

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD IN
PUBLIC HELD ON THURSDAY, 2 JULY 2009 AT 12:00 NOON IN WATERSIDE
TOWER, BELFAST**

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Mr Barry Gilligan (Chairman)
Mr Brian Rea (Vice Chairman)
Ms Martina Anderson
Mr Tom Buchanan
Mr Leslie Cree
Mrs Dolores Kelly
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr Basil McCrea
Ms Mary McKee
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
Mr Gearóid O hEára
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
Professor Sir Desmond Rea
Mr Trevor Ringland
Mr David Rose
Mr Suneil Sharma
Mr Jimmy Spratt

**POLICE SERVICE OF
NORTHERN IRELAND IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Sir Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)
Mrs Judith Gillespie (Deputy Chief
Constable)
Mr Alistair Finlay (ACC Urban Region)
Mr Duncan McCausland (ACC
Operational Support & Criminal Justice)
ACC David Jones (ACC Rural Region)
Ms Liz Young, Head of Media & PR

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Adrian Donaldson (Chief Executive)
2 Board Officials

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Good afternoon everyone. You are all very welcome to this Policing Board meeting in public and I would like to particularly welcome the students who join us from Boston and hope you find this meeting of interest.

We have had a busy month in many ways, both good and bad during the past few weeks, the attacks on members of the Romanian community have been a very shocking reminder that there are those in our society who remain very intolerant of our increasing diversity.

It is fair to say that our entire society becomes damaged by mindless racism like this. We do know that this is not representative of our entire community but it does remain a fact that it is down to all of us, and not just the police, to work hard at eradicating this. It is clear that we are moving forward from policing a divided society to policing an increasingly diverse society and that is going to bring its own challenges and some of those we are going to be discussing with the Chief Constable today.

I also firmly condemn the threats made to South Belfast MLA Anna Lo, those who make threats such as this have absolutely nothing to offer our society. The nearly completed strategy being formulated by the Executive which aims to tackle sectarianism and racism as the responsibility of the wider society will be very welcome. I think it is fair to say that excellent work is done to promote good relations throughout our community – and this week the PSNI have launched a campaign to end all sorts of hate crime – but it really does need to be joined up so I hope that the OFMDFM strategy will pull all of this work together. This society is in dire need of more joined up thinking.

We have seen some further progress in the peace process here with the weekend's decommissioning of loyalist weapons. We have waited some time for this and it is a very welcome development. We have moved so far in the process of building a normal society here and the remaining groups now need to move quickly on this issue – just get on with it.

As we enter the marching season, I think we all appreciate that the parades which have taken place so far have done so relatively peacefully. It is important that communities continue to work together to make sure this continues to be the case. Not only does

violence and disruption around marches cause damage to the very fabric of our society but it diverts police resources, scarce police resources, from other important areas. The reality is that if an officer is policing a parading disturbance, then he or she is not out policing with the community and delivering neighbourhood policing. It does not work.

We will be looking today at the most recent performance statistics which cover the first quarter of this year – April, May and June. Whilst some of the statistics coming out of this are welcome, there are some areas of serious concern, significantly the 22% increase in more serious violent crime in the first quarter of 2009/10 on top of last year's 27% increase, as well as the drop in overall clearance rates and again we will revert to this later in this public session.

I would like to refer briefly refer to the most recent Omnibus Survey results published by the Board yesterday which give us a view on the public's perceptions of policing structures. With the usual health warning about surveys, overall the results are very positive with 87% of respondents stating that they have some, a lot, or total confidence in the PSNI's ability to provide a day-to-day policing service for everyone in Northern Ireland and 88% of respondents reporting they felt safe in their community.

Policing is an essential public service and the public have a right to expect a good standard of service when needed. As a Board we are placing a renewed emphasis on a community based and community focused policing service.

One of the biggest issues of policing concern within our communities - and one that is often associated with anti social behaviour, criminal damage and assault - is underage drinking. The facts are, according to the DHSSPS, that by age 13, almost half of all children and one in 10 young people who have drunk alcohol have ended up in trouble with the police. That is not a good start.

Hopefully some of you will have caught the advertising campaign which the Board has put together with other partner agencies which is designed to encourage parents to talk to their teenagers about alcohol. So it is about parental responsibility as well as police responsibility.

The campaign is part of a wider package of measures already put in place by the PSNI and other agencies to tackle underage drinking and anti social behaviour and is being run against the backdrop of Operation Snapper, the PSNI's campaign against under-age and on-street drinking which will continue throughout the summer holidays. It will also target adults who are found to be very irresponsibly, buying alcohol for young people which is one of the main ways that young people are getting their hands on alcohol, which in turn leads to anti-social and criminal behaviour.

We hear a lot about historic days and this is another historic day for policing as you Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde, attend your 63rd and final Policing Board meeting in public. I remember his first back in 2002 – he had energy, he had enthusiasm, he had hair, but I am sure it will be a huge wrench for you Chief Constable not being able to take part every month in these sessions, but we can certainly arrange for a telephone satellite link for you when you move on to London.

But seriously, Sir Hugh has been coming to answer direct questions from Board Members almost every month for 7 years and he has done so with courtesy, dedication and often good humour. We will be hearing a lot in the next few weeks about how much he has played his part in policing in Northern Ireland. I have heard a lot of it over the course of the last few weeks. It seems to be, that you have more send offs than the QE2 Chief Constable and presumably it is going to continue right through until the end of August 2009, but policing here will miss your straight talking and dedication to good policing but as you well know, that does not mean you will get off lightly today though. I will soon be unleashing the pack on you. So, if you could move on to your report and then we will deal with questions.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman. As you rightly say, I thought it was a 163 rather than 63. This is my last meeting before I move on in September 2009, but of course I am here for the marching season.

First, can I place on record my thanks to the Board Members, all Board Members past and indeed present, for their contribution to policing in Northern Ireland. I think it has been the vital institution in terms of building confidence in policing through proper and effective accountability structures. I also would like to mention at this point, that I am deeply

grateful to my senior management team, because it is their expertise in the various policing disciplines that I think ensured our discussions, both in private and public whilst challenging have always been constructive.

We have not always agreed on issues and some of our discussions have, without doubt, been extremely challenging and on occasions frustrating I am sure for both sides. But that is probably how it should be. A cosy relationship is not what I would want. I know that it is not what you would want and more importantly, it is not what the public would want. I am convinced that if we had had an improper or far too close relationship, we would not have seen the advances in policing what you have helped supervise over the past 7 years during my time.

That having been said, what has been achieved at the front end, has been achieved by my officers and staff and their willingness to embrace changes has also been highly impressive.

The structure of the service, in my judgement, is now about right and I think that has helped and it has been a lot of work. But structures do not deliver quality policing – people do and I am fortunate to have such high quality people. I think there are many examples of that which I certainly will not go into today, apart from they range from individual acts to supreme courage through to the sheer determination to solve the most challenging crime or critical incident. They are all delivered against a unique policing backdrop which people in this room are fully aware of. That activity has been supported by equal examples of commitment by political and community leaders and indeed communities who have supported policing and made it more inclusive. I think it is that collective commitment that has made Northern Ireland safer over my time.

I have had the privilege of leading this organisation from its earliest days. But in doing so, I would like to place on record the obvious fact that we did not start from scratch. We would not be where we are today if he had not been for the commitment, and indeed the sacrifice of those who were here throughout the Troubles. My organisation remains committed to support our former colleagues, widows and families and we stand on our record over the past 7 years as clear evidence of that commitment.

In terms of the achievement, Chairman, I think going from 29 Districts to 8 was significant and has allowed us to be more efficient and use officers more flexibly. We must continue to look at how we do things differently and we are determined to do more work to look at the effective use of warranted police officers and that will no doubt be taken forward by my successor.

The remodelling of our organisation to date has seen the establishment of the Crime Operations Department which has now matured and I think has been a significant contributor to dealing with serious and organised crime, especially crimes such as murder and indeed rape. I think what we have done through that piece of work and supporting it with our scientific expertise has been a major impact in dealing with organised criminality and indeed terrorism.

We have seen crime overall reduced by 23% since 2002/2003 but I note your comments you made earlier and we will touch on that in terms of performance but that is cold comfort to those who currently are being victims of the slight increase in crime. I think the reduction has been down to in the improvements in the way we do investigations at the serious end and indeed at the bulk end of the business and down to greater confidence and support from the community to work together to tackle criminality.

We have always faced financial pressure. I think we have delivered against that and against our efficiency targets. There is more to come and I think we are yet to realise the nature and extent of potential cuts across the public sector which will of course have a severe impact on our partners with whom we work everyday and I think there are some difficult choices ahead. It is also right to note that, of course, we still have a small group of dangerous criminals who are determined to bring us back to the past. You have noted this week the move toward decommissioning. I think that is to be welcomed. Any guns off the street are something that we should be very keen to endorse.

The threat from dissident republicans remains as I have briefed the Board in the private session. I do think they are becoming increasingly isolated. That does not make them less dangerous. They remain determined to attack police officers as we speak. I guess my eternal regret during the last 7 years Chairman has been to loose officers on duty and of course in the last 12 months, we have lost 5 – James Magee, Kevin Gorman, Kenny Irvine, Declan Greene, died in the awful road traffic collision at Warrenpoint and of course

on 9 March 2009 we lost Constable Stephen Carroll in Craigavon. If we add to those the murders of Sappers Quincy and Azimkar it clearly shows the unique policing backdrop that we face is still here and has not yet finished.

That having been said, I think there is enormous optimism for Northern Ireland and policing in general. I am absolutely confident that communities will not tolerate a return to the past and I think with effective policing continuing, we are getting more and more support.

Chairman, that all having been said, there is of course more we can do and if I can move on to more current matters, since we last met racism and hate crime has certainly raised its ugly head in a way that has made not only local but national and international headlines, in particular the intimidation of Romanian nationals in Belfast. However, the issues in Northern Ireland are far wider and deeper than simply that particular community. As far as those particular attacks are concerned, I am confident that in the majority of the investigations we have done our job.

That having been said, there is always learning to be had in these cases. They have been designated 'critical incidents' and ACC Finlay will of course be holding a full debrief to make sure that any lessons that need to be learned will be learned and we will do that in consultation with our community advisers. We did however, respond to incidents promptly. Indeed, Board Members have been briefed and are satisfied with the response times. I have advised the Board, but I would like to put it on record publicly that the allegation that it took 90 minutes to respond to an urgent call, is incorrect. I do actually condemn the use of that figure by reporters who should have checked with us before they used it because in my judgement, it increased the fear within communities who rightly were already frightened. It also reduced confidence in us. I have written to Channel 4 News and asked for it to be corrected which it has not been. I have yet to receive a reply or indeed an acknowledgement. My officers did help people move to safety when they felt unsafe in that area. We have launched significant investigations. Crime Scene Investigators were tasked to seek forensic opportunities, house-to-house investigations were carried out. We spoke to many witnesses and high visibility patrols have been put in place. Our specially trained hate incident and minority liaison officers have been fully engaged and of course, I have those across the Province and they work very closely with individuals and community leaders. It was of course regrettably still that these families felt

sufficiently unprotected that they wanted to leave, not just the street but indeed Northern Ireland. We will continue to work closely with Housing Executive and the Department of Social Development.

Six people to date have been arrested, two youths aged 15 and 16 have been charged with provocative conduct and one also with intimidation. A 21 year old man has been charged with provocative conduct and intimidation and three other youths are currently on bail facing further enquiries.

Chairman, I have also met, as you have been aware at that time with the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and I am grateful to them for concern around this particular incident. I do think we need more action in relation to the Shared Future Strategy. As you rightly pointed out, this is a shared responsibility of everybody in Northern Ireland.

Interestingly a piece of research that has been published by an academic recently, which I have asked for more work to be done on, actually shows that in terms of hate crime overall compared to the exponential increase in people coming here to live, the actual risk per head has dropped. I have asked someone to go and have a conversation with that academic from Glasgow to see if there is some learning or some issues that we may learn from and I would be happy to share that with the Board. It is an interesting piece of work and puts a slightly different perspective on the notion that Northern Ireland is the hate capital of the world, which it clearly is not. Whilst, it was an awful event, I do think that the goodwill and support from the overwhelming majority of the community in showing their disgust for it, shows actually just how far Northern Ireland has indeed come.

In addition to investigations into intimidation of the Romanian nationalists and other hate crimes, we are involved in a number of other anti-hate projects. In South and East Belfast, we have linked with a number of partners in the bi-lingual advocacy scheme which not only encourages engagement; it also encourages third party crime reporting. The Chinese Welfare Association, the Polish Association, the Housing Executive, the Community Safety Partnerships and indeed the City Council are partners in that initiative. The main objective is to reduce crime but also to get a greater understanding of crime that is being committed. And surprise, surprise yesterday ACC McCausland launched an advertising campaign which is aimed exactly at encouraging the reporting of hate crime.

The more we get reported, the better intelligence and picture we get of what we are dealing with.

Chairman, since we last met the Full-Time Reserve issue has yet again been raised in the public domain. The process of phasing out does continue as decided a couple of years ago up until spring 2011. The process is supported by an agreed programme to ensure that leaving colleagues receive training opportunities which has also been in place. Nothing at all will change immediately. Even with the planned severance, full-time officers will remain at their current strength until March 2010 and operationally available in decreasing number until the middle of 2010. In other words, we remain on target. This was a subject to a full review of the existing decision by my Senior Command team following exactly the same models we have followed in the previous years. And of course much work is now going on to ensure and reassure my District Commanders that where they need additional support we will redeploy officers from non-operational duties to make sure they receive the necessary support to provide effective policing at the front end. Again it is worth reminding colleagues and people in this audience that 102 Reserve officers, full and part-time lost their lives during the troubles and we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to what they have delivered. These are always very hard difficult and indeed distressing decisions but sadly we have to make them.

In terms of drink and young people which again reflects the observations you made, there is clear evidence of a link between drink and crime, certainly street violence and disorder. We have again started to work with a number of partners, not only the Board, the Minister and Mr McGimpsey's Department, Community Safety Units at the NIO and the Public Health Agencies to promote awareness of the dangers of young people with drink.

It is essentially a public information campaign aimed at parents and you will have seen the advertisements which are seen as quite powerful in trying to get more parental responsibility in knowing where their young people are when they are out at night and when they come back in again in the morning.

We have also agreed and I think this is a very positive step forward in light of the current marching season, with the Orange Order, the Apprentice Boys and the Royal Black Institution to produce a leaflet in relation to no alcohol at parades. Again on the 13th we do intend to adopt a fairly robust approach to those who think it is appropriate to come to

these community events under the influence of drink or indeed in the procession of drink where they are not allowed to have it. I welcome that co-operation. I think it is a positive step forward and hopefully yet again, we will see a peaceful 13th July.

You touched on the marches today. It is right, Chairman, that they have been peaceful. It is also right to say that there have been certain tensions. I would like to place on record, not only my thanks to all partners who work very hard and very long hours, both within the community and within my own organisation to try and to gain agreement against certain determinations but it has to be said that failure to agree, deploys huge additional resources from policing just in case something goes wrong and these are people who should be doing community policing and dealing with the crime which currently, as you said, is increasing slightly.

Operation Snapper continues in terms of targeting under age drinkers and thousands of items of alcohol have been seized as a result of that operation which will continue.

Chairman, that is really probably all I want to touch on this morning. We have a busy session and indeed performance. Finally, I would like to say, that the Ombudsman Survey is something that one should take some comfort from. It does show generally that there is a confidence in the ability of my organisation to deliver an effective day-to-day service and a welcome increase, all be it slight, in knowledge and understanding of community policing which is actually where this Board and this organisation are in total agreement in a sense that we want to move in that direction.

Chairman if it now helps, I will take questions.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

If you would pause there, Chief Constable before you go on to performance so that Members can ask questions on your initial report. I know Peter Weir has one which is tabled at question 12.

Mr Peter Weir:

There are some other issues I want to raise out of what has been said.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

If you could deal with question 12 first.

Mr Peter Weir:

Well I know you are keen to avoid speeches, but if I could add my best wishes to the Chief Constable in his new appointment and maybe ask one question. Do you want me to take the two together?

Q12 - To ask the Chief constable to explain how extra police officers will be found to replace the Full-Time Reserve should a decision be taken to phase these officers out; and to ask the Chief Constable why these police officers were not out patrolling in the first place?

In terms of first of all, Chief Constable, you mentioned the Full-Time Reserve and obviously you have given indications that you see the proposals to remove the remaining Full-Time Reserve that, if you like, the gap would then be filled by releasing officers from desk duty. I wonder if you could first of all explain how you would see those extra officers being found to replace Full-Time Reserve and indeed ask in many ways that if there is this opportunity to release people from desk duty, why this was not done sometime ago and make sure the people were out patrolling in the first place.

The other issue you mentioned about the parades issues and while you mentioned about tensions, I am sure that not everybody would share the assessment of it being peaceful. Specifically colleagues have asked me to raise in terms of the Whiterock parade, obviously with the hoax bomb alert which led to the delay in the parade, shortly after that there were a number of youths, as I understand it, who gathered at the interface wall and were taunting some of the representatives of the Orange at that stage and indeed made references to the burning of people out of their homes for example. Yet when this was pointed out to the police, there appeared to be no action taken, I wonder if you could explain that. And also finally in relation to it, whereas the march passed off relatively peaceful, there was actually a situation at one point when members of the Orange Institution who came through Workmen Avenue, they were subject to bottles, golf balls and other projectiles thrown at them. Can we get confirmation that evidence was gathered of that and there will be then prosecutions of those who were responsible for that?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will deal with them in order. In terms of the Full-Time Reserve, ACC Jones and ACC McCausland may want to touch on it, but the bottom line is that there is a space between now and March to identify or to basically review every officer in every DCU and Headquarters Unit to make sure they are focused on what we need to do. So frankly, some things will stop to make this take place.

Why it has not happened before, is that the main bulk of my non-operational officers are tied up in criminal justice and there has been a long and hard debate to move criminal justice issues on which we discussed briefly in the private session to enable my officers to stop wasting time in creating large files which are never going to go anywhere and put that into useful time doing something constructive at the front end of policing.

It would be wrong to say that this is going to be a simple one-for-one swop. The Board will be aware that on 6th August 2009 we are talking about Estate Strategy. That plays into this equation. The Prime Minister has kindly given us additional money - £3m over the next two years to spend on initial security measures to make our officers feel safe in the buildings. So there are other ways of doing that bit of business, but it will be subject to a very careful and thoughtful review led by the two Assistant Chief Constables. I know ACC Jones wants to touch on the Rural area, because that is the main focus, then ACC McCausland on criminal justice very quickly.

Assistant Chief Constable Dave Jones:

In addition to what the Chief Constable said, there are already plans in motion to try and civilianise the jailer capacity within the organisation which would free out some capacity. The main thing at the moment is, that myself and ACC Finlay are asking the District Commanders to come up with their operational delivery plans post the phasing out of the Full-Time Reserve. We are both very keen to make sure that service delivery does not drop and the safety and security of the public and those officers is paramount. There are opportunities in relation to changing the way that we deal with certain elements of station security. There are other issues that we can do in relation to the way in which we deploy our staff. Obviously, I have to rely on the professional judgement of the District Commanders in the way in which they want to deliver policing on behalf of their local communities.

They have been tasked by the end of August 2009 to come up with those delivery plans which myself and ACC Finlay will question and answer and this will give us sufficient time to make sure that there is appropriate personnel and security measures in place before the Full-Time Reserve are actually phased out.

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

Members will know that we have been reviewing with the Director of Public Prosecutions, the bureaucracy associated with the criminal justice system and the whole aim has been to introduce a speedier justice system. So this has been ongoing for a period of time. That will result in things, for example, as we discussed earlier in the private session, the penalty notice system potentially being introduced at the end of this year or early next year with legislation being introduced. About decision making oversight being returned in some elements to the police, to in effect then speed up the system and review fully our processes which should free and will free up significant number of officers to return to front line patrolling. If we can introduce all the issues we want around speedier justice, we will generate between 50,000 and 55,000 more officer hours on the ground.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

On Whiterock, I will ask ACC Finlay who was in charge of the overall operation. There are always going to be issues around parades. I still have to say, having been involved in some of the discussions before it, that as a result of those discussions, I was sufficiently concerned to actually suggest asking ACC Finlay to increase the number of officers deployed which we have to do, because of the unwillingness of people to engage in a constructive way with us. It is a zero sum game Chairman. It means we deploy a lot of officers which we drew from other places who could have been properly employed protecting communities, and indeed on the case of protecting my own staff. I think we are going to get to that stage where some very hard choices have to be made and decisions around how this thing continues, because the costs are getting expedientially higher. ACC Finlay will touch on the specifics of the case.

Assistant Chief Constable Alistair Finlay:

In terms of evidence gathering, that goes on throughout the whole period of the time that all these parades are taking place and the criminal justice strategies followed up, in the main, post the event. Whether or not we intervene at particular times or not in the face of a particular action is a judgement call for officers on the ground in terms of the overall

tension and fuel between the individuals that are there. For every action, is an equal and opposite reaction and getting that particular judgement about what we should do or not do is something for the Commanders on the ground to do. I am certainly happy to have a more detailed conversation about specifics, not being on the ground myself but I can pick that up at the debrief for the whole operation. There is a criminal justice strategy and there is a prosecution investigation being pursued particularly around a whole range of things, but particularly around the throwing incidents when the parade was coming through Workman Gate. That aspect is certainly being pursued. But there is a judgement call about when to intervene in certain cases. You will be aware that at one stage there were children basically on top of the interface wall just near Workman Avenue and that was inappropriate that we would do anything round about that time. Community representatives were involved in bringing those very young children down eventually but we do recognise the tension that that can cause no matter what the age involved.

In terms of specifics, I am happy to take specifics from you in due course and we can feed back exactly what is going on.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Trevor Ringland.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

Chairman, to pick up on the point on the Whiterock parade, Mary McKee and myself were guests of the PSNI at the operation and Chief Superintendent Mark Hamilton and Superintendent Michael Ellis and just a couple of points. I think the problems over parades is an example that we have a shared future but we have not yet bought into how we are going to work together constructively in our society and we do look forward to the Shared Future Strategy coming through, but a particular point I will bring out, is that we were very conscious of all the issues going on. I was very impressed with the police operation and those young kids did get onto the wall and there were various people who were concerned about them. I could see the marshals were concerned about them, but one expression that came out of me that hit me about the way it was being dealt with was that the officers in charge were conscious about how it could help. It could result in raising tensions but those kids were on a 12ft wall, there was a spike metal fence below that wall and if they had fallen off that wall in any way, there could have ended up being seriously injured. I just heard the expression being used, "I need those kids down now" and then

followed that up with the words “safely”. So he was conscious, yes he needed those kids down but he needed them brought down properly and I think the marshals did work to help bring them down. So there is an awful lot of work. It is a challenge to our society, but I was very impressed about the work being done in trying to ensure the parade went through smoothly.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

I will take that as a comment Trevor as opposed to being a question? Dolores Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Thank you Chairman. Can the Chief Constable give any indication of the budget for policing of parades for the next few weeks and does he agree with me that if organisers or either parades or protests bring people out onto the street, then they have a responsibility for how those people behave and cannot advocate that responsibility. Given the increase in the flags and the shooting at a woman's house the other night in relation to flags going up in a housing development, can the Chief Constable reassure the public that anyone seen putting paramilitary flags up will be prosecuted and if any of his officers had any discussions with Minister Connor Murphy in relation to the use of DRD street furniture for the use of flags? You know, along the carriageway, some of these street lights are very high up and there are these sort of pickers or whatever, do those vehicle users have the proper licenses and assurances to be doing what they are doing?

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Chief Constable, we have a question on flags later on this session, perhaps you could leave that and deal with Dolores' point on the cost of the parades. Basil McCrea has a question on flags which we will come to later.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

If we can deal with the flags all at once. It seems we have questions on flags for seven years and if there is one observation, there is significantly less than there were seven years ago and it is still a very real issue for communities. I fully understand that.

In terms of the cost, we will have to cost it fully and I can probably tell you when we have done the numbers, what the increasing costs was because it went to the wire. It will be in the ten of thousands of pounds at least. The overall cost of parading last year was £5m.

Now that is a substantial cost in terms of what we could have done with £5m in terms of community policing, in terms of dealing with crime levels which experience tells me, is exactly what communities talk to me about. By way of observation on the day of Whiterock, I was actually doing a visit in Banbridge where completely normal policing was taking place. In a narrow road, I had half of Banbridge resources probably deployed sitting in support, sitting in carriers just in case something happened. So it is just a waste of police time and it is very expensive if we have to cancel at the last minute.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

I am conscious that we have to get on and talk about the performance in the last quarter. I will take two questions on the session – Alex Maskey and David Rose.

Mr Alex Maskey:

It is not so much a question, because I just want to follow on from a number of the Members and the Chief Constable's remarks as well. I very much appreciate Trevor Ringland's comments in that there was tremendous work done. I was on the Springfield Road on Saturday and I know that in the run up to that for some considerable time, police officers and other community and political representatives worked extremely hard getting right down to the very fine detail of how do we make sure we had those events pass off, even though in my opinion, not enough people are putting their shoulder to wheel in these matters, but nevertheless events have in recent weeks gone relatively well. Certainly in contrast in the last number of years because of the work that people are putting in within the community. Let us face it, we had a few 10 or 11 year olds running along the wall, we had grown up men up trying to get them off the wall which then started to look rather ridiculous so if that is all we had to worry about, then we had a good day. It is a waste of not only police time and resources but a waste of a lot of other people's time. It does continue to build tension and more people to step up to tackle these issues where they have responsibilities. But I want to commend all those people, including the police who were involved in making sure, working right down to the fine detail to make sure those events passed off in the way in which they did.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thanks Alex. I will take that as a comment as well. David Rose.

Mr David Rose:

Chief Constable, just very briefly. I do not want to steal Basil McCrea's thunder here, but it is an element of the wider issue and my view is, and I just wondering whether you will agree with me or not that come September 2009 the whole issue of the summer, the marching season and all accompanying issues that come with it should be on the table at the very highest political stations in Northern Ireland, so that we have a strategic overview heading into next year, as opposed to try and deal with these marches each one in isolation or issue. It is quite obviously it is just going to revisit us every year under that basis.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I would agree entirely. Communities can fix this. We will police them, but the more engagement we get and the more agreement we get and more no surprises we get, the more police I can put onto ordinary routine patrol and less police I can put on to what is an unnecessary consideration in essence a zero sum game.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Some of the things that have been said, nothing should diminish some of the very good work that is being done by community groups on the ground especially in terms of repainting out murals and putting in more acceptable symbols of our community. I think that should be acknowledged at this public session.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Chief Constable, your performance report, first quarter please.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Performance – it is a mixed picture as you touched on but we are seeing an increase, continuing from the final quarter of the last year, crime has continued to climb slightly. This is the first quarter figures, if we go into the first slide, currently is showing a 4.8% increase in crime rather than a 4.6% reduction which we need to get to our current target. In total, as said on the slide, that is an increase of 1,196 crimes in total. What is increasing, the biggest increase is in shop lifting. That has increased by 240 crimes which is nearly 20% - it is 17.3% increase. The more serious violent crime whilst not high in numbers is 88, it is about one day or is less than one a day. That is of course a matter for concern, as I was discussing briefly with you in the margins, I think we do need to perhaps

have a longer session with our partners, in particular from the licensing industry to try and get a better understanding of that. We have problem profiles for every District. A lot of work is going in to mainly the night time economy and if we go to the next slide, I will show what that looks like. It is right, however, in terms of overall crimes, to reflect that the current number of crimes is below the seven year average. That is cold comfort to those that have been victims.

In terms of more serious crime I would say it is up by 88 offences, about one crime per day compared to the same time last year. The long term trend shows that reductions which we did achieve earlier on, apart from the one spike at Whiterock, that is the spike right in the middle of the graph, but we are now seeing from that time was an increasing trend in serious crime. If one distils it down, about 12% of most serious violent crime has domestic motivation. A slightly smaller percentage may have a hate crime motivation - that is about 10%. The overwhelming majority is linked to the night time economy – drink and people in their late teens and early twenties, both as victim and indeed as suspect.

A huge amount of work, as you would expect, is going into dealing with this. Our long term Get Home Safe campaign continues. Getting people to plan their journeys home, book taxis, etc as well as a high visibility policing of the night time economy.

In terms of the clear up for this particular crime, it is higher than our average. About 27% to 30% of these crimes are solved and most serious crime, violent crime for information includes homicide, attempted murder, and wounding and grievance bodily harm, with or without intent.

We have figures checked to make sure we are recording this correctly and we see some comfort in that. These are crimes which we would say should be in the serious category. They are not low level assaults that have been actually overegged or over estimated. This was a real trend in serious assault which is interesting as it conflicts with anti-social behaviour. We seem to be doing well reducing anti-social behaviour and low level anti-social activity but a combination of serious drinking and young people is the catalyst for this sort of violence. Does ACC Finlay want to go into any detail or ACC Jones in relation to their particular areas?

Assistant Chief Constable Alistair Finlay:

One of the things we have, is each District has a problem profile around about more serious violent crime and are actively looking to find the trends patterns and learning about where these crimes are occurring. How they are recurring. What the frequency of the weapon is - which is predominately people using fists and feet. It is incidents predominately not in licensed premises so much but in the areas surrounding licensed premises later on in the evening. Which is why we move the patrol profile to reflect that, so that we have got sufficient officers on the seat and we have to revisit that to find out if we are doing enough. Are we getting the right people at the right time? Although this has gone up significantly, the actual numbers are not huge numbers. The devotion of the resources, the appropriate police at the appropriate time can be more problematic than it is for volume crime and unlike, for example, burglary which we will probably talk about later. We would have a number of people who are persistent offenders that we can look at as the offender has a crime habit. This does not have that crime habit. This results out of arguments, this results out of people probably getting involved in crime that maybe have never been involved in it before through the influence of drink in particular roundabout this night time economy.

It is something which all the Districts have problem profiles on are working actively. We have seen the biggest increases in 'B' District which would be the city centre area and up in 'G' District in Londonderry in terms of the night time economy. So actively being looked at in the ways to prevent this. Working with licensees, working with door stewards, working with partners in the councils all with a view to making the place safer and we will continue to do that and continue to seek to tackle that. But the predominance is people fighting and resulting in serious injury.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Domestic burglary, again I regret to report another slight increase in burglary. Continuing from last year, we have managed to slow the crime rate and certainly some particular success in Belfast and I will ask ACC Finlay to touch on. Up in terms of reality point 7 of 1 crime per day. One of my big concerns around these figures, we do know that we have spikes in the good weather and the reason is incredibly simple. People leave their doors and windows open. 40% of these crimes are utterly preventable if people would shut and lock their doors and windows and this has been a mantra for the last 7 years. We are not making the impact we need and it is not just, and we know this from the analysis, it is not

just people who leave their doors and windows open when they go away, it is people who leave their front windows open when they are in the back garden. So there are opportunities being created and whilst we will work on the targets, we do appeal for help and common sense and people to keep their doors and windows shut even in this very hot weather. Operation Bullent continues with An Garda Siochana in relation to targeting travelling criminals who are picking on older people. But as I say, it has gone up slightly but I know there is some substantial work we wanted to touch on.

Assistant Chief Constable Alistair Finlay:

Overall in the Urban Region we are down 121 crimes so far but the pattern of that is that it is in A, B and C Districts and in particular in B District. The impact we are having in A and B District, the realisation of that is an increase in D District and has increased in the rural districts. Predominately we are pushing some of those offenders who get involved in this sort of criminality out of that area into other areas. So we are working together to look towards changing the strategy in order to tackle those offenders so that we do not get the displacement effect and we actually tackle the offender in a more holistic way. Some of that is the learning that we will take out of Operation Heartbreak which was spoken about on several occasions. Heartbreak has run its course for the moment and we are in the analysis phase of the results and into the analysis of how we went about our business, what are the lessons that are learned from that and how best to do that again. What worked and what did not work. But quite clearly some of the discipline from that have moved into South Belfast into the Holy Lands, the Village area has worked and in that area we have burglaries falling. 126 recorded in March down to 68 in April and then later on into May, 82 crimes. That is significantly down on the previous year and the previous trend. So we know that some of the approaches we are taking around about certain people are working. It is making an impact. It is significant and ACC Jones and I are working together. We had a discussion earlier today about how to reinvigorate some of the processes, get the lesson learned in order to bring some of the learning across the whole Province and make an impact.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Again, in relation to criminal damage and anti-social behaviour, these continue to decrease. Again these are the issues that focus on every DPP's areas of concern. We are still in the learning here, is that local solutions developed in partnership, in particular, DPPs and other agencies at local level has been making an impact. Certainly in making

sure that our people are in the right place at the right times and major operations such as Halloween where every single District is required to come up with a control strategy, I think has made a substantial increase. This is a key priority for neighbourhood policing and I think the evidence, because it is now consistent over time, is that neighbourhood policing works in this area of crime and criminality and it is the partnership bit which is the significant factor in making a difference. ACC McCausland – do you want to touch on your drinking bit about this?

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

One of the key elements being delivered through the neighbourhood is the Operation Snapper. As you will be aware, we have launched for the summer campaign our alcohol and young people issue. As well as that, as the Chief has already said to you, the issue of tackling alcohol at parades and events. For example, last night at the parades in East Belfast, we seized over 220 items of alcohol from people. Since the Operation has commenced, we have seized 27,000 individual items and we have reported over 1,200 people and I do believe that has a significant impact in both the graphs you are looking at, namely criminal damage and anti-social behaviour. If you remember last year our performance saw a 10% drop, over 10% in anti-social behaviour and a significant drop in criminal damage. In real terms that was 11,000 less offences of anti-social behaviour and 3,000 less offences of criminal damage.

We intend to continue to pursue this in the summer and both my regional colleagues have dedicated resources to Operation Snapper in the forthcoming summer week-ends and again with organisers of major events, we intend to continue to develop this. 200,000 booklets will be sent out to homes in terms of encouraging parents to know where their young people are and in effect if they are potentially involved in consuming alcohol illegally but again the reality is, that we cannot do this on our own. It has to be through education, health, enforcement and reoffending and by starting and seeing our part in it, you can see significant reductions we have made and continue to deliver for the people of Northern Ireland.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Next slide please. Road traffic. After 7 years of slight decreases, I think this is one of the most worrying trends that I have picked up this time round. In terms of loss of life, it is now 32 - that is an increase of 11 compared to the same time last year. In terms of

trends, a number of things are emerging. Sadly it is single car accidents, quite often driven by young people, both male and female and tragically there was one last night so it is now an increase of 12. The issues are speed, seat belts, drink and inexperience. We have a control strategy which ACC McCausland is working very closely with my 2 operational Assistant Chief Constables and we will be shifting resources around increasing the enforcement side, certainly around speed and seatbelts.

If we look at where the accidents are taking place, H District is suffering the most so we do go from 11 in one District (H) to none in B, D and one in A. These are quiet roads, quite often late at night with single young people in cars.

Interesting information emerged, which I was unaware of last month which we are now looking at, which suggests that those young people most likely to be killed in accidents will already have a ticket or a speeding conviction. Tragically in one case I am told a speeding ticket had been issued during the same day to an individual who later lost his life. So there is an opportunity to target a group which we might be able to do some work, perhaps jointly with the Board or other agencies on how we get some information/messages to young people when they are caught speeding before they actually end up dead. It is a classic example that we can do the enforcement and prevention but on some of the roads where these young people are dying, there is no enforcement strategy on the planet that will stop them dying. But we are, as I said, at a level of activity in our own organisation that will see a greater level of enforcement targeting on the areas where we see the greatest risk which is currently very much focused on rural – that is unsurprising due to the nature of the roads rather than the people there.

We move on to clearance rates. Again this is the first three months and at the risk of sounding defensive the first part of the year, it is slightly skewed because the clearance has yet to filter through, but that having been said, we are still up on last year. Last year at the same time we were at 19%. We are currently at 21% which I am pleased to report, again I think, is a result of a huge amount of work which continues. I do think it would be right to say we can not put up the comparative forces, because our figures are ahead of theirs. We have figures to a more current date and it would be unfair to compare unlike figures but it is fair to say if you distil out things like fixed penalty tickets, our clearance rate is very similar to many of the similar forces who we are grouped with. It is something

to be positive about but of course there is more work to do. Chairman that is the overview of crime to date.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you Chief Constable. Mary McKee you have a question?

Ms Mary McKee:

Thank you Chief Constable. My question is around why overall crime is up by 5%. You have said something about shoplifting and specific around rural region. I believe there is 1,040 increases in crimes in Rural Region and ACC Finlay touched on this – is it all about domestic burglary?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

In terms of domestic burglary, over the whole of the Province, the number of crimes have increased by less than one a day. That does not mean it is not serious but it does mean in terms of perspective, this is not something we should get over alarmed about. It is something we need to work very hard to deal with. The explanation of burglary is to some extent the reduction in Urban Region has been off-set by an increase in Rural Region. So there is clearly a trend which is partly about displacement. It may partly be about other criminal gangs operating. The total increase in crime over the whole of Northern Ireland is 1,196 offences – I do not know if ACC Jones wants to go into more detail in terms of rural region.

Assistant Chief Constable Dave Jones:

There are implications for what is happening in the Republic in relation to the economy there, where we have people who were traditionally employed in the building trade in Dublin who are now unemployed and now seeking alternative employment which includes breaking the law. I think there is also some clear indication of travelling criminals, not only using the border as a means to perpetuate their crimes and the reason why myself and ACC Finlay got together is there clear displacement going on from Belfast into the rural regions. But there are things we can do in relation to that as well.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Suneil Sharma.

Mr Suneil Sharma:

Just a couple of questions - one is about the crimes like burglary that affect the quality of life in people communities. Can you explain to me how the Community Restorative Justice processes and how well they are stitched into the Neighbourhood Policing Strategy. It is something that we talked about over a number of years, but we do not know how effective that is in terms of delivering policing with the community.

That is one question. The second question is that we are all aware of the negative impact in Northern Ireland of the murder of Mr McDaid and also the attacks on Roma. Chief Constable, have you any idea of any additional initiatives or strategies in place to increase clearance rates for sectarian and homophobic crime, particularly given those recent incidents?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

As ACC McCausland is wearing both hats, he is going to be busy today.

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

We are looking to develop and expand the use of Community Restorative Justice particularly with our neighbourhood teams and we will be bringing back an update to the Board in relation to that. At this moment in time it has been limited in terms of the groups that have been involved. As you know two groups have been registered and we are looking to develop their role and ensure that they are referring and have been referring cases to us. So we do see that as a potential benefit for the way forward.

Mr Suneil Sharma:

Internationally, the evidence is that this can have a very significant impact on crime reduction and as a Board we need to move ahead a bit more quickly on this issue.

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

I do not disagree with you but there are significant politics which we have to manoeuvre through.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. I suppose the most concerning matter raised in your report Chief Constable is the issue of the road traffic related deaths and certainly on behalf of the people here, would again express our condolences to all of the families who have been affected by these very sad and tragic incidents. I do think it would be important that if we do have the type of discussion which you are suggesting between yourselves, ourselves, Department of Environment or whoever because clearly this rise and the patterns that we are all seeing emerging, we do have to try our best to collectively tackle those because it is just an awful sad waste of particularly young life, in fact a waste of any life but it does seem to be the trend that more young people are affected by this. That is the first thing Chairman.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

If it helps, ACC McCausland can very briefly give an overview of the control strategy. I think you are right. It is also education, because even Roads Department are going to be struggling to reduce the danger on these single track roads. You know these rural roads in the middle of nowhere, where there is a very light traffic flow. So education is a critical element in that. We are fully engaging and we do a lot more than many forces in trying to educate through Road Safe Road show which is a big event which ACC McCausland may very briefly touch on what we are doing.

Assistant Chief Constable, Duncan McCausland:

Chairman very briefly. Since taking over Operational Support, I have had a new fatal road traffic problem profile completed for the whole of Northern Ireland. I am happy to share the presentation with the Board. We will be specifically focusing in the short term in relation to the Districts which the Chief Constable mentioned. For example, we have redeployed resources around Northern Ireland to ensure that we can start to tackle the problems that are in effect falling to us. There will be additional, and I make no hesitation in announcing these, significant road policing surges in the forthcoming months – 3-5 July, 1-3 August and the 29 and 31 August. We are working hand-in-hand with An Garda Síochána and their traffic core in terms of the border areas to ensure that there is a link up.

We also will be introducing 11 new safety camera routes and again, I make no apologies for announcing that. We will be making the public very clear in relation to what these routes are and we are waiting, as the Chief Constable said, with our colleagues in the DRD to sign these routes and once that is done, these will be introduced. We are not trying to catch you speeding; we are trying to stop you speeding.

Our message is very clear. One death is far too many. As it stands now there is going to be 60 vacant chairs at Christmas and we want to try and prevent as many deaths as possible and I will be launching tomorrow again our drink driving summer campaign and emphasising the dangers and risks in relation to drink driving. We cannot do this on our own. We need everybody's help.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Do you want to follow up on that Alex Maskey?

Mr Alex Maskey:

Not on this, it is another matter just related to the report. In terms of the whole question of burglaries, domestic burglaries in particular, and I do appreciate some of the work that has been undertaken. I know in my own area that I would represent in terms of the Lower Ormeau, there has been a lot of work done there in conjunction with the local community. I am not so sure it is Operation Heartbreak, it is more like Break My Heart I know that much. But there is an issue around repeat offenders and a number of the burglaries have been carried out by people who are not travelling to do burglaries anywhere else. They are young people who are petty criminals who are repeatedly offending against their community particularly with regard to burglaries and in some cases, there is an absolute total and utter parental neglect and I would think is parental responsibility. In relation to the repeat offenders scenarios where there are young people, who in themselves are in many ways vulnerable. Is there any strategy from the police side about where they see that pattern, where there is parental neglect and I would believe responsibilities lies, that this is taken through to Social Services or indeed the Housing Executive, because there has to be sanctions also on the parents who are partly responsible at least for some of this work.

Assistant Chief Constable, Alistair Finlay:

There is certainly a strategy around repeat offending and targeting those people who do these recurring crimes. The majority of those that I think we are seeing though are not coming into the adult category. Where we have got juveniles, yes there is an involvement through the Youth Justice process. Now whether we are putting enough emphasis on parents is a good question. It is something that I am going to take away and look at because we have spoken before about some of the successes round about early intervention with letters regarding anti-social behaviour where that eventually can lead to accessible behavioural contracts. That has meant that we have got relatively few ASBOs having to go into place, because we have success lower down. In relation to other offending, this is something I am more than happy to go away and look at. I do not want to give specific details because of the sensitivities of on-going cases but there are details I have here of people - and here is an individual, a burglar who has offended in Richhill, Carryduff, Newcastle, Dungannon and Dromore and came and lived within the city of Belfast has repeated that burglary all over the place and he is not the only one. We have prolific offenders. There are specific strategies to deal with those and particularly get bail conditions that are appropriate and then policing those bail conditions to make sure people are where they should be at that particular time.

In Heartbreak Two from 12 January to 31 May 2009, we arrested 209 people and 91 of those were for burglary arrests and 29 for taking and driving away vehicles and then there were 89 for other associated offences. We did 348 bail checks during that period of prolific offenders in order to minimise the amount they were moving around. So there is and will continue to be a strategy around about specific offenders. We will have to look away further about maybe a different approach to juveniles.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Three more questions on this session. Jimmy Spratt.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

Just in the area of domestic burglary again and given that in the past TSGs have been very successful in dealing with specific operations in relation to domestic burglaries. Given that TSGs are being reduced is my understanding and obviously quite a number of Full-Time Reserve officers are attached to those, you have been telling us that under your strategy that you are going to be able to get officers from behind desks, I am not

convinced of that. Can you not quickly look at these officers who are supposedly behind desks in areas that are doing other jobs now and get them out onto the ground to deal with domestic burglary because quite simply, the increase in some areas is unacceptable and the present strategy is not convincing to people who have been victims of domestic burglary?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

In terms of TSG, I will ask ACC McCausland. Whilst we had TSGs carrying lots of vacancies, we will have fully staffed TSGs at a slightly lower level. In terms of the burglary rates, yes I am worried that it is increasing. Of course it is a lot lower than it was 7 years ago so I think we need to keep it in perspective. I do not want to start raising peoples' alarms. In terms of officers who are currently in there, we need to manage the process and make sure we can deliver the criminal justice strategy and as soon as we do that, those people go to the front line. ACC McCausland give us a touch on TSGs.

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

There will be 16 TSGs across the country and as the Chief Constable said, will be fully staffed. Those TSGs are in full support of the regions and they have the ability to deploy them on specialist burglary operations and as rightly said, they do deploy them very effectively.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

Can I ask how many full-time officers are presently on TSGs?

Assistant Chief Constable, Duncan McCausland:

Staffing of the TSGs will be with regular officers. There will be no Full-Time Reserve officers once we move forward.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

But the question I asked was how many officers presently, full-time officers on TSGs. Obviously, they have got to be replaced.

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

At one point we did have up to 100 Full-Time Reserve officers on TSGs but they have gradually been filtered to be replaced and moved to TSG to station security.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

So you are saying there are no Full-Time Reserve officers in TSGs at this minute and time?

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

I am not saying that. I am saying that we are gradually filtering and removing TSGs officers in terms of regular officers that will replace Full-Time Reserve officers and as the Chief Constable has already said, the TSGs will be maintained at their full strength that we have agreed.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

Chairman could we maybe have full details of exactly what the numbers are because I hear numbers of 160. The ACC has said up to 100 so could we have clarification exactly what those numbers are?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I can, I think it is about 50 something Full-Time Reserve colleagues employed on TSGs.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Okay, thank you. Martina Anderson.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Chief Constable, accepting that we are still sort of early in the year, could you explain why the more serious crime has increased by 22% and could you reassure the Board and the general public that you are doing everything that you can to address this very significant issue of public concern.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Hopefully as we described, there is a lot of work going on and I mentioned to the Chairman if it would be helpful to have a half day with the Board and other partners in particular in the licensing industry, the door security industry, people who are engaged in this – I am absolutely up for that. It might add a lot of value in terms of the detail. I also think to some extent it may give reassurance of the work that is ongoing. Of course TSGs can only be deployed in one place at one time. If they are fully deployed supporting colleagues with the night-time economy because we do have very large night clubs in

some places in quiet remote and indeed quiet towns, but it is certainly something we take very seriously. I do not want to know if anyone wants to add anything to that.

Martina Anderson:

Could I also ask and I do not expect you to have this information with you but could we get a breakdown by district of the sectarian, homophobic and racist attacks?

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Ian Paisley Junior.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Thank you Chairman. ACC Jones in an earlier answer indicated that there had been a pattern of people who had previously worked in the Republic of Ireland in the building trade and had now maybe involved themselves in some activities in Northern Ireland. Could you give us some more detail on that ACC Jones in terms of quantity? I mean, is this a cross border issue or is it people who travel from here for work in the Republic and are back here at a loose end and are engaged in crime? Can you add some more substance to that because I have been aware of some issues in rural areas where people have been advised to lock up their plant, equipment, etc. Is that all tied with that sort of crime?

Assistant Chief Constable Dave Jones:

It is sort of common that during any economic downturn that you do see an increase in crime. It is also the case that people who traditionally would have got work elsewhere are now trying to find other ways of earning money. We had a cross border conference with the An Garda Siochana the other week and where we have now got cross border analysis trying to track whom these individuals are who we believe are using the border to exploit their opportunities to commit more crime. This particularly plays into Operation Bullent which was mentioned before.

One of the initiatives we are doing, there is a very successful operation called Liberal which is run through the East Midlands combined forces which actually has a national database of travelling criminals and it is quite surprising how often people are using whichever border you want to use to actually exploit law enforcement's inability to recognise that these are just lines on the map. So we are very closely working with An

Garda Siochana in particular in certain parts of the border area because we have got travelling organised criminal groups who are exploiting more vulnerable members in the rural areas in particular.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Can you give us a bit more in terms of quantity of crime and is that a pattern of it is stolen here and sold there?

Assistant Chief Constable Dave Jones:

At the moment we have just done some initial work with the Guards in relation to sharing of information and joint analysis. I am quite happy to come back and explain in more detail what that is actually coming up with. It is clear at the moment that the exchange of information although good, we really do it a bit more sophisticated and we look at it, not just in the respective of how it has an impact in the North but also how it has an impact in the South because they do not recognise the border.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Alex Maskey is going to give us a one liner – he has not said how long the line is?

Mr Alex Maskey:

I presume if you remove the border you will reduce crime – that would be a good target to reach.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Nice one liner. Basil McCrea – final question on performance.

Mr Basil McCrea:

It seems to me that the most serious information put forward here is the rise, the steady increase in serious violent crime because actually it is the fear of crime and this is the stuff that hits the headlines. I have no doubt that ACC McCausland's initiative on educating people about alcohol will have some long term impact but my real concern would be in terms of the short term issue. Would additional initiatives, such as increasing the level of sentencing for people who are caught in the most serious of these crimes, would that have an impact, would that help you in terms of getting the message across? Would you also be able to make more use of CCTV? We heard earlier when we were talking about

parades and other issues about the impact of being able to catch people on film and how you can go and prosecute? Would you those two initiatives help you in trying to actually deal with this issue because this is actually growing quite strongly at the moment?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I think the perspective is important in terms of the numbers. Very worrying because it is a serious crime, so even one extra crime a day is something we should be concerned about hence the offer to actually get engaged in a more detailed way. CCTV is used when it is available and it is powerful evidence if it is of a sufficient quality.

Sentencing - In fairness, on serious crime, sentences can be quite severe here. It is not an area where you would see disproportionately light sentences in my judgement. It is a deterrent. Of course the problem is the nature of the crime in terms of the night time economy, is many of these people may well be first time offenders actually because it is the drink that has driven them into this particular mode. It does not translate because the behaviour is fuelled by alcohol; therefore people are not rational when they commit the crime so they are not thinking correctly.

Mr Basil McCrea:

That is exactly my point. When you say about sentencing, there are people, there was Aaron Montgomery, his killer was convicted of manslaughter with a relatively small sentence. It sends out the wrong message to people. It was definitely drink inspired, drink fuelled and there is an issue when you talk about young people that do not have the cognitive bit going round about the only thing "if you get involved in violent crime, then you will go away for a long time" and I do think that we need to change the sentencing policy in this regard.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Of course it is outside my remit, all we can do is make sure that people are fully aware of the circumstances of crime. There are things like impact statements they have to give in Court in serious crime which helps to inform the judge as to the impact on the victims which is vital in this. The point you make is the fear of crime. ACC Finlay is keen to touch on this.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

You might make that point at our next meeting Basil.

Assistant Chief Constable Alistair Finlay:

Just to add finally when we have talked about a lot of these crimes surrounding licensed premises. It is the whole environment there, it is about people looking and waiting for taxis, about people queuing up for fast food. It is that hanging about period once they have finished their nights enjoyment in transition between, when they are leaving those premises, where they have had their entertainment or enjoyment and they are moving and trying to get home, that is where we get the conflict arising. So there is work that can be done, and is being done. We have the 'Get Home Safe'. The ability to get people from where they are out and back home and avoiding those confrontations and there is different approaches done in different place. But fast food shops, queuing for taxis the ability to get home, those are all things where the longer people are hanging about, the more opportunity there is for conflict, the more opportunity there is for this to happen and most people's minds are not actually on the impact of what they do at that time. Most people do not realise the impact of what they do at that time until they recover from their alcohol.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you ACC Finlay. I have to move on to a couple of questions from the Committee.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

Sorry Chairman. Just one point, should they change the taxi laws?

Assistant Chief Constable Alistair Finlay:

I think there is a whole raft and we have had some discussion about what could be done in relation to the ability of taxis to pick up passengers and what could be done there. There are examples in other cities that we can look at. There is a licensing regime in connection with fast food takeaways for example which might be worth looking at. That work I know is in the Community Safety, certainly in Belfast Engaged, in some of that work and hope there will be opportunities in the future for some legislation to regulate these rules.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Question from the Community Engagement Committee – question 4 Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Q4 - How is the Chief Constable going to ensure that the Policing with the Community Strategy drives not only the implementation of the recommendations from the Strategy Review but all the other key PSNI strategies?

I think the question is on the board. I spoke to the Deputy Chief Constable earlier, this question is about trying to make sure that we maintain the focus on the need to ensure that policing with the community is the concept and the policy which should be the driver for all the work we are doing.

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

The answer simply is that it will be and continues to be, as the Community Engagement Committee knows, Policing with the Community Strategy is being refreshed at the moment and the strategic review will, in effect, link into it very heavily in terms of the implementation of the various elements of, and in particular the Refresh Strategy, so please be reassured that the two will merge into one.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

It will be a recurring theme at this Board, Duncan as you know. Question 3 on behalf of the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee about flags – Basil McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Q3 - Would the Chief Constable outline for Members what the criteria is for consultation and negotiation on the removal of flags from residential properties. Does the PSNI take a lead role in negotiating/consulting with community representative where the display of flags is an issue? Can the Chief Constable give some tangible examples where negotiation and consultation has led to examples of good practice in community relations and future use of protocols on flags?

We already have had a number of discussions about the question in the Board.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC McCausland to deal with it. Overall, the flying of flags is not illegal. Under the strategy it is led by OFMDFM. We are major players in it and ACC McCausland will give you some details on what we are doing.

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

In itself, the flying of flags is not illegal, as the Chief Constable has already said. It is when the flags are flown and they are likely to cause a breach of the peace, or displayed in a way or circumstances suggests support for proscribed organisations that the problem arises. This Board over many years has debated with us the issue of proscribed organisations and the flying of flags and the marking of territory.

In circumstances where the display which supports a proscribed organisation is a breach, we will take clear enforcement action and have demonstrated that in many occasions. A community impact assessment would be completed, including consulting with community representatives to ascertain the feeling of the community in relation to the display of flags, rather than proscribed flags. Negotiations also take place with community representatives through the Housing Executive and as the Chief Constable has already said, in 2005 we developed with OFMDFM a flags protocol. The emphasis on the flags protocol was consult, negotiate and enforce and as the Board knows, we have reported regularly to the Board when flags were a major issue, of the number of flags that we had either negotiated or enforceably taken down and those numbered into the thousands. We continue to work actively with the community in relation to that but again the emphasis is that we are only one partner in this. There are other organisations that have to play a part in relation to tackling flags. What I would like to suggest Chairman for the sake of time is that rest of the answer would be given of the details and examples that we have taken forward in written to the Board for Mr McCrea's benefit.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

I think you have a small supplementary Basil McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

I realise that time is pressing on. Can I just say in support of what my colleague David Rose said there is a huge challenge for our society about developing a shared future and understanding. People absolutely have the right to look after their culture and flying flags

is part of that but it must be done in an appropriate way and what I hope is that when we get through this particular period of time that we will reconvene and that the police as a lead organisation will play its role in addressing what is a very important issue.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

I have two supplementaries on this one. From Trevor Ringland and is it you Martina or Alex?

Mr Trevor Ringland:

Just picking on Basil McCrea and David Rose's point, I think maybe in September we should have a look at the whole issue of flags and marching and just see where we have got to now and where we want to get to in the future. Would you agree with that? The second point coming back to the kids that were on the wall in Whiterock, have we a strategy to find out who those kids were and talk to them and see if we can do some work with them to ensure that maybe next year they are not up on that wall putting themselves at great risk never mind the problems they create.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I am actually up for the debate but it is led by OFMDFM and that is where the responsibility lies but we would be full players in this and ACC McCausland quite rightly did not go through them but we have two pages of examples where negotiation has worked this year. There is a lot of work going on already.

In terms of the young people, we had a conversation outside and I know it was community workers that dealt with the issue. There was a clear awareness within the community of who it was because they managed to get them down, but it was very tricky at the time.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

It is a wee bit more than that. It is actually getting those kids and actually saying how are we going to make sure those kids do not appear on the wall next year and making sure someone is working with them to ensure that does not happen.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

The point has already been made. Alex Maskey .

Mr Alex Maskey:

Obviously I do appreciate that it is a very complicated matter and there is no easy solution to it and it does involve

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

A bit of parental control would help.

Mr Alex Maskey:

There is actually an issue here much broader than 10 or 11 year olds. I have to say it is the adults I am more concerned about than the children. As I have said earlier on and I do appreciate very much that in many ways, the PSNI like a lot of other organisations and departments are caught in this very complex controversial issue.

Let us remind ourselves here when people are throwing around silly remarks that the worst case scenario here resulted in the death of Kevin McDaid. So this is resulting in people being killed on our streets around the whole issue of flags. So it is not the 10 year olds I am worried about. It is people who are just simply abdicating their responsibility. What I am concerned about is there are quite a number of main aerial routes which are not any community, because I understand that communities want to be able to demonstrate their heritage and culture and all the rest and I share that, but there are main areas where, and I have to say it is regrettable that it is still happening, that even in parts of South Belfast in the last week that there are police officers, who in my view and in the view of many of the residents, are actually facilitating people putting flags up on main aerial routes of areas that are very, very mixed. That is not the role, in my view, of the police and I think that breaches the protocol. So, the protocols need to be strengthened and we all including very adult around this table needs to take a responsibility on that. Can the Chief Constable clarify the role of the PSNI on some of these situations, particularly in regard to these main aerial routes?

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

With regard to main aerial routes, the DRD Road Services have the responsibility under the protocol to remove flags or attachments that they feel pose a danger to road users. If there is no such danger, they then seek the advice of the police and look for strong local support from communities before removing the flags.

In relation to facilitating the erecting of flags, maybe my regional colleagues.....

Assistant Chief Constable Alistair Finlay:

I am happy to look at the detail surrounding that. The question is, are they committing a crime?

Mr Alex Maskey:

The police should not be facilitating or standing idly by when people are putting flags up on main aerial routes of mixed areas.

Assistant Chief Constable Alistair Finlay:

And the optics around about that I understand fully but if you can get some more details, I will look at this.

Ms Martina Anderson:

That is very flippant.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

I understand that sometimes the police are actually there gathering evidence and that is why they are seen to be there. There has to be a bit of sense injected into this. I know in my own constituency, last night there were flags put up and people complain "Oh the police were there". The police were gathering evidence about who was putting those flags up so that it could be used later.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Chairman, I tried to curtail my comments on this because we were running out of time. We now have got into a fully fledged debate on the issue.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Is this debate not better on the hill rather than here? We are here to ask the Chief Constable operational questions and it is absolutely right that we do in respect of the flags. I am keen to move this on.

Mr Basil McCrea:

I wanted to establish because it came up at the Committee and there are serious issues raised by all people but the question going back with ACC McCausland and his team is that we do need to tackle this issue properly. We need to do it in September 2009 whenever this is finished and that all people should have their say.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

I understand that commitment has been given.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

It needs to be led by OFMDFM because they lead on this and I will give an absolute commitment to be there. We have got the right people.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Dolores Kelly, have you a question or commentary?

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

No it is not a question but I actually do think there is a wider community perception about flags being put up. I do not accept that this is part of a culture. It is about marking out areas and intimidating other people and the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland - their silent voice is not being heard on the issue of flags but it is a matter, and I would support the Chief Constable that OFMDFM should lead on.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Chairman, could I also add to this because you mentioned OFMDFM and DRD today and obviously in terms of the ministerial responsibility without doubt they have a role. You also have DSD as part of the broader environmental schemes have to have a role in this. And you also have Environment in terms of planning so in terms of a cross departmental approach to this, obviously must be led by OFMDFM but DSD, DRD and DoE also have also a responsibility to play in this and there is a responsibility of duty on yourself to try and engage with those people and encourage them to become a part of it.

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

And we do have and we have an extensive shared protocol in relation to flags but the reality is Chair, that as I said in my answer, everybody needs to get involved in this to deal with this in an effective way that is in fact a win, win situation for the whole opportunity.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

I will move to an operational question, Question 13 about the percentage of police officers, at constable rank.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Q13 - To ask the Chief Constable to make available the percentage of police officers at constable rank in each of the District Command Units who have less than 3 years experience in the PSNI?

There has obviously been a lot of change in terms of composition of the force and I just wonder what the position is in the number of Districts and there will be a brief supplementary after I get the figures.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

The average across Northern Ireland of officers less than 3 years service is about 25%. That 25% of officers on Districts would be 3 years or less. It ranges from 30% in F District and the lowest one would be C District with 24% and H District with 24%, so it is very tightly drawn. I can give you a grid of the whole number but that is where it ranges.

Mr Basil McCrea:

I am happy to take the grid. The question really is that in certain challenging areas, I hear that there is a higher proportion of new recruits going into those areas. I am not saying that is correct I am just asking the question does that happen that some of the more challenging areas have got fresher faces. Is there an issue in terms of making sure that they have got adequate support because I do hear terms that the best friend for a constable is his mobile phone?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

By definition all new officers go out on street duty as they are required to do and we have a basic stipulation because of our commitment to community policing, they do a minimum of 3 years ordinary policing before they try to specialise in any of the other areas where of course they can progress their careers over time. So by definition, if the question was in relation to front line officers, you would see a high percentage of probationers i.e. people with less than 2 years service.

In terms of support and training, yes we have extremely experienced officers out there. Would I like more? Of course I would. Every Chief in the country would want more experienced officers at the front end but that having been said, I think we continue to talk down our new officers frankly. The average age of a new officer here is 30. Many of you have been to a graduation ceremony. You will have spoken to them, you will have met them, these are not people who are naive or inexperienced in life or interacting with communities because many have backgrounds in different disciplines which are hugely transferrable skills. They are well trained. They develop experience over time supported by their older colleagues. I am happy if you want a breakdown of shifts, etc., I am sure we can get it for you.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you Chief Constable. Martina Anderson has a question about the Tasing of Declan Smith during his arrest in August 2008. Question 16 Chief Constable.

Q16 To ask the Chief Constable (i) to comment on the decision to drop the case against Declan Smyth who was Tasered by police during his arrest in August 2008 (ii) does he have any plans to review the guidelines governing the use of Tasers in light of this decision (iii) and whether any disciplinary action will be taken against the officers involved?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

The reason as I understand it, it went to the PPS who decided to proceed and since then they are not proceeding because a key witness has withdrawn her support for prosecution. So, it is not a police decision, it is a PPS one.

In terms of the deployment, I am told it is soon to be completed, I am waiting for the Ombudsman's Investigation before whether I know if the policy needs to be examined or not. It is currently under investigation, so it would be wrong to comment until the Ombudsman reports. As soon as the Ombudsman reports, I undertake to come straight back to the Board with what the Ombudsman says.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Chief Constable. Declan posed no threat that evening when he was Tasered. He was fully compliant with every instruction that was given to him and the PSNI officer who both authorised the deployment of Taser and also the officer who used the Taser did not seem to be able to assess the situation properly or accurately. When you consider that there is over £30m given out on the settlement of cases, then we need to be ensuring that the accountability mechanisms are in place so that those officers who are making those decisions or blunders with regards to cases because the judge says to Declan Smyth on Friday that he left the court without a stain on his character and the same could not be said for the PSNI. This was the first time that a Taser was used in the North, so I can consider the fact of what you are saying with regards to having to await the Ombudsman's Report on this, but you have the judge's comments with regards to this case and whatever about the witness having withdrawn her evidence, you yourself with regards to your assessment of the situation of whether he needed to be, in your assessment, Tasered or not. In the court of public opinion in Derry, he certainly did not and that is notwithstanding the fact, you know our position is quite clear with regards to the use of Tasers, but I think this warrants an absolute review of the guidelines that are given to PSNI officers (a) with regards to the authorisation of it and then the deployment of the officer who is actually going to use it.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

As I said, that is one interpretation of the facts. I am waiting for the Ombudsman to give an independent view on what happened on that day. That is the whole strength of the Ombudsman – the point I made in a speech earlier this week – one of the key issues in terms of police accountability.

I have to wait to see what the Ombudsman says. I said on my record, we have never refused to accept the recommendations on an Ombudsman and implemented them fully. And the Ombudsman would say that too, so I am told it is soon. Once it is soon, I will

bring it back so, if it is your version we will discuss it. If it is my version, or is a different version, not mine, the Ombudsman's, I will want to discuss it too.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

And that opportunity will be open to Members at that time. Have you a supplementary, Gerry on this?

Mr Gearóid Ó hEára:

Yes, I just wanted to comment because I was involved in this case at the time, and it happened in our city. I actually opposed the introduction of Tasers because there was always the danger that they can be used irresponsibly and bring about a tragedy. And I was told in the middle of that argument that this was an operational matter, which seems to be an argument that gets used quite selectively since that. But, what we were also told was that our job is to hold the Chief Constable to account after decisions are made, and if they go wrong.

I had a conversation with the Deputy Chief Constable at the time that this happened, a private conversation, and the version that he had differs drastically from the version that exists among the community who watched some of this happening in Derry, and I told him that. I also told him circumstances that he had not been made aware of, which is obviously the reason that the court case collapsed, and I predicted that the court case would collapse, and I predicted then that if this guy got himself a decent solicitor that he would take the PSNI to the cleaners, and I presume also that that is going to happen. I also told him that this was going to be very very embarrassing for the Force, and would affect public confidence on the ground in Derry towards the PSNI. And I think all of that is in front of us, and we can wait on the Ombudsman's report; we can wait on the outcome of a civil case which I think will cost us money; and then I am back to where I was told I should be – holding the Chief Constable to account because when this all goes pear shaped, as it is undoubtedly going to go, and I predicted at the time, then I would like a sort of a written report on where the accountability starts and stops, because the person who fired the Taser was wrong. It was a mistake to deploy it, and everybody who stood watching it, civilians with no knowledge of these things knew that the guy was standing there in his pyjama bottoms with his arms by his side – he was complying completely. So it was a mistake to deploy it. Whoever that person phoned to look for authority to fire it

made a mistake, and I would just like to know that at the end of this process of serious mistakes and errors, that somebody will come back with a written report which says, yes, it was all a mistake. It was handled badly. Bad decisions were taken, and here is how we are going to deal with it. So I just look forward to that, and I hope that I can now ask that that comes back, because if it does not I will raise it again.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

They are all valid questions, Gerry and they will be asked. Basil, do you want to say something in your role as Chair of the Human Rights Committee.

Mr Basil McCrea:

I do just want to point out that as Chair of the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee, we did look exhaustively at the use of Taser and the rationale behind it, and I am disappointed in Members here present that are asking questions that did not go to the training sessions, to understand the timescale upon which decisions have to be made.

I am also further disappointed, Members here present, that they are pre-judging the report coming out from the Ombudsman. It is for the Ombudsman to have a look at these issues, and when that report comes out, whatever it says, I trust that those Members that have spoken very vociferously today on this issue will actually have the same amount of intent and actually look at what the Ombudsman has to say. The decision about whether there is a criminal case, a civil case, or the deployment of Taser are not related. The challenge comes down about what is the threat posed, and what is the appropriate response. And if the police are not vindicated in this issue, we will actually have a look at that, but that has got nothing to do with whether Taser is an appropriate operational instrument or not, and I do think, having heard that there are a number of discharges about Taser, that actually the training and professionalism of the Force will come to the fore.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you Basil. Briefly, Ian.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

I think Basil has actually hit the point on the head, that we cannot prejudge the Ombudsman's report. Let us wait for that and then we will comment in a more informed

way. But can I say that some comments have been made there by a Member of the Board which seems to suggest that the support for the police is somehow selective. That you can pick and choose when you support the police. I do not think that message should come out from here. I think it should be very, very clear that the police get support from the community, and we as leaders in this community encourage the public to support the police, and things are not perfect, and if mistakes are made we will get over those issues and we address those issues, but we do not withdraw support from the police. Support remains unquestioned.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chair, can I just add though. In relation to the time that happened, the police communications put out in the news that Mr Smyth was committed to hospital, to a mental health institution, and that was not the case, and I do not think that message was ever retracted.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Dolores, all these questions will be asked once we have sight of the Ombudsman's report, and the PSNI will be asked to respond to the Ombudsman's report.

Can I bring you to question number 11 from Mr Spratt, which is about the attacks on the Romanian families, and Mr Spratt if you want to ask your question, to speed, Alex has a supplementary question with it, and you might want to do that ...

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

Q11 – To ask the Chief Constable to update the Board on the situation surrounding the racist attacks on the Romanian families in South Belfast and the subsequent attack on the City Church in University Avenue?

Well, I mean most of the question has been answered earlier in the Chief Constable's opening comments, and I am happy enough with the answer that was given. But in relation to the attack on the City Church, I mean I think there is some questions around that. That went out right across the world as another racist attack. Now, my understanding is that three people were arrested; two of those people are being reported to the Public Prosecution Service. My understanding is the press are reporting this morning that one of them is the son of a leading QC, and it is quite obvious that that

leading QC certainly would not come from the loyalist community. So, can the Chief Constable indicate to us why the police did not say something in the aftermath to make it clear that it was not a racist attack. It looks like, and I was led to believe certainly whenever I spoke to individuals, that it was just another criminal damage attack that happens there night in, night out, and again Northern Ireland's reputation was portrayed across the world as being the hate capital of Northern Ireland, Belfast City, which is absolutely wrong. There is a lot of people in that Holylands area, and generally within Northern Ireland doing a lot of good work with all sorts of people from ethnic backgrounds and all the rest of it, including the police service, and I just think it could have been better handled.

How did the press get to know that the police were making arrests, and that was actually filmed and went out on national television. There is a whole lot of questions here need to be answered, and I think the police could have done more, quite frankly, to have said that it was not a racist attack. Because, Chief you did in your remarks challenge Channel 4 for doing the exact same thing, so the onus is back now to a degree on the police to make sure that if there is information to cool down the situation, and I think that was a bit lacking quite frankly in this case.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Alex Maskey, briefly.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you, Chairman. I mean obviously the earlier part of Question 11 was I think addressed earlier on and we will move on and further discuss that later on, and Jimmy has raised the issue around the City Church. Again I would want to be doing the critique around that issue with the police themselves at a later point because I was there from early in the morning and I do think that the way in which the thing unfolded, I mean the media for the first hour or more had the whole thing as this big concerted racist, sinister attack. I mean I watched all of the CCTV evidence and footage and dealt with the police for an hour and a half or so, and it was actually only a matter of time before the culprits were arrested. In fact, I was actually putting a call out to them to hand themselves in because they were just caught on camera. But, there are issues in terms of how that was handled – I believe allowed to get out of hand and, I suppose in some way, partly driven

by the media just presumption that this was part of this concerted, sinister racist intimidation, which it was not.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I would look at it, Chairman, it is I have to say one of the challenges we now face because Northern Ireland routinely is very quiet and not interesting. When we do get media attention, who do not understand Northern Ireland, and are very keen to put stories out without actually checking – I will ask Alastair to very briefly touch on those issues, but we are happy to have that conversation.

Assistant Chief Constable Alastair Finlay:

I think firstly, in terms of it being a racially motivated crime, it is categorised as a race hate motivated crime primarily because the victim perceived it to be that way. And that is the basis we work on. That was the perception of the reporter – perceived it to be because of the connection that the church has offered shelter to the Romanian community in the previous days, that was the perception and that was the basis why it was treated as such. In terms of the media being on hand when those arrests were made, part of the strategy around what was a fairly fast moving scenario in terms of the early identification of potentially people that were involved, was that there was a lot of media in that area at the time due to the interest around the Romanian stories.

There was also a community impact assessment in relation to the role of the police going into that area and undertaking the arrests that were planned, and a community engagement strategy with representatives of the community happened in advance, just in advance of that happening, and that seemed to be an appropriate thing to do. Clearly, from the number of people in the community that were alerted, that leaked out to press, and the press were close at hand having had the interest of the whole issue of South Belfast and the Romanian and hate crime at that time, and diverted their attention to those resources as they moved into the area. We understand that is how it became that they were present at the time police were on the ground taking arrests.

Mr Jimmy Spratt:

Well, can you clearly tell me now that it was just a criminal damage attack and that there was not anything whatsoever to do with any sort of a racist background to the attack? I think in your earlier remarks about the perception of the Pastor of the church or whatever,

I think those things should be – until there is an investigation – those sort of ideas should be very clearly put out of a victim’s mind until such times as there is some solid foundation to make perceptions such as that. But, can you clear absolutely that it was a criminal damage attack, and it was not a racist attack?

Assistant Chief Constable Alastair Finlay:

Firstly, we will not influence the victims as to what they perceive it to be. We will treat on the basis, if a victim perceives this to be a hate crime of any kind, that is the basis that we work on. There is no cooling off period while we assess or validate their perception. If that is their perception, that is their belief then that is how we will approach the crime. In terms of the actual reporting of the charges against these individuals, yes they are in relation to criminal damage acts, and that I do not think, as I understand it, there is no aggravation associated to them in that regard.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

We have guests upstairs for a presentation at 2.00 pm, so I have 2 final questions and Basil has kindly agreed to let you answer the question – there will not be a supplementary and that is Question number 5, and then there is a final question from Dolores. Basil.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Question number 5.

Q5 - Further to the thematic inquiry into domestic abuse which highlighted the importance of MARAC and following the successful pilot of MARAC in the Antrim Area, could the Chief Constable provide an update on its status and the proposed date for its regional roll-out?

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

Very quickly, Chairman I have some good news to announce that we will be introducing the Aide Administrators, the MARAC administrators from September onwards.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Sorry, Mr McCausland, maybe you better explain what MARAC is for the benefit of the Board.

Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland:

It is the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences in relation to Domestic Abuse, and it comes out of this issue of thematic inquiry that the Board carried out in relation to domestic abuse. We now have 16 trainers and 60 officers trained in the issue since May 2009, and with negotiations with the Department of Health and Social Services and the NIO, they will now fund 8 MARAC administrators and 1 co-ordinator which will be currently being out recruited at the moment. As well as that we have gone even further than this report, and we are going to introduce domestic violence advisors in relation to assisting and they will be on a part-time basis, so by the autumn 2009 this will be fully operational, as was promised in the report.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you ACC McCausland. A final question from Dolores Kelly on an incident at the Courthouse in Newry – Question 10.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Q9 - To ask the Chief Constable to explain how a senior police officer or officers were able to assist an alleged member of the infamous 'Glenanne Gang' by placing a police car at his disposal, which was waiting outside the courthouse in Newry when a civil case being heard in this courthouse did not involve the PSNI?

Q10 - To ask the Chief constable to explain what actions he intends to take in relation to this incident given that officers originally said that no police vehicle was tasked through the normal station system to go to the courthouse to pick up this individual, but later admitted that a police car had been involved?

Chief Constable, there was a report and it certainly does appear to have happened, where a police car was put at the disposal of what was believed to be an alleged member of the Glenann Gang in relation to a civil action, and what investigation is there into that incident and will there be an disciplinary action taken?

Assistant Chief Constable Dave Jones:

I will answer that. Obviously the Ombudsman's office is actually investigating that whole set of circumstances and I am limited by what I can say, but we did respond to a request for assistance from a member of the public at Newry Courthouse on 16 June 2009.

Having assessed the situation it was agreed to provide an escort for that male person out of the precincts of the courthouse. Judgements made at the time and processes that followed at the time will all be subject to the Ombudsman's Office, and as the Chief Constable has said we will take action as and when it is required based on what the report comes out with.

Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you ACC Jones. Thank you Chief Constable. It seems to me you got away pretty light in your last meeting – you seemed to do more listening than talking. But we do, on behalf of the Board, wish you very well in everything that you do in the future. Thank you very much to members of the public and to members of the media.