House of Commons
Transport Committee

Security on the railway

Fifth Report of Session 2014–15

Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report

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The Transport Committee

The Transport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Transport and its Associate Public Bodies.

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The Reports of the Committee and the formal minutes relating to that report are available in a printed volume. Written evidence is published on the internet only.

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Summary

Crime on Britain’s railways decreased year-on-year over the past decade. That trend shows the effectiveness of the specialist rail policing provided by the British Transport Police (BTP). We were impressed by the BTP’s commitment to tackling crime while minimising delays for the travelling public.

Despite the welcome decline in overall crime, we identified areas where the BTP could improve its performance. The British Transport Police Authority (BTPA) is the body with responsibility for setting the BTP challenging but achievable targets to tackle crime on the railway. The BTPA must fulfil its remit and avoid any perception that it is too close to the people whom it should be holding to account.

We concluded that the BTP model of developing specialist policing skills and securing funding from transport providers might usefully be applied to other transport modes, such as aviation. Such an approach could minimise delays, maximise security and reduce the cost of policing to taxpayers.

In the course of our inquiry, we heard that vulnerable children and young people are often found in and around railway stations. We were therefore surprised to learn that the BTP currently has no targets in relation to child protection. The Department for Transport, the BTPA, the BTP and the charity sector should work together to tackle this emerging issue by examining the available data and reviewing current practice.
1. Introduction

1. A railway that is safe from crime and that passengers perceive to be safe from crime is essential for Britain’s society and economy. In this inquiry, we examined:

- Recent trends in crime and perceptions of crime on the railway;
- The measures that train operators and Network Rail are taking to reduce crime and perceptions of crime;
- The role of the British Transport Police (BTP) in reducing crime, including whether the BTP’s current strategic plan is sufficiently challenging;
- Relationships between the BTP, train operators and Network Rail;
- Collaboration and partnership working between the BTP, other police forces and the Home Office;
- Progress in tackling cable theft on the railway.

2. The inquiry began with a call for written evidence on 23 January 2014. The Committee conducted its first oral evidence session on 7 April 2014, when we heard from criminologists, the charity Railway Children, the Rail Delivery Group and Passenger Focus. The inquiry concluded on 23 June 2014, when we questioned a Department for Transport (DfT) Minister and official, the BTP and the British Transport Police Authority (BTPA). We are grateful to everyone who took the time to submit evidence to our inquiry.
2 Governance and accountability

British Transport Police

3. Specialist railway police—the BTP—patrol Britain’s railways and light rail systems.¹ That responsibility includes Network Rail infrastructure and stations, the London Underground, Docklands Light Railway, High Speed 1, the Sunderland line of the Tyne and Wear Metro, Midland Metro, Croydon Tramlink, Glasgow Subway, Emirates AirLine and Eurostar.² In total, the BTP polices some 10,000 miles of railway track and more than 3,000 railway stations and depots.³ It is not responsible for policing the majority of the Tyne and Wear Metro, Manchester Metrolink or any other railway with which it does not have a service agreement.

4. The BTP currently deploys some 2,900 police officers and 350 police community support officers. Those officers are supported by special constables and BTP-accredited security personnel, who are employed by the railway companies.⁴ The BTP has an annual budget of around £280 million. That sum is provided by train operating companies, Network Rail, Transport for London and other companies which use the BTP’s services.⁵ Each of those transport providers “makes a contribution commensurate with the services provided to it.”⁶ Transport providers pay for specialist railway policing. That is a cost-effective arrangement for taxpayers, if the BTP meets the needs of both the railway industry and the travelling public. That requires effective governance and accountability.

British Transport Police Authority

5. The BTPA is an independent body which holds the BTP to account for its performance. It sets the BTP’s targets, monitors the BTP’s operations and agrees the BTP’s budget. The BTPA’s duties are similar to those of the Scottish Police Authority or of a Police and Crime Commissioner in England and Wales. The DfT told us:

The BTPA sets objectives for the policing of the railway before the beginning of each financial year and publishes a plan setting out the arrangements proposed for policing during the year. In addition, it publishes a plan every

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¹ The BTP has no jurisdiction in Northern Ireland.
² DfT (SOR 002) para 2; Emirates AirLine is a cross-Thames cable car in East London. BTP polices Eurostar services in conjunction with French National Police.
³ BTP, About BTP
⁴ Q164
⁵ DfT (SOR 002) para 4
⁶ DfT (SOR 002) para 7
three years setting out medium-term and long-term strategies for railway policing; and publishes an annual report on policing of the railways.  

6. The members of the BTPA were appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport. Those appointments by the Secretary of State contrast with the governance of local police forces, where there are elected Police and Crime Commissioners. We examined the BTP’s accountability to the public partly because the BTP is funded by the rail industry, but also because the members of the BTPA are appointed by the Secretary of State. We specifically raised the question whether passengers were adequately represented on the BTPA.

7. The DfT was confident that the structure of the BTPA guaranteed that both the rail industry and passengers would be adequately represented:

The British Transport Police Authority itself is very prescribed in the sense of the membership of that authority needing to include people who have experience and expertise in the particular areas the police will be interested in. You have English, Welsh and Scottish interests covered. You have police staff and passenger interests covered. You also have the industry with full representation.

However, the BTPA told us that it did not “have reserved places for anybody as such.” The BTPA’s duties are set out in the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, which stated that the BTPA must include “at least four persons who have knowledge of and experience in relation to the interests of persons travelling by railway.” The 2003 Act also stipulated that “the Secretary of State shall ensure that the number of members is an odd number neither lower than 11 nor higher than 17.” The BTPA currently has 12 members.

8. Passenger Focus is the statutory, independent consumer watchdog representing the interests of rail users throughout Britain. The BTPA stated:

Currently I do not have anybody from Passenger Focus on the authority. We used to, but they retired, and we do not have anybody at the moment. We have some vacancies.

The Secretary of State for Transport must appoint at least one new member of the BTPA in order to comply with the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003. In addressing that point, the Secretary of State should appoint a member from Passenger

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7 DfT (SOR 002) paras 8 to 10
8 Q171
9 Q88
10 Q167
11 Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, schedule 4(2)
12 Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, schedule 4(1)
13 Q171
14 Passenger Focus (SOR 007) para 1.1
15 Q165
Focus, which is the statutory body representing the interests of rail users and is therefore best placed to advance the interests of passengers.

9. We observed that the BTP and the BTPA have a close relationship. For example, they collaborated to provide our inquiry with a joint written submission.\(^\text{16}\) That submission explained that “the Authority together with BTP” set targets on policing the railway.\(^\text{17}\) It also stated that the “BTPA and BTP exercised professional judgment” in determining the BTP’s strategic objectives.\(^\text{18}\) However, the Minister told us that it is the BTPA’s responsibility to set strategic targets for the BTP.\(^\text{19}\) It is important that the BTP and the BTPA work together effectively, but the BTPA must be mindful of its obligations to oversee the work of the BTP and to drive performance by setting realistic but challenging targets on crime reduction and crime prevention. The BTPA must avoid any perception that it is too close to the people whom it should be holding to account.

Department for Transport

10. The BTPA and the BTP are accountable to the DfT. The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 provided the Secretary of State with the power to direct the BTPA and the BTP in relation to strategic priorities, targets and performance indicators. The Secretary of State can also require the Chief Constable to submit reports and to supply specific information. The Minister stated:

To this point in time the powers have not been used in any extensive way because the current system is working effectively and well. There is always the potential to use the powers to intervene … around strategic priorities, targets and performance indicators, but there really has not been a need to use them.\(^\text{20}\)

11. The BTP’s is an unusual British police force, because, unlike most other British police forces, it is not overseen by the Home Office. We explored whether that arrangement might disadvantage the BTP. In particular, we were concerned that the needs of the BTP might not be addressed in Home Office legislation. The BTP referred to the complexity of dealing with two Departments, one of which is particularly focused on policing and one on transport. Sometimes we need to make sure that we are speaking to both teams to ensure that that ties in. There are one or two issues where there have been some legislative anomalies. They arise primarily because, when legislators in the Home Office are looking at new

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\(^{16}\) BTP (SOR 010)
\(^{17}\) BTP (SOR 010) para 4.4
\(^{18}\) BTP (SOR 010) para 4.7
\(^{19}\) Q91
\(^{20}\) Q91
12. The Minister acknowledged the importance of clear channels of communication between the DfT and the Home Office. She adduced a specific example of liaison between the two Departments to address the BTP’s legislative requirements:

There was extensive contact between both Departments about a clause in the Home Office’s Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill … to put BTP officers on the same footing as officers from other police forces in relation to the possession of firearms.

13. On the question whether the BTP should be overseen by the DfT or by the Home Office, the BTP concluded:

Broadly I think the system works. We have very close links with the Home Office and the Department for Transport, and are able to bridge those gaps quite effectively.

We are satisfied that the BTP should be a DfT responsibility. The DfT must maintain and develop its liaison links with the Home Office to ensure that the specific operational requirements of the BTP are addressed in future Home Office legislation.
3 Strategy

Risk-based rail policing

14. In line with its specialist remit, the BTP has developed a risk-based approach to policing the railway that is designed to meet the needs of both the railway industry and the travelling public. It set out how it implemented that approach:

Over the last 10 years BTP has assessed over 10,000 bomb threats and not once recommended closure. The financial saving for the rail industry achieved by avoiding unnecessary closure of the system through this approach is assessed in the billions of pounds. The wider economic benefit to the UK economy is higher. The investigatory methods BTP has developed also bring significant benefit to passengers and industry in terms of reducing delay and improving safety. For example, when BTP is the first responder to a fatality incident, closures last half the time, and cable theft incidents are dealt with in a third of the time when BTP is first on the scene.25

15. We explored the question whether the BTP’s commitment to minimising delays might compromise security. The BTP pointed out that its first priority is passenger safety:

We have established over many years a very mature relationship with the operators. I think they respect and understand that, if we ask for something to be done in the interests of security or preventing crime, we have taken into account the impact that it has. If we ask them to do it, there is a reason why we are asking them to do it … that is what comes from the strength of a specialised transport policing organisation that demonstrates on a day-to-day basis that it understands the context and is able to balance the public interest, which must always prevail, against the impact of our actions on the industry.26

The BTPA added that “this is a public police force; it is not G4S … at the end of the day, this police force has its own accountability and responsibilities as a public police force.” We were convinced by the case for a risk-based approach to policing Britain’s railways. We were impressed by the BTP’s commitment to tackling crime while minimising delays for the travelling public.

Counter terrorism

16. The BTP has proven counter-terrorism capabilities. The DfT observed that those capabilities were “strikingly evidenced during the terrorist attacks on London in 2005” and highlighted the “BTP’s role in helping to keep London running in the most testing

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25 BTP (SOR 010) para 1.4
26 Q153
circumstances.”27 The BTP has developed its approach to managing the risk posed by terrorism over several decades. It pointed out that its method was “developed through all the terrorism threats through the ’80s and ’90s”.28 It added that it rarely recommends to the train operators that they should close if we get a bomb threat. On the rare occasions that we do, they take it very seriously because they know that we apply a lot of thought and risk management to that decision.29

17. We examined how the BTP accessed the necessary intelligence to inform its counter-terrorism policing. We were concerned that the BTP might not have access to all relevant information because it did not fall within the purview of the Home Office (see paragraph 11). The BTP reassured us that it is linked to all the national and regional structures. We are very closely linked, for example, with the Metropolitan Police and the counter-terrorism command, as well as with regional counter-terrorism structures throughout the UK. We are very closely linked into the security services and various other sources of intelligence data.30

The BTP has a proven record of successful risk-based, counter-terrorist policing, which depends on accurate and up-to-date intelligence. The BTP must maintain and develop its liaison links with other police forces and the security services to ensure that it has the latest intelligence on major threats.

18. Until 2010, the DfT maintained the Transport Security Directorate (TRANSEC) to co-ordinate its departmental-level response to terrorist and other major threats to transport. We examined how the DfT addressed such threats following the closure of TRANSEC. The DfT explained how it had reallocated its resources to cover different types of transport:

The expertise still exists; it is just that it exists in different places. Rather than there being a single unit known as the Transport Security Directorate, a number of different units now look after different aspects for the different modes.31

Following the reorganisation of TRANSEC, it is important that the DfT maintains sufficient expertise at a departmental level to address major threats to both the railway and other transport modes.

27 BTP (SOR 010) para 6.1
28 Q153
29 Q153
30 Q128
31 Q83
Expanding specialist transport policing

19. Unlike railways, roads, ports and airports are patrolled by local police forces rather than by specialist police. For example, Gatwick airport is patrolled by Sussex Police because it is in Sussex.32 We identified how the BTP’s transport specialism allowed it to maximise security while minimising delays on the railway (see paragraph 14). We therefore explored whether specialised policing might usefully be applied to other transport modes. In particular, we questioned whether the BTP’s remit might be extended to encompass airports. The BTP stated that there

are transferrable skills for managing risk in the railway and managing risk in any transport network. I often look at extensive road closures when there has been a fatal road traffic collision and wonder how our approach might be applied in those sorts of circumstances. There is definitely scope. It is for others than me to decide whether that is the right thing, but we would be very willing to look at it.33

20. The DfT was not attracted by the notion of expanding specialist transport policing. It argued that

much of the work around securing airports and ensuring that they are safe, particularly from terrorism and from serious crime … takes place beyond the airport perimeter. There is more logic to say that it should be for the local forces who are policing outside the airport perimeter also to be responsible for policing the airport itself.34

We were not convinced by that argument, because the BTP successfully polices railway stations while having no jurisdiction beyond those stations’ perimeters. In its 2004 review of the BTP, the DfT expressed a more positive view on expanding the BTP’s remit to include airports:

Policing of airports involves the policing of a transient population and requires policing to be undertaken within a commercial environment. The risk management regime in the aviation industry, particularly with regard to bomb threat categorisation, was also likely to reflect the regime the BTP had developed on the railway network. BTP’s specialist skills could therefore be readily adapted to the policing of airports.35

21. There may be value in applying BTP’s specialist approach to policing the railways to other transport modes, such as aviation. In particular, if the BTP’s funding structure and close working relationship with transport providers were replicated at airports, it could minimise delays, maximise security and reduce the cost of policing

32 Q120
33 Q157
34 Q118
35 DfT, Review of the British Transport Police, para 3.12
for the taxpayer. The DfT should examine the case for expanding the remit of the BTP to include (a) aviation and (b) other modes of transport.
4 Outcomes

Crime statistics

22. The total number of crimes committed on the railway has declined in the past decade. There were 10 consecutive years of crime reduction up to 2013-14. The BTP told us:

It is predicted that by the end of 2013/14 there will have been a reduction of 25,717 offences (40%) in crimes on the overground railway since 2003/04. In terms of crimes per million passengers, the rate has fallen from 63.33 in 2003/04 to an expected 24.24 for year end 2013/14. Non-notifiable crime has fallen from 40.49 to 22.21 crimes per million passengers over the same period. In 2012/13 Transport for London’s rail-based systems had 9.4 crimes per million passenger journeys and the predicted figure for 2013/14 shows a further 16% decrease. BTP’s overall detection rate remains constant at around 40%, which compares favourably with that of forces in England and Wales.

Bearing in mind that the number of people travelling on the railway has significantly increased in the past decade, the overall figures on crime reduction are encouraging and could be taken as evidence of effective performance by the BTP. However, we noted the marked decrease in the number of crimes committed in locations other than the railway in the past decade, which suggested that wider societal factors were also significant.

23. Looking beyond the headline figures, we examined the number of crimes and detection rate in relation to particular offences committed on the railway. Comparing the statistics from 2003-04 with those for 2013-14, we identified that

- Robbery reduced by 82% with a current detection rate of 42%;
- Line of route offences reduced by 72% with a current detection rate of 24%;
- Motor vehicle/cycle offences reduced by 35% with a current detection rate of 37%;
- Theft of passenger property reduced by 53% with a current detection rate of 7%.

24. In contrast with the overall trend in crime reduction on the railway, incidents involving assault and aggravated racial harassment have increased in the past five years. The number of common assaults increased by 6% from 3,632 in 2009-10 to 3,832 in 2012-13. Projected figures for 2013-14 show that racially aggravated crimes increased by some 13%.
addition, the most recent statistics showed a 21% increase in sexual offences on Britain’s railways in 2013-14.\textsuperscript{42} That increase might, as the BTP has argued, indicate a greater willingness by the public to report such crimes. Nevertheless, the BTP must continue to address emerging trends in crime through targeted initiatives, such as Project Guardian.\textsuperscript{43}

25. We questioned why the BTP achieved a detection rate of only 7% in cases involving the theft of passenger property. The chief constable pointed out the intrinsic difficulty in investigating such cases:

If someone gets on a train at St Pancras and travels to Leeds, and somewhere on that journey they have their purse or luggage stolen, do you record it at the end destination or at the beginning? That makes it very hard to analyse. If you look particularly at the London underground, where there are 1.1 billion passenger journeys a year, and the congested nature of it, the vast majority of these offences occur inside the train when people are very crowded together. You can begin to see that there is not an awful lot of evidence to go on. First of all, we do not know where the crime was committed. Often the property is not recovered, so you can’t narrow it down. Nobody knows it has even happened until some time afterwards; it might be an hour afterwards. Although there is CCTV in a number of carriages, when you are talking about a very packed train, it is incredibly difficult to identify offenders.\textsuperscript{44}

We acknowledge the practical difficulties in investigating theft offences but remain concerned by the BTP’s 7% detection rate, which seems remarkably low.

26. The BTPA highlighted a factor which it believed skewed the detection rate in cases involving the theft of passenger property:

In order to get insurance payments when you have lost your mobile phone, you have to report it to a police force. We get reports of mobile phones that have been stolen because without a crime number from us, if they think they have lost it or that it has been stolen on the railway, individual citizens cannot claim insurance … I am not making any aspersions, but it is quite important to bear in mind that the insurance companies don’t pay up without a reference number.\textsuperscript{45}

We were disappointed by that comment from the BTPA. The BTPA should focus on driving the BTP’s performance rather than making unsubstantiated allegations about the victims of crime.

27. We asked the Minister whether she was concerned by the 7% detection rate in cases involving the theft of passenger property. She told us that she had “not personally discussed
it with the chief.” 46 She added that she would “go away and have these conversations.” 47 The DfT is ultimately responsible for the BTP’s performance (see paragraph 10). The Minister acknowledged that “there is always the potential to intervene around strategic priorities, targets and performance indicators.” 48 We welcome the overall decrease in crime on the railway. However, there is no room for complacency, because the high-level statistics mask increases in serious crimes involving assault, sexual offences and racial harassment and areas where the BTP can improve its performance. The BTPA must fulfil its core function of setting the BTP challenging but achievable targets.

**Fear of crime**

28. We welcome the public’s increased use of the railway in the past decade. 49 If the railway is to sustain its popularity, the public must perceive that it is a safe way to travel. The Rail Delivery Group explained how passengers’ perceptions of their personal safety were fundamental to the viability of Britain’s railways:

> Fear of crime is an important issue for the rail industry, especially at stations. Passenger growth, and the general health of the industry, could be undermined if stations were to become places people would rather avoid. As an illustration, compare the new Kings Cross with the rather dingy and unwelcoming old station. 50

29. We heard that the reduction in crime on the railway has been mirrored by an increase in passengers’ perceptions of their own personal security. Passenger Focus surveys showed that 76% of passengers rated their security as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ in autumn 2013 compared with 68% in 2008-09. 51 The Rail Delivery Group highlighted a similar trend in the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS):

> There has been a significant improvement in passengers feeling secure at stations, going from 62% in 2007 to 71% in 2012. Similarly, security on trains has increased from 70 to 79% over the same period. These contrast with the welcome but smaller improvement in overall passenger satisfaction from 81% to 85% over the same period. 52

30. Passenger Focus observed that “the NRPS only reflects the views of those passengers who are actually travelling by train, so in effect it is talking to people who have already accepted the potential risks to their personal security associated with train travel.” 53 That

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46 Q115
47 Q117
48 Q91
49 DfT, *Rail Trends Great Britain 2012/13*
50 Rail Delivery Group *(SOR 009)* para 4
51 BTP *(SOR 010)* para 2.9
52 Rail Delivery Group *(SOR 009)* para 12
53 Passenger Focus *(SOR 007)* para 2.4
observation corresponds with research conducted by the Applied Criminology Centre, University of Huddersfield, which found that improved security measures result in increased demand for rail travel.\textsuperscript{54} In other words, some people would like to travel by train but do not do so because of their fear of crime. That provides a commercial incentive for train operating companies to invest in passenger security.

31. The Applied Criminology Centre examined security measures at 322 stations. It found that the following measures reduced crime at railway stations:

- the presence of station staff;
- the presence of CCTV;
- measures to improve lines of sight across the station;
- the presence of ticket barriers, and the ability to secure station property and spaces therein;
- the extent of routine activity associated with the presence of shops and cafes.\textsuperscript{55}

In line with that research, the BTP told us that “more uniformed officers will be available to patrol at stations and on trains when the public feel most vulnerable—these late night deployments will provide a visible presence to reassure passengers and reduce the fear of crime.”\textsuperscript{56}

32. The Applied Criminology Centre highlighted the relationship between security at railway stations and security at railway station car parks. It found that investment in car park security had no influence on vehicle crime unless it was accompanied by a corresponding investment in station security, in which case the combined effect produced a 48% reduction in vehicle crime.\textsuperscript{57}

33. Secure Stations is a BTP-accredited scheme for managing security and adopting measures to reduce crime at railway stations. The scheme was launched in 1998. In 2011, there were 1,245 Secure Stations in Britain. Safer Parking is managed by the British Parking Association on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Approximately 400 stations have gained Safer Parking accreditation for their car parks. The increase in the number of accredited stations and car parks has been driven by the inclusion within rail franchise negotiations of commitments by train operating companies to extend the proportion of stations covered by the two schemes.\textsuperscript{58}
34. The DfT, the BTP, Network Rail and train operators must address not only crime, but the fear of crime in order to maintain and grow the railway. Visible policing is a proven means of enhancing passengers’ perceptions of security. We therefore welcome the BTP’s plan to deploy more officers on patrolling railway stations at key times. To fulfil its oversight role, the BTPA must monitor the implementation of the BTP’s deployment of more officers at railway stations and examine how this affects passengers’ perceptions of their personal security.

35. We approve of the inclusion of compliance with the Secure Stations and Safer Parking schemes as a factor in rail franchise negotiations. However, Secure Stations are of little benefit if passengers cannot get to and from them safely. To secure full value from such investments, improvements to railway station security should be accompanied by complementary improvements to station car parks.

**Vulnerable children and young people**

36. We took compelling written and oral evidence from the charity Railway Children on the experience of vulnerable children and young people at railway stations. Railway Children described the risks to children and young people in and around railway stations:

> It is no mystery why King’s Cross and Manchester Piccadilly have red light areas just outside the train stations. You have transient populations, mostly of men, and that is where people will gather when they know there are vulnerable people and people passing through. It is why pick-pockets and others are there as well—to exploit people who have a number of things on their mind and are not concentrating … We know that some of the sexual exploitation taking place on concourses is gang-related and quite organised in some areas.  

37. Because the BTP patrols railway stations and engages with people who are travelling without tickets, it encounters a significant number of vulnerable children and young people. Between April 2012 and August 2013, the BTP picked up 90 runaway children at Euston, 185 runaway children at King’s Cross, 115 runaway children at Paddington, 239 runaway children at Liverpool Street and 140 runaway children at Euston Underground. The BTP told us that the problem is not confined to London and that its officers encounter vulnerable children and young people in major railway stations across Britain. Railway Children pointed out that those figures, which are the best available, may be unreliable and could underestimate the problem:

> We sent out an FOI to BTP a number of months ago to see how many young people who were picked up … were subsequently found to be missing … We
got the response from BTP that it would be too costly to look through all of those because a lot of them were manual written forms.63

The BTP acknowledged that “the data is undoubtedly there” and agreed to “go away and look at how we can make the data more visible.”64

38. Accurate data are crucial to, first, defining and, secondly, solving problems. We welcome the BTP’s assurance that it will examine its available data on runaway children and young people. We look forward to seeing the results of its analysis, which will inform not only our inquiry but the work of charities such as Railway Children. If that analysis of the BTP’s data requires significant resources, the DfT should make them available to facilitate the protection of vulnerable children and young people.

39. We were surprised to learn that, unlike other police forces, the BTP is not subject to specific targets in relation to child protection. Railway Children stated:

If you look at police outside BTP, they have their own specialist child protection and they have links with their local authorities as part of the safeguarding board. I always find it quite strange that the BTP people I have been in contact with do not seem to have those connections.65

The BTP explained that its national remit posed specific challenges in relation to child protection, because, unlike local police forces, it had to deal with local authority child safeguarding boards from across the country.66

40. We asked the BTPA why it had not set the BTP targets in relation to child protection. The BTPA replied:

What would be our targets? … They [runaway children] have come from somewhere. Their home county is where they have targets … We could certainly think about how we should deal with them in custody and care. One of the things that we have been thinking about is how we communicate with their local forces … to send them back to where they will be long term. These are very often long-term issues … Let the record show that I give you my assurance that I will take it away and look at it.67

Although the welfare of a runaway young person or child is the long-term responsibility of a local authority safeguarding board, it is the BTP’s short-term responsibility while that young person is in its care. The BTPA must set the BTP appropriate targets in relation to child protection to bring the BTP in line with other police forces and to capture the extent and importance of the BTP’s responsibilities.

63 Q25
64 Q142
65 Qq27-28
66 Q136
67 Qq140-141; Q146
41. We asked the Minister whether she was aware of the issue of vulnerable children and young people at railway stations. She replied:

No; I focused much more on the broader issue of vulnerable people, without particularly identifying vulnerable children. As a consequence of this meeting, I will make sure that I am getting as briefed on vulnerable children as I have been on vulnerable people in the more generic sense.68

Child protection at railway stations is an emerging issue. We commend Railway Children for raising it, which allowed us to alert the Minister. The DfT should ensure that the BTPA sets the BTP appropriate targets on child protection. In addition, the Minister should convene a seminar involving departmental officials, the BTP, the BTPA, Railway Children and other NGOs and the Transport Select Committee to ensure that policy and practice in this area is fit for purpose.

Cable theft

42. The theft of power supply and signalling cable delays passengers, and cable is expensive to repair and replace.69 We have maintained a focus on cable theft throughout this Parliament, notably in our Cable theft on the railway Report which we published in January 2013.70 Incidents of cable theft have declined since the publication of that Report. The Minister stated:

During 2011-12, there were 845 cable theft incidents. That cost the industry around £12 million and caused 344,000 delay minutes, which is obviously significant. Moving to 2013-14, we had 179 cable theft incidents costing the industry about £2.5 million with about 68,000 delay minutes.71

43. In our Cable theft on the railway Report, we recommended that “the Government amends the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964 and introduces measures to improve the audit trail for metal purchases, by requiring that sellers prove their identity before metal is traded at scrap yards.”72 The DfT explained how it implemented our recommendation:

The Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013, which came into force in October 2013, aims to clamp down on rogue traders and gives local authorities and the police new powers to inspect premises. Additionally legislation now prohibits cash transactions, creates a register of scrap metal dealers, and requires that

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68 Q111
69 DfT (SOR 002) para 27
70 Transport Select Committee, Fourteenth Report of Session 2010-12, Cable theft on the railway, HC 1609
71 Q114
72 Transport Select Committee, Fourteenth Report of Session 2010-12, Cable theft on the railway, HC 1609, Recommendation 3
all transactions are fully verifiable/auditable, including through a requirement to provide name and address details.\textsuperscript{73}

The Minister told us that that legislative change was “absolutely crucial” in tackling cable theft.\textsuperscript{74} We welcome the sharp decline in incidences of cable theft, which has translated into reduced delays for the travelling public and decreased costs for Network Rail.
Conclusions and recommendations

**British Transport Police**

1. Transport providers pay for specialist railway policing. That is a cost-effective arrangement for taxpayers, if the BTP meets the needs of both the railway industry and the travelling public. That requires effective governance and accountability. (Paragraph 4)

2. The Secretary of State for Transport must appoint at least one new member of the BTPA in order to comply with the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003. In addressing that point, the Secretary of State should appoint a member from Passenger Focus, which is the statutory body representing the interests of rail users and is therefore best placed to advance the interests of passengers. (Paragraph 8)

3. It is important that the BTP and the BTPA work together effectively, but the BTPA must be mindful of its obligations to oversee the work of the BTP and to drive performance by setting realistic but challenging targets on crime reduction and crime prevention. The BTPA must avoid any perception that it is too close to the people whom it should be holding to account. (Paragraph 9)

**Department for Transport**

4. We are satisfied that the BTP should be a DfT responsibility. The DfT must maintain and develop its liaison links with the Home Office to ensure that the specific operational requirements of the BTP are addressed in future Home Office legislation. (Paragraph 13)

**Risk-based rail policing**

5. We were convinced by the case for a risk-based approach to policing Britain’s railways. We were impressed by the BTP’s commitment to tackling crime while minimising delays for the travelling public. (Paragraph 15)

**Counter terrorism**

6. The BTP has a proven record of successful risk-based, counter-terrorist policing, which depends on accurate and up-to-date intelligence. The BTP must maintain and develop its liaison links with other police forces and the security services to ensure that it has the latest intelligence on major threats. (Paragraph 17)

7. Following the reorganisation of TRANSEC, it is important that the DfT maintains sufficient expertise at a departmental level to address major threats to both the railway and other transport modes. (Paragraph 18)

**Expanding specialist transport policing**

8. There may be value in applying BTP’s specialist approach to policing the railways to other transport modes, such as aviation. In particular, if the BTP’s funding structure
and close working relationship with transport providers were replicated at airports, it could minimise delays, maximise security and reduce the cost of policing for the taxpayer. The DfT should examine the case for expanding the remit of the BTP to include (a) aviation and (b) other modes of transport. (Paragraph 21)

**Crime statistics**

9. We welcome the overall decrease in crime on the railway. However, there is no room for complacency, because the high-level statistics mask increases in serious crimes involving assault, sexual offences and racial harassment and areas where the BTP can improve its performance. The BTPA must fulfil its core function of setting the BTP challenging but achievable targets. (Paragraph 27)

**Fear of crime**

10. The DfT, the BTP, Network Rail and train operators must address not only crime, but the fear of crime in order to maintain and grow the railway. Visible policing is a proven means of enhancing passengers’ perceptions of security. We therefore welcome the BTP’s plan to deploy more officers on patrolling railway stations at key times. To fulfil its oversight role, the BTPA must monitor the implementation of the BTP’s deployment of more officers at railway stations and examine how this affects passengers’ perceptions of their personal security. (Paragraph 34)

11. We approve of the inclusion of compliance with the Secure Stations and Safer Parking schemes as a factor in rail franchise negotiations. However, Secure Stations are of little benefit if passengers cannot get to and from them safely. To secure full value from such investments, improvements to railway station security should be accompanied by complementary improvements to station car parks. (Paragraph 35)

**Vulnerable children and young people**

12. Accurate data are crucial to, first, defining and, secondly, solving problems. We welcome the BTP’s assurance that it will examine its available data on runaway children and young people. We look forward to seeing the results of its analysis, which will inform not only our inquiry but the work of charities such as Railway Children. If that analysis of the BTP’s data requires significant resources, the DfT should make them available to facilitate the protection of vulnerable children and young people. (Paragraph 38)

13. Although the welfare of a runaway young person or child is the long-term responsibility of a local authority safeguarding board, it is the BTP’s short-term responsibility while that young person is in its care. The BTPA must set the BTP appropriate targets in relation to child protection to bring the BTP in line with other police forces and to capture the extent and importance of the BTP’s responsibilities. (Paragraph 40)

14. Child protection at railway stations is an emerging issue. We commend Railway Children for raising it, which allowed us to alert the Minister. The DfT should ensure that the BTPA sets the BTP appropriate targets on child protection. In addition, the Minister should convene a seminar involving departmental officials, the BTP, the
BTPA, Railway Children and other NGOs and the Transport Select Committee to ensure that policy and practice in this area is fit for purpose. (Paragraph 41)

**Cable theft**

15. We welcome the sharp decline in incidences of cable theft, which has translated into reduced delays for the travelling public and decreased costs for Network Rail. (Paragraph 43)
Formal Minutes

Monday 1 September 2014

Members present:

Louise Ellman, in the Chair

Sarah Champion
Jim Dobbin
Jim Fitzpatrick
Jason McCartney

Mr Adrian Sanders
Chloe Smith
Graham Stringer
Martin Vickers

Draft Report (Security on the railway), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 43 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fifth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Monday 20 October at 4.00 pm]
Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the Committee’s inquiry page at www.parliament.uk/transcom.

Monday 7 April 2014

Dr Richard Batley, Principal Research Fellow and Director of Research and Innovation, Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds, Dr Andrew Newton, Senior Research Fellow, Applied Criminology Centre, University of Huddersfield, and Andy McCullough, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Railway Children

Mike Hewitson, Head of Passenger Issues, Passenger Focus, and Charles Horton, Managing Director, Southeastern, and Policing and Security group member, Rail Delivery Group

Monday 23 June 2014

Baroness Kramer, Minister of State, Department for Transport, and Steve Marshall-Camm, Head of Rail Sponsorship and Stakeholders, Department for Transport

Paul Crowther, Chief Constable, British Transport Police, and Millie Banerjee, Chair, British Transport Police Authority
Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the Committee’s inquiry web page at www.parliament.uk/transcom. INQ numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

1. Applied Criminology Centre, University of Huddersfield (SOR0006)
2. Applied Criminology Centre, University of Huddersfield (SOR0008)
3. British Transport Police Authority and British Transport Police (SOR0010)
4. Department for Transport (SOR0002)
5. First Capital Connect (SOR0013)
6. London TravelWatch (SOR0001)
7. National Union of Rail Maritime and Transport Workers (SOR0012)
8. Passenger Focus (SOR0007)
9. Rail Delivery Group (SOR0009)
10. Rail Delivery Group (SOR0014)
11. Railwaychildren (SOR0003)
12. Transport for London (SOR0005)
13. TravelWatch NorthWest (SOR0004)
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the Committee’s website at www.parliament.uk/transcom.

The reference number of the Government’s response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

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