



WMPCP West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

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Bob Jones,
West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner
Lloyd House
Birmingham

cc. Jacky Courtney,
Chief Executive, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

16/07/2013

Dear Bob

Safer Travel Agenda Item 24 June 2013

The Panel very much appreciated the attendance of you and the Safer Travel Partnership at last month's Police and Crime Panel and the wide ranging debate.

I enclose a report on the Panel's recommendations and trust that you will consider these as you develop the final version of the joint Transport Policing Plan.

We accept that some of the issues in our recommendations may not be entirely within your remit to resolve, but we felt it important to note our concerns and hope that the influence you can bring can help move on some of the issues to ensure our public transport network is safe, especially for the young people of the region.

The Panel felt that the scrutiny approach adopted, bringing in a range of experts into the discussion, was beneficial and intend to utilise that format again. We hope you agree this and in carrying out our support of the effective exercise of your functions we would welcome discussion about further topic areas.

As required under Section 28 of the Police and Social Responsibility Act we will post this report onto the Panel's website today or tomorrow.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Jess Phillips
Vice Chair, West Midlands Police & Crime Panel

West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

Report of Panel Scrutiny of the PCC's Role in Safer Travel in the West Midlands

24th June 2013, 2pm, Wolverhampton Civic Centre

A Introduction

A.1 The aim of the session was to consider:

How the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is working with Partners to further improve safety on public transport in the West Midlands. What further improvements would Panel members wish to see? Are there recommendations to be made to the PCC regarding the development of the proposed Joint Transport Policing Plan?

A.2 The Panel hopes that the recommendations made are felt to be supportive by the PCC and the Safer Travel Partnership as they develop the final Joint Transport Policing Plan for approval by the PCC and the Integrated Transport Authority in September 2013.

B Attendance

B.1 Members of the Panel in attendance were:

- Nick Drew, Lionel Walker and Cllrs Alden, Hossell, Jamieson, Lucas, Mattu, Meeson, Phillips, Smith, Tyler and Webb.

B.2 In addition to the Police and Crime Commissioner the following witnesses attended:

- Mark Babington, Safer Travel Partnership
- Inspector Lee Gordon, British Transport Police
- Superintendent Allan Gregory, British Transport Police
- Peter Coates, Managing Director, National Express
- Gordon Frost, Area Business Manager, Arriva Midlands Limited

B.3 The Panel is very grateful for all their contributions and honest reflection of the challenges. It made for a valuable discussion.

C Recommendations for the PCC

C.1 A number of recommendations follow which relate to issues discussed on 24 June 2013. Recommendations should not be taken as criticism of what is currently in place. Rather, the Panel's intent was to examine the issues as a fresh set of eyes and the recommendations are intended to improve safety on the transport network, passenger perceptions and also clarity within the Plan itself. We recognise the importance of public transport to the economy of the West Midlands and in addressing issues of social cohesion and service accessibility.

Recommendation 1 : Victims

Whilst the Panel supports the priority focus on repeat victims we also consider that reference to recognising the needs of all victims should be included in the Joint Transport Policing Plan.

The West Midlands Police have signed up to a victims' charter and pathway, ensuring that all victims are signposted towards appropriate victim support not just those where a charge is brought. Could you inform us as to whether British Transport Police has also signed up to this victims' code and pathway and if not, could you ask them to consider it?

Recommendation 2 : Young People

- i. We recommend that more weight is given in the Plan to young people as the statistics provided indicate that young people are predominantly the victims, as well as the causes of criminality and anti social behaviour on public transport.
- ii. We note the proposed action on education to help educate young people in the region. We would be interested in further information on this and how you measure its effectiveness.

Recommendation 3: Anti-social Behaviour and Low Level Nuisance

We fully agree about the negative impact of anti social behaviour on passenger perception and passenger use and the need to tackle this. Although anti-social behaviour is noted a number of times in the Plan the Panel considered that it was unclear that this also includes low-level nuisance activities, such as drinking, smoking of cigarettes and smoking of marijuana and that this also needs to be acknowledged in the Plan.

Recommendation 4: Alcohol

We are concerned about the use of alcohol on public transport and the apparent absurd anomaly that a potential passenger can be tackled about drinking at a bus stop in an alcohol free zone, but this power does not extend to once s/he gets onto a bus.

Given that we understand that the driver's role is not to provide guardianship of the vehicle, we have concerns about who has responsibility to tackle offences such as drinking on public transport and who enforces company rules relating to consumption of alcohol

We note an intent to lobby the Home Office for use of powers to tackle ASB and are interested to understand if alcohol is part of this. We would, of course, support that lobbying if additional powers are required.

We understand that this is not a change that can be implemented immediately, but would support the development of a long term plan to restrict alcohol consumption on public transport.

Recommendation 5: Feedback to Passengers

We note the work being undertaken to elicit passenger feedback to identify problems on the network and the roll out of the "See Something; Say Something" app in response to user feedback. We discussed the frustration of uneven feedback to passengers along the lines of "you said; we did". We note that feedback to passengers is noted as an action in the Plan, and in twelve months time would like to see that there has been a step change in this.

In particular social media provides opportunities for feedback and we would suggest that the Plan refers to this as well as noting its proposed use for engagement and promotion.

Recommendation 6: Driver and Operative Responsibilities and Training

We are aware of the vital role that drivers, conductors and other operatives play in the network and the professionalism that they display. We note that they are key to the issue of passenger reassurance and safety and feel this is an area where we would welcome some further information and further work. Safer travel has to mean it is safe for both operatives and passengers, and we note the view of bus operators about balancing the health and safety needs of both staff and passengers.

- i. The Panel would be grateful for further information on support to drivers in dealing with incidents. For the operators involved in the Partnership are there records of responses to drivers or conductors/"ticket collector" asking for backup? If so what do they indicate about the speed of a response once an operative phones or radios in?
- ii. We also suggest police responses are extremely important and are interested as to the data kept on these. Specifically we recommend that West Midlands Police and British Transport Police should prioritise attendance for agreed types of incidents.
- iii. We believe that it may be an area where sharing of good practice between operators would be beneficial and would urge the Partnership to support this.
- iv. Training for drivers and operatives is obviously important to help them provide reassurance and deal effectively with any form of aggression. We would welcome any support the Partnership can provide with this, although we acknowledge that this is a responsibility of the individual companies.

- v. We strongly advise that, if tendering of bus services is carried out, that radio contact for drivers is part of any specification. We understand that this may be difficult to achieve, and so would also ask you to use your influence with operating companies to ensure that drivers and other operatives across the network can always advise of their need for additional support.
- vi. We are concerned about how passengers' expectations of the driver's role are managed, as passengers can get frustrated with drivers when they are not resolving issues on their bus because they are apparently instructed to remain in their cabs.

Recommendation 7: Conductors and Inspectors

On the issue of reintroducing conductors we recognise what was being said about cost effectiveness and health and safety of staff, but note that the level of incidents on the Metro where there are conductors is significantly lower.

- i. We would urge operators, backed by the Safer Travel Partnership, to consider reintroducing conductors on some selected bus key routes where this would be most effective in both increasing public confidence and bus use.
- ii. We also note that more visible use of inspectors would also provide support to drivers, deter those involved in criminal and anti-social behaviour and give reassurance to passengers.
- iii. We also note that passenger reassurance at bus and train stations is important in calming down potential incidents.

Recommendation 8: Passenger Champions

Passenger Champions are mentioned in the Plan. We would like to have further information as to the progress being made to ensure broad representation of the public transport using public and the impact they are having.

Recommendation 9: Purpose of the plan

Finally we note that as a Safer Travel Plan or Joint Transport Policing Plan there needs to be clarity for the public and Members across the region if this Plan just relates to the public transport network. If it is possible a note about where plans for improving other modes of travel safety across the region, and especially the role of the PCC in that would be useful.

However, if you wished to extend the Plan's remit to cover safety in all forms of travel that would also be welcomed.

D Next steps

- D.1 We would welcome a response from the PCC as to which of these recommendations are accepted and how they are to be included into the Joint Policing Plan and the PCC's own work. Please could you send us a further draft of the Plan prior to publication?
- D.2 We would like to know how the Plan is going to be monitored to ensure our public transport network becomes even safer and that passenger perceptions reflect this.
- D.3 The Panel requested that this topic be added to the work programme in 12 months and invited witnesses and the PCC to return to consider progress made.

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