

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2009 AT 11:30AM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Mr Barry Gilligan (Vice Chairman)
Mr Tom Buchanan
Mr Leslie Cree
Mrs Dolores Kelly
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr Basil McCrea
Mr Daithí McKay
Ms Mary McKee
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
Mr Gearóid Ó hEára
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
Mr Brian Rea
Mr David Rose
Mr Suneil Sharma
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)
Mr Drew Harris (ACC Crime Operations)
Mr David Jones (ACC Crime Support)
Mr Duncan McCausland (ACC Criminal
Justice)
Mr Roy Toner (ACC Operational Support)
T/Superintendent Michele Larmour,
Command Secretariat
1 Public Affairs Officer
1 PSNI Personnel

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

APOLOGIES:

Ms Martina Anderson

Good morning Chief Constable, Senior Officers, members of the public and members of the media, a sincere welcome to this public meeting of the Board and an apology for the late start, but I would say programming the private and public sessions of the Board become more and more difficult and I apologise for that. You are all very welcome to the meeting.

This is the first meeting of the Board in 2009, and we have a full agenda to get through.

But first, can I congratulate those officers who were honoured, Chief Constable, in the recent New Year's Honours List.

Since we last met there have been a number of significant events, some of which Members have already tabled questions about. Perhaps the issue of most serious concern was the 300lb bomb abandoned, which is attributed to dissidents, in Castlewellan a concern I believe shared right across the community. There has been widespread condemnation and also widespread support for the police handling of the incident. I suppose Chief Constable and I have no doubt that you will be touching on this in your remarks that it is an imperative that information is forthcoming from the community, such that the people who were seeking to deliver that bomb, regardless of its target, do not succeed in what they are about. As Chairman of this Board I welcome the statement made by Gerry Adams at the weekend in condemnation of those who sought to perpetrate this crime. I am aware that the dissidents have little support in this community, also obviously strong local community pressures are needed to bring these activities to an end.

But strong pressures are also needed to deliver on loyalist decommissioning and we are well aware that these groups are also heavily involved in criminal activity. In your remarks, can you provide your latest assessment in respect of both threats?

Last week brought the publication of the report from the Consultative Group on the Past. Chief Constable, the report itself included a specific recommendation in respect of the future of the Historic Enquiries Team and perhaps you would like to comment on that.

As you know, this week we have entered into discussions on the PSNI budget for the next year, and I do not need to rehearse the issues facing the budget in the next year, and indeed, the following. As a Board, we are all aware of the pressures placed on the police to address the legacy of the past issues, whilst also having a commitment to ensuring that policing delivered at the present time, and in the future, is appropriate and meets the needs of the community.

Today, we are also due to receive the third quarter performance report against this year's Policing Plan.

Chief Constable, your report please.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman, and like you I intend to lead on the 300lb at Castlewellan. You are right it was a serious and deadly device which was designed to kill and injury. The criminals who left it there did not seem to care who they killed or injured, although we are clear the primary target would have been police officers going about their normal duties. Whatever their intention they certainly, through their reckless actions, put ordinary people, local men and women and children at risk and substantial disruption was caused to the local community over a period of days whilst the device was made safe.

In addition, since we last met Chairman, there have been attempts in Lurgan and Fermagh to put police officers at risk in potentially lethal situations.

Your comments are entirely right. There is clear evidence there is firstly no cogent or intelligent end game and very little to offer, but there is a groundswell of opinion and universal condemnation at every level which is growing, and I think that is a very important point to make and to recognise the disgust of local communities of this sort of activity.

In terms of the loyalist threat which you discussed on arms Chairman, of course the Committee is meeting today at Westminster and if there is any extension our message is very clear, anyone who has a weapon should give it up immediately, notwithstanding any specific legislation. If they do not and we find them, we will prosecute them to the maximum of our ability.

Chairman, in terms of the Estate Strategy. Policing the dissident republican threat is one of a number of pressures on the Service and we are utterly committed to maintaining our frontline service delivery, and we were disappointed that we were unable to progress the special meeting of the Board on 10 January 2009 in relation to the police estate. We were looking to gain approval for the closure and disposal proposals for 16 of our stations in order that we could focus as much of our money as possible, which is shrinking, on frontline service delivery. Much work has been put into that, and we understand the Board wanted some more clarification, which I hope has now been provided, and we look forward to meeting next month to take that matter forward. I think that is now pressing, bearing in mind the pressures which I will touch on forthwith.

We are working hard to achieve a balanced budget this year, bearing in mind the pressures during the year, we are coming very close to what we hope will be a balanced budget and we project currently an overspend in the region of £1.5m and we are currently looking at how we can claw that back before the year end.

If one looks at the external pressures which Members are well aware of during that year, it has been achieved by diligent management at all levels and I do think the devolution of a budget to District Commanders and their equivalents was a critical element of ensuring good practice throughout the organisation. That having been said, the pressure from the whole issue of hearing loss claims continues to grow, and this represents a substantial financial risk in the next few years. The bottom line is, that every claim made by a retired officer or serving officer, takes money from the frontline of policing, and every piece of work to support public inquiries and independent investigations into old cases does likewise.

If one looks at what that means in cost terms, just take one year 2007/08, the cost of policing public inquiries, preparing the information for public inquiries and the Stevens Inquiry collectively cost £13m. That is £13m that we would have been able to spend on community policing. If one looks at the Stevens Inquiry for example, which is the subject of a question later, over the past 3 year that has cost £2.38m. All of that has come from operational budgets and the time must come where these onerous and

unique responsibilities are funded in a different way so we can actually manage the day job which we are paid to do and which is what we very much want to do. That having been said, I can assure Members that we will continue to work to achieve a balanced budget, and of course we have always had unaudited accounts for the last 6 years which is no mean achievement.

There is much work to do in relation to next year's budget and we look forward to working very closely with the Board and the Northern Ireland Office to ensure that every possible saving is achieved, whilst minimising impact on frontline service delivery, but there are substantial pressures that we are facing and that will be a huge challenge. Indeed, I am meeting all my District Commanders and heads of departments this afternoon to take this subject and this debate forward.

The Capital Budget this year is projecting a £3m underspend, all of that we have assurance can be carried forward and is earmarked for the college and some specialist equipment which has to be spent, so it is not lost to the organisation.

As I touched on the future years, the financial pressures currently for next year, we believe are in the region of £37m. We had meetings only this week to firm that up and we think for the following year there will be a shortfall of £27m. The Capital Funding gaps in both years are expected to be in the region of £30m so there is much more work to do Chairman before we can assure ourselves we have a clear plan and a balanced budget. We will do everything we can to keep those pressures away from frontline policing, but it does mean other things will have to go.

In terms of performance, there is a presentation later on, on performance, and I am pleased to report that in general terms, the crime trend is in the right direction, although certainly levelling off at the moment in keeping with the experiences of many other Chief Officer colleagues in the United Kingdom.

While figures have their role Chairman in giving Members an overview of performance, they cannot give the whole picture of what we are doing as a police service and they must be set in context. There never can be a simple numbers game.

Members may well have heard, as I suspect they were up at 6:24 this morning, that the recent trends were reported in the following way. Radio Ulster claim a violent crime increase of 70%, it is not 70% the violent crime increase is 17.5%. Stark numbers without responsible qualification can frankly increase the fear of crime expediently, so let me fill in the headlines on behalf of the media.

Firstly, all crimes of violence are down by 7.7% that equates to over 2,000 less victims of crime, a reduction of 2,000 less victims of crime. Violent crime, that is the most serious of assaults, grievous bodily harm, unlawful wounding, murder, rape, crimes of manslaughter and crimes of that nature, are as I have said up by 17.5%. That is an increase over the year of 212 offences, less than 4 crimes a week, that is in a population of 1.75m and a geography of 5,500 square miles. I think it is important, without diminishing the importance of any increase of violent crime, we do get some sense of proportion and I think we are entitled to demand some sense of proportion.

Chairman, later I will be giving a snapshot of some of the operations that officers are involved with to reduce crime and to deal with the issues that concern our communities. But just in the past week, I think 2 cases of particular notice have come to court for sentence. They have been widely reported on and I think it is just worth touching on them briefly.

The first one was 25 year old Kristoff Alauya who was sentenced to 22 years with no remission for the murder of Grace Moore. This man was a dangerous predator, a very great danger to society and in particular to women. It was the expertise of this service and the forensic teams that built a case that led to his conviction, a watertight case, and substantial again co-operation both north and south of the border.

The second case was that of Ryan Zubrian, he was sentenced to 18 years for rape, kidnapping, 2 accounts of threat to kill, indecent assault and assault occasioning actual bodily harm. This involved 3 victims who stood up to their attacker and helped us bring those cases to court. Now frankly Chairman, those sentences will never bring back Grace Moore or remove a sense of violation to Zubrian's victims but I do hope they help give them some sense of justice being delivered.

You asked about Eames/Bradley Chairman. The publication of that report certainly demonstrated to many of the people here presently in the room, the huge emotion and concern and interest in the past in Northern Ireland. It is still very raw and it is still very emotional, it is also a very expensive resource in terms of our current contribution to policing.

I think it is of interest, I met a family only last week, 12 members of a family who as part of the resolution from the Historic Enquiry Team (HET), wanted to have a meeting with me and were hugely grateful to the work of that Historic Enquiry Team. That is one of many. Over 250 resolution reports have now been delivered, another 500 are in the pipeline and when one looks at the cost and the effort and the outcome of that particular Unit, which we are very proud of, compared to the cost and the lack of outcome of other solutions, I think Eames/Bradley is timely. We are not precious about the Historic Enquiry Team and the recommendations that over time it has moved, indeed it was recognised as a very useful model, has far wider application, is an important recommendation which we are more than happy to live with providing, and we would put this qualification in, there is no consequence in terms of quality in terms of what we are delivering currently. That is something that I do think is important.

Chairman very briefly, other operations that have been running recently. Operation Heartbreak 2 which ran starting on early January 2009. There have been over 19 charges for domestic burglary, I have forgotten the exact number now ACC Finlay...

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

We have got currently 28 charges for burglary with a further 8 cases being taken into consideration. The Operation has identified 75 prolific offenders who are being targeted in this Operation, and so far there have been 151 bail checks to reinforce the rules of the court relative to their behaviour when they are on bail, and 11 arrests for breach of bail in that Operation so far.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you, sorry I lost my note on that one.

In terms of another particular case. We did read with some interest, a 72 year old man was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment for some very serious charges of sexual

offences against his step-daughter 30 years ago. I think it makes a point that when we do get evidence regardless of the timescale, we will pursue it to a conclusion.

On the education side, Ards Neighbourhood Policing Team have just finished a very successful drugs education project with members of Youth Clubs, that ran from October 2008 to January 2009 to raise awareness of the danger of drugs among young people. Only properly trained officers and this was seen as a very positive and successful intervention.

Chairman, I will end my comments there and I am happy to take questions or go on to the presentation.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could I ask you, you did say personally to me within the last week, your concern about weekend events in terms of raids on homes of the elderly. Could you say something about that please?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

ACC Finlay may want to add something. In terms of overall numbers, burglary is up by about 3.6%. Last weekend there were a number, I think about 6 or 7 crimes targeted, particularly targeting elderly people in their homes which is a subject, as you know as Operation Bullent, where huge amounts of police effort are being put. The bad news is, those are still cases under investigation, the good news is some very positive leads, mainly from community information, have been picked up and we are working very closely with our colleagues south of the border to hopefully bring some of those lines of enquiry to a successful conclusion.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Does ACC Finlay want to say something?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

I could only add to what the Chief Constable has said. We have seen a recent increase in this activity, having been at a low level for some considerable period of time after a time when we put significant resources into that. We have responded to that, and the Heartbreak Team that I referred to earlier on will consider that and are taking that very

much on as one of their top priorities. We have seen a series of these, particularly in the Belfast area. There are a number of connections and an active investigation progressing, but it is a most galling crime when the majority of these victims are generally in their 80s and not insignificant sums of money are being stolen from them. It causes huge amounts of distress but we are prioritising our investigation focus roundabout these particular crimes, with a view to getting hold of and there are probably are a very limited number of perpetrators of this crime, and stopping it dead in its tracks.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Peter Weir.

Mr Peter Weir:

Chairman, my question was principally around the figures on violent crimes, I do not know if it would be better to take that after the presentation?

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Yes, we will take it later.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. Thank you Chief Constable for the presentation. I want to deal specifically with the question of burglaries and I appreciate that you have already addressed that as has ACC Finlay. But, I want to speak a wee bit from experience Chairman if you do not mind. Because over the past number of months, myself and a number of local colleagues have been working directly with the PSNI, in a very dedicated way I would have to say to try first of all pre-empt, what was a spate of burglaries prior to Christmas and since that time. I think probably I speak for everybody around this table, that people are very concerned at the very high number of burglaries which have been taking place in a number of fairly small identifiable localities.

For me, certainly the experience has been that there needs to be a lot more quality engagement with local communities in terms of pre-empting some of these problems.

Also, when in the aftermath of burglaries, there needs to be, in my opinion, a much greater improved quality engagement with local community representatives in those areas. People who are pushing the boat out in terms of how they are co-operating with the police by getting local community residents to give evidence to the police, make statements to the police, but yet of all, there is that frustrating logjam of where people who are very known prolific offenders still walk on the streets or have been arrested, let out a few hours later without even the local community being advised that these people are let back onto the streets again. Now, I appreciate that some of this is in relation to the courts system and people who are accused of these things have rights as well, but I am just making the point that obviously there is a big concern out there at the high number of burglaries, some have been higher profile than others. But there has been a huge number in some small areas and the kind of burden that that is on those local communities and the difficulty that creates for building confidence with the police should not be under-estimated. I know you do not under-estimate that, so I am really just trying to draw added attention to the very serious concerns that are out there in a number of communities about the high number of burglaries and the need to tackle it.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could you say something about co-operation with those leaders.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I think Alex Maskey is right. The more co-operation you get and the more community engagement and police engagement with communities, the more successful we are likely to be in building cases. I think there are great examples of that and I am very mindful of the fact that many people are continuing to engage with my officers regardless of threats from these idiots who are trying to stop them doing it, and I think that is hugely powerful and sends a very clear message.

The commitment of our people I would like to think is very high, and certainly Operation Heartbreak was another manifestation of that, but it is how you keep the pressure on over time, and I will go into the details of the burglaries in slightly more detail later, but I accept entirely what Alex Maskey has said, it is a very valid point.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Yes Chief Constable, I do welcome the sense of proportion that you have actually given to some of the reports that were made today. I mean effectively you are saying that Northern Ireland is one of the safest places to live in the United Kingdom. If that is the case, then that has to be down to the fact that, yes you have achieved broad community support for policing. Yes, you have achieved officers who are able to deliver effective policing on the ground and I think we should recognise that achievement by your officers and by the fact that we have that broad political support across the community for policing which was once absent and has now been achieved. I hope that whenever you are doing a presentation you could maybe draw some conclusions as to how we achieve more successful prosecutions and if there is anything which can be done so that the Public Prosecutor, we can equally celebrate his successes which sometimes I think in this place are largely absent.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Certainly in terms of the crimes, I will touch on the overall crime rate and comparative forces in my presentation and ACC McCausland is doing a huge amount of work, for me in relation to our relationship with the other parts of the Prosecuting Service, I do think as the money gets ever tighter, we need to look at opportunities that are available to colleagues in the United Kingdom that are not available to us. So, people who commit minor offences can be dealt with very quickly on the street through a Fixed Penalty system which keeps officers on the street to deal with far more important things, but actually sends a very clear message to the jobs for the want of a better description, that they cannot misbehave on a Friday night and get away with it scot free. It is hugely successful in the rest of the United Kingdom, it contributes 3% to 7% in terms of clear-ups, but it is more important than just for clear-ups. There is more work to do but what I am looking at very carefully is, making sure that cases where we think there is a genuine chance of a prosecution, we maximise our effort in. Cases where quite frankly we are not going to get there or can be dealt with in another way, be it Fixed Penalty or Caution or some other solution, that actually in the longer term it is better for victims and indeed perpetrators, that would take that work off my officers at the frontline which means they stay on the streets. We are going to have to do because the fiscal pressure is such now that we have to make sure that all our effort is

on frontline policing and back office bureaucracy that delivers nothing simply is thrown away.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

On the Fixed Penalty issue, I have picked up the view that, if a person gets a Fixed Penalty Notice and it calms them down and they pay the fine, they walk away. However, if these contest the Fixed Penalty and they lose it actually leads to a conviction on their record which say for example they wanted in later life to join the police, it would probably stand against them. That if they wanted to go for a job interview it would stand against them, so it does have a very sobering effect.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Everyone is entitled to go to court, if a criminal allegation is made they have the right to go to court. The vast majority accept their behaviour was illegal but of a minor nature and this is an appropriate punishment for such a matter. I do not know if ACC McCausland wants to talk ad nauseam on this subject at this moment in time.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Can I reassure the Board that we are in active negotiations and the Chief Constable is tapping is pen now so I have to stop. We are in active negotiations in relation to the Fixed Penalty Notice system with the Director and we hope to bring a presentation forward to the Board to show actually the issues that we want to tackle with the Board's help with the Public Prosecution Service to in effect create a speedier justice system in the whole of Northern Ireland, and reduce significantly the bureaucracy that our officers are facing.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Will that require legislation here?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

There will be legislative changes that will be required to be brought in. We are negotiating with the Northern Ireland Office and it may well be, that the new Minister of Justice, he or she may have that as the first thing on their particular agenda.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Basil McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Thank you Chairman. Chief Constable, I look forward to talking about the statistics in a moment or two, but I would like to refer to an issue that you covered in your opening remarks about the estates.

I have to say, and I think I speak for the majority of the Board, that we are extremely disappointed in the way that this issue has been handled. Whilst we understand that you do have to look at all financial issues, we have made it quite clear to you that it is not acceptable to close any police stations unless the community have been involved in acceptable alternative policing arrangements.

We had a meeting set up with you on 15 January 2009, we have a further meeting set up with you, a special meeting, on 20 February 2009 and in the meantime you have taken the decision to not only close but ask us to dispose of Dromara police station. The way in which this was handled, the District Policing Partnership (DPP) were not actually informed properly, it was mentioned over a cup of coffee to certain people at the end of the day, this is not the way to handle the relationships with either the DPP or the Board and we do view it as a serious breakdown in communications and we do need to find a better way to go forward on this important issue.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, I will ask ACC Finlay to deal with that particular case. The estate has been rumbling on for years. There is a harsh reality here. Some of the stations we are asking to close of the 16 have been closed for ages. There is no alternative policing arrangements, the alternative policing arrangements have been in for ages. Now, we can go into individual cases here or probably more constructively at the meeting, but there is a reality check coming up like a steam train and it is called money.

Now, either I put large meaningful significant sums of money into redundant buildings or I spend it on protecting people. I know where I want to go and I want to go there with the Board because I think that is extremely important, and I understand your frustration and my frustration. In an ideal world we would not be shutting these places quite

frankly, but we have some very hard choices to make, so I think hopefully all the additional information will be available for the next meeting. I will ask ACC Finlay to touch on Dromara as you particularly raised it and I am unsighted on it, but hopefully at that meeting we can get that debate moving on regardless of the past, we need to look forward because 1 April 2009 we have got some very hard choices to make.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

In relation to Dromara. One of the things that I have compelled my 4 Commanders in the Urban Region is to come in together with a balanced budget at the end of the financial year. Currently there are disparities between the overall spend between the various Districts and they are doing their utmost to reduce spend between now and the end of the financial year so that we achieve that, because if I do not achieve a balanced budget and everyone does not achieve a balanced budget then the whole organisation does not achieve a balanced budget. But notwithstanding that, Dromara station has been on limited opening of 4 hours a week for some considerable period of time. It has been waiting in anticipation of treatment by the Board in terms of disposal of the assets, and in light of all the pressures and virtually negligible football, I did take the decision with the Commander that we should move from 4 hours a week to closure and I did that on the basis of the agreed consultation process having been completed some considerable time ago.

Mr Basil McCrea:

If I can just come back on that, it is a supplementary Chairman. You were aware as a team about the importance to the confidence of the public about closure of policing stations. We have tried to work with you on this issue, we have explained our concern. It is not acceptable to us, to this Board, for you to make decisions to close in the middle of us having a consultation process. It shows a disrespect for this Board and it does not auger well for other discussions. We will not accept this and will make the point here now that at the 20 February 2009 you can expect to see a very intensive interrogation as to what form of policing you plan to put in place afterwards. We do not demur from the idea that we have to make financial savings and that we have to look at it, but you must bring the public with you and you must come forward with a viable strategy.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will turn up personally. I do not particularly intend to come here and be interrogated, I come here to have a conversation with a constructive outcome. But the reality is as I have said, and the risk of being boring, is a harsh one. These police stations are simply not being visited. Thirteen of the 16 are shut. We are having a debate about something that has happened in history and this is around formalising reality in a way that allows us to move on and use the maximum of our resources to deliver community policing which is not, and never has been, about having police officers sitting in redundant buildings where no-one comes to speak to them. If you add onto that the security angle of this you are adding huge money into achieving nothing. Now, if that is the choice of the Board so be it, we will have that conversation. I happen to think that 13 police stations which currently exist with no police officers in them, but a security implication, a cost implication around rates, maintenance, health and safety and the threat implication to officers who have routinely check them and go through processes because they are empty, is such that the Board has to make a harsh decision and the Board Members too will have to explain to their communities why they want to keep this redundant piece of real estate on the books at substantial cost.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mrs Dolores Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I mean the closure of police stations has been before us for at least 4 years that I am aware of. There is nothing here that is any surprise to anyone. I think it is political opportunism by some in relation to some of the comments that have been made. We are all very much aware that a lot of the stations have been closed, have had very few visitors over several years and really we are looking to making some mature political decisions that, if we were running a private business and where responsible for this particular element of the public purse, we would be making very swift decisions in relation to the matter. It is not the view of all of the Board Members that has been expressed.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr David Rose.

Mr David Rose:

I want to come in and just endorse what Dolores Kelly has said. I think we are in danger of having a budget bubble here that whenever it bursts it will be far worse the longer it goes unaddressed. I always presume Chief Constable that you will be happy to be held accountable for decisions and if a problem arises you will accept our questions on that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Chairman, just to make the point that we are having a special meeting to discuss this, it has been long overdue. I think there are quite a number of Members of the Board who are very anxious to take whatever necessary decisions we have to take and yes, if it has to be in the context of ensuring that there is a proper and effective police service for all communities to be able to avail of and have access to, bearing in mind that some Members around the table when they are speaking here, make sure they make it clear when they are speaking for themselves they are certainly not always speaking for everybody around this table, not us anyway.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Okay, could we move Chief Constable to the presentation please.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman. Could I have the first slide please? This shows the 7 year crime rate for just over the 7 year period, you can see we are almost on a flat line now. The reduction in the early part of the year has levelled off to basically standstill, it is about 0.1 of 1% down currently which is about 100 crimes fewer than this time last year, that is standstill.

In terms of an explanation of that, well obviously 7 years of continued crime reduction makes it tougher to keep the pressure on. Additional pressures around making sure we keep our officers safe has had to shift the budget unfortunately to some extent, but we still have seen some significant reductions in some areas of crime. Violence with criminal damage, really interesting this year, a reduction of 2,700 offences and actually

at Halloween there was no increase. The amount of effort put in at District level, with communities at Halloween, kept it pretty much on a flat line during a period where historically we always saw the spike, albeit a reducing one. As I have said, offences Against the Persons Act is down just about 2,000 offences – 1,919 but these reductions are offset by increases in theft offences, fraud and forgery and burglary. Now, that may be a link to the economic downturn, it is a big mental leap to blame it for that but there certainly are an increase in inquisitorial crimes and in particular fraud and forgery which is up over 600 offences.

Can we move onto the next slide please? Domestic burglary, as I have said an increase of 3.6%, that equates to 186 more crimes so it is about one every 2 days extra across Northern Ireland. A lot of action through Operation Heartbreak certainly had an impact and stemmed the flow. There may have been some displacement caused by high activity in Belfast. There are a number of anti burglary initiatives running currently and we will continue to focus on this. We are fully aware that this is not where we want to be on burglary, we were hoping for another reduction this year, sadly we are reflecting the national trend burglary is increasing slightly across the United Kingdom and we are with that, of course overall it is down over the 6/7 year period but it is certainly an increase.

The next graph shows the long term trend for burglary between 2002 and 2008 and as you will see that I think can rightly be seen as a reasonable degree of success, burglary is down roughly a third from the same period in 2002.

Violent crime which was a subject of much debate and misinformation this morning, overall levels of violent crime are decreasing. The proportion of numbers of crimes falling into the more serious categories, I touched on them in my opening, has increased by 212 offences or 17.5%. The greatest increase in the more serious category are threats or conspiracy to murder, wounding and grievous bodily harm or wounding and grievous bodily harm with intent, but I would stress that those crimes form only 6% of all violent crimes so only 6 in every 100 assaults fit that category. Northern Ireland still remains a safe place to live in the context of the United Kingdom.

In terms of offences committed by persons under the age of 18, overall reductions in all violent crime and those offences committed by persons under 18 have been influenced

by a noticeable lack of a peak on both categories in October 2008, something I touched on Halloween. It was interesting, bordering on incredible, because we would normally expect a peak at that time, but assaults and criminal damage did not happen, did not increase and I think that has helped keep crime at least on the level playing field for the final part of this year.

In terms of the murder figures, just by way of information really Chairman. This year to date there have been 16 murders, that is not counting the 2 currently under investigation I have to say which go back many years compared to 22 last year. In 2002 it is worth reflecting there were 42 murders, so murders have more than halved in that period. I do think our clear-up rate is very high, it is in the high 80s and I do think that can be quite properly placed at the door of the major enquiry teams and the professional response to serious crime that is now being delivered.

Moving to criminal damage and anti social behaviour, both of which I know feature on just about every single District Policing Partnership agenda. The figures are there, the good news is they are both also down and again I do think, whilst we would like to claim success of this it is absolutely a function of partnership and greater and increasing support for policing and the effort put in by communities in support of us I think should be properly recognised and put on record at this meeting, but the figures are looking positive at the moment.

Chairman, in terms of most similar forces, again we follow the trend pretty much. You see in domestic burglary it is a mixed picture, some are up and some are down. The trend is as of yesterday across the country is, it is continuing to climb slightly. Again, so far this year, our comparative forces are still reporting a decrease in crime and we are just about hanging on in there.

In terms of clearance rates, we are still not as high as our other forces. It is not on the graph but for information, currently our clearance rate is improving, it is at 21.6% that is compared to a similar force average of 27%, so we are about 6 percentage points below the average in our comparative forces. One must bring to your attention the fact that we do not have access to Fixed Penalty tickets which traditionally are between 3% and 7% of all clear-ups. If one was to add that on and actually add on other offences of disorder which we are not allowed to claim and other United Kingdom forces are, we

are actually pretty close to the similar force average which is a better place than we have been for some time, that does not mean it is satisfactory. Certainly more work this year has gone into looking at offences being taken into consideration and as ACC Finlay touched on in Operation Heartbreak, a number of offences were cleared up by perpetrators caught for one offence admitting, quite properly and evidentially, that they had committed other offences. That may not sound too important, it is very important to the victim. It enables us to give feedback to the victim, a person that broke into their house has been caught and has been dealt with so it is something that is well worth investing some time and effort into.

Chairman, Ian Paisley asked about where do we compare as a benchmark against other places in England and Wales and if you look at our comparative forces, this graph shows the breakdown per 1,000 residents, in other words the likelihood of becoming a victim in Northern Ireland compared to anywhere else in our comparative forces. If you look at all crime, you are at 60% of the risk that you are in any of the other comparative forces.

Criminal damage again slightly less, burglary definitely less and violent crime slightly less. Domestic burglary by way of information is against per 1,000 households. The PSNI figure is 10 people per 1,000 residents, if you compare that to the worst case it is 24 people per 1,000 residents so you are less than half as likely to be a victim of burglary here than in, for example, West Yorkshire. So I think it is an important point again to put into context, not to diminish the importance of every victim of crime, be they in Northern Ireland or West Yorkshire, Manchester, Northumberland or Nottinghamshire, but it does just set the context of how people are feeling reasonably reassured that they are less likely to become a victim of crime in Northern Ireland than in other places and I think that is an important final point to make.

I am happy to take questions on any of the other routine performance measures that Members have.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

We note in particular the last point. As a Board we welcome the improvements in respect of incidents of anti social behaviour and criminal damage. We note the concerns around increases in burglary but would welcome the initiatives that are being

taken in Belfast. I commend the recent 2 interviews in the Belfast Telegraph which I believe give a degree of reassurance there. We note that the PSNI has made some improvement in the sanction clearance rates, moving to 21.6% clearly there is some way to go to achieve the target that has been set, however the results when broken down into Rural and Urban, the improvement in Rural is to be welcomed.

It is at this point I think Peter Weir.

Mr Peter Weir:

I would thank the Chief Constable for his presentation and as the Chairman has indicated, to be fair there are a number of good news within these statistics and I think it is important to place on record our thanks and appreciation for the work that is ongoing in reducing figures such as the anti social behaviour, such as criminal damage. I think one aspect that was not directly touched upon, the welcomed continuing reduction in the number of road deaths and serious road injuries. Obviously it is an area that we cannot be complacent upon.

It is also a case I acknowledge as well from the Chief Constable has said, particularly in terms of the violent crime, that we do both put this in context and also that we have accurate reporting of this. Nevertheless, obviously people will be concerned at the increase in terms of the violent crime. If I can ask 2 questions on it and then a third on a separate aspect quite briefly.

As regards the serious violent crime, could the Chief Constable give a breakdown as to the balance between paramilitary violent crime and the other sort of criminal violent crime.

Secondly, in light of the increases if he can outline any additional actions that are being taken to try and tackle this problem.

Thirdly, by way of I suppose more routine bit. I note that one other area where there appears to be a degree of gap from the target is in the processing of summary crimes where the variations seem to be quite a distance away from the target. I wonder if the Chief Constable could comment on that and any actions that are being taken on that front.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

In terms of the violent crime, statistically it is such a small increase across such a wide area it is very hard. Have 212 extra crimes happened in any location, answer no. ACC Finlay may want to touch on particular issues in Belfast but we are not seeing a spike somewhere. This is a slight increase across the whole of Northern Ireland so it is very hard to say what it is caused by. ACC Finlay may want to put some particular focus on what is happening in Urban Region and I will ask ACC Gillespie, who is unable to be here today, to certainly respond to your other issue in writing if it would be helpful.

In terms of paramilitary versus ordinary crime, this is ordinary crime. There are very small numbers of paramilitary, this does not reflect a substantial increase in crime which we would say is paramilitary based. There is no evidence of that at all. I do not know if ACC Finlay wants to touch on Belfast region which is where the brunt is being carried.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

Just a couple of things that I would add. Our assessment is in looking at this approximately 20% to 30% of the most serious violent crime is actually occurring within dwellings, so it is not in public spaces and I would say on an area where we can have little influence in a prevention capacity other than the work that we do in encouraging people to come forward and speak to us, very often in domestic violence but very often it is familial or it is what we might call a 'fall out' between former friends and some of that is very violent indeed.

The other aspect, and certainly in Belfast, we have seen is, in some of those assaults that have been associated with the Night Time Economy, while the volume may have reduced there have been some that have been significantly more serious. But none of those are attributed to anything else, no paramilitary connection other than very often the effects of alcohol and the tensions that sometimes can arise between people out for an evening's entertainment when it all goes wrong.

So, we are doing particular pieces of work roundabout this but the numbers are quite small and that element we can actually reach and influence is probably relatively small. We are doing a lot of work ongoing with the licensed premises owners and the club

owners roundabout their responsibilities in taking an opportunity to bar people from coming into certain licensed premises if they have committed themselves in a disorderly manner and therefore deprive people for a period of time for the opportunity of using those premises and that is proving to be an effective initiative working with the industry. It is an initiative which was initially commenced in Bangor, has been found successful there and is now rolled out and is operating in Belfast.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC McCausland to deal with the summons.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, if I could just backup what ACC Finlay says in relation to the question relating to preventive measures. I have written to the Board an extensive report in relation to the Knife Crime campaign and what we have been doing. We are about to launch another School Awareness Programme. It will be something similar to our Road Safe Road Show but particularly in relation to knives and about the issue of carrying knives. There is a significant ongoing media campaign and links with the Public Prosecution Service and the Department of Health and Social Services in relation to preventing the issue of knives and knives in society, but remember to get it into context we are talking about 800 knife related incidents in roughly the last 12 months. Seven knife murders all of which have been charged and as ACC Finlay has said, all of which the offender was potentially known.

We have established as you are aware, Public Protection Units, in terms of everyone of the Districts potentially tackling the issue of children and of violent offenders and we have also looked at Merseyside and the Operation Stay Safe campaign that they have introduced across other parts of the country in relation to potentially bringing forward schemes that will dissuade people from carrying knives and dealing with violent crime, but again that has been written to the Board.

In turning to the issue of the Public Prosecution Service and the issue of our detections, the figures that the Board were given are slightly improved and improved on the positive side. In relation to bail cases we are now at 95.5% satisfaction in our achievement in relation to bail and 93.5% in relation to custody. But our summary and indictable cases as was raised by Peter Weir range from 72% to 25%. We have a very

detailed conference we have arranged in February 2009 for the Inspectors who are taking forward this issue. We look to bring forward clear plans in terms of improving the process, and as I have already said in a previous answer, we need to be working with the Board and with the Public Prosecution Service potentially to introduce a way to reduce the bureaucracy and speed up this whole process. One of those, we have already mentioned the Penalty Notices but we have a number of significant plans we will bring forward and you should see significant increases in this area.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Okay. Daithí McKay.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Thank you Chairman. Can I first of all welcome the increase in the clearance rates in terms of the racist and homophobic crimes. In terms of the sectarian crime rate it shows that those figures have actually worsened to less than 10%, can I ask the Chief Constable what work is being carried out to improve those figures and in terms of the bald statistics in terms of the actual number of sectarian crimes, have those got better or worse?

Second to that, there are also figures there in terms of victims satisfaction and the report outlines that it is 11% short, 64% of victims are satisfied that they are kept informed of their case. Could I ask the Chief Constable why that is the case currently and what he is doing and will do to ensure that those figures are improved upon?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC McCausland to deal with some of the detail. In terms of sectarian crimes the numbers are very low, so wild swings in clear-up rates can occur because the numbers are low, that does not mean that sectarian crime is low it means the reported sectarian crime is low.

In terms of the satisfaction rate, yes it should be better frankly. I think part of that is around the length of time the case takes to get to conclusion and who has responsibility for delivering and keeping people updated. But clearly, I think there is more work to do. At every briefing I run for police officers, the one operational plea I make to everyone in
Record No: 104424

the room, is to make sure that if they have got victims of crimes they are investigating, just to give them a phone call to let them know where the case is. A lot of this is simply about just being kept up to date. It is no different to people who ring in giving information to police, a simple phone call back has a very positive effect in terms of community confidence. I will ask ACC McCausland with his Criminal Justice hat on to deal with the detail.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Briefly Chairman, the figures that we have before the Board do show an improvement in relation to racism and homophobic but again it is areas that we want to significantly and continue to work on. Sectarian crimes, if you are content I will write and send down the exact figures in detail because these figures that you have here are the clearances to the end of August 2008. If you remember, we wanted to validate our performance and our statistics so that the Board had a proper and a clear picture.

Most of the sectarian crimes relate around criminal damage and that is the difficulty in relation to clear-ups, people painting, or throwing stones, or breaking windows, aspects like this.

The issues in relation to homophobic and racist crimes, in many instances relate to assaults where you can clearly identify an offender and that is why we have a slightly better clear-up rate, but as Chief Constable has said, those clear-up rates we have always constantly wanted to improve.

In relation to victim satisfaction, it is one of the key elements we will be tackling in the rewrite of the Policing with the Community Strategy with the Board where victims satisfaction and the end to end process of dealing with people coming into the criminal justice system is a key element. We have encouraged, and the Public Prosecution Service have taken on that when a file or a prosecution case now moves to them, they write to the victim and inform the victim that that is where the case currently is. That has, we hope, started to show a speedier justice system and also potentially keeping the victim informed but it is an area that we have constantly to work on and we do accept the comments made.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I will take 2 more questions on the report, Mary McKee.

Ms Mary McKee:

Thank you Chief Constable for the presentation. My question is around the 3.6% rise in domestic burglary and I was just wondering could you comment on the fact that the Board contribute to the ongoing advertising campaign and is it making a difference? The second thing, could you outline to the Board what other initiatives the PSNI are taking forward in terms of tackling domestic burglary.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I think you have got to hit this at every level. I do think advertising is important. It is still a fact that an awful lot of burglaries here are committed through open doors and open windows and that is a frustration for us as well as for the victims when they realise that they could have actually taken basic steps to have solved the problem for themselves, so I do believe in locally focused advertising to bring those message home, I think it does add value.

But that is only one strand. Crime prevention which is very much a responsibility of ACC McCausland's people is another one and enforcement being the third element. I do think that operations such as 'Heartbreak' do make a big impact, but the problem is it is a surge followed by a step back simply because of the resource that we have to put into it against all the other competing demands. I am not overly worried about the increase to date because it sort of mirrors what is happening elsewhere. It does not mean it is not important and I am confident that my District Commanders are putting a lot of effort into dealing with it at the local level and it is the point Alex Maskey made, the more local initiatives you can bring to the party the more likely they are to keep a lid on it. The frustration is shared by my officers of revolving door justice, where we arrest people and they get bail. That frankly is the law which is why if you look at 'Heartbreak' so many bail checks were undertaken because in fairness where judges feel unable to put people in custody because of the legislation and the human rights requirements and considerations, they do impose conditions and we do find that where people who are regular offenders are kept under strict supervision with a huge effort on our part to do it, you stop them operating to the point that some literally are so concerned, they know they are going to get a visit every night or once a night or twice a night, they do stay in

and they do keep out of trouble so it does have some impact, but it shifts the responsibility to us. I do not know if ACC Finlay wants to touch on particular initiatives in 'A' and 'B' Districts currently running.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

Just in relation to bail. Bail is an area that is undergoing a great deal of scrutiny by the Law Commission as one of their primary areas of the law requiring reform. Our bail laws are well out of date, with some of the more innovative and much more effective uses of bail elsewhere in the UK, so that work is currently ongoing and we welcome looking at the outcome of their deliberations later on in the year.

In relation to particular initiatives, there is not particular rocket science around this. It is about locally trying to reinforce the message that people get out of the habit of locking doors and windows and leaving things around the outside of the house that invites opportunists to make it easier to get into their house. It is about keeping that message going. It inevitably happens when we do have a series of burglaries or a number of burglaries in the area, that area will tighten up their own personal security as a consequence of those people becoming victims, but we want to prevent crime happening rather than detect the offender. Prevention is much better than cure, and therefore the local initiatives, and particularly in areas for example in South Belfast where you will get high density population in houses of multiple occupation where you have people who do not necessarily have the same sense of ownership for the overall building as opposed to their particular room or part of flat, are a particular issue for us that allows people into a block of flats and then can undertake perhaps 3 or 4 burglaries in that time by someone not actually taking the care to lock the controlled entry door behind them. So there is work with universities around those specific issues and work goes on in particular areas in relation to particular styles of burglary, locally led by the Chief Inspectors. We have a range of different initiatives, but it has got to be tailored to the particular problem of the area, but it is just about trying to get the message over and over again to get people into the habit of locking doors and windows and having basic security measures.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, the last point I would make is as you know, you and I launched at Christmas our 'Close It, Lock It, Check It' and it is very clear that over 40% of all domestic

burglaries, can be due to the fact that people leave their premises unsecure. In fact, the startling figures seem to be, that the Home Secretary announced yesterday, in relation to the United Kingdom burglary initiative, that 18% of all homes in the United Kingdom, do not have proper door locks and 14% of all homes in the United Kingdom, do not have proper window locks, and what we are saying to people is, as ACC Finlay has already emphasised, if people can in effect secure their property in the first instance, this will significantly help us and this is one of the issues in terms of the whole community making a real difference together to help drive down crime.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Final question, Mr Brian Rea.

Mr Brian Rea:

Thank you Chairman and thank you Chief Constable for the presentation. Bearing in mind that drug dealing and drug gangs would be related to large amounts of money, could you comment on the figures for frustrated and disrupted and dismantled drug gangs and also would you comment on a reduction in overtime paid to officers and if that contributes to that?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Harris to do the detail on the drugs operation. The Drugs Squad have been very successful, not only in disrupting but actually in ceasing assets which is of a huge benefit to us in terms of that we can get some of the money back that is confiscated.

The overtime issue is a slightly more complex point. Overtime has been reduced year on year for the last 6 years, and yet performance has increased every year and crime reduction has increased every year, year on year for the last 6 years, so there is no connection between, it is how you use the money intelligently and how you maximise the potential for it.

It is a fact that currently a lot of money is being spent, quite properly, on keeping our officers and our community safe to the current particular threat and defusing devices and such like when we find them. Now, of course, by definition that moves the money to the point of extreme urgency, it has to come from somewhere so there is some

cause and effect, but it is in my judgement limited. Budgets are devolved at the beginning of a year so each particular unit, be it Roads Policing, be it ACC Harris operations, be it ACC McCausland's operations or be it ACC Finlay's have a set amount of money to manage the year. It is only in a real crisis that we take that money back because it simply makes it unpredictable for District Commanders. So District Commanders generally and heads of departments, have a fund at the beginning which they can use to the best of their professional judgement and ability to maximise the impact in their bit of the business, but we could always do with more. I think next year we are going to face some very real pressures in the overtime area, but I will ask ACC Harris to touch on the actual disruption issue.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

The figures cover the first 2 quarters of this financial year and they were pretty unique in terms of the problems we faced in those first 2 quarters around the cannabis farms and cannabis factories, and the amount of effort that had to be put in to the disruption of those. We uncovered over 80 factories in the end and were very successful in terms of bringing offenders to justice and actually, the principal masters of this ring. But that in effect was one criminal enterprise and we displaced it from Northern Ireland, after it had been displaced from elsewhere in these islands, so that had a distorting effect on our work.

The third quarter of the year back on track again and tackling our own more local drug gangs. We had a lot of success in December 2008 and, in effect, took over £2m worth of drugs off the streets in December 2008. The difficulty when we have a success in one area is, that you drive criminals and particular the people who are career criminals, into other areas and that often leads them towards more violent crime such as cash in transit robberies or tiger kidnaps and that is some of the issues that we have identified around our successes against drugs, drives crime gangs into other areas but our efforts continue. We look very much in partnership through the Organised Crime Task Force at the whole picture of organised crime, and as you can see, in terms of the amounts of money we have seized and recovered £1.2m in the first 2 quarters of the year and that figure has grown substantially since then, actually taking cash out of the crime business is a very important deterrent and actually drives people away from this criminal activity.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed. There are 2 questions from Committees of the Board Chief Constable, question 1 relates to Project Horizon, may be it could be put on the screen. Could I ask you in your reply, could you clarify for the benefit of the public and the media what Project Horizon is about please.

Q1 - Some of the benefits of Project Horizon are detailed as:

- *more efficient use of PSNI resources*
- *more efficient end to end business processes*
- *improved visibility of PSNI officers due to reduced administration*
- *higher quality data within line of business application.*

Can the Chief Constable advise to what extent Project Horizon has delivered on each of the stated benefits, and quantify where possible, the efficiencies?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Toner to deal with that and we will try and keep the jargon to as little as possible.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

Chairman, Project Horizon is PSNI's major IT project in relation to the Causeway Programme and as colleagues will know, the Causeway Programme is the electronic joining up of all the Criminal Justice Agencies across Northern Ireland. That is, ourselves, courts, probation, Prison Service etc so Project Horizon is our project in relation to implementing internal IT systems that will improve efficiency within the organisation, free-up officer time and assist in feeding information into the Causeway Hub as it is known.

The first thing I would say is funding. This is one of the projects we managed to save in the funding cuts and keep going because it is fundamental to delivering the Causeway Programme. What I would say, and would offer up to every Member of the Board, and indeed officials is, to come along and see Horizon in action and its interaction with

Causeway, because it is immensely useful. I know some Board Members have actually been there already.

What is it actually doing at the moment? Well, it is custody. If you go into a custody suite now it is all electronic. It used to take about 10 to 12 days for an old photograph to be taken of a detained person and then fed through the system and scanned in and put on the old computer system, it now takes less than a minutes.

Fingerprints are taken electronically as part of the Horizon Project in conjunction with life scan and they are processed in about 35 to 40 seconds, so we know whether you are in the fingerprint database.

Occurrence and case management is up and functioning as well, as is case preparation. There is an issue with case preparation and that is the volume of work involved in, what we would see as relatively minor crimes, and this is one that ACC McCausland and I have been working on through the Causeway Board and the Criminal Justice Board in relation to, for example, minor crimes. An example would be a simple shoplifting offence where the offender is identified and the offender admits the offence now requires a full file to be prepared for the Public Prosecution Service and that is soaking up a lot of time.

Crime recording is on the system and fully functioning and accurate. Property management is on the system and I think from the figures I have here we have something like 400,000 items of property now barcoded and on the system, so we know where they are, what officers are responsible for them.

Warrants and searches will be going on in June 2009 at the next stage of the Causeway development whenever the Hub is expanded so that warrants and searches information will be electronically fed back and forward across live time, as will all the live time reports from the courts service as well. We have tasking and we have intelligence aspects going on between May to September. The likelihood is that the Horizon Project will terminate at the end of this calendar year or the early part of the next calendar year.

That gives a quick overview of the Horizon Project and again I would offer it up to any Member of the Board to come and see it in action.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed. Question 2 relates to the level of abstraction for neighbourhood officers. Maybe in your response Chief Constable, someone could define abstraction for the benefit of the public and the media.

Q2 - The District Policing Partnerships have reported to the Board on their assessment of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Policing Framework for the period April to September 2008. DPPs noted some concerns in relation to the level of abstraction for Neighbourhood Officers. Can the Chief Constable report on progress towards achieving neighbourhood officers working at least 80% of their duty hours on neighbourhood policing duties.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC McCausland to do that please.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

The Board were given the figures for the first 6 months of which the abstraction levels or the current levels of neighbourhood officers serving in their neighbourhoods range from 93.6% to 85.5%, so all of the targets of 80% have been met and achieved. We are currently compiling the next 6 months which is in line with the current Policing Plan and that will be reported down to the Board in relation to the next 6 months from October 2008 to the end of March 2009.

In terms of actual abstractions, well District Commanders and Regional ACCs.....

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could you define it?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

It is in effect removing or they do not provide a neighbourhood policing service within the defined neighbourhood and the area that they working. We have 176 defined neighbourhoods Chairman across Northern Ireland of which the figures and the details I have shared with the Board before. The neighbourhoods are a geographical area in size of around between 4,000 and 15,000 people and the abstractions are for things for

example, court appearance or if they are tasked off in relation to training, aspects like that. We have tried as you can see to keep those abstractions to a bare minimum and we will be, for example, in terms of public order commitments trying to prioritise that neighbourhood officers are the last officers that would be used for any public order support, particularly in the forthcoming parading season.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed. Move to general questions then.

Sorry, Mr Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you and thank you ACC McCausland for that response. Obviously the reason why this question has been tabled today is, as you know, we are trying to maintain a very keen focus on this whole question of neighbourhood policing and we have taken reports earlier on about the level of engagement between communities and the police themselves. This issue of neighbourhood policing officers is the most crucial interface between the PSNI and local communities and therefore, it is essential that we, not only maintain this level of keeping officers in post for the majority of their time, but in fact probably improving from 80% upwards to make sure that these officers will be spending almost all of their time at the interface working with local communities to ensure that we have that kind of co-operation, that local knowledge and confidence built within the system between the communities.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, I could not agree more and for the Board's information, I have just had a 2 day planning session with my Senior Management Team and looking at what we face next year. Every question around cuts, the question will be 'what does this particular activity add to community policing, policing with the community'? If it does not then that will be the sort of areas we will be targeting to leave that alone as far as we possibly can. I did have a meeting with all my District Commanders to reinforce that message this afternoon, we have had to cancel it because the weather I am told is getting worse and I do not want to drag people up from Fermanagh and places where they have a day job for no value, but that meeting will be delivered by Deputy Chief Constable

Leighton next week. The whole focus of the 2 days was how do we drive community policing to the next stage and so you have got that reassurance.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

The next question, question 3 it relates to the Eames/Bradley report and its recommendations that touch on the Historical Enquiries Team, it is in the name of Mr Ian Paisley Jnr, question 3.

Q3 - To ask the Chief Constable to comment upon the proposals contained within the Eames/Bradley report on how to deal with the past, with specific focus upon the future of the Historical Enquires Team?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Jones to deal with that, I have touched on it in my opening but he has more detail.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr David Jones:

Yes Chairman, the report only recently came out and there were 30 recommendations and I am sure the debate will take the proposals forward. As it specifically relates to the Historical Enquiry Team (HET), the easiest way to sum it up is, that it is business as usual for the Historical Enquiry Team. The Enquiry Team is set up and financed until the financial year 2010/11 where it is indicated that there would be hope that the Legacy Commission would be actually up and running by that time. We have been in negotiations and contact with the Eames/Bradley group before its report was actually published and it is clear when reading the report that they found that the HET not only impressed them, but it was clearly a project that was innovative and valuable and a lot of their work they are recommending is based on the HET's work. I think, as far as we are concerned is, that we will continue to do the work that we focus on, the needs of the victims families and to ensure that we can conclude as many of the cases as we can prior to, and if and when, the Legacy Commission is actually put into place.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I take a note Dolores Kelly you want to ask a question, but may be I could take you after the answer to question 4. Question 4 again Article 2 compliance and the HET.

Q4 - The Committee of Ministers have provided their latest consideration of Article 2 compliance in a memorandum dated 19 November 2008. Could you give a response to this report, and in particular, address the following issues:

- (i) comments made by the Secretariat in relation to the structural arrangements/organisation of the HET and independence;**
- (ii) the Committee of Ministers raise concern regarding progress in expediting investigations and whether the current structure is appropriate in this respect;**
- (iii) what are the implications in this regard further to the recommendations made in the Eames/Bradley report?**
- (iv) the Committee of Ministers highlight “the lack of independence of police investigators investigating an incident from those implicated in the incident’, and advise that this remains an outstanding issue. The Secretariat note that the UK Government’s response is not yet available.**

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr David Jones:

Yes Chairman, it might be useful to know that I am in front of the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee next week on the 11 February 2009 where, if there is more detail required obviously we can get into that. I think the outcome of the report from the Committee of Ministers is very positive. If I go through each of the 4, I think it is 4 specific questions

The first one is in relation to the Secretariat’s comments about the structural arrangements of HET. It concluded on pages 9 and 10 of the report “*that the Secretariat takes note of the structural arrangements and organisation of the HET and acknowledges that the organisation is independent and it has adopted a well structured organisational scheme*”. There are issues in relation to whether or not it can then expedite the number of investigations and it is useful to remind people of the sheer scale of what has been taken on by the Historical Enquiry Team. They are investigating 3,268 deaths which is over 2,500 incidents. Currently there are 509 cases that have been concluded and 1,400 have been opened in total. 808 families have

been engaged and clearly focusing on the needs of victims' families we have sought to answer over 5,500 questions from victims families.

The Secretariat went on to say *“that in its opinion, that the HET can be considered as a useful model for bringing a measure of resolution to those effected in long lasting conflicts”*. I think it is fair to say, not only Eames/Bradley but the Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee and the Secretariat itself acknowledged the good work that has been done by the Historical Enquiry Team to date. I think it is fair to say that we are constantly evolving our processes and procedures in order to deliver as an effective service as we can within the time band and limited budget that has been made available.

One of the implications of Eames/Bradley I think I have touched on. I think the key issue, and the Chief Constable has been clear on this, is that the good work that has been done already on working with the families, has to continue and we do not want to see any drop in service in relation to that, but I think there is a lot of work that needs to be done between now and when and if the Legacy Commission is put into place in relation to its processes, procedures and its interface with PSNI which would still need to take place for various reasons.

One of the issues that was also raised was about the lack of independence of the police investigators which is question 4. I understand that this is in relation to previous responses that have been made to the European Commission prior to the establishment of the HET and I think it is above my pay grade to consider what the UK Government's response to the Committee query will be. I think the fundamental thing is, that the HET is an independent unit of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. It has been recognised as such and 3 bodies now have commented favourably on the work of the Historical Enquiry Team.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Thank you Chairman. Two points really in relation to HET and certainly I think all of us can recognise the good work and welcome the recent arrests in relation to HET. But

you did say in your comments it was business as usual and given that a month or so ago there was an announcement that 70 agency workers were being laid off because of budgetary constraints, what do you mean by business as usual?

Then in bullet point 4, the lack of independence of police investigators, am I to assume that is because these agency workers are former RUC officers and may well have been involved with some of those incidents, or what assures can you give the public of the level of independence?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr David Jones:

I think in response to your first question, the budget for the HET next year and the following year is the level in which it had been previously. This year there was a significant amount of extra money to do with Operation Ballast as you know which is now in the court process and hopefully will be a successful outcome of that particular investigation. Any organisation has to constantly look at the way in which it delivers its service. Myself, Dave Cox and Phil James have been trying to make sure that the level of money and funding that we have we can use to best effect and there has been a reorganisation within the HET to concentrate around 7 lead SIOs (Senior Investigating Officers), this will hopefully not diminish the productivity of that particular unit. I think we are trying to do more than we have had before in a different way and quite happy to explain in more detail how that will work, but I do not see that we are not going to be doing the same level of cases as we have previously.

In relation to the second item that you raised, I think if it is directly related to the comment from the Commission, then that does predate the setting of the Historical Enquiry Team. Currently there are very few individuals who work within the Historical Enquiry Team who are not agency staff from England or Wales or Scotland. All I can say is, that regardless of the background of an individual works within that particular unit there is a process by which it is all quality assured all the way through up to Dave Cox and myself and the Chief Constable, to ensure that the level of independence required to deliver an effective service is actually in place.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Thank you Chairman. With regards to the Eames/Bradley issue. It appears to me that from the thrust of what has been said generally, it there is almost a working assumption that the Eames/Bradley recommendations are going to be implemented. I think that is actually the wrong working assumption. I do not detect either the political will to implement Eames/Bradley and I do not detect the financial ability to implement Eames/Bradley and I think therefore that working assumption should maybe be set to the side. Maybe I am wrong in picking that up but it is just something that I assume.

Both the Chief Constable and yourself ACC Jones indicated the HET aspect of investigations is working and that you put a very heavy caveat in that there should be no changes. That you would be happy to see them absorb into something else, provided there were no detrimental consequences which I think is an important point. But could I just leave this with you, if it is not broke why are we going to fix it? The fact of the matter is, that it is starting to work, it is starting to have teeth. Dolores Kelly has pointed to the fact that it is starting to have effect in terms of getting people into court, why are we going to set about a huge expensive operation of fixing something which is not broken?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Eames/Bradley is a matter for Government, if they accept recommendations then it becomes a bit of a moot point. But I do think and I certainly know we will be very clear on maintaining the level of quality.

In terms of whether it happens or not, again not a matter for us but ACC Jones is absolutely right, until anything changes we are just going to keep going. As Members will be fully aware, the money for HET is time limited, so there will come a point where the money we have been given runs out. Now at that point obviously we would either have to renegotiate to see if we can get more money or at that point something else would have taken over from it.

I will tell you the other point. We were very clear, vey clear at the beginning that we fully recognise and accepted that not everyone would want to engage. Many would not have anything to do with us and that happens to be the case, although a smaller number than I anticipated, just want something different and I think the strength of

Eames/Bradley is, that it recognises HET as only one part of the solution to dealing with the past and people would have other options which should be in one place, so I think that would be a debate for the future Mr Paisley. At the minute I am absolutely behind ACC Jones, this will continue and I do think the outcomes are hugely powerful. I also think we can make a very powerful case in terms of value for money when we are benchmarked against other attempts to bring some sort of clarity as to what happened in the past, focusing on those who deserve the most attention, that would be to say the victims of the families of the victims of the Troubles.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Jimmy Spratt.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

I just want Chairman to make the point regarding Dolores Kelly's comments regarding the agency workers. I do not think there should be any question of the impartiality of the former RUC officers who are working in that. I just note at least 4 of the Top Team are former RUC officers and there is no question about their impartialities, so I do not think there should be any question about the agency workers.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I think you are right. Also, there are some issues in Eames/Bradley which suggests a level of independence that is over and above what we would operate. There is without question, the people who were RUC officers operating within the HET are highly impressive and have delivered some outstanding outcomes and frankly, a large number of people are more than happy to have their cases investigated by our previous colleagues, but equally those that are not or are concerned, there is the other option so we have accommodated both.

I must say, a case that I dealt with only last week had been dealt with very well, very high standard by a mixed team and it was not an issue, nor should it have been.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating the inquiries by Sir John Stevens in the name of Mr Jimmy Spratt, maybe Chief Constable, you would remind us of Sir John's Terms of Reference in your reply.

Q5 - To ask the Chief Constable:-

- (a) how much money has been paid to Sir John Stevens in each of the last 3 years, and the reason for this payment?**
- (b) how much money has been spent from the Police Budget, including HET for a London Office, together with office rentals, for each of the last 3 years?**
- (c) how much money has been spent on the storage of papers relating to the Stevens Inquiry at a London police station, including any payments made to the Metropolitan Police Service in each of the last 3 years? And to ask the Chief Constable why such papers**

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

That should be Lord Stevens, Chairman.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Sorry, Lord Stevens, I apologise.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

It is so long ago I have almost forgotten.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

How long has he been here?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

About 150 years. A long time way before me and remember this goes way back to the previous Chief Constable.

If I can just focus on Stevens 3 which I think is important in relation to Jimmy Spratt's question. Stevens 3 Team looked into for the first time the murder of Patrick Finucane and the Stevens 3 secured a conviction of an individual for that murder who was sentenced to life imprisonment, but in keeping with the conditions of the Belfast Agreement, was released after about 2 years. But it was, as a criminal investigation, one person was arrested. I fully accept that was not what the family was interested in and that debate remains one very much for Government.

During the inquiries, additional matters and Sir John as he was then, went to see Sir Ronnie Flanagan who was the Chief Constable at the time, who widened his Terms of Reference to look at matters around 'Stake Knife', that is still ongoing. These are difficult situations for a Chief Constable because they are independent investigations.

The purpose of Stevens 1, 2 and 3 was independent from the host force. The Terms of Reference I would say, are widely drawn and to interfere with the Terms of Reference is to interfere with the independence of the person invited into an independent team to look at it, so it makes it very difficult to control. In many ways, like many public inquiries, it is a matter for the Chairman how those things are carried on. That inquiry is ongoing, although I have to say the costs over time have reduced, they are still substantial. I do not intend to go into particular payments to individuals, in particular, Lord Stevens, but I am prepared to give the total costs over the last 3 years and indeed, the costs of accommodation linked to the Historic Enquiry Team, a small part of which was based in London. Actually, for economic reasons it saved flying people to and from every week and accommodating them here, so it was actually a value for money initiative which sadly is also going to be brought to a conclusion partly because of the reduction in the size of the HET.

Agreement was reached with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) that we would rent some accommodation from them because that was secure accommodation, that rental costs £97,000 per annum, that is based on the cost of office space in London. That is paid for by the Historic Enquiry Team budget, it is not paid for by the PSNI budget and to date we have not paid for this year, so I hope we are not going to get thrown out.

In April this year we withdraw all our staff from that accommodation and what we have to fund the Historic Enquiry Team should be focused in the building we have in Sprucefield.

In terms of the cost of the Stevens investigation over the last 3 years, in 2006/07 it was £1.14m, in 2007/08 it was £615,000 and in 2008/09 it was £628,000 that relates to the full costs of the Stevens team including payments to Lord Stevens, one independent investigator who goes back as far back as Lord Stevens and the remaining team of police and police staff. It covers all wages costs, office costs excluding the cost I have

already mentioned, travel costs and office costs, payments for all those matters are made through the MPS with the exception of Lord Stevens and the independent consultant.

In terms of material, we are currently in negotiation with Lord Stevens in relation to bringing that material back to Northern Ireland into secure accommodation here where we can maintain the integrity of it. That does take some planning, it is a substantial dump of material for the want of another description. It has been referred to of course, not only by public inquiries but also by the Consultative Group on the Past. We believe we can reach an accommodation which does not offend the principles of independence but that will frankly have to be carefully managed and will not offend concerns within the Legacy Commission.

Chairman, it is worth noting, because of course we fund this in the same way as I touched on in my opening, we fund public inquiry costs, sink costs in essence which are not funded independently. Success for me is that this is moved from the police budget. It is a consistent drain on our current expenditure which we could put to good use in protecting communities currently. That is not to demean the value of the work but I think we have got to a point now where this does need to be faced up to and I am happy to work with the Board on that. It is worth noting for example, that because of the spread of public inquiries, Lord Stevens' team are required to give evidence to the Billy Wright Inquiry I think this week so it does mission creep to some extent does occur when other things run in parallel and link very much back to the amount of material that was seized by Lord Stevens or taken by Lord Stevens during his lengthy investigations.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Jimmy Spratt.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

I am disappointed that you are not giving the figure for Lord Stevens, I would have thought that was money out of the public purse and your salary and everybody else's salary is open, clear and transparent so I think any payment should be open and clear and transparent, it is coming from the public purse.

Just in relation to the third part of the question, I do not think it was answered. The question asked had money been spent on the storage of the papers, in other words, within a London police station. I think I did not name that police station but I think you know where that is and has any money been paid to the Metropolitan police service, in other words, was there a specific guard squad on and was that paid for out of the PSNI budget or the HET budget at any point in time, was money paid to the Met in relation to the protection of those papers over whatever period of time that has taken place?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

No, and it is held in a secure location. There is no guarding in the sense of physical guarding on it. It is held in accommodation which is extremely secure but owned by the Metropolitan Police Service and the costs are included in the costs I have mentioned. There is no other cost that has been paid, certainly to my knowledge, by us to maintain the storage of those documents. I am looking to ACC Jones, no there was nothing else.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

What you are saying then is that it came out of the costs, the ballpark figure that you gave us, so money has been paid to the Met for the storage facilities obviously and we need to tease that out.

The other question is, just in relation to the Lord Stevens and whatever payments that has been paid to him, is there any way that that can be made privately, given that it is public money?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I spoke to Lord Stevens yesterday. We can have a meeting to discuss the whole range of what he is doing with you at any time and any place at your convenience, so I will have a chat afterwards if it is helpful.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I think we all recall very well when such sensitive papers were held over here, there was a mysterious fire occurred, so one can understand why such papers.... and if we all want to cut to the chase, maybe if we published Stevens we would not be spending as much money on inquiries and if other people were to step up to the mark.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 6 relates to Sir Peter Gibson's report on GCHQ information.

Q6 - Sir Peter Gibson, the Intelligence Services Commissioner, has found no evidence to back up allegations by the BBC Panorama programme that GCHQ intercepted information that could have prevented the Omagh bombing.

Could you comment on the Gibson report and in particular, address the following issues:-

- ***the full report has been classified for security reasons. This raises obvious concerns for the Omagh families. What further reassurance can be provided to the families?***
- ***the BBC Panorama reporter, John Ware, has said that, in certain respects, Sir Peter's report was "highly selective and a little disingenuous". He said it had not focused on the key theme of his programme – why detectives had not been given the information: "It (the report), says all the information was shared with Special Branch. The question raised in this programme, and one that still remains a very live issue, is why the Detectives at the end of the food chain didn't get to know everything the Special Branch knew and what GCHQ knew".***

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

In respect of Sir Peter Gibson's report, obviously it has been classified for security reasons and is not in the public domain. The further reassurance that we as a police service can give in respect of this is, that an investigation was conducted, it was reviewed back in 1999 into 2000 by a Detective Chief Superintendent and was then

further examined and subject of an enquiry by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. As a result of that, a further independent review as recommended by the Police Ombudsman was conducted by Merseyside police and they looked specifically at all the intelligence in respect of the Omagh bomb. Parallel to that, the then HMIC, Mr Dan Crompton examined the relationship between Special Branch and CID. All these investigations and reviews had full access to all the available intelligence relating to the Omagh bombing. Specifically, the intelligence that flowed, there were briefings between Special Branch and CID on 16 August followed up by a further briefing on the 20 August, this is all 1998 and senior members of An Garda Siochana were briefed on the 21 August 1998. This was followed up then on 9 September by an all source briefing to the CID and in particular to the Senior Investigating Officer and this would include names and other details of individuals who had played a role in the bombing of Omagh. Information was also provided regarding the movements of vehicles used in the bombing and information regarding unidentified individuals who may have also played a role on the 15 August.

This briefing has stood the test of time and was subsequently corroborated by the criminal investigation which ensued.

Sir Peter Gibson himself said *“any intelligence derived from interception as might have existed could not have prevented the bombing”*. It has to be emphasised that there was no prior intelligence to indicate that Omagh was a target for the 15 August 1998 and this was on the back of a bombing campaign which had involved bomb attacks in Moira, Portadown, Newry and Banbridge and where a further device in Lisburn was defused.

The Ombudsman’s report which was published on 12 December 2001 made no suggestion that any intelligence was withheld from the investigation. Rather, there was criticism that the full intelligence picture was not passed to the investigation team until the 9 September 1998. All intelligence that was assessed and could be passed was passed to Special Branch and the briefing of the 9 September 1998 was followed by subsequent briefings and Special Branch officers were implanted in the actual investigation team.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Any comments or questions? No, okay.

Question 10 in the name of Mr McCrea, Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

Q10 - Can the Chief Constable provide assurance that resources are being dedicated to neighbourhood policing teams across Northern Ireland?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, I will answer that and it will build on earlier answers in relation to Mr Maskey's question about the levels of police officers deployed in the neighbourhoods.

As the Board are aware, over the last 12 months, the PSNI have been implementing a Neighbourhood Policing Framework across the Districts. This framework has seen the introduction of geographically defined neighbourhoods and has already, on the basis of your question earlier defined that, of which we have 176. Within those neighbourhoods we have designated neighbourhood officers responsible for engaging, along with partners in the community, to identify real issues. Neighbourhood policing is also the tactical arm of where we do our policing with the community, whereas policing with the community is a strategy is how we police overall, and as already mentioned we are reviewing that currently with the Board.

Chairman, I have sent to the Board, and I am happy to send it down again, the detailed breakdown of where every single officer is. But the overall headlines are that there is 1,313 police officers of Inspector through to Police Officers Part-Time dedicated into the neighbourhoods and we report on a regular basis to the Board in relation to the deployment and the use of those particular officers and the delivery of neighbourhood policing across Northern Ireland.

In relation to the framework and Board officials sit on the Steering Group with myself and other colleagues around this table, and we reported to the consultant in relation to the Patten the recommendations that were outstanding only yesterday. Of the recommendations, there are 25. We have currently closed 9, there are 16 open and are very close to closure and those will, in effect, see the delivery of the neighbourhood framework right across Northern Ireland on the United Kingdom and ACPO standard.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 11 is in the name of Mr David Rose.

Q11 - As a result of the head camera pilot in Carrickfergus, what have the benefits been for frontline policing and single officer patrolling? Will it be adapted for widespread use throughout the province, and if so, when can the public expect it to happen?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

Chairman, this is in relation to the body worn video equipment which we are currently trialling in Carrickfergus. It has been in wide use throughout the UK and indeed, our colleagues in An Garda Síochána are also looking at it as well. It is basically a body worn small video camera and recording equipment that an officer can wear on their uniform somewhere. It has been known as the 'head cam' for some of it can be worn in caps or helmets.

The benefits of it primarily are that it has very major reduction in complaints or allegations against police officers, particularly those police officers who are operating in single officer patrols which we are trying to encourage. It is also useful for evidence gathering in relation to officers who are in single officer patrol as well. What we are looking at now at the moment is whether we could roll this out elsewhere. We do not envisaged that every officer would have video equipment, but we may well put it out to where there is a specific need for example, if a District Commander or Area Commander identified a problem with public disorder, anti social behaviour in a particular area, it would be very useful there for a Neighbourhood Policing Team or other officers to utilise. Then we get back to the aspect of cost, between £600 to £900 per unit for each individual officer and then to put the recording and downloading equipment on site, you are talking about £2,000 per site because we have got to obviously use the evidence gathering rules in continuity of evidence. But we are actively looking at it as a tool that could be useful to enhance policing with the community and reduce complaints and allegations against officers, and when the trial is complete I am quite happy to report back to the Board in more detail.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, I support everything that ACC Toner has said. I do not know what Board Members feel. I think this is a tactic to be used in appropriate circumstances. I do have a slight concern of a notion and I do not want to portray a picture that every time a member of the public has a conversation with one of my officers, they feel they are going to be under some sort of recording mechanism, I am not sure that is what community policing is about. I think what the pilot has identified, and as ACC Toner has expanded on, there may some areas where it adds huge value but I would want to reassure the Board it is not something I see, 'robo cops' going around with this on in the routine of policing.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Okay, Mr David Rose.

Mr David Rose:

I just want to quote Inspector Mahood from Carrickfergus who said that the technology will allow officers to spend more time on the streets. I think that is the angle where I am coming from on the question. I think that we are forever putting pressure on you to put more officers on the streets, so anything that might come across as being able to enable that should be given

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I am not quite sure how that adds up. I think one thing it does do is, it allows more officers to have confidence in single officer patrolling, so in essence you can double the number of officers. It may well be that interpretation and it gives them that reassurance, but that having been said, the vision has to be a reassurance where officers can patrol, subject to the current threat and all of that, by themselves, confident that 99% of the community want them there and they do not need that extra protection. The interesting numbers are around complaints against police quite frankly because it may modify other peoples' behaviour and the tactics they employ when they do have an interaction with police when they know that the reality is captured on camera.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

The interesting reduction where personal cameras have been used in the mainland, has sometime been in the amount of time that it has taken to deal with a case, because

the offender is more likely to plead guilty is the simple way of putting it and it is not tied up in court, it is not tied in obtaining witness statements, the offender pleads guilty because there it is on the camera.

Mr David Rose:

And the officer therefore is back on the streets.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 12 is in the name of Mr Basil McCrea, it relates to tiger kidnappings.

Q12 - Can the Chief Constable update the Board on the progress with police investigations in respect of recent "tiger kidnappings"?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

There has been a number of so called tiger kidnaps over the Christmas period, and these are violent crimes. Over recent years, the number of these offences overall has been reducing. In 2007, there were 12 offences including attempts, in 2008 10 offences including attempts and these recent incidents are all being investigated by officers from my own Serious Crime Branch who are all specialists in dealing with these types of crimes. Extensive enquiries are still ongoing and we have taken a very meticulous approach to both forensic examination of the crime scene and also the gathering of intelligence around these offences.

The crime is a high priority for the organisation. We work in partnership with both the Organised Crime Task Force and the industry to prevent such crimes. In particular, we work and have recently briefed the Business Advisory Forum in respect of the up to date position around tactics used by these criminals and how these offences can be prevented, and it has to be said that the police service is always ready to provide crime prevention advice and specialist advice around these crimes. Businesses which are dealing with a high amount of cash should come forward and approach us if they are worried about a tiger kidnap type crime.

Since 2004 when Crime Operations took responsibility for tiger kidnappings, there have been 55 kidnap type incidents including attempts. Of those incidents, 42 people have been charged, 10 have been convicted and for 7 individuals charges were withdrawn and there are a further 25 people charged where their cases are still pending.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 13, this relates to attacks on protestant youths in Ballymena town in the name of Mr Ian Paisley Jnr.

Q13 - To ask the Chief Constable to detail the number of attacks on Protestant youths and young adults in Ballymena town over the past 12 months; and will he comment on the police response to these attacks and what outreach there has been to Protestant working class communities?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Finlay to cover that one as ACC Gillespie is unavailable.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

Chairman, in the period 1 January 2008 to 29 January 2009, there have been 15 sectarian assaults in Ballymena and of those 5 of the victims have been from a protestant background and only one of the victims was a young person aged 16 years. A thorough investigation has been carried out in each case and each matter reviewed in line with the Hate Incidents Service Policy and police are involved in a number of outreach initiatives which would include the Kick Start football coaching programme, the Life Scheme which is a joint police and Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Scheme which teaches young people about civic responsibility.

I have had neighbourhood policing officers in each area and estate to regularly engage with resident groups, community representatives and Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators and the Police and Communities Together meeting, the PACT meeting, has been held recently in Burleigh Estate to provide an opportunity for local people to speak with senior police and highlight their concerns.

The Citizen and Safety Education Programme is being delivered by police in local schools to address a number of issues, including sectarianism, and consultation between police and local communities have resulted in very positive results, particularly in the issue of parades and bonfires.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Alex Maskey. Sorry, is there a supplementary Mr Paisley?

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Whilst I would encourage you to continue with the outreach work, I am picking up increasing concerns from surveys in the Ballykeel part of Ballymena and Ballee parts of Ballymena in particular, that the response that the people get when they report crime is very significantly along the way that the incident cannot be investigated due to lack of resources, or when it is being investigated, there is a lack of feedback. Now those issues I think can be addressed by more outreach or by more integration with the community. I would encourage that and encourage some of those other programmes like Operation Kick Start to be increased. I know the stresses and strains that are on the organisation, but I do think that this is where the rubber hits the road in meeting these communities and ensuring that they do feel that their reports of crime and reports of incidents are being taken seriously.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

Absolutely, I will certainly take that back and will go back to the DCU Commander and reinvigorate our efforts around about it.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

We have Mr Chairman, red circled next year the Policing with the Community budget so that events just as you have described so that in effect that Commanders can bid for additional money to in effect assist those, and there is money coming in from our OCTF (Organised Crime Task Force) and SOCA (Serious and Organised Crime Agency) in terms of incentivisation bids that can come through myself in terms of doing exactly what you have said.

Mr Ian Paisley:

(tape unclear).

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

It is money Chairman that has been recovered from criminals that goes back into the system and in effect, 25% of it has come back to my particular department to share and allow District Commanders to bid for in terms of projects just as you have described.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Do you advertise where that money is being spent...? (*tape unclear*).

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

The Commander does.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

(*tape unclear*).

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

The Commander advertises. We have a clear media programme that we will be launching.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Chairman, could I say I think it is very unfortunate the way in which Ian Paisley has actually posed that question. Given the nature of sectarianism in that area, in fact other areas, in fact we are going through a horrible court case at the moment around the death of young Michael McIlveen. Could I have an assurance that the PSNI in that area will be involved in outreach to all communities as I just did not get that in the response?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

The answer is cross spectrum, it is all communities.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

If it reassures the Board, one of the criteria in terms of bidding is, that it is all communities for money and for events that you have just described and it builds across community events.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 14 refers to what is euphemistically down here as our annual cultural celebrations and Mr David Rose tells me he will take a short reply.

Q14 - Looking forward into 2009, amongst the substantial challenges faced by the PSNI will as ever be those attached to our annual cultural celebrations, most especially the summer marching season. In an ideal world the annual marching season would pass with the minimum of police requirement, but we do not live in an ideal world. With that in mind, would the PSNI comment on the organisation's view on the health and safety of those 'community representatives' who may be asked to lend a hand in ensuring that the celebrations pass off with the minimum of disruption and damage?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

Yes, basically it is a good question. We have a duty of care as a police service for all people who are taking part in protests and processions. We take that duty of care very seriously. We are under Section 32 of the Police Act in relation to protection to life. We do not have any direct health and safety responsibility for those people under the health and safety legislation, that does not directly apply. However, what I would say is, the primary responsibility in relation to safety of people relies on the organisers and stewards of all the events and the organisers and stewards of people who are protesting at the said events.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Okay, I think what is important here is to underline that the importance of community leaders and local politicians on the ground to begin now to avoid any civil unrest in the summer period and I think that is important.

Sorry, do you want to come back Mr Rose?

Mr David Rose:

Just very very quickly. It is a good answer. It also shows that, just to make a bit of a point, that the ideas, beliefs and divisions in Northern Ireland that fuelled the Troubles and continue to divide us still remain unaddressed and that is why these questions get asked year in year out and why the police end up standing in the middle, until they are addressed. Historical Enquires etc deals with the people who were affected and events of the past, but we are still to look at the divisions.....

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Likewise Chairman, at risk of being rather boring on the financial situation, the cost of policing some of these events. The more agreement is reached and against a principle of no surprises, the more successful we will be at managing the risk and saving the cost, putting that cost back into community policing. But it is a harsh fact, if we think we are going to have a huge issue in terms of public order, we have to commit the right resource to it and that resource can only come from one place. It also, of course, hits what little overtime we are going to have next year, what is in essence of zero sum gain. That money could be better spent doing all the stuff that Board Members have touched on this afternoon.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

ACC McCausland might well have expected question 15, the festive card drive.

Q15 - To ask the Chief Constable to state how many offenders were targeted in the recent festive card drive. Can the Chief Constable comment on the success rate of this initiative, that is, how many offenders have consequently surrendered themselves to PSNI officers?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

He is going to give you an extremely short answer Chairman.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, the reality is we looked at this scheme and this scheme is in relation to 'find the fault warrants', which around the rest of the country are not executed by frontline police officers. What we tried to do was, we sent out 178 season's greeting cards encouraging the people who we sent them to, to either pay their warrants or surrender

themselves and 30 people surrendered themselves, so it is 16.85% returned. In the rest of the United Kingdom it is seen around 10% would be success. Of that we managed to clear 57 warrants that were executed, which is nearly a 20% return, but in real terms it meant that we spent just over £200 and in effect delivered over £10,000 worth of potential police business.

Now my 2 Regional colleagues have now the list and have had the list for the last few weeks in relation to people who did not decide to take this opportunity and they will be being visited.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I think we should congratulate you that there has been some success that has come out of it.

Question 17, in the name of Mr Spratt and this is the last question.

Q17 - To ask the Chief Constable if the entire police computer system was infiltrated by a disc containing a virus, and if so, what damage was caused; how long was the system out of order; how much did this cost including repair; what safeguards have been put in place to ensure that this does not happen again?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

I am glad this question was asked because it has raised some concerns in the press in relation to information security.

The question relates to a malware virus which was running across more than 9 million computers across the world in relation to basically a virus. The first thing we have to say is, this thing does not occur naturally. Somebody sits in a room or a group of people sit in a room and create this malware deliberately to cause harm or mischief across, both private and public sector computer systems.

The Home Office was affected, the MoD was affected and a large number of large scale institutions. What actually happened with us was that on 7 January 2009 it was detected on our system. We believe it was introduced by an employee who was entirely appropriately logging on using a data stick or a disc, but it had not been

properly scanned before it was put on. When it got onto the system and started running on the system the software picked it up immediately and limited its access. It never got to any secret data or top secret systems at all. We never lost any data whatsoever, what it actually caused was the slowing down of the systems. The systems slowed by about 15% to 20%. It took us about 10 days to completed eradicate it from the organisation and we have now put in place additional security software and patches which have come onto the market after the incident has taken place.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

Thank you very much ACC Toner for that answer because I think it was worrying because there was some speculation out and about, and the rumour I heard as well was, that it was an illegitimate disc or something that was being used, but it was just worrying that that could happen and get into the system and maybe knock the whole system out and that is the reason I wanted an answer to it.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you Chief Constable and your colleagues for taking our questions today and thanks to the members of the public and media for their attendance and also the media.