

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF THE 22nd PUBLIC MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND
POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY, 1 APRIL 2004 AT
12:00 NOON IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST**

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Mr Denis Bradley (Vice-Chairman)
Mr Alex Attwood
Viscount Alan Brookeborough
Mr Joe Byrne
Mr Brian Dougherty
Mr Sam Foster
Mr Barry Gilligan
Mr William Hay
Mr Tom Kelly
Lord Kilclooney
Mrs Pauline McCabe
Mr Alan McFarland
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
Mr Suneil Sharma
Mr Sammy Wilson

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

Mr Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)
Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief
Constable)
Mr Sam Kinkaid (Assistant Chief
Constable Crime Operations)
Mr Duncan McCausland (Assistant Chief
Constable Urban Region)
Mr Peter Sheridan (Assistant Chief
Constable Rural Region)
Ms Judith Gillespie (A/Assistant Chief
Constable, Criminal Justice Department)
Mr Joe Stewart (Senior Director of
Human Resources)
Acting Director of Media
Chief Inspector, Command Secretariat

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
Acting Head of Audit Services
Director of Community Affairs
Director of Corporate Services
Director of Policy & Accountability
One Board Official

Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr McGrady.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

On behalf of the Policing Board I would welcome members of the public and journalists to the meeting and I would welcome also the Chief Constable. For those of you who are not aware, we meet in private session and then we move into a public session and now I would ask the Chief Constable to speak.

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman, no specific updates this month that would substantially change anything I said last month. I will make 2 observations and then hand over to Acting ACC Gillespie who I think has the most important part of my presentation today which is around racial attacks.

I would just say, that you are aware that our recent sickness figures are back down to 623 which is almost the lowest figure achieved within the last 2 years and the trend continues downwards, which is very positive news, because it means more officers out on the street. It is a substantial difference from the peak of 1,200 officers in the year 2000 which shows how much has been achieved.

I would also make a very brief comment on the crime survey that was published yesterday. Interesting I think for a number of reasons. One is that it is a comprehensive survey, the common concerns of the communities are mirrored exactly by the Policing Board objectives, which I thought was

interesting. Also, but more importantly, I think that most people believe that crime is not common in their area which is a comment from the survey which I also thought is worth noting.

One other thing, the importance of speeding. There have been many questions on speeding and concerns around speeding but it still remains a very high area of local concern from local communities, many of whom suggest we should put more attention into speeding, not less, but on that point I will hand over to Judith Gillespie to talk about racial attacks.

Acting Assistant Chief Constable, Ms Judith Gillespie:

Hate crime is abhorrent whatever form it takes and it is the responsibility of every single police officer, assisted by all of the community to tackle this problem.

Hate crime is any crime which is motivated by the prejudice of the perpetrator. Being a victim of crime is traumatic enough but when the effect is made worse by the fact that you have been singled out, targeted because you are in some way different, this leads to increased feelings of isolation, exclusion and victimisation. In this short presentation I want to give some figures and background to hate crime, in particular, racist and homophobic incidents, some initiatives that we are undertaking and some local examples within districts.

All racial and homophobic incidents are identified under our current service policy. That defines any incident "*which is perceived to be racist or homophobic by the victim or any other person*" and that is the ACPO definition, in the wake of the Stephen Lawrence Report in 1999.

The definition refers to incidents rather than crimes or offences and so it covers behaviour that might not normally be police business for example, name calling by children.

We have a manual system at our Community Safety Headquarters which records these incidents, which are recorded by police officers on the street and that helps us to identify trends and increases in certain areas. We are working very hard at developing our intelligence system so that trends can be further identified. That is very important with regard to repeat victimisation because we know in many cases, victims are victims more than once and often a number of incidents might have occurred before they eventually report them to the police. So, it is very important that we identify repeat victims and target our resources accordingly. The same is said for both racial and homophobic incidents.

Our Analysis Centre has recently produced a 'strategic problem profile' which outlines all of the intelligence and information that we know about racial incidents and that will help us to target our resources appropriately. Further work may need to be done on the area of homophobic crime because this is an emerging crime which we have only started to gather statistics on in recent years. We are certainly already identifying an increased trend in that area. Our general order to the whole of the organisation highlights the need to appropriately and accurately record these incidents.

This graph shows very clearly the extent of the problem that we are talking about and the increase in racial incidents over the last 4 years. Remember, we are still concerned about under-reporting of these incidents as an issue, so these figures are actually likely to underestimate the true extent of the problem in Northern Ireland. However, the converse of this argument is, that within these figures there is undoubtedly an element of increased confidence in reporting and some of the increase can be attributed to that, but clearly not all.

Under-reporting of racial incidents can happen for a number of reasons, perception that the police are only interested in sectarian crimes, for example. The perception that the police do not view racial incidents seriously enough, lack of knowledge about what the police can actually do and what services are available, and also a genuine

fear by the victim that the situation might worsen if they report it to the police. These are examples of factors that need to be taken into account and that we need to work hard to address to increase reporting.

0.13% of the total number of crimes recorded by the police last year were racial incidents but to say only 0.13% I think belies the impact on the victims. Each of the 189 victims last year has a traumatic story to tell and I will not trivialise that story by reducing the percentage to only "0.13%".

The figures when they are broken down, I hope you can see clearly there, that we are most concerned about is the trend in attacks on homes. You can see very clearly that last year there were 59 such attacks, this year 103. Compared to the trends in England and Wales, attacks on the home here of a minority ethnic community members are quite starkly increased and that is clearly an area of concern. Local police officers have been briefed about this and are equipped to deal with it and are targeting their resources in areas where minority ethnic communities live because this is clearly where the biggest problem is. Everyone will be aware of the attack last night on the Filipino nurses' home and that is another example of the type of the type of incident that we are looking at here.

Also physical assault, compared to England and Wales, the type of incidents that predominate there are, damage to property or verbal abuse, so clearly in Northern Ireland the trend is that the incidents tend to be of a more serious nature and probably more traumatic as they refer to the victim's home.

Homophobic incidents - there undoubtedly has been an increase on last year but if you compare the trend over the last 4 years you will see that it is generally static. Of course, that is no comfort at all to the victims of such incidents. Fifty nine victims of homophobic incidents is far too many. We are intensifying our efforts in this area as well, to increase reporting and confidence on the part groups who engage with these

minority communities. Our Minority Liaison Officers have also distributed information on their role and the services available to these groups in leaflet form and also on the PSNI website. 0.02% of reported crime is homophobic but that refers to

59 people who have been very much traumatised by this type of crime and the personal attack on them. As you will see from the breakdown of incidents, they are mainly physical assaults, we are not just talking about name calling, we are talking about physical assault.

Also of interest, you will see just above the physical assault figures there have been 5 incidents of graffiti reported. This may be an emerging trend or it may simply be an increase in reporting, we do not know, it is too early to tell, but it is significant that for the first time this year we see a trend of homophobic graffiti where we have not seen that before and clearly will be keeping a close eye on that.

Measures to tackle hate crime - all officers have a responsibility to foster good relationships with their patrol areas and to ask relevant questions of people in the areas and to glean information and intelligence on local crimes, including hate crime. It is fair to say that there is undoubtedly a heightened awareness among patrol officers with regard to hate crime and police officers have contributed increased and relevant information to the ICIS database. Local knowledge of where vulnerable individuals, groups and communities live, work, worship, socialise and indeed go to school, that helps to target

resources and identify trends where we might not have otherwise identified them.

Arrest and prosecution of offenders – only a small number of racist incidents to date have resulted in prosecution. However, there may be recent significant detections for racially motivated crimes and prosecuting files are being prepared. We clearly need to work harder in this area but that is about increasing the confidence of communities in our procedures and also supporting victims and witnesses right through the criminal justice process. That involves keeping victims informed of the progress of the case throughout its progress and Minority Liaison Officers in each of the districts help to do this in close liaison with their local forums. We do take this issue very seriously and it is one that Minority Liaison Officers work to engage with their local community groups to make sure that their views are taken on board.

Just a few initiatives and I will run through these very quickly. We have literature promoting and publicising the existence of Minority Liaison Officers in each district. These are just not in regard to minority ethnic communities but they are also with regard to the gay and lesbian community and other minority groups within districts. They have received specialised training in cultural awareness and religious diversity and also looking at training on asylum seeker issues and refugee issues which are coming to the fore in Northern Ireland. A lot of this training is delivered by the Northern Ireland Interface Forum and it focuses on the main faiths currently in existence in Northern Ireland communities.

The 2001 census figures were distributed to all District Commanders to help identify where minority ethnic communities may be living. We believe that these census figures probably under-estimate the number of minority ethnic community representatives or community individuals living in Northern Ireland. It puts the figure at around 14,325 and we know from our contacts with community groups and local forums that that is likely to be about 50% of

the true figure. It is more than likely to be 25,000 to 30,000 and for a lot of reasons the census figures are probably an under-estimate, not least that some of the individuals were unable to complete the forms because of language difficulties, so that is a factor that must be taken into account.

We have established a Multi Cultural Independent Advisory Group. That consists of 12 representatives from minority communities to assist and advise on policy and procedure and to discuss various issues. We also are working on developing an inter agency reporting structure for hate crimes and incidents with the Equality Commission. We have had hate crime training delivered to detectives and student officers on racial and homophobic crimes by members of minority ethnic groups as well.

Community Safety are represented on the Northern Ireland Race Forum and we are developing a cultural awareness guide for operational police officers, just to provide some practical guidance and advice on issues that they might encounter when they are dealing with members of minority ethnic communities and sensitivity to cultural and religious issues.

An Ethnic Police Officers Association is currently being developed as is a Gay Police Officers Association in Northern Ireland and these are significant developments within the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Sexuality Awareness Training is also delivered to student officers and to Minority Liaison Officers and this is, of course, in addition to any existing training that has been in existence for some time for Child Abuse and Rape Enquiry detectives because there are particular sensitivities around investigating sexual crime in minority ethnic communities.

Details of the conference that was held in 2002 are available on the PSNI website and we are also working very closely with Victim Support. We

already have a number of Chinese victim support volunteers working with us and we are looking to develop that into other minority ethnic community representatives with Victim Support and that is again a very significant development. We had a seminar for Minority Liaison Officers recently at Newforge and this involved, again, the input from various minority ethnic community representatives.

We are working hard at developing the intelligence database with regard to recording and monitoring and identifying trends. I mentioned previously the repeat victimisation issue. I think developments in this area will enable us to have a significant impact and to reduce crimes against the minority ethnic communities and indeed crimes of a homophobic nature. Crimestoppers you will be aware, also provides a means by which people who do not necessarily want to come to the police for whatever reason, can indeed report their crimes anonymously.

Community Safety Branch provide funding for some minority ethnic community groups, so it is practical and financial support, as well as morale support. We are looking at ways of developing third party reporting by telephone or via the internet.

Finally, there are many local initiatives going on within districts but I would highlight a few that are going on in the relevant areas where crimes against minority ethnic communities have been prevalent.

South Belfast have issued local managing hate crime guidelines and they are also working on a vulnerable persons strategy. South Belfast are not the only district working on this area, there are a number of districts working on a vulnerable persons strategy and I had mentioned this in a previous presentation about crimes against older people but it is an important development. They have also issued a number of personal attack alarms to members of minority ethnic communities who feel particularly vulnerable and that is again a practical way of reassurance and help by the police.

In Dungannon DCU, the police are working very closely with the Portuguese community and have funded an interpreter to have weekly meetings with the community. They are also meeting with local companies who employ large numbers of migrant workers from Portuguese, Ukrainian and Polish communities to discuss the range of services which police and other agencies offer and to encourage reporting of racially motivated crime. In Craigavon, a Muslim Forum has been established with the police to discuss, amongst other issues, the proposed Mosque. That is about developing trust and confidence and also they have issued local guidelines to CID saying that where a racially motivated incident occurs a detective sergeant will be allocated to the investigation. That is not just to apply a detective mind to the investigation from the outset and that is not just with regard to traditional CID investigations, it is to all racially motivated incidents.

These are merely examples and they show that our resources are aimed at preventing these crimes before they happen but also when they do, that we are taking them very seriously. Everything we are doing is about increasing trust and confidence on the part of all communities, including all minority communities and groups. Through these measures we would hope to achieve that aim to appropriately and intelligently target our resources and services and to address this complex issue in a professional and responsive way.

I would repeat my opening statement, hate crime is abhorrent, whatever form it takes and it is the responsibility of every single police officer, supported and assisted by all of the community to tackle this problem.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Any questions from Board Members? Sammy Wilson.

Mr Sammy Wilson:

First of all could I thank Judith for the presentation and I think that the attitude of this Board has been of course that all crime is abhorrent not one particular type of crime.

One of the concerns I have Judith, well there are 2 concerns really, that I have about your presentation this morning. The first is that I hope that the impression is not given that the police pay more attention to one type of crime than the other. Crime against the elderly is equally abhorrent. Crime against young people who go out for a good night and get attacked and are the most vulnerable to attack is abhorrent, and people who get broken into is abhorrent. My disappointment in all of this is, that the presentation we have had this morning reads more like an extract from political correct manual than about what we are actually doing. As you have already indicated, we have caught very few of these people. I suspect that most of the people who are the victims of this crime would be far far more content and rest easier in their bed if they actually thought we were catching criminals rather than setting up Minority Liaison Officers, Gay Police Associations, Ethnic Minority Police Associations and all of the other things we have heard today. I would just like to know what actions have the police actually taken on the ground to catch the people who are doing this, rather than all the political correct stuff that we have heard in the presentation this morning?

Mr William Hay:

Some of the crime we are seeing, is it being organised and is it being sanctioned by paramilitary organisations, especially loyalist paramilitaries?

A/Assistant Chief Constable, Ms Judith Gillespie:

If I could respond to the general point and perhaps one of my colleagues would want to respond to the specific point in relation to paramilitary involvement.

Yes, of course all crime is abhorrent. The point is that the effect on victims of vulnerable communities, such as minority ethnic communities can be worsened by the fact that they feel isolated, victimised and targeted because they are different and that makes the impact so much worse.

There have been a number of recent successes against crimes against minority ethnic groups. There have been arrests made and as I have said prosecutions are in the pipeline. We have already had prosecutions for racially motivated crimes but what I am saying is that we need to work harder in that area, roughly half of the incidents that are reported to us result in no further police action. Now that no further police action may result from the fact that the victim did not want to pursue the case through the criminal justice system. That is why I was saying that it is most important that we have appropriate support measures in place to support victims right through the criminal justice system should that be their wish, but victims might legitimately not wish to pursue that course of action and that, of course, is their choice and they are entitled to that. The important point is that we are providing a professional service, we are tackling this issue, we are making arrests, we are charging individuals with serious crimes such as burglary, criminal damage, assault occasioning actual bodily harm and in a recent example, indecent assault so those crimes are being tackled by arrests and by officers on the street and perhaps Duncan might like to comment on Belfast specifically.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, very briefly and I answered this if you remember at Omagh, but I will highlight it again. For example, in South Belfast we have dedicated patrolling in the particular areas where there are concerns and it is based on information and intelligence led policing. The key issue is the 'beat officer' who is on the ground and who is dealing and speaking with these people on a regular daily basis and building up the information and the picture that is going on. That for me is simple baseline policing and that is what we are doing. That is how these people are being apprehended and brought before the courts and as Judith rightly says there are a number of prosecutions

pending. If I pass on to Sam to answer the specific question on the organised crime.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

There clearly has been evidence of paramilitary involvement in a number of cases. At this stage I could say it involves individuals attached to paramilitary organisations and local units. I have nothing to say that it has been centrally directed by such organisations. It has mainly been on the loyalist side and particularly the UVF. In relations to these attacks I have to say that beside the DCUs, because of the work that has come out of the Analysis Unit, the serious crime side and crime ops have been involved in the support of districts and to try to ensure that adequate and relevant intelligence is going out to officers and districts. It is not just in relation to the individual actions of paramilitary members, particularly the loyalist side, but we have to be mindful of the organisations like Combat 18 and there is a role for C3 Intelligence Branch in terms of checking that they are not growing and who is involved and those various things. There have been a number of specialist operations run in support of Belfast region to try and ensure that people have been brought to justice and there have been some successes in that regard.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

I am going to take 2 more questions, Mrs Rosaleen Moore and then Lord Kilclooney. Mrs Moore.

Mrs Rosaleen Moore:

Thank you very much Judith for your presentation, it is heartening to see the activity at policing level. It strikes me that the problem is with the majority community and failure to recognise the responsibility there has to be there in terms of tackling any sort of hate crime. Sometimes we are not best served by our community leaders, either at regional or local level in terms of the statements they make and in terms of not giving effective leadership in this area. Are you happy that you are getting the co-operation you need out there

from local community leaders and the wider public? You are tackling it at a criminal level and obviously it is much wider than that but the leadership has to come within the majority community who are determined that they will not tolerate this type of activity. My evidence at the moment is that it has been actually condoned either overtly or covertly.

A/Assistant Chief Constable, Ms Judith Gillespie:

Well I can only agree that the responsibility lies with all of the community and not just with the police. I have said earlier on, in the case of minority ethnic communities, many of these attacks are happening at the peoples homes and clearly these people have neighbours and people who live nearby who must see, or hear, or know something of what is going on. We would be very keen to encourage such people to come forward with information because that is the way that we will solve these difficulties.

In relation to the support from community leaders, we have established a very good relationship in the vast majority of communities with regard to minority ethnic communities and their representatives and with local people. There are a lot very good local initiatives going on involving sports, youth, cultural and educational initiatives where members of minority ethnic communities are brought in to mainstream with other young peoples groups, so there is a lot of very good work going on. I certainly would not want to undermine any of that but we do feel that in some cases there could stronger condemnation of these attacks from local community representatives in certain areas.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Lord Kilclooney.

Lord Kilclooney:

Thanks very much for the presentation. I was wondering is there a selectivity in the particular ethnic group that is being attacked, for example, you mentioned Dungannon and South Belfast. South Belfast would mainly be an

Asian / Chinese ethnic group, Dungannon would mainly be a European ethnic group, mainly Portuguese. Is there a greater attack on Asian people than there is on European ethnic groups, for example? I very much agree with you that the census figures are crazy in so far as ethnic people are concerned in Northern Ireland, probably twice as many as is reported. That being the case and even though one is alarmed at the increasing number of reports in the media about ethnic attacks, is it possible to really say that per thousand of the ethnic people there has actually been a decline in the number of ethnic attacks over the past 10 years?

A/Assistant Chief Constable, Ms Judith Gillespie:

I think you are quite right to introduce some caution with regard to the census figures, we share that and you are quite right to introduce a note of caution with regard to the crimes per thousand because clearly the figures with regard to the census are incorrect. The true figure, as I said was probably more like 25,000 but we do not have a very accurate true figure, so I would agree with you that you do need to interpret those figures very carefully. The bottom line is that there is such a small percentage of minority ethnic communities that the effect on them is, I think, exaggerated by the fact that there is little community support for them because they are so isolated and vulnerable within the communities they are living.

Lord Kilclooney:

On the question of selectivity, is there a greater willingness to attack Asian people than to say European people?

A/Assistant Chief Constable, Ms Judith Gillespie:

The pattern we see would accord with, for example, in the Belfast area a lot of minority ethnic communities work in the hospitality and restaurant trade and the times at which the attacks occur would accord with them coming to and from work, in the late / early morning hours and that type of thing. The

pattern in England and Wales accords much more with coming home from school in the late afternoon / early evening. It is a slightly different pattern of attacks that we have seen here in Northern Ireland compared to what is going on in England and Wales. Certainly that pattern has helped to target the resources, as Duncan McCausland was just referring to, in the Belfast area with regard to the Chinese and Asian population. In relation to Dungannon, it is a different phenomenon and they are European migrant workers coming over to Northern Ireland for employment and it is a different type of problem and we have to obviously gear our resources differently within that area.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Suneil Sharma.

Mr Suneil Sharma:

Thank you for the presentation. The Quality Commission released information about 6 months ago that Northern Ireland was becoming statistically, one of the worst places for racist attacks in the whole of Great Britain and that is from really a very low position which is obviously very worrying as you can see from your statistics. I just want to make a point that the conduits you have set up are very very important, I know there maybe political correctness but it is in line with the principles of policing with the community and the Board has signed up to that process so I am perfecting content with that.

Just a general comment about the setting up of the Black Police Officers Association and the Gay Police Officers Association which is happening, this reflects the society that we live in today in 2004 so I think those are all very positive steps in the right direction. The comment I want to make generally is on the whole issue of sectarianism and the definition of sectarianism.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Would you put it succinctly please Suneil.

Mr Suneil Sharma:

Sectarianism has been defined as “incidents and crimes involving the element of religious motivation” now that is a definition that has been designed by PSNI. I have a concern about that, in that, religious motivation can be further sub-divided into catching statistics around anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Could you may be have a look at that definition from a statistical gathering point of view, which I think is very important in the light of what is happening in the world today, that information like that should be gathered from a policing perspective.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

I am assuming you are going to look at it.

Could I then suggest that we move to question 8 and I would ask Members to put their questions as succinctly as Sam Foster is about to put this one.

Question 8, Sam.

Mr Sam Foster:

Thank you Chairman for the warning. Chief Constable as we approach the yearly public cultural presentation period, could the Chief Constable give an assessment at this stage of what he anticipates the public order could be in the months ahead?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

Thank you for the succinct question, now I will give you a fairly long answer. There are a number of issues. First of all, the reality at the moment is we are policing in the broadest sense of political impasse so the concerns I expressed in recent history around the marching season are self evident. The longer the politics fails to move forward, the more likely it is in my professional judgement that the marching season could be more difficult.

We are working very closely as we always have with the Parades Commission, and community workers. There is huge work going on behind the scenes already with many community groups who are as determined, as we are, to have a peaceful marching season. So, we live in hope, we are prepared to plan and anticipate for a situation that may be less peaceful than last year, which was I think the lowest in terms of disorder for many many years.

I will ask Duncan and Peter to comment on their 2 regions. I think it is early days and I never try to second-guess too far down the line as things move so quickly. I would hope that if by the marching season the politics has moved on then we would see exactly the same as we saw last year, which was hardly any violence and people being able to march and be facilitated in areas without causing huge disruptions to the communities through which they march.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Commenting very brief Chairman on the urban region. At present I have no firm indication that there is a specific threat of disorder during the forthcoming marching season. However, having said that, we will assess and continue to plan. Every District Commander is very actively working with all the relevant parties and agencies that the Chief Constable mentioned, to ensure a peaceful summer. It is important that all people are prepared to talk and work out their problems together and it is important that we do not have the vacuum the Chief Constable mentioned, if it is still there, filled by any violence associated with the marching season and that is what we are working to prevent.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Two questions on illegal waste. Question 7 to be put by Mrs Moore and there is a supplementary from Sammy Wilson.

Mrs Rosaleen Moore:

Chief Constable. There appears to be some evidence of a multi-million pound illegal waste dumping activity from the Republic of Ireland into Northern Ireland, especially in the border areas. In the Republic, the Garda have been called in to work alongside the Environmental Protection Agency on a joint investigation. In view of the fact that these land fill sites are indeed in Northern Ireland, what is the role of the PSNI in counteracting the illegal activity? The Irish Times carried an article during the week that indicated that the paramilitaries again were getting a toe-hole in this particular piece of enterprise.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Sammy, do you have anything to add.

Mr Sammy Wilson:

Other than some of the comments that were made in respect of this, where the Garda said that they found difficulty in dealing with some of these illegal dumps or the people that were doing the illegal dumping because they were actually using roads in Northern Ireland and, therefore, they could not move in and arrest them. What co-operation has there been with the Garda in trying to apprehend these people?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Sheridan to deal with that but in broad terms we work very closely with the Garda on a number of issues and no doubt this is one that Peter can cover the actual details, as this is his piece of territory.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Act 1997 governs the licencing, carriage and disposal of vehicles involved in the

transportation of waste. The issue is a matter for the Environmental Heritage Department and council environmental officers under the auspices of the DoE. This Government office's remit

is to identify and pursue any breaches relevant to the legislation. Article 42 of the Act refers to the duty to produce an authority to transport controlled waste, it states that if it reasonably appears to an authorised officer or a constable contrary to Article 38, he may stop and require authority to inspect his licence and search any vehicle. Environmental Heritage has stated they have not sought specifically for police to stop vehicles. However, working with the police in Strabane, Fermanagh, Dungannon, Armagh and Newry there have been a number of operations where police assistance has been requested and provided accordingly. Indeed, on one occasion police at Crossmaglen police did stop a vehicle and requested the department to attend. Environmental Heritage Services spoke glowingly as to the assistance police have provided.

The Head of Road Policing in Rural Region conducts a specific operation on a number of occasions during the year where this aspect of illegal dumping is incorporated in the operation and the DoE are involved during these operations. The Police Service will continue to provide support to the Environmental Heritage Department and will continue with their colleagues in An Garda Siochana to be proactive in enforcing the legislation.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr has a question relating to city centre crime.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Thank you Chairman and indeed Chief Constable. One of Northern Ireland's oldest businesses known as Tuchan and Crane carried a news report on the 20 March 2004 by its Managing Director indicating that his business, which

has been in operation in our city since 1850, had to close. The reasons that he cited were issues to do with crime and poor policing. I want to quote you what he said because it is very

important, he said *“that the main reason I am closing is due to crime. We had 3 ram raids last month, since the ceasefire the actual crime level has got worse. On*

St Patrick’s Day he reported that a mob of 100 people were illegally drinking outside his shop and causing a disturbance”. He reported it to the police and he said *“they “just drove off and did nothing”*. He went on to say *“that in 45 years in business in this town, I have never had a report back from the police into crime committed in this shop, I have continually written to the police and they have never even responded about the recent ram raid on my shop”*.

Those comments, if they are true and they come from a very senior businessman in our city, are absolutely disgraceful and I wonder if you could report to us the level and trends of city centre crime and how you intend to reassure business people in the city and indeed across Northern Ireland that crime does not pay?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I would be delighted to. I am surprised at some of the specifics in that question which were not in the question given to me and had it been I perhaps could have given an answer in relation to those specific crimes.

Although, I do know the shop, which makes it even more surprising about the feedback that that individual has received because I personally have walked into his shop with the home beat officers very soon after I took appointment. The reason I was down there was I was on foot patrol with the city centre beat patrol, they knew exactly where the high crime areas were which is why they

were patrolling them and they chose to introduce me to the person in that shop, I do not think it was the owner. We discussed crime prevention at that time, I remember it extremely clearly. I equally remember during that discussion, the officers encouraging some crime prevention measures which had been recommended, I believe beforehand and perhaps not adopted. So, I think a lot of work has gone on in relation to understanding the crime and clearly the individuals I was on patrol with were very switched on to those events.

But in terms of crime reduction, I think the figures which I report to this Board almost monthly have reflected that over the last 12 months there has been a substantial decrease in burglary and a substantial decrease in violent crime. These are not my figures, these are statistics which are supported and we are quite happy are accurate. They continue to drop down, including as well as criminal damage, so perhaps this individual's perception of crime is somewhat away from the reality.

We work very closely with the professional organisations in Belfast. They are excellent partnerships, indeed one of the partnerships was that the fact that the city centre owners provided money so we could provide bicycles to our officers so they could get around the streets even more quickly. There is a lot of commitment from the Police Service of Northern Ireland into keeping Belfast a safe city. I would like Duncan to give a bit more detail because this is a very important question.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, if I could give some specific details which I think are important. Obviously the city centre falls within the South Belfast district and there is a Sector Unit that looks after the city centre headed by an inspector, 2

sergeants and 20 constables and they are supported on a regular basis by Roads Policing and Tactical Support Units.

During the last 11 months every type of crime in the city centre has fallen significantly and I think it is important to give you some statistics. Very simply, street robbery has reduced by 41%, till snatches by 50%, retail thefts by 21% and commercial burglary by 30%. That has just not been achieved by the work of the police, it has been achieved by the work and partnership of the Chamber of Trade and the Belfast city centre management and local businesses, led by the Community and Police Liaison Committee who regularly highlight the issues and discuss with the police what they can do to prevent crime.

Our response clearly would be evidenced, if I could take one particular example, the month of December and the question specifically referred to commercial premises. During the month of December we saw a 91% reduction in commercial burglaries in Belfast city centre. Only 3 premises were burgled and I think that is a very significant issue Chairman.

As well as that, 89 stalls which were trading illegally were seized and over a £100,000 worth of goods which were being sold illegally was brought into police control.

This downward trend in crime has continued in January and February for all the categories of crimes that I have outlined, indeed, during this period there have been 242 people arrested for criminal offences in the city centre. I think it is important also to emphasise that we are not going to rest on our laurels, this year's Policing Plan that is being launched for South Belfast specifically emphasises the issue of reducing thefts for retail and business premises. It is listed as a key objective for the District Commander and will be reported on to the District Policing Partnership.

I am quite happy in terms of the specific comments that were made at the start of the question and if you wish to write to me I will deal with those on a one to one basis with you or that individual.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

You will be pleased to know I have written to the Chairman of the Board and asked him to formally pass on the comments that appeared in a newspaper article in the Newsletter on the 20 March 2004. But I must say Duncan, we have a responsible citizen here, Noel Graham, not some fly by night trader, a serious citizen responsible for generating employment, generating a good business, a supporter of good law enforcement practice and he expresses such disappointment in such a public way. Then you come to me today with statistics that quite frankly do not equate to the level of confidence that the business community actually have on the ground, now there is an imbalance there and it has got to be addressed. I do not know if it has to do with lack of officers or better practice on the ground but something has got to be done otherwise, unfortunately, stories like this may become the norm and this country cannot afford that and the business community cannot afford it.

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I would be surprised if this becomes the norm because if the figures are right, what you are saying is in through partnership crime going down. I am not sure that one shop closing in the city centre however important and however longstanding it is can be used as an example that crime is the key reason for closing businesses in the city centre. The figures do not add up to that.

Businesses generally tend to report crime (a) because they are responsible and (b) because they need to so. The statistics support the fact that crimes are going down, it is hard evidence that crime is dropping, it is not soft evidence - it is hard evidence. Businesses report crime, they do not absorb the cost themselves certainly around burglary.

To achieve 3 burglaries in a city centre in December any other chief officer would be shouting from the rooftops. We continually do shout from the rooftops and if we continue perhaps some of this good news may be picked up by the press here present and report it because I think one of the ways of dispelling these myths is through good reporting, accurate reporting of the fact that crime is going down.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

This Board is aware that the Cory Reports are likely to be published this afternoon, it is also aware that the Secretary of State is likely to be speaking about now in respect of those Cory Reports and indeed that the Prime Minister at his Press Conference could well be taking questions. Against that background and bearing in mind that this Board has not had sight of, or not read those Reports, there is a general question on this matter from Alex Attwood.

Mr Alex Attwood:

Thank you Chairman. Given that as we speak the Cory Report is being published and given that it is widely anticipated that its contents will be shocking in relation to certain criminal and other conduct in the old RUC, Security Services and British Army, could I ask you 2 questions.

Do you find from what you know of Cory and Stephens 3 to be shocking in terms of the conduct of agencies within the State. Secondly, if arising from the Cory Report there are any further developments that are required in respect of the management, policy or personnel within the PSNI, over and above the already far reaching changes undertaken by the Board and the PSNI arising from Patten, Stephens and other reports, would the Chief Constable indicate his willingness to take any further action if that is deemed necessary after an assessment of the contents of Cory?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

We all need to see what Cory comes up with. In the broad picture, should the report find anything that is not covered by the 3 reports you mentioned, I would be surprised. You have reflected on the huge changes already underway and moving forward at a high degree of energy and great degree of pace and of course I will look at it. If there is anything else we need to discuss with the Board, of course I will look at it very seriously, I would be slightly surprised because all of these reports are so comprehensive and indeed the Stephens Report refers directly to one of the investigations that Cory also looked at. In terms of the actual enquiries, I am uncertain what follows the Report but what I would say is that I will ensure that this Police Service will fully co-operate with any requests for information.

Mr Sammy Wilson:

I think the last question indicates that in their absence Sinn Fein have a very good representative on the Board already.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

That was out of order now Sammy.

Mr Sammy Wilson:

Could I just ask, on the question of speeding, and the Chief Constable indicated that the police were still giving a very high priority to speeding in Northern Ireland.

After many requests Chief Constable, I finally was given some figures as to the DCUs and the figures for each of the DCUs and those figures were also released in Parliament. Could I ask you, given the fact and leave aside the speed cameras which are only found in certain localities, given the fact that the police seem to be detecting speeding more in areas like Ballymena, Banbridge, East Belfast, Castlereagh all of

which are perceived as unionist areas, have the police reached a conclusion that unionists drive faster than nationalists or is it simply these areas are being targeted more by the police because they are easier to police? As it was indicated to me in the response, which came from the police, it has been in some of the nationalist areas for example, that the fixed speed cameras have been damaged and therefore have not been recording crimes, why is or can you explain the disparity in the number of detections between unionists and nationalists for speeding in Northern Ireland?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

The first thing, the reason that speeding is important is that about 150 people a year die on the road which is one of the highest figures in Europe, if you distil our figures out of the UK figures where they currently hide, we are as bad if not worse than France. That is why we take it seriously because speeding, drink driving and careless driving are the 3 main contributors to road deaths but I will ask the Deputy to deal with the specific details on that one.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

I am sitting with the same table in front of me Mr Wilson and I have to say that your figures may be slightly portrayed in the wrong way.

If I look at Newry and Mourne with 1200 and other areas that are not perceived as unionist, there certainly is a spread of activity across the whole province. Banbridge and Craigavon, Dungannon other places Fermanagh have got high levels of speeding detection. I would refer you back to the Community Attitude Survey which was published yesterday and the Chief Constable has already mentioned this. The fact

that respondents view speeding as their prime issue and the issue that they would wish police to devote most of their attention to in their own area. Apart from the fact that we lose more people to driving incidents every year than

any other cause and that each fatal accident costs the state in the region of £1 million, I think it is right and proper that we devote a lot of attention to speeding and I hope that our spread across the DCUs will improve because we should be doing more in all of them I think and that is a plain fact, if we have got 150 deaths we need to do more.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

A question on the lessons from the public inquiry into the tragic deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman. Question 9, Barry Gilligan.

Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you Chairman. Chief Constable, Members of the Board are aware of the public inquiry into the tragic deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman and we have been sent an information pack, as I am sure you have, from the Chief Constable of the Humberside Police Service. In that pack the Chief Constable highlights a number of lessons to be learned around information review periods and on-linked computer systems and while no-one should forget the perpetrators are behind bars and I am sure that will please you as much as anybody else given your recent comments, I am sure that you are looking at your own systems to ensure that our house is in order. Would you like to comment on the Humberside information pack and whether the lessons learned there are transferable to PSNI?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

Very briefly, I will ask Sam to deal with the details as he has been looking into this. Two fast-time reports have come out, which is very helpful, from the Forces involved to make sure that if there is any quick learning we pick it up but the Bichard Inquiry reports at the end of May and I think in the long term we need to get the full report to see exactly what is said, so we can benchmark ourselves against that. We have some other things that Sam can mention in relation to the reports that we have already had.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

Clearly the tragic deaths of Holly and Jessica raised a number of issues for all police services across the United Kingdom. We started to check our systems for handling information on suspected sexual offenders once the first initial reports emerged about the problems experienced in Humberside. This is an area where both the Criminal Justice Department and Crime Operations both have important responsibilities within the police. I currently sit on the NIO Committee currently reviewing all the vetting systems being managed by public bodies and the Chief Constable has mentioned 2 reports we have received. I have circulated those within the PSNI and within the next couple of weeks will be doing a review of what other issues that we need changed. Without wanting to pre-emptify these, I can say that the PSNI did not apply the weeding policy that Humberside apparently did and that is an important issue.

It is expected also that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary will also be producing a report covering other aspects of the Cambridgeshire investigation into the deaths of the 2 children which we will also want to carefully consider because it will raise issues about how sexual offenders are investigated, and murders searching, there are a whole range of issues there. We currently have an officer assisting in that Inquiry which allows us to be fed back information, so there are lessons to be learnt there as well.

I am happy at a future date to report back our findings in relation to the material that has come from Humberside and that will come from Her Majesty's Inspector at a later date.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Question relating to attacks on members of DPPs, this is the final question, Joe Byrne.

Mr Joe Byrne:

Chairman, could the Chief Constable give the PSNI assessment of the ongoing intimidation and attacks on members of the DPPs in the North West and can the police state how successful or otherwise they have been in solving this problem? Finally Chief Constable, are you happy that police intelligence is working successfully in relation to this matter?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I will deal with the broad picture and then hand over to Peter Sheridan who has been covering that area. In broad terms, a huge effort has been put in by the PSNI to protect members of the District Policing Partnerships. I think that is very important and that commitment continues and will continue as long as these people are under any sort of threat because DPPs are too important to us to do anything else and I think those efforts have worked and have lead to arrests and I will leave that to Peter to cover in slightly more detail.

I think it is also worth noting that the international support for District Policing Partnerships was clearly shown in the United States, two members of DPPs met with President Bush and others on St Patrick's Day. He chose to specifically refer to their commitment to democratic policing in his speech in the Whitehouse. So, everyone accepts that District Policing Partnerships are a force for good. Anyone with an intellect at all knows that intimidation will not work and has not worked. We have not lost huge members of DPP members simply because they have been intimidated. They are determined to stay and we are determined to protect them, but I will leave Peter to continue with what has been going on in particular areas.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, I took the reference to the North West in the question to refer to Strabane and Foyle DCUs.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

That is right.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

In Foyle there has been a total of 6 incidents which involved both the DPP and Policing Board Members homes or property. Investigations into these incidents have not yet resulted in any arrests or prosecutions although some forensic evidence has been obtained and is being followed up.

On the preventative side, proactive operations continue in order to protect DPP and Policing Board Members homes. Physical measures have been installed in a number of Members homes and a direct line number to Communications at Strand Road has been provided to DPP members. Crime prevention advice has been provided to all Members including advice on letter bombs from the army technical officer.

In Strabane DCU there have been a total of 14 incidents. Currently the main threat against DPP members emanates from dissident republicans particularly the Real IRA in Strabane. In recent months 4 members of the Real IRA have been arrested and charged with terrorist offences and are currently in custody awaiting trial and since October 2002 a total of 21 arrests have been carried out in Strabane of suspected Real IRA members.

The number of attacks on DPP members homes in the area have significantly reduced, this in part may be due to the arrests but can also be attributed to patrols and security checks at homes and places of work of DPP members. Members are provided with attention on a 24 hour basis with at least 3 visits per 24 hour period to each home. Local police, TSG and military are all involved on a co-ordinated basis. Locally, the Crime Prevention officer has spoken to members and provided them with a thorough briefing on personal security and property security. Following a local assessment each member has been provided with certain physical security measures to their homes, as

part of the Key Persons Protection Scheme and in total 135 DPP members in rural regions have been provided with crime prevention advice.

Mr Joe Byrne:

Chairman, could I just ask a supplementary.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Quickly Joe.

Mr Joe Byrne:

Could I seek an assurance Chairman, that in future when there is an incident at a DPP family home, that there is not an undue haste by the media to get to the home because it does put DPP family members in awkward position. They do not want undue publicity and they do not want the media arriving at virtually the same time as the PSNI to do the investigation.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Can you note that Chief Constable.

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I can note that certainly but I do not control the media although some might suggest that I would wish to but I understand the point.

I think the point is well made but many of these people have made brave decisions to become more public within their communities by standing up and being involved in policing and it is difficult enough for them without undue extra attention and I would agree with that entirely.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

That concludes the session in respect of our business. Could I say thank you Chief Constable and your colleagues for attending our meeting today and thanks to members of the public and the press.