

# Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Economic and Community Development Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
MEETING DATE:	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2013
TITLE:	Community Safety Plan: British Transport Police
WARD:	ALL
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	

## 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The report invites the Panel to hear from British Transport Police (BTP) on the work they do in protecting the public and staff on our trains and rail stations.
- 1.2 The Panel will receive a presentation on our local BTP Neighbourhood Policing Team based in Bath Spa rail station and, hear about how they reduced an overall 43% reduction in reported crime and anti-social behaviour since 2009 for Bath and North East Somerset.
- 1.3 The Panel will be invited to an open question and answer session at the end of the presentation.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the Community Safety Partnership work with BTP, First Great Western and Network Rail and to raise questions in relation to the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour for Bath and North East Somerset.
- 2.2 To note future challenges on our local rail stations, to include Keynsham and Oldfield Park.
- 2.3 To assist with future BTP community safety campaigns and identify where further support can be generated by the council and other agencies.
- 2.4 To make any recommendations to Cabinet or Responsible Authorities Group.

## 3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

## 4 THE REPORT

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the role of BTP - *to police Britain's railways, providing a service to rail operators, their staff and passengers across the country* - and the work they do in Bath and North East Somerset to keep levels of disruption, crime and the fear of crime as low as possible.

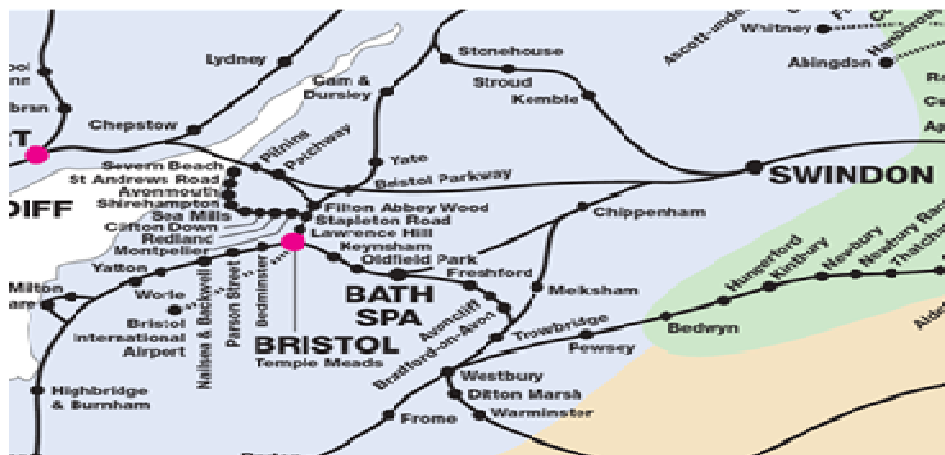
4.2 Every three years, the British Transport Police Authority, publish their four key objectives, which run from 2013 to 2019. These are:

- Helping to keep rail transport systems running
- Helping to make the railway safer and more secure
- Deliver value for money through continuous improvement
- Promoting confidence in use of the railway.

4.3 First Great Western is the main train operating company in this area and other passenger train companies running through the locations are Arriva, Cross Country and South West Trains. The vast majority of BTP funding comes from the train operating companies such as First Great Western and Network Rail; however they do accept funding from the Home Office for specific projects.

4.4 For Bath and North East Somerset we have a dedicated BTP Neighbourhood Policing Team situated in Bath Spa, looking after our rural stations such as Oldfield Park, Keynsham, Freshford and Avoncliff, protecting the public and staff. The team involves 2 Police Constables, 6 Police Community Safety Officers and Special Constables.

4.5 The Neighbourhood Policing Team, although based at Bath, cover some of the other major stations in the area. To the east, on the main London line, Chippenham and Swindon stations, and on the Portsmouth line, Westbury taking in the smaller stations en-route as far as Trowbridge and Warminster, outlined below.



4.6 Overall, Bath Neighbourhood Policing Team is covering nearly 100 miles of track and the railway property associated with it. The main focus is at Bath Spa, based in the middle of the heritage city. It receives many tourists and welcomes two large universities and, is celebrated for its shopping, Christmas market and late night economy and, of course, commuters travel daily to work.

4.7 For Bath Spa rail station, 2013 has proved to be a very busy year, particularly the summer months attracting a noticeable increase in passengers using the station. At 5.9 million passengers last year, Bath and although Bath has only two platforms (compared with Bristol Temple Meads which has 15 platforms), it is ranked the seventh busiest First Great Western rail station – after Paddington, Reading, Bristol Temple Meads, Slough and Ealing Broadway.

- 4.8 BTP has a dedicated Independent Advisory Group (IAG) where the members provide advice, guidance and constructive feedback to Staff and Officers within the Wales & Western area. IAG members advise on both internal processes within BPT, and on external service delivery. A good example will be learning from the First Great Western station and train staff and passenger groups, who raised sombre concerns over the drunkenness and anti-social behaviour of late night revellers, many arriving drunk and leaving the city back into Swindon and Wiltshire.
- 4.9 From a crime point of view, the area covered by the Neighbourhood Policing Team has a mixed proportion of offences ranging from serious crime such as robberies, trespass, assaults, sexual offences, graffiti and anti-social behaviour. It also suffers from a high proportion of low level type crime such as low level disorder, various thefts and stone throwing.
- 4.10 In 2009, crime and anti-social behaviour reached its highest level for Bath Spa and this was a growing trend within Bath City and the night time economy. Working with the Community Safety Partnership, BTP worked tirelessly to undertake a wide range of crime prevention campaigns in making our station and travel safe and secure. First Great Western also funded additional BTP staff on the station and this established the Neighbourhood Policing Team for Bath. By December 2012, they had reduced all reported crime and anti-social behaviour by 43%.
- 4.11 Much of this success is due to increase in BTP presence and the concentrated efforts to focus on identified hot spot areas, mainly on a Friday and Saturday evenings. The introduction of Body Cameras has been the biggest impact where we have seen 100% reduction on staff attacks and, gathering evidence for victims - when using enforcement and court action. The presentation will highlight this work.
- 4.12 BTP Neighbourhood Policing Team holds quarterly PACT meetings at the Royal Hotel Bath (next meeting Tuesday 10th December 2013 at 11.00hrs. Current PACT/Team priorities are:
- ASB and drunkenness at Bath Spa (priority on Friday and Saturday nights)
  - Cycle thefts – various locations
  - BTP days of action – advice to passengers and crime prevention
  - ASB and ticketless travel on Taunton line
- 4.13 Mental Health and Suicide continues to be a great concern for BTP. Suicides affecting the railway network across Britain have increased 46% over the previous 12 months. BTP and Network Rail have been working with the Samaritans for some time and they have now set up a Strategic Mental Health and Suicide Prevention team to aligned mutual support services to those at risk and, to deliver the best support to vulnerable individuals, families and staff. Network Rail also provides training to staff and volunteers, such as the Street Marshals and Street Pastors – scheduled for 2013/2014. For Bath and North East Somerset Council and Community Safety, we have a multi-agency Suicide Prevention group where Network Rail is a valued member representing BTP.
- 4.14 The station and surrounding area have under-gone massive commercial reconstruction and this will impact on the neighbourhood and staff - this will be closely monitored for the next couple of years.

## 5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 The presentation relates to the work of British Transport Police and is subject to their risk assessment processes.

## 6 EQUALITIES

6.1 Promoting equality and opportunity for all groups and individuals across the equality strands and, promoting community cohesion is integral to this work.

## 7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Divisional Director, Strategy and Performance; Democratic Services.

## 8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

8.1 Community Safety, Section 17 and 115 Crime and Disorder Act 1998; Other Legal Considerations.

## 9 ADVICE SOUGHT

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Council Solicitor) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance), had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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<b>Background papers</b>	Web site link <a href="http://www.btp.police.uk/">http://www.btp.police.uk/</a>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	