Mr Humza Yousaf
Minister for Transport and the Islands
T3.24
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

21 March 2018

Dear Mr Yousaf

I am writing to you in respect of the integration of BTP Scotland into Police Scotland. As you will be aware, we have welcomed the decision of Scottish Ministers to pause the integration process to allow for a period of re-planning.

Full integration is undoubtedly complex, and several crucial issues have emerged during the process. We are informed that the decision to pause was based on advice from the Joint Programme Board that a successful and safe integration could not be delivered by April 2019. Furthermore, the MTT had identified several areas of work associated with higher than acceptable risks, those being:

- The current lack of resources, skills and data;
- The continuing failure to agree key asset transfers;
- The lack of progress on the development of Railway Policing Agreements;
- The inadequacy of Police Scotland ICT systems and processes
- The continued lack of clarity over transferring BTP officers terms and conditions; and
- Concerns over the rising cost of integration and its impact on both Police Scotland and BTPA’s transformation programmes.

The decision to suspend full integration clearly reflects Ministers’ commitment to Parliament to keep the programme under review and to give any issues raised by the Joint Programme Board due consideration.

On Monday 19 March 2018 the BTP Federation, in company with colleagues from TSSA, attended a JPB Partners meeting, where we were informed that full integration would continue, albeit with an as-yet-unknown timetable.
Given the challenges that remain and workflows that have barely progressed in recent months, we are questioning why, ahead of the re-planning process, a full-scale review of the decisions made to date isn’t being carried out.

Throughout this process assurances have been given repeatedly about minimal transition costs, potential for efficiencies, manageable pensions costs and engagement with staff and stakeholders. As yet, these reassurances have not been delivered and the risks associated with full integration continue to grow.

There is now considerably more information available than perhaps existed when the original decision was taken to proceed with full integration and we now feel that the pause offers the Scottish Government and JPB a timely opportunity to consider alternatives to full integration.

An option we believe should be considered is that of a commissioned service model (similar to the second of the three options proposed for the devolution of transport policing in Scotland). We believe such a model can achieve the aims of devolution/integration without the related costs and disruption associated with full integration. We believe that continuing with full integration regardless of the known facts is neglectful and very damaging to the future of Railway Policing not only in Scotland but also in England and Wales.

Minister, I respectfully request that you reflect on the alternatives to full integration and give serious consideration to a commissioned service model which we believe would be supported by many including the BTP Federation. If this model is not going to be considered, we would be grateful to hear the reasons for this.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Goodband
Chairman
British Transport Police Federation

CC.
Nicola Sturgeon MSP, First Minister of Scotland
Michael Matheson MSP, Justice Minister
The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, Transport Minister