

**NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

**MINUTES OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> PUBLIC MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND  
POLICING BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2003 AT  
12:00 NOON IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST**

**PRESENT:**

**MEMBERS:**

Professor Desmond Rea (Chairman)  
Mr Denis Bradley (Vice-Chairman)  
Mr Alex Attwood  
Viscount Brookeborough  
Mr Joe Byrne  
Mr Fred Cobain  
Mr Sam Foster  
Mr Barry Gilligan  
Mr William Hay  
Mr Tom Kelly  
Mrs Pauline McCabe  
Mr Alan McFarland  
Mr Eddie McGrady  
Mrs Rosaleen Moore  
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr  
Mr Sammy Wilson

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

Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief  
Constable)  
Mr Duncan McCausland (Assistant Chief  
Constable)  
Mr Joe Stewart (Senior Director, Human  
Resources)  
Mr Austin Hunter (Director of Media &  
PR)  
Superintendent Bobby Hunniford,  
Community Involvement Branch  
Chief Inspector, Command Secretariat

**OFFICIALS IN  
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Alastair McDowell (Acting Chief  
Executive)  
Head of Policy & Accountability  
Head of Training & Community  
Consultation  
Acting Business Manager  
One Board Official



**Apologies:**

Apologies were received from Mr Dougherty, Lord Kilclooney and Mr Sharma. Apologies were also received from the Chief Constable.

*(Due to technical difficulties, a verbatim record of the opening of the meeting is not available. The verbatim minutes commence with Superintendent Hunniford from PSNI Community Involvement Branch outlining a number of police initiatives concerning older people).*

..... the Police Liaison Committee, in an initiative to provide personal attack alarms and door restrictors for older people in that area. Various partnerships initiatives, are being delivered by all the commanders, through all the police areas. There is a full list available if anyone wishes to see the list of local partnerships that are available.

It is the intention, that next year we intend to hold a conference entitled 'Older People and Policing' in order to obtain the views of older people regarding relevant services to be provided by multi agency groups, including the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Those are some of the key initiatives that are being undertaken at this time.

I now would like to move to the presentation entitled, 'Young People and Policing'. Just to set the scene, who we are dealing with in Northern Ireland? The population in Northern Ireland as you can see is just over 1.6 million, of which 24% are young people under 16 years of age. That gives us the youngest age structure in the whole of the United Kingdom and 36% of that figure are under 25 years of age. Breaking that down into 3 of the main council areas. Belfast Council, as you can see they are 17.23%, Derry/Londonderry 7.13% and Lisburn 6.42%. The vast majority of younger people are in the Belfast Council area. Where do they live? Looking at the figures, going from age 5 to 24, you can see the vast majority of them are based in the Greater Belfast Council area.

If you take in the one sentence 'young people' and mention 'crime' and young people and their interaction with police, if you put those all into one sentence, the general perception is, that young people are involved in crime and when young people are involved with the police, it is because a crime has been committed. That is a stereotypical view of young people, not only in Northern Ireland, but across the whole of Great Britain. Yes, there are young people that get involved in crime. Those are some of the figures that the Police Service have, through the youth side, been involved with the Community Involvement Branch. But the key point to make is, although we have 11,900 juvenile referrals, those are young people that have come to the attention of the police for various reasons, some of which may be crime related, others may be that they are young people at risk and there are only a small number that are actually referred for prosecutions. The main figure is 5,070 advice and warnings, where we give advice and warning to young people and over 1,000 cautions, where we work to try and divert young people from the formal criminal justice system. With the prosecutions of under 17 year olds, the vast majority are for indictable offences. Those are the more serious offences that the court and prosecution deem the appropriate response. For convictions, 6 out of 10 under 18's are convicted, but again that is of indictable offences, the more serious offences.

There are reasons why young people get involved in crime and areas that bring them into contact with the police. Some of those main areas are highlighted, drugs, alcohol and solvent abuse, which is an ever increasing problem in Northern Ireland. Again you can see the figures and I will just pick up on some of them. Of 11-16 year olds, 16.5% use drugs, that is an extremely high figure. Alcohol, more than 20% of children under 12 say they have consumed alcohol, again that is one of the reasons why the Police

Service is represented with other agencies in the development of the Drug and Alcohol Strategy, for implementation right across Northern Ireland.

So, we have already agreed, that young people do get involved in crime and for some there are reasons why they get involved in crime, but if we challenge that perception that all young people are up to no good, or involved in criminality and look at it through the young peoples eyes, these are some of the issues that are actually affecting them.

Forty percent of primary school pupils have reported being bullied. The latest form of bullying is by texting on the phone. Young people are being bullied by text messages which means they are not safe even at home because as soon as they switch their telephone on, someone can put through a threatening or intimidating message to them.

Thirty two suicides occurred in 2001 in the age 15 to 24 years and that figure represented 23% of all suicides in the population, which is an extremely high figure and something that I know all the agencies take very seriously to try and address.

Some of the research that was carried out by the Community Relations Council into sectarianism, 15% of 6 year olds expressed sectarian statements, these are 6 year olds that have just started school and they have expressed sectarianism statements. The question has to be, where do they pick this up, where do they learn this type of behaviour?

There is a great fear of violent attacks which exists among young people, over 40% of young people are victims of serious attack.

Other issues that are affecting young people - there is a lack of awareness of their rights, there is a lack of awareness of policing issues. We certainly picked that up in a recent conference that we held on young people and policing. I will cover that in more detail in a couple of minutes.

So now that we have established the percentage of young people in the province, some are offenders, a lot are victims, how do the police respond, how do we actually deal with it?

The first thing we have to realise is, that young people are citizens. They are citizens of Northern Ireland, they have rights and with those rights come responsibilities. It certainly must be the police response that we must make working with young people a core business area.

We must deal with perceptions and one of the perceptions is that police move young people on and they just get moved from one place to another because someone has complained that they are standing there. There must be better communications and listening to young people. We must engage their support and help.

One of the ways that we are addressing that at this time, is through a local group called 'Include Youth'. This is a voluntary body that works with very difficult, hard to reach, young people and one of the staff from 'Include Youth' is now involved in training for our beat officers. These are the officers who meet these young people on the street. Training has also now been progressed into student training for all new intakes into the college.

We must promote citizenship and responsibility. We address that through our education programme, because citizenship is stressed in the Northern Ireland curriculum. We must establish clear boundaries for acceptable behaviour and we do that through our Youth Diversion Scheme and I will address that in more detail in a couple of minutes. Certainly, working with young people we need to have partnerships with statutory, voluntary and community groups to work with young people as a core business.

For some police officers working with some of the community groups is quite challenging because of the background that some of the groups come from. But the fact is, that these people are working with young people at the coal face, out on the ground. We must encourage our officers to work with these groups in dealing with the issues affecting young people.

One of the other areas that we are responding to is through independent advisory groups and we are working with the Policing Board in establishing independent advisory groups across all police areas as a youth consultant forum.

Education, I have mentioned the Citizenship and Safety Education Programme, which is the police led programme to address many areas of interest to young people, not only on safety issues, but certainly on the education side as well. We work with the Department of Education and with the Curriculum and Examinations Assessment Unit, working to get the case that it compliments the Northern Ireland curriculum. The police commitment to that is that we have seconded a teacher from the Department of Education to work full time in our own office to ensure that our lessons are to the right standard.

We are involved in drugs education and we have officers trained through Dunlewey Substance Abuse Centre to go in and talk to young people, not only in schools but in youth groups, about drugs education.

Partnerships again, I have mentioned the Curriculum Council and the new Youth Justice Agency, which has been established now as part of the Criminal Justice Review to work with young people.

'URZONE', which was launched last week, is a stand alone web site for young people, where we have interactive learning on key issues. We have also safety messages on that site. Just as a matter of interest, a point that was raised last week at the meeting was that Microsoft are closing down their

chat lines, but it will take a 3 month run down period. We have been in discussions with Microsoft and we hope at the end of the week to be able to put flash messages across our site, alerting parents, teachers and young people to the fact that for three months there is the likelihood that there will be intensive grooming of young people by paedophiles, so that everyone can be alert for the next 3 month period to ensure that the site is well monitored.

We work with various other groups to bring key people into schools to talk to young people. One of the groups that we are working with at the minute is the Police Ombudsman's Office to bring a speaker to some of our groups of young people to ensure that they know the role of that office and how it works with the Police Service.

Consultation Engagement, which is a key role, I mentioned that we held a conference in March entitled 'Always Seen, Rarely Heard', which was about young people and policing. There is a post conference report which is now with the publishers and we are building on the contacts with the hard to reach groups that we had at that conference.

We are also establishing, as I have said, the Youth Forums. You can join the District Policing Partnerships when you are sixteen, but there are no young people anywhere near that age who have applied or are represented on DPPs. In our consultation with them the likelihood of anyone of sixteen or seventeen years of age feeling that that would be the right way for them to go would be difficult. So

working with the Policing Board, we are trying to establish Youth Forums in all District Command Units, so that the views of young people there, in particularly the hard to reach groups, can be fed to the DPP. That will link into our independent advisory groups and it is one of five that we have now up and running, with youth being one of the key areas. Again under consultation, I would just like to highlight 'URZONE' which not only provides safety messages and interactive learning but is a site where young people can ask questions and on a daily basis we respond to the issues that they have raised on the site.

Changes to the Youth Justice Strategy, as part of the Criminal Justice Review. The Youth Diversion Scheme, which is a police led scheme for young people on the lower tariff of offending, we have developed that through restorative justice interventions, where young people come face to face with the victims, or if young people are the victims, they come face to face with the perpetrators, to have a proper solution to the outcome of the offence. At the higher level, working with the Youth Justice Agency, where instead of young people going straight to court after they have been through the lower tariff, they now will be subject to prosecutorial diversions and court order conferences and under law and through legislation police play a key role in both those interventions.

Finally, just to mention the acceptable behaviour contracts and anti-social behaviour orders. I know there is a lot of interest in this in the Board and the fact that we are currently working with Northern Ireland Office on research to have it developed in Northern Ireland.

I would just like to finish with something that I picked up from a debate last week on anti-social behaviour orders. One of the individuals on the radio mentioned young people and at the end of the debate he said, 'that young people should not be ignored but should be included because they are our future'. Another individual commented and I picked up on this because I would very much subscribe to this view, that he agreed with what had been said, but he added, 'young people must not be ignored but must be included through consultation and communication in a partnership, as not only are they the future they are the present'. Thank you very much.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Deputy Chief Constable, do you have any comments that you want to make now?

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

Just to add that Youth Strategy is something we will focus on in the near future. The new department being created under Criminal Justice Support will actually have a focus on youth crime, but not just youth crime, dealing with young people as victims and as witnesses as well and all our contacts with young people. We hope to develop an entire holistic youth strategy in the near future.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

A question perhaps on the elderly, Mr McGrady you had a question that related to burglaries and I would imagine you were also thinking of the elderly as well.

**Mr Eddie McGrady:**

Yes Chairman, thank you very much. I welcome the initiatives which have just been described to us in terms of the aged. As we sit here, there is a gathering at the City Hall expressing a degree of concern about the protection of and policing against crime against the elderly. I do notice that while burglaries have decreased by 50% the rate of detection has not increased or decreased measurably. The point I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Constable is what new practical initiatives on the ground is the PSNI providing as of now, rather than forecasts of what consultations may take place in the future? For instance, in part of my own area which I represent, the detection rate for home burglaries seems to be 1 in 98, I do not know whether that statistic is accurate or not but that is what was given to one of the local DPPs, if so, that is totally unacceptable. There is also the perception, that there is an escalation in domestic burglary violence against old

people. I would like some assessment of that and how the PSNI and indeed all of us, can join together in making some measure of reassurance and comfort to old people who feel themselves under threat, either really under

threat or perceived to be under threat because perception here is becoming a wee bit more than the reality?

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

If I may answer the question in reverse and start with the last point that Mr McGrady has made, about the perception. You are quite right, the perception is sometimes not the actuality.

The average number of burglaries of people, if you define elderly people as people over 65, the average number of burglaries per 1,000 of those people across Northern Ireland is about 7, so 993 are not burgled. I think that is the perception that is sometimes difficult to get across. Because for the 7 people who are burgled, of course, it is extremely serious and we would not want to minimise that in any way.

With regards to initiatives, the Board is aware that today we launch our new 'Smart Water' initiative with regards to the protection, this will impact upon burglaries, robberies and on several crimes. 'Smart Water' is a new innovative tool to help us in detections. The detection rate you quote of 1 in 98 is no more acceptable to me than it is to you, but I would caution against using statistics in that way, sometimes statistics are taken in time periods which are not realistic. Obviously detections follow offences and it can take some time to build up a detection rate for offences that have been committed sometime beforehand and to quote statistics in very limited time spheres is sometimes misleading.

The overall detection rate for burglary in the province is much higher than that, although it is not as high as we would like it to be and we are working on many initiatives, some of which are preventative. The provision of free locks, working with other agencies to give crime prevention advice to elderly groups. There is a lot of work going on around the province, there are databases, for instance in East

Belfast being built up of where elderly people are, when they are at home and how we can help them. There are other initiatives around the province in Newry and Mourne, Larne and Foyle. Coleraine, Dungannon, South Tyrone have got different types of initiatives, all of them are multi agency, it is not our responsibility alone and the community are very, very conscious of their role in helping protect the elderly. Although there has been a lot more publicity around attacks on the elderly recently, I would like to reassure the elderly that they are relatively safe. For those people who are the victims of crime, we will do our utmost to solve those crimes and to protect them in the future.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Mr Foster.

**Mr Sam Foster**

Fears and resources again, Deputy Chief Constable. We talk about statistics, sometimes they say statistics are used the same as a drunk man uses lamp posts, more for support than enlightenment. However, there are security issues, still plenty of crime going on, the elderly has been alluded to, living in fear everywhere, but especially in the rural areas, yet there is less police presence on the ground and suggestions of limited closing, complete closure of stations in rural areas has been talked about these days, does such instil confidence in the community, considering the evil that lurks awaiting the easy prey? For instance, I visited a lady last week in Enniskillen, 91 years of age who had been burgled, this chap standing over her at half six in the morning with an iron bar in his hand, saying, 'where is your money' she had to come downstairs in a stair lift and give him all that she had. This is a sad situation which a lot of people find themselves in, so what I am saying is, surely we require more police on the ground or more links in the community and not less that is or has been suggested, that is a great fear at the minute?

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

The allusion to less police on the ground or less contacts with the community I think are illusions. We have over 300 more police officers in District Command Units in September this year than we had last year. That is due to a reduction in our sickness levels and to the deployment of new officers out into those areas. We will increase the number of police officers in Districts Command Units.

The point about closure of stations, we are not proposing at this point in time to close any stations in the immediate future. However, it has to be recognised that a police officer in a police station, sitting behind a desk is not much use to the 91 year old lady. We want police officers out in the community where they are doing more good. Sometimes we have to look at how they are deployed, where we have got physical presence in a police station, it does take away the ability of that resource to be on the ground where it may be needed. So we do have to look very carefully at how stations are actually placed throughout the community, but it is not our intention to reduce contact with the community by doing that, it our intention to increase contact with the community.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Recent court case allegation by a forensic scientist against police officers, Mr Attwood.

**Mr Alex Attwood:**

Just on the last point Deputy Chief Constable, the British / Irish Declaration of May this year stated that there would be a review of the police estate generally, in terms potentially of reducing police accommodation, including the number of police stations, could you give some broad indication of where that sits within the police at the moment?

Secondly, you will be aware of the Abernethy Case, where a man up on attempted murder charges was found 'not guilty' and one of the grounds for that finding was allegations of interference in the work of the Forensic

Science Lab. They were of such severity, these allegations, that the High Court Judge took the unusual step of saying that he would refer the matter to the Lord Chief Justice. Given that the High Court Bench normally has been protective of the police historically in the North, that was quite a remarkable thing for him to do. So arising from all that, is

there now any criminal investigation by the police into these allegations and the Abernethy case, and if not, will there be? Is there any criminal investigation into any other allegations of interference in the conduct of the Forensic Science Laboratory and if not, will there be? Is there any PSNI wider enquiry to determine if these allegations are well founded and were they isolated, or was there a wider policy of interference in the Forensic Science Lab? Is the Police Ombudsman going to be called in to consider any individual wrong doing or any issues of policy or practice in this regard, in respect of the police? What can you say today in order to give public reassurance that these allegations will not arise in the future and that the conduct of the Forensic Science Lab will be without any question?

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Six or seven questions in a row, Deputy Chief Constable.

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

If I may answer the first question about the estates review, this is scheduled to take place in the near future. Obviously, you are aware of our restructuring and the restructuring from three regions to two and with the new Crime Operations Department and wanting to give the criminal investigators proper investigative resources, in terms of buildings and incident rooms, has effected our estates strategy. The estates strategy review will take place once we have seen what the new structures looks like. So it is in the immediate future, probably within the next three or four months that the review will take place.

To move onto the next question, yes, I am aware of the judgement given in the Abernethy Case by Lord Justice Nicholson and yesterday received a letter from the Lord Chief Justice. The Lord Chief Justice has intimated that he is expediting a copy of the transcript to us. We believe that the transcript of what was actually said at the trial, which is not the judgement obviously, it is a much slower document, is vital for us to see exactly what was said at this trial. We will then consider the transcript and will consider referral to an independent body for investigation, possibly the Ombudsman, to see if there a way forward. We are as

concerned as everyone else. I cannot answer all your individual questions, but what I can say is, that the seven year period that seems to have been mentioned, we have checked our records, we have no record of any expression of concern being raised with us by the Northern Ireland Forensic Science Laboratory, we have no complaint and there is a procedure for such complaints to be made to us. That is all I can say at this moment in time, until I have seen the transcript and I have discussed this with the Chief Constable, we think it is inappropriate to refer anything to the Police Ombudsman. We have been in contact with the Ombudsman's Office over this matter.

**Mr Alex Attwood:**

In the event that you get the transcript and you find that it is compelling in terms of what the allegation is, can you confirm or not, if the police or some third party will consider criminal investigation into these allegations against those officers who may or may not have been involved?

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

Once we see the transcript, we will decide what investigation is required and we will ensure that it is carried out in full independent style to make sure that we get a result.

**Mr Alex Attwood:**

That includes a criminal investigation?

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

The investigations that we carry out always consider criminal allegations.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Next question refers to the raid on the offices of the Sunday Times, Mr Wilson.

**Mr Sammy Wilson:**

Just before I do ask a question, can I thank Superintendent Hunniford for the talk especially in the respect of elderly. I know that in my own area in East Belfast, the police have done a lot, working with community groups, setting up surgeries, providing safety measures, which the communities have fitted to peoples homes, meeting with elderly people who feel vulnerable. It seems that there are good examples of best practice there. I just wonder what actions have been taken to try and spread that across the province and other DCUs, because it does appear to be a bit patchy as to police responses in other areas.

Just on the High Court case, given the ruling in the High Court last week, in respect of the raid on the offices of the Sunday Times, can the Deputy Chief Constable comment on the processes and procedures in respect of securing warrants, what went wrong in this instance and how he plans to guard against any future similar reoccurrences?

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

To answer the question firstly about the elderly, I have already alluded to some of the best practices or good practice that are going on or around the province. Our Analysis Centre has just completed an analysis of crimes against the elderly across the whole province, because we do treat this extremely seriously. It has pulled together lots of good practice and is

disseminating that, as we speak, across all the DCUs in Northern Ireland. So we are trying to get the message out there as to what can be done.

Going to the second part of the question regarding Mr Clarke. The processes and procedures for securing warrants are set out in the relevant legislation, which is the Police and Criminal Evidence Order 1989. As to what went wrong, the purpose of the search was to seize any documents which might have been disclosed to Mr Clarke by a former police officer, in breach of the Official Secrets Act. These documents had been quoted from, and the usual restriction on police, seizing journalistic material held in confidence could not apply. In the event the officer applying for the warrant referred in his notebook to seeking journalistic material, which was somewhat wider than the above purpose. The error was technical in nature. Had the application been made to a County Court Judge rather than to a JP, it would have still have been granted. As to the lessons learned, it is, fortunately, unusual for us to be in this set of circumstances and to have searches of this type, but I can assure the Board that we will learn from the error made.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Mr Paisley Jnr.

**Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:**

Again could I acknowledge the work that has been done by Superintendent Hunniford in the field of protection of the elderly. I know that the work which he mentioned about the Ballyclare initiative was greatly appreciated. I think what should be noted about that was how quickly whenever the proposal was brought to the police, how quickly they looked at it, considered its merits and were able to initiate something very, very effectively. I know that has been greatly appreciated by people on the ground and I just want to put that on the record because I think it is worth congratulating the police and encouraging their officers when they do get things right and long may that continue.

Turning to the substance of my question Deputy Chief Constable, it is to ask you if could you make a statement on the current status and future deployment of

Part-Time Reserve officers across the various DCUs? My concern in this is really threefold, first of all I believe that Part-Time officers are being treated very unfairly and I have a number of examples. In one area they are being told by public notices on their notice board, that for training reasons their duties are being curtailed. In the same district they are being written to and told, that owing to financial constraints there will be no further operational duties for you. In the same district there is advertising going on that we need additional an additional 14 part-time officers.

I think that the existing Part-Time Reserves feel that they are doing a very good job and yet they are being set up for constructive dismissal. Whenever you consider

that they are putting out adverts to employ new Part-Time Reservists and telling existing officers that their work is being curtailed and there is not the finance available to give them operational duties. I think that that is of major concern to me and I think that every effort to demonstrate the effectiveness and ability and work of the Part-Time Reserves ought to be put in place across these DCUs.

Just one final point, with regards to Part-Time Officers, the duties which I have examined, which these officers carry out, are identical to the duties that regulars carry out, yet in some instances, where those duties are identical, owing to financial constraints, they are being told, 'we cannot deploy you', yet they give those duties as extra time to other regular officers, who get time and a half per hour, while a Part-Time officer doing the job would get a basic rate. So it does not seem to add up, being told in one hand, that for financial reasons we cannot deploy you, yet we deploy a regular officer and give them double time, almost.

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

I will pass this question to the Senior Director of Human Resources, Joe Stewart to answer in full, but I can assure the Member that, we have just yesterday, received additional funding, which will enable us to answer some of the questions, but I will ask Joe to answer the question in full.

**Mr Joe Stewart:**

I think, just touching on the funding question, as the Deputy said we received indication from the Government yesterday, that funding would be available for the re-training of our existing Part-Timer Reserve, which will touch in part upon the issue that you have raised Mr Paisley. The second thing is, that the Government have now advised us that they are prepared to bring forward funding in respect of the four pilot District Command Units that we have focused on in the launch of our recruitment. So, funding should be available to proceed with the recruitment of officers in those DCUs. I have an obligation to come back to this Board, in the very near future, within days, to let them know in detail how we intend to proceed in that regard.

It is very difficult to deal with anecdotal information in respect of the DCUs that you have referred to without having prior notice of them. I guess some of the things are patchy and around the issue of availability of funding from Government to enable us to progress but we will be coming back to the Board within the next few days.

**Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:**

Are you able to confirm, Mr Stewart, that that money you have been able to receive and I welcome that additional money, that that is ring-fenced for part-timers, or does that go into the DCU budget and it will be up to the Commander to determine how it is deployed? Again I welcome what you

have said regarding the four target districts, indeed I would encourage you to make sure that the 171 vacancies in those four areas are filled immediately.

**Mr Joe Stewart:**

The budget will be ring-fenced and has been applied for under Patten non-severance to the Government, for the purposes of recruiting new Part-Time Reserve officers and training, re-training and upgrading skills of existing Part-Time Reserves. So it will be ring-fenced and allocated to DCU Commanders to be used solely for that purpose. As to the question of numbers to be engaged, that is what I want to come back and discuss with this Board in detail within the next few days.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

The attack on independent members of the DPPs, Mr Byrne.

**Mr Joe Byrne:**

Deputy Chief Constable, could you give us an update on what is the current range and value of threats against independent members of DPPs across Northern Ireland. You will be aware that a number in Strabane have been intimidated or indeed attacked in recent weeks and I want to pay tribute to the way they have responded in remaining committed to DPPs. But can I ask you, in relation to security assessments by the PSNI, how is that progressing, because I think it is very important that these individuals are reassured that everything is being done to make sure that they feel secure? Can I seek an assurance that the PSNI in no way are holding up any security assessments for packages to improve their homes? Can I also seek an assurance that because of these sort of threats, that the PSNI will not get diverted off into a purely security related policy again in policing, which I think would be disastrous.

Lastly Chairman, Tyrone won the All Ireland this week, and Sam Maguire came to Omagh on Monday and I want to congratulate the police and the GAA stewards who marshalled the whole public event. I think it was a very good example of maximum co-operation between a sporting organisation like the GAA and the Police and the District Council.

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

We pass on our congratulations to Tyrone as well, a marvellous event for Omagh, and very well behaved, by and large.

With regards to the DPPs, we would also pay tribute to those members of the public who have put themselves forward for DPPs and come forward. We assure them and I can give you a categoric assurance, that we will do all that we can to make sure that they are safe and we are doing that. All of the requests for assessments are being progressed very quickly, there are very few outstanding now and those will be dealt with very quickly. You have my assurance on that. With regards to additional work being done to protect DPP members, you have alluded to and other people in the province are aware that we are working very hard to provide the profile and the necessary protection for DPP members and that will continue. It will be built in with other policing duties, it will not simply become a role in itself.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

An acceptable prejudice, Mr Bradley.

**Mr Denis Bradley:**

The Board has noted a publication by the Institute for Conflict Research, entitled 'An Acceptable Prejudice?' which reported homophobic violence and harassment in Northern Ireland. Could the Deputy comment on how he plans to respond to the recommendations contained in this publication?

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

We have received 'An Acceptable Prejudice?' by Neil Jarmin, and Alex Tenant, seven of the recommendations are of concern to the PSNI and affect us directly. Each recommendation warrants a considered response and we have prepared a considered response, however, because of the length of that, I would propose to write to the Board with a detailed response.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Road traffic accidents, Mr Wilson, final question.

**Mr Sammy Wilson:**

Deputy Chief Constable, I notice in the statistics that we have been given for this Board meeting, that the detection rate for speeding, by District Command Unit, is almost trebled. I am sure many people who have had their houses burgled or their cars broken into would love to see the detection rate in those crimes increasing by a similar rate. I just want to ask a number of questions, does this also include prosecutions, which result from the increased use of speed cameras, or are the prosecutions as a result of the speed cameras, which have mushroomed across the province, on top of this and do we have any figures for that?

Secondly, in light of this increased detection rate, are we still in line for the predication that was given to this Board some time ago, when we were given a briefing on the actions which the police intended to take against people who were speeding, are we still in line for about a third of the motoring population actually getting a prosecution within the next three years?

Lastly, given that over the period, that there has been this blitz on people, who have been speeding, road deaths have increased by 10%. Is not an indication that a policy which simply blankets speeding, regardless of road conditions, regardless of the appropriateness of speed at that particular time, has failed. Indeed, all that it is doing is succeeding in annoying drivers who happen to drift over the speed limit and who then are prosecuted, regardless of whether that is in the middle of the night when there is nobody else on the

road or whether it is in the middle of the day when the road is crowded. Is there not a real danger that the police are simply going to annoy those drivers who happen to drift over the speed limit without really achieving the objective of making the roads safer?

I am sure you will not have the information on this today, but I would appreciate it if we could have the breakdown of those offences across District Command Units and also how many people have been caught on cameras and you have not been able to detect because either they were driving illegally or did not have a licence?

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

Deputy, I think Mr McFarland has a question in this area also, maybe you could take it at the same time?

**Mr Alan McFarland:**

Just to follow on, if you go down to North Down in Bangor, about 11 o'clock in the morning on many days of the week, you will find the famous speeding van there and the little old ladies going about their business, maybe at 42 miles an hour in a 40 mile an hour area. If you go down to Bangor at 11 o'clock at night, you will find half the province doing these cruises, with people doing wheelies in the car parks and chasing around the place and Traffic Branch are not to be seen, because I think they probably work to 5 o'clock and go home. I think there is a management problem here. Just referring to your report here, it says the principal causes of collisions where drivers and riders are responsible at the end of August 2003, are one, inattention, secondly, emerging from minor roadway/driveway without care, and thirdly, excessive speed. Can you give us an indication where drunkenness fits in or the taking of drugs or drink fits into those and what percentages of those have drink involved?

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

I am going to pass this one to ACC McCausland, but I think it would be remiss of me not to comment first that I think some of the comments made are actually very disparaging towards Traffic Police Officers and I do not accept that.

Speeding does cause a lot of accidents, we have more fatalities on our roads at this time of the year than we had last year. Traffic Officers deal with these fatalities as well as detecting people who may cause them. Yesterday we had an

officer who suffered a traumatic incident because he was at a fatal accident and it brought back a flashback of previous fatal accidents he had attended. I do not accept criticism of our Traffic Officers, I think they do an excellent job. I think speeding is a serious problem for society, as are other methods of abuse on the road. I am going to pass over to Duncan McCausland who has more details on the statistics.

**Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:**

We have made it very clear that our policy in relation to speeding is that we want to prevent people speeding, not detect people speeding.

If you remember back to earlier presentations given to the Board about traffic cameras and issues of speeding, we have made it clear where these cameras are and where they are going to be. In relation to the actual detection of people for speeding, it is fair to say that the District Command Units are detecting more people, because actually there is more equipment being deployed to them in terms of detection. It has been moved to a degree away from the traffic branch specialism and put into the District Command Units, so that they can reflect what their DPPs and what their local community are saying in relation to the speeding on local roads.

It is fair to say that speeding causes approximately 25% of all road deaths in Northern Ireland, as does drink driving. In relation to the figures that you have before you, they are the analysis for particularly August. The issues that you have referred to are the unique figures and the unique causes for August in relation

to inattention, emerging from a minor road, driveways and access speed. But if you were to assess the figures across the board for the year, drink driving would appear in relation to that.

I do have to agree with the Deputy Chief Constable that Traffic Branch, or Roads Policing Units as they are now called, do work around the clock into the early hours of the morning. This Board is aware that where we have mounted a number

of major operations, 'Operation Viper', where we have detected people, at all hours of the day, in relation to all causes that are causing people to lose their lives in Northern Ireland on our roads.

We do not have and I am very strong on this, we do not have a policy where we go out and are looking to detect people who drift over the speed limit very slightly. We have a clear policy and a clear set of rules in terms of the issue of tickets and prosecutions, where people breach certain speeding levels and it is not drifting by the few miles per hour over. Where someone is travelling down a 40 miles per hour road and say drifts 1 or 2 miles over, there is a clear set limit, where tickets will be issued or where prosecution will be moved to. It is fair to say that in the first 24 hours of the cameras being active, we were detecting people at 72 miles an hour in a 40 mile an hour speed limit and those are the prosecutions which I know the Board will support that we take to court and prosecute. My Superintendent has been very clear on this, that where people have concerns or where they feel that this is not being

applied, he has publicly said that we can be challenged and we would encourage people to challenge us, so if you have specific cases where people feel they have been dealt with incorrectly in relation to this, please write to me and I will address them personally.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

There is one other question that I would wish the Vice Chairman to put.

**Mr Denis Bradley:**

This is really a follow-up supplementary question to what Joe Byrne was asking about DPPs. There is grave concern out there at the moment amongst some members of DPPs, particularly I think along the more Western frontiers of this situation. I think it may be helpful Deputy if you were to give us an assessment of the security status of the various organisations at the moment, I think it is important that people are aware precisely where all this sits at this moment in time?

**Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:**

The capability and readiness for action of all the various paramilitary groups that exist in Northern Ireland has not changed significantly. Those organisations which are on a ceasefire remain on ceasefire, the threat to DPPs emanates largely from the Real IRA, and the Continuity IRA in some areas.

**Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:**

I would like to thank you Deputy Chief Constable and your colleagues for participating in this session. That concludes the session, thank you.

