice within the BTP and unashamedly squeezing it in relation to how fatalities and crimes on the line are dealt with. There is no doubt that the BTP can have the line opened up again within 90 minutes; there has to be some learning from that. It is not about bringing the BTP into Police Scotland and throwing out everything that it has done over the past couple of hundred years—that would be foolish.

Let me give some assurance around that. When the forces merged to form Police Scotland, the smallest force in the UK was Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, which had the best process for dealing with licensing inquiries. Although that is not my area of responsibility, I understand that the processes that were used in Dumfries and Galloway have now been rolled out right across the nation. That is evidence that we look to see where the best practice is taking place, and we roll it out.

On training, should the will of Parliament be to pass the bill, we will run an upskilling programme for existing officers; in addition, we will extend the initial probationary period for every new recruit to Police Scotland from 11 weeks to 13 or 14 weeks, to incorporate the additional training that current BTP students studying at the police college at Tulliallan receive once they have passed their Scottish training. It is correct that, post 2019, every Police Scotland officer will be trained in policing the railways.

I am not making light of the task and how it would be achieved. We would rely heavily on the BTP to support us in delivering that training and making sure that it was fit for purpose. However, that would be our plan, and ultimately it would mean that pretty much every officer in Scotland would have some knowledge of how to police the railways. A great many officers, over and above those who are deployed full time within the transport environment, will have specific and specialist knowledge.

**The Convener:** I do not want to rain on your parade, Mr Higgins, but when we visited Dumfries and Galloway as part of seeing how Police Scotland was operating, the main complaint was that the responses to local issues that had already been developed and were working very well were being overwhelmed by what was seen as Strathclyde Police writ large. I have no doubt that the objective was as you just said, but we are, perhaps, some distance away from actually achieving it. That is a fundamental point when we are looking at how we can integrate the BTP into Police Scotland.

We move on to a question from Stewart Stevenson.

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** For completeness, I state that I have a close family member who is a constable in Police Scotland; indeed, my wife's family is full of policemen, north and south of the border.

I want to go into the issue of specialisms, perhaps with the two chief constables in particular. First, I ask Chief Constable Crowther whether there are specialisms within the BTP—within the Great Britain network.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Absolutely, yes. Within the BTP we have the full range of specialisms that would be expected in any police force—counterterrorism, intelligence, firearms, safeguarding and just about everything that would be expected in an organisation that polices a transient population. There were 3.2 billion passenger journeys last year, which is an interesting statistic when you think about how to engage with those people and how to deal with that influx, and the threat that perhaps surrounds the crowded places that go with that number of people. A range of specialisms, particularly in relation to dealing with fatalities and suicide prevention, has been developed specifically for our environment.

**Stewart Stevenson:** It is a natural and necessary part of any police service to develop specialisms to protect people and to make sure that it delivers on the particular requirements that it has to undertake. In transport I guess that intelligence will be one of the more important ones.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Yes. I imagine that, in the same way that Police Scotland develops its own structures and processes to deal with the different elements of communities within Scotland that Mr Higgins referred to, we have to develop specific structures within our organisation. That allows us to integrate and engage with the 43 police forces in England and Wales, Police Scotland and local authorities, and with the associated structures, including the intelligence-

sharing networks that take account of travelling criminals and the issues that go with the transient nature of the population.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Turning to Assistant Chief Constable Higgins, I would be interested to know roughly how many specialisms there are in Police Scotland. You referred to firearms. One area that has benefited from the merger of police forces in Scotland is wildlife crime—it used to be dealt with by Tayside Police but is now dealt with Scotland-wide. There are also specialist dog and traffic units—and those are only the ones that I can think of. Presumably, Police Scotland, like the British Transport Police, is well used to having protected resources for particular specialisms, to develop and nurture them and train people in them. Is that a correct characterisation of Police Scotland?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Yes. I would say that, in UK terms, we are probably one of the most well-equipped forces, given not just the number of specialisms that we have but the number of people who are trained in those specialisms. We have specialisms that other forces in the wider UK do not have. For example, we are one of the few remaining forces in the UK that have a mounted section and a dive and marine unit, although those specialisms are not relevant to today's debate. We invest heavily in specialisms to make sure that we can deal with any eventuality.

**Stewart Stevenson:** There are nearly 70 ferry services that operate in Scotland. Are the ones that are within your remit already seen as an important part of Scotland's transport infrastructure?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Yes. We have the border policing command and look after both the airports and the sea ports. We have specialist officers deployed to all those locations.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Does having specialist units permit the development of a particular and specific ethos in each of those units? I would imagine that a firearms officer has a particular approach to the way that he or she may do their job that is quite particular to that unit. The same may be true of other units, just as it may be true of railway policing, if Police Scotland becomes responsible for that in the future.

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** To go back to an earlier answer, there are different cultures across the policing network in Scotland. They reflect local circumstances but also the duties that the officers are carrying out. For example, firearms officers are very precise; there is no room for manoeuvre and no room for mistake. Community policing is far more flexible, fluid and involved with the community. Those two areas have two different cultures, which is

necessary so that the officers can do their jobs. However, the overarching ethos is around public safety—it is about keeping the communities of Scotland safe.

For me, one size does not fit all. We have to react to local circumstances in the operating environment. I very much respect the environment that the British Transport Police officers currently operate in. We would not want to lose that aspect.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Intelligence, to take just one transport issue, is an important area. Transport in general—in Scotland, as elsewhere—has been the subject of terrorist attack. Public order is at the other end of the spectrum of difficulties. Where intelligence is concerned, I take it that if policing the railways is brought within your remit, the number of communications that the central intelligence services have to have will reduce, and there might be a wider view of the intelligence situation, which could benefit Scotland. It is up to Mr Foley, his team and you to deliver on that opportunity, but it is there to be delivered on.

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Certainly. As I have said, outwith the Metropolitan Police, Police Scotland is the largest force in the UK. As such, we have a massive responsibility to support the UK counterterrorist network, and we are a key and pivotal player in it.

For example, we have a number of partner agencies from both law enforcement and wider Government agencies at our state-of-the-art crime campus at Gartcosh. We have direct linkage into real-time intelligence with agencies across the country and down in London. We feed back into the process as well. For example, our counterterrorist police operations room could run an operation in any part of the UK. It is one of a limited number of such facilities in the UK.

**Stewart Stevenson:** So you have the scale to cover those big issues while also protecting smaller areas, such as wildlife crime. How big is the wildlife crime unit?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** We have an assistant chief constable who has portfolio responsibility for that. Coverage depends on which part of the country you are talking about. For example, in Mr Finnie's area we have a full-time officer. However, we have at least one single point of contact officer in each of our 13 local policing divisions who has that subject matter expertise.

**Stewart Stevenson:** So on the question of integrating transport police into the operation, we have an example of a very small unit that is nonetheless able to operate within the very large unit that is Police Scotland and which has access to all Police Scotland's resources. Without talking

too much about the detail, we have in that an example of how things can be done.

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Yes. We have a number of small units that operate nationally across the entire force, such as our public protection officers and our domestic abuse teams, which are small in number but high in impact. They are located in every geographical area in the force.

**The Convener:** Stewart Stevenson mentioned terrorism. The Gartcosh unit is state of the art. Does liaison work well under the current arrangement with the BTP?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** The answer is yes. We have run a number of operations with the BTP over the years, whether they be football or crime related. There has never been any problem with that. What tends to happen is that the BTP will put an officer in our events room or control room and they will be the SPOC, so that there is real-time live interaction. That has never been an operational challenge at all; it has worked well.

**The Convener:** I suppose that the question then is: why mess with that? Why change the arrangement when it is operating well and when this is such an important area UK-wide?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** That is a matter for Parliament to determine. We are saying that, should Parliament determine that such an approach is to be taken, these will be the arrangements. At our intelligence cells in Gartcosh, we have access to live real-time information, which has to be relayed out of Gartcosh to the BTP or other partners that are not represented at the crime campus. In the future, if BTP Scotland were to be part of the wider Police Scotland, there would be no need for that relay; the information would be put directly to the point where it was required.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** That is a really interesting element of the discussion. There is a risk of falling into a bit of a trap of looking at the issue from a geographic policing perspective. Police Scotland has first-class counterterrorism capabilities and works really closely with us, other forces and the security services and so on. We are talking about the challenge of assessing the terrorist threat across the network—for example, for train services that start in Scotland and finish in England or vice versa—and about how decisions are made on threat and risk in relation to matters that could be in one or other of the jurisdictions but which could have a significant impact elsewhere, depending on what decision is made.

One of the significant challenges on which we will be working closely with Police Scotland is being really clear about decision making. If, for

example, there is a bomb threat or a risk to a line of route, who will be the decision maker for the process? Knowing that will ensure that there is no doubt about where the decision has been made and that there is a proper assessment of the decision's implications along the route of the particular trains. That is the nub of the issue—it is about having a network-wide perspective rather than being about the specific and skilful set of capabilities in Police Scotland.

10:15

**John Finnie:** As you are responsible at the moment for trains that run through several police jurisdictions, would it be wrong to suggest that there is no set of circumstances in relation to areas of responsibility that has not already been encountered?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** At the moment, we are responsible for the trains on the rail network that runs across England, Wales and Scotland, and the issues that I am referring to tend not to occur, because it is us who make the decisions. For example, if there was a bomb threat on the rail network, we—not the geographic force—would make the decision.

**John Finnie:** You would make the decision in conjunction with the geographic force, because the threat would have implications outwith the rail network.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Indeed. We would liaise particularly closely with the Metropolitan Police counterterrorism command, the security services and the geographic force on what might underpin the threat or any background information. Ultimately, however, the decision is made by us.

**John Finnie:** I understand people's different perspectives, but it would be wrong to suggest that there might be a grey area on such an important matter as terrorism. Demarcations must exist already. You talk about the relationship between the geographic force, yourselves and the UK security services.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I am highlighting the fact that the proposals would add another layer of complexity, which would not be insurmountable but would become a really important element of the planning for the proposed move, because it would be different from the current structures. There is currently no break in decision making, and we need to ensure that the added complexity would not add risk to the process. It would not be insurmountable, but I highlight it as a key area that we must focus on.

**John Finnie:** Equally, it could be argued that it is complex to have three players in the decision-making process: a UK strategic player,

yourselves—I appreciate that you are a UK force at the moment—and the geographic force. Moving from three players to two would take out a layer, which would be beneficial.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Sorry—I am not quite with you.

**John Finnie:** If two organisations are making decisions of such importance, surely that is better than having to satisfy three command structures.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I am not sure where the third comes in.

**John Finnie:** You said that there is liaison at a UK strategic level with the security services.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Yes. When bomb threats or other threats come in, we liaise with other agencies that might have intelligence or information that is relevant to the decision. That would be a natural course of action for any police force. A decision is then made by the British Transport Police.

I am saying that we need to work closely to be clear about how such decisions will be made in the future. That is not insurmountable, but it is an important element that we need to work closely with Police Scotland to develop.

**Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** My question is for Charlotte Vitty and Paul Crowther and is about the governance arrangements immediately following the devolution of railway policing. Will the process be seamless? Has everything been planned for that? Will the public be aware of any difference?

**Charlotte Vitty:** One of the strategic joint programme boards is focused on the governance, and we have two years in which to make sure that we are working together to support the Scottish Police Authority in how we approach our governance and how we work with the travelling public, railway staff and the rail industry. We have come to that board actively and we are highlighting all the risks to ensure that the process is a success, instead of things being found out later. We are approaching that in an open and transparent way, and the board has been invited to our authority to look at how we do our governance.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** The governance and finance issues are primarily the focus of the BTP authority, but I agree with everything that Charlotte Vitty said.

**Rona Mackay:** What you are saying is vital, but the reason for my question is that the public want to know that they will be safe on trains and that nothing will change because of a difference in arrangements. Are you confident that that will be

the case and that the public will be reassured that everything will be fine?

**Charlotte Vitty:** We spend an awful lot of time working on our strategy and we do a lot of consultation. I know that Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority have released their 10-year strategy, and it is really important that we start to look at how we can align our strategy with theirs to ensure that the process is seamless.

**Rona Mackay:** Is that a priority for you?

**Charlotte Vitty:** It is a priority for us leading up to devolution. However, one second after devolution, the responsibility will lie with the Scottish Police Authority, and we will support that.

**Rona Mackay:** I will widen the question to the Scottish Police Authority.

**John Foley:** We recently published the policing 2026 strategy, as you are aware. We have introduced a policing committee in the authority, which is welcome and which I have promoted for a number of years. Should the bill be passed by Parliament, the governance of the transport police will form part of the policing committee. The committee is chaired by George Graham, who is a former chief constable and a former HM chief inspector of constabulary for Scotland, so it is well chaired by a person who knows policing, which is a positive. I believe that the public can take assurance from the proposals that we have in place for governance.

**Rona Mackay:** Have discussions with rail operators begun? Have they raised any concerns about the transitional period and how it will operate?

**John Foley:** We have a meeting with rail operators and the transport secretary tomorrow, and that will be the first time that I have met representatives of the rail authorities. I hope that one of the outcomes of the meeting will be a plan to get me and others into a room with the railway people to discuss matters of importance. The BTPA will have met—and will meet on an on-going basis—the railway people.

**Charlotte Vitty:** I sit on the Rail Delivery Group's policing and security board, which we report to regularly. The matter has been on the board's agenda for quite some time, and it is vital for us that it understands how we will support the process until devolution, as well as the safeguarding and support post-devolution with the remaining England and Wales functions.

**Mary Fee:** I have a brief follow-up question to John Finnie's questions. Can Mr Higgins and Mr Crowther give me examples of how the BTP and Police Scotland currently collaborate? How do you speak to each other and collaborate if there is an incident on the line?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** There are two types of collaboration. The first is for a pre-planned event. In the past year, there have been 11 football matches to which travelling supporters from England or Scotland have journeyed. We have deployed Police Scotland officers down to England in support of the host force, and English officers have come up here. The rail network has been critical to that.

We have planning arrangements for the old firm game this Sunday, for example, which fans from both sets of supporters will use the rail network for. In our events room on Sunday, a British Transport Police officer will provide a single point of contact at the heart of the event control, to ensure that the joint operation works seamlessly.

For a spontaneous event, contact tends to be from our control centre to Birmingham to say that we have come across an incident and to ask BTP officers to attend and assist. Vice versa, British Transport Police officers contact us through their command centre to ask us to assist, which might be until BTP officers get there or might involve assisting BTP officers on the scene. That is fairly straightforward.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I support everything that Mr Higgins said. The difference in the future is that the officers who bring football supporters, for example, to and from Scotland will be a mixture of British Transport Police officers from England and Wales and Police Scotland officers. One of my key aims is to understand the legislative framework that will provide the powers to those officers, whichever way they are going, to ensure that they are fully fledged constables who can carry out their duties wherever they might be on the journey.

Existing legislative arrangements enable a constable to arrest someone in any part of the UK, but there are particular issues to consider, in that officers who are on board trains escorting supporters—to continue to use that example—will find themselves between England and Scotland and sometimes will not know precisely where they are, if they have passed the last station in England on the way to Scotland or vice versa. I am keen to ensure that there is no ambiguity about the powers that people have, the legislation under which they act and the laws that they enforce during that process.

The issue goes beyond the existing arrangements for cross-border jurisdictions. A good example is the way in which we police the Channel tunnel. There are specific protocols in place that make very clear, at the point when an officer does not know whether they are in England or France, who can do what and what jurisdiction they are in. I am keen to ensure that the legislative

arrangements for our cross-border policing are as clear as they are for when we police into France.

**Mary Fee:** Have you been given an indication that the BTP will have the opportunity to be fully involved in the process if integration goes ahead?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I am assured that the jurisdictional arrangements can be dealt with through an order under section 104 or section 90 of the Scotland Act 1998. I am sure that I will be involved in that. I will undertake careful scrutiny to ensure that we learn the lessons from other jurisdictions where we police across borders.

**Mary Fee:** Can Mr Higgins confirm that that will be the case?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Yes—certainly. As Mr Crowther said, there are existing legislative arrangements. For example, Police Scotland deployed several hundred officers to support the G20 conference in—I think—Cardiff and the G8 conference in Northern Ireland, and they were allowed to operate as officers of the law in those jurisdictions.

Mr Crowther was correct to say that, when an officer is on a train, he might not know which part of the country he is in, so it is vital that the cross-border legislation is all-encompassing. We are content that we are fully aware of and engaged in discussions on the matter.

**Mary Fee:** Was consideration given to integration when the policing 2026 strategy was drawn up?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** The short answer is yes, but I will expand it ever so slightly. The 2026 strategy is a consultation document; it has not been finalised. I had a chat with Malcolm Graham, the Police Scotland lead on the strategy, and my view is that it would be presumptuous of us to put into a 10-year strategy something about the integration of the British Transport Police into Police Scotland before the Parliament has had a chance to debate the bill. It would be disrespectful to the Parliament to proceed in that way. However, I assure you that, if integrating the BTP is the will of Parliament, it will form a critical part of our sustainable policing model.

**Mary Fee:** The British Transport Police and Police Scotland currently have different terms and conditions. Will the BTP staff who transfer over be given a guarantee that they will keep their existing terms and conditions?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** I am going to unashamedly pass that over to the Scottish Police Authority to answer. I have been assured by senior members of the Scottish Government that that is the desire and that they are working furiously to ensure that the current conditions of service of all British Transport Police

staff will be honoured on transfer. However, perhaps Mr Foley can give you a more detailed answer.

10:30

**John Foley:** As far as I am aware, the Government's intention, as Mr Higgins said, is to ensure that there is no detriment to officers or staff. Indeed, we have mentioned that in this committee before.

I mentioned at the beginning that we are looking at the pensions situation. The Scottish Public Pensions Agency is to present options towards the end of this month, when we have the next programme board meeting. Clearly, pensions form part of terms and conditions. Overall, we will be looking at that aspect, but my belief is that that is the intention as we move forward.

**Mary Fee:** Mr Higgins said in a previous answer that people who train at Tulliallan currently do 11 weeks or so. If the BTP is integrated with Police Scotland, that period will be extended to 13 or 14 weeks to include training on transport issues. After 2019, will you have one force with one set of terms and conditions?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Currently, a number of officers within Police Scotland retain legacy terms and conditions. For example, I am one of the dying breed of officers who retain a housing allowance. Officers who joined on or after 1994, I think it is, no longer receive a housing allowance. I joined in 1988, so that is a grandfather right that will stay with me until I retire. I am entirely comfortable that people transferring in and retaining their rights is no different from the current legacy arrangements within Police Scotland.

**Mary Fee:** It has been reported that some BTP officers do not want to transfer to Police Scotland. Have you done any work to try to establish the number of such officers and how you will deal with that?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** No. Again, although it is right for us, at my level and the chief constable's level, to be having these discussions, I think that it would be inappropriate to go and engage with the staff on the ground until Parliament decides whether the bill is going to be enacted. Should Parliament decide that the bill is to be enacted, one of our first key tasks will be to sit down with the staff, speak to them, listen to the concerns and give them reassurance.

In many ways, the situation is similar to the legacy arrangements when Police Scotland came together. There was nervousness across the country that, for example, people who were working in Inverness were suddenly going to be

transferred to Glasgow. That has simply not materialised. We have said to people within Police Scotland that, if they joined Northern Constabulary and their will is to stay within that geographical area for the remainder of their service, we will respect that.

It is all about early communication at the right time. My assessment, being respectful to the British Transport Police and the parliamentary process, is that now is not the right time for Police Scotland officers to go and engage with current BTP officers.

**Mary Fee:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Convener:** Does Mr Crowther want to comment?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Yes—thank you. Up with my concern that we ensure as best we can that the public continue to be protected is my concern about the way that my staff are treated in any transfer. During what has been two years or more of quite discombobulating times for them, if I can use that term, they have excelled and shown their professionalism. Performance has increased at a time when we might have expected people to be somewhat dismayed by the uncertainty.

As you are probably aware, there is a particular difference between the proposed transfer and any other. The constables of the British Transport Police are employees rather than Crown servants, and that presents a particularly interesting conundrum with regard to how they are transferred into Police Scotland. A range of options could flow from that. My understanding is that the intent is to transfer them in their current status as employees, and that they will become employees of the Scottish Police Authority. I think that that is one of the favoured options, and I think that people understand it.

Whatever happens with the merger and whatever happens thereafter in terms of synchronising terms and conditions, I am keen that people are treated fairly and with the respect that they deserve. I am encouraged by the Scottish Government's commitment to the triple-lock approach around terms and conditions, pensions and so on. However, there are some particularly interesting twists and turns with regard to how the transfer can take place. From the staff's perspective, the earlier that that can be shared with them, the quicker we will be able to work with individuals to help them understand what it means for them in their individual circumstances.

**Mary Fee:** Can we be quite clear that it is unlikely that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations will apply and that that is one of the reasons why there is such an issue about the proposed merger?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Yes. That is my understanding.

**The Convener:** Why is that the case? Why would TUPE not apply?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I am not sure that I understand why it would not apply. However, the legal advice that I have seen is that it would not apply but that the Cabinet Office guidance on staff transfers in the public sector, which uses, in effect, the same principles as TUPE would apply.

**The Convener:** Can Mr Foley shed any light on why TUPE would not apply?

**John Foley:** Yes. The principles of the Cabinet Office guidance and those of TUPE are the same, and we have all signed up to that. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that the officers and staff are treated as fairly as they would be if they were transferring under the TUPE regulations.

**The Convener:** Can no one give me a direct answer as to why TUPE would not apply?

**John Foley:** No, but I can undertake to give you a written response on that, convener, subsequent to the meeting.

**The Convener:** That would be very helpful. Fulton MacGregor has a supplementary question.

**Fulton MacGregor:** It concerns an earlier point in Mary Fee's line of questioning, so I apologise for that. We heard of a good example earlier from Mr Crowther regarding the border arrangements between England and France. I was heartened to hear that that is regarded not as a problem but as a positive factor. I think that we would all like to see something similar from all stakeholders involved when the devolution that we are discussing occurs. Will Police Scotland look at the kind of arrangement that France and England have with regard to the border?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Absolutely. It would be foolish not to look at best practice elsewhere. We share a border with England and our J division and Dumfries and Galloway division in particular have very strong working relationships with, for example, Cumbria Constabulary and Northumbria Police. It is not unusual for one of those forces to be the first responder to provide assistance to Police Scotland. We recently had a robbery at a bank, and a Cumbria police dog van assisted in tracking the suspect. Arrangements are therefore already in place for cross-border policing. To return to Mr MacGregor's question, the answer is yes: the channel tunnel arrangements interest us greatly.

**Ben Macpherson (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP):** Again, I will touch on some earlier themes. First, I was encouraged by Mr Foley's

earlier statement that appropriate implementation and consideration is already taking place. We discussed pensions at a previous evidence session, so it is good to hear that things are moving forward on that.

In returning to the issues of ethos and the specialist nature of the skills that are required in transport policing, I want to address the issue of abstraction, which has been raised at various points. On the economies of scale and the operational capability advantage that the merger of the British Transport Police into Police Scotland will bring, I would like some reassurance and comment around whether officers will be abstracted from other operational parts of Police Scotland and whether any consideration has been given to that in terms of the upskilling that was talked about. We want to build the capacity and maintain the current specialist knowledge, but consideration must also be given to ensuring that resources are allocated appropriately.

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** I will address that directly. First, I have gone on the record publicly to say that any British Transport Police officer who migrates into Police Scotland will have their legacy right to police the railways honoured. If they choose to remain within the railway environment for the remainder of their career, that will be respected.

We will sign service level agreements with the rail operators that will require us to provide exactly the level of resource that we have agreed with the rail providers.

As our written submission says, in times of crisis the chief constable reserves the right to deploy officers as he sees fit. However, the reality is that, in a terrorist attack, for example, the resources on the rail network would be strengthened, not diluted, because the rail network is key national infrastructure. If we had a security-based major incident, rather than remove officers from the transport network we would increase their number. Similarly, the upskilling of officers will allow us to deploy them into the rail environments in areas of Scotland where, as the chief constable has mentioned, that possibility does not currently exist. In addition to their routine duties, those officers will have the advantage of being able to operate in that environment.

The crux of the matter is that I give an assurance that the wishes of any British Transport Police officer who transfers into Police Scotland and wishes to remain on the railway network will be honoured and respected.

**Ben Macpherson:** Thank you. That assurance is hugely welcome, as is the determination to increase the capacity. It was good to hear about that.



**The Convener:** I want to ask specifically about the various forms of delay, which is an issue that features strongly in the BTP and BTPA submissions. There are particular expectations around the various situations that may cause delays—for example, abandoned luggage and hoax calls. It is estimated that the cost associated with the temporary closing of a station is in the region of £2 million, with an impact on the operator's finances. Can you talk at length about that?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Yes, convener. That goes to the heart of many of the issues that we have talked about today. It is about network-wide decision making, appreciation of the impact of decisions—not just at the location but elsewhere—and an understanding of the transport policing ethos.

As you can imagine, thousands of items are left unattended on the railway every year, each of which is a potential suspect bag and a potential closure. We have network-wide, well-rehearsed approaches to how we deal with such issues and with how we deal with bomb threats. Those might seem like something from the past—they were prevalent during the distant Irish republican campaigns of the 1980s and 1990s—but it is not unusual for us to have to assess 20, 25 or 30 bomb threats a month across the network. That requires a thought process based on risk management that ensures that we act appropriately to those incidents that need to be reacted to and that we act proportionately to what are, in effect, benign incidents. It is about sorting out the real incidents from the ones that might otherwise distract, and how those decisions are made goes to the heart of our approach.

Equally, it is about the way in which we deal with fatalities. I have been in transport policing for 37 years, and in the past—this is going back a long way—we did not have as finely tuned an approach as we have now. In the case of a death, national policing protocols guide policing towards the assumption that there has been a murder and then work downwards, whereas a thoughtful, evidence-based approach allows officers to make judgments about the likely cause of a fatality and determine their response accordingly. That takes lots of training, leadership and support, and I guess that it goes to the heart of what we have identified in all our evidence. We do not doubt Police Scotland's professionalism; the issue is how that is maintained and delivered while taking into account the network-wide implications.

10:45

**The Convener:** In particular, the approach to suicide seems to have been finely tuned over the years, and a programme of suicide prevention is

now very much at the heart of the BTP. Could you talk about that?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** We have developed a specialism around safeguarding people who might harm themselves. I am the national police lead for suicide prevention for the National Police Chiefs Council. We have developed a range of initiatives that identify those who are at risk and implement measures to divert them away from it. We also have initiatives to deal with not just the consequences of the tragic and sad death of an individual, which must be reported to the coroner, but the consequential impacts on the network.

Last year, my officers, rail employees and sometimes members of the public made 1,279 life-saving interventions. A life-saving intervention literally means that someone is restrained from jumping or is removed from the tracks in close proximity to death. Those 1,279 interventions were delivered through a clear focus on safeguarding people who are drawn to the railway for some sad and tragic reasons. That is one of the specialisms that we have developed in the British Transport Police.

**The Convener:** Will Police Scotland integrate the national rail suicide prevention programme?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Absolutely. We cannot argue with the number of suicide interventions that Mr Crowther mentioned. Police Scotland has a large number of negotiators. Our negotiator cadre is deployed right across the Police Scotland estate, and suicide intervention is one of their key training elements. Where we can grab best practice and implement it, we will absolutely do that, because ultimately it is about saving lives.

**Rona Mackay:** Is specialist counselling available for British Transport Police officers and will that continue? Is that different from the counselling that I assume other police officers get?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** That is a really important element of our wellbeing support for our officers, because we ask them to do some very difficult things. Some of my officers individually deal with 12 or 15 railway fatalities per year, each of which is pretty traumatic, as you will understand. A range of other people are also involved.

Part of our ethos in dealing professionally with incidents, supporting the bereaved families and reporting to the coroner is to assess how we can try to keep the railway running while we are doing that. For example, my control room staff will speak directly to the driver of the train to get a first account. As you will imagine, that is quite a traumatic account, and that is another group of individuals who we need to take care of. There are

closed-circuit television operators who, as part of our assessment process, are tasked with viewing the CCTV, which is a particularly difficult task and they are of course affected by that.

We have a system that we call TRiM—trauma risk management—which is drawn from the military. Through that scheme, we have trained buddy officers throughout the force who make an initial intervention with people who have been involved in such incidents, and from that we can make referrals on to professional services as required. We currently make the first intervention for around 300 members of staff a month, such is the range and impact of that sort of activity. Clearly, we do that in Scotland as well, and that will be one of the areas of operational practice that we will share with colleagues, because it is a vital part of supporting the staff who do a really difficult job on a day-to-day basis.

**Rona Mackay:** Just to clarify, will that continue after the devolution of railway policing?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** It will certainly continue in the BTP and we will share our experiences with Police Scotland. I am pretty certain that it will want to do something similar.

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Like Paul Crowther's organisation, Police Scotland currently has a TRiM process and an employee assistance programme.

Policing is not a very pleasant occupation—there is no doubt about that. We have road fatalities and sudden deaths of infant children, and some officers spend their days in a darkened room viewing the most horrific offensive actions against children, so we have to have something in place to support officers psychologically and emotionally. Like the BTP, Police Scotland has a very robust employee assistance programme and a TRiM process.

**Mary Fee:** Paul Crowther and Charlotte Vitty might be the best people to answer this question. Was any model other than complete integration put forward for consideration? Is there another model that you think would work?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** We made a number of submissions to the Scottish Government during the discussions on the bill. As I said, we completely understand and support the principle of devolution. There are different means of achieving that. We have given professional advice on what the options might be but, as you would expect, we will work with whatever option is taken forward, to deliver it in the interests of the public. Perhaps I will stop there.

**Charlotte Vitty:** It is vital that, throughout the process leading up to devolution day, we are able to articulate our thoughts to and communicate with

the SPA and Police Scotland, as it is a complex process. That communication should not be seen as anything more than work to ensure that it is a success. We must be able to align our operations on D-day, so it is key that we continue to communicate.

**The Convener:** You have to work in partnership with the railway operators and, as I mentioned, minimising delays without compromising safety is paramount. This question is for Mr Higgins. If there is an accident of some kind on the motorway, is any cognisance taken of the effects of the delay when you consider how to handle it as effectively as possible? On top of the devastation of the accident itself, when traffic is tailed back, the economic impact is huge. Mitigating any delays is in the DNA of the British Transport Police, if you like, because if it does not do that, the whole railway system grinds to a halt. Will you comment on that?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** I am acutely aware of that. The latest figure that I was given was that, if a major road such as the M8, the M77 or the M90 is shut down, it can cost the Scottish economy a quarter of a million pounds every 30 minutes. My road policing officers deploy on the basis that they need to get the road open as soon as possible. However, if there is an incident involving six or seven people in three cars, and two people are still trapped and need to be cut out and rescued, reopening the road is not as straightforward as we would like it to be.

Often, the delay in reopening a road is caused not by the investigation but by the need to clear the road and repair the crash barrier, for example. A road is not safe to be driven on until the damage that has been caused to its infrastructure is repaired. Various factors combine to make a fatal road accident, and invariably the road will be closed for longer than a railway line will if an accident occurs on that.

The short answer is yes. We are acutely aware of the economic impact, but we have a duty to ensure that the cause of the accident is properly investigated and reported to the procurator fiscal so that we can give the family of the deceased some assurance that that has happened.

**Douglas Ross:** ACC Higgins and John Foley have made it clear that they are looking ahead based on the Parliament's decision, whatever that will be, and that they are looking at how they would mitigate some of the concerns that have been highlighted. As you are taking an impartial view, will you tell me whether you have identified any potential pitfalls or risks of merging the BTP with Police Scotland?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Yes, of course. Mr Crowther alluded to—

**Douglas Ross:** Sorry, I was asking for Police Scotland's view.

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Yes, and I am going to answer you, Mr Ross. I was going to say that Mr Crowther alluded to the fact that there is a massive turnover of staff in the British Transport Police. There is a risk that, on transfer, that skill base will be diluted, and it is my job to ensure that that does not happen. There is a risk that the terms and conditions might be diluted but, again, we have made it clear that we hope that the Scottish Government will address that. There is also a risk on the financial side. It is necessary to ensure that Police Scotland is properly compensated for taking on the additional responsibility.

Those are all risks that we recognise, but much will be dependent on what the legislation says and what happens after the debate in Parliament.

**John Foley:** On the potential financial risk, I have officers going down on Friday to work closely with BTPA officers on the cost allocation models, and we will have greater transparency after that. A risk clearly exists in that regard. We do not believe that it is significant, but we will have to look into it further.

**Douglas Ross:** Are you saying that you agree that those are risks and that you have fed them into the Scottish Government's consideration?

**John Foley:** As I mentioned, there is a programme board. Those risks are discussed in detail by that board and actions are taken to mitigate them, be that by the SPA, Police Scotland, the BTP or the BTPA. We work collectively not only with the Scottish Government but with the Westminster Government.

**Douglas Ross:** I will continue to ask you, Mr Foley, about potential risks. An independent evaluation of Police Scotland and the police and fire reform stated that Police Scotland representatives considered themselves to be in a

"consolidating' and 'integrating' phase of the journey"

and that

"real 'transformation' of service delivery"

was yet to come. It went on to say:

"The challenges associated with the 'transformation' phase are seen as being at least as significant as those already encountered in integrating the services."

Given that analysis and the uncertainties that remain, is now the right time for another element to be brought on board and for the BTP to be integrated into Police Scotland?

**John Foley:** As we discussed earlier, we are talking about an integration that is two years away. If that is the task that Parliament sets us, we can

achieve it within that timeframe. It would be inappropriate for me to comment from an operational point of view because I am not a police officer so, if you do not mind, Mr Ross, perhaps Mr Higgins or Mr Crowther could answer that part of the question.

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** I agree with Mr Foley on that. To be frank, two years is a luxury, based on what we had to do to bring Police Scotland together, so I am confident that the transition would occur and that it would be done in collaboration and partnership with the British Transport Police.

**Douglas Ross:** In your written submission, Mr Higgins, you say:

"Following integration, in the short to medium term, it is the intention of Police Scotland to retain the current specialist skills and knowledge built up by BTP Officers".

What is the long-term intention?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** The long-term intention is that, as I said, training for policing on the railway network will form part of the initial training of all officers who join Police Scotland. Rather than having a small number of officers with specialist skills, we will have 17,000 officers with the ability to operate in the railway environment and, within that number, a smaller group of officers with the specialist skills in, for example, rail investigation and rail death.

**Douglas Ross:** Based on that answer and what I read out from your written submission, are you saying that, in the long term, the specialist skills and knowledge that are currently available in the British Transport Police will not be available to Police Scotland?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** No, I have not said that at all. I have no idea why you are even asking me that question.

**Douglas Ross:** Perhaps I can explain, then, if that is okay.

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Please.

**Douglas Ross:** You make it clear in your submission that

"the short to medium term ... intention"

is that you will

"retain the current specialist skills and knowledge built up by BTP Officers".

However, you go on to say that, in the long term, there will be additional training of all officers for two to three weeks during their course at Tulliallan. Are you honestly saying that officers who come into Police Scotland with an additional two to three weeks of training will have the same expertise, specialist skills and knowledge that current BTP officers have built up?

11:00

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** What I am saying quite clearly, Mr Ross, is that I am mainstreaming the training that BTP officers in Scotland currently receive. I am quite sure that, within the BTP specialism, there will be investigative officers who are specifically trained to deal with fatalities on the rail network, just as my crash investigators who go to fatal road accidents are specifically trained. As well as having the general two to three weeks of training, which will allow a greater number of officers to operate on the rail network, we will invest to ensure that the current levels of skill that are available to investigate, for example, fatal rail accidents will continue.

**Douglas Ross:** What level of investment will there be?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** We will need to see what the demand is. I have some 600 road police officers, who police the road networks. Not every one of them is a crash investigator, but we have enough crash investigators to investigate the fatal road accidents on Scotland's roads. We will have a number of officers who are able to work on the rail network in the same way that my road police officers work on the road network, and within that team we will have a number of bespoke officers who can take on specialist investigations, just as we have crash investigators who investigate fatal road accidents.

**Douglas Ross:** Following the launch of the policing 2026 consultation document, it was established—this was not in the document—that up to 400 police officers could be lost. Some of that capacity will be replaced by people who do not want to join Police Scotland; they will have specialisms, such as in information technology, but do not want to be Police Scotland officers. I presume that the majority of Chief Constable Crowther's officers do not want to be police officers but want a specialism within the British Transport Police. Is there a danger that people who are interested in joining a transport police force will not feel encouraged to join Police Scotland, which would give them only a couple of weeks of extra training, as part of a general training programme to become a police constable? I see that Assistant Chief Constable Higgins is shaking his head, so perhaps we can come back to him after Chief Constable Crowther has spoken.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I am not sure that I am qualified to speak about what the future might hold; I think that Assistant Chief Constable Higgins has talked about, and will talk about, Police Scotland's plans.

What I know about the current people in the British Transport Police is that they specifically

joined the BTP. They could have joined a geographic force, but they did not do so, and they are proud to be transport police officers. If they transfer, they will continue to be proud transport police officers and they will continue to deliver a great service.

One of the interesting challenges for me—indeed, it is a challenge that we share with Police Scotland—will be the transition period. We do not yet know what impact there might be on recruitment in that period, when there will be the prospect of transferring into Police Scotland. It might not be a problem or it might be a disincentive to people joining. We simply do not know. We will need to work through that.

In our submission we say that at some stage there might well be a case for our discussing the issue with Police Scotland. If gaps begin to appear, either through challenges with recruitment or existing BTP officers seeking to transfer to the England and Wales part of the BTP, we will need to fill those gaps, because I must continue to deliver policing until such time as it is not my responsibility. There might be circumstances in which we need a conversation about secondees coming to us, under my direction and control, during the transition period.

We do not yet know how things will play out. We have identified the issue and we must plan for it jointly as we go forward.

**The Convener:** Just to be clear, is it Police Scotland's intention to have a dedicated transport police unit? Would there be an option for people from the British Transport Police to join that unit and would there be a guarantee that they would not be deployed elsewhere, even if there was pressure on numbers in another part of Police Scotland? At the moment, they work for the British Transport Police, they are on the railways and they have the necessary expertise.

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** I will answer that question, and I will address Mr Ross's points. As I said earlier, I can give an assurance that for any member of the British Transport Police who transfers into Police Scotland, we will respect their right to police the railway environment until they retire, and we will not move them elsewhere unless they volunteer to do so. Would they, on an ad hoc basis, be removed from their station to police the community beat in Cathcart? No, they would not. However, if we had a major incident—heaven forbid—would they be deployed to support policing that? Potentially, yes they would.

Is it our intention to have a bespoke transport unit within Police Scotland? Absolutely. We see it as sitting alongside our road policing unit. They would be two separate entities under that overarching command. We would train every

officer, and would give transport officers the two to three weeks' training that all BTP officers in Scotland currently get in addition to their initial 11 weeks.

**The Convener:** I understand that, but I think that we are muddying the waters a bit. Although that is a good thing to do, it does not begin to meet the expertise of the trained unit. You have said that your intention is not to deploy to other areas anyone who had transferred from the BTP. If new members join the specialist unit who are already in Police Scotland, would they be deployed routinely if there was the need?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** I do not follow. New members of what?

**The Convener:** Will there be a distinction between the 284 officers who are currently employed in Scotland by the British Transport Police and officers who might join the unit? I understand that you are saying that, until those current officers choose to retire, they would not be deployed elsewhere. What if other officers join the unit from Police Scotland? Would they be deployed to other duties if that was deemed to be necessary?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** No, they would not, because they would be treated no differently from the road policing unit. They will be a bespoke specialist unit that is dedicated to policing the rail network, and we would have to maintain the service level agreement that we have with the rail providers. I am saying that we will train every officer and every new recruit to have the awareness and ability to operate in the rail environment, but we will maintain a specialist unit of 284 officers—or however many we determine will be appropriate with the rail transport providers—and the officers in that unit will receive additional specialist training to allow them to carry out crash investigations. There will be a strong and clear parallel with how our road policing unit currently operates in policing the road network.

**The Convener:** That is helpful. There are a number of supplementary questions.

**John Finnie:** My question is about training. I accept that individuals' knowledge is time limited, but it certainly was the case that British Transport Police officers undertook exactly the same training as geographic force officers. At the moment, as I understand it, when British Transport Police officers have completed their time at Tulliallan they go off to do another intensive two-week or three-week course. When you talk about additional training, do you mean exactly the same two or three weeks, and is that why you referred to seeking the assistance of the BTP in provision of that training?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Yes. All officers of the BTP and Police Scotland currently complete the 11-week initial training course at the Scottish Police College at Tulliallan. Thereafter, Police Scotland officers go to their divisions and British Transport Police officers have an additional three weeks of training. We want to replicate that three weeks of training at the Scottish Police College, so we will rely heavily on the assistance of the BTP to develop the course so that we can deliver it.

**John Finnie:** We currently have a cohort of officers who are British Transport Police officers, which you have undertaken to maintain within the railway policing environment, but people will retire or leave for various reasons. It could be argued that you are supplementing that diminishing resource with additional resource.

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Yes, but we have to look ahead—284 officers can get swallowed up very quickly by retirements and transfers. We have to plan for the high turnover that Chief Constable Crowther alluded to. That is not unique to the BTP; there is always high turnover in units of that sort of small number. We have to plan for that reduction and make sure that we have appropriately trained and equipped officers who are able to step in, fill the gaps and take up the roles.

**John Finnie:** Finally, on deployment of Police Scotland officers and British Transport Police officers, is it the case that there were officers from the previous constituent forces who were not enthusiastic about the move to a single police service in Scotland but who subsequently moved from one end of the country to the other—literally—as a career development choice?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Yes.

**John Finnie:** Thank you.

**Ben Macpherson:** On the back of some of the points that were made earlier, I note in the BTP's written submission a commitment to work constructively. That will be hugely welcome, should the will of Parliament be to proceed with implementation of this devolution.

Charlotte Vitty made a statement about wanting to highlight risks in good faith in order to address those risks, and Mr Higgins spoke about the risks, as well. Can you elaborate on what high-level discussions are taking place, what procedures are being put in place and what mechanisms are being developed to address some of the risks that you highlighted in written evidence and in today's evidence?

**Charlotte Vitty:** The main areas of work are within the joint programme board and in the seven individual workstreams underneath it. Within our

business, the BTPA has mirrored that structure exactly to ensure that we are driving out those areas in order to make sure that we are communicating effectively with the programme board. We have mirrored the structure in terms of resource from the authority and resource from within the force, so that we are capturing the governance and authority requirements, as well as the operational elements of the business. We then bring that back to the programme board and share it with our colleagues around the table.

**John Foley:** I will respond as well, if I may, Mr Macpherson. The programme board is made up of representatives from the SPA, the BTPA, the Scottish Government and the Westminster Government. The BTP and Police Scotland have also recently joined the process. They were not involved earlier because a lot of the board's work concentrated on the legislation and what might be required, so there was a heavy civil service involvement in that.

As Charlotte Vitty mentioned, there are seven workstreams that could almost be described as shared workstreams. The SPA and the BTPA are involved in some—there is a bit of a mix. A risk register has been set up, and the meetings are regular—the next one is towards the end of this month—and well attended. I am on the programme board, as is Charlotte, so there is senior representation and we are managing the process effectively and to a timeline.

**Charlotte Vitty:** It is important to make it clear that some of the emerging risks for BTPA business are happening to us here and now. We have to change how we work and negotiate some of our commercial contracts because—for example—there is no point in signing a five-year national contract for IT service delivery when we have to make sure that we are agile enough to deal with a devolution date. The risks that are emerging are about us communicating effectively with the Scottish Police Authority, but also being able to manage our own business with the pressures that we currently face.

**Ben Macpherson:** Throughout all those mechanisms and discussions, is there a shared sense of good faith and of constructive, collaborative spirit and determination? Is that paramount to all sides?

**John Foley:** Yes—there is an open forum. We are able to share our views with each other and identify areas where we think that we need to work to overcome potential difficulties. The project is managed well, as you would expect, under the circumstances.

**Charlotte Vitty:** We have brought in a specialist resource to work and support us in the process. It is in no one's best interest not to come to the table

and work together, so that is absolutely what we are doing.

**Ben Macpherson:** Thank you for that reassurance.

**John Foley:** I will give Mr Macpherson a sense of where the SPA is. Momentum has picked up quite a bit over the past couple of months; I have officers attached to the work, and the feedback from them is that their collaboration and co-operation with colleagues across the group has increased significantly. That suggests that there will be momentum, as we move forward.

**Ben Macpherson:** Working together is having a positive effect.

**John Foley:** Yes.

11:15

**Stewart Stevenson:** Douglas Ross raised the issue of the risks associated with the putative loss of 400 officers in Scotland over the next few years. Has the loss of 28,400 police officers in England and Wales since 2013 translated into any risks or difficulties for the British Transport Police?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I will make two points on that. The resources that have been lost to policing in England and Wales have been lost primarily from geographic forces. A report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary that was published last week speaks of many of the difficulties that are now being found in police forces, and there are clear arguments and viewpoints about whether the two things are connected.

However, the BTP has encountered a different experience. As you know, the train operating community directly funds our budget—the police authority independently sets the budget and it is levied on the industry according to a charge model through police service agreements. We also enjoy around £20 million of extra funding through enhanced police service agreements that those fairly hard-nosed commercial people decide to fund in addition to what we already do because of the value that they see in what we deliver. As I said to HMIC, which is currently inspecting us, the graph that shows the financial profile for many geographic forces in England and Wales tends to go downwards whereas ours has gone upwards. That is an interesting commentary on the service that people believe they get from the BTP.

**Stewart Stevenson:** I was not aware of the £20 million in enhanced payments. What does that buy? Please be as brief as possible, as we are now short of time.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** It can buy a range of different facilities. Some police service

agreement holders buy in specific neighbourhood teams in areas where they want to enhance what we do. That work might involve police community support officers, which we have in England and Wales but not in Scotland, or police officers. In other circumstances, we have been doing a lot of work with Network Rail to identify how we can contribute to its effective running of the network. I seconded one of my best chief superintendents to Network Rail for a year to help it to develop a national disruption strategy, the net result of which is around £8 million of additional investment by Network Rail in the BTP and infrastructure. We work very closely with Network Rail to avoid disruption.

As part of our wider public value ethos, we believe not only that a safe and secure—that is, low-crime and high-confidence—network is a good thing but that a reliable network is a good thing because it is good for the economy and for social inclusion. We have some interesting initiatives with Transport for London whereby it gives us additional funding and we have response police officers who are trained to act as medics while they are out answering normal calls. The London underground has a particular challenge with people being taken ill on trains during the rush hour and, if a tube train is held up, trains back up in the tunnels and a critical incident is created behind it. We therefore deploy police officers with medical training who are able to take command of an incident and get people off the train to allow it to keep running while they give immediate first aid before the ambulance service arrives. We also have what are, in effect, joint incident resolution teams that include engineers and response people from the railway. They turn up together, having enjoyed the advantage of the blue-light route to a scene, and all the people who can solve an incident quickly are on the scene at the same time, working closely together.

Those initiatives are steeped in a clear financial case for keeping the network running.

**Fulton MacGregor:** How will the recruitment for the new transport unit work? Will individuals have the opportunity to state a preference for that at the point of entry to the police, or will the approach be more that people will choose to specialise in that when they are in the police and will then be supported and trained to do so?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** I think that it would be a combination of both. As part of maintaining the numbers in the transport unit, future applicants to Police Scotland would be made well aware during the application process that they could find themselves posted to the transport unit. Currently, any new recruit coming into Police Scotland is asked to nominate three preference areas where they wish to work.

Normally, those are geographical areas—for example, someone might say that they wish to work in Glasgow, Lanarkshire or Ayrshire. I have not thought through whether we will include the opportunity straight off the bat for them to go into the transport hub. That is a fair suggestion. However, I am absolutely certain that the approach will be similar to the recruitment process for road policing, to keep with that parallel. We invite people to apply to undertake duties in road policing and, if they are successful, we give them bespoke training such as advanced driver and crash investigation training. I see a similar path into the transport unit.

Equally, it might potentially be stated as a preference at the initial point of application. New recruits might be able to say that their first preference is to work in Glasgow, but actually they would quite like to work in Glasgow in the transport unit. I do not see any huge difficulty with that.

**The Convener:** I will finish with one last cross-border issue, which is the issue of Tasers. In September 2006, the BTP announced that it had decided to deploy Taser devices to some of its officers in Scotland. Taser devices give officers extra ability to protect themselves and the public when faced with extreme violence, and every force in England and Wales, including the BTP, routinely deploys them. However, the policy in Police Scotland is to permit only authorised firearms officers to deploy Tasers. How will that play out?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** You are absolutely correct that currently in Police Scotland only my authorised firearms officers carry a Taser. Should integration occur, one of the first things that I will have to do is to assess the threat in the wider rail network and see whether it is still appropriate, in terms of the wider Police Scotland threat assessment, to continue that practice.

**The Convener:** So, potentially, different policies could be deployed north and south of the border. The major question then is that, if Tasers are deployed on one side of the border and not by Police Scotland transport officers on the other, will that make them more vulnerable?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** No. I would take a slightly different perspective—I would say that there would be a consistent policy for all Police Scotland officers. The availability of Tasers on the rail network could be delivered by the existing firearms officers. That assumes that, when we carry out the threat assessment, we agree that it is still appropriate to continue the carriage of Tasers in rail stations.

**The Convener:** Perhaps an authorised firearms officer will be seconded to the unit or will be a permanent member of it. I am not exactly sure

how that would work. Am I seeing problems where none exists?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Come April 2019, if the decision is made, the fundamental question would not be whether there should be Tasers in stations in England and Wales and no Tasers in Scotland; it would be about Police Scotland's capability to meet every threat in every environment, whether in Sauchiehall Street or Union Street or in Central station or Waverley station. It would be about the best way to mitigate threat, which could be to continue to have a Taser deployment in train stations. Currently, Police Scotland issues Tasers only to authorised firearms officers and it is my understanding that the British Transport Police has Taser-trained officers but that they are not firearms officers.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** Mr Higgins is right. The people who carry Tasers in the British Transport Police are not exclusively firearms officers, although we have firearms officers and they carry Tasers as well.

As Mr Higgins said, Police Scotland will need to make its assessments of the threat and the risk. Our approach is based on a transport-specific strategic threat and risk assessment of terrorist threats. We seek to counter 24 identified attack methodologies and we deploy resources and capability according to those attack methodologies that we think are pertinent to the rail transport sector. I will not give you the full history lesson, but Britain's railways have been attacked by terrorists in three centuries and we know that—internationally—transport hubs and transport networks are attractive targets for terrorists because of the economic impact of any attack and because they are crowded places. That is what drives our deployment.

As responsibility passes, so does the responsibility for making those assessments, and I am sure that Mr Higgins will make appropriate judgments.

**John Finnie:** I make the point to the two operational police officers that risk assessment is an on-going process. An idealist such as me wants a situation in 2019 in which not only the Tasers are locked in a cupboard, but the guns are, too. That is perhaps unlikely, but it is entirely academic to be discussing a threat level two years hence. Do the operational police officers agree?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** The short answer is yes, Mr Finnie.

**Douglas Ross:** Although I understand Mr Finnie's argument, we should always look at all the eventualities and possibilities. Would it be a concern for the BTP if we decided not to have Taser-carrying officers routinely deployed in stations in Scotland, despite them being deployed

south of the border? Would there be a concern that there could be a higher risk of a terrorist attack taking place, or starting, north of the border?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I am not sure that I would make that link. We would work really closely with Police Scotland to understand the nature of the risk and we would come to appropriate decisions about how to deal with it. An interesting element—it goes back to the earlier point about cross-border operations—is what happens to officers from either force who transcend into the other jurisdiction carrying Tasers or firearms. When we look at some of the attack methodologies that are used elsewhere, we see that all sorts of tactics have to be deployed. One of the key things that we have to sort out is what interoperability looks like and how it is best managed.

**The Convener:** The important thing is that it has been raised. It is very much in the forefront of the issues that are to be considered.

**Douglas Ross:** Will the BTP's determinations south of the border play into any Police Scotland thought processes and will it be a consultee? If the BTP still believes that there is a threat and it requires officers south of the border to be armed with Tasers, will that come into your or your successor's considerations?

**Assistant Chief Constable Higgins:** Yes, it will come into the assessment.

**The Convener:** Has the BTP received a response to its request for "urgent clarification" on future cross-border policing arrangements?

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I have received an assurance from the Department for Transport that that will be dealt with in the legislative arrangements.

**The Convener:** So you have not received a response yet, but you hope that it is imminent.

**Chief Constable Crowther:** I am assured that it will be dealt with and I am keen to see the legislative draft.

**The Convener:** Thank you very much; that concludes our questioning. It has been a very helpful session.

The next committee meeting will be on 14 March, when we will hear from the Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs on the Limitation (Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Bill and we will continue to take evidence on the Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill.

11:29

*Meeting continued in private until 13:01.*



This is the final edition of the *Official Report* of this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

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