

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY, 1 MAY 2008 AT 11:30AM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Mr Barry Gilligan (Vice Chairman)
Ms Martina Anderson
Mr Leslie Cree
Mrs Dolores Kelly
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr Daithí McKay
Mr Basil McCrea
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
Mr Gearóid Ó hEára
Mr Brian Rea
Mr Trevor Ringland
Mr David Rose
Mr Suneil Sharma
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 Drew Harris (ACC Operational Support)
Mr Duncan McCausland (ACC Urban Region)
Mr Peter Sheridan (ACC Crime Operations)
Mr Roy Toner (ACC Operational Support)
Mr David Best (Director of Finance and
Support Services)
Mr Joe Stewart (Director of Human
Resources)
Ms Liz Young (Head of Media &
Communications)
Superintendent Mike Ellis, Information and
Communication Services
T/Acting Head of Command Secretariat
1 PSNI Personnel

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
Mr David Jackson (Director of Community
Engagement)
Mr Sam Hagen (Director of Corporate
Services)
Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
2 Board Officials

APOLOGIES:

Mr Tom Buchanan
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
Mrs Mary McKee

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Good morning Chief Constable, Senior Officers, members of the public and media. You are all very welcome to this meeting in public of the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

Chief Constable, I have a few comments before we start.

There has been a lot of discussion in recent times focusing on the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Assembly. It is important to note that this is a decision which is in the hands of our politicians and I would hope that they come to an agreement on the progression of these arrangements.

It is the duty of the Board to continue to monitor the effectiveness of the policing which is delivered to our community. The Board is ready and willing to continue our work against the backdrop of devolution when it occurs.

People are interested in policing. They are interested in policing, not just because it is the last of the areas to be devolved and is currently on the political front boiler. They are interested:-

- because they experience anti-social behaviour;
- because they are victims of crime or know someone who is a victim of crime; and
- because they are frightened by what they hear on the news.

The news last week of the cruel rape of a young woman in a Belfast Park, our thoughts are with both young women as they cope with those horrendous ordeals and perhaps Chief Constable you will update us with how some of these investigations are going.

This and the violence recently in the Short Strand remind us that we continue to need the right sort of policing. Our community and the needs of our community continue to evolve and we need to ensure that policing evolves in line with those needs.

One of the challenges ahead is to continue to build on public confidence in policing, particularly in areas where there has been a lack of community support and I know Chief Constable that that is a concern of yours.

In recent months we have heard reports of communities demanding answers and actions to deal with the levels and consequences of anti-social behaviour, hate crime, criminal activity and the frustration and anger of communities at a number of recent murders. Obviously these present and continue to present tough challenges to the police; and we wish you well as you tackle those challenges.

Research published today by a Professor of Criminology from Wolverhampton University on Policing the Police in Northern Ireland, claims that Northern Ireland has a disproportionately high level of organised crime in comparison to the UK as a whole. Particularly in relation to murder, extortion, armed robbery, counterfeiting and fuel smuggling. I have looked at some of the statistics that he quotes and it does not seem to me to be representative of what I read, but perhaps also Chief Constable you will refer to that work as I say about to be published.

Earlier this week, the Strategic Review of Parading published its interim report on how it sees parades being handled in the future and that document is now out for consultation. It is important to note that the constructive and positive dialogue entered into in recent years and which this Board has been at some pains to encourage, that has delivered peaceful parading seasons, that has provided also the foundation for handling the parading issue in the current year and as we move forward. It is important to keep the focus on working together, particularly at community level both for the benefit of the community and to ensure, in addition, the best use of policing resources.

If I can say something about recently Chief Constable you were quoted in terms of an address that you gave in Dublin and certain remarks that you made at that meeting. I know that you have stated to the Board through me, that these remarks were taken out of context. I should say to the public and to the media, this Board's role is on the one hand to secure the maintenance of the police, in other words, to ensure that they have the resources to do the job and we seek to do that conscientiously. It also has the critically important role of holding the police to account through the Chief Constable. We do that monthly in private session and in public session and this is a good example of that. We go about that business and we believe that we do it conscientiously and robustly and, of course, the exchanges not simply between Members of the Board and the police are stringent and at times tough. That is our role and we will as a Board continue to pursue it. This Board is also democratic. Members have their opinions and they will express their opinions and sometimes those opinions are in contradiction with the other side of the argument. But that is democracy. That is the way we do our work. Now the Chief Constable I know has concerns because he has referred to them in the past. He feels that at times we should be pursuing questions at a more strategic level. That is a matter for continuing debate and this Board will join with him in those discussions and debate and also with his officers, but nobody should be under any doubt that this Board knows the role it has to perform and it will continue to perform it.

Could I say in conclusion of my remarks, I would like to congratulate and have written to the Chief Constable on his receiving the 2008 Leadership Award from the United States Police Executive Research Forum. He attended last week the conference at that Forum which brings together some 300 Senior Police Officers from across the United States and the award is given to an officer who has shown outstanding leadership and vision and it is a huge honour for any Police Chief. It is a matter of record the Chief Constable has guided the PSNI through considerable change and we congratulate you formally at this meeting on receiving that award, which as I do not think I have said, is the first time it has been given to a police officer outwith the United States.

Over to you Chief Constable and to your officers.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman. You are aware we have a presentation on Call Handling by Superintendent Mike Ellis but I will respond to your remarks if I may before we have that presentation.

I note your comments on devolution. I am record at the Committee that was held at Stormont where Deputy Chief Constable Leighton and myself gave evidence that we, like the Board, had no difficulty in recognising the importance of that debate and we are ready to deal with the issues that arose as and when it happened.

I am also on record at that Committee as saying very clearly, something I repeated in a programme that is going out tonight, that I answer to the Policing Board, my accountability in law is to the Policing Board and that is how I still saw it regardless of where policing and justice finally sat.

I also note your other observations you made at the beginning. I think in terms of this Policing Board, I think those comments underline how important I see the Board to be. In my whole time here, I think I have missed 2 Board meetings out of some 55 Board meetings that would have been held to date. It is a critical part of the accountability and the relationship of the public between the police and the Chief and I agree with you and those comments that the debate should be robust. It is a health way forward and I note your observations.

In relation to my comments in Dublin, I have no more to add really apart from just to note the fact that the Chairman of that Committee which the Members of the Policing Board had been there to hear the totality of my speech, where I am on record as saying categorically that the Policing Board was an outstanding success story in the new dispensations in Northern Ireland.

Chairman, in relation to other matters that have been going on. It has been another busy month and I would like to touch on some issues in a little detail.

First of all if I may touch on the Estates Strategy which has been a matter of some public debate and I know of concern to many District Policing Partnerships. Members will be aware, that 2 months ago I brought a paper to the Board in relation to how we

were going to achieve a balanced budget against a shortfall over the next 3 years in the CSR bid of some £88m. It is a challenging situation and we certainly are focusing our effort to maintain frontline service delivery and looking at everything we do, including the estate, to see how we can best achieve that. We have to achieve a balance between investment in some new buildings absolutely essential I would argue and improving and indeed, softening the appearance of some other police stations in keeping with the vision of Patten and, indeed, his recommendations. That having been said, it is inevitable as you will know, that we have had to make some station closures and it is also inevitable there will have to be more station closures on grounds of achieving greater police efficiency and, indeed, coming in on budget and we have come in on budget for the last 6 years.

The pattern of stations in Northern Ireland is unique and, of course, it is designed to deal with a very different style of policing. We have stations that are not in the right place, we have huge stations where we need small stations, we have many stations that are simply falling down and are too expensive to repair. We also have many outstanding health and safety issues. So in days of a shrinking budget we have to ask ourselves how we use that money and how can we achieve safety of the communities by providing an effective frontline service which is why I have asked my Commanders again to review, as you will be aware, the review of the police estate against the new 8 Districts that we now run.

Many Members here will be aware of 'F' District for example where Chief Superintendent Skuce has made many advances in that work and is currently in consultation as to a way forward in terms of police stations under his command.

You will be aware in Fermanagh we have a mobile police station, and we are looking at other ways of maintaining that essential community contact without actually having expensive and unused buildings which people tend to focus on.

Over the next few months we will be refocusing on this particular issue. I know it is sensitive and I know we will do our best to include all the concerns of the communities in what we do, but what we do is based on achieving an effective policing service, not necessarily effective police buildings.

Chairman, in relation to the rapes which you quite rightly raised in your opening comments. It is hard to comment on some individual cases because people have been charged and are awaiting trial. That having been said, I think it is worth noting for the Board's information that since the 1 April 2008, in one calendar month, 22 rapes were reported to this police service. It is also right that 16 of those would be what we would classify as stranger rapes, i.e. suspect and victim unknown or not known to each other which is quite unusual, normally most rapes, as Members will be aware, are committed by people who are known to each other. That having been said of 22 rapes, 19 offenders have been identified which leaves only 3 outstanding in terms of police investigations. You touched on Colin Glen on the 12 April 2008 and it is a very high profile case, it is also right in that case as I have said, someone has been charged.

It is worth noting, I received a letter from the organiser of the Group from which the victim came, praising not only the frontline response officers and how they dealt with the crime once it was reported, but also particularly singling out the role of the Family Liaison Officer which is a critical role in these cases. If Members would find it helpful, it may be useful next time to do a presentation on how we now deal with rape, which frankly is probably the most next serious crime to murder and manslaughter which is how our organisation now take it under investigation, and if that is helpful I am happy or ACC Sheridan's people would be happy to do that.

Chairman, in relation to drugs offences. A growing trend in seizures of cannabis grown within Northern Ireland or certainly the island of Ireland. Four arrests in Limavady recently, 3 men and a woman and that was in relation to cocaine and ecstasy so we still have to deal with all classes of drugs. Drugs Squad officers on the 15 April 2008 recovered a cannabis factory in Finaghy Road. These operations are worth about £100,000 in terms of hard cash to the perpetrators, so they are major crimes in that sense.

A police operation, officers on mobile patrol in Doagh, stopped a car containing 3 adults and a child, indeed cannabis was also recovered from that particular vehicle. The driver made of, the helicopter police 44 spotted the individual, 3 people have been arrested with possession of intent to supply.

Another high profile case that was well reported in the press was the armed robbery in Armagh. This is a robbery of a Parochial House, a rapid police response to a very brave effort to contact us from within the house led to a pursuit by local crime team officers through 2 counties and indeed across the border where our colleagues in An Garda Siochana arrested, after the chase and a lot of damage to their vehicles, 2 people, the third was arrested by an officer from our Neighbourhood Policing Teams and those 3 people are now, of course, facing trial.

In terms of terrorism, we did have an incident in West Belfast on 10 April 2008, when a man was shot in both legs. We have linked that to the past, 2 people have been arrested and charged with a range of offences, including possession of a firearm and possession of items linked to terrorism.

On a broader front Chairman, in terms of road safety, a lot of work is going into that bearing in mind our accident rate. By just one operation by a Tutor Unit in Newry and Mourne along with Part Time Police Officers and the Department of Environment and Customs and Excise on heavy goods vehicles, resulted in the identification in a very short period of time, of 11 vehicles with defects. Four were so dangerous they were not allowed to move from the site due to defective brakes. One driver was found to have 8 motoring offences in an HGV and these are extremely dangerous vehicles when they are out of control. One was arrested for serious offences of the Working Times Directive around serious tachograph breaches, and 5 vehicles were found using red diesel and that is just one operation which shows in that sort of business we still have to very much keep our focus on.

You touched on anti social behaviour, again we are fully aware of its concern. I have had meetings with people from some political groups over the last month and community leaders in relation to this. If one looks at the Lower Falls and Operation Street Safe which has been running since the 20 March 2008 tackling anti social behaviour, and in particular, a group that have had a very high profile, the so called "Divis Hoods", very high visibility patrols, bail checks on high profile offenders, seizure of alcohol have contributed to, we think, reducing the level of fear in that area, although we fully recognise there is a lot more to do.

In terms of the bail checks Chairman, ACC McCausland just gave me updated figures which I promptly lost, but the last figures I had were 32 arrests for crimes such as theft, breach of bail, assault, disorderly behaviour, drugs and motoring offences and in excess of 419 bail checks. This is where a repeat offender is on bail with conditions imposed by the court, we repeatedly and consistently check in particular curfews to make sure they are at home and not out causing serious offences.

Public reaction has been positive, my particular concern here is where my officers repeatedly arrest people on bail committing offences in breach of bail who then simply go into the court and come out on bail again. It is raised with me and my officers continually, quite understandably by members of the community. Our particular frustration on this operation have been 6 what we would call "high profile offenders" who fit that category. It is also worth noting a very serious assault last week was committed by a person who was on bail for a serious offence.

Chairman, you have touched on Wolverhampton and a Professor from Wolverhampton. I am assuming that he was on the same planet as people in this room. I am not sure who he spoke to in my organisation, he certainly did not speak to me or to my knowledge anybody. I have written to him seeking urgent clarification of what figures he chose to use and the wider remit of his research so I can give you an informed response.

In relation to organised crime, the murder rate in Northern Ireland is 2.8 people per 100,000. In Greater Manchester it is 8.5 people per 100,000 and for an international comparison, in Washington it is 40 people per 100,000. That does not strike me as a murder rate out of control as perhaps suggested. But, as I have said, I have written and I will keep the Board informed of what happens as a result of any reply I may or may not receive.

Chairman, finally, an observation on a slightly more personal matter but one that indicates some concerns that I have in the organisation currently. Recently Members would not be aware that I was interviewed, under caution, by the Police Ombudsman's Office (OPONI) in relation to a complaint made by 3 people who are all convicted criminals, Mr Andre Shoukri, Ihab Shoukri and indeed Mr Courtney. The allegation was that I had interfered with their rights under Article 6. I can think of no more serious

allegation the Chief Constable can receive and it is worth reminding Members, as a matter of public record, Mr Courtney of course is currently serving time for having pleaded guilty eventually to participation in a brutal killing of an individual, Mr McCullough in 2003.

Mr Andre Shoukri is convicted with others of a brutal blackmail which actually involved a gun being placed at a completely law abiding businessman's head with another person and was sentenced to 9 years. Mr Ihab Shoukri's particular concern was I had implied he was a member of the UDA and therefore interfered with his right to a fair trial. Of course it was a Diplock court sitting by an individual judge. It is a matter of record he pleaded guilty to that offence, having at the very last moment and is currently awaiting sentence to being a member of that illegal organisation. He was arrested at the scene and the convictions in that police operation to date number 6 people for 9 offences, a further 6 will be in court this week and I think it shows very clearly our determination to deal with these so called community players.

I raise it for a number of reasons Chairman. One is, it highlights the tactic used by individuals who are subjected to serious criminal prosecutions to raise a smoke screen by complaining about the activity of police. It is not unique to the Chief Constable. Many of my officers receive these sorts of complaints and a thorough Police Ombudsman's investigation takes place. It is the result of those effective and very proper OPONI investigations that many of my officers have been exonerated from any of these allegations, but it shows the tactic and the attempt to dilute the impact of the criminal justice system.

I also make the point Chairman, that yet again we have shown that we are more than capable of dealing with these so called leaders within their communities, and we are capable of creating an opportunities for those who wish to sign up to the new policing dispensation. For those who wish to disarm, for those who wish to move away from paramilitary activity, to seize the day and work with my officers across the divide, it does not matter if it is loyalists or republicans, and we have arrested some 26 people in relation to the dissident republican threat over the last 3 months, to actually engage and move the world on. I would encourage those community leaders who are now making those tentative steps to engage with my officers, to continue to do so and to reassure

them that I will continue to work with anyone that wants to make a difference and an impact on policing.

Chairman, I will end my comments there and I will hand over to Superintendent Mike Ellis unless you wish to do questions now?

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Yes, I think we would like to do questions on the report you delivered. Any comments or questions.

Vice Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Chief Constable, thank you for your report. In reference to CSR07 settlement last month and in your opening remarks you said that comparison with other UK services were not helpful. However, I do think it is helpful to look at how your peer services operate and I am asking this in the context of your comments on the Estates Review, and is it not the case that PSNI have more floor space, business space per head of population than any other service and a lot of the public focus in terms of the Estates Review has been around police closure of stations, but I think this Board would like to see a fairly radical look at Headquarters space to make sure that it is being effectively and efficiently used.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

The review of the estate includes absolutely everything and there is a plan, certainly for Headquarters, much of which of course is predicated on building our New College which will allow us to consolidate our position. But as a police organisation, we have roughly 70% more space than a comparative organisation in the rest of the United Kingdom. So, I have no difficulty with that comparison and in a way it makes us ask the harder questions about why do we need so much, recognising of course that we are trying to transcend from a very different policing environment where it may well have been necessary to one where we simply do not need it and what we have is fit for purpose, so it is a complicated equation but I have no difficulty with that comparison.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. I obviously do not want to comment on all of the Chief Constable's comments nor to your own Chairman, suffice to say that we obviously had quite a number of discussions already today and I think they are all very welcome and important.

One of the part elements of your report from the Chief Constable this afternoon, you highlight a number of cases and many which were quite highly publicly profiled. I just think there has been a recent trend, which I very much welcome, to bring a number of these matters more into the public domain, because I think it is very important that the issues of the differences between the police approach perhaps in terms of dealing with anti social behaviour, you mentioned for example the bail checks and repeat offenders continuing, seeming to walk in and out of revolving doors in some of these courts. I just think it is actually very welcome that the public are becoming more aware of these types of issues which are important in their own right. Because I think that very often the public just find it totally inexplicable to work out why some of these things are happening the way they are. So, I think the way in which, notwithstanding the fact that some of the cases have been very brutal and tragic, but at the very minimum, if as a result of some of the recent activity there is more public openness, more transparency about the way in which policing is done, I think as ACC Sheridan at one point said at one of these Policing Board meetings, if I remember correctly, that 95% of policing should be public. So there should be no mystic, there should be no misunderstanding from within the general community as to how policing is actually performed and obviously the more people are fully aware of it then obviously the more the general public will understand and be able to engage on a more constructive basis. So my simple point here is that the growing trend towards more transparency on policing matters I think is very very important to the time ahead.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you. It is partly a function of growing confidence in policing, but I also think and I agree entirely, for me I think the critical debate that the strategic overview obviously we provide here, the critical debates for me are around what has been going on for example in West Belfast by community police and all the other agencies work together to get a shared understanding. What it does and it is a learning for all of us I think is how an event can be described or interpreted very differently by different groups, can

have huge implications for policing and the confidence in policing, so the closer at the grass roots level people can interact with the local officers, the more successful we will be which of course feeds into our Neighbourhood Policing Strategy. I would agree entirely.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

David Simpson.

Mr David Simpson:

Thank you Mr Chairman. Can I welcome the Chief Constable's report and in relation to the drug seizures, can I welcome the find recently in Craigavon in the Lurgan area. Just on a point of clarification, could the Chief Constable inform us, has anyone been brought to book for that find or are charges pending?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I am looking to ACC Gillespie because I cannot answer that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

Are you referring to the heroin seizures? Yes, there has been one arrest in relation to that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Any other questions on the Chief Constable's report?

Could I ask one question Chief Constable and maybe through you to ACC McCausland. This link between anti social behaviour and alcohol, I am aware of the fact that you are taking certain initiatives in that, could you give us an indication of the sort of things that you are thinking about.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC McCausland to deal with that. Certainly, it is not just anti social behaviour. If you look at the role of alcohol in serious crime it is equally worrying and I am happy to defer to ACC McCausland for some detail.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, you will be pleased to know that we are in the final stages of putting together an Alcohol and Young People campaign which we hope to introduce during the summer, which the DPPs and CSPs hopefully working together in partnership to produce a harm reduction action plan or strategy will start to make a real difference on our streets. This campaign will go end to end looking at education, treatment, enforcement and re-offending and I am pleased to report to the Board that all the main statutory and voluntary agencies in relation to this type of campaign are very keen to sign up.

I have had meetings with Minister Goggins and meetings have been arranged with the Health Minister and the Education Minister hopefully to get involved and the Minister of the Department of Social Development. The idea is, and we will present this to the Board on the 22 May 2008, to have an all encompassing campaign which in effect focuses all the statutory agencies in one particular direction to tackle this issue of alcohol and young people. The reason being, as the Chief Constable rightly says, 48% across the United Kingdom of violent crime would be linked to alcohol consumption. 17% of domestic violence would be linked to alcohol consumption and what we want to do is start off and tackle it with our young people and then look at obviously issues that range from binge drinking, the night time economy, drinking in the home and parental responsibility. So Chairman, with your permission I will end at that point but we would intend to bring a fairly lengthy or a detailed presentation to the Board that hopefully all Board Members will be able to sign up and support us, not just in their role as Board Members but also in the role as politicians and MLAs.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Chief Constable, your thematic presentation.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman. We have been asked to do a presentation on Call Management and I will ask Mike Ellis, one of my Superintendents to give you a short presentation and he will be delighted or ACC Toner will take questions in relation to any detail Members may have.

It is one of the examples frankly of where the CSR settlement has had a big impact and it has meant that we had not been able to go for the preferred option as a consequence.

Superintendent Mike Ellis:

Good afternoon Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to make a short presentation this morning. My name is Mike Ellis as introduced, on Call Management in the PSNI with particular regard to Project Unity and its current status.

The presentation will only stretch to 3 significant areas. A timeline for Call Management which is really how we got to where we are now. A road map to the distributed model for Call Management and then looking at a transition phase which is some of the work already achieved and there will be an opportunity at the end for some questions.

So, if I could start with the timeline and perhaps start with a few definitions of the terms we use here. They can be used interchangeably and sometimes they can cause confusion.

Call Handling itself is really restricted to and certainly there is no strict definition for this, but in policing terms it is really the interaction between members of the public and the police officer at the point of contact and here are the processes regarding the direction.

Call Management and indeed Contact Management which are used interchangeably refers to the full end to end process which takes us through public expectations, how to access the police through Call Handling into data capture, management of information and ultimately call dispatch.

The first bullet point we see in 2004 an IS Strategy included a limited scope of a Call Handling project and also a Contact Management Strategy and also a crime reporting facility.

During 2007, there was research undertaken into the merits of variously centralised, a 2 centred approach, distributed approaches and some hybrid proposals. In April 2007 the ISMG settled on the strategic 2 centred approach. By that stage there was also a kick off of what we know as the transition phase, that is how we are going to make it

from the decision to go for 2 centres through to actually the 2 centres manifesting themselves and there was a whole range of work to happen in that period. As that work on the transition phase continued during 2007, it was clear from the unsettled climate leading up to CSR07 that there was going to be some funding shortfalls, particularly with regard to the new build which was going to be the most expensive part of the project.

Whenever we arrived at the decision then, rather when CSR07 was announced this March, it was clear that when the impact was assessed that we were not going to be able to afford to do the 2 centre approach. At that point the Business Case was revised to contain essentially just the transition phase plus some more consolidation work and that has been submitted to the Northern Ireland Office, and at that point a distributed model was substituted in its place.

Where do we go from here? The distributed model which I am going to talk about shortly will be a matter for CSR09 as far as funding is concerned, that is our understanding.

The next slide shows a timeline along the horizontal axis, however, the vertical axis shows benefits but they are not quantified in any sense, it really is the general reflection of the benefits sought.

If I could address firstly the first 2 columns which look at the transition phase which is underway and also some further consolidation, and just to recap, to finish of those 2 columns requires this Business Case approval for Northern Ireland Office. There have been some costs savings realised by the consolidation of control rooms across the province down to 8. Some National Call Handling Standards have been introduced with training and we initiated a pilot in 'H' District which takes in some of the soft skills, and some of the software we bought for the final project and that is ready to rollout providing training is provided.

The next stage is the further consolidation, again more work on telephonic functions and an important aspect of that is the Police College training programme. It is important that any of the training we introduce is brought into the College so that the accreditation that comes from National Call Handling Standards is seen by NPIA to be

in place in PSNI. That training programme still has to be brought in from the Training Strategy Steering Group.

So, if I could leave some of those more strategic approaches and look and dwell very briefly on some of the detail and refer back to the transition phase I mentioned earlier. The transition phase was separated into 6 strands back in 2007 and I am going to go through those individually.

Strand 1 – I should say, of this transition phase around about 80% of that is already complete and certainly in Strand 1 this is almost entirely complete. Due to the RPA, we have consolidated our own control rooms down to 7 and there have been some savings in that with redeployment of personnel. We have also done some work on the restructuring of Belfast Regional Control to take into account the fact that a place like Larne have come out of Belfast control and the likes of Downpatrick have come in. Again, that is all important work, there is a great deal of technology and the organisation has to go on behind the scenes for that.

Silver Command facilities, all the new Districts have Silver Command facilities to handle major events and incidents in their respective Districts, and as I said earlier on, we have done some work on IT landlines in the background and upgraded our telephone equipment to handle the new Call Handling software and as I said, we have a pilot going now in 'H District which is starting to produce management information.

The last bullet point is really the radio talk groups and the call signs, again that is very mundane, straightforward work, but for policing it is absolutely crucial. That is the communications that allows all the officers and the PSNI support staff to communicate on the ground, and whilst a bullet point is not enough for the detail involved but that was a significant part of work to make up what we have achieved so far.

Strand 2 – is the virtualisation of Call Handling and that is what the public's perception is whenever they phone into the police using the single non-emergency number which I will come to shortly. As far as they are concerned it goes to the relevant police district and some work has been done with BT and ourselves to map all the landlines across the province into the relevant District, so as it goes to the correct station. As far as mobiles are concerned, that still has to go through Headquarters and through our

switchboard. We have also done work on the revised policies and procedures to go along with that and we intend to have those embedded in training.

The final part of the virtualisation is the province wide approach, that would be where if calls were stacked up in any one District, the technology is there, we can move it through to an adjacent District. That technology is there ready to go, however, it is on hold pending the Business Case.

Strand 3 – is the single non-emergency number which was launched in 2005. It is in place now. We have publicised it in the Yellow Pages, on our website and Directory Enquiries and it provides an easy to remember single point of access for the public to get advice and report non-emergency matters. The benefit there obviously freeing up '999' services for more urgent needs. As I mentioned in previous slides and I will mention it in later strands as well, the final part which is an advertising campaign, there has been one already, it needs more impetus and that will be on hold pending the Business Case.

Strand 4 - the internal telephone directory, again this may seem like an internal PSNI matter, however, the self help that this provides frees up time for our switchboard operators which improves our service to the public. Right now our switchboard in Headquarters receives around 7 million calls per annum, the majority of those are from the public, however if we can free up those that are made internally and directed internally, it makes for a better service. Whilst work has taken place on work on our Internal White Pages as we term it, there is still some synchronisation work to be done with our switchboards.

Strand 5 – was our Mystery Caller. We have prepared our procurement documents and they are ready to go out to an external supplier through procurement routes to engage a commercial company to do this work for us. It will provide management information which will lead to an improvement in quality of service. It only refers to the single non-emergency number, these are real incidents in real time, so it is important that it is managed very carefully. Again, the output of that, the management of information will be fed into our training programmes.

Strand 6 – Again, I touched on this briefly before. This is where we, in consultation now with the Police College, we will go out to an external supplier and it is our proposal to go out and bring training in. Trainers who will work in conjunction with the Police College to provide this soft skills training and Call Handling training and again it is important that we have that accreditation with NPIA and that we totally embed it within our training programmes. That will provide increased confidence in the public when they phone us, a consistency of service and importantly, we can bring in some core competencies we put into training into the Call Handling arena, such things as human rights, diversity, health and safety and policing in the community.

This last slide is used as a recap for the Board. We talked about the transitional and consolidation phase which are the first 2 arrows you see. As I said before, it is 80% complete with some further work in the control rooms in 'E' District and 'H' District. The training has to be procured and again will have to go to our Training Strategy Steering Group for that. After the transition and consolidation and before we go into the third arrow, there was a point to reflect and reassess the scope of the Strategy. We have to look at best practice from around the world and we have to revisit the Business Case. The only other thing, certainly for now, if the presentation is that the Communication Strategy, how we convey this to the public and how we synchronise what we hope to do with the material what the Policing Board produce and what their objectives are.

So, as I mentioned before that is the end of the presentation and myself and ACC Toner are available for questions.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Dolores Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Thank you Chairman and thank you for the presentation. But not wishing to shoot the messenger, but this is a product that should have been delivered over 2 years ago and the Chief Constable said in his opening remarks about the impact of CSR07, is it not the case that Call Management should have been a priority 5 years ago in which case CSR07 would not have had an impact? Is it not also true that £6m had been returned to the Treasury without any prospect of being returned to the PSNI for their budget?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

I will take that question. The timelines in relation to the 2 contact centre option in Project Unity were agreed through the Information Management Steering Group internally with PSNI and brought to the Policing Board and discussed. I agree it was a timeline that was going to take a significantly longer period that people would have liked, but we were then talking about actually having to build a 2 purpose building facilities, recruit and all the elements around that. Now if CSR07 had provided the necessary spending profile we would have been able to do that within the timeframe that was put up on the board and we would have had a 2 centre option by 2010/11.

The difficulty is that with the Patten Non-Severance Funding for IT and the £65m, and this leads into the first main question for the Board, there was always carried forward each year of capital and revenue expenditure within that structure which was separate from Main Grant carry forward. However, that flexibility no longer exists and was removed, so we do not have the luxury of that. However, you will see from the presentation that we currently have a Business Case with the NIO for £3.5m to do the transition work that we outlined which is £3.5m out of last year's budget which we have carried forward specifically for that. However, until the NIO approve that, we cannot actually spend the money and that is why it is on hold. The short answer is, the timeline is there if the funding had been available would have been the agreed timelines that Project Unity had been working to for the last 3 years.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

I want to come back. I think we all know that Call Handling is the major issue across all DPPs and in particular, for members of the public, and it really is not good enough that this is the timeline now before us. As you know Chairman, we have asked ACC Toner to come to the next meeting of the Resources and Improvement Committee. Those timelines will not be acceptable to the Committee, and could the Chief Constable the Chief Constable not confirm that there is a problem with Call Management and it was only whenever we went to Scotland to West Lothian, whenever the Chief Constable there admitted that there was a problem, that that problem then was resolved.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

If we could we would have gone for the preferred option because that is the Rolls Royce and Lothian and Borders are I know, like all these major changes when you implement them, they had substantial problems getting it right and we, no doubt, would have had similar challenges in the system. The reality is, in terms of the budget, as soon as the money is approved and one could argue and we are arguing for our own money back through a Business Case précis which we have no option but to deliver under, I cannot break the rules to get the money. Any help we can get to get that money released quickly will enable us to move forward more quickly. I do not know if ACC Toner can add any more detail to that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

No, the timelines that we presented today, albeit we are not talking about a 2 centre option we are talking about a distributed option around the Districts which is cheaper to be perfectly honest. It is not as good an option but the reality is those timelines are exactly the same timelines that I have reported to you in the past to the Policing Board and the Resources and Improvement Committee in relation to Project Unity. The 2 centre option would have been delivered in 2010/11 as well, usually in the last financial quarter of 2011 we would have delivered that. So, the timelines have never actually changed, it is just that we have had to take the scope of the project down significantly beyond what was originally agreed because we do not have the funding to do it anymore.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Rosaleen Moore.

Mrs Rosaleen Moore:

Thank you for the presentation. Just following on from what Dolores Kelly is saying and with reference to the funding and we know the difficulties and we debated this at the Resources and Improvement Committee. I think what we wanted to see within the Committee as well was, an emphasis on an imaginative solutions especially on the Call Handling area which is actually the area that policing gets judged on very strenuously, which is the first point of interaction with the public. I think what we wanted to see was on the ground local initiatives to try and I know these are happening in some parts of the service. It happens right across the public sector and I often think that while the

Mystery Caller issue and the quality assurance review is very important, I think every Senior Manager should be sent out with a limited number of 5p coins to a coin box and try and access your own service. It does not matter whether it is a hospital or a police service or something else, but to get that sort of immediacy into the situation and some sort of localised immediately consumer responsive issues being brought into the handling and the management of the Call Handling system.

Superintendent Mike Ellis:

If I could just respond on that, the transitional phase we have completed now has included Call Handling facilities in all the Districts, but there is one District that still has some work to do – recruiting, but Call Handling is now in place in its barest form to achieve that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. I am not sure how long ago you were able to make a 5p phone call. I want to thank Superintendent Ellis for that presentation, but I must say I am neither a Trekkie or a Techie so you sort of lost me after virtualisation.

What I would say on a serious note, obviously a lot of work has been done, a lot of disappointments and we have all agreed that Call Management is a very very key area of engagement between the public and the police themselves, so the issue has been well aired and the need to resolve it has also been agreed. So, when you are talking about how do we communicate this out, could I ask yourself Superintendent Ellis or ACC Toner or whoever, obviously much of what we have had presented to us is actually on hold, so in a way there has only been a limited rollout. Do you have any assessment as to the effectiveness of what has been rolled out so far, because at the end of the day, we can communicate what we want or what we might want to, but what has actually been achieved so far?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

We do not have the metrics, we do not have the hard data at the moment to prove it, that is why we are going to use the Mystery Caller and get more management

information available, but we think there has been an improvement across the Districts by consolidating the control rooms and consolidating the Call Handling.

The virtualisation aspect is basically that, instead of having telephonists who are operating individually in every single District station or Area station that we can actually link them all up together virtually so they can operate as a network, so you have a switchboard defector across the whole of the District and you can offload the calls so the caller is not waiting. We think there has been an improvement but there is still a lot more room for improvement. We are measured against the National Call Handling Standards, that the standards that the HMIC measure us against, and while we are always open to any sort of innovative approach that a DPP or any local individual want to come forward with, we do have to adhere to the National Call Handling Standards across the whole of the organisation.

It is a less than perfect situation, there is no doubt about that, but unfortunately the finances are not there. This was all projected to be in the latter part of the Patten IS Strategy and the delivery of it, but of course the funding is no longer there in place to do that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Mr Chairman, as the Head of the Training Committee to back up what ACC Toner said, we are putting emphasis really on the Call Management training to ensure that when people do ring up they get consistency of response right across all 8 Districts as to what and how we actually deal with people and as Superintendent Ellis has said that is coming forward and being embedded into the College in terms of our trainees and right across the organisation to ensure that there are the standards that ACC Toner has defined. So, it is about what Alex Maskey has said, it is not about the technology, it is about how you handle the people when they actually ring up and that is what we are putting our emphasis on.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Taking one further question on this, Mr Basil McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

But is the issue not really one of call grading? Nobody really understands what is to be expected when you phone up. The single number that you have, I have no idea what it is. I do not even know what number I am supposed to phone, and you come back here about communication and get none, we need to find a way of getting that sorted out, and as far as the Call Handling system goes on, I do think that you need support and we will give you whatever support we can.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

The number is 0845 600 8000, unless I got it wrong.

Mr Basil McCrea:

That is because you read it on the screen.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

No, I did not actually see it on the screen, I am the one person who cannot see the screen. Thank you for your help, it is a very important area and it is Dolores Kelly's point, I see it as very important. It is one of the critical interfaces.

In terms of consistency. The trick in terms of the training and the so called soft skills are actually enabling people to tailor the response to the request and you are absolutely right, it may be 2 days later a Community Officer is the appropriate response rather than a car with his blue lights turning up in 3 minutes. It is that assessment, the first line assessment, is absolutely critical and that requires all the other bits to come into play.

In terms of the money, just very briefly, there is a legacy issue around this. We did inherit no decent IT 5 or 6 years ago, it is taken a £65m project to bring us up to speed on everything, so we are as frustrated as you in terms of getting this one out. In terms of 'could it have been quicker', well we had a plan but we were trying to bed it with everything else and some things win and some things lose, but it is a complicated bit of business.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I am going to move on and could I say thank you to Superintendent Ellis for a very clear presentation.

Questions relating to budget etc, question 1 from Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, it is basically going back to the figures and Patten underspend in terms of the budget 2007/08 and to suggest that there was £8.5m underspend in Patten revenue budgets last year with £5.3m relating to IT systems.

Q1 - The Resources & Improvement Committee was advised that from an original £8.5m IS capital budget, £4.5m was surrendered in December 2007 and only £1m from the remainder was actually spent by the year end, equating to an 88% under-spend when compared to the original budget. The figures also suggest there is an £8.5m under-spend on Patten Revenue Budgets in 07/08, with £5.3m relating to IT systems.

- (i) Could the Chief Constable advise if he is content with the delivery on Patten Non-Severance spend relating to the IS Strategy;***
- (ii) How does the Chief Constable intend to address the significant slippages that have occurred in 2007/08 in future periods, given the restraints of the CSR07 settlement?***

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

Yes, there was an underspend last year and I would propose Chairman to actually go to the Resources and Improvement Committee and go into this in granular detail because there is an awful lot of facts and figures and information around it. But to give an explanation why there was an underspend last year, there are a number of different areas for this.

Number one, is the business case process. Business cases pending with the Northern Ireland Office and not approved, therefore, we have only limited scope that we can actually do any expenditure against that because we are spending against Main Grant money.

Secondly, we are working on a procurement process on the original timelines from the strategy, our procurement policies then work between a 3 to 6 months timeline, it is now between 9 and 12 months. Remember these are complicated large scale IT contracts and they have got to be got right, so that adds at least an extra 6 months onto most of the major projects.

There have been a number of national systems which have been delayed, for example, access management SHENGEN which is the international information sharing system and IMPACT which is a national information sharing system. They are all substantially delayed and because of that we cannot put spend in place for a national system when we do not know the standards or requirements or the procurement processes therein.

We had our provisional CSR07 figures given to us by the Director of Finance just before Christmas 2007. From those provisional figures it was clear, that as of 1 April 2008 there will be a limited amount of spend available for information technology. Therefore, in the last financial quarter, and remember it is predicated against business cases, in the last financial quarter of 2007/08, it would have been foolish for us to spend money on new systems or on procurement work or contract work whenever we knew for a fact that we were not able to progress those systems on 1 April 2008.

We have also lost the facility for carry forward which I touched on earlier under the Project Unity. We had a totally flexible facility under Patten non-severance to carry forward each year. That facility was removed in the 2007/08 financial year because of the constraints in relation of the budget.

I know that the Board have spoken to the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and their validation visit in relation to the Information Systems Strategy and have specifically asked for this issue in relation to the financial provisions and how the funding took place and how the funding was delivered and spent. I welcome that, I think it would be immensely useful and I have already spoken to the NPIA Validators

this week, specifically into looking at the work that we do within Operational Support Department and Information Communication Services and the work that David Best and his colleagues do in Finance and Support Services and the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and hope that that will assist in providing the clarity to the Board in relation to how this money was spent, or in this case, not spent. But as I say, there are still a number of business cases up with the NIO and we hope we will be able to utilise some of the underspend in the 2008/09 financial year.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Mrs Kelly, could you also at the same time ask your question 5 when you are commenting.

Chairman, I will put that too, as well.

Chairman, we will welcome ACC Toner's attendance at the next Resources and Improvement Committee, but you know, when you look at it 88% underspend at a time of a very tight public purse when there was an opportunity to spend money I think that is a grave concern to the Board. I would ask the Chief Constable how he intends to address those slippages?

In relation to Business Cases Chairman, as you know, we have also met with the NIO and the NIO are saying about the quality of the business cases coming from PSNI are also a matter of concern. So, I would ask the Chief Constable was liaison or dialogue has he had with the NIO in attempting to speed up the processes and ensuring that business cases meets NIO requirements.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Your question 5. This is the one about money going back.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Yes Chairman, it is fairly straightforward though.

Q5 – To ask the Chief Constable, how much money has been returned to the Treasury over the past 3 years and is now list in the PSNI budget. What impact has this had on projects/service delivery?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Sorry Chairman, I will ask ACC Toner to do question 5.

In relation to the quality of business cases, the ones that I have seen I think are, without doubt, up to the mark. Does that mean some get fired back for better clarification, yes it does and I am more than happy to share and I will ask ACC Toner to share with the Board, the sort of points and clarification we get, or are sought, and the Board will then want to make a view as to whether that should or should not hold up a business case. I will say no more than that here because I think it needs to do the detail, but I will ask ACC Toner or perhaps David Best on question 5.

Director of Finance and Support Services, Mr David Best:

In relation to question 5, during 2007/08 funds were taken back to the Department in respect of capital receipts from the sale of police estates. Receipts were received for £9m in excess of target. These targets were set quite a few years before that through the previous spending review. We know the property prices in Northern Ireland were probably a bit conservative at the time also when they were prepared. Receipts were received in excess and in previous years, it was left to the discretion of PSNI to spend those over-receipts, but during the year that was withdrawn. Now, do you understand that it is now policy within other public sector organisations that you have to bid for over-receipts and we are being told, you had that freedom in the past, you have lost it this year but you are brought into line. That does not take away from the fact that a large sum of money was taken back from policing which we were hoping would be left with us, and that has been lost in the 2007/08 year.

It is possible that it could become available in future years if we have capital pressures which we anticipate having, but there is no guarantee at all we will get that, that will be subject to an in-year bid.

Taking into account the projected year end easements for the Police Service Revenue Budget arising from the underspend of £10.7m, that is the current estimate. Some specific bids for additional funding during 2007/08, which were previously committed to as part of the £65m IS Strategy that ACC Toner was referring to, those had been approved in previous years and we expected to get the funding and it did not actually come. Although that specifically is EDRMS and Horizon Project costs and maybe some normalisation as well, and we had to pick those pressures up from elsewhere within the budget.

During the year, slippage and easements were identified from the Patten Non Severance you referred to, and rather than introduce new capital funding to meet the in-year pressure, that was veered into these other capital areas, namely estates. We have notified the NIO as ACC Toner referred to, that we do need that money for future periods, otherwise the ICS strategy will suffer.

PSNI Services presented just recently to the Committee its in-year estimated position for the year end. Now, that is subject to the Northern Ireland Audit Office's audit which will be completed by the end of May 2008, but at the moment, we are projecting a £10.7m underspend in revenue and a £2m overspend in pressure on the capital side. We think this is a reasonable result so far, bearing in mind this is the first year of resources budgeting, much more complex process to follow, moving away from the old cash when you used to be able to just hold a cheque back at year end to ensure that you lived within budgets, we cannot do that any longer.

The NIO confirmed that they will meet the pressure of the £2m capital overspend, so in effect, we have got that money back and I think that is good news for us, and the police service are permitted now to carry forward the £10.7m. NIO have just recently come back to us and indicated that we are now allowed to carry forward up to £14m, that is just very recently and we welcome that, and from that £10m we hope to give some of the money back to ICS.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, just to put on record that I think that the Committee and Members of the Board will expect the delivery of Police Community Support Officers within any future budget provision.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, that is obviously a debate we are going to have with the Board in the very near future.

Just an overall observation. Of course running a budget of our size on annularity was a very difficult thing in terms of what happened and two things to remember really, one is we were not allowed to build reserves up in the past which would have perhaps dealt with some of these issues in a more traditional way from a police budget perspective, and also, annularity has always been difficult, resource budgeting has been a big challenge, so I think we are there or thereabouts, we are going to see some pluses and minuses over the year.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to the value of officer secondments, Mr David Simpson, question 6.

Mr David Simpson:

Q6 - Can the Chief Constable provide the Board with his assessment of the value that the secondment of officers brings to the PSNI and can he quote examples to demonstrate how these secondments have been successful?

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

Chairman, Members, we believe that the secondment of our officers to other services, in fact the receipt of other officers to our service, provides the career development opportunities and also gives us a chance to market and understand the considerable abilities of the Police Service of Northern Ireland near and far.

There are numerous examples of secondments in which we participate, both on a national and an international level. At a national level, we support national policing by, for example, having a number of officers seconded to the Border and Immigration Service. A number of officers seconded to the National Police Improvement Agency in

training and development roles and we have officers seconded for their own personal development to other police services so that they get an experience of a policing environment that is beyond Northern Ireland, for example, recent secondments to the Lancashire Police Service spring to mind.

On the international front, all of our secondments are based upon either Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) requirements or, indeed, the European Union policing requirements centred around the developing nations either the pre-accession states or the immediate post accession period where new member states have to in the first instance, satisfy the members of the European Union that they have a policing at a certain standard or agree, that within certain standard post accession, will raise their policing standards to that which is the European norm. So, in that regard, we have been considerably involved in Turkey and various other states.

In Bulgaria for example, there is one project of witness protection is coming to an end and we are about together to work with NI-CO on projects that are emerging now in Serbia, Bosnia and Kosovo and these are very short term secondments where officers are going to deliver training for maybe 2 weeks at a time on the establishment of human resource systems, or dealing with issues such as witness protection. In some cases issues such as close protection as well, depending on the circumstances, but all within either a Foreign and Commonwealth office or European Union framework. This also gives the officers the opportunity to develop themselves and working in different cultures and backgrounds, and of course, because of our extensive experience in the Balkans in the past, we are pretty much in demand in terms of bringing those previous experiences to bear at this point in time.

We have also been seconding officers to deal with the situation as best we can, in assisting the FCO in Iraq and Afghanistan and in East Timor but those secondments again tend to be single officers and, with the exception of Afghanistan, for an extremely short duration.

You will also be aware, that we have seconded a number of officers from Poland into the Service to provide specific advice and guidance in dealing with the emerging new communities in Northern Ireland, and at the moment we are trying to source a Lithuanian officer to be seconded to deal with some of the problems that face that

particular community in Northern Ireland and to enable our officers to better understand their needs and requirements in terms of delivering a service to them.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could you say something about secondments to and from the Garda Síochána?

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

Sorry, I should have mentioned that we have had over 17 exchanges of officers between the Garda Síochána and ourselves, and there are about 6 Garda officers I think from memory, who are about to take up their personnel exchanges within the next month to various border stations across Northern Ireland.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr David Simpson, supplementary.

Mr David Simpson:

Thank you Chairman. Very briefly. I think what Mr Stewart has said is right. I think it is good for officers right across the board to get the experience and 2 of the concerns that the Committee had raised that I chair in Human Resources are, that we would like an undertaking and a guarantee that whatever rank of officer would go on secondment, that there is someone there to take that officer's place and to carry on the duties. Also, from time to time, requests have come retrospective to the Human Resources Committee for approval for secondment. I think the Committee certainly are very strong in the view, that this should not happen and it should be brought before the Committee before a decision is taken.

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

There are 2 points really I think in response to the Chair of the Committee. The condition of officers going, not unless they are under my command, not that they are being sent by me on behalf of the Service to another country to deliver a service, is that they have the agreement of their ACC or Head of Function, that they are permitted to go and that he or she can accommodate their absence during the period and that no dutatorial service impact affects the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

In terms of approvals, we have I think, a very clear protocol with the Committee for approvals and we understand that the Committee are the final arbiter and I hope the Committee will also understand, that within that approval process, we make every effort to contact you through officials, but we do in circumstances get very short order requests to send officers to do a particular presentation. In fact, I got a request just last week for a presentation to take place in Pristina this week, which was about setting up human resource systems and a general in-country governors on behalf of the United Nations in that area, and rather than not participate and bring our skills to bear, I authorised that. So, that is one of the things we would be asking you to retrospectively approve, but it is not something as a matter of course, it is something that comes up maybe at short notice to me.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to single officer patrols, Mrs Moore, question 7.

Mrs Rosaleen Moore:

Can the Chief Constable provide the Board with an update on the progress since March 2007 towards implementing single officer patrols? Can he provide the Board with an update on his plans to increase these patrols during this year?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Thank you Mr Chairman. If I quickly go round my 4 Districts and then hand over to my colleague ACC Gillespie in relation to Rural Region.

In 'A' District, single officer patrolling is kept under constant review. In fact, cycle patrols were introduced as a first step, but sadly that had to be withdrawn temporarily, we hope, due to the threat in November 2007 from the dissidents.

Single officer patrolling will continue to be assessed in the District depending upon the risk assessment and outcomes, with the intention of making it the default patrolling position as and when it is appropriate.

In 'B' District, that is East and South Belfast, single officer patrolling has become the default patrol style since October 2007 for response in neighbourhood policing. But again prevailing security situation has meant, that at times, single officer patrolling has to be kept under constant review, which I hope the Board would appreciate.

In relation to 'C' District that is North Down, Ards, Downpatrick and Castlereagh, single officer patrolling is the norm for the neighbourhood policing officers during the hours of daylight and in suitable areas. The single officer patrolling policy for response officers is under review and it is hoped again, that in line with other Districts, this will be fully implemented in the near future, subject again as the Board appreciates, to a local risk assessment.

In 'D' District, Lisburn, Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus and Antrim, single officer patrolling is the default position for the neighbourhood police team and single officer patrolling policy for response officers will be implemented, I am pleased to say, in the next few months.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

In relation to Rural Region, there is a single officer patrol champion in each of the Districts and I know Urban Region is the same at Superintendent or Chief Inspector level, and before the implementation of the Service Policy which we just had recently, Area Commanders had introduced single officer patrols in many areas, but that is always depending on the outcome of risk assessments. Local Commanders are best placed to make those decisions locally, because within each District there is a variance. For example, in 'E' District, single officer patrolling in Banbridge would be much more appropriate than it might be in South Armagh for example. So, due to the very rural nature of some towns and villages, single officer patrols are carried out in conjunction with the mobile police station to which the Chief Constable has already made reference. One officer will stay with the mobile police station and the other will do a beat around the periphery in the village, which is a very useful way of engaging with members of the public there.

Obviously, the safety and confidence of police officers is very very important in this regard and the ongoing dissident republican threat to which ACC McCausland has already referred. Despite 2 officers within my Region having been shot in Dungannon

and Derry in November 2007, cycle patrols and single officer patrols in those areas do continue and that will be at appropriate times and at appropriate places.

Officers, in particular neighbourhood officers, are increasingly creative and they might leave the station as a 2 person patrol, but split up and patrol in parallel which would, strictly speaking, count as a single officer patrol as well.

They will continue to be developed as an integral part of the District Call Management and Neighbourhood Policing Strategies, but it is not just neighbourhood police officers that will patrol singly.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Vice Chairman of the Board, Mr Barry Gilligan.

Vice Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Just a quick follow up Chairman. My experience of seeing police cars is largely in the Greater Belfast and City Centre areas and I hear what you say ACC McCausland about the security considerations and the Board fully take that on view.

Maybe it is my imagination, but I seem to notice an awful lot time, 3 officers in a police car around the City Centre and there may be reasons for that, maybe you could explain them?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Thank you Chief Constable. In relation to 3 officers in vehicles, I hope that what you are seeing is officers being conveyed out, to being dropped off. We had to introduce 3 officers in relation to North and West Belfast for a period of time due to the dissident threat, particularly in relation to the armoured land rovers, and some of the vehicles that we have, have to be crewed by 3 officers. But again, single officers are patrolling. Just this week the night duty Inspector was on patrol in North Belfast where I had mentioned we had withdrawn. He was on his own to give confidence to his officers. He came across an individual acting suspiciously at 3 o'clock in the morning. He challenged that individual who was actually armed with a hatchet and a hammer. He disarmed him and he made the arrest, so single officer patrolling is out there and we constantly keep it under review. I know it is a bone of contention to the Chief Constable when he sees

more than 3 or 2 officers in any one vehicle, so thank you very much for that and it was not your imagination.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Seriously, I challenge it all the time and I think we need to keep doing that, but it is that fine balance. The individual referred to who was arrested by our Inspector, if I remember right, was also on bail. I challenge it and just by way of example, there were 4 in, it was actually 4 officers on their way to a training course maximising the use of the resource, so there may be explanations for some, but I do think it is something we keep pushing and we keep challenging, but we do recognise on occasions sadly we are not in a position where we can do in the routine of policing yet.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 8 relates to officer suspensions, Basil McCrea.

Mr Basil McCrea:

Q8 - Further to a report in the media on 7 April 2008, of an officer having been suspended for over 7 years; could the Chief Constable:-

- (a) Indicate the number of officers currently on suspension for over 12 months and state for how long;***
- (b) Outline the reasons for suspensions continuing for protracted periods;***
- (c) Outline the process that leads to the suspension of officers;***
- (d) Outline the review process for officers on suspension; and***
- (e) Outline the total amount of salaries and allowances paid to officers on suspension in 2007/08?***

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, if I can respond to that one. There are currently 15 officers suspended for over 12 months. The figures break down as follows.

In the 1 to 2 year period there are 7 officers suspended and in the 2 to 3 years there are 5 officers suspended, 3 to 4 years – 1 officer, 4 to 5 years – 1 officer and over 7 years – 1 officer.

The main reason for the protracted nature of these suspensions is, that criminal proceedings take precedents over misconduct procedures and, therefore, whilst criminal proceedings are ongoing, including appeals against sentences, misconduct proceedings must be pended accounting for the delay.

The considerations that are taken into account when an officer is to be considered for suspension come to myself, and the things that are looked at are the nature and seriousness of the alleged action of the individual and, in particular, the impact that may have on any sanction that might be imposed by a panel and whether or not one of the upper 2 sanctions that is 'required to resign' or 'dismissed' is likely to be imposed. The strength of evidence and the nature of the investigation is also considered along with the public interest and that of the police service and the reputation of the police service. Whether effective investigation of the allegation may be compromised by the officer remaining in post has to be considered, because in some certain cases, the officer remaining where they are could actually mean that the investigation is ineffective.

The nature of the post held, because one of the alternatives to suspension of course is repositioning, we can reposition officers and we have a number of officers who are repositioned. They are not considered suspended, they are still at work, but they are repositioned to posts in which there is no risk to themselves or members of the public of the type of action that they have been accused of being repeated.

All suspensions are reviewed on a monthly basis and as I have mentioned, there are 15 suspended for more than 12 months, there are a further 20 officers who are in the 1 to 12 month period, so there are 35 suspensions at present. They are reviewed on a monthly basis by the Head of the Department or supervising member to ensure that they remain necessary and proportionate. It may be, that even after a court case, where someone has been found not guilty, there is still a good reason for maintaining the suspension or it may be that there is a reason for lifting the suspension.

The total amount of salaries and allowances paid for the 15 officers currently over 12 months suspension in the past year has been £612,500. Those are the answers to the points made, if any other questions, I will be happy to answer.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Could I just ask Deputy Chief Constable, what processes are there in place to help identify those officers who become involve in criminal activity or have been involved in criminal activity such as drugs, possession or theft, that I say, lead to that initial suspension? How can the police send out a message that those types of activities will not be tolerated?

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

A very good question. The Professional Standards Department when it was reformed, and there have been questions before about what happened when Professional Standards was reformed from the old Complaints and Discipline Department. We created a proactive unit within Professional Standards which has an intelligence cell which is run, the same way as any other intelligence cell, gathering intelligence. It is proactively looking for, and following up on leads, on officers who are committing wrongdoing of many different forms, be it drugs use whatever, leakage of information all that sort of thing, we are proactively investigating so we have a proactive unit which does those investigations. It can then lead to a discipline file which can lead to suspension. Obviously, at the earliest stage if we have enough evidence, enough concrete material, we will suspend.

The other way that officers can come forward for suspension obviously is, from an Ombudsman's investigation and the Ombudsman can recommend suspension, but usually we wait, well in all cases, we wait for the Ombudsman to recommend suspension because we have no knowledge of what is in their investigation because it is a totally independent investigation, usually resulting from a complaint from a member of the public, or a referral by us to the Ombudsman. So those are the ways that people come forward and that is the way that we are actively looking for officers who are committing wrongdoing.

In terms of sending out a message, we have been trying very hard to make sure that the message is very consistent, that integrity is not negotiable. That you cannot commit offences within the police service and expect to get away with it.

We have sent out a very strong message about drink driving which the Board is very well aware of, that has resulted in a big reduction in the number of officers being arrested and charged with drink driving. However, it has to be said, that if any officers arrested for drink driving are any member of the public is arrested for drink driving, the message has not got through to everybody, but we are trying very hard with that one. That has been reinforced at Christmas periods and at other prime times with screen savers on computers so immediately when somebody switches on their computer they get one of the ads that we have used about drink driving or about other offences. We remind them on the computer about lawful business monitoring, that we can monitor all internal telephone calls and all internal uses of computers that belong to the PSNI, we can monitor those freely without having to record it or tell them at the time or anything else, we can do that lawfully within lawful business monitoring. So, they are reminded constantly of the big issues. Now the big issues for us are drink driving, use of drugs and leakage of information. Those are the 3 big issues that we have identified through our proactive work and we are sending out messages day and daily about that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. Just briefly, obviously this is a very complex matter. There are a variety of reasons why suspensions in the first instance occur and perhaps even why some of them take a long time to be resolved. I am thinking from 2 points of view. Obviously, there is a huge cost publicly of well over £500,000 here and at the same token, officers like any other employee, have their rights and entitlements which must also be protected. So, it seems to me that the longer a suspension goes on, it becomes increasingly difficult to stand over and justify, not least even where an officer who has been accused of something may well be innocent and be eventually exonerated, but I think you would appreciate, that after a certain period of time, it becomes very very difficult to sustain the integrity of that progress. So, I am wondering what work can be done to try to eliminate a situation if possible, where suspensions can go on for a number of years, the officers in question are left and do not know what the position is likely to be, so there are a lot of very fundamentally important questions to be dealt with and addressed, so just to give me some indication Deputy Chief Constable,

what more fundamental work can be done to try and get to the root of some of these problems.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

As I mentioned, the major reason for the length of some of these suspensions is the protracted nature of legal cases. Now, where cases have been waiting with the Public Prosecution Services (PPS), obviously once it is in a court we cannot interfere in any way, nor can we interfere with the PPS. What we do after the regular reviews is, if it is still with the PPS for a length of time, I write to the PPS and say this case has now been with you, you should be aware that an officer is suspended, we need to try and progress this as quickly as possible, to try to get as much speed as we can into the system. We do that on a regular basis and we get a response from the PPS. If that response is indicating that it is unlikely there is going to be a charge, then we reconsider the suspension then. So, we do try to make sure that we are reviewing them on a regular basis and we are actively following them up with the PPS.

Once it is in train and there are adjournments or there is an appeal against sentence, there is very little that we can do because that is down to the legal process and the Courts Service, we cannot really interfere on that, so it is very difficult. We are left waiting to try and satisfy the officers, satisfy the complainant or whatever because we have no influence there.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 9 relates to race and diversity issues with the PSNI.

Q9 - Could the Chief Constable comment on the following points with regard to race and diversity issues within the PSNI:-

- (i) how does PSNI quality assure its policies/procedures in relation to race and diversity issues so as to ensure that the integrity of the policy/process is not compromised or undermined?***
- (ii) how many racist incidents were reported within PSNI in the last 2 years and could the Chief Constable give a snapshot of the incidents and outcomes?***

- (iii) what processes are adopted during recruitment and selection to assess a candidate's ability to meet the standard as laid out by the race and diversity competency?**
- (iv) can the Chief Constable reassure the Board that selection/assessment panels appointed to assess candidates in any promotion or recruitment process are reflective of the society the PSNI serves?**

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

Chairman, it is a lengthy and important question. I will highlight the responses but it might well be better, that after I have spoken, we can actually correspond and give precise details about particular issues.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

A letter would be very helpful.

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

In terms of the equality assurance of policies, all our Police Service policies and procedures are required to be screen at the development stage in line with our obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 for any potential negative differential impact across all 9 categories, and this includes race and ethnic background, so there is a very substantial screening process in place to deal with it.

As far as the second point is concerned about racist incidents, we have recorded no complaints of bullying or harassment concerning racial motivation in the last 3 years at all and there have been none reported to the Equality and Diversity Unit inside PSNI.

As far as our recruitment processes are concerned, then whether they be internal or external, each process has an assessment of respect for diversity within each process, designed at each process at every level inside the organisation. In terms of our internal processes, it is absolutely compulsory that we have race and diversity assessed in the promotion processes. In the external processes, Consensia Partnership who handle our police recruitment processes, go to every length to ensure that the assessors are as representative of society as they can possibly be and, of course, the Board themselves have a role in this because the Board appoints lay assessors who oversee

the process and assure themselves that the way in which the matter is conducted. When we are designing our internal processes, even in the composition of the questions to be put, we bring in a range of representative groups from society, who we are very grateful to for the assistance they provided us with, to assist us in framing the questions to ensure that our questions are to the point and accurate and are reflective of the society we seek to serve, but as I say, I have an extensive written response for you Chairman which I am quite happy to send on.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Any other supplementaries on that?

Question 10 relates to incidents of anti social behaviour as reported by 2 bodies, question 10, Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Q10 - How many incidents or crimes, including incidents of anti social behaviour, have been reported to each DCU by:-

(a) Alternatives NI

(b) Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI)

in the past 12 months?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Harris to deal with that please.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

In respect of Community Restorative Justice (CRJI), there have been no formal referrals to the police service, but this is due to the fact that CRJI are not yet accredited and they will be accredited by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) in time. They have undergone an inspection and the process of accreditation is well underway. However, we have been increasingly in contact with CRJI, and it has to be said that the overall tone is very constructive and that there is a real desire to build on relationships and develop a good positive working relationship with the police.

Matters referring to ongoing crime or information and details about repeat victimisation have been given to the police by CRJI and other information relating to crime, so it is evident that a constructive relationship is being developed and I would particularly highlight the work going on in West Belfast and the Twinbrook area.

In respect of Alternatives, no formal referrals have been received as yet through the Community Based Restorative Justice protocol. We met most recently with Alternatives on 17 April 2008 and they are in a position very soon to refer 2 cases to us from the Newtownabbey and Bangor areas, and arrangements have been made to process these referrals through. We are very anxious to see those referrals work so that we have an idea how this whole process, Community Based Restorative Justice, will work out in actual practice and how we can practically apply the protocols.

Ongoing contact with Alternatives is very much normal day to day business and in respect of matters outside the protocols, relationships continue to work as they have over the last 4 to 5 years.

Referrals and information regarding more serious crime, such as drug possession and possession of offensive weapons have been made recently, and also crime prevention and anti social behaviour issues continue to be referred to the police.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mrs Kelly, supplementary.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I think the public and everyone else has heard much from different areas that have both in existence, Alternatives and Community Restorative Justice and I think it is absolutely scandalous.

The issue about relationships is not what they are accredited on, they are accredited on the work they are supposed to do and it is a very clear demarcation between the work that is the proper criminal justice system, i.e. that of the PSNI and that of other agencies. So, can ACC Harris assure me that there is not a parallel justice system in existence out there and that the only criminal justice system that actually is appropriate, that is right, is the one that the PSNI and the criminal justice system actually have? I

actually do not accept that these organisations, which are part funded out of the public purse, actually should be in existence without information which quite frankly, Crimestoppers or a bobby on the beat could deliver on.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

In respect of Alternatives they are accredited, they have gone through an inspection process conducted by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate and the Northern Ireland Office have to be convinced of their accreditation. The personnel who have been put forward to work on Community Based Restorative Justice undergo a vetting process and go through a suitability panel, again ran by the Northern Ireland Office. It is not for the police to have any role in terms of deciding whether a body is accredited or not, and so they have gone a number of gateways, decided by the protocol in which we supplied some information.

In respect of Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI), they are now going through the accreditation process, and that is overseen again by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate and in respect of both bodies, we would say that we have positive working relationships with them that are developing, but also developing in respect of other work other than Community Based Restorative Justice referrals to the police. There is a lot of work around dealing with young people, relationships with young people, crime prevention and also supplying information about more serious criminality than the protocols were designed to deal with.

Mrs Dolores Kelly

Chairman, you did not address the issues about parallel justice systems.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, I could deal with that. There is only one criminal justice system, but success quite frankly, certainly around young people in my experience is, if you can keep them out of court by getting them into a system or diverting their behaviour, providing they accept what they have done, is a huge long term improvement on the potential solution of criminalising them and locking them up because we know what happens is a downward spiral.

There is a protocol, we are quite properly, not the decision makers in this, but I will as I have said from the word go, we will always deal with and speak to people who want to make a difference to policing. But, there is no dual role. We were absolutely clear on that right from the word go on this, there is one judicial system and you have to engage with the police as a precursor to anything and that is what this protocol is aimed at delivering.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary, Mr Alex Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

Thank you Chairman. Certainly over the last number of months we have had a number of these questions from Dolores Kelly, and it seems to me, that I would certainly be welcoming the fact that on each occasion, the PSNI have actually recorded what appears to be a progression of engagement with people involved in those initiatives with the PSNI on an increasingly progressive basis.

ACC Harris has given again here today a fairly lengthy and detailed account of the type of engagement that has been built upon, month after month after month. Now, I know it is difficult for Dolores Kelly to take it on board because she actually spoken for half of the contribution to people on either side of her, so for me I am very pleased to hear that there is an ongoing building, progressive engagement with people in these communities with the police to deal with issues which are appropriately dealt with at those levels, so I think that has to be welcomed.

The issue of whether somebody is opposed to the concept of Restorative Justice is not really an issue which should be addressed with the PSNI directly. It may be something that this Board may want to discuss, but people who are demonstrating an obvious political hostility towards these concepts and these very important projects, should say whether they are opposed to the concept of them or not, because they are challenging these organisations which are clearly working hard within their community, working day in and day out with the PSNI and other criminal justice agencies. Now, that to me should be welcomed by people around this table unless you are opposed to the concept.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I just want to make it clear. We are not opposed to the concept of Restorative Justice, what we are opposed to is parallel justice systems and I think the record of no formal referrals from either organisation in all the years they have been in existence, speaks for itself.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Sorry, let us leave it. We can have that debate at another time. Sorry.

David Rose.

Mr David Rose:

I just want one question and it is in relation to the protocols. What would be the level of awareness around the police throughout all the areas where projects are in existence of how the protocols work, and is that issue being addressed? Because that might actually impact on how many actual referrals could be recorded.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

We entered into a specific training programme when Alternatives were accredited and that accreditation was in last June. It was another further 6 months before a Suitability Panel had actually cleared staff, but the Alternatives have the name of our contacts. We are refreshing the training because obviously almost a year has past, but Alternatives do have even the mobile number of our Superintendent McGuigan who leads the Community Safety Branch, so that when the initial referrals are made, in effect we want to nursemaid those first few through to make sure it works well and our interface then with PPS works well. So, there are specific officers, single points of contact for Alternatives in the Districts where they are operating and from a Headquarters level, we want to see the first few working and working well and understanding what the practical, pragmatic process is going to look like.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to the Ombudsman's investigation of Constable John Larmour, question 13.

Q13 - Could the Chief Constable brief the Board on the Ombudsman's investigation into the murder of Constable John Larmour and what action he is taking to address the findings and recommendations?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

The murder of Constable John Larmour took place on 11 October 1988 and has been the subject of a recent Ombudsman's Inquiry.

It is currently being reviewed by the Historic Enquiries Team (HET) and it is an ongoing re-investigation.

The Historic Enquiries Team has liaised closely with the Ombudsman and is fully sighted on all the issues the report has focused on. The Historic Enquiries Team will identify and explore any realistic evidential opportunities that exist, and it has the full resources of the PSNI available to support it, should any action be required following those reviews.

The Historic Enquiries Team is liaising closely with members of the victim's family and will keep them up to date as the findings and outcomes of this process, which is ongoing at the moment, continue.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 14 relates to the skills, mix and grades of management structures within the PSNI and it is in Mrs Kelly's name, question 14.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Q14 - To ask the Chief Constable has he any plans to review the skills mix and grades of management structures within the PSNI?

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

As far as police officers are concerned, the ranks are established nationally and therefore, we are not in a position as a Service to interfere with them. However, the Service identifies what specific skills in relation of previous answer as well, what specific skills were required for each role at every level in the organisation. This has

been achieved through the development of robust role profiles using the nationally recognised Integrated Competency Framework and I should say, that we are one of the lead forces in the utilisation of the Integrated Competency Framework for police and indeed, for police staff.

After each police officer promotion process, we assess the skills sets of both successful and unsuccessful candidates. We then have tailored programmes for each of those individuals or where we see there is a class of weakness in terms of the assessed skills, then we take remedial action by developing the appropriate training courses or the appropriate training programmes.

As far as police staff is concerned, Members will know we are not in a position to move all that far, if at all, from the established structures inside the Civil Service roles and responsibilities. But Members will also be aware of our extensive work, again a national lead, on the issue of job families which is identifying particular job skills within job groupings and we are developing career pathways for our staff to enable them to enhance their skills over time.

I think one point that we should touch on is that, in the issue of rank ratios inside the service, the Command Team as a whole when each promotion competition comes up, takes a very close look at our rank ratios in relation to most similar forces and then decide, based on our assessment and operational needs and our intelligence assessment, as to how far we can go towards meeting those most similar force rank ratios. That is something that is ongoing work and takes place at each promotion process before we decide on how many posts we decide to fill. It might just be if we have 40 vacancies it does not mean to say we are going to take 40 promotions, we might decide only to fill 25 as a progression towards most similar ranks. So, it something in terms of effectiveness the organisation and efficiency of the organisation that is constantly before myself and my colleagues in the Command Team.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Chief Constable, recently you made a statement about the limited number of recruits from the Shankill area in the last 5 years and Peter Weir has taken this up in question 16.

Mr Peter Weir:

Q16 - Given that the police have attracted only a limited number of recruits from the Shankill area in the last 5 years, what proactive steps are the PSNI taking to encourage applicants from working class Unionist areas?

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

Chairman, I will take that forward. As a service and Members of the Human Resources Committee are aware of this, we conduct a very wide range of outreach measures to those communities that are especially under-represented across the province as a whole.

I think we need to distinguish between applications and appointments. In fact, in the last 3 competitions, there have been over 200 applications from the Shankill area to become police officers. Sadly, and this is not in some respects to be unexpected when you are dealing with certain areas right across the province, only 50% of those indicating their interest in pursuing a police career, actually turned up for interview and that then resulted over a process of the application of merit process, that there were a number of officers **(tape unclear)**.....community based to encourage applications from others. Obviously, the first thing to do, if you are going to make any progress is, to have applications in the first place. If you have no applications you cannot change anything, and we do this irrespective of the political background with the individual concerned, or indeed their perceived religious belief.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Weir, try to be brief.

Mr Peter Weir:

I will try and be as brief as possible.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I am conscious of the members of the public

Mr Peter Weir:

I appreciate that, but I have also not actually asked anything up until this point where others have made comments on.

Could I thank Mr Stewart for his response on it. Could I then receive an assurance, I mean, I appreciate you have mentioned a number of initiatives being sort of tried out, could I receive an assurance from Mr Stewart, or indeed if not him, then other senior members of the Management Team, that if there are initiatives and proposals that come forward from either locally elected representatives from the Shankill area, or indeed, other areas that are under represented, either from elected representatives or DPP members, that you would be willing to meet with groups of that nature to discuss any initiatives or proposals that are put forward that might encourage.....

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

With that I have no difficulty and we do encourage that from the public and private sector, that is something that we are very well used to doing and are fully supportive of.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to the withdrawal of Full-Time Reserve officers from 'C' District, again in Peter Weir's name, question 17.

Mr Peter Weir:

Q17 - How many Full-Time Reserve officers from "C District" have been withdrawn to combat the threat of dissident republicans and what impact does the Chief Constable believe this will have on the 4 DCUs (North Down, Ards, Castlereagh and Down) affected?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, there were 53 Full-Time Reserve officers attached to 'C' District when we entered into our strategic review to consider the security deployment of Full-Time Reserve. A total of 25 officers have been withdrawn from 'C' District and re-deployed as a result of a recent realignment in the Full-Time Reserve within the Service. A total of 28 Full-Time Reserve officers are on short term contracts and remain within the District. The District Commander is satisfied that he has sufficient to meet his current needs.

Mr Peter Weir:

Can you just clarify, has there been any withdrawn to meet a sort of a dissident threat?

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

Yes, that is the 25 that have been relocated.

Mr Peter Weir:

Okay then, sorry I was not just clear on that. Can I ask then how this compares with the numbers withdrawn from other Districts?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

In relation to, as I have said before when I started this answer, there was a full strategic assessment, the issue of the dissident threat in relation to that part of the problem was assessed that we could withdraw Reserve officers and that has been reflected at different aspects across the country. Obviously, as the Board would appreciate, we would not want to go into specific details, but I am happy to speak to the Member outside.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary, Brian Rea.

Mr Brian Rea:

Thank you Chairman. You will notice that we are getting thin on this side of the house here and not physically, but numbers.

I gave up the opportunity to ask question 15 in the interest of time, so I will not delay any longer. I just hope that it was not in order that we could have a sort of a bit of political tribalism which appeared to be happening there.

In the light of question 17, I would like to ask the Chief Constable if he would bear in mind that 'C' District that has been mentioned could benefit from the recruitment, training and deployment of some PCSOs and could he try to do that within CSRO7. I am asking that, bearing in mind that I know the real constraints, financial constraints under which he is working.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Well, I think the first point is that we were convinced and DCC Leighton did all the work, that the police service would benefit from a number of PCSOs, it is simply a hard fiscal

decision. But we are very much, and I was discussing with Mr Best only yesterday, we will be coming forward very shortly to have a very serious debate about how we can best use the budget to maximise our benefits for the community.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to the rising cost of fuel and its implication for the policing budget. Question 20, and it is from David Rose.

Mr David Rose:

Q20 - Are there any long term implications for the policing budget in consideration of the rising cost of fuel? Are there any issues that the Chief Constable feels Board Members should be aware of in relation to this issue?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask Mr Best to deal with that.

David Best, Director of Finance and Support Services

Yes, I was hoping this would be asked. I think it has come forward from a couple of previous meetings and I have had to update it. In the past year from March 2007 to March 2008, prices of petrol have increased by 15% and diesel 26%. The spend on fuel in the last financial year was about £3.5m across the service. In the context of a budget of £1.1/£1.2b that is really quite a small figure, it is less than 3%. However, fuel costs and expenditure are continuously monitored and we are pleased to note, that even with those increases in prices, that expenditure fell within budget during the 2007/2008 year. Measures are being taken to reduce the size of the fleet, that is assisting in off-setting the price increases. There has also been a deliberate policy of acquiring diesels. Virtually all of our vehicles now are diesel, as in fact we led the way in terms of UK in doing that, for the higher mileage and that is contributing. More recently with the improving security situation here, more use has been made of soft skin vehicles which have a lower fuel consumption compared to the armoured vehicles which are much heavier.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Explain that.

Director of Finance and Support Services, Mr David Best:

Soft skinned is your normal vehicle that does not have armouring, similar to any vehicle you would find in Manchester, Liverpool and those are obviously much lighter than the heavy armoured vehicles, and with the change in balance, there again that has helped the cost of our fuel in reducing it. There has also been plans to introduce lower powered vehicles for community based policing, and in fact, we have just recently required some Ford Focuses and you will start to see more of that size of vehicle on the roads in future. That was actually brought in with single person patrolling as well. You may find single police officers driving some of these vehicles in future. A flat budget has been set for next year, this year now 2008/2009, and we expect that will be adequate.

Just to note, lastly that we have planned to reduce fleet vehicles by 300 by the end of this financial year, by March 2009. That represents a planned 10% reduction in the size of our fleet during this coming year.

Mr David Rose:

As well as the cost of the transport and also would it include the lights and the heat, do you think there would be any long term implications around that?

Director of Finance and Support Services, Mr David Best:

Yes, I will make a brief comment. I look after the estates side. Certainly we have had, over a period of years, efficiency measures. In fact, at Resources and Improvement Committee we have reported that, and in fact, we soon will be reporting again, so they are definite. Also, with some reduction, you know lights going off when people walk out of certain areas, but also with some reduction in the size of the estate with the disposal of some police stations, that has obviously helped as well. But we will be reporting on that progress to the next meeting, or the following Resources & Improvements Committee.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Maskey.

Mr Alex Maskey:

I wanted to make an observation, I mean is there shopping around for the fuel, I mean do they go over the border?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I understand red diesel is inappropriate for these police vehicles.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 22 relates to sectarian and racist acts in Ballymena. Question 22, in the name of Daithí McKay.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Q22 - To ask the Chief Constable to outline how many sectarian and racist attacks there have been in Ballymena in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008; to ask how many people have received warnings that their lives are under threat by a paramilitary group and if any protection is being provided to these members of the public?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

Yes, thank you. We publish figures on a financial year basis rather than a calendar year basis. So, the figures for the racist incidents in Ballymena Area Command Unit area which is bigger than Ballymena town itself, obviously. For 2005/2006 - 53 racist incidents, for 2006/2007 - 41 and for the last year 2007/2008 the figures have not yet been finalised.

In terms of sectarian incidents in Ballymena for 2005/2006 - 133, 2006/2007 - 142 and the last reporting year has not yet been finalised.

Moving on to look at the issue of the threats in the area it obviously would be inappropriate for me to comment on any individual case or the protection offered to individuals, but the number of police messages relating to threats served on individuals residing in Ballymena are 2005 - 102, 2006 - 85, 2007 -107 and 2008 - 10. Now, where we have information that individuals may be under threat, they are spoken to individually by the police and given appropriate advice and literature. It is an issue we

take very seriously, not just from the point of view of our Article 2 responsibility to protect life and to protect the individual, but also to investigate the source of the threat.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Go ahead Daithí McKay.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Thank you Mr Chairman. Can I thank ACC Gillespie for her answer. Obviously, the figures regarding the threat against individuals in that area and also the rising figures in terms of sectarian attacks in Ballymena is significant. I have to say that speaking to people on the ground there is real and a growing concern that the number of these rising sectarian attacks taking place in Ballymena and the number of paramilitary attacks overall. There is a belief that it is only a matter of time before we do have another murder case like Michael McIlveen, a case we are all quite well aware of. I would like to also point out, that there is a situation now where there is an atmosphere within the town where people do not feel safe to go out in certain instances, in certain parts of the town or if they are under threat from paramilitaries. I am aware of cases, where minors and under 18s cannot even walk down the street because they are under threat from paramilitaries as well, so it is a situation which is worsening in the eyes of many people on the ground. It is something I would like to see the police be more proactive about and I do commend the work that has been done there to date.

So, can I ask how the police do intend to address this issue? How they are going to be more proactive and address what kind of initiatives they will be putting in place and also as well, to outline how significant an issue this is in other towns and other parts of the north?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

Well, first of all, I think it is important to say that crime in 'H' District and in Ballymena is down and actually 'H' District had the highest detection rate across the police service so there is some very, very good work going on in Ballymena. You referred to the murder of Michael McIlveen, there was a huge amount of work in the aftermath of that went on to rebuild community relationships and to eliminate the very fear that you are talking about Mr McKay. If that is a real issue, then I would certainly welcome a conversation with you about it and a conversation with the local Area Commander, Chief Inspector

Barbara Gray, who I am sure would be very concerned to hear the comments you made in the public forum.

So, we would have a lot of work going on behind the scenes with Youth Groups and across the sectarian divide, and I am very concerned if this is becoming an issue again and if there is real fear out there, then we certainly need to deal with that. But it has not been mentioned to me before. It has not been mentioned to the Area Commander and it has not come to the District Commander's focus because I have just checked after the Private Session. This has not been mentioned to him before and he is certainly not aware of it. So if it is an issue locally we need to know about it, and we need have a conversation about it.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Trevor Ringland, could you link your question to question 23?

Mr Trevor Ringland:

I think this linked with question 23 and question 11 but also moving on from Mr McKay's point, I think it is to be commended a lot of the work that has been done in the area by the police and by the local community, and a lot of leadership has been shown by the local councillors. I think the figures that you are quoting there show that there is a problem there and that is after all that work has been done and that there is a long term solution required to deal with the problems of sectarianism and racism, not only in Ballymena but in many other towns and in Belfast and Derry and elsewhere. But could you maybe just talk through some of those solutions that are being put forward and also highlighting, just dealing with parts of the question raised in question 23 there, about whether or not you are receiving the full co-operation from those in the community in dealing with some of those issues.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 23 and Question 11.

Q23 - In light of some of the disturbances last month on some of the interface areas in Belfast, please confirm if you are receiving the full co-operation from the community in using the normal channels of law enforcement to bring those responsible before the courts?

Q11 - Could the Chief Constable give an assessment of the potential for interface tensions in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry and what actions might be taken at this stage to address any anticipated problems?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Judith Gillespie:

Well, I will deal with that in so far as Rural Region is concerned and then ACC McCausland can deal with Urban Region, but certainly, we do get broad co-operation right across the spectrum of the community and the co-operation that we get in particular from republican communities has significantly improved over the last few months and that is broadly speaking right across Rural Region. There is really good partnership working in particular at interface areas and whilst the interface areas might not just be so obvious in Rural Region as they are in Urban Region, there are areas where there are significant tensions, Ballymena being just one of them, and over the last few years Ballymena has had a very high instance of sectarian incidents compared to other Districts. So, it is clear there is still an issue there despite the initiatives that have been put in place.

If I could mention for example, if any of you were looking at the Irish News this morning, there was an article in there by Chief Inspector Chris Yates from Foyle regarding Bebo and the suggestion of arranged public disorder by young people. Now, we are monitoring that very, very closely and the article related to some planned incidents at the weekend in the Greater Shantallow area. The article basically said, this is a warning there will be additional police patrols in that area and will not tolerate any nonsense and so we need to monitor that type of communication network very closely as well and make sure we are on the ball with community reps and with young people.

In terms of relationships with young people, we also have Young Peoples' Independent Advisory Groups formed recently in 4 areas across Northern Ireland, and that is a really a good way of linking in with young people in various areas to make sure that we are in touch with what they think police should be concentrating on and what their priorities

are for policing. So, I am very happy to talk with you Mr Ringland about other initiatives that are going on, some of which I mentioned earlier on in the private session. But Ballymena, undoubtedly there is a sectarian issue there, and we need to be very much alive to the concerns but happy to have conversations about it later.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

It is a challenge to all of us too, is it not ACC Gillespie. It is about the whole community having to take and grasp this problem. It is about leadership being shown in many different areas and that is where we are going to tackle this problem. It is not a policing problem alone.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCauland:

Chairman, if I could deal then with the Urban Region side and picking up on that point that Mr Ringland makes. Quite frankly there is no policing solution to this. If I look at the interfaces in 'A' District and 'D' District I am seeing more and more daily very low level aspects of what I would define, and other political parties disagreed for a time, but now I would suggest agreed with me, "recreational rioting". That motivated by anti social behaviour.

We had sadly two incidents in 'A' District in North Belfast, where petrol bombing has taken place in the last three weeks and that does not bode well with the forthcoming summer. That is why I again reiterate the comments you made at the last Board meeting, and I re-emphasise them, that everyone needs to double their efforts to ensure that we have a peaceful marching season and a peaceful summer ahead. But on our part, in our role in it, what we have been looking to do is to ensure that for example CCTV coverage or dealing with representatives of both communities to maintain a dedicated presence at the interfaces are encouraged and praised and recognised in terms of the work that community representatives from all sides are doing. We have a very strong communication network established in many of the interface areas involving as I say community reps and politicians.

There is a continuing dialogue that is ongoing between all representatives and this was demonstrated in the Mountpottinger area recently. As you in your opening remarks commented upon, again disorder had started to break out over two nights, and again with the help of both sides of the community that has been settled down.

We look to explore mediation and to, in effect, resolve disputes and tensions before they in effect spill over in the streets. There is an early identification of events and a prior planning and preparation and ACC Gillespie has highlighted the issue of Bebo and local neighbourhood police officers are very robustly involved in looking at interfaces at both, not only in terms of actually on the ground, but internet aspects in terms of Bebo. For example, I mentioned at the last Board meeting, that we had the incident in Belfast of where the rioting broke out around a football match and I said I would report back in relation to activity. If you monitor the Bebo site, and I put this challenge to any Member, you will see some ridiculous comments being made by individuals on the Bebo site as in relation to incidents that have happened, particularly around that football, and challenging and planning for things in the future. We have arrested 13 people in relation to those incidents and a continued very active investigation looking to arrest more. So we are taking and playing a very active part.

The last point I would say is, that both the Junior Ministers at the Assembly sit on the Shared Futures Committee of which PSNI is a part, and they are focussing in relation to the interfaces, and potentially sectarian issues across interfaces which has to be welcomed. But again, I come back to my starting point, there is no police solution to this, it has to be the community together solving this problem.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

That takes us to our final question today, question 26 again it is in the name of Mr Ringland and relates to former paramilitary organisations.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

Q26 - Can you assure the Board and the public that there is no need for former paramilitary organisations to try and remain in existence to “protect” their communities against the activities of mafia type organisations

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will do that Chairman, there is one police service, it is the Police Service of Northern Ireland that has been reflected on today already by Members and it is our job to protect all the communities in Northern Ireland. There is no reason, it is topical in the sense of my opening comments, there is no need for any illegal organisation. I note the IMC

Report will have been released by now and reading the suggestions in the press yesterday, it is a very clear message that those illegal organisations that still exist need to disarm and needs to disband and we do not think we can if they do not chose to do that, to prosecute them through the judicial process. But, there is no need for any other enforcement agency to even think it has a right to exist in Northern Ireland.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

On behalf of the Board Chief Constable, thank you very much indeed for taking our questions today and through you to your colleagues. Thank you.