

Transport Committee

Oral evidence: Rail Safety, HC 694

Monday 16 January 2017

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 16 January 2017.

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Mrs Louise Ellman; Clive Efford; Robert Ffello; Karl McCartney; Mark Menzies; Huw Merriman; Will Quince; Iain Stewart.

Questions 252 - 304

Witnesses

I: Adrian Hanstock, Deputy Chief Constable, British Transport Police, and Charlotte Vitty, Interim Chief Executive, British Transport Police Authority.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [British Transport Police](#)
- [British Transport Police Authority](#)

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Adrian Hanstock and Charlotte Vitty.

Q252 **Chair:** Good afternoon and welcome to the Transport Select Committee. Could you please give us your name and position?

DCC Hanstock: Good afternoon, Chair and Members. I am Adrian Hanstock, deputy chief constable of BTP.

Charlotte Vitty: I am Charlotte Vitty, interim chief executive of British Transport Police Authority.

Q253 **Chair:** What types of crime would you say present the greatest danger to rail passengers?

DCC Hanstock: That is clearly one for me. In hierarchy of risk, the biggest threat is terrorism. The challenge of protecting a network that is so wide and open, and the risk being so unpredictable, causes us the greatest level of concern. We have seen that most recently at North Greenwich. It is a very real threat that we have to counter.

In terms of more traditional crime, I know that protecting vulnerable people was a theme of the previous Committee. Focusing on people in crisis or at risk on the network, who can then be vulnerable to crime, is where we are putting our effort. Then there are the types of offences that cause people the most physical harm and have an impact on their confidence to travel—predatory sex offending and levels of violence, particularly where that affects railway workers. Volume crimes affect confidence: for example, the organised theft of cycles—when people get to the end of their journey and find their bicycle gone. We know we can have an impact on that, so we prioritise it as a volume-type crime, but the headlines are clearly about those that will cause the greatest level of harm and risk.

Q254 **Chair:** Recorded crime increased by 4% in 2015-16 after quite a number of years of falling figures. We are told that that increase might be to do with better recording rather than more crime. Do you think that is feasible?

DCC Hanstock: It is certainly a factor. We are very focused on making sure we have the most accurate data. We recruited a very experienced data registrar who previously worked for Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary. She brought some fantastic standards and rigour to what we did, so a minor increase—probably about 1%—can be attributed to housekeeping.

The other key initiative was opening up the ways people can contact us. We introduced the 61016 text message service as a very discreet way for people to be able to tell us what is happening. We saw that explode in interest and use. As a consequence, we recorded about 2,000 more crimes where people were advising us of things that had happened that



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perhaps previously they would not have told us about. I think those two things connected are the housekeeping issues. My other observation is that crime nationally increased for a variety of reasons, but much less in the transport environment.

Q255 Chair: Is the increase in reported sexual offences to do with people feeling more confident, or is it more actual offences? How can you tell which it was?

DCC Hanstock: That is where we were out of kilter with other police forces. We have recorded a greater increase in sexual offending. You are quite right to suggest that there was greater confidence in victims to tell us. We actively promoted our interests and concerns, and we have had a number of significant initiatives in the past two years. In London, we had Project Guardian, which was a collaboration between BTP, the Met, the City and Transport for London actively to encourage people who felt uncomfortable about behaviour, predominantly on the tube. That morphed into the national campaign Report It To Stop It.

Why is it important? To give a very quick example, quite a number of victims who contacted us, particularly on the text service, would say, "I've experienced this in my journey. I don't want you to do anything further, but I want you to know that it happened." For a variety of reasons they want to take that approach. Using that data, we were able to analyse trends. On one occasion, we saw a spike in indecent assaults—touching—on a tube line. We were able to put undercover officers on that line. They saw an offender who used the busy service and the lurching of the train to bump into people. Those people did not know that they had been victims, but watching his behaviour and seeing him do it three or four times in a row without getting off the service allowed us to intervene and arrest him. The point is that we encourage people to tell us more about what is happening to them even if they do not want to pursue it through to a criminal case in court, which we know can sometimes be quite traumatic. It allows us to focus our proactive behaviour in a much stronger way that protects people.

Q256 Will Quince: We have seen a dramatic decrease in cable thefts, which we know are particularly dangerous for the perpetrators but also cause huge disruption for hours on end for rail users. I am interested to know how much of that you put down to the work you have done with the BTP, or is it to do with market forces in terms of the value of the product once it is stolen?

DCC Hanstock: I am sure that will have an impact. I suspect the most significant effect has been the change in legislation to make it harder to sell that kind of material when it has been stolen, together with all the work that Network Rail and others have done to put identifying coding on cables. We have carried out significant proactive patrols, and we still do that. We have had a number of successful interventions where we arrested people through covert observations, with some significant hard work—through the night, if I am honest. It is still a focus of all our joint



teams; we continue to work with the infrastructure to look at likely hotspots and we do preventive patrols. We are looking at some emerging work involving new technologies, such as drones and remote cameras, which would give us greater vigilance across the whole network. I think it is a success story—an 88% reduction in the offence—but the knock-on costs and the impact of the delays that you referenced are significantly more than the value of the cable itself.

Q257 Will Quince: I completely agree. It is a big success story. Is there any key learning you can take from the policing work that led to such a decrease that can be spread across to other potential crimes committed across the rail network?

DCC Hanstock: The strength is in the partnership work; it is not just a policing issue. A similar point can be made on the theme around sexual offending that we have just spoken about. It is not something that the police alone can tackle. For many of the volume crimes that we experience, across the whole of three countries in effect, targeting them in the way I described for a single line is a little more difficult, because one or two offences at remote locations do not give enough of a pattern to be able to deal with them in a traditional policing way. We now have to work very closely with industry. We have crime prevention design advisers to look at ways of designing out exactly that, as well as broader engineering at stations, hubs and remote locations to remove those opportunities.

Q258 Robert Ffello: If I may continue that theme for a moment, the individuals or criminals committing those cable thefts will not have suddenly gone straight. No doubt some have been detained at Her Majesty's pleasure but will be out before too long, if they are not out already. What are they doing instead? Are they committing other crimes on the transport network or have they furthered their criminal careers elsewhere, in which case are you liaising with other police forces on the sort of crimes those individuals were involved in?

DCC Hanstock: It is a good question. We have not seen attacks on the infrastructure anywhere else, so it is not as though they have taken anything else of value. I suspect that similar criminality of that nature is not there. We have seen moves into new areas; cybercrime is the traditional way of describing it. We have seen moves into more organised use of skimming devices on machines. We have had some very successful interventions based on observations and intelligence. We have used all the opportunities that we have available, including covert methods. We had a recent successful international prosecution; those devices are being sold all over the world, and clearly they have a huge impact on the revenue of operating companies. There may be a little shift into that, but it is quite a sophisticated method, so it is not a natural shift.

We work with other forces and track those who are coming out from terms in prison. We intervene and let them know we are aware that they are out again and available to us. We do a lot of prevention work and



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offender management in that regard. Similarly, we work with police forces in the most affected regions. We do a lot of joint intelligence sharing and work to manage those people.

Q259 Chair: Ms Vitty, do you get involved in any of those areas as the police authority, or do you regard all of that as straightforward operational work?

Charlotte Vitty: Obviously, the force has operational independence, so how it polices areas is down to the chief constable, the deputy and the rest of the team. The authority looks at it when thinking about its strategy. Year on year, we pull together the policing plans with the force. That is done very much through local engagement with stakeholders, public and industry. It helps to inform our overall position on our wider-term strategy—our three to five-year goals and objectives—as well as how we look at our strategy moving forward, and whether there are any changes we have to incorporate. The emerging areas of risk the deputy talked about that are critical for us are around cybercrime and counter-terrorism. That is at the centre of our agenda at the moment.

Q260 Huw Merriman: Passenger numbers have almost doubled over the last 20 years. What effect does overcrowding at stations and on carriages have with respect to crime figures? I imagine it can be negative and positive.

DCC Hanstock: The congestion and growth of the network is not just about passenger numbers. The commercialisation of the whole network has changed the focus of the policing we have to do. Sticking with the commercial aspects, there are more shops and late-night drinking places. Some of our stations are now becoming venues in their own right, and that is changing the dynamic of how we need to police them. We are moving some of our shift patterns and policing teams to match that new demand.

In the broadest sense, the flash points come at rush hours, as you can imagine. When people are dashing to where they need to go, on many occasions they are less tolerant than they perhaps could be. We see an increase in reported violence without injury. It may be a shoulder barge or push by somebody dashing to get off a train or verbal violence towards staff, perhaps when barriers are not working as quickly as they can. We have seen an increase in those areas of crime. You are right. The flip side of that coin is that there is more vigilance, so when things go wrong people are able to tell us and intervene. Over the past weekend, we had a significant, disturbing incident on a train in north London where passengers intervened and assisted the victim in that case, so it works both ways.

The other matter that concerns us, as the chief executive mentioned, is keeping an eye on the terrorist impact. There are more people, more crowded places and more opportunity for risk and threat. We now have to shift our policing style to exercise contingencies for that, whether that is



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evacuation plans, response plans with our firearms teams or collaborative firearms responses with other forces. It means that the force has to shift its approach to risk in a very different way from what may have been traditional 20 years ago.

Q261 Huw Merriman: You touched on staff. Staff are on the frontline for the service. We have all witnessed them being on the frontline of some poor behaviour. What assistance do you get from the Crown Prosecution Service to make sure there really is zero tolerance in attacks on staff?

DCC Hanstock: Fortunately, serious attacks on police officers, PCSOs and rail staff are still rare. We do not have a huge number of significant injuries, but I would not like you to think they do not happen. In the past year, officers have suffered broken arms and broken legs in dealing, on occasion, with very minor issues—ticket discrepancies or people being told they cannot drink on services—that have escalated. In the past year, we have introduced a seven-point pledge to our officers about how they will be treated as victims in their own right. They will not be expected to investigate a crime against them. We will use the full, qualified investigative skills of the force, proportionate to the incident, to make sure that anybody who assaults staff, particularly rail workers, is brought to court. We have good success in that regard. We are very successful in the courts. Our performance nationally, both in the magistrates and the Crown court, is among the highest of all police forces in the country across all cases.

Q262 Huw Merriman: We have heard in this Committee that innovation on the rail network will perhaps lead to guards not being required on every single train. Do you have any evidence as to whether that negatively impacts passenger safety?

DCC Hanstock: It is a very difficult area for us to make too much comment on, but there is no detail we have to show any increase in violence towards passengers or staff as a result of that. Some of those trains operate across the network in different places already. We monitor, and we work closely with Government and train operating companies to make sure we have contingencies for the current action. Our primary interest is in the safety of people who are queuing, waiting or using alternative means of transport. Similarly, we will respond to any incident. Interestingly, in the most recent round of industrial action we have been very closely working with the Cabinet Office on contingency plans. We have not seen any offences at all during that period.

Q263 Clive Efford: Can I ask about the future of the BTP? Can you let us know where the proposals are for the BTP to be integrated into a national police force or infrastructure?

Charlotte Vitty: We have been involved in research and investigation into infrastructure policing, and we are yet to hear the outcome of that. It is clear that the British Transport police offers a unique service in the rail



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industry. We have been focusing on that, making sure we communicate it in the project on infrastructure policing, so that it is taken into account.

Q264 **Clive Efford:** Clearly, you are concerned about the specialist skills that might be lost as a result of integrating with a wider service. Can you elaborate a little more on how that is progressing, and on whether you are confident that the arrangements under discussion at the moment will not result in the loss of those specialist skills for our transport infrastructure?

Charlotte Vitty: We have been very active in involvement in infrastructure policing. Railway policing requires specialisms, and I think we have managed to put across our point very well. We are awaiting the outcome of that review, but we are very confident about how much we were able to put across in terms of what we do as a police force and what would need to be considered post any decision. Other than that, I don't have any information at the moment. I don't know whether Mr Hanstock has anything to add.

Q265 **Clive Efford:** Before you come in, Mr Hanstock, can I put one more question? You might want to integrate it in your comments. The proposals mean that the Department for Transport will no longer be responsible for policing the railway, so when you respond would you like to comment on that?

Charlotte Vitty: I do not think any decision has been taken about who would actually lead, or the outcome of the infrastructure policing review. We are all waiting for that.

Q266 **Chair:** Isn't that implied in the proposals in the consultation?

Charlotte Vitty: It is implied.

Q267 **Chair:** If it is, shouldn't you be alerting the stakeholders you spoke about to that possibility?

Charlotte Vitty: Yes.

Q268 **Chair:** Have you had a response from stakeholders? How have you gone about it?

Charlotte Vitty: We engage our stakeholders, the public and industry, at all possible points. The industry is very focused on supporting us as a police force, as it was in the Scottish devolution area.

Q269 **Clive Efford:** I was going to come to that.

Charlotte Vitty: The stakeholders are concerned, but we are able to allay their fears by talking about how much we have been involved. We have been part of the programme groups all the way through the infrastructure policing review, and have fed many documents into their decision-making process.

Q270 **Chair:** DCC Hanstock, can you tell us how you have been involved?



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Sometimes proposals like that sound a little convoluted. Someone somewhere has decided to change the way you operate.

DCC Hanstock: Indeed.

Q271 **Chair:** That is pretty fundamental.

DCC Hanstock: It is.

Q272 **Chair:** Surely it should be known much more widely than it is.

DCC Hanstock: It is quite right that there are a number of concerns across industry and the key stakeholders we work with, including some of the public. Sticking with the national infrastructure review, it is important for us to understand what the initial purpose and proposal was, which I think arose on the back of an intention to have a more flexible armed policing capability following the Paris terrorist attacks. That is quite interesting. Mr Efford spoke about specialist skills. While BTP has some firearms capability, that is purely in London at the moment, so our interest is in what a future national infrastructure force would need in terms of wider flex and capability to tackle that kind of threat.

You asked what particular involvement we have had. Both the chief constable and I attended sessions with DFT to talk through the implications. With regard to any broader stakeholder engagement, it is difficult to do that at the moment because we do not know what the proposal is. We received a letter just this week from the Cabinet Office saying that we should hear some of the proposals by the end of the month, which will allow for a bit more detailed understanding of what this means. It is similar to a conversation I had recently with the Scottish Government. If it was simple to integrate transport policing in every other force area, arguably it might already have been done. I moved to the BTP two years ago. I spent some time in the Met police and Nottinghamshire police before that. There are unique differences in this policing environment that I am sure many members of the Committee are aware of. The policing is tough in its own right. Dealing with everything from missing people to murder happens in transport policing, and has happened in the last two years.

What is different is the environment—understanding the risks, threats and health and safety elements—and being specially trained to operate in a transport way. Added to that is understanding the implications of how we do our business: the commercial imperative and the impact of what you do in one area of the network on what happens elsewhere, which may be hundreds of miles up country, based on decisions you make here. There is some true uniqueness about the British Transport police, which I think is treasured by the industry and stakeholders, and that is reflected in quite a bit of the feedback we have received about nervousness about some of these proposals.

Q273 **Chair:** What is your impression of the procedure now? You said a proposal was expected. When did you say that was? Next month?



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DCC Hanstock: I believe we will hear some of the detail by the end of the month.

Q274 **Chair:** What is the process? Is that the detail of the proposal or a decision? What you have spoken about could mean some very profound changes.

DCC Hanstock: It could.

Q275 **Chair:** There is very little public awareness of the proposals.

DCC Hanstock: That is correct, because nothing has been formally announced. Clearly, we are also a key stakeholder waiting to hear that. As a police force that operates in this way, we are in a bit of an invidious position, because of course we have to follow the will of Parliament, and we will do that; we recognise that our role is actively to support Government direction. We have given our professional opinion on what we feel are some of the risks, and some opportunities, through the whole consultation process. We have not yet seen the proposals that have been put to the Cabinet Office, and it is that detail that is due to be shared once some decisions have been made on options.

Q276 **Clive Efford:** A further change is taking place as well, isn't it? The Scottish Government are proposing to integrate the British Transport police with Police Scotland? What impact will that have on your capability to police the infrastructure in England and Wales, and how does it fit in with the current consideration of the two sets of proposals where we are waiting to hear the outcome?

Charlotte Vitty: The British Transport police are a devolved consideration, so we are now going through the process of supporting the devolution process to Police Scotland. At the moment, we are trying to understand the risks that will be felt by us throughout the whole devolution process and post-devolution. It is key for us to understand that. It is very important that we safeguard the remaining service for England and Wales, because it is a unique, special service and vital to the train operating companies within that area.

Q277 **Clive Efford:** But how is it going to work? How do you divvy up your funding structure between England, Scotland and Wales? Then there is transfer and sharing of information. An incident can happen on a train that starts in London and goes all the way beyond the border into Scotland. How is all that going to be co-ordinated?

Charlotte Vitty: You touch on many risks. We have several hundred more as well. If I may, I will talk high level and maybe the deputy can pick up some of the specific areas. I and the deputy sit on the programme board of the devolution project. We are looking at everything from the pension arrangements for officers, and whether they will fall under TUPE, to information sharing and much more, down to the level of charges. There are programme groups for every single category within that. We sit on every one of those boards to support that process,



because it is important not only to highlight the risk but to safeguard what remains. The deputy can pick up the operational side of the risks.

DCC Hanstock: The fundamental challenge is the removal of all jurisdiction for England and Wales BTP officers. We have no cross-border capability in Scotland at the moment, and we have made the Scottish Government aware of that. That is important for all policing: special movements, the royal train and the way we operate in investigating crime that could happen on a service. There are challenges. Our position has been to make the Scottish Government and Police Scotland aware of the way we currently do our business so they can consider how they will preserve the level of service, which was the aim set out by the devolution policy. It comes with difficulties. There will be dual reporting arrangements for the public and transport operators that currently do not exist. We will share information, but it takes time. Practically, an incident that occurs in Scotland can quickly—within minutes—impact on crowding, service and delay in the midlands and then in London. Currently, we are aware of that from the outset. If, for example, there is a fatality in Scotland, our control room managers will straightaway introduce contingencies at Euston or King's Cross. We will still be able to do that, but potentially it will be slower, and that adds delay to the service. I know those are areas of concern that the industry has flagged. How we mitigate and minimise them will be the challenge as we work through the streams that the chief executive has already mentioned.

Chair: These are potentially profound changes not just in relation to Scotland but in relation to England and Wales as well. Mr Hanstock, you mentioned earlier terrorism and perhaps different challenges. I want to follow that up as well.

Clive Efford: I have not finished yet.

Chair: Do you want to ask about Scotland?

Q278 **Clive Efford:** I want to come back to the last answer. We have had areas of concern about the restructuring that you have highlighted, in particular dividing the British Transport police between Scotland and England and Wales. Can you point to any benefits that come from that restructuring?

DCC Hanstock: This is difficult. We have not been able to identify any operational or economic benefits. In the short term, it will probably cost more. There will be a need for us to have, in effect, dual versions of the same thing. Police Scotland, for example, will need some headquarters functions that they do not have currently. We will need to keep those in England and Wales, but the cost will be higher because it is not defrayed across the whole service in the way we do it now. There are some economic challenges.

There are some staffing complications, but they are not impossible to sort out. On the point you made about plans for a single national infrastructure police force, the other side of it is that we are almost trying



to carve off part of it as well. We are working to ensure that when that happens it is seamless, and the service for passengers and rail staff is as unaffected as it possibly can be, but we are hugely aware of and alive to a whole raft of areas that will need to be assured for it to work effectively.

Q279 Iain Stewart: I would like to pick up the terrorism point you mentioned in previous answers. Clearly, the rail network is a potential target for terrorists. We have had incidents on the London underground. On the continent, there was the gunman on the Thalys high-speed train and the attack on the Brussels metro. I would be grateful if you could talk me through a little more how you see the threat changing and how you are adapting to that. Specifically, what is your relationship with other security agencies and your ability to fund what you wish to do?

DCC Hanstock: From the outset, I would say that we are completely embedded within all the national counter-terrorism arrangements. We work closely with the senior national co-ordinator at Scotland Yard. Because of the particular role of the railway and the risk and the attractiveness of that kind of attack, we have a close part in those arrangements within the national framework.

You mentioned a number of high-profile incidents that have a direct transport focus. We have a very sophisticated and well-evidenced strategic threat and risk assessment—STRA. It sets out the enduring threat to the railway. Specifically, it has detail of 24 direct methodologies that we have identified as potential ways in which terrorists could attack the network. We have some extremely well-exercised plans for those and have led national operations with other forces. We were part of the testing at Aldwych that you may have seen last year, and we had a significant lead role in Operation Red Kite in Wales, which looked specifically at an incident involving a moving train, so we rehearse and exercise those plans. We have put even more of our resourcing into counter-terrorism protection. Almost 10% of the force budget is directed towards that.

We mentioned the point about devolved responsibilities. I would probably be less worried about counter-terrorism policing or, indeed, serious crime, because when things are at their most extreme the police service and the agencies always come together anyway. We flex and respond, wherever in the country it may be. That is usually under the direction of the national co-ordinator, in any case; we cede that responsibility to the Met. The greater challenge is ensuring that there is the join-up and agility to protect the critical national infrastructure, and to train and brief thousands of staff to be the eyes and ears for what is out of place. You mentioned North Greenwich. That was escalated as it was due to the vigilance of a member of staff and the public. At that point, our specialist teams took over. As I said right at the start, this is our biggest enduring threat and risk, and the one we focus the most effort on. We are actively



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looking to extend some of our firearms capability to a northern hub so that we can flex further in that part of the country, if need be.

Charlotte Vitty: Would you like me to cover the budget area, from the authority's perspective?

Iain Stewart: Please do.

Charlotte Vitty: This is an emerging risk all the time. As the deputy mentioned, we all have to be agile in relation to that, especially at authority level, in assessing the strategic risk to our business and in the longer-term position that we take. The authority has been supporting the force by extending the resource spent in this area and has taken it relatively at risk, so we are now in the position of having to seek additional funding from the industry to support this area, because we have not yet been successful in securing any central funding from the Home Office for counter-terrorism measures.

Q280 **Iain Stewart:** I have two supplementaries, one to each of you. On the firearms point, I think I heard you say earlier that your firearms capability is limited to London. I am a little concerned about what would happen if we had on a UK intercity train the same sort of incident as happened on the Thalys train between Brussels and Paris. Could you say a little more about that?

On the budget point, we have had some evidence from the Rail Delivery Group that the industry's ability to provide additional funding in this area has been quite heavily stretched. Do you think it should be industry or more Government funding that gives you the extra capacity you need?

DCC Hanstock: On tactics and tactical response, as well as using our own dedicated resources, we exercise with other Home Office forces, as I mentioned, so that, as a national standard, all firearms units have the capability to understand that kind of threat, how to access trains and how to work with us to know exactly where an incident is unfolding and to be able to respond to it. That was the whole purpose of the exercise in the summer—to upskill other areas.

Our London focus at the moment is based purely on DFT categorisation of stations. As I mentioned, the crowded stations are those most at risk in that regard, so of course that is where we put our visible effort. Beyond that, we have 577 officers trained to carry Tasers. You may recall that at Leytonstone there was a bladed attack that was stopped when the offender was shot with a Taser. We have invested more in officers being able to respond to those kinds of attacks, which seem to be the bigger type of threat at the moment.

Beyond that, with our own resources, in London we are trialling firearms teams on patrol on trains. We already move about the network in London between the key hubs, using the underground. That has been an incredibly successful way of getting our teams more visible more quickly in the places where they need to be. I know that there was some concern



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that it might increase public alarm. We have tested that. We surveyed members of the public and passengers as they were travelling and have not had any evidence of that. They seem to accept that it is a necessary response to the reality of the threat we face.

Q281 **Chair:** Do you have the funds to deal with this as you think is needed?

Charlotte Vitty: I can take the two questions together. It was very widely publicised that £1 billion was being made available to the Home Office for counter-terrorism measures. We are not able to access any of that currently. However, the industry is very well aware that it benefits hugely from a lot of Home Office support in this area. Counter-terrorism is divided into four areas. We support two of those and the Home Office covers a large part of the others on our behalf. The deputy can go into details on the latest bomb threat on the Jubilee line and on how much the Home Office, as well as ourselves, sprang into action. What is challenging, and becoming more challenging, is that we have a very real emerging threat outside London and the business as usual part of the industry that stakeholders really want us to deliver. Doing that within a price promise of RPI is challenging and difficult. We need to explore how we can get support for this particular area if we also have to continue to deliver policing to stakeholders in their other areas of demand.

Q282 **Chair:** How is it decided? It does not sound very convincing or reassuring if you talk about a developing threat and say that you have to look at how you can get support. How is it addressed? Who decides?

Charlotte Vitty: The deputy can talk about the detail of how that is covered.

Q283 **Chair:** I want to know about the process, not the detail. Who does the deciding?

Charlotte Vitty: The budget is pulled together by the force. More and more, counter-terrorism is becoming a key part of that. As we mentioned, 10% of our budget is already set aside for it and goes towards supporting that activity on a daily basis. We do not decide that at authority level on a daily basis, but we support the budget requirements.

Q284 **Chair:** Who decides what your budget is? Is your budget funded principally by the industry—by the sector?

Charlotte Vitty: Yes, 100%.

Q285 **Chair:** Who decides how much it should pay—not how it is distributed, but how much? Do you decide as the authority? DCC Hanstock, can you tell us? Do you decide what the needs are? How does it work?

DCC Hanstock: As the chief executive points out, we are tackling an emerging contingency, rather than a threat. I do not want people to be alarmed that suddenly something is happening in the north that we need to counter, but we know that we need a greater contingency, based on what is happening in terrorism in world events and on the national threat



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level. We present that as a package of risk that the force needs to address, and we indicate how we think we need to carve up the budget to meet that risk. We are now putting more and more of our core funding—the funding that the authority gives us—into terrorism and countering terrorism, which means that other areas of the force have to absorb that cost.

Q286 **Chair:** But who decides how much that budget will be—not how it is carved up, as you say, or distributed? Who actually decides what the budget will be?

Charlotte Vitty: The authority sets the budget envelope for the force on a yearly basis, based on a force application for a budget.

Q287 **Chair:** You set the budget.

Charlotte Vitty: Yes. The authority does that.

Q288 **Chair:** Then it has to be paid for.

Charlotte Vitty: Yes. We are also responsible for delivering the charges to the industry and collecting those charges from it.

Q289 **Will Quince:** Terrorist attacks on our rail network have been somewhat of a concern. For me, the three biggest areas are as follows. First, there are the rail control centres. When I visited one, I found that it was like a fortress, so I was somewhat reassured by that. The second is stations. Especially when we have congestion or issues on the line, there can be thousands of people in a very confined space. In London, certainly, there has been huge reassurance with armed officers and a clear police presence at mainline stations. That is very much welcomed.

The third is the one that worries me most. Recently, we have seen across Europe terrorist attacks involving domestic vehicles. We have obviously seen attacks with aircraft. More recently, we have seen trucks or lorries used. The thing that concerns me most is level crossings. We have trains that can carry up to 1,000 people at peak times and that are hurtling at huge speeds, with level crossings where we just have flimsy barriers. That is a major concern as far as I am concerned. I am interested to know from your perspective what can be done to try to mitigate the risk. What training has been provided to those in a control centre to enable them to spot some of the signs that may be able to stop such an attack happening in the future?

DCC Hanstock: I wish it was an easy one to answer. It is often described as Martini terrorism, if you will forgive the phrase, because it can happen any time, any place, anywhere. We do not know; we cannot predict it, as will be all too familiar to you. Having an open network, in the way we do, running lines that criss-cross a small country, opens up those kinds of vulnerable points.

We do a lot around level crossings. We have a large number of Network Rail-funded mobile safety vehicles that allow us to target different



hotspots or risk locations so that we can put in preventive and disruptive mitigations, not just for terrorism, but for trespass and for people who are offending by not abiding by crossings, with the risk that that brings. Network Rail is investing in fixed cameras at key locations, which we can view in our CCTV centre, as well as the ROCs—the regional operation centres—that were mentioned. Beyond that, we have now embedded police inspectors from BTP in those centres. They can make a policing operational decision very quickly on what they see in Network Rail centres. We are not waiting for somebody to interpret that—to think it is a problem and then tell us. We have somebody there who can very quickly say, “No, that’s a threat. I’m now going to take command of it.” We are much more fleet of foot in that regard.

In terms of broader level crossing issues, which I know were of interest to the Committee previously, we have carried out nearly 3,000 driver retraining programmes with people who have strayed or abusively gone on to crossings. We do a lot in that regard. Finally, the level crossing risk is very much in our strategic risk assessment. I mentioned 24 key challenge areas. It is one of those.

Q290 Clive Efford: On the issue of anti-terrorism and security on our railways, I have a question relating to Eurostar. In the summer, a high-functioning but vulnerable adult in his early 20s ran away from his family, armed only with a credit card. The next thing we knew about him was that he was in Paris. He had no travel documents and no luggage—nothing—but he got through all the security and got all the way to Paris on Eurostar. That suggests to me that there are some gaps in the security system. When an incident like that is brought to light, what is done to learn the lessons and make sure that it does not happen again? I bear in mind that you do not control the border, but you act in partnership with other bodies to ensure security on all our transport infrastructure.

DCC Hanstock: Yes, we do. It sounds to me a highly unusual case for somebody to go through so many controls and avoid all of them. It is not something we are very familiar with. We do not get it many times. You asked where the force would take lessons. As a single incident, I am not sure that it would particularly cross our threshold. It sounds to me more like an immigration and border control matter that may not even have been reported to us. The point you make is around adult vulnerability. I suggest that issues like that would be flagged with our intel teams. We have very strong intelligence-sharing arrangements with all the transport operating companies, particularly Eurostar.

That leads into the approach we have taken to safeguarding overall. One of the recommendations when the chief constable was here two years ago was about us strengthening and reassessing our safeguarding capabilities. I assure the Committee that we have taken a substantial reset to all of that, and have had a complete overhaul of the approach to dealing with safeguarding—particularly for children and young people, but also for adults and those with mental ill health. I do not know how much



of that detail you want to hear, because it strays a little from Mr Efford's point.

- Q291 **Clive Efford:** I will segue into it, if that is okay. Our predecessor Committee made recommendations in that regard, particularly with regard to the fact that railway stations are places that young and vulnerable people head for and congregate at. You therefore have a particular role to play. What has been done in response to the previous Committee's recommendations?

DCC Hanstock: A significant amount of work. There is now a culture of safeguarding in the transport police force.

- Q292 **Chair:** Have you improved the way you collect information? That was one of the key concerns.

DCC Hanstock: Phenomenally. Significantly, after the last Committee report, we introduced a safeguarding hub, in which we invested about £500,000 a year. It is led by a very experienced detective superintendent, under the control of an assistant chief officer. It is a group of key analysts—co-ordinators who can access child safeguarding units in other county force areas, as well as looking at trends.

You asked whether we are collecting more data. First, we have trained 3,000 officers on the importance of looking for and spotting people in crisis or at risk. In relation to young children, we have had 4,401 risk assessments submitted. Of those, 2,700-odd were converted into protection or children in need activity plans that we developed with local safeguarding hubs. We proactively identify children at risk. We very much follow the British Transport police's guide "From Crisis to Care" and the Railway Children's "Safeguarding on Transport" protocols, with strong attention on officers being aware of people who do not look like they are displaying the activities of a traveller or passenger. Some of those individuals are very easy to spot by patrolling officers, by rail staff or by proactive monitoring of CCTV.

When we intervene, our primary approach is to be concerned. It is not about simply removing a problem; it is very much about promoting and supporting welfare, safety and wellbeing. We have a whole focus in our training and a completely new strategy on safeguarding, to ensure that the whole approach is what I guess you would describe as kindness and compassion to people who find themselves vulnerable, whether they are children or people with suicidal tendencies or mental ill health, homelessness or substance abuse issues. The railway industry attracts people because they want to come there in their own right, and it is obvious that people with a whole range of difficulties travel around. Our responsibility is to spot them and to support them when they need that help.

- Q293 **Chair:** How do you address autism? Do you have a policy to deal with that? You are aware of a particular instance where complaints were



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made. I will not get involved in the detail of that, but there is a policy issue underlying it.

DCC Hanstock: There is. It is a very challenging area. First, police officers are not clinicians, so they cannot spot and understand every type of scenario that an individual might present. I am told that there are about 150 different ways in which autism or different syndromes can present. In our training and our policy, we very much follow the National Autistic Society's guidance to professionals in the criminal justice system. Exactly as I said, we expect officers and staff to look for and be aware of people at risk and to show concern.

Q294 **Chair:** Are they trained to do that? One of the issues currently being thought about relates to somebody who might not have displayed behaviour that suggested that he had a problem, and officers were not trained to understand that.

DCC Hanstock: That is the hardest thing. There may be no obvious symptoms or signs that somebody is affected by any kind of illness or condition. If you ask people, you may not get any triggers from the way they answer those questions. Somebody may describe themselves as being perfectly fine and not needing any support. We ask this on a number of occasions, depending on the circumstances. I suggest that it is quite difficult for officers to diagnose that, but it does not stop them dealing with somebody who is in need of care and concern. They will do that. The challenge in some very extreme cases is that, despite controls, it does not always happen in the way that is ideal for the person. That picks up Mr Efford's point: how do we digest that and make sure that it feeds into our training approach? For the workforce, we have extended our probationary training for our new recruits by two extra weeks, in which they look at all the specifics of safeguarding, risk and harm and their special role when they are out and about on the network.

Q295 **Chair:** Is it an ongoing policy area?

DCC Hanstock: Yes, very much so. We have published our safeguarding strategy and our From Crisis to Care strategy. We have made clear all our activities to support people with autism, in particular, and other mental ill health issues. We sign up to local authority concordats and are a signatory to the national concordat on mental health.

Q296 **Chair:** Ms Vitty, can you give us any examples of how the authority has brought accountability to the British Transport police?

Charlotte Vitty: Absolutely. I will pick up the safeguarding issue, as we have been talking about it. The previous Committee recommended that we should have a target in this area. We listened to that and the authority put in place indicators around being able to hold the force to account there. As the deputy rightly said, they have shown huge improvements. We are in a data-rich environment now and are able to look at key indicators and performance. That is vital for the authority to



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hold the force to account in the performance committees that happen every quarter.

Q297 **Chair:** What have you done to change things?

Charlotte Vitty: We helped to drive through the fact that we needed to deliver a strategy. The force wrote the strategy for safeguarding. We supported them in rolling it out and how it was then governed through performance indicators, to look at where we are doing well and where the force should focus moving forward. That is the challenge process that happens every quarter.

Q298 **Chair:** Where did you suggest changes?

Charlotte Vitty: As it was a new area of data, as soon as the data started coming through we could start to look at indicators. It has been really interesting to look at hotspots of vulnerability, focusing on stations, and at areas where there are repeat incidents of contact with vulnerable people and children. The force and the performance committee are looking at that at the moment.

Q299 **Chair:** What about the issue of lighting at stations and the national stations improvement programme? Are those areas where you have an involvement as the transport police or as an authority?

DCC Hanstock: It is a key area of the confidence strategy. We know that what causes travellers and passengers concern is not necessarily crime but factors in the environment, whether a dark car park or, as you mentioned, stations with the lights out. Last year, we looked at the 20 stations that had the lowest level of public confidence and developed some very comprehensive plans for them, together with the station owners. We called it the "You said, we did" campaign. People told us what they needed us to do. It included a range of things, such as those environmental changes but also patrols, monitoring and CCTV improvement. Across the 20 stations, we saw a 2% improvement in confidence. Considering that it moved from 76% up to 78%, we regard that as a good indicator that we are moving things on.

We have expanded the programme to 50 stations this year, and have worked very closely with Network Rail to bring those improvements about. We are now engaged, with DFT as well, on the secure station programme, a kitemark programme of the sort you might have seen in secure car parking, which used to have a kitemark for security capability. That programme existed some years ago. It seems that it did not withstand time, but we are reinvesting in it and reinvigorating it to show stations that have met the standard, through a whole range of measures.

Q300 **Chair:** There is a lot of ongoing disruption on the railway. How do you make sure that it doesn't compromise safety?

DCC Hanstock: Often safety is the reason for the disruption, whether it is trespass or suicidal impacts. Those two things are the biggest factors in



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causing disruption. The incident itself is significant. We monitor very closely, and have to report to the authority our performance and progress on assessing such incidents and handing control of the service back to train operators within a timeframe of 90 minutes, which we achieve. The problem is that the network is becoming ever more congested, and one incident causes enormous secondary delay, because of the backlog of more and more trains.

It goes back to the point I made earlier about the specialist nature of railway policing. Our officers know that they have to make some very swift, confident, but very assured decisions. Particularly when there are fatalities, that activity needs to be reported to the coroner, and there can be no mistakes. We make an effort to train officers to ensure that they know the responsibility of that work, at the same time as being conscious and cognisant of delay. Having to balance those issues is a real skill. As leaders of the service, we have to monitor that, to make sure that it remains ethical.

On the trespass programmes, we have spoken a little about level crossings. We do some significant work on patrolling graffiti and trespass hotspots due to schoolchildren. The ongoing programme to educate young children about the dangers of the railway is a daily feature of the work we do. We had a hard-hitting campaign in the summer, which involved some very graphic footage. It was incredibly well received and has been used widely in school education programmes to promote the dangers of the railway. All those measures combined are efforts to prevent that kind of delay and risk, but we know that there have been some significant safety challenges that resulted in fatality.

Q301 **Chair:** Ms Vitty, I want to clarify what you said about the budget. You said that your authority sets the budget.

Charlotte Vitty: Yes.

Q302 **Chair:** How do you go about that? Do you look at what is needed, or do you look at what your funders are prepared to pay? What is the process?

Charlotte Vitty: The budget is computed by the force on an annual basis. They put together the operational budget and bring it to the authority finance committee for scrutiny and challenge, and for support to recommend it to the authority for full approval. We have an industry price promise that was made as part of the strategy for 2013, which is to keep our charges within RPI. We have a pressure there, but we certainly do not take a number from the industry and work that back into our budget. It is definitely built from the operational budgets up. We are just very aware that we have made that price promise to the industry.

Q303 **Chair:** Have the budgets increased or decreased in real terms in recent years?



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Charlotte Vitty: We had several years of increases in budget. Then we had a year of flatlining in the budget, which was based on the premise that the budget before that was slightly underspent by the force.

Q304 **Chair:** Which year was that?

Charlotte Vitty: The year of the underspend was 2014-15; we then flatlined for 2015-16. We have just issued a budget for 2016-17, which is back up to a full RPI increase.

Chair: There are no further questions from members. Thank you very much.