

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2007 AT 7:00PM IN THE MARINE COURT HOTEL, BANGOR

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Mr Barry Gilligan (Vice Chairman)
Ms Martina Anderson
Mr Tom Buchanan
Mr Leslie Cree
Mrs Dolores Kelly
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr Basil McCrea
Mr Daithí McKay
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
Mr Gearóid Ó hEára
Mr Brian Rea
Mr Trevor Ringland
Mr David Rose
Mr Suneil Sharma
Mr Peter Weir

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

Sir Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)
Mr Alistair Finlay (ACC Crime Support)
Mrs Judith Gillespie (ACC Rural Region)
Mr Drew Harris (ACC Criminal Justice)
Mr Peter Sheridan (ACC Crime Operations)
Mr David Best (Director of Finance and
Support Services)
Ms Sinead McSweeney (Director of Media
and Communications)
Mr Joe Stewart (Director of Human
Resources)
Chief Superintendent Bill Woodside (Urban
Region)
Chief Inspector Ian McCoy, Area
Commander, North Down
Chief Inspector, Command Secretariat
3 PSNI personnel

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
Dr Debbie Donnelly (Deputy Chief Executive)
Mr Sam Hagen (Director of Corporate
Services)
Mr David Jackson (Director of Community
Engagement)
Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
Mr Peter Gilleece (Director of Policy)
3 Board Officials

APOLOGIES:

Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson
Ms Mary McKee
Mr David Simpson

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Good evening members of the public and media and representatives from Ards and North Down District Policing Partnerships. Also, good evening Chief Constable to you and your senior officers. Welcome to this meeting in public of the Northern Ireland Policing Board. As a Board, we are pleased to be in Bangor tonight for the first time.

At this meeting, Members of the Board will question the Chief Constable and his senior officer team on a range of issues relating to the policing of Northern Ireland. I should say that the questions that are put to the Chief Constable, this is part of holding the PSNI to account through the Chief Constable. The questions come typically from Board Committees, from individual Members of the Policing Board, they also come in from members of the public or members of DPPs and whether they are taken as written or in the private session or in the public session is largely dictated by the person who put the question. If, for example a Member is adamant that they want the question taken in the public session, then generally that is what happens, it is taken in the public session.

A number of questions have been tabled tonight relating to the problems of anti-social behaviour. This issue and how the police are responding to it remains one of serious concern to the wider community.

There is a real fear within parts of our community that this issue, some people have said that it is out of control and the public need assurance that concerns are being

taken seriously. The Board as a Board, is alive to this issue and it is indeed facilitating a roundtable meeting on 15 October 2007 with a number of community representatives and key agencies across the criminal justice sector, in order to ensure that a joined up approach has been taken to the problem. There have been calls for more resources. The Chief Constable has assured the Board that he has the necessary resources to deliver an effective, efficient policing service. The fact remains that we are not yet policing a normal society.

The Chief Constable and the Independent Monitoring Commission, the IMC, have told us that dissident republican groups remain the most significant threat to policing and continue to plan attacks on police patrols and stations. This threat, of course, is not evenly distributed across the province; some areas are dealing with a more normal environment than other areas. Loyalist activity, particularly feuding, continues to impact on police resources, as witnessed in Bangor only a few weeks ago. Killcooley demonstrated that there remains the potential for spontaneous serious public disorder. Anti social behaviour can, of course, escalate into disorder, for example in Derry / Londonderry last Saturday night.

Terrorist threat and civil unrest have consequences in terms of the delivery of policing in the community and tie up resources that could be better used out in the community.

Next week marks the first anniversary of the St Andrew's Agreement. We now have a fully functioning Assembly working for the benefit of all in our community. Full political support for policing has been secured.

Northern Ireland is moving on. Those still grounded in the past need to get with the new agenda and move forward with the rest of us through peaceful and democratic means.

Chief Constable, earlier today the Police Ombudsman published a report on the discharge of a police firearm which resulted in the death of Mr Neil McConville on 29 April 2003. The report will be the subject of detailed discussion by this Board and it has already convened a meeting of one of its Committees to which all Members of the Board will be invited to that end. However, I should be grateful for your initial response

to the findings in your opening remarks. I have pleasure in asking you to address us, Chief Constable.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

As we are in Bangor, we have my Chief Inspector, the Area Commander, Ian McCoy is going to do a short presentation on policing in the area in a moment and I will keep my opening remarks therefore fairly short but touch on a couple of issues that you raised in your opening address.

In particular, first of all in relation to the disturbances in Derry on the 29 September 2007. I think it would be fair to say our assessment was this was blown somewhat out of proportion by the way it was reported. Many colleagues may have heard my local Chief Inspector the following day explaining what had gone on. I do think it is important in these situations that we do not escalate things and create an event when actually the event that happened is fundamentally different. This was basically drink related at the closing of nightclubs, sadly something all too common across the United Kingdom and officers there to do their Night Safe patrols, trying to break up a fight coming under a small amount of attack and disorder which was dealt with by local resources. It was not necessary to escalate to resources from other places, so it was an important event and something we take very seriously but it was not quite as bad as some of the papers certainly touched on.

You touched on the regrettable death of Neil McConville, both Deputy Chief Constable Leighton and Assistant Chief Constable Peter Sheridan will be available for your Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee to answer any of the questions, colleagues around or Members of the Policing Board would have in relation to that event. The report was out today, we will, of course, take it very seriously indeed as we take all the Ombudsman's reports. Our responses are of course contained in her report for Members to read so I look forward to that debate taking place at the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee.

Just on another matter Chairman, an interesting development I guess and something I think shows just where we are now in terms of policing. The latest recruiting campaign for new officers, where we have advertised for 440 new officers to replace officers who

are retiring this year, nearly 7,500 applications. This is the first time we have seen a significant increase in the number of applicants from the Catholic tradition, it is at 44% where it has consistently been at about 38%. So, we have this time 4% undetermined, 51% Non-Catholic, 44% Catholic and of course a huge number to find officers of the right quality to take up service in this Police Service which we are all very proud of.

Chairman, I will stop there and ask Chief Inspector McCoy to do the short presentation.

Area Commander, Chief Inspector Ian McCoy:

Thank you Sir. Mr Chairman, first of all I would like to extend to you a very warm welcome to North Down on behalf of the local police and indeed, the local District Policing Partnerships, Chairman and Members of whom are represented here this evening we would like to welcome yourself and your Members very warmly to North Down.

I have been the Area Commander in North Down from 1 April 2007, a role that was previously carried out by a Superintendent and 2 Chief Inspectors, and I have to say at the outset that this presented me with a very challenging role. I have almost 25 years service in the police and I would also say that it has been the most stimulating and most enjoyable 6 months of my police career, challenging as it has been.

I am going to give you a brief overview of the North Down area and mention some of the partnerships working, particularly our District Policing Partnership and talk a bit about the future and the new custody facilities etc that we have at North Down.

North Down area is approximately 81 square miles and it stretches from Orlock on the outskirts of Groomsport to Palace Barracks, Hollywood. It stretches as well from Bangor Marina to Conlig. The area is made up of Bangor, Hollywood, Conlig, Groomsport, Crawfordsburn and Helen's Bay and there are 2 police stations within the area, Bangor and Hollywood. Bangor police station is a full-time station, open 24 hours a day and Hollywood police station has limited opening hours from 8am to 8pm, albeit it is patrolled 24 hours a day by police.

Just to give you an overview of the makeup of the population of North Down, these figures were taken from the 2001 census. We have a growing population, many new housing developments and the population is now estimated at over 80,000 people. If you look quickly at the age distribution, it is interesting to note that we have somewhere in excess of 32,000 people in the over 50 category.

In relation to recorded crimes and police numbers, you can see if you look at the figures that from 2002/03 where there was 3,000 crimes recorded we have moved to a position this year, the first 2 quarters of this year where we have 1,994 which is a decrease of 33% and a significant decrease in crime. Looking at the right hand column you will see police numbers for the period. Again, 2002/03 we had 226 officers and we now have 141 which again is a significant decrease in the number of police officers. I think what that does for me is, it emphasises the need for police to work in close partnership with other agencies, the community and community groups. There are 80,000 citizens as I have said in North Down and I believe that everyone of them can make a positive contribution to policing in the North Down area, and it is not for us alone to police this area.

North Down is divided into 3 sectors. We have Bangor inner sector, Bangor outer section and Holywood sector and each sector is commanded by an Inspector. Each sector also has a Neighbourhood Policing Team lead by a Sergeant and we have a total of 17 dedicated officers in Neighbourhood Policing in the North Down area.

The area is co-terminus with North Down Borough Council and they are a very significant partner to policing the area. 2003 saw the creation of North Down District Policing Partnership (DPP). The partnership consists of 19 members made up of local councillors and independent members appointed by the Board and I have to say, that this DPP is an extremely proactive team who work in partnership with the police and many other groups and forums in the area, they make a real live contribution to policing. As a newly appointed Area Commander, I have to say that their support, guidance and assistance and feedback has been crucial to effectively commanding the area over the last 6 months. The relationships are professional, they are not cosy but they are equally not adversarial.

We have regular and open transparent briefings on policing issues and some examples would be the recent disorder following the Easter parade in 2007, the disorder in Kilcooley on 1 August 2007 and the Snow Patrol event. Those briefings can take place before or after those events and whilst the content can be confidential, it certainly helps to inform the key stakeholders in this community.

The DPP contributed significantly to last year's Policing Plan. They carried out a consultation process within North Down and they presented me with an extremely comprehensive consultation document. That document was very valuable to the local command in formulating the priorities for the incoming year and I also met, at a planning meeting, with representatives from the partnership where we sat down and formulated the plan. The DPP have also been centrally involved in recognising local officers for good police duty. You will see on the right hand slide awards have been presented at public meetings. This practice is now being spread throughout 'C' district and I believe in fact throughout other areas in PSNI and if you look closely at the picture on the right hand side you will see one of your Members, Mr Leslie Cree. This is an extremely important and encouraging aspect to local police officers and recognition motivates individuals and colleagues to excel in the area of policing.

DPP members have participated actively in local policing, they have joined us on patrol. We have a very well known Operation Night Life in Bangor and the Members have actually went on patrol with us during that operation to see what it is like policing the area first hand. As I said earlier, they have been involved extensively in community consultation, they have joined us in training events, they have attended accountability meetings with our Assistant Chief Constable and here you see a team of 2 members during a Deaf Awareness training event which was carried out with the police, 108 police officers were trained. This is an annual event which is funded by the District Policing Partnership and the Bangor Grammar School, here you can see the well known Road Safe Road Show which makes a very useful contribution to road safety, and again, another event which is funded by the District Policing Partnership in conjunction with the Policing with the Community Fund.

On the left hand slide we see Andrew Muir who is a prominent independent member of the District Policing Partnership and that is an event where we encourage the car

enthusiasts who visit the town regularly on a Sunday evening to join with the police and work with the police to try and transmit the important road safety message to a very vulnerable group of people.

Another example of working in partnership with DRD Roads Service. Six Road Ends junction has been completely reorganised, there is a new layout. We also have designed out a very dangerous dip in the road at Green Road and you see the vehicle activated warning sign on the A2 at Coach Hill bend where we have had fatalities to try and encourage people to reduce speed on approach to the bend.

Our new custody suite in Bangor and associated accommodation. This is a new state of the art custody facility and it has 7 cells and it will keep ourselves future proof and helps on an operational level to deal with prisoners. A quick look inside the new suite, it has full video and audio recording facilities, state of the art monitoring facilities for vulnerable prisoners. One cell is actually equipped with a monitor to monitor breathing and we anticipate that that facility will be open in January 2008.

A quick word Mr Chairman about single officer patrols. North Down has been at the forefront of single officer patrolling and officers regularly patrol the area alone on foot, on bicycles and in vehicles. This has all been risk assessed and to date has proved very successful and I feel that it increases visibility and stimulates engagement. The officers themselves are becoming more used to these patrols and more comfortable with this type of patrolling.

We have a number of CCTV cameras in Bangor town centre and we hope, that subject to planning, that early next year we may get an additional 3 cameras in Bangor and 1 additional camera in Holywood to supplement the existing system. We have actually spent a fair bit of money on a new system called DARS (Digital Analogue Replay System), which is a system that basically transports the video evidence that we seize into a workable product very quickly for us and provides us with a mechanism to turn that into evidence for courts. That is again state of the art, future proofed equipment that can assist our officers to advance investigations very quickly.

Finally, I think the Snow Patrol event in Ward Park really emphasised what we can do when we work in partnership. We had 31,500 people attend at Ward Park in Bangor earlier in September 2007. We worked in partnership with the council, the Fire and Ambulance Service, Translink, the promoter and many others and by all accounts this was a very very successful event. We had 5 arrests, 8 persons reported for indecency offences and 450 items of alcohol seized and by all account I am told that that is a very very small amount of criminal or disorderly activity associated with a concert of that size. I have had very positive feedback, as has the council, in relation to that event. The promoter Eamon McCann actually said that the support that he got from North Down Borough Council and the police was completely unprecedented. Finally, I would just like to mention the contribution that Translink made to the event. They transported somewhere in the region of 10,000 people to and from Bangor on the date. At the end of the event, I witnessed 3,500 people boarding the trains in an orderly queue at Bangor train station and they had trains lined up and waiting to move those people back. I think again I have to say the importance of partnership working and what can be achieved.

Finally, I would just say that working together I think we can achieve so much more. North Down currently has the highest sanctioned crime clearance rate in the Urban Region, we are currently sitting at 21.4%. Now I would not be complacent about that clearance rate because that means that there is still a considerable number of uncleared crimes, but it is significant and what I would say is that at the centre of many of those clearances are the citizens of North Down. The people of North Down make a significant contribution to clearing crime and that does not matter whether it is reporting suspicious activity, reporting erratic driving or it could be as simple as a retailer who has closed circuit TV in his shop premises that assists us in advancing an investigation.

Chairman, that concludes the presentation.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed, that is a very helpful introduction to the policing in this area.

Is there anything you wish to say at this stage Chief Constable?

I know that some people are concerned about how long this is likely to last tonight, we have planned to conclude at 8:30pm and I am asking for the co-operation of Board Members that their questions are succinct and that they avoid speeches and that the police in replies make a succinct reply as well, this is a 2 way process.

North Down and Ards DPP were asked to submit some questions, not all of them are we able to take tonight, but for a number of them, their replies will be in writing and they will go out to you. I will take the first question, question 33 this is Peter Weir on behalf of North Down DPP.

Mr Peter Weir:

Thank you Chairman. I would like to pass on my thanks and congratulations to the local police in all their efforts in combating crime in North Down. But I wonder if the Chief Constable could comment on, do the police intend to keep up the pressure on criminal elements and paramilitaries that are still controlling some of our estates in North Down? That is on behalf of the DPP in North Down.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

The very short answer is yes. It just so happens and I will ask C/Superintendent Woodside to do a bit more detail, I actually met the DPP on the Kilcooley in what I thought was one of the most constructive police public partnerships I have seen in 5 years here, talking about all the issues that one would expect people to talk about. It was sad that only a few weeks later we had that serious disorder, and the bottom line is absolutely, the statement I made at the time, we will continue to come back and arrest these people but I will ask Chief Superintendent Woodside to do a bit more detail on this.

Chief Superintendent Bill Woodside:

Good evening. I think first of all I would say that I would disagree with the wording of the question, because I do not think for one moment that any criminal gangs are controlling the estates in North Down. As the Chief Constable has said, he made a commitment in the press following the disorder in Kilcooley, in fact he said, "I have got news for them we are coming back and will continue to go back until we actually put

them in front of the courts". That indeed happened, because in days after the disorder in Kilcooley we continued with our operation, not only to investigate the outrageous disorder that we witnessed but we went back for the original purpose, that was to put on the pressure in relation to criminal investigations and that is the position, those investigations continue and will continue.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mrs Dolores Kelly, a supplementary. Okay Mr Weir continue.

Mr Peter Weir:

Sorry, just briefly, certainly I thank you for to the answer. I wonder if you could comment also in terms of the paramilitary element as there were problems a couple of years ago in terms of Holywood and the Redburn area and obviously I know there have been efforts gone on there, I wonder if you could maybe just comment on those as well?

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, just in terms of the answer, in terms of the paramilitaries and criminal gangs, I trust there is no distinction really in essence between the 2, other than maybe one whether it is organised at structural level or indeed it is at an individual level but could you tell us, who the paramilitary organisations are? Is it both the UDA and the UVF and or other organisations?

Chief Superintendent Bill Woodside:

I would go back to what I said originally. We do not believe that there are these paramilitary gangs controlling estates. We have certainly seen in Kilcooley, members of paramilitary gangs who not only came out on the streets and caused disorder, but you will recall that they actually fired upon our officers and you would have seen the outstanding bravery that those officers displayed. But it does not matter under what auspice that someone is committing crime, the PSNI are committed to investigating and bringing before the court anyone that is committing crime and that is the position and that will continue to be the position.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

When it is appropriate I have no difficulty attributing blame and I did that pretty clearly on the Kilcooley for policing reasons but I think the big picture is, it is a point Mr Weir made earlier, there is no distinction between them, paramilitaries and criminals are of one and the same, it is just the organisational structure is different. The thing that concerned me most on the Kilcooley I think was the speed at which, when we started to do what you expect us to do, which is make arrests, the speed at which they managed to mobilise, sufficient to cause us a reasonable amount of difficulty until we got it under control. So, it is still there but we will continue to deal with it and the outrage from that community shows that without doubt they did not want these sorts of people playing in their world.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I think Mr Weir would like an answer to his first question. Not another supplementary.

Mr Peter Weir:

I am just asking if he would update us what the position is in Holywood in relation to that?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

It has been very quiet.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Okay Alex Maskey, you have a supplementary.

Mr Alex Maskey:

*..... exercise our right to silence but I would ask, obviously in the earlier presentation, this is a slightly wider question but I think very relevant to the borough that we are in. In the presentation earlier on Chief Inspector McCoy gave an increase in figures of reported crime, could you give us some sense of what is the actual situation now in regard to the overall crime figure in this area and the clearance rates? Is it a better position this time this year as opposed to maybe a year or 2 ago?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask Chief Inspector McCoy to cover that. I think it is an improving situation but would you like to touch on those figures again.

Chief Inspector Ian McCoy:

In relation to current crime, we are currently sitting at approximately just below 12% less crime reported in the first 2 quarters of this year that there were last year. The clearance rates for this year are 21.4% compared to a clearance rate last year of 25%, however, the clearance rate last year did include non-sanctioned clearances, so it is not really comparing like with like, and the clearance rate in the area does sit at the highest in the region.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 40 from Trevor Ringland on behalf of Ards DPP, this relates to drugs, drink and drugs issue, Trevor Ringland.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

*.....on behalf of Bangor DPP but could the PSNI update the DPP on the measures that they take to deal effectively with the drink and drug issue which currently is a blot on the Bangor shorefront.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask Chief Inspector McCoy to deal with that as well.

Chief Inspector Ian McCoy:

*.... there is really a 3 prong to detect in relation to this, it is working in partnership, it is education and it is enforcement. The working in partnership is seen and manifests itself in joint patrols between PSNI and the local council enforcement officers. In relation to education, members of the PSNI in Bangor attend numerous community groups to educate and give the message out in relation to the problems that have been seen. In relation to the enforcement of the bye-laws, the council have enacted bye-laws and they are routinely enforced and I can tell the Members, that since 1 April of this year, 114 people have been reported to North Down Borough Council for on-street drinking in Bangor and there have been 469 items of alcohol seized during that time period. I

should point out and remind Members, that the actual prosecution of offenders in relation to the bye-laws is a matter for council, they enacted the bye-laws and they see the prosecutions through but it is very impressive in terms of enforcement. Of course it is not particularly impressive that we have 114 people who still see fit to drink on the streets in Bangor.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Again on behalf of North Down DPP, question 37 could we take it as a supplementary, Peter Weir.

Mr Peter Weir:

What is the PSNI's advice, policy and plans in relation to challenging the community's perception that tackling anti social behaviour in our communities is the PSNI's job? Secondly, I am aware that ASBOs have been served on some people in North Down, how effective have these been in reducing crime and should the scheme be increased by introducing Parental Control Orders?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask Chief Superintendent Woodside to deal with the detail. A number of things, I think the issue around partnership is an emerging one here and I think we are behind the curve to some extent where it is still many of your questions intend to be "what are the police doing" and certainly people out there think see it as our job and not a wider thing. Where you see real success is where you break that down and you actually get real partnerships, and by real partnerships I am not talking about meetings, I am talking about actual real action.

In terms of ASBOs, in a way an ASBO is recognising we have failed to deliver what we should deliver which is actually keeping people out of court and not criminalising young people. That having been said, they are useful to deal with people who persistently and consistently break the rules and are not amenable to any of the help that is available to them. They are, of course, only as good as the enforcement of those ASBOs and there is a debate to be had about how effective the enforcement on some occasions is, but Chief Superintendent will give some details on the area itself.

Chief Superintendent Bill Woodside:

I would agree entirely with the Chief Constable, I mean the issue of tackling anti social behaviour is not down to police officers alone and it must be tackled, not just by the statutory agencies and voluntary but by the communities themselves and that is how we really will make an impact on it.

In relation to Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), there are 3 public bodies within Northern Ireland who can apply for such Orders. The Police Service obviously, councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and we work in conjunction with all the councils and with the Housing Executive in relation to ASBOs.

In relation to Bangor, yes there have been in the North Down area a number of ASBOs enacted and, indeed, Chief Inspector McCoy would say, that at a recent meeting in Holywood, the residents of Holywood felt rather assured that a number of people had been served with ASBOs and saw it as having a fundamental impact on crime levels within the borough. So yes they do work, they do not work for everyone, but in the right circumstances they do and they work better when it is done in partnership with everyone involved.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary, Basil McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Just on a wider issue but on a similar subject. ASBOs really require people to work in partnership and to share information with you and I just wondered what the state of play is, how many councils are actually sharing information with you.

Chief Superintendent Bill Woodside:

That is an interesting question, because here we are in North Down and I suppose it is rather disappointing that North Down Council still has not signed the information sharing protocol that allows the ease of information to be shared between the partner agencies. Once those protocols have been signed, it makes the sharing of information between partner agencies much easier. I do not have the figures in relation to the

overall picture across the province. I am told here that there are 5 at the moment who have signed up.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Members of the audience and of the media will have noticed that some of these questions relate much beyond North Down and Ards and the next 2 questions again are no exception to that. Question 41, the sale of replica guns, Trevor Ringland, again from Ards DPP.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

Are the PSNI in a position to state what is the current status on the sale of replica guns, both hand and machine, freely available at the various markets? Also, I would raise a question over some toys that are made of metal, fire pellets and are very very realistic and is there any position on that as well and the widespread use by kids of all ages?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

*..... impeccable Trevor Ringland, I will ask ACC Drew Harris to cover the detail.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

Recently, in fact on 1 October 2007, there has been a change in the legislation, the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 has made it illegal to manufacture, modify, sell, bring or cause to be brought, a realistic imitation firearm into Northern Ireland. There are certain offences in relation to displays or performances involving a realistic imitation firearm. These offences will give the police greater powers in relation to tackling offences and the proliferation of imitation firearms in our society. It is very new legislation, there is a number of offences within it and policy and guidance is currently being prepared to ensure that police officers are fully aware of this new legislation, but we are aware of local complaints around the sales of replica guns and this legislation will allow us to act. In the first place it may be to warn shopkeepers and others on these stalls that they are actually now committing a specific offence.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Can I take then a question from Ms Anderson, this is question 6 and relates to the Billy Wright Inquiry.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Can the Chief Constable explain why the PSNI failed to hand over files to the Billy Wright Inquiry despite being formally requested to do so by senior counsel for the Inquiry on a number of occasions stretching back to 2005?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Finlay, Crime Support to deal with that. In broad terms, this is a huge issue for us, not just this Inquiry there are a number of Inquiries and I have deployed, as the Board is aware through the briefing I gave, substantial and as many resources as I can afford to service those Inquiries. There is no huge room within the PSNI where all these files are nicely labelled and can be pulled out easily, it is a huge amount of work to go back to the legacy systems to find people who understand how it worked, to actually work out what is on paper records, what not is on paper records, to research across the whole peace to make sure we give the Inquiries everything they are entitled to have, which is pretty much everything. I do not want to be in a position where we have stuff and we fail to hand it over because that would of course look somewhat suspicious. I am not sure we can deliver everything in keeping with what the timescale of the Inquiries but I think ACC Finlay can give you more detail on this.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

*..... the PSNI are not holding back any information that we know about from the Inquiry. There have been difficulties as we have discussed with the Board before in locating information and fully complying with the very broad requests which have come from the Billy Wright Inquiry, which have required clarification before we could drill down to the actual identified issues and material required. Now the Inquiry has alluded to specific gaps, particularly in intelligence material, and they have alluded to those gaps for some time with us. Only recently has the Inquiry found itself in a position where it could tell us where it believes the gaps are. It did that in a meeting with me on 15 September 2007 and we have undertaken to report back to the Inquiry by 15 October 2007 in relation to those perceived gaps in relation to material. The work is ongoing and full co-operation with the Inquiry to give as much as we can possibly source and find.

Ms Martina Anderson:

*..... public pronouncements in relation to the Inquiry process and the expenditure and are you aware that those kind of announcements is feeding into a view out there that is seeming to grow and deepen, that in many of the controversial cases that the PSNI is unaccountable for the actions within the Inquiry process, and if it is a matter of resource then that is a matter that should be discussed with this Board and in my time on this Board, it has not been brought to our attention that the difficulties you are having around resources needs to be addressed by the Board?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, I did a presentation a little while ago on what I am providing to it. Am I uncomfortable, yes I am uncomfortable frankly? Not around what is there, I will make sure and I am on record repeatedly, I will deliver everything I can find to the Inquiry, it is a matter for the Inquiry on the relevance, decide on issues around Article 2 and all of those sort of things, although some of it rests heavily on my shoulders as well. But I am uncomfortable in the sense that, despite my best efforts, and despite the best efforts of ACC Finlay and his team to deliver as much as we can, not just to the Billy Wright Inquiry, to the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry, the Hamill Inquiry and to the Breen and Buchanan Inquiry as well as the Wright Inquiry, that this organisation will be subject to potentially substantial criticism for failing to deliver within a reasonable timescale.

Now, the challenge I have, is to deliver all of that and also to deliver current policing and the people I and ACC Finlay are using to do this sort of resource, are exactly the same people as I rely on critically to deal with some of the most difficult and complicated operations that we are currently running for active policing operations to keep people safe now, so it is a huge resource issue. I receive no additional funding to do it so it comes out of our core budget, save of course the HET which fits this to the lesser extent which is, of course, independently funded now following our discussions this year. So, I am not uncomfortable in the sense I do not want anything to be dealt with, I am uncomfortable in the sense that I think we will be unfairly, potentially and unfairly criticised for the lack of effort when I am doing the best I can. I am not saying we will get everything but we will do our best and if people want a more in-depth briefing, I can happily arrange that with the Board. I do think money is a legitimate debate to be had because it is the reality, if I am spending the money on looking

backwards, I cannot spend the money on dealing with issues currently or looking forward, it is difficult.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to the murder of Robert McCartney, question 9, Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chief Constable, following the meeting between the police and Sinn Fein in relation to the investigation of the murder of Robert McCartney, what response has the police had from Sinn Fein regarding the issues discussed between the two parties in recent months in relation to co-operation of its members with the murder investigation? Further, have those Sinn Fein members who refused to co-operate directly with the police in 2005 and who would only provide statements via a solicitor to the Ombudsman, some which were unsigned, since co-operated with the police?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

*..... with the police investigation, witnesses are entitled to confidentiality in that investigation, but I am aware of the important public interest in this case in particular and furthermore, I am constrained by the fact that this is a live investigation and in fact it is due before the court again on 12 October 2007, but I can confirm that the Senior Investigating Officer did have a number of working meetings with representatives of Sinn Fein at their request. At the last meeting, Sinn Fein members agreed to look at encouraging members of their party and witnesses to come forward. I can say that as of this date, no new witnesses have come forward.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 1, this question relates to policing with the community and anti social behaviour, the Vice Chairman of the Board.

Vice Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan

In view of recent concerns expressed by church and community leaders, could you Chief Constable comment on the delivery of community policing in the Belfast area and indeed throughout Northern Ireland? Additionally, in a recent newspaper article, it was 2 weeks ago today in the Irish News, Jim Gibney made the comment and I quote 'PSNI

have all the resources they need to effectively deal with anti-social elements but the will to provide effective, consistent, firm and focused policing was the problem, but the will did not exist to do it'. Could you comment on this assessment and I know the issue of resources continues to pop up and could you give us maybe an overall assessment of the resources available to you, with particular reference to the provision of community policing?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

You have heard a description from one of my Area Commanders, Chief Inspector McCoy just now, I think the best description of commitment is to hear from my officers. I disagree with the comments, I think Mr Gibney was right in the sense that we have resources, we are a well resourced police service and we are determined to deliver an effective community service. But if one looks at the reality rather than the jargon and the rhetoric, the fact that the District Policing Partnership meeting took place in Crossmaglen a couple of weeks ago, the fact that we have single officer patrols across pretty much the whole of Northern Ireland. The fact that I was on a foot patrol in Ballymurphy with a local officer just before I went on holiday, shows I think in reality far more than we hear sometimes in the rhetoric, indeed I have touched on the role at the meeting I was at in Kilcooley. So, I think in terms of a commitment from this organisation, there is a clear commitment from this organisation to deliver community policing across the peace.

In terms of working together, I think we can be more effective and that is around by increasing the partnership work. I think that is actually why and just to go back to the Ballymurphy meeting, that was so important, it was a very clear indication that there was a determination to work in partnership with many agencies, statutory and non-statutory and community to deliver a safer community in an area, where historically the facts were, it was not a place where police and communities worked together. So, I think we are seeing it moving on very quickly, different speeds, different places but I can reassure everyone here that my officers are certainly up for delivering it and are committed. There is no lack of will as suggested by one journalist in one paper. We have been recognised nationally and internationally for our work at community policing level and Members will be aware very much of financial commitment through the Community Policing Fund chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable.

That having been said, I think there is more to do. I do think we can refine, perhaps at our next meeting around the Policing Plan to look at turning from aspiration to a harder edge to some of our performance targets around neighbourhood policing, I think this may add an additional motivation, but rest assured we are committed to delivering community policing. It is the style of policing enshrined in Patten.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Peter Weir.

Mr Peter Weir:

I wonder if the Chief Constable could comment on the need to maintain current police resources and police numbers, particularly in light of speculation on the Comprehensive Spending Review and one suggestion, I think within the HMIC, of a potential or a suggestion of a potential future reduction to 6,000 full-time officers in the future.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

No Chief Constable in his or her right mind volunteers to lose resources. I think the reality is, one of the most critical issues that we, both as a Police Service and a Police Board will face in the near future, will be 'how much money have you got to run policing'. Currently my establishment, whilst not enshrined in statute, it is a commitment, a clear commitment to have 7,500 full-time regular police officers in Northern Ireland and we are using 7,500 police officers in Northern Ireland. So, I would not wish to see a reduction but the reality is, the money will drive the business. So, I think by working collectively to make sure people understand the importance of delivering a consistently improving policing service to benefit the far wider implications of the more normal Northern Ireland is absolutely critical because I am clear, that the crossover between a secure Northern Ireland and a Northern Ireland that is perceived to be law abiding etc etc does bring huge financial benefits in terms of investment and all those other sorts of issues which are critical to the future of this part of the island of Ireland. So I think we need to be realistic, and I think we have got to continue to show improvements in efficiency, and I think we have shown that over the last 5 or 6 years but we need very much to keep our eye on the ball, it is a function of money.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Another supplementary on this, Basil McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

There have been loud and vocal calls for zero tolerance towards anti social behaviour and such crimes, I just wonder how you would react to that, particularly if it was carried out in a short term snap and perhaps you would also consider whether such an approach would include community and judiciary as well?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Harris to do the detail but in broad terms, you have to have a policing style bespoke to the communities you work with. I am not a fan of the zero tolerance in the sense of brutal enforcement of minor offences and some bizarre theory about it stopping the world getting a lot worse, it did not work. It also actually, if you do it in an uncaring and unthinking and very aggressive way, it can actually cause huge damage within communities. I think it is around a very thoughtful approach of crime and law enforcement, working in partnership with communities. There is a place for it, there is no doubt about it. I think on the Kilcooley estate on that particular evening, I was not in the mood to negotiate with rioters, they need to be arrested and dealt with, let us be very clear at that end, there is an absolute place for it. The notion that officers patrolling around enforcing in an unthinking way, minor legislation can actually unravel everything that has been achieved, but I will ask ACC Harris to add something else.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

Particularly around anti social behaviour, there is a number of tactics that we use and one of the most successful actually has been diversion and working with other partners diverting young people away from anti social behaviour. So, things like the midnight football leagues have been very successful. There is also enforcement, but that is a graded response. There is diversion through Restorative Justice processes, with the Youth Justice Agency or the Acceptable Behaviour Contracts with young people, and then as a last resource, Anti Social Behaviour Orders. So the individuals who get involved in this behaviour there should be a diversion for them, but if they continue with that there is enforcement action, but it is right and appropriate that that should be graded and should be stepped up as they continue to persist in that behaviour.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question that goes back to the Stevens Inquiry Team, question 7 Mr Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. How many RUC officers of the rank of Chief Superintendent or above were questioned under caution by the Stevens Inquiry Team? How many of them are still in the PSNI? How many are suspended?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

* under caution, the officer has retired and was in effect suspended from duty.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Chairman, a brief supplementary. I mean that is in a way welcomed news, it is unfortunate that we have to keep returning to these similar questions month after month and I would just point out that today again we are dealing with that and another question that I will come to later on. But it is in a way that we have to keep coming back to question after question to get a little bit more information and I would really make the point that, if we had a full and a complete answer from day one we would not have to keep returning to these questions.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

*.....if it would help to have a briefing as far as one can go on the work of Stevens, I am prepared to ask Lord Stevens come over and deal with it. This is part of dealing with the past and I think I am all for a far wider debate on dealing with the past and its facilities, if that would help I am sure we could see if we could arrange it.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to crimes against the elderly, question 3 Mr Basil McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Chief Constable, we recently had a fairly horrendous crime against an 89 year old woman in my constituency and it was fairly minor in terms of statistics, I mean she lost a certain sum of money but she had 5 adults come in and ransacked her home and it

does give a lot of fear to the elderly fear out there and I just wonder what strategies you have in place to actually take away this blight in our society?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Harris to do the detail but I think this question was asked a couple of months ago as well. It is something we are continually looking at and working towards. Some of our successes have been from alert members of the community ringing up as they see something going wrong and a fast response leading to an arrest. In overall, the Operation Bullent which is the co-ordinated operation in our organisation to deal with this particular sort of deeply offensive crime, and we have seen 63% reduction between January and August this year, so an awful lot of good work and an awful lot of people are being arrested. But you make the point, every single one heightens albeit that you are at a very low level of being a victim of crime if you are an older person. It is the impact and the fear which is the issue we also have to take very much into account.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

Yes, as it has been mentioned Operation Bullent has been running since very early 2006 and it is focused on reassurance of the public, gathering intelligence, the detection of crime and the prevention of further crime. For instance, just in general terms, violent crime against those aged 65 and over, last year at this time was standing 234 incidents and this year it stands at 149 so it shows a substantial reduction. Along with this, domestic burglary which last year stood at 340 offences at this time, now stands at 266 so some reduction there as well.

In 2005, the organisation issued advice in the form of a policy directive to the organisation about responding to crime against older persons, and from that an Independent Advisory Group for the elderly has been set up at Headquarters level and that advises on our policies and our approach to crimes against the elderly. We also work in partnership with the Northern Ireland Community Safety Unit around reassurance and prevention and that leads then to a number of local police community safety initiatives. Things such as safety of seniors road show, locking out crime, providing personal attack alarms and particularly focusing on repeat victimisation because that seems to be a particular facet of burglary and aggravated burglary. We

also engage with partner agencies such as Help the Aged and Age Concern, the Housing Executive and the Victims Support but our main thrust across Northern Ireland is within Operation Bullent and really the next stage of that is to identify the cross border crime which is also a feature of this where cross border gangs are engaged in aggravated burglary. So, overall crime is reducing but we do recognise that crime against the elderly causes a lot of fear and we have put a lot of effort into prevention and detection.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Just taking that from the serious crime, which is obviously something that is really objectionable, there are also very real issues with what might be called low level, the verbal abuse, people playing football, fireworks going through letter boxes, all of these things that really make our elderly people feel that they are under seize and the only people that they can turn to is the police and we need to find a way that these crimes are responded to, to bring confidence back to our senior citizens.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

*..... specifically respond to the issue of anti social behaviour and around fireworks. On Monday, there will be a campaign directed towards the misuse of fireworks and because there is a particular feature at this time of the year. Last year there was 290 individuals detected for fireworks type offences and we have made further suggestions to the Northern Ireland Office around the licensing of fireworks dealers and how that could be improved upon. But on Monday, there is a launch and specifically that will also be in partnership with the DCUs' initiatives around tackling anti social behaviour at this time of year. There is a particular spike that we see now, coming into Christmas and around St Patrick's Day and those are well identified and each DCU will have its own specific plans to cope with it.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to victims of domestic violence, question 11 Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Thank you Chairman. Could the Chief Constable outline what steps are being taken to provide better protection for victims of domestic violence in each district command area?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

Public Protection Units which I have mentioned and briefed to the Board before will link the investigation of domestic abuse to other issues around crime committed against the vulnerable. In particular, it will connect it to crime protection issues and also to missing persons. We will have Public Protection Units set up in the DCUs by the end of the year. We have met just very recently, just to firm up on the details and the number of officers who will be involved in this. In tandem we have conducted a pilot for the last 1½ years around a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference known as MARAC which is designed to protect the victims of domestic abuse and this has highlighted a lot of good practice and we are now working with partners to roll it out across Northern Ireland. MARAC has achieved and improved police response through risk assessment and it has also been warmly received by agencies such as Women's Aid to make sure that proper support is available to victims.

In July 2007, we had a campaign to encourage the reporting of domestic abuse and calls regarding domestic abuse increased by 35% in the 2 week period of the campaign and showed a further increase in the month of August 2007. It is important that we get maximum reporting of domestic abuse incidents because this is notoriously under-reported crime.

We will run a further campaign running into December 2007 as we know historically that again there is a spike in the domestic abuse incidents. We will launch this campaign and will also use posters, washrooms and the use of Ad Shells and again a further campaign will be planned in and around St Patrick's Day next year.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

*..... I commend the officers for this initiative and trust that there would be publicity around it in each District Command Unit, because it is about giving confidence to victims, that if they do come forward action and protection is there.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 35 relates to the breeding of illegal dogs and organised dog fighting, Peter Weir on behalf of North Down DPP.

Mr Peter Weir:

I wonder could the Chief Constable outline what strategies he intends to implement to tackle the problem concerning the breeding of illegal dogs and organised dog fighting?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

*..... national media there has been some horrific attention brought about this type of criminality, and this is exactly what it is, and I am sure local people again were horrified that Northern Ireland was playing a part in that criminality.

The breeding of illegal dogs in Northern Ireland lies with the responsibility of our district councils and we work very closely with district councils to enforce the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order. This includes the inspection of dog breeding establishments as well, so there is legislation there to control this.

In relation to organised dog fighting which has an ancillary aspect to this, and I think it is worth mentioning, we work on an intelligence led approach, so where intelligence comes in we will follow through on that.

There is an education aspect as well. As colleagues will know, we appointed a full-time Wildlife Officer to PSNI who has assisted operational officers on the ground with providing advice and guidance around this whole issue in relation to illegal dogs and dog fighting, and indeed, also assist in briefings and operations on the ground with officers.

We have a Comprehensive Media Strategy in relation to this whole area and we continue to work in partnership with our colleagues in councils and the USPCA. What I would say in relation to enforcement is, we would very strongly ask the public if they feel that they have a concern or can identified any individual or individuals taking part in this activity or breeding dogs which are classified as illegal, please contact your local police or indeed, contact the local council and action will be taken.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I am going to ask Mr Daithí McKay to take a number of questions together, so would you take 28, 29, 30, 31 and the police will answer them together.

Mr Daithí McKay:

All at the one time.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Yes.

Mr Daithí McKay:

As they are all in together Mr Chairman will you give me 4 supplementaries?

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Okay, that is alright.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Has the PSNI been working with the Equality Commission to establish internal affirmative action goals and timeframes that will be monitored to ensure that equality of opportunity is being engrained within PSNI to ensure that there is an increase in the rate of the promotion of members from the Roman Catholic background into senior grades?

Secondly, to ask the Chief Constable to provide a detailed breakdown since Patten 50:50 was introduced which reflects the annual promotional advances within the grades of PSNI personnel from the Roman Catholic background and from an ethnic minority background?

To ask what percentage of members from the Roman Catholic community background will be affected by the Patten severance scheme being applied to senior ranks. Finally, to ask the Chief Constable to provide the Board with a comprehensive breakdown across the Section 75 categories of the entire civilian staffing levels which have been employed since Patten was introduced?

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

*...there is of course a significant crossover on those question, I do think it makes sense to take them together although it may lead to a relatively long answer.

As far as the question on the co-operation to the Equality Commission is concerned, we have been one of the leading public authorities over many years, working with the Equality Commission to ensure that our promotion processes, which I believe are second to none, are compliant with the equality legislation here in Northern Ireland.

The issue of affirmative action and its applicability or relevance to our circumstances, is discussed as part of the regular 3 yearly reviews of workflow patterns with the Equality Commission, and the last time we discussed this some 2 years ago, it was not thought necessary to introduce affirmative action measures in this area due to the comparatively higher percentage of Catholics being promoted in the management and professional category. At the moment within the senior positions and civilian area, or police staff area, Catholic promotions are above representational level at 24% compared to Catholics at about 17% of the population as a whole.

We have already started work on our next report for the Equality Commission which is provided under Article 55 of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998 and this will be submitted to the Commission in May 2008. We will then see what those figures reflect and discuss that with the Equality Commission at that time and see whether any affirmative action is necessary. We can, of course, provide a breakdown of the promotion advances in the grades of personnel from Catholic and ethnic backgrounds to the Board. That is rather difficult to explain at a meeting of this nature, but there is a tabular form here, which I am happy to forward to the Board and that reflects increasing Catholic representation from 14% to 18% in 2006 and as I said, that tabular form will be forwarded to the Board in response.

As far as the Patten severance is concerned, our primary concern as a Command Team in the organisation, is the impact of Patten irrespective of religious background of the officer, on the loss of experience at the higher grades in this organisation. I would stress that whether somebody applies for Patten severance is entirely a voluntary

matter, not everybody that could apply does apply. Currently, we have got about 12.9% of persons from a Catholic background in the senior ranks, that is Superintendent or above and of these, about 80% are eligible but that does not mean to say that they will in fact apply.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementaries?

Mr Daithí McKay:

Question 31.

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

*.....and the guidance from the Equality Commission, who you mentioned earlier, in fact states, that it is a matter for each employer to identify their priority areas for equality monitoring. We can provide information on ethnicity, age, gender, disability, community background and marital status again, they can be and will be supplied in tabular form to you.

From June 2007, we have taken a step that has not been replicated by other public agencies, as far as I am aware, to monitor all 9 equality categories under Section 75 and, of course, the information on that will become available as that survey takes place, but in terms of tracking and trending it will take some time to build up that information.

Mr Daithí McKay:

If I could just return to the first question. You said about the high promotional levels effecting Roman Catholic police officers, but I recall at a previous meeting a number of figures were outlined over the next 5 to 7 years, I have not got the figures in front of me, but the number of Roman Catholics in the senior ranks of the PSNI are actually going to fall and fall below 10% from what I am aware. So, could I ask and I think some projections were to be done on that, I think the Chief Constable may have alluded to that at the previous meeting as well, so could I ask, have projections been done on that? Can I also ask, what has been done in terms of the lateral entry mechanism to date and does the Chief Constable feel that he has used the lateral entry mechanism to its full benefit?

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Lateral entry means, for members of the public, means people coming into higher level posts from elsewhere.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Given that the percentage of Roman Catholics in senior positions will continue to drop over the few years, does the Chief Constable recognise that more needs to be done to address this imbalance in terms of practical measures?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will take a number of those issues.

The issue is, it is a function of history and because of the way the regulations are devised, officers progress in a hierarchical way. So, in a way there is going to be a drop before it levels out and what I think you will see and certainly be seeing at the lower competitions, sergeants and inspectors just about now. As you will see more Catholic recruits you will see more Catholics feeding up through the system. That having been said, what can we do about it, well we advertise and every appointment for senior rank is advertised nationally and across the island of Ireland so we try and encourage people to come in. Now in terms of do I know of what background they come from, no I do not. When we advertise people will apply, it may or may not have some impact in that way, but we certainly do advertise and I insist on it, in fact even to sergeant level. We have got I think 10 sergeants coming across from various other police forces. Likewise, I am happy to export talent but it will only really mature, I think for the want of a better description, as those officers who joined more recently work their way through the ranks.

Human Resources Director, Mr Joe Stewart:

*..... I think Mr McKay there are so many figures flying around and you have certain figures in front of you and I have different figures in front of me, we maybe answering different questions. I think the best thing to do frankly, would be for you to take up the offer I made to you last month and that is, to have a meeting with me and we can go through the process in detail to actually discuss and show the tracking and trending of figures. That offer still stands and I would be delighted to see you taking that up. We

have done everything we can as far as I can see in terms of trying to recruit externally. We have actually, for example, for the latest Chief Superintendent competition that has just closed, made direct approaches to An Garda Síochána. Made direct approaches to encourage individual officers at superintendent rank in An Garda Síochána and have been so far singly unsuccessful in getting anybody from An Garda Síochána to apply for our competition. It is not through lack of trying. We cannot force people to come here if they do not want to come, they have to see it in their best career interests to make that shift and that is the sort of practical work that we are doing. We currently have live, at the bottom end of the organisation, live advertisements as you well know, for Detective Constables to come across from the United Kingdom forces to apply for jobs and vacancies that we have here. So, we are dealing a bit with history here and I think it is important to remember, that until the ending of violence here, the application rate from Catholics to the Police Service was 18%, and you have just heard the Chief Constable talk about the level of applications we are talking about now at 44% which is exactly where I predicted we would be if we got full consent to policing in fact.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

It is useful Mr McKay to put your questions in writing on some of these things and then maybe on the back of the written answers, to ask the questions.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Well, in terms of the figures, the figures were outlined to us at a previous meeting and at that meeting we noted our concern at the fact that the figures for Catholics at senior levels are going to drop so I do not agree with the statement that there is no need for affirmative action as there quite clearly is.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

*..... happy to have that debate as to what else we can do. It is exactly the same situation with women officers as well, it is a function of the past, it is how you get them through the system so there is going to be a gap before you see a more representative sample at senior rank.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Trevor Ringland.

Record No: 75619

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*Due to technical difficulties, the opening remarks of some speakers were not audible

Mr Trevor Ringland:

*..... dealing with sectarianism and particularly sectarianism of certain sections of our society, but part of that question 28 is nearly insulting to some of the senior police officers, because I could just say that I have no doubt, that any officers that gain any rank in the police do so because of their ability as police officers rather than anything to do with their religion and would the Chief Constable care to comment on that?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I think it is a wider issue. I think they are both legitimate debates to be had. I have total confidence in the officers under my command and it is not an issue around ability or professionalism, I have absolute confidence. I think in a way it is the same as we are discussing here, is perhaps a subset of some of Patten's vision which was a more representative service, being perceived to be more caring for different communities, so I do not think it is mutually exclusive.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

*..... view things in a very sectarian way. In the police, surely somebody is promoted purely on ability.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I could not agree more and they are and we are trying to widen the net as best we can and I think that is unquestionable and as Mr Stewart said, our selection processes are vigorous and stand up to any scrutiny and are very carefully constructed. That having been said, I think the police service in general, the more representative of the communities you police you are, and it does not matter at what rank that takes place, the more representative you are the more likely you are to be effective.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Alex Maskey and then Mr Peter Weir.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. I think it is appropriate that we do have a debate but not obviously tonight, but there was a sort of simple and direct question around the need for an affirmative action programme because it is not simply the case that we had an end

of violence as has been described. We have an entirely different situation now thankfully, we have all come to a far better place and clearly whenever you know in advance, as was told to us by yourselves on a number of presentations in the last number of months, that there will be a considerable reduction in the number of Catholics in senior positions, then when you know then it is clear that what you have to do is to take some kind of action, affirmative or otherwise. You need then to take some kind of action to make sure that people have the opportunity to be appointed on merit in line with what Trevor Ringland actually suggested earlier on. But the problem is, if you do not take a particular courses of action then you will never get to the position where people will even have the opportunity on merit to be appointed to senior grades.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

*..... the point, the question is what else can we do? I am clear on this, we have done everything we can think of to make people feel welcome to go for promotion and you are certainly seeing that in the junior ranks, where some of the figures Mr Stewart has given, show that people are doing well across the traditions. We want a police service that is effective and fit for purpose but it will take some time. There are regulations around who can be promoted so we in a way inherited this problem, this challenge because of the legacy which you refer to, it does not mean we are not trying.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 4....

Mr Peter Weir:

*..... to call it Chief Constable, given the fact that senior police officers will almost by necessity be officers who have served in the police for a large number of years, is it not a little bit rich that there is criticism about lack of Roman Catholics at high level within the police coming from Sinn Fein when their military organisation is responsible for targeting and murdering a lot of RUC officers, in particular people from a Roman Catholic background for many years, whenever those officers where actually entering the RUC?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, I do not want to get into a debate around the tribal ground. The point is very simple, we want the best service that we can possibly have now. The legacy issues yet again we find woven into the 41 questions, there are ways of dealing with those issues. My personal view is well known on this, it needs to be a far wider debate than the one currently being had. My task is to deliver effective policing now with officers who are fit for purpose at every level.

I have absolute confidence in my Senior Management Team, they have answered all the difficult questions for me today as they usually do and my Superintendents who lead and have led the crime reduction for the sixth year running, we have people that are more than fit for purpose. We also have to be seen to be as inclusive as we possibly can and that is the challenge we face, it is not easy, that is the challenge we face. The reality is, because of whatever reasons, right or wrong, a police service that was historically between 8% and 9% Roman Catholic and is now 21% or thereabouts is inevitably going to be skewed at the lower end of the organisation. It will take some time. I have confidence in every single officer that walks through the door of Garnerville. I am not from here, I cannot identify what traditions people come from, I rate them as police officers, when I walk up and down the line at Garnerville they are police officers and that is what they talk about doing, delivering policing.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to restorative justice, question 4, Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Thank you Chairman. Could the Chief Constable assure the residents of areas in which Restorative Justice Schemes are active, notably but not only, the Shankill and inner East Belfast, that the police are no less committed to engagement with their communities that perceptions of slower response times are false and that community policing will be rolled out in these neighbourhoods promptly?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

The short answer is yes, but Chief Superintendent Woodside will answer.

Chief Superintendent Bill Woodside:

Record No: 75619

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*Due to technical difficulties, the opening remarks of some speakers were not audible

Mr Chairman, the development of Community Based Restorative Justice programmes do not involve any disengagement with communities, in fact the whole principle underpinning Community Based Restorative Justice is, that the police work in partnership with the community so it is an extra string to our bow in respect of partnership working.

In respect of the perception of slow response times, you mentioned 2 areas the Shankill and East Belfast and I can tell the Members that to date this year, response times in West and East Belfast are both up significantly by almost 4½% and 3½% so we can put to bed I think that myth that response times are slower.

You have already heard the Chief Constable mention our commitment to Community Based policing and you heard the presentation by Chief Inspector Ian McCoy, the whole ethos of policing is community based and that is the way we are moving forward so there is no diminution in any of that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question that arose from the McLoughlin family and relating to the HET, question 5 Basil McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Chief Constable, at a recent meeting with the representatives of Victims and Survivors Trust, including Alex McLoughlin who represents the McLoughlin family and representatives are actually here in the audience today, they raised the issue that they were disappointed in the way that they were treated with the HET and the delay in getting information and I just wonder if you could comment on the situation for us please?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Yes, I will ask ACC Finlay to deal with that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

*..... review investigation into the McGurk's bar bombing, the horrific events of the

4 December 1971, when 15 people lost their lives in that event in North Queen Street. That commenced on the 8 June 2006 and the fact that it had so many victims makes this a very complex enquiry.

Care is taken to try and manage family expectations regarding the time scales of the Historic Enquiry Team Review, it is not a mechanistic approach it requires to be developed and at the beginning of that process it will not be entirely known what is going to be required to be done and so it is difficult to predict how long that will take. This can cause frustration and that is understood and is regrettable.

This case has taken quite a long time to develop. There has been family contact throughout, but it is clear that the family on this occasion do not feel they have been kept sufficiently up to date with what is going on and for that I can apologise and I would be more than happy to meet members of the family if they wish to take the issue further on a more personal basis. However, at this stage I cannot actually say when this enquiry will be complete. Because of the family centred approach the HET has, families have raised a number of issues which have required further research and development by the HET and that is ongoing at present. It is awaiting those developments to it gets to the conclusion where the final closure report can in fact be delivered to families. But the HET will certainly endeavour to keep more contact if that is required and as I say I am more than happy to meet the family and explore their particular issues if that would in any way be helpful.

Mr Basil McCrea:

*..... it is not just on this issue that this is a particular one, that it is really important for families and Members to be kept informed and if there is going to be any delay, we should be explaining to them why that is the case. I will and I am quite sure that the family will take you in saying that we need to deal with this specific issue immediately.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

It is useful to get feedback and if the feedback is that the process that we are currently adopting is not fulfilling what we anticipated to do, then we will look at that and change that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Record No: 75619

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*Due to technical difficulties, the opening remarks of some speakers were not audible

Mr Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman, I think the clear impression certainly that I have from that one particular family is that they are not satisfied with the process thus far and they made that complaint directly I think Chairman to yourself, so that has been made very clear going back a number of months. A further question, could I be assured and more importantly the family be assured, that your investigating team within the HET have full access to all information or any information pertaining to that particular bombing from no matter what source that information may be, whether it is in RUC files, whether it is in British Army files or whatever?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

Yes, the HET have access to all intelligence held in other agencies or with other agencies or any information they have the fullest amount of information to work on that they possibly can.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to UDA decommissioning, question 15 Mr Trevor Ringland.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

*....., do you accept that the Conflict Transformation Initiative organised through Farset could have positive benefits for assisting the UDA decommission their structures, and would he welcome the greater involvement of "critical friends" to ensure it delivers on what had been promised, and if so, should it be permitted to run its full term?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, it is not for me to comment on or comment any more on the CTI, it seems to me that the link between money and decommissioning is a false one. We have been very clear that all paramilitary organisations, regardless of which tradition they claim to be representing, should decommission forthwith. Now if there is a wider issue around encouraging people, and politicians think it makes sense, then it is very much a matter for them. People are aware of my views and in particular the UDA, after their behaviour

on the Kilcooley because my concern there was a policing concern and I think we are now moving into a wider debate around some paramilitary groups which seem still to be struggling at the end game are assisted and whatever can be done to assist them I am all for, but it is a matter for the politicians as to how it goes.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to a recent amnesty report, question 18 Ms Anderson.

Ms Martina Anderson:

In light of the issues raised in the recent Amnesty Report, particularly regarding the provision of overseas public order training by the PSNI, could the Chief Constable provide the Board with the following, and forgive me it is a bit long (a) the criteria used in the decision making process to select overseas forces to which the PSNI provides training and information on the nature and extent of evaluation carried out into such training; (b) a clear statement of commitment that all outward or overseas training given conforms to and underlines the content of international human rights standards and the UN Basic Principles on the use of Force and Firearms; and (c) a commitment that you will include a full reporting of outward or overseas training given by the PSNI in the Chief Constable's published Annual Report and also just to remind you that on the 25 September 2007 you stated your support for the Board's Human Rights Advisors to fully examine this matter and I just want to confirm that that is your stated view.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, this is interesting. It is where recommendations or observations from different groups sort of not clash but perhaps complement each other, but of course Patten recommendations 169 and 170 recommended that we provide more training for overseas police services, and in a way I guess it is part of the success of Patten where people are actually seeking our advice. We do not select and engage in the sense that we actively seek to provide training systems elsewhere, we get requests normally from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office or the Council of the European Community where we are seen as to paying particular expertise it tends to be around community policing or public order where minimum use of force training is seen as adding some benefit to other people.

We do have some bespoke expertise where we do have detectives for that investigation, anti terrorism and the such like where we are asked to provide some assistance that is normally around the operation end of the business rather than training.

I am happy to certainly report to the Board on everything we have done. I am not sure the Annual Report is the best place for it but I am happy to make sure that material is made available to you in a way that everyone is in agreement with.

I do think it is important that we deliver our style of training which is human rights based where it is sought in places where perhaps the human rights is thought to be less good, but rest assured we do not change our training to suit individuals. Our training is what we deliver. I am not prepared to deliver training which does not meet our standards around all the issues you raise, so we would not lower our standards for the want of a better description, to provide training for other people. Potentially, it is a huge demand on resources so we do not do a huge amount of it, but again I am happy to make sure the Board gets all the details.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary, David Rose.

Mr David Rose:

Chief Constable, I think it works both ways. Would you also take the view to ensure that there is no training ever provided by foreign organisations that do not reach high standards that ever come into the UK and Northern Ireland specifically to train any groups. If I could use an example Heathrow Airport, where the queues and the mess with their security would indicate to me that they would be far better of taking training from the RUC/PSNI on how they dealt with their approach to security throughout the Troubles and ensured the smooth movement of the passengers as well as good security.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

*..... training people coming here to assist us, the reality is, the demands are for us to supply training to other people as we are seen now as leading in so many fields. I

mean regularly again, another Patten recommendation we do a lot of combined training with An Garda Siochana and that is very much a 2 way process where we go to their training school and they come to us. More recently we were training them in evidential evidence gathering in public order situations. We have had their traffic department up here looking at the very real issue of traffic across the island of Ireland so those sort of issues take place routinely but we would not tolerate any training that did not meet our standards and requirements.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Do you want a supplementary? Trevor Ringland.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

*..... ask the Chief Constable or maybe he would not have the information as to whether there are any other organisations that are passing their expertise around the world as they were in the past or have they stopped these activities, I will leave that for the moment.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

*....I will take that as a rhetorical question. Question 19 this relates to the transfer of primacy in terms of intelligence, Mrs Dolores Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, could the Chief Constable assess how, in the light of the absence of a single upheld complaint against MI5 the Security Services, and weaker statutory basis of oversight faced by MI5, and the proposed sharing of intelligence, resources and offices, between the PSNI and MI5, there is no possibility of deterioration of PSNI compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and other relevant human rights legislation, and could he give us an update on when, if there is any date yet set for the transfer?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, the assurance I can give the Board is that the Police Service of Northern Ireland are breaking new ground in terms of our relationships with the Security Service. There is no other police service that has put in place the arrangements that we have put in place in preparation for the transfer of national security. Board Members will be

aware that we have 5 principles setting out the position where the Chief Constable wants to be assured that the Security Service agree with before he is prepared to transfer national security. The 5th principle in those clearly states that there will be no diminution in the police service's ability to comply with human rights or, indeed, the Policing Board's ability to monitor that compliance with human rights.

The Security Service have no authority to take executive action, they cannot arrest people, they cannot search property, that remains with the police service and before we take any decision to carry out any of those acts, we will ensure that they are set against human rights standards. If the Board needs further assurance on the efforts and the energy the police service has put into this, they only have to look at their own Human Rights Advisors' briefing to the Board on 20 September 2007 when they said, "having reviewed the Memorandums of Understanding and the draft Service Level Agreements, and having discussed matters with ACC Sheridan and the PSNI team working on transfer issues, we are satisfied that the requirement that the Police Service of Northern Ireland personnel working in liaison with the Security Service, remain subject to all legislation, policy and procedure governing PSNI actions including the Human Rights Act 1998 along with accountability to the Chief Constable, the Board and the Police Ombudsman".

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Timeframe, Chairman?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

I briefed the Board the last time, I am at the later stages of agreeing Service Level Agreements, I have not signed off on those agreements and until that happens, then we will not be in a position to do it. I would suggest we are very close to that but until every "i" is dotted and "t" is crossed and until the Board's Human Rights Advisors have satisfied themselves with that then we will not be in a position to transfer national security, but we are very close to it.

Chief Constable, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

If Ms Anderson, Mr Trevor Ringland and Mr Basil McCrea would agree to pass over those questions to the next meeting, that is questions 21, 23 and 32 I will ensure that

they are taken as the first 3 questions at the next Board meeting, if they would do that I would be able to end as close to 8:30pm as possible. Is that agreed? You are joking.

Ms Martina Anderson:

*..... of the person who is concerned about this question is here tonight and on that basis I think I should raise that one.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

If the other 2 have agreed and given the person is here tonight, question 21
Ms Anderson.

Ms Martina Anderson:

As I say, it is a matter for public concern as well and David McIlwaine whose son Paul McIlwaine was murdered along with Andrew Robb in 2000 and that is where this question emanates from. It is around what vetting procedures are in place regarding the tendering processes for police building contracts and have the police ever entered into building contracts with known loyalist paramilitaries?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

*..... the specificity of the question, but I can confirm that we have never had a contract with any paramilitary but Mr Best if you want to do the detail.

Director of Finance and Support Services, Mr David Best:

*..... must comply with the current PSNI vetting procedure which prohibits paramilitaries entering into any building contract with the police service. The contractor vetting process, along with the tendering process, both must be satisfied completely before any company is formally engaged for work. The vetting process consists of intelligence, convictions and criminal records, a review of these assessed within an agreed framework. There are many individuals who do not meet those standards required by the police service and who are not accepted.

The Estates Services Branch is not aware, just to confirm, of having entered into a building contract with known paramilitaries from whatever background.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Can I ask a supplementary just in relation to that? Can the Chief Constable confirm that police contracts worth approximately £320,000 were awarded to Jameson of Portadown, a company part owned by alleged Armagh UVF Commander, Richard Jameson before he was shot in 2000 and were similar contracts also entered into with another firm owned by an alleged senior UVF figure in the Armagh area?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, I am not in a position to particularly comment, I will have it investigated if there is something to investigate. Without any pre-warning to be able to come up with any detail around named individuals I do not think it is appropriate for a public session of the Policing Board.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I think if you*

Speaker unclear:

Tape unclear

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

No, the latter part is not in the question, I think that is what the Chief Constable said.

Mr Alex Maskey:

*..... it does not take a genius to work out that part of the question.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Can I also just draw attention to the fact that there was a response given by the Deputy Chief Constable in relation to these tendering processes, so it is not to say that this question would have come as a surprise with regards to the related question that I asked earlier.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Naming people in a public session as alleged paramilitaries did come as a surprise, I am unsighted on it, I said I will get back to you that is what I will do.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Thank you*

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could I say to Members of the Board, thank you for accommodating in terms of the questions. Members of the public, journalists, we thank you for your attendance tonight. Thank you very much indeed Chief Constable to you and your Chief Officers for taking our questions. Thank you very much indeed and good night.