

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2008 AT 11:30AM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Mr Barry Gilligan (Vice Chairman)
Ms Martina Anderson
Mr Tom Buchanan
Mr Leslie Cree
Mrs Dolores Kelly
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr Basil McCrea
Mr Daithí McKay
Ms Mary McKee
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
Mr Brian Rea
Mr Trevor Ringland
Mr David Rose
Mr Jimmy Spratt
Mr Peter Weir

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

Sir Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)
Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief Constable)
Mr Alistair Finlay (ACC Urban Region)
Mrs Judith Gillespie (ACC Rural Region)
Mr Drew Harris (ACC Crime Operations)
Mr David Jones (ACC Crime Support)
Mr Duncan McCausland (ACC Criminal
Justice)
Mr Roy Toner (ACC Corporate
Management)
Mr David Best (Director of Finance and
Support Services)
Mr Joe Stewart (Director of Human
Resources)
Ms Liz Young (Head of Media & Public
Relations)
One PSNI Personnel

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Dr Debbie Donnelly (A/Chief Executive)
Mr Sam Hagen (Director of Corporate
Services)
Mr David Jackson (Director of Community
Engagement)
Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
2 Board Officials

APOLOGIES:

Mrs Rosaleen Moore
Mr Gearóid Ó hEára

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Welcome, to the Chief Constable and his team to the meeting, you are all very welcome to this meeting in public of the Northern Ireland Policing Board. As you already know Chief Constable, we have already had and do have a busy agenda today. Before we begin, can I record that we intimated to you and your senior officers, and have done so in a letter, our sympathy at the deaths of Constable Gorman, Constable Greene, Constable Irvine and Constable Magee. Last weekend, the weekend that was past, rather the weekend before, there were 7 people killed on our roads, including the 4 officers. I should say to members of the public and the media, that in our private session we had a one minute silence along with the Senior Command Team for the 4 officers.

Chief Constable, it is clear from the widespread tributes paid to these officers, that they were highly respected right across the community and that they are a considerable loss to the Service and they were out serving the community, getting on with the job and our thoughts at this time are with their families and with their colleagues.

Today in the latest Omnibus Survey, the findings show that confidence levels remain high, 86% with the confidence in the police's ability to provide a day to day policing service for everyone in Northern Ireland. This is, I believe, testimony to the good work ongoing right across the province but there is still work to do, and whilst it is welcomed that people feel safe, making communities safer and reducing crime and reducing the fear of crime, remain imperatives for the PSNI.

There is also more to be done in building trust and confidence in republican and loyalist areas. In moving forward, we all have a responsibility to continue to contribute to the normalisation of policing. The republican dissident threat impinges directly on the delivery of the policing service. The community must play its part and ensure that those who want to return us to the past do not succeed. In the last week, there have been threats to firebomb businesses and threats to community workers who have been working with police to make communities safer. Just this week there was a report of an attack on the life of Conor Murphy, Sinn Fein MLA by a dissident loyalist grouping. It is also fortunate that loyalist pipe bombs found in Belfast did not kill or seriously injure and I am in no doubt that you, Chief Constable, or one of your colleagues will be giving an assessment of the threats from the dissidents on one side and dissidents on the other. These are headlines from the past and now more than ever we need to condemn them to the past for good and all. Society has moved on and those who hold arms and weapons must move on too. Decommissioning is another imperative for this society.

This Board very much welcomes recent comments from Cardinal Brady in respect of support for policing and for the right of the community to choose to engage and work with the police.

The political settlement reached in respect of future devolution of policing and justice is to be welcomed; and it is particularly timely given the discussions between the PSNI, the Board and the Northern Ireland Office in respect of police funding and finance. Earlier this week we reached agreement in respect of bridging the funding shortfall for the 2008/09 year. Whilst a balanced budget has been delivered with minimal impact to front line service, the real challenge now is dealing with the pressures ahead because some of that money is being taken from either next year or future years back into this year.

At the meeting earlier the following motion was passed, *'that the Board does not accept that the budgeting crisis has been solved in the medium and longer terms. Whilst the Board will not obstruct the current budgetary process, the First and Deputy First Ministers are being asked to meet with the Board on the funding issue as a matter of urgency in order to inform of the strength of feeling on this issue'*.

Future funding in a devolved arena will present new challenges. Policing will be competing directly alongside the economy, health and education, to mention but 3. Members of this Board and the PSNI have noted that the devolution of policing justice will be taking place at a time when, within the UK, public expenditure will be tightening. It is very much in that context that there is the need for the legacy issues for policing, in our view, to be separated out, and that is the case that we will be pressing with the Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers.

Chief Constable, over to you for your report please.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman and can I also put formally on record, the debt of gratitude this society owes to James Magee, Kevin Gorman, Declan Greene and Kenny Irvine. They lost their lives serving their communities of Newry and Mourne and like you Chairman, our thoughts remain very much with their families, their immediate colleagues in Kilkeel station and with the wider family of policing that certainly felt a great sense of loss.

Can I also put on record our thanks to you and other Board Members for their expressions of sympathy and in particular, those who were able to attend the funerals. Your presence was not only welcome, it was sincerely appreciated by the service and by the families.

As you are aware Chairman, the officers died responding to a call for assistance from another colleague. They were part of our neighbourhood and frontline community policing team in that area who were committed to policing with the community and that was a choice they had made, be they full-time officers, regular officers or indeed, part-time police officers and their loss will certainly not be forgotten by their colleagues, police officers and staff and I am sure, not the broader community.

You touched Chairman on road safety in general and this has been a dreadful period of time for us. In addition to our 4 officers, 3 other people died on the roads that weekend and since then of course, there has been a tragedy in Fermanagh where 2 young people were knocked down and killed on their way home from school and another injured. It is more evidence that the roads in Northern Ireland can be very dangerous despite the efforts of our policing team and we have a presentation by a Roads Policing Record No: 101110

Unit following this opening, and indeed effort at District and area level. We will continue to keep the pressure on speed, seat belts, drink driving and drug driving and people who drive without care and attention, and certainly this pressure will come into sharp focus now, sadly traditional, winter anti drink driving campaign, which is a partnership with the Department of the Environment (DOE), which is now up and running.

Chairman, if I can emphasis, the solution to this is not a policing solution alone. Critical partners remain education, enforcement as well as engineering and as well as changing peoples mindsets, but we are certainly committed to playing our part in the 10 year reduction strategy.

Chairman, you also touched rightly on money and on finance, the situation in my judgement, still remains grave. We have put a huge effort into delivering a balanced budget for this year as I am legally required to do, and I am extremely grateful to the Board for their support and assistance, working with us and the Northern Ireland Office to secure that situation, where we can deliver a balanced budget to the end of this financial year. But, it has been achieved at a cost and we have had to cut back on most areas of policing and most of those cutbacks have been against a principle of minimising the impact on the frontline; that remains our clear operational and organisational focus.

But, as you have said, we now have to look on the medium term or indeed next year because the solution to this year was to bring forward money allocated to next year's budget. Put simply, we are living on credit and we will have to recover that debt after April 2009 by making more cuts in our planned expenditure and we will work very closely with the Board in discussing and agreeing where those cuts have to be made.

Whilst our budget does look large in public sector standards and it has been an observation made by many, by the time pay and pensions are dealt with, the flexibility is actually, as you are aware, quite minimal. We are still committed to having 7,500 police officers as promised as a major commitment in the Patten report which achieved sign up to policing and we are, in this year, able to maintain our current recruiting targets to remain on target but the issues next year are put into starker focus.

Chairman, if there is one unique pressure, once you have taken out pay and pensions, it is the issue of legacy. It does not go away and currently we are finding that legal costs to support those involved in public inquiries or to support those independent investigators brought in by my predecessor to look for example, at the Rosemary Nelson case, are increasing week on week and that is not to mention the number of staff we are deploying in this area to support those inquiries. In stark terms, my costs currently out of our current policing budget are running at around £100,000 per week. That is an additional cost to the Parliamentary Answers to the cost of public inquiries, that cost does not certainly include policing costs and I suspect, it does not include costs to other services servicing those inquiries. You are also aware we have the hearing loss claims going back 30 years. Every penny I spend on these matters, and indeed the legacy of the Stevens 3 Inquiry, comes out of current policing money and we now have to make a serious case in my judgement to look at how that expenditure can be dealt with out with our policing budget, our police allocation, if we are going to achieve some stability over the next few years. I know you are concerned and I think we need to take that matter forward.

Chairman, on a more positive note, I am pleased to report that the organisation was recognised by a number of organisations recently as a Centre of Excellence. The Media and PR Department who support our policing operations through the News Department, the Public Relations Department and indeed, the Public Affairs Department, our main point of contact between us and the media locally, nationally and indeed internationally, a department that takes over 19,000 calls a year, was recognised by the Institute of Public Relations and awarded a Gold and Silver Award at their recent ceremony. Our staff, quite properly chose not to attend due its proximity to the fatal accident involving our colleagues, but the awards were for crisis communications and indeed, for an internal communications strategy around bringing our whole police service, police and support staff together and breaking the link with the Civil Service.

Inspector Rogan from Larne at the National Policing Awards was named the UK Police Officer of the Year beating 43 competitors from other police services, and of course, Inspector Rogan had already won a Community Award here. Our Reserve Constable Joe Fraser from Rathfriland was runner up in the Lifetime Achievement Award. No other police organisation in the United Kingdom did so well at the National Awards, and

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more locally, the Criminal Justice System Awards, our Citizen and Safety Education Case Programme won an award for outstanding contribution to diversity for creating the whole system and lesson literature in the Irish language.

Chairman, on operational matters, there was a murder on 2 November 2008, a man suffered multiple stab wounds, a man has been charged with that murder. Last month we discussed rape in detail here and you will remember the powerful presentation. We are currently running a public information campaign to try and reduce the incidents of rape which is being piloted in Belfast, Londonderry and the universities during this month. It is again a joint effort between ourselves, the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety, and the Northern Ireland Community Safety Unit. The "Be Smart" campaign will be running in pubs and clubs with a specific different message, different messages for young men and young women.

In 'B' District we have also provided 600 personal attack alarms to Stranmillis College in a response to a request for help for them.

A number of other operational matters have taken place Chairman but I am conscious of time. I would pick out Operation Snapper which I know the Board has been interested in. Certainly, over its longevity it is worth I think reminding people, it still is running. This is the underage drinking, the targeting of illegal and underage drinking in Foyle since October 2008 and just under 3,000 items of alcohol have been seized which sums to half the total of seizures in Northern Ireland.

In Enniskillen around 1,000 students from secondary schools across Fermanagh attended a special theatre style show driving home the key messages on drugs and alcohol abuse, and again that was another partnership effort between our local neighbourhood policing Sergeant and the Policing with the Community Fund.

Chairman, recently concerns have been brought to our attention around begging and some Members have asked us to make a comment on that and I am happy to have a discussion about it. It is not unique to Northern Ireland, there is no quick solution. It is being dealt with at a District level and we work closely with partner agencies. What that means is bringing people together who can assist in addressing the issue, not just in the short term, very short term solutions just simply arrest people, but to try and find

how we can manage these people better over time. It is a graduated approach looking at enforcement and education and we will continue to work with partner agencies to deal with it.

Chairman, on human trafficking, a major policing operation over the last few days involving organised crime who have been involved in human trafficking within Northern Ireland and elsewhere, and these are people who are controlling people who can best be described as sex slaves, forced into prostitution against their will, offering huge returns of money for the criminals engaged. It was an operation that spanned the island of Ireland and, indeed, police forces in the United Kingdom. It was victim centred and it was successful in terms of protecting and rescuing vulnerable women. The criminal side is our main concern, but obviously there is a substantial human side and a clear gap exists in Northern Ireland between the needs of the victims of this crime and the services available to them. Currently the pressure is being taken by voluntary groups who are outstanding in their commitment, but it is clear that more help needs to be given to these groups and indeed, more support from Government to bridge that gap whilst we manage the enforcement side.

Chairman, you have touched on confidence in policing and I am pleased to see that the headlines are looking positive, but as you rightly point out, there is more work to do. The debate around confidence in policing is not just a local one, but having one performance indicator perhaps gives a rather generalistic picture and we remain very interested in looking at confidence in policing at a local level so we can better understand where we need to put our effort in.

Chairman, you have touched on the current terrorist situation. The threat from dissident republicans does remain at a high level against police officers, and indeed more recently, people working with us have been subject to threats and intimidation. Could I place on record, my thanks to those people for working with us and continuing to work with us and sending a very clear message they will not be put off because of their commitment to community policing and their communities. Likewise Chairman, on the loyalist side which you also touched on, there has been an increase in activity and a number of pipe bombs, dangerous blast bombs were recovered in Belfast only yesterday. These are lethal devices and left in a place where anyone could have come across them and it shows yet again, that they have yet to understand and learn that this

world has moved on and they are left behind. We would make the appeal that we always make, that the more people help us to deal with this the better able we will be to bring these people to justice.

There was also an attack in Tyrone against a Sinn Fein councillor and we condemn utterly the threats to Minister Conor Murphy again from the loyalist side. We assess these individuals as desperate groups who are determined to destroy what has been achieved to progress their own criminal ends.

Very briefly Chairman, as we approach the festive season, I understand it is called Christmas, we know there is an increase in crime at that time of year. We know people have more high value goods in their houses, as do the burglars. We have launched a major burglary information campaign which is on television, radio and indeed posters. We would remind everyone when they go out, to close their doors, to lock their doors and indeed to check and make sure their houses are secure. Simple actions before the event can certainly stop a lot of sadness and unhappiness over the festive season.

Finally Chairman, I would like to end on our major reminder at this time of year which is to remind everyone of the importance of keeping safe on the roads and that may be an appropriate moment to introduce the Roads Safety Policing presentation which we will try and keep to a short time.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

We will take the questions first may be and then we will take the presentation, if that is agreeable to you?

There was a question that came up in the private session and it was suggested that it be extended to here, it is question 20 and it is in the name of Mary McKee and I think she would extend it also to the question in respect of recent activity and from loyalists. Sorry, the question was, as it has not come up on screen yet?

Q20 - Can the Chief Constable give a status of the threats (Continuity IRA) on the community organisations in North Belfast? and also about what recently took place in respect of findings of blast bombs attributed to loyalists.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

Thank you. On 26 November 2008, media reporting revealed that the Continuity IRA in Belfast had threatened to kill nationalist or catholic community workers in North Belfast who were co-operating with community or neighbourhood police. Since then, one threatening intimidating letter has been delivered to one individual. It has been recorded and that incident is the subject of a full investigation that we are carrying out at the moment. We are taking these threats seriously and will continue to monitor it very closely. Our local police in the community, the neighbourhood policing officers, are also still working very closely with those individuals and we continue to monitor the situation on the ground.

What we have not picked up is anything to further corroborate these threats in terms of evidence of either targeting or attacks being planned and still we would view that the Continuity IRA's major target and operations continue against the police service, as opposed to other individuals.

In respect of the finds of blast bombs this week and other incidents, blast bombs is a term that we apply to homemade, improvised explosive devices, hand held devices and some of these are very crude devices. The ones found yesterday were very dangerous devices filled with nails and other shrapnel. The actual explosive in them was from fireworks and they were viable devices which can be attributed to loyalist paramilitaries. Other such devices though are very difficult to attribute, in effect homemade probably by disgruntled individuals and would never actually get to a point of attribution in terms of organisations and can only really attribute those to some individual acting on their own. But all of these devices do have the potential, certainly the devices we found yesterday did have the real potential to kill or maim and they are subject to a full investigation. We were able to retrieve those in good shape and able to be further examined for forensic evidence.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mary McKee.

Ms Mary McKee:

Could I thank the ACC for his comments on that? I am particularly relieved because one of the organisations that is under threat has a significant child care element to it

and there is upward of 340 children that are minded in it, so I think people are right to be very nervous, so thank you for that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. Could I just thank the Chief Constable for the report, it is quite comprehensive and just to place on record our appreciation of the work, particularly in relation to the human trafficking work that has been undertaken recently and fair to comment there is a success story there and appreciate your remarks made both in the private session and here this morning, around the victims centred approach that you are taking, so I want to place that on record or acknowledgement to that very important work. It does, unfortunately, throw in the stark relief some of the society attitudes which is creating this problem, which is certainly feeding it, so I welcome any further developments in that regard.

One of the things, could I follow on Chairman in relation to the stuff around the loyalist activity, because obviously it is a matter of growing concern and I am wondering does ACC Harris or the Chief Constable or anybody have any understanding or intelligence or perception or belief of who were the intended victims or targets be of some of these activities because clearly we had the Chief Constable already acknowledge some of these threats have been against some of my own colleagues very recently. We have also had one of these devices put into the door of a home of foreign nationals in South Belfast a week ago. But what I am trying to get at here, I think the public would like to know, is there a pattern emerging, is there more hate crime flowing as a result of some of these or is it maybe against some of the community people, so I was looking for further information on that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

Overall, in terms of loyalist and the direction of loyalist violence that might be attributed around, particularly these blast bombs, in effect it is hate crime and the origins are around hate crime. As you have identified yourself there is no sense of any other targeting going on and any other violence within the loyalist communities are most likely

directed towards other rival factions or alleged lower level criminals, or as you have identified, particularly the Donegall Road area, around hate crime.

Overall, at the leadership level, both UDA and UVF continue to make efforts to try and move their organisations away from paramilitary activity, but the IMC reported recently that both members of the UDA and UVF continue to engage in criminality and an element of that is hate crime. But it also extends to drug dealing, robbery, intellectual property crime, extortion as well, so it is a mixed picture of what is happening actually on the ground around individual members as opposed to where the leadership is going or trying to go.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Dolores Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I just want to pick up on the human trafficking issue.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Sorry, I am going to come to that.

Mr Ian Paisley, do you have a question?

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

The other thing I notice that is missing from the.....

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Sorry, is it not on the question of the threat?

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

No.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Okay, I will come back to that.

Could you maybe Chief Constable, I think it was agreed that we suggested in the private session that it might be useful if ACC Harris was to say something further on the human trafficking.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will certainly ask ACC Harris to cover that. The other point I suppose which is an emerging trend is, I suppose what one would call 'tit for tat' attacks on Orange Halls and GAA clubs which is another cause for concern. Many of these places on both sides are in isolated areas and very hard to detect.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

In respect of human trafficking, we have 3 investigations ongoing and those are live investigations that in time we will be reporting to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), so it is difficult to go into details of those, but I can talk very much about this crime and how it has been visited upon us.

Firstly, although the overall phrase that may be given to this is prostitution, in effect it is sex slavery, because the women who are being trafficked into Northern Ireland, or conned or fooled into coming into Northern Ireland to take on a job, what they think is legitimate employment, find that they have to pay a debt bond for arriving, for being brought into Northern Ireland. That involves them being coerced and threatened into prostitution or else their families back in their home countries are threatened around this, so it is very much around coercion, threats and actual violence inflicted upon the victims of this trafficking.

Very substantial sums of money can be made through prostitution and for very little overhead the gangs involved in this are very fluid and move from rented property to rented property in quick succession, and quite often the individuals who run the brothels, actually most of them are here also as illegal immigrants and they also inflict violence, but they are part of the crime as well because they are caught within this criminal network. The money is usually flown back to a small group and very substantial sums, thousands and thousands of pounds, in fact up to millions of pounds, which is then laundered throughout the world, so these are very substantial operations.

What I would say is, that from the victims, we are aware that some men who have arrived and paid for a sex act have then refused to take part because they have been aware of the distress that that victim of the trafficking is in and they do not go any further. That throws up other offences. It may be being committed around here specifically rape because these individuals are not giving their free consent to the sex acts that are going on.

Another issue as well is, that the adverts that we find on the internet are advertising in effect, unsafe sex and that also is a mark of individuals being coerced into this industry.

I would say to people who use prostitutes, that if they become aware of this, or if they find themselves in situations where they think somebody has been coerced into the sex trade, that they should either contact the police or contact Crimestoppers and bring forward this information, because it is modern day slavery. People are held in the most awful circumstances under the threat of violence and the fear of violence and the conditions they are held in are really very difficult to comprehend. It is not really where we think we are as a society, but it is going on within our society. We have recovered 10 victims in total between these operations and Pentameter 2, but we know there are other victims out there and we really need to get a grip on this before it swamps us, because it is a big money industry and it is very attractive to organised crime.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Dolores Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Thank you Chairman. Could I thank ACC Harris for the forthright manner in which he has made it very clear that if anyone who uses these services then becomes aware that the person has been a victim, they will presumably be charged with either rape or attempted rape as a consequence of that. I think that is a very clear message that needs to go out. I understand the constraints that it has in answering some of the questions but could I ask, in relation to the perpetrators and the organised crime, are they home grown criminals? Are they former paramilitaries or are they international crime organisations? It is not so long ago Chairman, that we were told that there was no evidence of human trafficking in the north, so is this just the tip of the iceberg in relation to this?

The services that are available then for people that have been rescued afterwards which the Chief Constable made mention of in his opening remarks, I think it is very disturbing to learn that there are no such facilities, as there are I understand, in both London and Dublin and how is that matter going to be resolved. It is certainly something I will take up personally with the Health Minister, but will the PSNI, will the Chief Constable be contacting the Health Minister in relation to this matter?

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

ACC Harris.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

Firstly, in respect of who might be involved in this. This is an international crime in effect, and I think Northern Ireland may have been immune to this in the past, but certainly we are now seen, as the whole island of Ireland is seen, as a market place for this type of activity. It does involve large sums of cash and big money laundering operations around that, so there is an international aspect and it is part of our investigations in any of these matters. So, we keep following the intelligence that we get, and again I would appeal to individuals in our own society here who may know something of this around the prostitution and in particular, the sex slavery, that they bring that information forward to the police or Crimestoppers.

The second part of your question in relation to what happens to the victims. The United Kingdom has signed up to the European Convention around the care and looking after individuals who have been trafficked. So, we are signed up to a reflection period for a victim and then if they then co-operate with the authorities and assist with the investigation, then an ongoing care period for them.

There are 2 organisations, one in Great Britain 'Poppy' and one in Dublin 'Rihanna' who provide specialist support. We do not have the equivalent of that in Belfast but both those organisations have assisted us. In effect 'Women's Aid' have stepped into the breach for us in our circumstances, but for those individuals who do assist us, there is long term care for them in terms of rehabilitation and then successful integration into society in terms of work skills and language skills and that does fall beyond the responsibility of the police. The initial stages certainly, where an individual is a victim, we want to keep very close contact. We want to build up trust and we want to get

information and evidence. But beyond that, how our society responds to these individuals and the awful predicament that they have found themselves in and the trauma they suffered is probably the measure of our society, because I think up until now, we could not have guessed the extent of the misery that was happening in our streets and we need to be very alive to that.

I know the Northern Ireland Office is represented on the Home Office Working Group which is meeting the requirements of the Treaty so work is ongoing, but really some of these operations were long term, but just the extent of what we found in the last week has been very surprising.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

One more question relating to human trafficking, Martina Anderson.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Thank you ACC Harris. I think listening to you and if the public were listening to you today, they would think we have moved in time here when we talk about sex slavery. But it is trying to get to the point of what is the extent of it. Now, I know you are saying what you have uncovered over the last few days has been somewhat surprising, and the problem here then in the north and across the island, is it on a bigger scale than what it was first anticipated?

In terms of the question that Dolores Kelly was asking you about the aftercare, after the period of reflection, I think it is somewhat concerning to find out if the victim feels that they cannot assist because they are too frightened to do so, that they are repatriated or sent back to the country that they wanted to get out of in the first place. So, I think that if we could get a real sense of the scale of the problem that we are dealing with, and in terms of our own responsibility, whether as elected representatives or as stakeholders in society, the role that we can play to try to both get the message out and to monitor what is happening maybe within our own constituencies.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

These are criminal enterprises so it is always very difficult to get a handle on what the true extent of this is, and obviously they go to great lengths to hide what is happening from the authorities. But, I think Pentameter 1 was accurate in that we were unable to detect anything going on in Northern Ireland. The picture changed with Pentameter 2 and now it is further ratcheted up, so we seem to be having an increase and that is only over the period now of 2 years. We have to be aware that we are seen and we are a rich society and we are a society that is then targeted around organised crime and this is a very lucrative form of organised crime.

The whole of Ireland is a target for this and they are aware that there are no respecters of the border. They flow backward and forwards across the border in response to the demand which they create through either newspaper advertisements or via the internet.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I am going to take 2 further questions on the Chief Constable's opening remarks, first Brian Rea and then Ian Paisley Jnr. Brian Rea's question was on the Order Paper, it is question 25 it is on street begging. Maybe you could read out your question Mr Rea.

Mr Brian Rea:

Q25 - To ask the Chief Constable for his views on street begging and to provide advice for members of the public and for those who are thinking of participating in such activity?

I would like you to make reference especially to the protection of children who either may be approached or indeed, who may be used as objects to persuade the public to give.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Just to finish up on ACC Harris' comments. I think the importance of us being fully involved in Pentameter 1 and 2 shows that by working with the National Policing Agency, we picked up on something that perhaps otherwise may not have been picked up as quickly, so all credit to Tim Brain, the Chief Constable who led on that for the whole service.

I will ask ACC Finlay to deal with the begging issue. What we are seeing is an increase in what we loosely describe as “roamer” gangs where children are quite frequently used to entice people to give up their money. It is not a problem unique to Northern Ireland but I will certainly ask ACC Finlay to touch on what is going in Belfast where the main issues are being identified.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

Thank you very much. We have seen the emergence over recent months of an increased amount of begging and some other associated activity. Some unlicensed street trading that we might describe it as and we have conducted a number of operations in partnership with the Belfast City Council in relation to the people that are engaging in this activity. It does seem that some of the people may have been displaced by activity that our colleagues in An Garda Siochana have taken in relation to Dublin where this has been an issue for some time. As a consequence of that activity some people have found it more attractive to move north towards Belfast.

The operation or the approach to this is in an early stage. We are gathering additional information because it does seem to be actually more extensive than it maybe first looks on the surface. However, we are ongoing taking action against those who seek to beg or unlicensed street trading, but we also have to be mindful, that in some cases some of these people also appear to be some victims of some particular circumstances, perhaps travelling from countries out with the UK.

In relation to what you should do in relation to begging, and also the emotional pleas that are sometimes placed in front of us by carrying young children or what have you. Our advice is not to support the begging. Supporting the begging will only encourage further begging. We and Social Services can take action to establish the exact status of the individuals and see what help or, if necessary, what criminal justice processes have to go through in order to bring this to a conclusion.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed.

Ian Paisley Jnr has a question on the report.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Thank you. In your statement Chief Constable, you mentioned Christmas and you have left one fairly obvious parcel unopened and that is your application to join the Met.

What are your prospects and could you maybe outline to us maybe your ideas of who should fill the gap that you will undoubtedly leave?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I do not think that was in my report. I can assure the Board I did not put Ian Paisley Jnr on as a referee.

Yes, I have registered my interest in applying for Commissioner along with 9 other highly experienced Chief Officer colleagues, so let us wait and see, until then my commitment is 100% to here.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I think we will move quickly to the road traffic report.

Chief Inspector Diane Pennington:

Good afternoon ladies and gentleman. I want to start by saying I am here to talk about road safety, and road safety is far too important an issue to be left to the police alone. Everyone in this room and everyone in our community can and must play their part in reducing the casualties on our roads. The importance of community involvement in achieving this objective can be seen in where it sits in the Policing Plan.

I recently saw, through the work that my officers in Ballymena have been doing, how it can affect both our reducing the casualties on the road and also in the wider context of community safety. My officers had been working with colleagues in District and colleagues who work for the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency to address the issue of young men primarily in modified vehicles, boy racers you sometimes here them called in the press, who are making life a misery for the residents of a local housing estate,

keeping them awake to the wee small hours of the morning. So what we did was, we managed to serve some Prohibition Notices on some of the vehicles, because these vehicles can be very dangerous and can contribute to death on the roads themselves. We were able to serve Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) in conjunction with District colleagues, and I was really moved when I got a letter from a local resident who said that their quality of life was so much improved now. They were not being kept awake to 3 o'clock in the morning and he pointed out, that his daughters, who worked in local restaurants and in the cinema, could now walk home and not feel intimidated, not feel frightened by what they had been seeing on the roads with what some of these young people were up to.

I just wanted to show you on the map where my officers are located, because they are out there in the heart of our communities which is absolutely essential for the positive impact that we are having on road death in Northern Ireland. If I could point out in particular in Mahon Road in Omagh and Maydown, my officers are working very closely with colleagues in An Garda Siochana. We meet regularly on a monthly basis to plan operations and to co-ordinate our response to road safety across the area.

I have just put up for you the targets which were agreed as part of the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy back in 2002. The first target was more or less achieved last year and the second target, which is relating to children and young people under the age of 16, was actually achieved.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) has now suggested that we look at setting more challenging targets for the next 5 years because we are only half way through the strategy. In particular, they are looking at 17 to 24 year olds. Now it has long been known that this age group of road users are disproportionately represented in the statistics for people who are killed or seriously injured on our roads.

I was talking to my Inspector in Ballymena a couple of days ago and he gave me an example of a piece of road behaviour which might illustrate this to you. They were coming back up the motorway into Ballymena and were very surprised to find a vehicle coming towards them, so someone going up the motorway the wrong way. They managed to pull him over. This young man was on a moped, he was 17 years of age, he did not have a full driving licence he only had a provisional licence and his reason

for taking this course of action was, that he had missed his turn off and he thought this was the quickest way to get back onto his route. He was prosecuted for dangerous driving, disqualified for a year, he obviously will lose his provisional licence and will have to go back and start all over again.

This slide is just to show you that the overall trend in reducing collisions where people are killed or seriously injured is downward. You can see in 2006 there was a slight increase and overall, the fatalities on our roads have been reducing since the strategy was started. I have some figures for you there. If we look at the calendar year you can see that last year, the end of 2007, there were 113 fatalities on our roads. To date in 2008, 100 people have lost their lives and 6 of those were children, young people aged under 16. So that is 100 families this year who will be spending Christmas without a loved one and far more who will be visiting people in hospital and helping members of the family to live with life changing injuries.

I have included here a photograph from the 'Road Safe' Road Show. I think a lot of people in the room have attended one of the Road Shows which have been running since 2001, and have now been taken as good practice and adopted in other parts of the UK and in the Republic of Ireland. It is a multi agency partnership approach focusing on young people aged 17 to 24, to get across to them this message about road safety. You will see colleagues from the Ambulance Service, from the Fire and Rescue Service, there is a doctor there from Accident Emergency and they all give personal testimony during the day to try and get the message across to these young people to be safer on the roads. The most important person in that picture is the young man who is sitting at the front. His name is Gareth Calhoun. Gareth is a quadriplegic. He can move 2 fingers on his right hand and he uses these to operate his wheel chair. Gareth accepted a lift one night with a driver who had been drinking. The car crashed and the driver fled the scene. The car burst into flames and there was a passing off duty police officer who rescued Gareth from the wreckage.

At the end of the Road Show, Gareth and another young woman called Lizzie Keyes who had a similar experience, tell that story to a room full of young people. The day I was there, there were 650 of them in Omagh and you could have heard a pin drop by the end of their story. I would ask anybody who has not been to a Road Show or who would like to go to another one, I have got a list of dates, please come and see me and

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I will arrange for you to go along and I think you will find it a really really worthwhile experience.

The collision that Gareth was in is in some way due to the fact that somebody had consumed alcohol. ACC Toner launched the Christmas Drink Drive campaign this morning. It is still the second most common cause of collisions where someone is killed or seriously injured on our roads and I have just put some figures and data there for you to have a look at. If I tell you that last year in our campaign the oldest person who provided a positive breath test was 97 years old and the youngest was 15, so this habit of drink driving spans all sections of our society.

I have mentioned local initiatives there in the last bullet point. I believe in empowering my Inspectors. I believe in them going out to their communities, finding out what the issues are and finding new ways to solve them.

In Fermanagh this year we are focusing on female drivers and passengers because what we have thought is, that it is mostly males who are driving the vehicles but the women are the passengers, and we would like to give them some information to see if they can make an impact on the people who are driving the cars after they have consumed alcohol. So, in partnership with our District Policing Partnership (DPP) we have got 60,000 leaflets printed aimed at young women and they will be put in places like hairdressers and beauticians where they will pick them up and read them.

I was asked to give you a brief update on the HMIC CJINI report. The centralisation of Roads Policing has taken place from 1 October 2008, we come under Operational Support Department, although as you can see from the map I showed you a moment ago, our operation officers are still out there in the communities. We are currently examining the issue of lowering the speed threshold. Minister Sammy Wilson has launched the consultation process for the lowering of the drink drive limit. I have spoken a moment ago about the really good working relationships that we have with An Garda Siochana colleagues.

The review of the Road Safety strategy, we have a protocol in place for the free flow of traffic in the Belfast area and we are working on one for the rest of Northern Ireland at the moment.

The final point is about a Collision Investigation Unit which should be set up to mirror practice in the rest of the UK and in the Republic of Ireland for the investigation of fatal and serious collisions.

Our feeling is, that if someone died as a result of a murder we would call in the experts, we would call in the major investigation team, and the families who are bereaved through road death deserve no less an expert service and that is what we will provide whenever this unit is up and running in 2010.

Speed continues to be the biggest single cause of collisions where someone is killed or seriously injured on our roads, 20% is involved. We do not want to catch you speeding, we want to prevent you speeding. That is why you will see the web link, if you look on there you can find the details of all the camera sites that we have and the routes which fit the criteria under the safety camera scheme where we operate our mobile camera vans.

If I could draw your attention to the bit at the bottom, the community concern sites. This is a new angle for us, this can be fed up to us through the District Policing Partnerships, maybe a route does not fit the criteria under the scheme but bring it to the attention of your District Commander and we will have a look and see if there is anything we can do. We are looking at one at the moment in Fintona with a 30mph limit outside a primary school. We have done a speed survey there and found that the average speed is 37mph, so we are now looking at what we can implement to try and alleviate the issue there.

The mobile safety camera vans that I just spoke about, as of Monday this week are no longer operated by police officers, they will be operated by civilians. This will result in a saving of over £250,000 projected over the next year, and also very very importantly, it releases my officers that they can get out onto the streets and do other very important PSNI work.

I was asked to provide a quick update on the Fixed Penalty Processing Centre. The Process Improvement report which was commissioned by Operational Support Department, a lot of the findings have already been implemented. They continue to be implemented and the Fixed Penalty Processing Centre transferred to Criminal Justice Department on 1 October this year.

These are my details, I would ask anybody who wants to get in touch, please do so and if you want to come out for a ride along with one of my units or if you would like to attend a Road Show, I would be more than happy to have everybody along. Thank you.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I know that there is already Chief Inspector Pennington, a question on the order paper, it was question 9 from Jimmy Spratt maybe Mr Spratt you would read the question since I think our technology is not exactly working today.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

Chief Constable, thank you very much indeed for the presentation. The question was:

Q9. What proportion of the revenue generated by speed camera Fixed Penalty Notices is retained by PSNI and what proportion does the Government receive?

and suppose, coupled with that and just in relation to your report, and in particular to the civilian safety camera, the Board has in its possession today a letter from ACC Toner where it indicates that the safety camera scheme basically is self financed from a cost recovery point of view. However, it says that in 2007/08 the cost recovery was £600k with the PSNI having to contribute a further £900k to that, almost £1m. It is just a bit confusing in relation to the civilianisation of the Safety Unit, where you say police spend will be reduced by £492,000 in 2007/08 and there will be a release of police officers, obviously for other duties. I wondered if you could tell the Board how many police officers that will reduce to put out onto the roads, I assume from a traffic perspective and maybe some of the confusion around the figures that is coming in the ACC's letter and the figures that you have there today, maybe you could explain them to us.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, if I can start off by dealing with the fixed penalty aspect then ACC Toner will deal with the issue of the letter that he wrote and try and clarify it that way for you Mr Spratt.

From 1 April 2008 to 30 September 2008, the generation in relation to fines issued by the Fixed Penalty Camera Scheme was £413,079. £53,882 was retained by the Court Services due to their costs and PSNI received £359,197. That was in effect a shortfall of £30,573 so let me emphasise to the Board and to the community, the issue of fixed penalty tickets is not a way of generating income, we actually lose money by running these schemes. We have been very clear, as in Chief Inspector Pennington's presentation, we are not out to catch people speeding, we are out to prevent people speeding to the extent that we actually advertise openly on our website where these fixed penalty cameras are deployed. So, if you are caught speeding through one, I have to say simply, it is your own fault. I will hand over to ACC Toner now.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

The funding around this is an interesting model which I have to say I have not been particularly comfortable with over the last 12 months. The first point I would say is this, we do not have a fully funded model for our Safety Camera Scheme in Northern Ireland, it is not fully funded at all unlike models in GB. So, the reality around it is, the police officers who were actually operating the mobile sites, the safety camera vans, were doing it on overtime and the reasons they were doing it on overtime was we did not want to take officers away from frontline policing duties, that was the whole rationale behind it and that overtime was being paid for, not out of the Main Police Grant, but paid for primarily out of the receipts from fixed penalty notices. Now, we can do that cheaper by employing, instead of 2 police officers, one civilian who is properly trained and vetted to undertake that, because these are fixed sites. The mobile van drives up, stays static, moves on, it is an electronic based process and that is where we can show savings.

Mr Spratt is absolutely right to raise this issue about the £900k. The £900k was spent on the SPECS system. We made a decision to invest money in the SPECS system to save lives. We could not get any more money from any other part of government to do it. We decided we put that in our Business Plan for the year and we committed that in

our Business Plan for the year and that is why we have the SPECS system, one in Newry and the other one on the road to Bangor. The whole idea around that type of system which the public are far more comfortable with is, it is an average speed system, you have the opportunity to modify your driving and your speed during that period. So, I think the variation in the figures is such that we are showing a commitment to actually investing.

Unfortunately, as you know from the funding model for the next few years, we will not be able to expand on those SPECS systems. For example, to the Frosses Road, Ballymoney where we were actually giving some thought to next place to do that. We would like a fully funded model where receipts were coming back to us and we were getting the full unit cost as ACC McCausland said earlier, but unfortunately we do not have that model in Northern Ireland at the moment.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

Chairman, could I just come back as I am a bit confused now and I hope the public are not being confused by the presentation that was given. I took from what ACC Toner said that in relation to, in one of the bullet points, 'releases police officers for other important duties'. Now he told us that the officers were used on overtime so in actual fact there are no officers released. Is that the message that we are being given? Because I am confused and I am sure the public are going to be confused as a result of what has been said.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

If you want to look at it on a simple one for one basis, it is a slightly more complex model than that. The reality is, officers had to be made available to work overtime to fulfil the mobile camera scheme, so that impacted upon what their shift patterns were and what their availabilities were to do that. They had to be trained in that mobile camera equipment which took time as well. Those officers no longer have that commitment so they are free to do day to day duties and they are free to do overtime that is paid from out of Main Grant in main policing or frontline policing duties. That is where those officers are released. We do not have that commitment in police officers anymore. We do not have them having to make sure that the van is prepared and all those other elements that have to be put in place, so we have taken police officers out

of this element and getting them back to their primary role of the key elements of roads policing which they are highly trained to do.

We are not trying to say we are releasing officers back directly, what we are actually saying is that this has freed up officers and freed up officers time. Of course, they were paid as overtime because it would have been remise of us to take money into the system and not actually utilise it to put officers out on the ground with the mobile cameras at that stage.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

Sorry Chairman, I do have to come back because I think there needs to be clarity around this and maybe we need a more fuller presentation at some point. In actual fact the presentation that was given there have been no police officers released for additional duties that is the bottom line. Yes or no?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

Police officers have been released back into Roads Policing again to fulfil their primary duties, yes.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Basil McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Thank you very much.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I have got 4 questions including Mr McCrea so that is enough on this one. Mr McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Is that me finished?

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

No, there are 3 following you and I just want you to bear that in mind.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Just checking the rules there Chairman. One of the issues here on the slide show was the implementation of the ACPO speed thresholds accepted by the PSNI. Can someone actually tell me what that actually means to real people?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

What it basically means is, if you are doing 30mph in a 30mph zone and you are doing 31mph we have a discretion about where we put that threshold and to prosecute and the rationale behind that is, that is to give people the opportunity if they are accelerating, they are decelerating, if they are only slightly over. So, we have a discretionary threshold within which we will not prosecute, for example over the 30mph over the 40mph or indeed over the 60mph. Our thresholds have always been slightly higher in Northern Ireland than they were in GB. We are reducing those thresholds down to GB standards, that was the recommendation and we are working towards that over the next 2 year period.

Mr Basil McCrea:

So what actually are the figures?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

My advice would be, test them out on the road and we will advise you of the figures if you are caught by one of the Road Traffic Units.

Mr Basil McCrea:

I appreciate that it is Christmas, we are having a bit of frivolity here but there is a serious point. You said earlier on that it is not your intention to catch people, actually it was your colleague ACC McCausland, it is not your intention to catch people out that you are giving people directions to where these are, so ACC Toner I think it would be better if we were tell me now that there is a change in the thresholds, that they are coming down and what thresholds are because we do not want to catch people we want to get them driving the proper way.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

Sorry, the thresholds 30mph in a 30mph zone, 40mph in a 40mph, 50mph in a 50mph, 60mph and 70mph on a motorway, that is the threshold on it. Police officers have discretion on how they apply the law, it is a fundamental element in how they do their business, we have a discretion in relation to this. If I turned round and said the threshold for a motorway for example is 75mph or 80mph I can guarantee you this afternoon they will all be doing 75mph or 80mph. The speed on the motorway is 70mph stick to it. Every mile an hour above 30mph in a 30mph zone increases the risks of a child or young person being killed or seriously injured, that is why we are reducing the speed limits outside schools to 20mph. So I have no intention of giving the general public the idea of what the discretionary limits are, I think that would be foolhardy to do so.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. In respect of the Collision Investigation Unit, the Deputy Chief Constable will be aware that I have been dealing with himself and a family who were bereaved as a result of a collision just not that long ago. So, I am just looking for some elaboration as to the timeframe for the establishment of the full-time unit.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

The answer to that question would be, there is a huge lead-in on training time because this is a unit that has a range of specialist competences around it. So, for example, you are building in your scene investigation, elements of reconstruction of the scene and advanced investigative capabilities. For example, as you do for example in a murder investigation, so we will have a functioning unit within the next 6 months and we will have fully functioning capability within the next 2 years by 2010 and that is basically getting enough people trained up and resourced accordingly. In the intervening period we have been working towards enhancing Family Liaison Officer role and the Senior Investigating Officer role out in the Districts as well at the moment with support from Roads Policing. So, for example, if there is a fatal road traffic collision on the roads now, there will be a specialist investigator appointed with the necessary skills and additional support now, but we are really aiming for the Gold Standard in this by 2010.

Now, not everywhere in GB has the Gold Standard in this, and indeed our colleagues from An Garda Siochana are very interested in the approach that we are taking to do it. It is the lead-in time for training and there is a cost imperative as well to do this.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Vice Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan.

Vice Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you Chairman. Chief Inspector Pennington thank you very much for your presentation. I note that when you are talking about drink driving you are saying that detections range from a teenager to a 97 year old. It has been my sense from talking to young people, that drinking and driving is not nearly as socially acceptable as it may have been some years ago and hopefully that message is getting through. The same message does not seem to be getting through in speeding and I hear what ACC Toner says in terms of reducing thresholds, but do you think, is there anything more that we can be doing whether it be as police officers or as a community, to get that message through on speeding because as you say, it is the major causation factor of KSI.

Chief Inspector Karen Pennington:

I hope that some of the content on the Road Safe Road Show that I spoke about in some length will help to do that. In fact, we have done a couple of exit polls if you like when some of the young people have left the Road Show, and I think in every case the sort of questions we asked them, *'is it right to speed for any reason at all, is it right to speed in an emergency?'* We ask them the question before they go in and then we ask them the question when they come out, and every time it is a very very positive response, that once they have seen the evidence of what speed can do and what alcohol can do and the long term effect on someone's life, it is having a very good effect.

Vice Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

But do you accept that there is a bit of a disparity between the message getting through to young people and drink and driving and the message getting through to them on speeding?

Chief Inspector Diane Pennington:

I do not have the figures to hand about speeding. Part of the problem is the mindset of the adolescent. I mean there has been some work done in the United States of America to show that young people are far more likely to take risks. They are far more likely to be thrill seekers and they do not think about consequences and it is my understanding that some of that is physiological, it is the way that the adolescent brain is made up. So, it is trying to get through to them that the idea that when they take alcohol as well, their behaviour will change. Not just by impairment and their fitness to drive, but they will be more likely to take risks. They will be more likely to look for reward from peer pressure to show off and to have something back from their peers.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, I think it is constant pressure. The Road Safe Road Show it is so impactive, Chief Inspector Pennington is right, you could hear a pin drop. My fear is, if you ask the same people 6 months later their approach, they forget about it. It is how you keep the pressure on which is why the Schools Programme is so important and it is why the collective effort is so important including engineering. If one was to look at the issue described in Ballymena. If you look at Bangor who had the same problem, it was actually designed out by the Council who made it impossible to behave badly in that car park by design features. So, it is collective, there is no one solution to this and I do think you are right, I think the mindset around speed is different to the mindset around drinking and driving.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Trevor Ringland is the final question on this.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

It is really picking up on the Vice Chairman's point as well and maybe looking at operating pilot schemes. If speeding is such an issue, over the last number of Christmases I have received a variety of presents, but included in those was an opportunity to take part in a rally course and an opportunity to take part in a racing course. I did not come back from those a faster driver, I came back a better driver and a better understanding of speed. Maybe is there something more we could do with young people in and around the driving test, looking at some of the ideas from other countries, such as Finland where they go through a far more comprehensive system of

training, how to handle cars at speed, the dangers of driving in the wet that would teach them of how to deal with some of the dangers that they might face, recognising that when they do get the driving test, some of them will speed so we might as well teach them of the dangers of doing that and also how to handle a car in situations that they might find themselves getting into. With proper teaching and education, the teacher who was teaching me on those occasions were very conscious about putting safety to the forefront above anything they were trying to input to the drivers.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Sorry Mr Ringland, could you speed it up.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

Yes I will Chairman.

Secondly, the use of speed indicators, I find very effective in slowing you down. When you see your speed flashing back at you and use of those around certain areas could help with safety.

The number of single vehicle accidents late at night, I was very impressed one night coming from a country area where I was stopped by both a breathalyser unit.....

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

You are in danger of a fixed penalty notice Mr Ringland.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

These are important issues Chairman that impact. I was very impressed with a breathalyser unit at 1 o'clock in the morning and even more impressed at a radar being operated in the village that I was going through and with a lot of accidents happening and occurring at night.

Lastly, how many breathalyser units are there at night around Belfast on average over the weekend?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

Could I just say on the first point in relation to the legislative changes in training, is a huge point that I think the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy review, which the Minister is looking at, and I think there is a role here for the partnership approach in relation to scrutiny of that through the Assembly, if I may say so in relation to what innovative approaches we could actually take to the training and education of our young drivers on the roads from a road safety perspective. There is a huge opportunity here that comes along.

In relation to the speed indicators, yes, that is proving very fruitful, particularly if you notice that at road works and other locations, and indeed, we have been a bit reticent in Northern Ireland about utilising that type of type of technology to inform the driver.

The third element in relation to breathalysers, every police vehicle is carrying a hand held breathalyser unit. We have just launched the new more up to date version today to screen drivers at the roadside to see whether they should be arrested and taken to a custody suite, and as I said on the radio this morning, 3800 people were arrested this year so far for drink driving, 3800 people into the custody suite. That is a phenomenal effort by our officers, but there is still a huge problem out there that has to be addressed.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I am going to take you to question 6 now, it is in the name of Ms Anderson. It is a lengthy question so I think it might be useful Ms Anderson if you were to go down through it please. Can everybody see it?

Q6 - With regard to the alleged dissident activity in Strabane over the weekend of 14-16 October 2008:

- ***Why did the PSNI on the Saturday afternoon of 15 October 2008 leave the car unattended when it was deemed to be of forensic value and a potential risk to life in the surrounding community?***
- ***What was the PSNI's risk management process/strategy on the day and how did they arrive at the decision to suspend the operation until***

Sunday morning, 16 October 2008 without informing residents or the DPP members that were on the ground?

- ***Does the PSNI have a communications strategy and if so, does it include a protocol for informing the community about such operations as they unfold, and more significantly, does it require the PSNI to acknowledge to the community and if necessary apologise to the community when operations don't go well or when mistakes happen?***
- ***Will the PSNI give a guarantee that in future security operations will involve local area commanders and that commanders will be visible on the ground to co-ordinate matters and communicate with the community?***

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

Thank you Chairman. Just to clarify, this incident occurred on Friday, 14 October 2008 and it was in the Ballycolman Estate in Strabane and if I could just put the incident into context of what was going on that weekend.

On that same weekend we had 2 confirmed explosive devices. We had 4 calls to other suspected explosive devices which turned out to be hoaxes, and we had one full blown firearms operation, and set against the significant dissident republican threat in the area, officers are required to make really difficult decisions and judgement calls on the ground with very little time to make those decisions. Sometimes that professional judgement, we might get it wrong, and on this occasion there was a public apology and a private apology made at the District Policing Partnership (DPP) meeting following this incident. So, if I could just give some background to it.

There was a robbery, I believe it was an insurance collectors car, and the vehicle was abandoned a short distance away in St Colman's Drive in the Ballycolman Estate. The initial intention was to carry out a full clearance operation because the professional judgement applied was, that there was a risk in relation to this vehicle. The clearance operation was suspended in the interest of police and public safety when information was received that the police would be attacked by petrol bombs, and I think it is best described in the public apology and the statement that was given by the Chief Inspector to the DPP meeting and some of it I will read to you now.

“A number of factors were taken into consideration on the night, for example, we were told by local people that youths with petrol bombs were in the area and waiting to attack officers attending the scene, and that any police presence would greatly increase the risk of public disorder. This followed a recent petrol bomb attack on local police carrying out a routine patrol earlier in the week. We appreciate the disruption that incidents like this can have in the local area. I apologise on behalf of the PSNI for the distress and anger felt within this community, however the decisions made by the officers concerned were done with the best intentions and interests of the community, and I can assure you that lessons have been learned and processes put in place to ensure a more positive outcome in the future. In my deliberations with community reps and DPP members, I have taken on board their suggestions for the future, and in particular, the lines of communication between police and local reps”. I do not think I have anything further to add Chairman.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed. This was raised with me and I presume also with Ms Anderson by a member of the DPP. Ms Anderson.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Well, Senior Officers have acknowledged as you said, that there was a problem locally and I have to say that since then, I think the mechanisms have been put in place and there have been notable improvements. But, I think for the community it is important to note that at this level that you are taking it serious.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much. Just by way of guidance Chief Constable, question 4 a written response to that, and Mr Maskey has kindly agreed to a written response in respect of 7 and Dolores Kelly has agreed also kindly to a written response to 14. So that takes us to question 10, it is in the name of Ms Anderson and this is on procurement practices. Question 10.

Q10 - To ask the Chief Constable to provide an update on the review of procurement practices and policies which he reported at the last meeting?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, I will address that. I mentioned previously in the private session, that myself and the Deputy Chief Constable met Ms Anderson on 1 December 2008 to provide her with an update in relation to the vetting and procurement processes.

It is, as I have already expressed to the Board, my intention to consult with the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee of the Policing Board on 11 December 2008 in relation to these matters, and as we discussed in the private session, I suggested that it be left to that occasion Chairman to clarify the policy in relation to how the Board and ourselves will move forward.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Any supplementary on that?

Ms Martina Anderson:

I appreciate what you said and as you say we have had 2 meetings on this. But did you at the review, uncover that active and known loyalist paramilitaries had secured lucrative contracts in the recent past, and have they actually been able to get access onto estate sites. I know the review that you are talking about is going to be dealing with policy from here on in, but obviously as part of that review, you would have looked into what had happened in the past, and is anything that happened in the past going to be corrected so as to ensure that it will not happen again?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, the situation revolves around whether we vet a company or we vet an individual. Now the reality is, the policy has been and stands with PSNI and other Government agencies such as, MOD even An Garda Síochána, or our colleagues in ACPO, that we vet the individuals that are coming onto the site. There has been no-one who has been vetted to come onto the site has any activities which would cancel or prevent us from allowing them to be vetted.

When the procedure was taken over by the Chief Constable, which as you heard previously in the private session, was 1999 forward, the reality is, prior to that the vetting was done outside this organisation but followed similar rules. The rules being that you vet the individuals that are coming onto the site, not the company.

The problem is, as I will collaborate with the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee, if we vet the company where do we stop? You have to start vetting every single director and this organisation has been involved, for example, in ACC Toner's part of the world, with some major international companies. Does that mean that we are going to have to require to vet every member of the Board of Directors before we can then decide whether we can allocate the contract?

David Best has already elaborated in relation to the procurement processes that are and have properly and correctly been followed, and that is Government procedure and we have followed those lines. That is why I am bringing it to the Board, to ask the Board's considered opinion as to how we should move forward in relation to the future. There was no-one on PSNI property, there was no-one in effect working for the Policing Board who had not been vetted and did not have a clearance to be there.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Can we reflect on that and consider it at the appropriate committee.

Question 17 is in the name of Daithí McKay.

Q17 - How regularly do all officers who carry firearms and weapons receive training in the use of those and/or practice using them?

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

Chairman, guidelines for firearms training are retained within our own policy directive based on ACPO policy. Re-qualification for handgun is at least twice per year and preferably three times and there should be no more than 6 months between attendances at training. Re-qualification for other H & K weapons is at least twice per year and again three times and again no more than 6 months should have elapsed between attendances.

This matter is regularly addressed by the Human Resources Committee of the Board of which Mr McKay is a Member and, indeed, is part of the approved Annual Training Plan. I would simply extend my invitation, issued before on a number of occasions, for Mr McKay and his colleagues to come and see our training system, and see how extensive it is and what care we take for our officers and for citizens with whom they may come into contact. But point out also that touches on one of the other issues, that our firearms training is being extended by a number of hours in fact, to take care of human rights and section 75 responsibilities and we are entirely unique in that in the United Kingdom.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Sorry, go ahead Daithí McKay.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Thank you Mr Chairman. Could I thank Mr Stewart for his answer. Just to confirm Mr Stewart, do all officers, regardless of those who are out on the street operational and those who are behind desks and other jobs, and also all officers regardless of rank receive that training twice per year?

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

All officers receive that training and it is part of the performance standards within Districts and in Departments to ensure that there officers come forward for training. We can always improve in terms of attendance, but the same system applies to everybody.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 15 is in the name of Dolores Kelly.

Q15 - To ask the Chief Constable, it is understood that a total of 91 officers designated as being from the Roman Catholic community are departing the service. Is there any indication of why this is occurring?

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

The actual number of officers from the catholic community leaving in the period between November 2007 and October 2008 is not 91 but 77, made up of 63 regular officers and 14 student officers, and in the same period a total of 511 officers left under voluntary severance and other arrangements.

The service has unbidden I have to say, conducted extensive research which we have indeed shared with the Equality Commission, to identify if there are any underlying reasons for higher catholic resignations, especially amongst student and probationary officers. We have written as part of this research to all our leavers to gain an insight into any underlying reason there might be for leaving, and to date our research concludes that officers resigned for a variety of reasons, most frequently describing it personal reasons including pressures of study, dislike of the shift system and dislike of the actual duties, and again, this detail has already been shared with the Human Resources Committee of the Board. So I think that deals with that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Dolores Kelly, do you wish a supplementary?

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I welcome the fact that there is extensive research because any modern organisation does look at exit interviews when people leave. There were concerns, I think in the wider community, that other reasons why catholic officers may be leaving, particularly in student and probationary and some of those concerns were expressed around the fear of dissident threats and pressure put on families, so I just wondered was there any comment on that.

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

We have not seen any increase in people leaving. There is an issue in certain areas where people are concerned about the level of community support they receive, particularly coming from particular communities, but I think that is something that needs to be addressed with the Board on a long term.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you for that. Just to follow on from that. Mr Stewart there has been obviously recently, in fact a couple of years in a row, there has been a fair bit of press speculation at a certain time in the year about the number of people leaving and then this focus in on whether catholic recruits are leaving disproportionate to other designated community representatives. You have given an explanation and I welcome that very much, but I am just trying to work out, why is that information not more readily made available to these journalists who are asking these questions, because it would actually allay a perception which could be out there among some people, if you understand what I mean. Because you have given an explanation which gives a rationale, what you are actually saying there is no evidence to suggest there are particularly underlying concerns, that has not actually been said in response of some of these journalists enquiries.

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

The difficulty we are dealing with and the Board is dealing with is, that we are responding to newspaper reports which are not always accurate. The numbers in this particular report were not accurate and the reasons for their leaving not accurately portrayed and that was a matter which I understand was drawn to the attention of the journalists concerned at the time. Now, if they decide to print the matter in a way in which they printed it that is a matter for them, so that information was available and was portrayed at that time, that is the information I have.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 24 is in the name of Trevor Ringland.

Q24 - Could the Chief Constable provide a rough estimate of the anticipated costs/budget allocated for the Judicial Review of his decision to introduce TASER?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

Chairman, basically at the moment we have costed expenditure somewhere in the region of just short of £7,000 in relation to the preparation work from the PSNI in relation to the judicial review for TASER. We obviously, as we do with these matters, look at what the potential costings would be. If we are successful in the judicial review, it will cost us somewhere in the region of £60,000 in total we estimate. If we are unsuccessful and costs were awarded against us, it may cost us somewhere in the region of £200,000, but of course, those are only preliminary costings as you would do whenever you enter into any legal aspect at this stage. But, actual spend at the moment is just short of £7,000.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Chief Constable.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

It is just worth adding to that. We happen to have put considerable resource into making sure all the material was available which I think was about 3 or 4 officers.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

We had a Chief Inspector, an Inspector and a Sergeant and 2 civilian colleagues working solid for 3 weeks to prepare the affidavit and the papers in conjunction with a solicitor and a barrister employed by the Crown Solicitor's Office, so it takes an awful lot of resource and time and energy. Those people could not do their day jobs when they were doing this but the judge decided that it warranted sufficiently to go forward to a full hearing.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

That concludes the business Chief Constable. Thanks to you and your colleagues and we now adjourn the meeting.