

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD
ON THURSDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2007 AT 11:30AM IN WATERSIDE TOWER,
BELFAST**

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Mr Barry Gilligan (Vice Chairman)
Ms Martina Anderson
Mr Tom Buchanan
Mr Leslie Cree
Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson
Mrs Dolores Kelly
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr Basil McCrea
Mr Daithí McKay
Ms Mary McKee
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:**

Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief Constable)
Mrs Judith Gillespie (ACC Rural Region)
Mr Duncan McCausland (ACC Urban Region)
Mr Peter Sheridan (ACC Crime Operations)
Ms Donna Scott (Legal Advisor)
Mr Joe Stewart (Director of Human
Resources)
Superintendent Rob Drennan, Criminal
Justice Department
Ms Gail McGreevy, Media & Communications
T/Superintendent, Command Secretariat

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
Mr David Jackson (Director of Community
Engagement)
Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
Mr Peter Gilleece (Director of Policy)
1 Board Official

APOLOGIES:

Mr David Simpson

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Good morning Chief Constable, Senior Officers, members of the public and the media. Our Chief Constable is presently on a senior management programme and this is the second part of that stint, so he is not here today and the Deputy Chief Constable will be standing in for him. You are all very welcome to this meeting in public of the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I would also like to give a special welcome to a delegation of Iraqi MPs. I met them yesterday and I believe that they have had a very good visit to Northern Ireland and you are very welcome. We also have the Police Commissioner from Hong Kong and other distinguished guests who are in the public gallery. I should also mention Owen Patterson, who is the Tories front bench spokesman on Northern Ireland.

At the meeting, Members of the Board will question the Deputy Chief Constable and the Senior Officer Team on a range of issues relating to policing in Northern Ireland. A number of questions have been tabled today and you will see members of the audience and the journalists present, that there is a variety to these questions. Board Members have asked to be updated on PSNI co-operation with the Garda investigation into the brutal murder of 21 year old Paul Quinn in Co Armagh and on the position of the PSNI investigation on the Devlin murder and indeed, the Deputy Chief Constable may wish and or one of his colleagues to comment on those.

Officers in the Financial Investigation Unit are to be credited with their success in a recent money laundering investigation with £700,000 seized in the operation.

Recent media commentary suggested that police were being inhibited in dealing with cross border crime as they could not pursue suspects across the border. PSNI views are sought on the current arrangements and whether this is an issue for officers in dealing with criminal gangs.

Today, the latest report on police performance for Northern Ireland is being presented. As you know, we recently facilitated a discussion with religious and community representatives to discuss the response by the police and the wider criminal justice sector to community concerns of incidents of anti social behaviour. The public need to know that those with the powers at their disposal are working together in support of communities to ensure resources are used to best effective, that there are no gaps within public sector delivery and that enforcement powers are exercised appropriately.

This week the Minister announced tough new measures for motoring offences, given the carnage on our roads to date, these new powers must be enforced with a strong message to road users that if you break the law you will pay the price.

And now Deputy Chief Constable over to you.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, thank you very much. If I can begin with the performance presentation, Members will be familiar with the format. I join in your welcome to the Iraqi parliamentarians who are here, I have also met them this week and we have had very interesting discussions and I hope you enjoy the meeting.

Chairman to begin, if we look at crime rates over the past 5 years. Overall the trend continues to be downwards, the recorded crime is 14½% lower than it was in the previous financial year to date. What this really means of course is, that there are over 10,000 fewer victims of crime than there were last year in Northern Ireland. We have been focusing, as the Board are aware, on various areas. One of them is Halloween which of course culminated in last nights festivities around the province, it is obviously too early yet to give a definitive answer as to how effective our measures have been with regard to Halloween, but certainly on an initial ring-round this morning it does not appear to have been any more troublesome than it was last year.

We have also been focusing on other areas such as criminal damage, and as we go through the presentation we will see just how that has worked. If we go on to the slide which compares us to our most similar forces, Members will be aware again that this is an HMIC comparison family which looks at us in comparison with forces which they have determined against various criteria, have got similarities to Northern Ireland. We have shown a 15% reduction in crime, our overall crime figure being 54,047 at the end of the 6th month period into the financial year. Our clearance rate at 18% has shown an improvement from the last time this presentation was given when it was around 15%, but still is significantly lower than the average for our family of forces. At the last performance meeting, the Chief Constable promised that we would take some action with regard to that, and immediately we contacted the best performing force which is Northumbria. I claim no credit of course from 3½ years there, but you will understand, that I was quite happy to contact Northumbria and ask them to come across and tell us how they were achieving 40% which they were at the time, they are now sitting on 39%.

We spent a morning with 2 District officers from Northumbria who explained what they believed was helping them towards their high clearance rates, and obviously it was not an overnight fix, it was not a quick fix solution. It focused on many things and some of them I will get into later on in the presentation. So our clearance rate at 18% is our big concern at the moment. We are focusing on that and we hope that by the end of the financial year we will have significantly increased it yet again.

In the area of domestic burglary, we continue to show a decrease. You will see from the slide that there is a very clear reduction from the years of 2002/03; we have currently a 6.5% reduction on the same period last year which equates to 250 fewer houses burgled in that period, almost 50 houses a month fewer burglaries which is a very good result.

There has been an overall reduction but it has shown an increase in 2 Districts, 'A' and 'C' Districts. In 'A' District we have had an increase in domestic burglaries resulting in a focused strategy to tackle the policing problem, this has involved crime prevention advice through the clergy, the establishment of a burglary team who attend every burglary scene and focus on maximising the forensic examination. We also focused

briefing sessions on the concentration of those areas burgled and the possible offenders, because as everyone will know, prolific offenders play a really big role in domestic burglary and if we concentrate on the prolific offenders we can have a big impact.

In 'C' District that is exactly what has happened, our analysts produced a prolific offender profile and a person was arrested after leaving a scene and he is currently remanded in custody, that has had a significant impact and the trend is now downward again, so we are confident that we will be able to address that issue in 'C' District.

Creeper burglaries have also been affecting the area and we launched an operation in September 2007 utilising Crime Teams from the District and over 50 arrests have been made of people from 'C' District and from the Greater Belfast area who have been travelling into that District.

Analysis is currently underway just to make sure that we have got that operation right to prevent creeper burglaries. So our focus continues to be on individuals and in preparing members for the Christmas period. We heard some marketing speak yesterday about the primary purchase period, well this is obviously a time when there are lots of extra gifts in houses and we will be publishing the need for people to be aware of their own security in their home.

If we move on to criminal damage, you will recall a few years ago this was highlighted as a major issue for the organisation and we have been focusing on it now for the past number of months. We are recording at the minute at 20.7% reduction and a 3.4% reduction in anti social behaviour. The anti social behaviour figure is just short of the Board's target of 5% but it does show good work across many many Districts. One of the things I would highlight is the effort being made by local authorities more and more proactively to work with us across the province to ensure that we do achieve a good result on this.

In criminal damage the emphasis was around Halloween, it was highlighted as a spike in the year and, therefore a time when we needed to concentrate our efforts and we have done a lot of work this year to pay attention to illegal fireworks sales, seize those

fireworks and get in early to prevent what were horrific incidents of criminal damage over the past few years.

Another area of great concern to the Board and to ourselves is violent crime in Northern Ireland. This is a flatter picture but does show a 15.8% reduction on the previous financial year to date. We are looking forward now to the Christmas party session and we are continuing our focus on domestic violence and the Night Time Economy which are where these crimes actually occur.

Violent crime down by 15.8% means that we have 17, 845 violent crimes recorded. Now broken down, the biggest category is offences against the person. Offences against the person obviously includes assaults, and those range from minor to serious. In this category we have had a reduction of 15.2% which means a reduction to just over 16,000 crimes compared with 19,000 this period last year, so 3,000 fewer people assaulted or the victim of an offence against the person in that period.

In sexual offences we have had a reduction from 1,137 in the same period last year down to 975 so far this year which is a 14.2% reduction. In robberies we are down from 863 to 602 which is over 30% of a reduction, so quite a good picture across the province with regard to violent crime.

One of the initiatives I would highlight to Members is “Safe Haven” in Banbridge where well meaning members of the society are actually providing an alternative to young people when they come out of the pubs and clubs, that they can sit down, have a cup of tea and a biscuit and a talk. A non-judgemental talk, just a talk but giving them a cup of tea and a biscuit and actually giving them somewhere where they can sit down and relax in an non-threatening atmosphere is helping to reduce tensions, is helping reduce the number of fights and things that happen in taxi queues and as people try to exit and egress away from the district. I have been down with the person who runs that scheme, I think it is an extremely good scheme. I have seen similar things operate in other parts of the country and would be keen to try and encourage that sort of approach across the province.

The next slide focuses on our clearance rates and I have already highlighted this as one of the areas that we are not performing so well in. Our current clearance rate is 18.2% that is the sanctioned clearance rate and we have been through the difference between sanctioned and non-sanctioned clearances before for Members, but basically, we do not count non-sanctioned clearances any more, we are only counting sanctioned clearances. This is well below our most similar force average which is 26%. The graph illustrates the significant dip in April 2007 which is when the new recording procedures were introduced and since then, we have got a gradual trend upwards. We did invite Northumbria police across as I mentioned earlier and some of the things that they highlighted to our officers and were the subject of discussion were the responsibility taken at neighbourhood or sector level. They are further down the road of Neighbourhood Policing Teams than we are having been the subject of funding from the Home Office for Neighbourhood Policing Teams and the responsibility of Inspectors at neighbourhood level of taking ownership of that area, seemed to be one of the key things they were emphasising so our officers have picked up on that and we are trying to see how that looks in Northern Ireland. They do a lot of quality checks on crime reports to ensure that any potential investigation leads are followed and we will also be following up on that. They have minimum standards of investigation, but the one thing that they emphasised above all was ownership and accountability, so those are things that we will be taking away and trying to make sure that we have implemented across the province. We think we are already seeing some outcomes from that but obviously we will watch it very very carefully over the next few months.

The Community and Neighbourhood Policing obviously has got a lot of focus in the recent past and we are continuing to focus on working in partnership across the province. This week we held the first ever high level partnership meeting with the Departments of Health and the Department of Education to discuss what cross-cutting issues we could do. How we could start to think in different ways about problems that go across different areas. It was very fruitful, as I say it was the first time in my experience that we have sat down at that level with other big public sector departments to look at how we solve problems across our different areas of responsibility, so it was a very profitable and useful meeting. We are trying to utilise knowledge and skills from across different agencies and you will see a couple of examples on the screen of how we are trying to implement reassurance plans across the province. Reassurance plans

involve working not just with those who are actively involved in community work, but with people who have perceptions about young people causing annoyance. Our biggest category of calls is still youths causing annoyance. Quite often when we attend the issue is not the youths causing annoyance, the issue may be the tolerance level of the people who have phoned in. We have to try and make them aware that 3 people standing at an end of a road talking loudly perhaps, laughing and joking, is not necessarily a crime and that there may not be something that the police officers wish to deal with, they may want to try and talk to the young people to see can they move them on or can they find something else constructive or divert them to another place where they would not annoy anybody, but there are issues on both sides with regard to this. We need to look at that very carefully about managing expectation across the province.

Another area the Board asked us to focus on was business crime and you will be aware that there is a target in the Policing Plan for this year to create a new business crime strategy by March of next year and we are working very actively on that at the moment.

We had a meeting again this week, we have a draft strategy prepared that we will go out to consultation with and it includes 10 crime areas. We have considered very carefully the idea of defining business crime or creating a new category of business crime and that has not seen favour with anyone in the UK, or with ourselves at the minute, it does not seem to work, there is no such thing as a business crime. All sorts of crime affect businesses from high level robberies right down to shoplifting and other incidents in shops where staff are threatened or staff are assaulted, so we have got 10 categories that cover the whole range of business crime as we see it, we will go out to consultation with all the big business organisations including Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), the Chamber of Commerce and we will try and talk to as many as we possibly can. We are doing that in conjunction with the Board's own business crime survey which is about to be conducted and we had discussions with Board staff around what exactly can be asked in that survey so that we get a better picture of what business crime is. One of the things that we highlighted at the meeting this week was, we need to ask the question, "what crimes are you not reporting from your business", because that is what we do not know, so we need to try and find out what are the categories of crime that business are not reporting to us.

We are working in partnership with many elements of industry. We already have a good working relationship through the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) at the higher end of crime with FACT and other counterfeit organisations. We work well with the cash in transit agencies and you will see from your screen, the bottom right hand graph shows a significant reduction in cash in transit robbery in Northern Ireland. A very successful initiative which centres around a central control room which is staffed by agencies, not just ourselves, but by the cash in transit companies and subscribed to by the major banks as well. So that was in response to a problem with cash in transit robberies going up in the past, and you can see from the graph, that it is now well reduced, and we intend to continue operating that structure.

Bail and custody, we have achieved the administrative time limits for processes of bail and custody cases processing 95.5% of custody cases and 95.8% of bail cases. We are currently processing 63.2% of summary reported cases within the time limits meeting the 60% target. We are just short of processing 75% of indictable reported cases, we are currently processing 74.9% within the time limits so we are very close to that target.

That Chairman is all I would like to say on performance unless any Members have questions for us on that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Yes, there are a number of questions. Question 3, Mr David Rose.

Mr David Rose:

Can the Deputy Chief Constable explain the 4% increase in domestic burglaries in Urban Region compared to the same period last year? A trend which impacts on the overall Policing Plan target which is to reduced domestic burglaries by 3%.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Yes Chairman, as I have already highlighted, we are achieving the 3% target and I have mentioned some of the things that are happening in 'A' and 'C' Districts but I will ask ACC McCausland to give more detail on that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Thank you Chairman. To sum up basically, in 'A' District there has been an increase in creeper burglaries which the Board have been aware of. There have been a number of new buildings and new builds across North and West Belfast which have been the target of burglars. As well as that, there has been an increase in copper thefts and we know that there has been a considerable demand for copper in the Far East and that is actually reflecting across the entire island in terms of copper thefts and rising copper thefts. There has also been an issue of insecure properties. A number of the burglaries have been clearly found that people have been leaving their properties insecure.

The Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) has commented however about the positive action that 'A' District have taken and I can positively report today that 65 separate people have been arrested and will be charged and put before the court in relation to burglaries. We have set up an Op Converter Team which is particularly focusing in turning forensic results into actual arrests and charges. For example, since September 2007 I can successfully report to you that we are turning round from an offence happening to a person being interviewed and having the forensic results put to them, to actually being charged is now down to 12 days. So on average, we are identifying people who potentially, if they leave forensic traces, within 12 days arresting and charging them before the courts, that is making a difference

Specifically, if we move to 'C' District where again they have had an issue around prolific offenders being released from custody having served their sentences, they have arrested 50 separate people in the last few months and have cut the increase, which the Board would have noticed in last month which was sitting at 21%, that has now been cut to 13% because of the success in terms of apprehending prolific offenders and bringing them before the courts.

We would intend to continue that push, and I can successfully report to you today, that the 4% increase that is mentioned in the question has now been cut to 2%, and I would hope that in the next few months you will see it going into the green and heading towards the target set by the Board.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed. Question 1 this is from the Vice Chairman of the Board.

Vice Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you. Deputy Chief Constable, the Chairman referred in his opening remarks to the ongoing carnage on our roads and that is a matter of great ongoing concern to this Board. So in the first 6 months statistics that we have been provided with here, we do not have information on the number of people killed or seriously injured on the road, or indeed, the number of children killed or seriously injured on the road, so when are we going to have that information to allow us to monitor the performance against those targets?

On a related matter, and this is tabled as question 9, could you update the Board on the progress which the PSNI and other agencies have made in contingency planning for major traffic accidents in the Greater Belfast area, and this as you probably know, follows on from an incident earlier in the year where a traffic accident on the M2 caused widespread chaos throughout the city.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, we share the Board's concern obviously about those killed and seriously injured on our roads which are very very big figures compared to other ways that people are killed in Northern Ireland. I can give the Board fatality figures for the first 6 months compared to the previous year and it is, with some relief that we say, there were only 56 people killed and that is still a very very large number and it means 56 families have lost someone, but 56 people killed on our roads between the 1 April and 30 October 2007. Now that compares to the same period last year a figure of 76 so there is a 20 reduction over the first 6 months which is welcomed but obviously is not enough, because any deaths and indeed, not included in those figures is someone who lost their life last night because we had another fatality last night, so we take it very seriously indeed.

With regard to the seriously injured figures, our system integration project is rolling out and we have experienced some process problems in getting injury statistics onto the

system and collated properly. Some of those are down to operator failures and some are down to process issues, we are sorting them out. We hope to have the situation rectified by the end of the financial year when we will have figures for the year for the Board so we will be able to give you an accurate picture.

With regard to the delays, which question 9 relates to. The contingency plan made for major traffic accidents in the Greater Belfast area, I am going to ask the ACC for Urban Region to give you an answer on that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

The Board will remember 12 October 2006 and a serious road traffic collision on the M1 when, as a result of that, the motorway had to be closed for 14 hours and also sadly, the fatal collision that took place on 20 February 2007 where both the M2 and subsequently the M1, were closed as a result of a follow-up accident there. We, the police, were very aware of the impact this closure had as the Board also did, because the Chairman hosted a number of meetings in relation to discussing this with relevant parties. We were very concerned in relation to the closure, not only in financial terms for the city but also the public confidence that the public have in relation to the ability of the police and other emergency services to deal with such incidents.

As a result of that, we initiated a review with our partner agencies, particularly the Department of Regional Development (DRD), the Belfast City Council, the Policing Board and other interested parties in relation to how we could better manage major critical incidents on the strategic road network. I can today outline the details of a new Response Plan in the event of a major incident on trunk roads in the Belfast area of the motorway network. New measures incorporated in the protocol include, the deployment of police officers at key junctions to manage traffic and the phasing of traffic lights being adjusted to assist the traffic flow. I have here Chairman a copy of the protocol and I have a copy for each of the Members and this will be available publicly for the public to see. It outlines our commitment to the entire community as to what we and the Department of Regional Development (DRD) will do in terms of actually trying to ensure that the road network is kept open.

The Plan seeks to minimise the traffic disruption, and most importantly, ensure the safety of our investigating officers and road users. These measures alone however Chairman, I must emphasise to yourself and Members, will not guarantee the prevention of traffic gridlock.

If any of the main arterial routes must be closed, particularly if road users fail to obey the basic rules of the Highway Code and this would be my message and plea to the motoring public. It is important to keep hard shoulders clear for emergency access and that must be guaranteed. We had the tragic events in Limerick earlier this year, where a Garda colleague and a fire officer tragically lost their lives at the scene of a road traffic collision, clearly demonstrating how dangerous collision scenes can be, and I would ask Members of the Board, and the public in general, not to forget that. Drivers must pay particular attention to the rules governing junctions. For example, if motorists were more considerate and did not block junctions when they could see that their exit was not clear or did not block side roads, significant congestion could and would be avoided. So what I am saying here today is, this is our commitment but the motoring public must also be aware of their requirement to help us help them to keep the road network open.

We would hope with this particular protocol, and with what we are committing here today to do, with the statements we have made in terms of the motoring public, that we would see a significant improvement if there was a major or critical incident in relation to the motorway network, but again, I emphasise this is a Plan, plans go wrong because there is a human factor and it requires the human factor to co-operate fully with policing and I would impart this Plan to the Board to consider and obviously the protocol will be available for the public as and from this meeting.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

When Members have had an opportunity to study that at one of the Committees then perhaps they could come to you ACC McCausland and question you on it.

Basil McCrea, do you have a supplementary on traffic accidents?

Mr Basil McCrea:

I do indeed Chairman. Just taking up on the comments about the dangers of road traffic accidents, for obviously you have got people in close proximity. One of the big concerns for people in the construction industry is the amount of construction work, particularly around the Westlink and other areas that are going on and the danger that this poses to construction workers and others. I would be interested in knowing what steps you have taken to actually enforce speed restrictions and other areas that are likely to lead to difficulties in this area. I would take up the point about where is a danger, just on the secondary part of that. About where you have got inappropriate coning or whatever, that it leads to drivers taking dangerous and inappropriate action and I think that this is really an issue that the construction sector would like to hear how you are planning to address.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, I myself was out with motorway patrols for a day's duty quite recently and the particular patrol I was with had responsibility for the hill section of the M2, and I know that one of the first things they did was go and do some speed enforcement at the temporary speed limits which they now have power to do because it has now been passed by the Assembly that those are enforceable speed limits. There was a significant impact on traffic caused by people speeding through or trying to speed through those areas. The officers I was with were well aware of that, in actual fact it was their top priority for their day's duty was to get back and forward to make sure that they monitored that particular section very very closely, so we are aware of it and our Road Policing people do pay attention to it. I cannot give you figures for enforcement because obviously we did not come prepared for that answer, but we are aware of it. We were happy to work with Roads Services and the DRD with regard to any works that need to be done on the motorways, particularly on the motorway sections.

Unfortunately, sometimes contractors move cones because they have work to do in a particular area, we are not necessarily consulted about every cone move. If we find something wrong with where cones are placed, and this actually happened at the slip road from Antrim Hospital in the recent past, where our traffic officers when they went to look at the finished product, found that in actual fact the contractors had left a hard

shoulder which ran into one of the main lanes, with no markings whatsoever on it to warn the motorist that they would be coming from a hard shoulder into a lane. That was not acceptable and there was delay, we made the contractors put it right and mark the roads in such a way that it was safe, so they do take a big interest in this. But you are right to emphasise the volume of these works that are going on at the minute, it does put a strain on Roads Policing officers to help manage that, but we are aware of it.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Still on performance figures, question 2 Mary McKee.

Ms Mary McKee:

While accepting the relatively low numbers, can the Deputy Chief Constable explain why fewer drugs supply gangs have been frustrated and dismantled so far this compared to last year?

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

I could explain that if it was true Ms McKee but it is not, so I am going ask ACC Sheridan to answer that question.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, it might be helpful just to explain what we mean by disrupted, dismantled and frustrated for members of the public.

When we talk about frustrating drugs gangs we mean where there have been one or more significant seizures or one or more significant arrests or a seizure of assets.

When we talk about disruption, we talk about one or more significant arrests and one or more significant seizure and a seizure of assets and what I mean by a significant arrest, I mean somebody who is a major drugs importer**(tape inaudible)** and 2 or more significant arrests occur and there is a seizure of assets.

This year's figures, I think the question looked at last year as a total year gets set against the first 6 months of this year, but even in that the figures reflect even greater success over the 6 month period, in that more crime gangs have been dismantled this year, that is put out of business and unable to operate.

Disruption and frustration success are at least on course to match last year's performance and maybe improved on it. Members will be aware, that when you are trying to disrupt or dismantle or frustrate a drugs gang, it can take long term covert operations to get them in the place where you want them, where you will be able to have significant arrests and significant seizures. It is not something you can measure on a month by month basis, much as I would like to, it does take long term effort with some of these people. It should be noted that we are only talking about the higher level of gangs when we talk about disruption, the level 2 and level 3 gangs, it does not take account of the work going on in Districts around the lower level drug dealers.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

A question that I would like to slip in under the performance figures, question 8
Mr David Rose.

Mr David Rose:

Could the Deputy Chief Constable give the Board an assessment of the proportion of the teenage population that has come to the attention of the PSNI through involvement in anti social, drunken or delinquent behaviour?

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, I will ask ACC Operational Support to give answer to that but I think to put it in perspective first of all, it is very important to say, that most of the young people we come into contact with are extremely good citizens who contribute positively towards things in Northern Ireland. They are not all problems and sometimes we talk about young people in these contexts and it is right and proper that we examine what proportion of young people get involved in problems, but it is also important to recognise that not all young people are problem children.

Sorry, it is Criminal Justice Department, Superintendent Rob Drennan.

Superintendent Rob Drennan:

Many of the types of behaviour which you have asked about do not involve a notifiable offence having been committed, so we cannot give detailed information on the total number of teenagers who may be involved in such incidents because they do not all necessarily involve notifiable offences. What we can say is, that we record the number of incidents of anti social behaviour which are reported to us, we log that on our Command and Control System and when the incident is being closed we enter a code if it was youth related. So I have the figures in relation to that for you and the figures are for the period from 1 April until the end of September of this year and we recorded 54,238 incidents of anti social behaviour. Of those, 22% that is 11,939 incidents were recorded as being youth related so I think that is the most valuable figure that I can provide to you in that context.

I would just repeat what the Deputy Chief Constable has said, that we do believe it is a small minority of young people who are involved in anti social behaviour and many are involved in very positive aspects of society, and indeed many are engaging positively with police officers in a forra such as our Independent Advisory Group for Young People, where we have appreciated the effort that they have shown in that area.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr David Rose.

Mr David Rose:

Could I just say I was very encouraged by the answer and I would certainly concur with what the Deputy Chief Constable said. My motivation for asking was to try and highlight the fact that the vast majority of young people in this country are very good citizens. I think as a starting point for the Board and for the PSNI, is to make that clear to the public, so that we can get some sort of proportion into the public's mind of this problem and then resources can be directed towards that minority. I also think that it is quite interesting there that 22% were youth related, it is worth noting that 78% came from the adult population so the police are certainly running into delinquent adults.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Sharma, does your question relate to the question that has just been put, or is it a separate one on the performance figures?

Mr Suneil Sharma:

It is about performance figures Chairman.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Sorry, then I will take Dolores Kelly first and then Suneil Sharma and then Alex Maskey and I am going to conclude the performance questions at that point.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Thank you Chairman. Quite frankly Chairman the issue in relation to clearance and the excuse in terms of the differentials in reporting is actually an excuse that has been well played out. It is overplayed, and we are tired of hearing that excuse. At a time when PSNI officers....

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I trust this is a question.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

There is a question..... In terms of PSNI officers per head of population, far more of them than any comparable force, it simply is not good enough. Chairman, in your opening remarks you made particular, and quite rightly, mention of the brutal murder of Paul Quinn and within the last 2 days, a woman in Belfast has lost her life under equally appalling and brutal circumstances and the clearance rate for crime against women and sexual assaults and violent attacks are well below the 15% mark and far from satisfactory. Chairman, we are coming into a time when women and families in particular, over the Christmas period, are more at risk of suffering from domestic abuse and violent attacks and we want to see the police doing a lot better. We want to hear what they are going to do about it and we want to see much better reports coming in terms of clearance rates.

I noted the reassurance plans, those are welcome but quite frankly they are at the soft end of policing, reassurance will come to the community when they see crime being prevented, detected and prosecuted.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, firstly I was not aware I had made any excuses for anything, I do not make excuses for our clearance rate, I accept it is not good enough and I am trying to do everything I can along with my colleagues, to make sure it improves. I thought I had outlined that.

One of the things we do accept is that sometimes we need help, well all the time we need help from the public. One of the examples I would bring to Members' attention is, reassurance sometimes is viewed as the softer end of policing, but in actually fact can pay big dividends, that is why policing is so complex.

An example of this, if we look to Castlewellan to the tragic drownings of the 2 young people earlier this year. The 2 Family Liaison Officers who worked with those families gained a lot of confidence of that community, and one of the outspinnings of that was, not just that the family invited those Family Liaison Officers with them when they were invited down to meet the President in Dublin, but the fact that the increase in flow of information in that area, which was from a reassurance act if you like. There was no crime here, but from a reassurance act by those police officers, actually has improved the clearance rates and the flow of information to the police in that area. So we do put emphasis on all sort of things to try and improve our clearance rate, we are not making excuses for it, we accept entirely the position that Mrs Kelly has outlined, there are most police officers here, we need to do better, we will come back with better figures.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Suneil Sharma.

Mr Suneil Sharma:

Chairman, much of the question is as Dolores Kelly as said. Clearance rates Deputy Chief Constable goes to the heart of the community's confidence in policing and

impacts on under-reporting, particularly in areas of hate crime and as already been said in reference to the numbers, we all know that.

But what are the key issues that need to be addressed to ensure that we get up to that average MSF 26%, how long will it take and what are the key strategies you have in place to make sure we get there?

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

One of the key strategies was to hear how other people are doing it and to try and implement what they have done successfully across Northern Ireland. I am confident that we will be well up over 20% and possibly approaching 26%. I cannot make a promise obviously that we will be at 26% by the end of this financial year, but we are going to be getting towards it. I would point out, and coming back to Dolores Kelly's point as well, when it comes to serious crime and murders, the detection rate is actually over 80% and is growing, so we do have success in the more serious offences and we do take crime very very seriously.

We will implement a series of actions and we have already started to improve the sanction clearance rate. You have already seen it climb 3% in a month, we would hope that over the next few months it will continue to climb and we will make every effort to make sure that that happens.

Mr Suneil Sharma:

Just one quick question please. Deputy Chief Constable, the most difficult ones to clear up need to be, I know you can get an average of 26% but we need to focus on all the areas of crime, including hate crime. We need to get all that up to 26% as opposed to an average which then shows that the clearance rate on some crimes are very very poor.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I would appreciate an answer in relation to domestic violence.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

The clearance rates with regard to, I have not got a figure here for domestic violence, I do have a figure for indecent assaults and including assaults on children, and those figures average out at 27.4% of a clearance rate. Now that is still not good enough, no clearance rate is ever going to be good enough because that means someone has not been detected. We will continue to strive towards improving our clearance rates, but I take Mr Sharma's point that detecting a shoplifting is not the same as detecting a murder or a rape or another serious crime. That is why I was keen to highlight that for murders, our detection rate is well over 80%, we do put attention on to the more serious crimes and we do put an emphasis on that.

I think ACC Gillespie would like to say something on this Chairman if possible.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

Just to make the point that one of our Districts is actually meeting the target of 25%, that is 'H' District and whether it is coincidence or not, it is also the same District that is involved in a Public Prosecution Service (PPS) pilot project to deliver speedier justice, in other words to get decisions made on cases more quickly. That pilot project has just commenced on 1 October 2007 and it will be interesting to see how that plays into our clearance rates, but it is certainly not all down to that.

The second issue Mrs Kelly, your point about domestic violence. The MARAC project which I believe the Board is aware of, will be a major step forward, and as we move to roll that out across the province I would anticipate to see better rates of satisfaction for domestic violence victims generally. But of course, prosecution is only part of the response to that issue, it is not just about prosecution it is also about supporting the victims and helping them to feel safer within their own homes.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

The Vice Chairman has a supplementary on one the comments you made.

Vice Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Just a quick one Deputy Chief Constable in respect of the 80% clearance rate for more serious crimes, do you know how that compares to our most similar forces in terms of more serious crimes?

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

As far as we are aware, it is well above their clearance rates. Certainly when we discussed murder with the Northumbria people when they were across, we were doing extremely well compared to them.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Final question, Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. Thanks to the Deputy Chief Constable for the presentation and like all of these presentations, there is some good news and some bad news and I will not rehearse any of the earlier speakers comments. But I do think it is important to put a couple of things on the record.

Obviously I do appreciate the focus on domestic burglaries because I know in part of my own constituency there was quite a very significant cluster of burglaries in and around the Lower Ormeau area and I think you would accept in your own local management team that that was unacceptable and work has been done to prevent that and reduce that considerably.

My question really would be around the need, and this is my opinion an important matter of public interest and it leads on from the previous public meeting of the Board. At the last meeting of the Board, we as a Board gave a very clear view to the Chief Constable that we did not want any usage or deployment of TASER weapons until certain conditions had been met. Now within a matter of hours, if not a day or 2, we had in my opinion, a very inappropriate public argument between the Board and the Chief Constable, when the Chief Constable decided in his wisdom that he would not take those views as his direction. Now my question is specifically related to the need to build public confidence, never mind the self respect of this Board, so from my point of

view and on behalf of my party, I want it acknowledged and I would like to think Deputy Chief Constable and I know it is unfortunate that you are here today instead of the Chief Constable himself, I have raised this matter this morning with the Board, the Chief Constable's decision on this. Obviously in the need to deliver an effective policing service I would like to have a formal acknowledgement here this afternoon from yourself, that the PSNI does accept that a fundamental requirement for the delivery of an effective police service is in the building of public confidence. One way of achieving that public confidence is by respecting the principles which should guide all of us which is about performance and accountability. So, if this Board is rendered ineffective by decisions of the Chief Constable that has a very negative impact on very substantial sections of the community, so I do not expect you to address the question from the Chief Constable's point of view, but again it is around 'does the PSNI really understand that there is a need in order to deliver effective policing that we need to build public confidence'?

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, I certainly acknowledge and I have used one example but I could use many others, about how important reassurance and how important public confidence is to us. It is the bedrock on which we are founded, because without public confidence, without public co-operation and I will mention later some other areas of public co-operation where it has been very influential and very helpful, but the whole idea of pursuing public confidence is seen as something that is not core to policing, it is absolutely core to policing. We were very gratified earlier in the year when the Board's own survey said that 83% of the people in this province felt they had confidence, at least to some level in the way that we were carrying out our duties. We would seek to improve that level and we will continue to seek to improve that level by whatever means we need to do.

Public confidence can be achieved in many different ways but one of the best ways is respecting human rights and making sure that we perform to a level that people can say, yes they did their best. We may not have caught everybody, we will probably never catch everybody for every crime, but we will do our best and we will work with people. One of the emphases we have at the minute is to make sure that first line supervisors and officers on the ground understand that every single incident they are called to is about people. It is not about a process, it is not about following a set of

rules or anything else, it is about people and making sure that people are treated properly. It is in line with human rights, and I would put human rights in there Mr Maskey, along with accountability and performance as the principles that we must work to and we will continue to do that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, if I could address specifically the issue of 'B' District and the South Belfast increase in burglaries. I can report successfully today that has been turned round, it is now showing a 7.4% reduction and the detection rate is now approaching 16%. Again using a very effective forensic and arresting prolific offenders and that has actually meant that we have reversed the issue that Mr Maskey mentioned in terms of the rise in burglaries, but it continues to be a concern for us in South Belfast, particularly in the area that he mentioned and around the student accommodation that is there in the multiple occupancy.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Chairman, if I could make a brief supplementary. Chairman, in the presentation Deputy Chief Constable, you mentioned the management of expectations. Now I understand that that is a common phrase that we all use, but I would like that that phrase would almost be turned on its head, it is about mobilising public expectations by engaging with the public who express concerns and using effective partnership working arrangements to, as I said earlier on, to deliver on good policing.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could I encourage you now Deputy Chief Constable if you could return to your introductory statement and could I ask you, perhaps I suspect you are going to refer to it, so I will ask Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson to ask question 11.

Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson:

Thank you Chairman. What progress has been made in co-operation with the Garda in apprehending those responsible for the recent murder of Paul Quinn from Cullyhanna?

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

In your opening statement if you would go on.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

I will refer to that Rt Hon Donaldson and we can come back to it if you wish.

Chairman, since we last met there have been several significant incidents in Northern Ireland. Shortly after we last met indeed, we had the terrible murder of Harry Holland and it was due to co-operation of the public and good police work at the time, that we now have several people charged with that murder.

We have also had the murder of Teresa Gray which has also been referred to this week which is very recent and has also just been confirmed as a murder. We now know that it was definitely a murder and we are pursuing that actively.

We have had several arrests in the investigation into the Thomas Devlin murder and so far we have one person charged in that case and hopefully we will have more, so it has been a very active period.

We have also had, as had been alluded to in the question, the tragic murder of Paul Quinn south of the border and we are co-operating with the Garda very very actively on that. Indeed, Garda officers are working alongside PSNI officers constantly on a day to day basis on that, but I would be unable to give an assessment as to exactly where that is in terms of its investigation. Just as if this question was being asked of the Garda Commissioner and he was commenting on a murder that had been committed in Northern Ireland, I would hope that he would not make further comment that might prejudice any investigations that I was doing. It would be improper of us to make any detailed discussion of the investigation so far that might prejudice what the Garda are doing because it is a Garda investigation, it is a murder that they will investigate. We will do everything we can and we are doing everything we can, as I have said, day to day liaison is very very active in that case.

During the period since we last met, we have also had the publication of the Ombudsman's Report into the murder of Gerard and Rory Kearns and our investigation of that in Bleary in 1993. We welcome the Ombudsman's finding that there was no collusion in that matter, but we also acknowledge that the Ombudsman did support the family's contention that they were not properly kept informed and that the investigation

could have been of a higher standard and that people were possibly pulled off too early. We acknowledge that, we accept that as criticism of our policing standards. We would say that our Crime Operations Branch would mean that neither of those should occur again and we will look again at that to make sure that neither of those issues would arise again in circumstances. But it is fair to put in context the fact that 23 people were murdered in this province in that one week starting with the Shankill bomb and culminating in the murder of people at the Rising Sun Bar in Greysteele. It was a horrific week, it is actually hard to sit here and think about 23 people from this province being murdered in one week as we sit today, so I would put it against that context.

There have been other developments over the month and I have already mentioned our partnership meeting with Health and Education this week, which I view as quite ground breaking in terms of co-operation across the public sector in Northern Ireland, and certainly I will be looking to follow-up on that and make sure that we get some concrete benefits out of such co-operation.

Partnership working progresses, we had a combined approach to Halloween this year from the Fire Service, the Ambulance Service and others and ourselves to make sure that we tried to get the message out to young people about the dangers of fireworks. Just recently, in conjunction with other 999 services who are co-operating with us, we have decided on a Charity of the Year for next year. Now this will be a 999 Charity of the Year and after an extensive voting process of members, it has been decided that the Northern Ireland Cancer Fund for Children will be that charity, so next year the Ambulance Service, the Fire Service, the Coastguard and ourselves will be conjoined in an effort to try and raise a significant amount of money for that charity.

There has also been a lot of good work ongoing in that period and it is going to take too long to go through it all. I would highlight a few things if I may. The seizure of more cannabis across the province, £50,000 worth of cannabis seized in Coleraine, along with some other drugs. The seizure of another cannabis growing facility in Newcastle. The largest Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) seizure in Northern Ireland since POCA was introduced, the Proceeds of Crime Act was introduced over £700,000 and a restraint order adjoining that which is up to £5million so significant effort by our

Financial Investigation Unit to make sure that we are investigating those crimes which affect all across the province.

I have already mentioned the success of the Family Liaison Officers in Castlewellan in the sense that, the family felt so grateful to them that they invited them to a meeting with the President that the family had been invited to, so I think there is a tremendous amount to be proud of.

In Limavady, following the tragic death of Danielle Gibbons, we have seized over 60,000 ecstasy tablets in that area alone as a result of public co-operation and reassurance that has come to the public out of the police actions that followed on that tragic death, so we are active in all sorts of areas.

In Coleraine we formed a very active relationship with the Muslim community which we are hoping to replicate across the province which should reassure that minority community that we are taking their concerns seriously when they come into contact with the police. A very positive step forward.

Chairman, there is much more I could go on and talk about but I am happy to leave it there and move on into questions.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 4, Trevor Ringland relating to paramilitaries.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

Chairman and Deputy Chief Constable, I think it is worthwhile remembering that in some Members in the Board making, hopefully constructive criticisms, that there is much good work being carried out by the police. This community is changing and changing fairly rapidly and it is a timely reminder in a week that 23 deaths occurred so many years ago that does not happen now and that society is starting to move forward.

Some of the comments you made earlier are reflected in question 4, in that in 1998, the people in this island determined that our conflict was to be over, and so does the Deputy Chief Constable agree, that as “the paramilitaries war is over”, those who

continue to break the law should now be treated as simply criminals, rather than given any badge that they might take honour from? In particular I think of the murder of Paul Quinn and Thomas Devlin and I think it makes a challenge to the communities out there as to how they respond to incidents such as that and responsibilities they have as we try to build society here.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, I totally agree that crime should be called for what it is and no longer dressed up as anything else. Whether that be the term paramilitary or some label of an organisation that in some way gives credibility to people. Criminals should not have any cover, they are criminals. We will do this, we will now talk about criminal gangs and criminals rather than any other type of group.

The activity we are talking about is activity that is aimed at lining pockets of some, making lives miserable for young people through drugs and making people fearful of living in their homes and going about their business. So we will certainly follow a lead and say, this is about criminality not about anything else. We will try and change terminology within our presentations and the way that we talk that starts to talk about criminals and criminal gangs.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Peter Weir has a supplementary to that.

Mr Peter Weir:

Yes, it is just I think arising out of the question I was slightly concerned about the word 'now' within the question and I just wondered if the Deputy Chief Constable could confirm that criminals should have been and indeed were treated as criminals throughout the period of the Troubles. Indeed, the reality is that there has never been any excuse for anybody to be involved in criminal activity irrespective of whether they had any degree or link with an organisation or not and indeed, there is no excuse for violence or criminality and never has been.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

I could not agree more with those sentiments. Chairman, we have treated everyone as criminals as they have come before us, not everyone but everyone who was.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Jeffrey Donaldson had a supplementary to his question 11.

Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson:

Thank you very much. Deputy Chief Constable, I understand that primarily the Garda are in the lead on the investigation into the murder of Paul Quinn. Nevertheless, I am disappointed that there is no report of any arrests having been made on either side of the border. We are now getting on for 2 weeks after this murder. It has major, major political consequences, never mind the criminal investigation. I just think it is unfortunate that no information can come out into the public domain about the assessment of how that investigation is proceeding, because I think people are looking at this situation, they are wondering why no charges have been preferred. We have names being bandied about all over the place of who may or may not have been involved in this murder. Certainly the information I have is, that the police on both sides of the border have a pretty clear picture of who may have been involved in this murder and I appreciate that the investigation is ongoing but it is, I think, slightly disconcerting that we do not have information in the public domain about the progress that is being made and I would just welcome, Mr Chairman, from the PSNI a little more information. Have any arrests been made and what at least the level of co-operation that the PSNI are receiving on this side of the border to the ongoing investigation because I know that the investigation is taking place on both sides of the border?

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, the political implications of this are not for us. Our investigation is to help the Guards detect a murder, those people who murdered Paul Quinn, that is where our concern is and I think the concern must be with the Quinn family and those in the immediate family circle. That is what we are working towards, we will continue to do that and neither I nor any of my officers will be giving public information that might in some prejudice that investigation, that is not to say that I appreciate the Board's desire

to know more about this terrible crime and what is going on and I will ask ACC Sheridan to give any more information we can.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, the Deputy Chief Constable is quite right that the Garda are taking the lead in it. Now it would be proper to say for the most part, most of the witnesses, the suspects and so on will be on this side of the border and that in actual fact, to a large extent, that what is on the southern side of the border is a crime scene, but nevertheless, that is where the murder took place so the Guards will lead on that.

I spoke yesterday with my colleague, the Assistant Commissioner down South, about the work that is going on on our side of the border, and even up to yesterday and the day before, there are house to house enquiries going on in South Armagh with a Garda officer and a PSNI officer in homes right across the border where no police officer, either on the Garda side or on our side has been refused entry. We have found that the co-operation has been of a very high standard and the Garda would agree with that.

In so far as arrests, we will have to be led by where the Guards want to go on this. We are in the initial phase of investigating and assisting in an investigation on our side of the border, all of that information including intelligence, including any information we have, has been shared with the Guards they will make the call when they want arrests to happen. It obviously is complicated by the fact that it is a cross border investigation but that is where we are currently.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

A few questions relating to illegal activity on the border, question 18 Peter Weir on cross border smuggling.

Mr Peter Weir:

I wonder could the Deputy Chief Constable make a statement on levels of cross border smuggling.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

I will ask ACC Sheridan to give information on that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, Members will be aware the lead responsibility for operations to counter cross border smuggling lie with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and not with the police, we do not lead on that capacity. However, I sit on the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) with partner agencies which include Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Assets Recovery, SOCCA, along with private industry.

We continue to share intelligence across those agencies in relation to cross border smuggling. The full scale of cross border smuggling remains difficult to clarify and there have been ongoing operations planned to address some of those issue in it. If we can give, by way of example, some of the successes in the work that is going on around cross border smuggling.

For the period April 2006 to March 2007, there was over £22 million worth of drugs seized. Over**(tape inaudible)**

.....the lead for this is with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. We are one of the partner agencies in it.

Mr Peter Weir:

Yes, I wonder arising out of that, could you give us some degree of assessment of the level of involvement by each of the paramilitary organisations, both republican and loyalist, main stream and dissidents in cross border smuggling, the current involvement?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Well, there are a number of groups involved in it. People who were probably in former paramilitary groups who have relinquished that role and are now involved in the smuggling activity of fuel, avoidance of revenue, counterfeit goods, etc., but it is also fair to say there are other people who were not in any of these groups using the border as a means of smuggling goods across the border.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Questions 19 and 2. The first relates to an illegal fuel rackets and the second to illegal dumping, Mrs Dolores Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Thank you Chairman. I want to ask the Deputy Chief Constable for an update on co-operation in respect of illegal fuel rackets and on illegal dumping.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Once again, I will ask Peter Sheridan to answer that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Again, Chairman, primarily the fight against those lie with other agencies. For example, illegal dumping is Environmental Heritage Service or Driver Vehicle and Licensing Agency and indeed local councils have a responsibility. For the illegal fuel rackets - Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. We continue to work closely with them. As I said in the previous question, I sit on the Organised Crime Task Force with all of those partner agencies. We share intelligence. We share information. We assist them in cross border planned operations, including with An Garda Siochana and we will continue to do that. By way of examples of some of the work that is going on – 16 laundering plants disrupted 2005/2006, one million litres of fuel seized, 956 vehicles seized, 2 gangs disrupted across the border. The loss of revenue in 2005 for oil fraud was somewhere in the region of £280m but we continue, as I said on the Organised Crime Task Force to target that activity.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Another question on cross border illegal activity, cross border drugs trade, Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Again would the Deputy Chief Constable, gave us some idea on what work is being done in co-operation with An Garda Siochana to tackle the cross border drugs trade and if he could make particular mention of Derry?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

This is definitely one we lead on. I sat last week at the Organised Crime conference down in Dublin with colleagues in the Garda, including Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Irish Customs Agency, Assets Recovery, SOCA and even at that event, we sat and drew up a level of agreed targets for the incoming year. Cross border targets that both Irish Customs, ourselves, the Garda National Drugs Unit are going to target over the incoming year and we have set up objectives for those. We continue to share intelligence on focused targets and this year alone, that intelligence has led us to a number of arrests, seizure of drugs and cash seizures. There is a regular exchange of intelligence in support of those operations. There are regular contacts and meetings and not just at the senior level but right across cross border districts, so each of the District Commanders meet on a monthly basis with our counterparts to discuss local drugs matters.

In my own department, the Chief Superintendent who heads the organised crime group works with his colleague in An Garda Síochána. There are quarterly meetings with the Head of the PSNI and the Drugs Squad from the South of Ireland and we continue to review those operations and identify trends. I can assure the Board that there are joint targeted focused operations on people who we suspect are exploiting both sides of the Border on this.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Two questions, I am going to bring them together, 13 and 14, attacks on Orange Halls, Tom Buchanan.

Mr Tom Buchanan:

Thank you Chairman. Could I ask the Deputy Chief Constable to day to make a statement on the ongoing attacks on Orange Halls? What measures have been implemented to stop such attacks and how many perpetrators have been charged or brought to justice for such attacks and could he also detail the number of attacks on Orange Halls that have been reported to the PSNI in each of the last 12 months?

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, as all of these attacks occurred in Rural Region, I will ask Mrs Gillespie to answer that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

Attacks on Orange Halls and other symbolic premises are a symptom of a much deeper seeded sectarian problem which the police alone will not address. We are on record, on many occasions, saying that we will work in partnership with any agency that is willing to help us to solve this issue. So, it is certainly not a problem that we alone are going to solve.

Whilst I would say that across Northern Ireland, and the Deputy has already mentioned that criminal damage has substantially reduced, in fact by 20.7%, there have been 45 attacks on Orange Halls across Rural Region in the past 12 months and that is obviously a cause for concern.

The strategy across Rural Region focused on 3 main elements; prevention, detection and reassurance.

In relation to prevention, we deployed district tactical support group, roads policing and other specialist resources in the vicinity of sensitive buildings, for example, Orange and GAA Halls and places of worship. In a number of areas, because of the particular problem in isolated rural areas, we have had conversations with local Orange Orders. These and other key premises deemed to be at risk have been drawn up on a prioritised list, in consultation with the local Lodges and the District Orange officials. With the result, we can prioritise, therefore, our patrols around those areas give reassurance that we are taking this issue very seriously. In fact, when we have deployed patrols in those areas, we have maintained a running log of when exactly patrols have been in the area, so that if there is a further attack, we can at least tie into when police were last in the area.

We have also made crime prevention advice freely available to all of those Lodges. I have released additional finance from the regional reserve which is held at Region at this time of the year, once we are half way through the financial year, I have released

some overtime reserve to allow us to focus on this particular problem, especially in the Craigavon, Armagh and Newry areas.

In relation to detection, where appropriate we have appointed a Senior Investigating Officer, a detective with detective experience to review and co-ordinate the incidents happening in the area. We have deployed a number of covert resources and we are continuing to consider where appropriate deploying further covert resources.

Crime scene investigators attend those scenes and where appropriate, there are forensic samples recovered, as was in the Strabane case that was mentioned earlier. Recent investigations would show that actually these attacks have been perpetrated by local youths, local teenagers and a number of arrests that we made recently have supported that theory. They generally take place late in the evening or in the early hours of the morning which make them very, very difficult to detect and without the support of the community and in fact it was the witness statements and witnesses that came forward reporting those attacks very promptly to the police that led to those arrests. So without that support, we will find it very, very difficult to make arrests.

Where intelligence indicates that attacks have been perpetrated by an unlawful association and where an application is submitted, we will obviously assign a Chief Constable's Certificate and that will be issued without delay.

Since June of this year, there have been 8 arrests resulting in 5 persons charged and 3 persons reported to the Public Prosecution Service. I have also tasked my Rural Crime Analyst to look at the patterns emerging across Rural Region to make sure, that if there is a pattern emerging around time of day, day of the week or a number of Orange Halls being attacked in sequence, we will pick that up very quickly.

Finally, in relation to reassurance, high visibility patrolling in vulnerable areas which we have already agreed with the local Lodges, ongoing engagement with the key stakeholders, availability of crime prevention advice and press releases where we have made arrests will continue to be made.

Now in relation to how many attacks have been reported in each of the last 12 months, I have a comprehensive list which I am very happy to share with you at the end of the meeting which details every attack that has been reported to us. But it is clear that there is a pattern that the attacks seem to increase in the month of July. In fact, there were 12 attacks on Orange Halls in the period from 10th to 13th July this year and there have been 9 attacks on Orange Halls in October of this year. Four in Craigavon, 1 Armagh, 1 Newry, 1 Banbridge, 1 Rasharkin and 1 in Belfast. Rather than go through each individual attack, I am happy to share the comprehensive list with the Member at the end of the meeting.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

As ACC Gillespie has said Chairman, there have been a small number of attacks in my Region. I have ensured that the information that ACC Gillespie has gathered and the operations that the ACC is doing are shared with my Commanders. Each of my Commanders has a clear prevention and investigation plan in relation to any potential attacks that would be perpetrated against Orange Halls, that is to say if Urban Region's or Rural Region's activities would potentially displace the crime towards Urban.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary from Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson.

Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson:

Thank you Chairman. There has been some public comment that the attacks in Craigavon are linked to dissident republican groups. Would the Deputy Chief Constable or indeed ACC Gillespie comment on an assessment that might suggest that this is an attempt to provoke a reaction as much as anything else, that it is part of a strategy? It is not just about attacking Orange Halls, but there is a political motivation behind it and a strategic motivation which may be about trying to stir things up in certain areas?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

There is no specific intelligence to say that but it is clear from the pattern of attacks, that they occur at key times. For example, the clear pattern that the attacks increase in the month of July could be interpreted as clearly sending out a statement to increase

sectarian tension. It is interesting that there has been an increase in attacks in the month of October and we are trying to get to the very root of that. If there is intelligence to suggest that dissident republicans are involved obviously that leads us to sign a Chief Constable's Certificate which means there is compensation available. But there is no specific intelligence to say that these attacks are being organised or to ferment sectarian tensions at this point in time.

Chairman Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 7, relating to the Injury on Duty Payment, Mr Gearóid ÓhEára.

Mr Gearóid ÓhEára

Go raibh maith agat. My apologies folks, I submitted this question in a bi-lingual format which an administrative error somewhere did not get to you, so with your indulgence I will give you it in the language of my choice and you have the translation in front of you.

Ag amharc ar na costaisí móra atá á gcaitheamh as a gcuid buiséidí ag Seirbhís Póilíneachta Thuaisceart a Éireann ar íocaíochtaí Gortú ar Dhualgas (GAD), an dtig leatsa, mar Leas-PhríomhChonstábla, míniú dúinn cé na céimeanna atá tú ag glacadh chun na figiúirí seo a laghdú agus an dtig leat a mhíniú dúinn (a) cá mhéad iaroifigigh dá chuid a fuair cúiteamh nó pacáistí scartha chomh maith le híocaíochtaí GAD agus (b) cá mhéad airgead a shálábhfaí dá nglacfaí íocaíochtaí GAD san áireamh maidir le pacáistí scartha agus cásanna cúitimh? Go raibh maith agat.

You have the English, I will not bother reading it out.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I think you should read it out for the benefit of the audience.

Mr Gearóid ÓhEára:

I forgot that the audience does not.....Given the massive costs of the Injury on Duty (IOD) payments currently coming out of the PSNI's budget, could the Deputy Chief Constable tell us what measures you intend to take to reduce this figure and could you tell us (a) how many former officers have claimed either compensation or severance

pay plus IOD payments and (b) how much might be saved if compensation awards and severance packages had taken into account IOD payments?

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman. Thanks very much for the question. I am not sure that we will be able to answer the quantification parts of it, but I will ask Joe Stewart to take you through as much as we can.

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

Thank you Chairman. My colleague, David Best is looking at statistical data around finances of both compensation for IODs and severance and we will come back to you with that written data as we assess its availability.

You referred in your question to what measures we intend to take. What I would like to respond to is the matters that we have taken. Actions we have taken already in terms of our health and safety procedures. There is a very extensive list and I am just going to pick them very selectively. Firstly, we re-engineered the health and safety function in 2002 and staffed it with individuals who are professional in every way in assessment of risk and accident and prevention, which in the long time will pay extreme benefits.

What the Board is now looking at, is of course, long term, long tail IOD claims in many cases resulting from public order situations that thankfully no longer pertain in the main.

Some of the things that we have done, we have introduced a new software package for incident reporting and claim management in 2004, which means that all these things are properly recorded. We have produced a template for local health and safety policies, updated to suit the change in organisation. We have engaged in Health and Safety Awareness Roadshows, about accident prevention right across the whole structure of the organisation. We have trained Risk Assessors in all departments throughout the organisation and the programme continues. We have health and safety training for all Operations Managers and that is continuous and ongoing. We have manual handling training for Operations Managers as well and that is continuing and ongoing. We have developed e-learning packages for dynamic risk assessments, for the care of substances hazard to health and control measures associated with that. We

have established local health and safety committees in all Departments, Districts and Headquarters and we provide guidance and advice to them. Health and Safety Advisers have been designated in specific Districts and Headquarter premises and we have been training them. We have introduced a new accident audit tool. We have introduced safety alert notices which enables us to learn lessons from situations where people receive injuries. I chair an Executive and Health Safety Committee. The Deputy Chief Constable and I participate in a Claims Management Committee together with Members of this Board, I am the health and safety lead for the Association of Chief Police Officers across the United Kingdom which enables me to have if you like, a helicopter view of trends in injuries and accidents throughout policing across the United Kingdom. So we have adopted a very, shall we say, comprehensive and aggressive response to prevention in terms of accidents and incidents of injury at work.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary – Martina Anderson, sorry Gearóid go on ahead.

Mr Gearóid Ó hEára

If I could just ask? Thig liom a dhéanamh i nGaeilge más maith leat. Based on the evidence and the information that is being presented to us at the HR Committee and at some strategy days that we are doing, it would appear that injury on duty is running somewhere like £14m over the most recent period. If that was taken into account at a point where compensation cases are being discussed and worked out and if that was disclosed in Court that people had access to that recourse, which is almost a secondary source of compensation, that the figures would not be what they are at the minute. In other words, that people would either get compensation or IOD, or it would be taken into account but they would not get both. In severance package there could be savings made if what is available to people was made known. That is probably key to this question.

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

I do not have the details of that which is why you have asked for quantification and statistics and as I said, my colleague, the Director of Finance has actually undertaken that as an activity but I believe this is a matter that has the responsibilities both on the

Board and at PSNI in this regard and it is a shared responsibility and therefore an approach needs to be adopted which reflects that.

Mr Gearóid Ó hEára:

That is exactly why I have posed the question, so maybe we could bring that back to HR at some stage in the near future.

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

By all means.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Martina Anderson, supplementary.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Go raibh maith agat. Given that you are saying that it is a shared responsibility, do we not need a root and branch review of the practices that are resulting into what is amounting to an economic scandal here with the amount of money is spent between injury on duty and we had a conversation earlier on today about hearing claims. Can you confirm that for some of the claimants that we are taking about up to £1,200 per month tax free for life and you are not talking about a working life of age 65 but you are taking about for life where one could live to 100. That is the kind of money we are taking about being given out to claimants on these IODs. It is little wonder that there is stress and pressure on the budget if that is the kind of money that is being spent on those kind of claims.

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

I think the first issue is whether the injury on duty is justified. If the injury on duty is justified, then as I think most Board Members will well know, then the terms in which that is settled is in accordance with the medical assessment of the injury which then flows into the regulations is cover payments under injury on duty. So it is not something that is made up by somebody in Police Headquarters. It is covered by Police Regulations and by medical assessment. Now we can all have different opinions about the accuracy of medical assessments. We can all have different opinions about the validity of claims but where the claim is substantiated, where the medical assessment

has taken place, then the regulations kick in, as I understand it, in terms of the assessment of benefit and that flows back to the injury suffered by the officer relative to his or her capacity to earn similar earnings in a similar job.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary and the final one on this question – Mr Jeffrey Donaldson

Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson:

Thank you Mr Chairman. Would Mr Stewart confirm that the most rigorous medical assessments are carried out in these cases and I have dealt with a number of them in the past representing people?

By coincidence, I had a conversation last night, quite a distressing conversation with a police officer who was involved in two bomb explosions in the 1980s and his life, the life of his family, his wife has attempted suicide twice as a result of the trauma that has been visited on that family. The family have been bankrupted, they are living in a house with no carpets on the floors, the husband is in receipt of an IOD pension but it does not go anywhere towards covering the financial loss that and this man who is in his mid 40s continues to suffer with his family as a result of terrorist actions. I do not think this Board or the PSNI should be in the business of denying to people what is their legitimate right; people who stood in the front line when there were others who were out there trying to kill people, innocent people trying to murder police officers. I think we have a duty and would Mr Stewart agree, that the law provides for IOD, there is rigorous testing, rigorous assessment and if we are making financial cutbacks, it certainly should not be about cutting back from those who served well and who continue to suffer.

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

I believe that there is rigorous assessment. Every individual applicant is assessed by our own medical assessors. They are then assessed as I understand it by the Board's medical advisers who reach a conclusion and if that is not a satisfactory outcome to the individual, then that individual has a right to appeal to the Northern Ireland Office and the Secretary of State appoints a medical adviser to advise him on the validity of the claim and the percentage of disablement that goes with that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

This brings us to the final question today. Question 5, Mr Basil McCrea

Mr Basil McCrea:

Thank you Chairman. I have had to wait a while to get this question but for the benefit of the audience and colleagues and the police here, I am going to ask the question in English so that we can all understand it.

We take issue with statements that have been made previously about the operational independence of the police. As far as the Ulster Unionist Party is concerned, it is non negotiable. It is the foundation of effective democracy. But it is right of course that other people do get involved and since we last met, we have seen the reconstitution of the DPPs bringing on the political representatives and Sinn Fein and of course that has to be welcomed as we all take part in this process of oversight and assistance. So I would be interested Deputy Chief Constable if these arrangements, the DPPs whether they are effective and efficient and I mean that in a very positive way. That it was a good idea but there are sometimes concerns that when we try and reach out to people that it takes an awful lot of your resource and your officers' resource but maybe there are better ways that we can do to make them more effective. So I wonder if you could comment please.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

I think the original question was around the quantity of resources that we put into liaising with DPPs but I am quite happy to answer that and the question that the Member has asked.

Chairman we obviously put a lot of resources towards DPPs. We have found them very valuable exchanges, not all the time, not every time of course not and in different degree of speed of development across the Province but our engagement with the public is vitally important. We have had various conversations today about how important it is to engage the public and we have also given a lot more examples than I can recall at a Policing Board meeting of times when we have had great assistance from the public and that has helped. So I think it is working. Yes it is working and things are working forward. Our relationship with DPPs has developed substantially

since it was first engaged a few years ago. It is true to say that it does take a lot of resource; there are DPPs; there are Community Safety Partnerships, there are various methods of oversight that all take time away from actually doing the job and we must be sure that we spend our time wisely and efficiently. But one of the ways that we do spend our time efficiently, I think, is in our engagement with the public, be that through DPPs or other bodies. I am going to ask ACC Gillespie to give an answer on behalf of the 2 Regional ACCs just as to how they found it for their officers.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

In as much as there is anything really to add in terms of the value of public engagement, I would point to the recent DPP meeting in Crossmaglen as a really positive development and a really good example of positive public engagement in which members of the public for the first time in that community, had the opportunity to hear police give the account of how they deal with anti social behaviour and local crime problems in that area. So the DPP model provides a really effective opportunity for the public to engage with the police and especially influencing the local Policing Plan. How the police prioritise resources and engaging community support for crime prevention initiatives because the DPP also have a responsibility in that regard as well.

The resources that we commit, Area Commanders attend all DPPs meetings, public and private and they may at times bring along other specialist resources, for example, roads policing, crime operations, community police officers and other specialist departments, if the DPP has requested a brief on a particular local crime issue.

The District Commander attends the meetings on a rotational basis and sometimes those meetings can take the form of a themed meeting. For example, on drugs, child protection, hate crime, roads policing and those are very useful in increasing the DPPs awareness of how this organisation actually functions.

Resources used in the preparation work, well that depends on the number and timeliness of questions asked rather like this Board meeting itself. In addition, Area Commanders will sometimes require additional background information which requires the use of their local police analyst.

In each District, there is at least one police officer or staff member who performs a performance quality and assurance role full-time in each District. Of course, that is not just in support of the DPP meetings but also monitoring District performance and helping the District Commander report to ACC McCausland and myself on performance.

You asked in the question about suggestions for improvement. Obviously greater clarification and streamlining around the Community Safety Partnership and DPP role would prevent duplication of effort and we are on record saying that many times. But I would point to some good practice in some areas. For example, in H District, the local community reassurance strategy has been drafted with a specific column for tangible actions by the District Policing Partnership, so community reassurance is not just an issue for the police. It is also in partnership with the DPP. There are many cases where joint training has taken place and again I would point to really good practice in E District where there has been joint training at Steeple in the Hydrominerva suite where the DPP and the police jointly tackle local policing problems and that has certainly enhanced understanding of how our priorities are set.

Finally, can I encourage DPP Members to take part in ride alongs and visits. I know in Urban and in Rural Region that has happened frequently and I would very much encourage that to happen more because it certainly enhances the understand of the DPP Members and I would extend that invitation to Board Members to take part in visits and ride alongs with District Commanders in their local areas.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Deputy, I thought we were finished but my attention has been drawn to the fact that you agreed to comment on Restorative Justice and the added value that an agency that has signed up to everything and all the requirements in respect of this, what they bring to the ongoing process to create a safer and more peaceful community. Maybe you would care to comment on it.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

As someone who was involved with Restorative Justice Schemes in England, I am convinced that Restorative Justice can be a very valuable addition to the Criminal Justice System. They can make a real difference to victims; giving victims much more confidence about the outcome of the Criminal Justice System. Even in cases where perhaps little sanction has been imposed by the Court on the offender but I am going to ask Superintendent Rob Drennan from our Criminal Justice Department to go through in a more detailed answer.

Superintendent Rob Drennan:

The Criminal Justice Review recognised that Community Based Restorative Justice Schemes have a role to play in dealing with low level crime and with anti social behaviour that is of concern to our local communities providing they work within an agreed framework and with the involvement of statutory agencies including the police. There are now protocols that offer that framework within which schemes can work to assist in making communities safer. Some of the potential advantages that have been noted in relation to such schemes would include being less bureaucratic and quicker, the potential to divert offenders, especially young offenders away from the Courts. Restorative interventions can give a higher level of satisfaction for victims who have an opportunity to participate more in the process and also Restorative Justice can assist in reintegrating offenders back into the community making it less likely that they will be isolated which can spiral into further problems in the future.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary, Alex Maskey and Dolores Kelly and David Rose.

Mr Alex Maskey

Thank you Chairman. Given that this question was put on behalf of the Community Engagement Committee, I thank the Deputy Chief Constable and his officer for giving us that response. Obviously we have dealt with this in the past in these public formats and I very much appreciate previous commitments from the PSNI and the Chief Constable that such concept like Restorative Justice and projects involving Restorative Justice will be a very complimentary element of good policing overall. I do appreciate the response you have given us this afternoon at fairly short notice.

Obviously just further in recent terms; in fact in the last number of days, we have had a further report from Criminal Justice Inspectorate which has I think given some very interesting comments. I would just ask that in support of your earlier comments and in fact in recent months, that this work with the various projects involved in Community Restorative Justice is ongoing works, work in progress and obviously you will take some of the comments, some of us have been very complimentary from a Criminal Justice Inspectorate report recently published.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

We will look at the report and take forward the work.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Dolores Kelly.

Ms Dolores Kelly

Chairman, whilst not wishing to diminish in anyway the work and the added value that Community Restorative Justice Schemes have, I would like to think that the police would agree with me that those involved in those scheme, the schemes themselves must be accredited and those involved must meet the high standards which vetting agree. I do not think we would want people making judgement within our communities and others whose own background and own integrity might well be questionable.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

We worked long and hard on this, as Members are aware with the Northern Ireland Office, to make sure that we have got something which we think is acceptable to the community and that does include the nature of people who are involved in the schemes and we will continue to hold that position. We have always said that vetting is important.

Mr David Rose:

I think Dolores has touched on some understandable fears that people would have. I am a fan and an advocate of Community Restorative Justice. Could you just make a comment on whether a scheme would be more effective if the people running it come

from within the community or if they come from outside in a car, get out and go into their office and are sort of unknown to people who live there.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

I can only comment Chairman from my own experience of taking part in Restorative Justice Schemes in England and certainly there local friends of both the victim and the perpetrator were invited along. So the local element was provided by people who were alongside those who were taking part in the Restorative Justice conference. There has to be a local element to it. There is no question of that to make it effective. I think that is true. Whether or not the people who actually conduct the process have to be from the local area, I would not feel qualified to make a comment on that to be truthful.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Can I say thank you Deputy Chief Constable and through you to your officers for rising to the challenge of accountability today and thank you very much indeed.