

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY, 6 MARCH 2008 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
Mrs Dolores Kelly
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr Basil McCrea
Mr Daithí McKay
Ms Mary McKee
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
Mr Gearóid Ó hEára
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
Mr Brian Rea
Mr Trevor Ringland
Mr David Rose
Mr David Simpson
Mr Peter Weir

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

Sir Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)
Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief Constable)
Mr Alistair Finlay (ACC Crime Support)
Mrs Judith Gillespie (ACC Rural Region)
Mr Duncan McCausland (ACC Urban Region)
Mr Peter Sheridan (ACC Crime Operations)
Mr David Best (Director of Finance and
Support Services)
Mr Joe Stewart (Director of Human
Resources)
Ms Gail McGreevy, (A/Head of Media &
Communications)
Chief Superintendent Brian Maguire
(Operational Support)
Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell
(Drugs Squad)
T/Superintendent Ruth Smyth (Command
Secretariat)
1 PSNI Personnel

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

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

APOLOGIES:

Mr Suneil Sharma

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

You are all very welcome to this meeting in public of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, and we apologise that we are starting a few minutes late.

Since our last meeting there has been a change of membership at the Board, the Board would wish to put on record its thanks to Jeffrey Donaldson. He brought to this Board, considerable political skills, a sense of purpose and a quiet style. His replacement, as you all know, is Ian Paisley Jnr, who given his experience on the Board from 2001 to 2007 brings much knowledge of policing to our deliberations.

We have a revised format to today's meeting in public. We keep learning as to how best to do this. Chief Constable, after your opening remarks, we will take questions from Members on the Policing Report, then move to the presentation on drugs policy, followed by questions. Questions generated from Committees will follow and finally, Members general questions. There is still a lot of business to get through, so Members and PSNI officers you will be asked to keep questions and answers within the agreed times, and we hope there will be no exceptions and so down to business.

On Tuesday of this week, we published and launched the Policing Plan for 2008/2011. Within the designated domains or areas of work, the identified objectives and performance indicators, the Plan set a range of challenging targets for the police to meet. Critical to the delivery is, of course, the issue of resources and the Board has been concerned for some time about the level of funding to be made available for policing under the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) for the next 3 years, also its potential impact on the delivery of the Plan, and the Board will be having further discussions about that this afternoon.

Whilst the Board recognises that the Government worked hard to achieve the best possible funding settlement for policing here, the outworkings of the Comprehensive Spending Review proved challenging in achieving a balanced budget.

Chief Constable, at this stage over to you.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman. As you just mentioned, when we last met the CSR allocation had been made to the Police Service, and we have been working since that date through the details of that allocation to see what it means in our judgement for policing. It is a matter of fact that we are a publicly funded body and we have to live within our means and within our allocated budget, and indeed in law, achieve a balanced budget as I am the accounting officer for it. That is our intention and our clear determination. Members of the Board know, they have received papers which set out a series of options to achieve a balanced budget. We are facing I think, some very significant challenges as you just mentioned Chairman, and some very difficult choices. We will meet those challenges in a professional and effective way in which you would expect and, of course, in full consultation with you. But I do want to set this briefly in some context.

The latest CSR round seeks to set police budgets for the next 3 financial years. We are discussing, obviously as a matter of urgency, the year which is about to happen. There is a gap across the CSR period of some £88m in revenue funding, that is to say money needed for the day to day running of our business. That is the gap between what we considered appropriate in our submission and the allocation. There is also a shortfall in capital requirement. That having been said, it remains our objective to make Northern Ireland a safer place for everyone. However, with the funding scenario facing us, it is inevitable there will be some impact on the style and delivery of services, and the challenge we face, as we all do in this room, will be to minimise the impact of those cuts on frontline policing.

Such are the pressures facing us, that I and my Senior Command Team believe the accepted drive for efficiency savings on which we have delivered over the last 5 years, must be supplemented by a number of major actions, and some of those suggestions have been forwarded to you, and I have been asked not to comment on them publicly until we meet this afternoon to discuss them with the Board in some detail.

What I can say I think is, I am confident, through proper financial management at all levels, we will achieve a balanced budget. We have done it for the last 5 years, there is no reason why we cannot do this year.

I think it is a matter of record and it is an obvious statement really, there is no such thing as policing on the cheap and I do not believe any simplistic comparisons between the police service here and other UK police services is appropriate, or indeed, helpful at this stage in Northern Ireland's development.

Members of the Board are fully aware of the differences between policing here and elsewhere and the Policing Plan that I was present with you Chairman earlier this week, and the Chief Executive and many of my Senior Officers, attempted in fact to qualify that difference in some fiscal term. The reality is, policing in some areas of Northern Ireland where the dissident republican threat remains high, does require a different approach. Policing in some areas where we are still not fully welcomed makes it harder for my officers to deliver community policing in the style they would wish. The solution to those particular issues are obvious, the more information we get against a few who remain stuck in the past, the quicker we can move Northern Ireland on towards a more truly normal society.

There is another unique area of work and it is truly unique that our budget has to cover. The current public enquiries and other historic issues, including inquests, of which there are some 100 yet to be resolved, are not financed independently in terms of work I have to undertake. Now, this is an area where, in reality, demand is driven from the outside, it is outside my control. I am obliged to carry out whatever work is necessary to find, research, validate and supply material to all these inquiries and, indeed, inquests without question in essence and that is what the law tells me to do and that is what I do do. Much of the material is obviously hugely sensitive so great care has to be taken if we are to properly discharge our obligations, not only under the Inquiries Act 2005, which some of these Inquiries sit under, but also the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and obviously Article 2 of the Human Rights Act considerations.

I confidently, I regret to say, predict that the demands on our budget over the next 3 years in relation to this business will increase outwith my control. In stark terms if I was to summarise it, the budget that we designed collectively and bid for to deal with

policing at present to a substantial extent, is being consumed by policing the past. I am pleased to report the Historic Enquiry Team which is actually making a difference in terms of our history, to some families, is separately funded and does not impact on day to day policing. We are, indeed, policing a legacy of 3 decades of communal strife and whilst we have a growing acceptance and competence across communities, expectations are high. As a result, the challenges of delivering value for money, with a reduced financial resource, will be magnified. Whatever savings have to be made and whatever actions have to be taken, we are committed to working with the Board and communities and their representatives to ensure that what we are doing is what they want us to do with what we have available.

Chairman, you are aware the CSR bid covers 3 years not one and we are still working through the figures for the following 2 years and I am very keen to do that in partnership with the Board. I think we have some hard choices to make.

Currently again, as I said earlier, we have identified some areas where savings can be made, but as of today we still have to identify more in discussion with you.

Despite the pressure on the resource we are continuing to deliver an effective and efficient service. It is worth noting this organisation, supported by the Board, has delivered over £71m of efficiency savings over the last 3 years and that is at a time when we have reduced crime and increased confidence. Of course, driving out more savings on top of what we have already achieved will be an even greater challenge. The bottom line is, that the allocation we have today is less than we had hoped to receive. Notwithstanding that, we have got £964m in our estimations for day to day policing and some £38m for capital expenditure for the next financial year. If you add this to other matters such as pension allocation, the total sum is some £1.2b. That is a substantial sum and we will put it to good use to deliver effective policing against the targets set in the Plan earlier this week.

Chairman, that is all I intend to say about budgets, but clearly it is a key issue which we need to discuss in detail later today and onwards.

In February 2008 since we last met, there have been a number of issues going on Chairman which I will briefly touch on the operational side. You would have seen a substantial effort by Lisburn District Command Unit in relation to underage drinking over the past 3 weeks, that is 'D' District, Lisburn, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey and Antrim. Operation Marsham has been focused on tackling underage drinking, that is just part of a wider Home Office initiative of which we are one pilot site. This was a very successful operation and a large amount of alcohol was seized from underage drinkers. Feedback from the community has been very positive, and we have also made it clear that after the Operation ends, we will continue to work with local communities and schools to increase awareness of this issue and tackle the associated anti social behaviour that it causes and the pain it causes to communities.

On completion of Operation Marsham, Superintendent Jonathan Kearney from Lisburn will actually brief all other colleagues to make sure that if it is seen as a valuable initiative, and we think it is, then it can be used across Northern Ireland rather than just in Lisburn as a pilot.

A number of incidents in Belfast city centre have made the news in the last month. In particular, the sad death of a young man Aaron Montgomery outside a nightclub, a young man who worked for the Newsletter if I remember rightly. Someone has been charged in relation to that crime with manslaughter and police in South Belfast are dedicated to tackling crime in all areas of the city centre. We do this through hotspot analysis, proactive patrolling and carrying out extensive and thorough operations. At the time when the press was reporting quite a lot of stories in that area, although not necessarily reporting the many arrests the officers had made, a high profile policing operation was mounted to reassure the public.

Overall crime from 1 April 2007 to 7 February 2008 which is nearly now a whole reporting year, in South and East Belfast it is down by more than 15%. That is to say 2,500 fewer crimes and again we know that working in partnership is a far more successful way of bringing down crime than working alone.

In terms of road safety, sadly we report further tragedy on the road, matched only by our determination to work with our partners to reduce the carnage. We all saw last week near Ballygawley, the sad death of 16 year old Nicola Murray in a collision between a lorry and a school bus in which 7 other children were also injured, that investigation is ongoing.

I have to report this year to date, 19 people have died on our roads. Our role is as much on education as it is on enforcement with our other partner agencies, the Department of Environment, Department of Regional Development and the Ambulance and Fire Service as well as our Health Service colleagues.

In terms of a couple of successful operations Chairman, they may not always make the headlines but they are ongoing. A motorway patrol operating a Road Safe Operation which is targeted at looking at drink and drug drivers, intercepted an individual who was acting suspiciously and found he was in possession of drugs to the value of £150,000, Superintendent Bell will talk about drugs in more detail in a little while, and in addition to that, £10,000 in cash. He was arrested and the cash seized and shows another example of partnership between, not only Roads Policing and Neighbourhood Policing, but also CCTV.

ACC McCausland advised me only this morning of another arrest of a burglar, and I know burglary is one of the targets we are increasingly concerned about this year and the following year, but based on our new initiatives around rapid recovery forensic exhibits from scenes and rapid analysis of that, in particular around fingerprints, an identification of an exhibit recovered from the scene led to an arrest of an individual within 5 days. In fact, from identification to arrest was 2½ hours and there is something very powerful about rapid operations where fingerprints and other forensic exhibits lead to a suspect that the quicker that person is brought to justice or arrested, the greater the chances of a successful prosecution.

Chairman, that is all I will say in my opening but I am happy to take questions on that and, of course, anything else Members would wish to ask.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Any questions on the first bit of the paper in respect of the macro position of the budget without getting into detail. Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Thank you Chairman and thank you for your words of welcome, it is nice to be back.

Chief Constable, could you give us an assurance that in terms of how you cut the budget that is in front of you, that you will keep a red line in it and that that red line will ensure that we maintain the 7,500 police officers. Do you accept that if there is a change to that number, that Treasury would look very harshly at you when you go back and negotiate, or the Secretary of State, when he goes back to negotiate with Treasury for more money in 3 years time, and that maintaining 7,500 officers is crucial to public confidence and the maintenance of the service?

Secondly, I was concerned about your comments about the shortfall in capital and the impact on revenue spend, does that give you any concerns whatsoever about the viability of the Police College and if so, is any fresh thinking required on that matter?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I am not going into detail, it is a little bit difficult to say much. In terms of the work we have been going on for the next financial year assumes 7,500 police officers. I am not the first Chief Constable to have signed up to Patten, I am the third actually and to move away from that would be a matter clearly of debate and no doubt the Board would wish to be part of that.

In terms of the capital budget and the Police College, I will ask Deputy Chief Constable Leighton to touch on that.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

The capital budget does not touch the funding that was set aside for the Police College, but obviously we have to look at the budget as a whole and we will discuss all that after this meeting I understand.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman, just a number of comments. Obviously I have listened to the Chief Constable both upstairs and within the last few minutes and appreciate a number of the points he has made and some of his assessments, but I do think it is fully proper and actually essential that discussions in regard to the budget are conducted between ourselves and the Chief Constable and his Senior Team and we will begin that this afternoon. Obviously we have a number of priorities which the Board has interestingly enough worked out with the police over the last several months in regard to the Policing Plan, so it is just a matter of days ago since we launched jointly the Policing Plan for the incoming year and obviously we will want to, as a Board, to make sure that we deliver on that Policing Plan as I dare say the Chief Constable will want to do that as well. So, the discussions around the budget are very properly scheduled to be conducted between this Board and the Chief Constable and his team.

Could I make another point and that is, and I feel obliged to do this, in terms of the elements around what are generally described as 'the past', we have the whole question of inquests. I make the point again for the public record, that very often these inquests and the costs associated with inquests, and indeed some of the Inquiries, actually flow as a result of the resistance to providing information to families and in fact, the refusal to co-operate with inquests. I mean a week ago where the McIlwaine family for example, were advised that they will not have an inquest into the death of their son so all of these things when we refer to them is costing money. We have to go to the source of why they cost money, they cost money because there is a resistance from within the system to actually comply with the need to give the families the information which they entitled to do, so it is the old cliché, the truth does not cost anything, it is the cover ups that cost the money.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I think that is more of a statement, just a couple of observations in reply. I am happy to discuss all the issues with the Board but we have been working very hard from a professional judgement as to how we can minimise the impact of this budget cut on frontline policing.

In terms of the past, it is a complex debate, but 38 years of history is now, and in terms of dealing with these in the legal sense, and it is in the legal sense public inquiries are set up under statute and indeed, the Coroner currently operates under legislation and indeed, current case law, is impacting on our current budget. There is no observation on the rights and wrongs of what happens and what does not happen, the reality is it is happening now, because I have said it is and I am on record repeatedly as saying that people will have whatever they are entitled to within the law and that does include the Human Rights Act and Article 2 considerations whether we like it or not. All of that actually adds to that and adds to the expense. It is worth noting of course, that the Historic Enquiries Team, which is not legally based and operates on the principle of maximum disclosure, has had several substantially successful stories to tell by meeting families and finding out what the families need and then trying to satisfy their curiosity and thirst for information which has been denied to them for many many years. There are other ways of doing this perhaps at a less expensive way.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Basil McCrea and then Mrs Dolores Kelly.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Chief Constable, I realise you were put in a rather difficult position there having been asked not to comment in detail and then been asked specific questions. But, if we were to accept that the figure of 7,500 police men and women is to remain intact, could you indicate to us as a Board, the free resources that you have available and the percentage that the £88m of savings that you are going to have to find, what proportion would that make of your free resources?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Again, we are back into detail. In broad terms about 81% of the police budget goes on salaries, so you are talking of 19% potentially being flexible. If one is realistic about that and breaks it down, a lot of that is not that flexible. We need to have vehicles, we have to pay rates and rent and those sorts of issues so you ever decrease that amount of budget you are cutting that saving out of. That having been said, as I said in my opening comments, we still have £1.2b here, so it is really where you make the savings to maximise the efficiency without affecting the frontend of the business. That is what we have been focusing on doing but it is a difficult circle to square quite frankly. These

are, like any other part of the public sector, what we would like and what we get is always going to be different. My job is to come in on budget as I have said and that is what I intend to do, but the debate in terms of the detail I have been asked not to comment on so I find myself in the same difficult position of going into any greater detail.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Just the percentage though if you were taking that that you have a budget of approximately £1b.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

About 7% or 8%.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I think we have heard for some time the cost of policing the past, and I welcome Mr Maskey's comments in relation to people telling the truth and the truth about the past and all of those who were combatants in the past, and perhaps the cost of policing the past might actually be resolved if we have actually a truth and reconciliation process. The Secretary of State said that this was a good budget for policing, that is clearly not the view of the SDLP and many people in the community, but one of the things that we are very focused on, is delivering on community projects and I welcome the good initiatives that you have highlighted here and trust that many examples of good police work will be rolled out across the North. But in terms of the £10m spend on 51 individuals and providing a policing service to them versus the wider community and providing a good service. Is the Chief Constable in a position to give us an update in relation to the personal protection officers provided to a small number of individuals?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

All I can say in a public session, because we do our best not to talk about security. Difficult though it is, it is under continual review and I am happy to have a conversation with the Board in private session as to progress to date. But I can reassure Board Members it is certainly under, every budget has been looked at by my officers with a very hard edge to look at where we can cut out savings that maximise the protection of the whole community rather than specific parts where that is appropriate.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mrs Martina Anderson.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Chairman, I think the language that is being used about the cost of policing the past needs to be looked at and examined, because you are not looking down the telescope of history. The past that you are talking about is about criminality and crime and that is what is being investigated, so I think that people should refrain from such language of the cost of the past in that way because in terms of trying to build public confidence, I think that people feel you are being dismissive of what needs to happen here and it is an investigation of crime and whatever it costs it needs to be resolved.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, I stand on my record about the past, I have done I would like to think, as much as anyone to try and deal with the legacy issues here. The Historic Enquiries Team is something I set up and I think we rightly claim the credit for, it was something unique in policing, something we have actually been asked to brief the Council of Ministers in Strasburg on next week or the week after. It is a determined attempt to actually do exactly what the victims want us to do which is to tell them as much as we can about the tragedies that they face. So, the issues around crime are police issues, the matters I was talking about were issues that are outwith of my control. I cannot control in any sensible or structural way the amount of input I put to these Inquiries, because to do so would be exactly the point made just then, I would then be seen as obstructing other people looking into the past. The reality is, I put huge resources, including an Assistant Chief Constable, who the Board appointed specifically for this job, into making sure we did discharge our duties to reassure the public that the Inquiries announced by Government were fully resourced so that Inquiries could carry

out their business. The reality is, even with that effort, we still have been subject to quite substantial criticism by some of those Inquiries for not acting quickly enough. If it is the will of this Board in the meeting later, that I put more into that, I am happy to go there, well I am not happy to go there, but I will have that discussion, but everyone I take off to put into looking into history I take out of delivering current policing and that is the equation. It is a difficult one, it is actually unique, but I do have to take exception to the suggestion that I do not take the past seriously.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Peter Weir.

Mr Peter Weir:

Thank you Chairman. Could I first of all welcome the tacit acknowledgement by Ms Anderson that obviously the terrorist campaign of the last 30 years is crime and criminality, which I think is a very positive step forward and acknowledgement by herself.

Chief Constable, can I ask you just on the issue of the underage drinking which you referred to in terms of the pilot scheme that you had put in place. You mentioned at the end of that that the intention because obviously it is a major problem in a wide range of areas throughout Northern Ireland, you have indicated that the intention is to share lessons with other colleagues in an effort to address this across Northern Ireland. Could you indicate what you see is the timescale for that in terms of being able to rollout a programme across Northern Ireland?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC McCausland to cover that. The interesting part of this initiative was we actually, not only by signing up to an initiative actually funded by the Home Office, we actually got some additional funding to allow us to do it as well, but ACC McCausland will go into the detail.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Thank you Chief Constable. We were able to negotiate £5,000 from the Home Office to mount the campaign over 3 weekends. We have already disseminated some of the good practice and we will be running the operation, for example in East Belfast, in the next couple of weeks and we will gradually look to roll the operation across Northern Ireland to different Districts at different times. The success of the operation has been to identify in the first instance, where the problem is, and then to have the public aware and the community aware of what we are actually trying to do and work with the community so that in effect, having removed for example in 'D' District nearly 750 items of alcohol from young people, we then have a clear campaign and a process with the District Policing Partnership (DPP) to actually get into the community with the councils to start talking to the licensees, to talking to the parents and making sure that this is just not a splash in the pan.

There are a number of different issues which the Board, and I have a meeting arranged with the Chairman to talk about alcohol and young people, that the Board may well help us and particularly the MLAs help us in relation to gaps that we can identify in terms of our legislation and the laws that we have here in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the country.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Any other questions on the underage drinking?

Ms Martina Anderson:

Excuse me, I just want to clarify just for the record. In terms of collusion and the role of the State with loyalist organisations in killing innocent people, was crime and that is what I was referring to.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could you just hold on for a minute, anything else on the underage drinking or city centre crime?

Mr Trevor Ringland:

I welcome the work being done by ACC McCausland and his officers and I take it that you are looking at the whole partnership, the holistic approach, the midnight soccer and tying in with other partners, the Probation Board and really starting to get to grips and putting a challenge out to society, how they start dealing with young people and what sort of lessons can be learnt and how we try and turn them in a better direction I suppose than where a lot of them are going at the minute?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Yes Chairman, we are, in fact the Board are actually involved in it under Mr Maskey's chairmanship. We are also involved in co-ordinating a lot of activities in the Urban Region in terms of dealing with young people and I am sure Mr Maskey will be reporting his findings from the Community Relations Committee to the overall Board in the next 3 months.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Okay, Ms Anderson and then Basil McCrea.

Ms Martina Anderson:

In relation to road safety, obviously we are not fully aware of the tragic circumstances that you are referring to of the horrific crash that happened with the lorry and the school bus at Ballygawley, but I would like to ask you what is currently being done around the deployment of the PSNI in terms of policing those accident black spots and have they been identified and are they being policed?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

It is a core task for our Roads Policing but also supplemented by my District colleagues and I will ask them to touch on what is going on. In terms of the precise details, it is still subject to an investigation but it was well reported in the press was the point I was making. But ACC McCausland and ACC Gillespie if you would like to just touch on what we are doing.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

I start with what is happening in Rural Region and then ACC McCausland will add what is happening in Urban Region.

In relation to Rural Region, we have seen an increase in fatal road traffic collisions this year compared to last year, an increase of 15 and obviously that is an increase we are taking very seriously. Foyle District in 'G' District has seen a particular increase in fatalities, 8 compared to none last year.

The Roads Policing Unit in Derry are working very closely with local police and have mounted a number of Road Safe operations, that brings additional resources into the District from Roads Policing and from the Tactical Support Groups and they focus on the main causation factors, speed, drink and driving and inattention. There is also a local police Inspectors Forum run by the Roads Policing Inspector in Foyle and he brings together all the local police inspectors to make sure that there is a co-ordinated and targeted approach towards the main causation factors, and that has been particularly relevant in Foyle, to involve the local police. As the Chief Constable has said, this is not just the responsibility of our Roads Policing Unit, it is the responsibility of every police officer, because after all maintaining life is the first principle of policing and, therefore, local police also take an active interest in this area as well.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

In Urban Region, we are showing a reduction this year, although we are not by any sense, laying or sitting on our laurels, we are down 18 less fatalities to this time last year. Our campaigns are very similar to what ACC Gillespie has outlined. Operation Road Safe we link up with Rural Region so it is across the province approach. They are very much intelligence led and analytically based in terms of actually identifying, as you have asked, the hot spots areas and where we potentially can target police to make the biggest difference.

We are also looking to work with the Department of Regional Development (DRD) and Road Services in terms of engineering out problems and also of identifying technology. For example, we have just introduced static cameras at traffic lights across 4 junctions in Belfast in relation to preventing people from jumping the red lights, and we would

look after having analysed those, to potentially roll that out across different places in the province.

As well as that Chairman, you will be aware of the major campaigns we do mount, such as the Drink Drive campaign at Christmas which has been successful and has seen a reduction of fatalities in relation to that particular causation factor. It is an ongoing battle, it is not a battle that we take lightly. We continue to commit a lot of activity to it, both at District and regional and province wide basis in terms of actually looking to drive down road fatalities, but the reality is, the motoring public have to help us. We cannot do this on our own, it has to be done in a partnership with the motoring public. Simple things like wear your seatbelt, do not use your mobile phone when you are driving, people are still doing that and it can be seen on a regular basis and they face a fixed penalty notice and penalty points as a result, but the public have to think safe in the first instance.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

If any Member wants to go out with our Road Traffic Unit they are most welcome, it can be arranged. I was out last month and it gives you a very good sight on the sort of things they have to deal with on a daily basis.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could I ask through you Chief Constable, ACC McCausland, the incident of someone who dropped off a bridge onto one of the motorways, in a previous incident you will recall dislocation and the rest of it, how did that work out?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

I think the incident you are referring to Chairman would have been at the weekend. The problem was, it was not the individual falling off the bridge, there was emergency road service work going on where 2 walls had been demolished in relation to the major road works that are ongoing on the M2. When the person sadly came off the bridge there was an investigation which we dealt with very quickly and professionally, but that put back then the work that the Road Services were doing because they could not in effect clear the road of rubble, so the road actually was not closed as the result of the person off the bridge. In the morning the road remained closed because the rubble was

still in position and the Road Services worked tirelessly to clear that and get the road reopened, so it was beyond our control.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Last question on the Chief Constable's report, Basil McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

ACC McCausland, just talking about the Lisburn operation. You indicated that there were certainly difficulties with regard to legislation in Northern Ireland compared with other parts of the United Kingdom, perhaps you could put a bit of flesh on the bones on that and indicate how you managed to overcome them for this particular operation that you are going on to.

On a second question but related because of drink, I note the comments of the Chief Constable about the very sad death of Aaron Montgomery and you might indicate to us you will be aware that there were difficulties for the Montgomery family in terms of the release of the body and the distress that that placed upon them and I would be interested to know the constraints that you operate under that actually failed to give the family the satisfaction that they required?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

The second part of the question obviously will be covered by my colleague ACC Sheridan, Crime Operations Department.

I will keep my answer brief, in relation to the actual legislation differences that we found, we do not have for example Juvenile Dispersal Orders. The Board are aware that we do not have Fixed Penalty Notices and we have asked, and the Board are supporting us in relation to that.

The one point the Chief Constable from the first day and hour he arrived in Northern Ireland, has been asking for and I would make an appeal to all MLAs around the table, is give us a Crime and Disorder Partnership, a statutory partnership where people have to work on a statutory basis with us. If we had that that would make a significant difference in the many many of the crime problems, not just alcohol and young people but a lot of other issues which we could deal with and certainly make a real difference in

Northern Ireland, but we need to put it on a formal working relationship basis. We manage to get around some of these issues by in effect, simple goodwill and work with the community and work with our officers in relation to what we actually did on the ground. We do have some basic powers which we used and we emphasised those powers to officers, but there could be far far more we all can do together if we had the correct legislation in place, and it is not rocket science to actually look across the water and see it working very effectively there.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

In relation specifically to Aaron Montgomery's death, we are restricted from saying anything obviously because somebody has been charged before the court in it. But in generic terms I suppose it is fair to say, that in deaths where there is a dispute about whether the actual injury caused the death, then there is the right on behalf of the person charged for their solicitor or barrister to ask for a second post mortem. If that is the case, once the police have carried out a post mortem, if the defence want to carry out a post mortem, that obviously delays the process and it is outwith the hands of the police because obviously in the protection and the interests of the individual charged, that may well be required by them.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Chief Constable, at this stage I would ask you to introduce the Thematic presentation.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman. Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell from the Drugs Squad, as requested, has got a 10 minute briefing on what the PSNI do in relation to drugs.

Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell:

Chairman, a very short presentation which will cover 4 key points. It will look very quickly at how law enforcement is set in the context of the Northern Ireland Alcohol and Drugs Strategy, it will explain the role of Drugs Squad as a sub-branch of C1 Organised Crime Branch, provide a short overview of the Northern Ireland drug market and conclude with a short insight into how PSNI delivers on the Policing Plan.

Very quickly, the overarching strategy for Northern Ireland in relation to alcohol and drugs is the Alcohol and Drugs Strategy 2006/2011 which was reviewed in 2005. You will notice it is the Alcohol and Drugs Strategy, it used to be the Drug and Alcohol Strategy, and it first of all recognises the significance of alcohol problems in Northern Ireland first and foremost, before we even start to consider the problems that we have with drugs.

From a law enforcement perspective, this strategy has made it very clear that law enforcement needs to reduce availability and it says we need to reduce availability through the disruption of organised crime gangs engaged in the supply of controlled drugs and that strategic objective has been distilled down through the Policing Board's objectives. It is also the objective for the Organised Crime Task Force and ultimately it is us in PSNI who try to deliver on that, reduce availability through tackling organised crime gangs.

A quick look at the strategy just by way of background. It acknowledges that law enforcement alone cannot solve the problems associated with drug abuse. Drug abuse moves along a continuum from demand through to supply. If demand did not exist, supply would not have a market, if supply was not there perhaps demand would not be there, so they are all an integral part of the problem, and the supporting pillars of the Northern Ireland Alcohol and Drugs Strategy are prevention and early intervention, treatment and support, law and criminal justice, harm reduction and then monitor and evaluate how that strategy is being effected, how effective it is and in 2011 to review that.

PSNI are obviously the lead agency in law enforcement activity, but we are equally involved with health and education and our officers are represented on 3 key advisory groups set up under the strategy. We have officers in the Children and Young People and Families Advisory Group, we have officers represented on the Binge Drinking Advisory Group and sit on the Law and Criminal Justice Advisory Group. The key point to make here in relation to each of these groups is that we are not the lead agency, this is where we act in support of other Government Departments to try and deliver a partnership approach to tackling the problems.

Leading on to the role of Drugs Squad, and I emphasise Drugs Squad just at this particular presentation. At one time Drugs Squad was a one stop shop for drug related problems in Northern Ireland. If an officer made a drugs seizure, the Drugs Squad was called in to deal with it, that was some years ago and the drug market in Northern Ireland has expanded somewhat over the recent years, and as a consequence, all officers in PSNI, all uniform frontline officers, will at some stage deal with drug offences.

Drugs Squad has now become a more specialised unit, it is now an integral part of C1 Organised Crime Branch. It tackles level 2 and 3 drug criminality and what that means is, level 1 is local district level, level 2 criminals who will cross borders and move from one district to another and level 3 those who will be engaged in national and international trafficking that impacts on Northern Ireland. That is the role of the Drugs Squad.

The Drugs Squad will also provide specialist support to District policing, because obviously there is an expertise within the Squad in relation to the investigation of drugs offences and when Districts ask for support, we bring that support to them.

A key point to note here and I am appreciative of the fact that 2 years ago the Board did change its objectives for policing, at one stage our objective was to increase the amount that we seize each year. The Board now has made us target driven. We are not so much interested in the quantities that we seize, but we are now interested in taking out the individuals who supply the drugs, because quite frankly we can seize drugs all day but if we do not get the individual behind the crime gang who brings in the drugs, we are wasting our time, we have to close down the crime gangs.

Very quickly a number of slides to give you a look at the market in Northern Ireland. Now these slides are slides that show seizure statistics and the point I want to make here is, seizures are only one indicator of the market. Availability, price, purity are all indicators of the market and it gives you an idea that the drugs market or some comprehension of how complex the actual drug market is. As you can see, the heroin problem has not really kicked off in Northern Ireland, and hopefully it will stay that way.

Ecstasy tablets, the seizures reflect the national trend, in that there was a considerable rise over 2002 through to about 2005 and then it tailed off, but recently in Northern Ireland over the latter end of last year and into this year, we are seeing resurgence in interest in ecstasy. Amphetamine, poor man's cocaine, a stimulant drug, reached its peak in terms of seizures in 2004/05 and if you compare this slide with the cocaine slide you will find that as amphetamine drops off, our cocaine seizures are rising. Cannabis, now this slide is actually a good slide to illustrate to my earlier point in relation to we are not commodity driven, we are target driven. In 2006/07, one could be forgiven for saying that PSNI had a good year because of the seizure statistics, but it was one seizure of 3 tonnes which put that statistic right up there and it does not necessarily reflect good police work that year, it was quite simply one seizure.

I am much happier now because one of the key players behind that seizure has been charged with other offences. We could not charge him at the time but he has since been charged with other offences and that is a more important piece of police work than the actual seizure itself, although the seizure is important.

A new trend is the growing of cannabis plants, cannabis production. Nationally it has been a problem for the past 12 months to 2 years where cannabis production sites have sprung up all across Great Britain and that trend has now extended to Northern Ireland. Over the last 3 to 4 months, we have seized cannabis plants in 3 different production sites where there were over 300 cannabis plants being produced by an organised crime gang and that is a new trend in the province.

Finally, in relation to product. Cocaine obviously hits the headlines on many occasions as the new problem in the Northern Ireland drugs scene, and even if we look at the high point there the 36 kilos, 13.6 of those kilos were not actually for the Northern Ireland market, they were stopped at Aldergrove Airport destined for Great Britain, but even if we take that out, what we are saying is, over the last 4 years and bear in mind this year we have not finished, over the last 4 years we have seized at least 20 kilos each year so it certainly is a growing problem.

So, how does the Northern Ireland Alcohol and Drugs Strategy translate into police action. Well as I said, the Drugs Strategy said they want law enforcement to reduce availability, the Policing Board set this target for the police.

Very quickly, before we can take on the drug market we have to understand the nature of that market. This slide shows how the market is made up, basically our level 1, 2 and 3. Level 3 are importers, level 2 are distributors, level 1 street level. The important thing about this slide is that there is no one level more important than the other in terms of policing. Because if we do not know who is doing it at street level we will never identify who is doing it at the middle level, we will never identify or understand who is doing it at the top level, but what we try to do by understanding the makeup of this market, is identify our targets and then take on those targets to try and reduce the availability of drugs on our streets.

So, the key to law enforcement activity directed against drugs supply is to identify local dealers, establish where they get their drugs from and then develop our level 1, 2 and 3 targets. We do not respond to every piece of intelligence in relation to drugs and just as a side issue, we deal with roughly between 1,000 and 1,400 pieces of intelligence every month in relation to drugs supply. We cannot possibly go chasing every piece of intelligence, so what we do is we have to be focused, we try and bring that intelligence together and identify the key players and then focus on those players.

This chart gives you some idea of how we have done that. Two years ago I appointed a Drugs Squad analyst to look at all the intelligence PSNI had in relation to the drug market and we mapped that market out and we mapped it out on the 3 levels. Level 3 - importers, Level 2 – wholesale/ distributors and Level 3 – street suppliers. What we do now, rather than running around and chasing little pieces of intelligence and making drugs seizures all over the place, we focus in on the individuals of crime gangs, the individuals who network and try to bring these drugs into the province.

That delivers on our police performance. As you can see, the first year that we established how many crime gangs we had. We frustrated 5 of those gangs, disrupted 5 and dismantled 4 and the key point here is, this is only Drugs Squad statistics just as a Drugs Squad, it is not reflective of all PSNI statistics. This year we have frustrated 4 gangs, disrupted 8 and dismantled another 4. What we are trying to do on each occasion is dismantle the gangs. Frustration is a step on the road, disruption is a further step, dismantle means we have closed the gang down from top to bottom, from the man who organises it to the guy who brings it in, to the individual who puts it out on the street. The difficulty with these figures is, they do not look as good as a 3 tonne

seizure on the television or a 5 kilos seizure of cocaine on the television, 4, 8 and 4 do not really mean an awful lot so to put that into real terms to give you some understanding of what that means.

The statistics behind the 4, 8 and 4 are 45 arrests. That will be individuals who will have been charged with at least supply offences and probably money laundering offences. The seizure of 8.7 kilos of cocaine, along with cocaine presses which is another feature of the Northern Ireland market. Presses are used to repack the cocaine, to cut it and make it into larger quantities for further distribution. The seizure of 207,000 ecstasy tablets, the seizure of 22 kilograms of cocaine, approximately £1.25m of drugs. On top of that, £164,000 in hard cash and this does not include the assets that we are currently chasing in relation to those individuals that we have arrested, I mean their cars, their houses, their bank accounts that we are still going after. Those are the statistics that you can see. The statistics that we cannot reflect are the successes that we achieve overseas on co-operation with other forces because they are difficult to measure and, on occasions, we are not able to give details. Most recently, An Garda Siochana seized 18 kilos of heroin destined for the Dublin market, that was done with the co-operation of the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Most recently 600 kilograms of cannabis was stopped at Calais by the French authorities, that was done in co-operation with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, that is drugs that do not reach our streets and unfortunately some of the success we cannot always reflect on our statistics. That has got to be the fastest 10 minute presentation I have ever done, Chairman.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

You did very well indeed. Mr David Simpson.

Mr David Simpson:

Thank you for your presentation and I think the question of drugs came up at the last Board meeting in relation to my own area. You mentioned seizures and I would like to ask the first part of the question. When it comes to seizures, have you any figures of where the seizures take place? Is it at the port of entry and you mentioned the airport I think in your presentation as well, because what I am hearing rightly or wrongly, is that most of the seizures are taken or received inland. That the security level within the

docks around the province is not as tight as it once was, so therefore, a lot of these seizures are taken place when the drugs are well in and have started to be circulated.

The other issue is, in dealing with drug dealers or whatever, a lot of elected representatives around this table I am sure, have been approached in the past from constituents who say, 'if you go to such and such a house in a certain estate with the cameras outside the door and steel doors on, you will get whatever you want there', and whenever it is reported, there is maybe a raid done but it continues and this is very frustrating for those who are elected representatives and residents from estates, both loyalists and republican estates. In relation to that could you tell us how you deal with that situation as a whole across the province?

Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell:

If I could deal with the second part of your question first. In relation to that type of scenario, I think if the Chief Constable was to allocate every police officer purely to deal with drugs and drugs problems we would not solve the problem. That type of problem that you have just highlighted, we would not even be able to deal with those problems. The reality is there are individuals who can supply it. Should it be one individual to another, a family to a friend, or an individual who is actually running a little business or a bigger business, those type of problems have to be dealt with at a local level, that type of activity dealt with at a local level. Drugs Squad does not get involved in that, what we try to do as a Squad is cut off his supply before it even gets to him. So that is the first thing we are doing, trying to make sure what that individual is putting out on the street, is difficult for him to obtain in the first instance and that the quantities that he is able to put his hands on that it is the absolute minimum. Then it is down to local problem solving and dealing with all the issues, reducing demand, education, treatment for those who go looking for the drugs, working with the Housing Associations and that is local policing issue, which to be honest, I am probably not best placed to comment on, but it is a real problem and I do not believe there is an easy answer to it, they will pop up.

In relation to seizures, there are many layers to seizure activity. There is activity taking place and we can take it to the extreme. Seizures taking place in Colombia, in Venezuela, cocaine activity that I know nothing about but drugs being cut off that will never reach our shores because of activity there. There will be drugs stopped on the

high seas by the Navy, by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. When it comes down to law enforcement and PSNI, our seizures take place where we believe, during the course of an investigation, it is right time for us to move where we can maximise damage against the crime gang. That might be in Amsterdam as an individual puts his hand on the drugs, we may agree with the Dutch to take him there. It might be we let that come the whole way to Northern Ireland because we believe we can get to the kingpin in Northern Ireland, it all relates to the quality of the intelligence, the evidence available that we have, because at the end of the day, we are not particularly interested in just seizing the drugs, we want the evidence to convict the individual behind the drugs network.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. I would like to welcome the presentation, I think it has been a very honest presentation and thank you for that. You have given your views as to the nature of the trade itself and the fact that it has been growing for some considerable degree over the recent years, so you have been pointing up the successes, you have also been pointing out the weakness, so I welcome that and I think it is a very honest assessment.

If I could ask a number of questions, 3 in particular. I am interested if you could actually define a 'gang', because obviously when we talk about gangs people have maybe different views on this. We have seen recent reports of where houses are actually taken over and just turned into a cannabis growing plant, small factory. The whole place is sealed up and all the rest, now is that a big 'gang' or is that a little family business for example, I do not know how that is defined as a 'gang' and I know it is a lot more serious than that but I am keen to work out that we closed a gang down, is it a small operation or is it a bigger operation?

I am interested in the proportionate success rate because yourself has pointed out, there is a substantial increase in the drugs trade itself, so if we go from disrupting and dismantling 2 as opposed to 4, or 4 as opposed to 2, is that really a success rate or is it just proportionate to the increase in availability of the drugs?

The third thing would be, and you touched on it in your last commentary. In terms of the local, you mentioned earlier as well, the need to stop the supply at local level and then you went on in your last remarks, if I heard you right, to say that this is about local problem solving. That is when I think we get into grey areas. I think most communities, particularly maybe in hard pressed working class communities, but not exclusively so, where a lot of people anecdotally or with evidence would say, that there are a number of known individuals who supply drugs in the local areas, and quite frankly many people would say and believe, that no matter who the kingpins might be and whether they come and go, that these local suppliers are still in place no matter what and I do appreciate there is a need for education. So, what is the strategy and what is the real policy about cutting that supply at local level?

Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell:

I will try and deal with that fairly quickly and I will go in reverse order and I may need some reminding as we go through this.

In relation to solving at a local problem, a District Commander will actually look at the problem the way I look at it. I look at it at the strategic level, strategic targets. If we take that down to District Command level, the Commander will look at his District problems and one of them will be your drug dealers. Quite simply that is a priority, what are his priorities for this month, the next 6 months and what can a Commander commit to that, what is the intelligence and what resources are required to get a result there? He will use the same process as we do in terms of identifying the targets. The difficulty is, many of these individuals that we charge and convict and put through the courts, come back out again and start all over again, and that is a societal problem, the police cannot stop that. We can secure the evidence, bring them to the courts but if someone is determined to use drugs to get back involved in supplying drugs, well the question is, why is our society like that? Why do individuals want to use the drugs and why do we tolerate that? That is not something police, I am sure you will agree with me, that we

can answer or indeed, that we can deal with on our own, that is why it is a societal problem.

In relation to the crime gangs, called 'crime gangs', called 'organised crime enterprises' in Great Britain. We have a set of criteria that we use and on occasions, it will be at least 2 people shall we say, but it will depend on the makeup of the particular group. There could be 2 heads to a particular group and they will have a number of runners and we will work on that particular group, it may be made up of 5 people but no crime gang is the same. The thing about a crime gang is they form themselves from the network, it is like a Medusa, the gorgon's head, every time you chop the head of the network grows a new head, because criminals who will do time for drugs get to meet more criminals who do drugs, they make new networks, they meet new contacts, they form new alliances and a new group forms. The best that we can do in law enforcement as I said, is try and identify the key players and each time keep putting them down.

I will go back to my first point, we will not solve the problem, we cannot stop these people all dealing drugs, we cannot seize all the drugs, so what we try to do by this approach, this strategy, is have the maximum impact that law enforcement can possibly hope to have in the circumstances, recognising that we will never beat it, we have to have a maximum impact and I am sorry sir you will have to remind me of your second question.

Mr Alex Maskey:

It was the proportionate success rate because you gave figures for disruption, dismantling and so on and what I am saying is, given the increase in the drugs availability of the last number of years, if you close down 2 gangs 4 now as opposed to 2, 5 years ago is that really a success rate?

Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell:

Again, it was the problem that I highlighted when I spoke to the Board previously in relation to seizures. Does the fact that we seized 3 tonnes this year and 1 tonne next year mean we were better last year, or does it mean there were more drugs to seize and that is an almost impossible question to answer and I will go back to the way I answered your second question. All we can hope to achieve is to have the maximum

impact on those gangs and stop the gang supply level going from here or the availability in Northern Ireland going from here up to here. I have to say that is an uphill battle, because until we tackle the other side of the problem, the demand side, until we get kids who are prepared to turn away from drugs, until we remove the market, there will be plenty of individuals willing to step in there and pass them drugs.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Daithí McKay.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Thank you Chairman. Can I again thank D/Superintendent Bell for his presentation. He did touch on one example, but I would like a more general oversight of what co-operation there is with the Gardaí to identify and disrupt the major drugs routes in Ireland. Does he see a need to view the drugs problem more in an all Ireland context and does he see any benefit in establishing a dedicated all Ireland unit to tackle drugs crime and to cut off those main arteries of drugs supply north and south?

Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell:

In relation to cross border co-operation, it is one I get asked all the time. We meet our colleagues in the National Drugs Unit formally on a quarterly basis. We sit down and we have a formal meeting, once in the south the next meeting in the north. But that aside, the formal bit aside, it is as simple as on the end of a phone, it is as good as on the end of a phone. It may as well be a PSNI office or a Garda Síochána office. The level of co-operation between the National Drugs Unit and C1 Drugs Squad over the years has been excellent. I can give examples where operations have run, as I did the 19 kilos of heroin, which is actually a good example. If we were judged by seizures that 19 kilos would never have crossed the border, because we would have been trying to impress the Board with our 19 kilos seizure. By giving us the objectives that you have given us, you have actually allowed law enforcement to work with the intelligence and develop it as far as possible. So when the 19 kilos crosses the border, our colleagues in the Garda are able to arrest the individuals behind that drugs supply. No success as such for PSNI, but in an all Ireland context, a success because we are catching the main people.

In my time I have allowed operations to run to the south where drugs have been seized and vice versa my colleagues in An Garda Síochána have allowed them to run to the north. We do not specifically sit down and pick a target, so that the next time we get asked this question, are you co-operating north and south, we can produce something to keep people happy, it does not work like that. The co-operation is seamless, it is going on all the time.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Chairman, again a very spirited and beneficial presentation, thank you.

Speaking to one of your Drugs Squad officers the other evening, and he characterised saying sometimes it is like going out with 2 men, a wee lad and a dog to fight an army of drug dealers. Now, I know that is a very general characterisation but I understood and was sympathetic to what he was suggesting in terms of he felt that at times they were strapped.

We are going in now to talk about budgeting. From your point of view, in terms of resourcing Drugs Squad, what areas would assist you over the next 3 years? Would it be more manpower, would it be more training, would it be different equipment, where could we make a significant difference to Drugs Squad in terms of giving you resource, in terms of encouraging the Chief Constable to give you resource that would make the difference whenever you go out to fight the drug dealers in Northern Ireland?

Secondly, in terms of outcomes, could you tell us something? I welcome the fact that you mentioned 45 arrests, and indeed the book quantity of seizures was very impressive, but could you tell us something in terms of what does that mean, in terms of ultimately convictions, the types of convictions, how long these people are going away for and the quality of convictions in terms of 'are you getting Mr Big' or are you getting just the petty distributor, because I think ultimately, whilst I agree with your analysis of cutting off the head it grows somewhere else, ultimately if you get Mr Big it will take longer for it to grow back.

Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell:

In relation to the resources, I would have all of those please if I could have them but obviously that is not the real world. In terms of looking at Drugs Squad in isolation, I think that would be the first mistake, we have to look at organised crime. As I said, Drugs Squad now is an integral part of Organised Crime Branch, and whilst I gave an example of how we look at the drugs market, the Head of Organised Crime Branch looks at all our targets and if an individual is a robber or a drug dealer or whatever, if he happens to be the individual who is causing our community the greatest level of problem, then we focus our assets on the individual whether he is a robber or a drug dealer, so it is not just the drug dealers because those involved in drugs sometimes are involved in armed robbery, sometimes involved in other types of crime, so whatever way we can take them down.

I will give you an example. Sometimes you cannot get to Mr Big for the drugs but you can get him for money laundering or you can get him for mortgage fraud. That is the way we have to take them down, that is the way we do it now. We do not just go seizing their drugs, we go out to take on the target.

In terms of what we need, you will obviously have your discussions but obviously issues facing you are, we do need to be resourced and the Chief Constable constantly reviews the resource and organised crime. Surveillance assets are very important to fighting organised crime. Sorry your second question again.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

The quality and the criminals, going beyond arrest, the actual outcomes in terms of convictions.

Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell:

When I say a gang dismantled, if I say 4 dismantled, that means we have got 4 good players, that means we have taken 4 individuals who were key players and we have shut them down. I cannot go in actually to the full issue because it is all before the courts, but those are individuals who were at the top of the tree. One was a cocaine supply network which was in the Greater Belfast area, that network just does not operate any more, that cocaine is not there because the supply line from Spain into Northern Ireland is gone because there is no where to distribute it to.

In terms of sentencing, that is a different issue. We have found some of the sentencing of the bigger players very very good. Probably one of the more high profile cases I dealt with since I became Head of the Squad, was the cocaine factory in the Moy, Co Tyrone where we seized 6 kilos of cocaine and that individual I believe got 12 to 14 years. Where the problem is and it is a well known problem in Northern Ireland, is the 50% remission. Nothing wrong with getting 12 or 14 years but if you are getting out in 6 it sort of diminishes and I have had the opportunity to make the judiciary aware of the drugs market. They are very aware, they are very supportive, they obviously have to ensure fairness in the judicial process, but they do try to support us where they can.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I am going to pull that together. Could I say a very sincere thank you on behalf of the Board to you Detective Superintendent Bell. I think I am correct in saying that this is one of the last presentations that you are likely to give, is that right?

Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell:

It is sir.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

When do you go?

Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell:

Next month.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

We wish you well. Thank you very much indeed.

I will take questions from Committees now and there is one question from the private session that I will take at the appropriate point. Question 5, Basil McCrea. This is a question on satisfaction levels of crime victims.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Chief Constable, you have got this in front of you. It is to with the satisfaction level of crime victims and as you know there were targets in the Policing Plan and we are currently at 69% which is well below where we want to be and perhaps when I have had your answer, the Chairman will allow me a supplemental.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Q5 – “Can the Chief Constable outline what steps are being taken to address the satisfaction level of crime victims being kept informed regarding their case which at 69% for the first quarters is currently well below the level stipulated in Policing Plan Target 1.1.2?”

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask Chief Superintendent Maguire to answer that question.

Chief Superintendent Brian Maguire:

Thank you Chief Constable. You are quite correct in stating that 69% is below the target, the target is 75%, we are not meeting that target. To improve the service that we provide to victims of crime, in 2006 we introduced a policy document entitled “Dealing with Victims and Witnesses” and that document was aimed at raising the standard expected from officers. We accept we can make improvements in this area. Work has already commenced with our Horizon Team to develop an IT solution through the NICHE system which should provide automated taskings for officers in charge of cases. This is a substantial piece of work but the aim is that officers will receive timely and accurate information and will, therefore, be able to update victims and witnesses in a timely and accurate fashion whilst keeping bureaucracy to a minimum. It is the practical outworkings of the policy that is the issue here and not the policy itself.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary, Mr McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Can I just say, it appears to me that we have got 3 elements to our attack on crime. One is prevention or stopping crime happening, the second is clearance rates, but the third is how we address the victims of crime and I think, and there is certainly a popular

believe out there, that the victims are completely forgotten by this entire process. The solution that you bring forward in terms of NICHE, I hear from talking to people in the force, it is horrendously complicated and impossible to use, and really what I would like to ask and while I am talking to you, it is actually directed specifically at the Chief Constable. I do think that this is an area where we have taken our eye of the ball. We do need a task force in to try and sort this out. It is not acceptable whenever you consider that 1 in 6 people will actually be the victim of crime in any one year, and if you were in England or Wales it is even worse, but it is not acceptable that we just leave these people wondering what is going to happen. I would ask specifically if the Chief Constable believes that the proposed introduction of more management of offenders in the community is actually going to encourage community confidence or diminish it? Does he anticipate that they will be beneficial in looking after the victims of crime?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Sorry, offenders in the community.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Yes, Paul Goggins is introducing this shortly.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

First of all, we have not taken our eye of the ball. At every briefing and I am holding briefings every month of up to 300 officers at a time, the one operational matter I raise is contact with victims. We are at 69% I think that puts us about 7th best in the country, that is mitigation at best, but do we take it seriously, yes we do. We take it as seriously if not more seriously than most police forces.

Will this IT solution fix it, well no. I take issue of NICHE being horrendously complicated. I personally went round, walked myself around the whole system with ACC McCausland at Antrim Road station last month and if you interested in doing that we can happily arrange it. We have arranged for Paul Goggins to come round with the Attorney to look at what we do. But any new system has a bedding in time and it is like for me stepping back into history when the Metropolitan Police introduced its first proper crime system, it took a long time for officers to bed in what is a new system. It is getting progressively better and we are getting better at using it. When it is up and running properly it will actually deal with a lot more things more efficiently. A single entry for

example of peoples' details being just one advantage. By linking all our work into Causeway and the whole criminal justice system gets more efficient. But there is no harm in having a system that prompts officers to make sure they do what they should be doing and that is what we are talking about here.

Now, it is like an amendment to a large IT project, it takes a bit of time to implement, in the meantime, it is down to frontline supervision to make sure victims are kept up to date. We will never get to 100%, yes some people will be permanently dissatisfied at what we do but I do believe we can get to 75%. I do not accept we have taken our eye of the ball in any way, shape or form.

In terms of the observations on offenders in the community, that is a sentencing issue, we will deal as we always do with the fallout of these matters. If one was to look at, for example, the amount of time police officers now put into managing people who are in essence, have time served i.e. are innocent in law, dangerous offenders, sex offenders for example, it is a whole new market for policing. A whole new focus has been put on the role of the police officers post sentence to deal with people in the community and that is a very large piece of work and in some cases, as well publicised, a very expensive piece of work. By releasing more people or by letting more people out to serve non-custodial sentences however, it is a complex argument. There is a very good reason for keeping young offenders out of prison quite frankly. If you can manage them in the community you have got a far better chance long term of making sure they do not commit crimes over a longer period of time.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Could I just say briefly Chief Constable, I do think that there is an issue about victims of crime. There is deep disquiet in our community about what happens when you get burgled. People just get to the point where they actually feel there is no point in reporting anything because all they get is a perfunctory response. I realise that you are tackling areas in other places in a good way, but we are telling you or I am telling you, that there is an issue and it is something that requires your attention.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to Headquarter Departments, we are now putting the questions for members of the public and the media on the screens, this question is from Mrs Dolores Kelly, question 6. We will take the question as read on the screen and then you can place a supplementary if you want.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Q6 – “Can the Chief Constable advise the Board whether an updated review on the future estate requirements of Headquarter Departments/functions will be included in the Estate Strategy Refresh expected in May 2008? If not, when might the Chief Constable be able to outline to the Board the future requirements of Headquarters functions and departments?”

Director of Finance and Support Services, Mr David Best:

The Headquarters Estate was the subject of a major review in 2006.

Recommendations which were endorsed by the Chief Officer Team and a copy of that was issued to the Resources and Improvement Committee at the time. PSNI are currently undergoing a number of key recommendations, progress of which have also been reported to the Resources and Improvement Committee on a 6 monthly basis.

The current update of the 2005 Estate Strategy, what we agreed to do was produce a 3 year plan strategy and then update it and now we are going through a process of reviewing that, which is now 3 years later. That will reflect progress to date on that original plan. It is not intended to do a full detailed reassessment of the Headquarters Estate until the current core review of Headquarters Departments and functions are concluded, because there may be a number of changes arising from that.

The Headquarters Estate must provide accommodation for the Headquarters Departments of the future and until that, the Headquarters Business Model has determined there would be little merit in implementing a full detailed review of the Headquarters Estate just at this point in time.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I would be interested in what progress there has been to date in implementation of any of the elements of the strategy in relation to the review of Headquarters within the last 3 years.

Director of Finance and Support Services, Mr David Best:

One of the areas is Mahon Road, development at Gough and that was also part of the normalisation process and that has been virtually completed at this point in time, we actually had to acquire land there. The plan there is to move the District Command HQ and that is under review.

The closure of Edward Street, Portadown as we know as well. Seapark, there is just about to be movement of motor transport from Lislea Drive to Seapark. We are combining the 2 areas Belfast transport support functions into one, that is freeing up considerable space there. Maydown, we have moved C3 and C4 in Ballykelly into Maydown, that work has been completed.

The major recommendation was the sale of Garnerville and I would go back a couple of years, 2 to 3 years, the intention then was to sell Garnerville and review and bring the whole Crime Operations and Criminal Justice Departments into one location. Now, that has not progressed because we now need the sale of Garnerville to raise funding for the new Police College, so that obviously has been put on hold, but those are just some of the areas that have progressed.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

David Simpson, you have a question on a similar territory, question 7.

Mr David Simpson:

Q7 – “Can the Chief Constable advise the Board when the review of HQ functions and departments will be complete and what impact this will have on releasing officers from HQ departments to frontline policing?”

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you. This is an interesting review of Headquarters Departments in terms of people more than property. The plan is to have this completed by 2010. I spent a very constructive day with my Senior Officer Team only a couple of weeks ago, looking at going through some of the areas where the majority of police officers are held. There is a commonly held view that an awful lot of police officers are sort of hidden in offices somewhere in Headquarters, those who do operate out of Central Departments of course are operating on Districts, in particular for example, Road Traffic, TSG and Crime Operations are out actually dealing with crimes which they are charged with dealing with on behalf of Districts. So, as a result of that stage of the review I do not anticipate huge numbers being realised, but what I do anticipate, is more local control of central resource, in particular around TSG officers. What we are looking at, is making sure that District Commanders have a greater grip on a fixed number of TSGs who can actually dance to their tune more than to dance to central tune rather than retaining some central capacity for the units. Indeed, in particular, people like Detective Superintendent Bell who need to call on that sort of resource to carry out their job. So it is very much work in progress.

In terms of Crime Operations, not only are we looking at the numbers, we are looking at the role, the issue around who for example deals with rape, making sure that is absolutely clear so that some of those most serious crimes may have to get taken on by a central unit rather than being left to local districts. Indeed, some officers have been released as a result of the Public Protection Units being created and that will allow some officers who would have traditionally been doing that work centrally, to be put out under District Command into those new units.

In short term, do I think the Headquarters Review will release a lot of people to the Command of District Chief Superintendents, no I do not. I do think it will give them more control over some units on a day to day basis, but I do think what we have to be clear on from Central Units is, are they providing value for money for Districts, so is it better. If it is not better to have something centrally resourced then it should be driven down to the District level.

Mr David Simpson:

Very briefly Chairman, I am not going to drag it out. I think it would be beneficial for the Board if we could get some figures on how many have been released and what we anticipate will be released when the review is completed, if that is okay.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

If it would help we can give a presentation to the Board on where we have got to at one of the Committees.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Individual questions, question 4 Ms Anderson.

Mrs Martina Anderson:

Q4 – “To ask the Chief Constable to detail if any convictions emerged as part of the vetting process employed on building contractors hired for security force contracts?”

Chief Constable

I will ask Chief Superintendent Brian Maguire to answer this one.

Chief Superintendent Brian Maguire:

Thank you Chief Constable. In relation to this question, all persons who are employed in building contracts within the PSNI Estate are required to complete a security questionnaire and that includes personal and family members details and these are then subject to a vetting process which includes a criminal record check. If any adverse reports are disclosed during this process, these are then assessed against the set criteria and this will determine whether or not a contractor is deemed suitable for clearance to work within the Police Estate. A conviction in itself does not necessarily mean a person will not be employed within the Police Estate, for example, a minor motoring conviction would not prevent someone working as a bricklayer on a police building site. But to quantify, this is very labour intensive work, in 2007, almost 7,000 individuals were considered under this process in relation to contractor applications, and of those, 143 failed the vetting process.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Go raibh maith agat. It is my understanding and I raised this earlier with you today, that you obviously follow the guidelines of the Central Procurement Directorate, but is it the PSNI that actually does the vetting itself in terms of potential contractors? If so, how has suspected loyalist paramilitaries received contracts and this is a matter of public confidence and some could view awarding such contracts to suspected loyalists as a pay off. Now I am talking here particularly about an individual who I will not name, but they have already been named in the media, as one of those involved in the Rob McIlwaine killings and yet he managed, according to media reports, to secure building contracts for security force instalments, so I am just raising this as a matter of concern. I actually raised it before at a public meeting and I also think that the Board needs an explanation for this.

Chief Superintendent Brian Maguire:

Chairman, the vetting process that we are referring to here is carried out internally within the Service. It is using known guidelines referred to as a Sherrard Guidelines, which were introduced post Patten, and it is within a framework agreed with the NIO. There is no indication that any individuals have somehow circumvented this process. Obviously I cannot comment on individual cases, but there is nothing to suggest that any individuals have circumvented that process.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

In terms of what has been said, I have a very strong impression of vetting as extremely rigorous in terms of people going into work on Police Estate and other Government Estate. Would there be any benefit in you releasing to the Board to view, and I stress to view, the criteria and the guidelines that allow you to make that judgement?

Chief Superintendent Brian Maguire:

I do not see there being a problem with that Chairman.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Two or 3 questions that have been deferred from the February 2008 meeting, question 8 this relates to officers convicted of drink driving.

Mr Suneil Sharma:

Q8 – “Could the Chief Constable clarify the PSNI’s policy and practice in respect of officers convicted of drink driving offences?”

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, obviously this has been discussed before. Our view of drink driving is extremely clear, we obviously do not condone drink driving in any shape or form by officers.

What happens to an officer if they are arrested for drink driving is, that they obviously face the full rigors of the law and go before the court. After the court hearing, if they are convicted of a drink driving offence, they can expect to face a formal disciplinary hearing. The usual sanctions that will be applied at that hearing will be either dismissal or a requirement to resign, to reflect the serious view taken by the Service and by society generally.

The discipline panel which will be chaired by an Assistant Chief Constable, will always treat each case on its merits, but officers presiding at such hearings, must apply their judgement to the facts of the case to consider whether an alternative sanction could be justified.

The figures for Members interest, just to keep them up to date because I know figures have been produced before. In 2005, 30 officers were detected for drink driving. In 2006, 15 officers were detected for drink driving. Our change of policy was 2 May 2006, just for Members information. In 2007, we had 16 officers detected and so far in 2008, we have 2 officers detected, that was only 1 until last weekend unfortunately, but it is now 2.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to illegal travellers' sites, it is question 9 and it is on your screen.

Mr David Simpson:

Q9 – “If the Chief Constable would outline the PSNI’s policy in relation to illegal travellers’ sites in Northern Ireland?”

Chief Superintendent Brian Maguire:

Chairman, the PSNI policy in relation to illegal traveller sites in Northern Ireland is very much governed by the relevant legislation which is contained within the Unauthorised Encampments (Northern Ireland) Order 2005. Under certain fairly precise circumstances, this gives police the power to remove trespassers who intend residing on land and also gives police the power of seizure in relation to vehicles and other property. I would emphasise, it is rather convoluted legislation and if you felt it was necessary or desirable, we could arrange for a presentation to be given to Members on the legislation.

The policy very much is based on that piece of legislation and it has been circulated internally in a 2007 document.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed. Question 10 relates to Causeway.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Q10 – “Could the Chief Constable update the Board on the implementation of the Causeway Project and, in particular, in relation to the budget and timetable for implementation?”

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

Chairman, I will answer this on behalf of my colleague ACC Toner who is not here today.

The Causeway programme will transform the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland, and already it is reaping benefits in terms of speedy transfer of prosecution files between the PSNI and the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). When it is fully

implemented it will be one of only 3 fully integrated criminal justice handling systems worldwide and I think it is worth emphasising that, one of only 3 worldwide.

In its current form as I said, it allows for the electronic transfer of files from PSNI to PPS and that is a secure electronic transfer.

In June last year, the Causeway programme was subject to an OGC that is Office of Government Commerce health check, which concluded that the programme was on track to deliver against the revised timescale. Now, we are a major contributor to the Causeway programme and the original timescale for completion of the whole programme was December 2006, but following the launch of the first electronic link between PSNI, PPS and the Forensic Service, the Causeway programme carried out a lessons learned review exercise and reviewed the timescales. It was managed by external consultants and as a consequence of this review, the whole programme timescales were reviewed and, it was agreed that when the Northern Ireland Prison Service and Court Service join, we would deliver the whole programme in June 2008 and the final elements of the programme would be delivered by December 2009. But I have to stress, that the PSNI has successfully delivered its obligations for the DSM zero milestone in June 2005 and we have met our key milestones in preparation for DSM1 in June 2008. Whilst we would closely monitor all of our expenditure against individual IS strategy business cases, we can confirm that the expenditure is within agreed budgets, but we do not specifically track expenditure on the Causeway programme. However, I can say, that all PSNI projects in support of the Causeway programme remain on time and within budget.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed.

Question 11, Mrs Dolores Kelly, this relates to a single force communication centre.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Q11 – “During a recent study visit to Lothian & Borders, Members were impressed by the benefits from the establishment of a single force communication centre. Can the Chief Constable assure the Board that full funding will be made available for the similar arrangement planned for Northern

Ireland, and could he outline the key milestones which will deliver this vital facility?"

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

ACC Gillespie will answer this.

Assistant Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, we certainly recognise the importance of the Call Management Strategy and the need to improve our service to people who call into the Police Service.

In April 2007, we approved a strategy for the centralised solution that was Project Unity, but there are insufficient funds in CSR07 to proceed with a centralised strategy, and no doubt, Members will be discussing more about that this afternoon.

We have effected transitional improvements in the interim period and moved from 17 control rooms to 7. Those are Belfast Regional Control, Banbridge, Ardmore and Newry, Dungannon, Enniskillen, Strand Road and Coleraine. We have also consolidated our 17 switchboards down to 9 and there is an independent assessment of our non-emergency performance being procured. There are 8 District Call Handling Units also established and we have developed process improvements based on the National Call Handling Standards and we have training in preparation for those call takers.

Further consolidation of the District Based Solution is planned and should be possible by 2011, subject to appropriate funding. Again, I am sure more detail on this will be discussed this afternoon in your meeting on CSR07.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I think it would be true to say that it is very disappointing that Call Handling was not delivered within the timeframe and when the money was available. I think that really is a failure on the PSNI to deliver what is a very vital project to deliver community policing.

It is my understanding from speaking to the Lothian and Borders police, that they were actually able to deliver one centre call management for £12.5m where PSNI had budgeted for £25.7m and as the Assistant Chief Constable said, we will be debating this later this afternoon, but it is still our opinion that Call Handling must be improved.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Part of the money was of course coming out of this CSR, but again I have been asked to be constrained in what I say, so I will talk about it later.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Could I just concur with what Mrs Kelly has said, that we do think there is a significant issue here if we do not get the Call Management Centre sorted out, and it does put in jeopardy all other areas to do with rationalisation and interaction with the public.

Perhaps the Chief Constable would indicate to us the likely difficulties that would arise if this Call Management Centre is not able to be funded/

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

It is an efficiency issue. Calls will still get answered, we deliver against our response times currently set by the Board and that will continue. It takes out some of the other flexibilities about how you do your business.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to sectarian issues in Stoneyford, question 12 it is from Mr Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Q12 – (i) Is the safety and wellbeing of the Catholic people of Stoneyford village less important to the PSNI than the group of loyalists who are involved in a ten year long campaign of intimidation against the Catholic people of this village?

- (ii) Will the Chief Constable explain why this group of loyalist, who are well known to the PSNI, remain free to carry on their campaign of driving Catholics out of Stoneyford?**
- (iii) Is the PSNI protecting these loyalists?**
- (iv) Why has the Chief Constable refused to visit the Catholics of Stoneyford?**
- (v) What measures does the Chief Constable intend taking to end this campaign?"**

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

ACC McCausland is keen to deal with this one.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Thank you Chief Constable. There are 3 parts to the question Chairman, if we deal with the first part. We are fully committed to ensuring that all members of the community in Stoneyford can live safely and peacefully and will take robust action against anyone who has reason to believe, with evidential basis, in engagement in intimidatory or criminal activity.

The PSNI is doing everything it can to address ongoing issues in the area. After recent reports of incidents, officers carried out extensive enquiries and a mobile police station was deployed in the village on a number of occasions to provide reassurance and to encourage people to come forward with information. Every line of enquiry is being exhausted. As a result of that, 2 people have recently been arrested in relation to an incident that took place in Stoneyford and files are being forwarded to the Public Prosecution Service.

On a number of occasions, we have categorically refuted all allegations that anyone is being protected in Stoneyford. No-one is above the law and where we have information that anyone is involved in criminality, we will act on it. But it is important to reiterate, that successful prosecutions will only result when evidential standards are met, basically, we need evidence.

In relation to the third part, I refer to the Chief Constable.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I have been asked to attend a lot of issues, I am not deliberately ignoring anybody. It is simply a question of what is achievable in delivering an effective police service across the whole of Northern Ireland rather than specific cases. I do on occasions meet specific groups, I am not against meeting any group, so the notion that I have refused for perhaps some ulterior motive is completely flawed. I have total confidence in ACC McCausland and ACC Sheridan who have spent a lot of time on this issue. It is an issue which there is not a policing solution to quite frankly, we will do our bit, but it is an issue which has been running sore for the victims in Stoneyford for some considerable time.

If it is seen as absolutely essential in this particular case that I have a meeting, I am delighted to do so, but in the structure I have 2 Assistant Chief Constables tasked whose sole job is to deliver policing in certain areas of geography, then it is absolutely right they take the lead on these things. If there is some wider issue that Mr Maskey thinks I can add value to, then I am happy to do it. Of course to do it, I will not just simply visit these people, I will need to carry out all the necessary precursor work so that I know what I am talking about, which is of course, exactly the same as ACC McCausland is doing. So it is not something other than simply pressure of work Chairman.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

On that basis Chairman, I have already had meetings with Sinn Fein, the SDLP and the Unionist party in relation to Stoneyford, and we are working with the local community to address a range of issues in Stoneyford. We have stepped up high visibility patrols in the area. Local police have distributed leaflets with advice on community safety containing contact numbers for the local officers. The police maintain a high visibility presence in Stoneyford and will continue to monitor the situation. The police have been thoroughly investigating every incident to identify leads and will continue to do so, but we also need as I said before, people to come forward and give us hard evidence and to be willing to stand up and give that evidence before a court.

We also have hopefully restarted the local forum with the community in relation to community safety.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. Obviously, without rehearsing the entire history of the problems in Stoneyford Village over the recent years, I would expect ACC McCausland and the Chief Constable to acknowledge that there is serious public disquiet in that area and indeed, beyond as a result of it, and some of the media coverage as well at the number of sectarian incidents of intimidation in that area, which has resulted in the forced removal of a number of families in that area. We still have a situation where families, who have all or at least many of them as I understand, have actually met with yourselves or with your own officers, have been forced to leave and some of these incidents have been actually have been very very visible. Some of these incidents of intimidation were conducted in front of the media, so the view of a lot of people out there, and certainly I have spoken to my colleagues recently, there is a very very clear view that there are a small number of individuals acting with impunity and I have to say that some people think with immunity. So, the fact that there are a small number of individuals who have been clearly identified, and some have been rather willingly to even put their own head above the parapet publicly, and identifying themselves, there is a very clear issue of public confidence around the protection of the catholic community in Stoneyford.

Now, this is becoming a touchstone issue for many people, in certainly the community that I would represent, who are anxious that their engagement with policing is a constructive one, who want to ensure that people are free to get on with their daily lives and live in their homes free from sectarian harassment. That does not appear to be the outworking of what is happening in Stoneyford. So, the specific reference to the Chief Constable's visit or to the area is really precisely about trying to demonstrate that the force and the service right through to the Chief Constable takes this matter of sectarian harassment on an ongoing basis very very important as a very serious issue, and it is really by way of demonstrating the PSNI's commitment to protecting every family in that area. Because it is the case that families are continuing to be forced to move out of there. These are, as you are well aware, are people who have been living in that area for some considerable time and do not want to move but are being forced to move ultimately.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Mr Chairman, in response, there have been 38 incidents recorded in Stoneyford in the last 4 years, 21 of which have been of a criminal nature. The PSNI have already publicly, and I repeat it again this morning, quite prepared to acknowledge that there has been a campaign of intimidation against the catholic families that are living in Stoneyford village. It tended to consist of low level harassment and criminal damage to property, although the cumulative effect of that is profound effect on those residents and as Mr Maskey has already said, a number of families have sadly had to leave the village.

A lot of the tension seems to be focusing around the issue of flags and the displayment of flags in the village area, and I know Lisburn Borough Council have a Committee established to deal with difficult issues of which flags are a key part, and this matter in relation to flags has been looked at by Lisburn Borough Council. It also will be looked at by us, as it has been right across the province in terms of our arrangements with the Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers, in terms of potentially dealing with flags. But we have asked constantly, and I ask again, that the Department of Regional Development (DRD) would consider creating legislation which would prevent people from putting anything on street furniture across Northern Ireland, that is the lamp posts and that would make it a criminal offence. The offences I have to work with are very very straight forward, but they are limited in terms of their application. I have Article 19 of the Public Order Order in terms of Provocative Conduct, I have Breach of the Peace and I have the Protection from Harassment (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, but again, all of those must have specific offences being committed and a specific people being offended against.

As this Board are aware, when we had harassment issues with flags in Larne, we removed 200 flags and the issue seems to be falling around this community as a whole, dealing with the issue of potentially living together and recognising each other's culture. The Chief Constable has already said it, we the police cannot solve this. We cannot solve this on our own, but we are working constantly to try and ensure that Stoneyford is a safe place for everyone to live.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Sorry, we have gone on a long time on this.

Mr Basil McCrea:

I would like to come in on that. Chairman, it is an issue that Stoneyford is my area and it is a serious issue that is brought up, and I do want to place it on record, that all sections of the community have been to speak to ACC McCausland with the intention of resolving this very unsatisfactory issue. I will concur with the fact that I know he has tried very hard to deal with it, but he is limited to what he can do. He must work within the constraints of the law and there is a sense of frustration by all concerned that these very serious matters cannot be dealt with properly, but we will work with the police as part of the community to do so.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Trevor Ringland, briefly now.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

Could I just add to ACC McCausland's words, that it is a challenge to our politicians and other leaders in our society as to what sort of future we want for ourselves and our children and it is dealing with these issues that we start building towards a shared future and that is a challenge to everybody.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

I was left with the impression that we do not do speeches anymore at this session, and if parties are going to make speeches I certainly would it clear, that whilst it is important specifically in this issue to look at what is happening at Stoneyford, it is also important that we make sure that any family feels protection in Northern Ireland, whether they live in the Short Strand in a Roman Catholic family or whether they live anywhere else in Northern Ireland.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 13, Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Q13 – “Have the PSNI any plans to publish pictures of their “most wanted” on their website or in the local media?”

Ms Gail McGreevy, A/Head of Media & Communications:

The Police Service website is currently under review and the 'most wanted' pages is being considered as part of that redeveloped site. The position in terms of releasing photographs of individuals who are wanted at the moment, we do release them when investigators believe it is necessary and proportionate to do so. Our Department has a good working relationship with local media and, if photographs are issued, they are normally given due prominence by the local media. If we were to increase the frequency in photographs being issued, it is our view we run a risk of their impact being lessened and a potential loss of media interest, therefore, it is done in exceptional circumstances rather than as a matter of routine.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, it was about the 'most wanted'. I have had reports of the abductors and those who assaulted Mr Tohill having been seen recently in West Belfast and I just wondered if that might be helpful, and what progress have they made in capturing these fugitives?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

It certainly would be helpful if I knew about it. If anybody has any information about people who are wanted, we would be delighted to hear about it. Both the Chief Constable and I raised this issue with the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána several weeks ago specifically in relation to the Tohill case, because of where we believe they are living, and if we thought it was to our advantage, to put their pictures on the media and if that was going to have some benefit to us, then we would absolutely do that, but that is a matter of judgement.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 14 relates to the cloning of cars, it is from Mr Daithí McKay, question 14.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Q14 – “To ask the Chief Constable to comment on the “cloning” of cars where a set of number plates are copied and used on a near replica of a car belonging to a member of the public; and to detail how many times members of the public have been wrongly contacted in regard to offences relating to “cloned” cars?”

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, Operation Gemini is a national scheme whereby speed cameras are used to identify cloned stolen vehicles. Where confirmed cloned vehicles are alerted, the genuine owner is then informed and advised that police may actually stop them in an effort to locate the offending vehicle.

The PSNI safety cameras have detected a number of vehicles for excess speed, where subsequent enquiries have confirmed that the registered keeper was not guilty of the breach committed and in such circumstances, the notice is cancelled and since July 2003 when the safety cameras scheme commenced, there have been 86 such notices and those have been cancelled.

Where the member of the public is contacted by the police, it is probably not accurate to say wrongly contacted, or categorising that action as wrong, the police are obliged to make enquiries with the registered keeper of the vehicle and as a result of making contact with them, they are actually able to deal with it and any offences that were disclosed can then subsequently be dealt with.

We also give advice to motorists that where their vehicle has been cloned, that they change the registration number, and I have had enquiries made with the Driving Vehicle Agency (DVA) for the past 12 months and they have revealed that there are no applications for new registration marks due to registration numbers being cloned.

As I understand it, new legislation is to be introduced later this year by the DVA to require number plate suppliers to register with the Agency and it is envisaged that that will assist in reducing the instances of cloned plates and non-standard, what we call, vanity plates.

Where a motorist reports a suspicion that their vehicle has been cloned, police place an alert on this registration number for the information of operational officers, but it is not possible for us to distinguish the type of alert from other various reasons why a vehicle would be alerted because the system cannot do that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Daithí McKay.

Record No: 84666

Mr Daithí McKay:

Thank you Chairman. Can I thank ACC Sheridan for his answer and have there been any instances where members of the public have been accused falsely in regard to speeding for example, and is there any risks of any miscarriages of justice in that regard?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Normally, in the cases and I have said there was 86 cases and I would not say they were wrongly accused, what happens is, their vehicle is identified as the vehicle that was involved in speeding, so when police officers go to that individual, to the registered keeper to interview him about it, it soon becomes pretty clear that if this camera detected them in the Newry Road and they actually live in Enniskillen and can demonstrate they were somewhere else on that day, it becomes pretty clear that they were not the people involved and 86 of those notices have been cancelled on that basis. I understand what you mean, if people have been wrongly accused. What happens is, the Fixed Penalty Notice goes out in the post to them and they think then they are being accused, but once they say that was not my vehicle and police officers make enquiries, it is relatively straightforward to prove that somebody was somewhere else on that day. I take the point that people may feel that they are being wrongly accused.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Two questions 15 and 16, they relate to overseas travel, maybe we could put the first question on the slide and then show the next one and then go back to the first one. Question 15 and 16 and they are in from Daithí McKay.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Q15 – “To ask the Chief Constable to list all the overseas trips which PSNI members have taken in 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 respectively, to list the purpose of each trip, the length of each trip and the cost to the police budget (this should include trips that have been paid by third parties)?”

Q16 – “To ask the Chief Constable if he believes that sending 3 PSNI officers to Malaga to oversee the opening of an IKEA store was a waste of police resources?”

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will deal with question 15 and ACC McCausland is going to deal with question 16 on the IKEA event.

Chairman, as Detective Superintendent Hayden Bell has just described, the business of policing is somewhat complex and diverse and covers national as well as an international arena as well as the local arena. For us to operate effectively at the forefront of policing, people have to travel on occasions overseas. Modern policing requires research, policy development, showing of best practice, useful exchange of expertise etc. Just a couple of things that spring instantly to mind. If you look at the 'Minimum use of Force' Conference, which Members of the Board attend as well as my people, I think the next one is in the United States, but it is something we are committed to continually researching.

We are also invited, or people from here asked to speak in many places by many organisations on the learning and experience of policing in Northern Ireland and its international application.

I have to say, collecting the data required to answer such a broad question has been somewhat challenging and highly resource intensive. If I was to cost it, at least £12,000 has been spent on securing the information in terms of opportunity cost. I would make a plea that if someone wants something specific, the more focused the question, the less time my business managers have to spend on some of our systems which are not, perhaps, as IT friendly as they should be.

Overall, what I can say, and I have a breakdown here by way of every department for the last 3½ years, I am happy to read it out, it would take me about 3 hours. It goes into the costs per District and per department. It covers costs of trips funded by the police and, indeed, trips funded outwith our budget. We on many occasions, recover the total cost where we are asked to speak for other people.

In terms of the total cost between 2005 and 2008, 675 officers have travelled overseas on police business, the total cost is some £750,000. I guess if one compares that to the full PSNI budget, the actual cost is .03 of 1% of the total budget. If there is a specific interest in a particular trip, visit or conference that the Member is interested in, I am

happy to provide far more detailed information. If the Board is interested in the process by way which authority is granted, again they may find that helpful, I am happy to supply that in written form. I would not want people to think these trips are not carefully considered, be it an operational or a non-operational reason, but it remains necessary in modern policing.

I will ask ACC McCausland to cover the particular trip for IKEA which cost us nothing.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, the Chief Constable has said, there was full cost recovery and IKEA paid for the 3 officers.

As Board Members would be aware, PSNI are category 1 responders under the Civil Contingency Act, and as such, we have a legal obligation to this statutory framework to co-ordinate any response and to ensure events such as the opening of IKEA was risk assessed, and that the risk assessment was used to inform the multi agency planning process. Business continuity was a key priority.

IKEA opened in Holywood Exchange on 13 December 2007 and as I have already said, this was a significant planning event for PSNI. The key priorities were to ensure public safety, minimise traffic disruption and make sure there was no reoccurrence of the tragedies that had been witnessed in similar openings in the United Kingdom and internationally.

For Members benefit, when IKEA opened in Saudi Arabia, there were 3 people killed in the stampede of the opening. When it opened in London, there was a man stabbed and 22 people were treated for heat exhaustion and crush injuries. As a result of that, IKEA approached the PSNI and invited 3 officers to attend the opening in Malaga. Now Malaga in Spain was the closest next IKEA department store to open. The ones after that were in Russia, USA or Turkey therefore it was felt that Malaga was more acceptable. This allowed liaison with expert IKEA staff in their procedures, planning and management of the opening of a similar size store and ensured that any mistakes that were made in Spain would not be repeated in Northern Ireland. We witnessed first hand the opening of the IKEA store and the general significant attraction of numbers of people on the first day.

It was entirely reasonable that these officers travelled to Malaga and that the lessons that were learned were incorporated into the PSNI plan. They were only there for 3 days, the first day travelling, the second day seeing the opening and the third day travelling back and all the learning was applied in relation to IKEA's opening, and as well, in relation to Victoria Square in the last few days. Just for Members benefit, 15,000 people attended IKEA in the first 12 hours when it opened and there were no traffic problems. The Chairman has already referred to the issue of potential major difficulties with the M2 and M1 blocking, there were no traffic problems on that day which I felt was a success.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Supplementary please Mr Chairman. Can I thank both officers for their answers and can I ask the Chief Constable to provide the Board with the details of the first question, in writing. But just further to that in terms of all those journeys, are they recorded centrally or have they been recorded centrally and was the difficulty in answering the question because they were all stored in different departments, and does the Chief Constable see any need to review the policy around sending police officers on trips, such as the one ACC McCausland outlined.

In terms of the IKEA trip, obviously the stampede that many predicted did not occur, but I still do not think there was any need to send those particular officers to Malaga. It was not a waste of money in terms of the cost of the actual trip, but obviously those officers were away for those 3 days when they could have engaged in other duties.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

There comes a point I guess when operational decisions have to be made, I think it was a sound operational decision. The planning of these things is not taken lightly. There was clear evidence of the enthusiasm. I am not sure if the stampede is the people entering or leaving, I suspect it is the latter, but there is a huge interest in new shops opening and there is a fine line between an effective police operation and disaster, and if there was learning from elsewhere, I think it made sense to do it.

In terms of the policy generally, like everything else, budgets are devolved to Districts and heads of departments to make decisions, operational decisions based on need. I will not go into detail on operational decisions obviously, because it would declare

where my officers are pursuing criminals and that is something that should not be in the public domain, but I am happy to have a conversation after and we will put it in the best format we can for you, I have no problem with that at all.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 17 relates to civilianisation and demilitarisation of 2 Belfast police stations.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Q17 – “Can the Chief Constable detail the reasons why no timeframe has been confirmed for the civilianisation and demilitarisation of Ballynafeigh PSNI station, South Belfast? Further to this, can the Chief Constable explain why there are no plans to demilitarise Lisburn Road PSNI station, South Belfast?”

PSNI Director of Finance And Support Services, Mr David Best:

The softening project at Ballynafeigh is scheduled to commence in May 2008. The work review what will be done and that was carried out in November 2007 and that will cover areas like softening the perimeter, disability development work and the Enquiry Office plus a few other bits and pieces.

We are currently assessing with the District Commander, further softening for the Lisburn Road station and these are planned to commence in 2008/09. A lot of work has already been undertaken at Lisburn Road, including improvement alterations to the entrance, some disability work and improvements to the landscaping. Now, there is not an awful lot more to be done to be honest in Lisburn Road as far as I am aware. We will look maybe at the rocket cage and some other issues there, and that work if it does progress will start in the next financial year, of course subject to funding provision which will be discussed this afternoon.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Mr Best for that, but could you explain to me what softening means because there is a big brick wall there at the moment.

PSNI Director Of Finance And Support Services, Mr David Best:

At Lisburn Road or Ballynafeigh?

Mr Alex Maskey:

No, at Ballynafeigh.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Making them more attractive.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Sorry, but it is a huge old style construction.

PSNI Director Of Finance And Support Services, Mr David Best:

Each individual scheme is different depending on operational requirements, level of risk and all those different issues, so there are different solutions. In terms of Lisburn Road, I am not sure that there is much planned to change Lisburn Road at this time, it really boils down to the Operational Commanders. We in the Estate side will support softening in terms of removing what is possible, but I do not know if ACC McCausland has anything to add.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Lisburn Road for example, what we would plan to do would be to take down the fence type sheeting and put up a clear fence that people could see through, and it would be ornamentally done within cost and budget of course.

In relation to Ballynafeigh, if the wall can be removed, we would be removing the wall.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Just to say that that concludes this session. Thank you very much Chief Constable and your colleagues for taking our questions and for your comments. Thanks to the members of the public who have attended this public session today and also members of the media. Thank you very much indeed.