

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY, 3 JULY 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 Daithí McKay
Mrs Mary McKee
Mr Basil McCrea
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
Mr Gearóid Ó hEára
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
Mr Brian Rea
Mr Trevor Ringland
Mr David Rose
Mr Peter Weir

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

Sir Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)
Mr Alistair Finlay (ACC Crime Support)
Mrs Judith Gillespie (ACC Rural Region)
Mr Peter Sheridan (ACC Crime Operations)
Mr Roy Toner (ACC Operational Support)
Ms Liz Young (Head of Media &
Communications)
Chief Superintendent Mark Hamilton (Criminal
Justice Department)
Chief Superintendent Brian Maguire (Urban
Region)
Chief Inspector, Command Secretariat
2 PSNI Personnel

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

APOLOGIES:

Mr Alex Maskey
Mr Suneil Sharma

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.

As normal Chief Constable, I have a few comments to make before this accountability session starts.

Since our last meeting, there have been a number of brutal and shocking murders in our community and the condolences of this Board are passed on to the families of those who have lost loved ones. It is important that people do what they can to help police bring the killer or killers to justice and that they pass on any information that they might have to the PSNI. To do so, is to send to the perpetrators, the message that communities are not going to stand for such serious crimes and will work with the police to ensure that the best possible cases for prosecution are put together such that convictions are brought and secured.

Chief Constable, it is also exceptionally fortunate that 2 of your officers were not murdered in the attack on Rosslea last month. We are all aware of the threat that dissidents have issued to police officers. There have also been threats in the last few days to political representatives from Sinn Fein. What is important is that we, and this includes the political parties, the 2 governments, the churches and the wider community and their representatives, realise the threat that has been posed to life, to political progress and, indeed, the impact on policing in terms of the use of resources. The policing of the dissident threat, the policing in terms of what has to be done in this area, excuse police away from normal policing and there must be a resolve to deal with those who have nothing to offer our community.

It is clear from the reactions over the last few weeks, that police are getting information and co-operation and strong condemnations from the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister are timely and are to be welcomed.

Northern Ireland has moved forward, politically and in policing. The results published today in the latest Omnibus Survey show the steady trend in public confidence in policing. New figures available to the Board today, also show that within the last year, Record No: 91339

there has been a 50% increase in attendance at DPP meetings with just under 4,300 people attending the public meetings during the last year which is, of course, just one strand of the DPP's work and this has to be welcomed and the Board will consider any other lessons from the Omnibus Survey report in moving forward.

There have been a number of other incidents which you will no doubt cover in your policing report today Chief Constable. However, one issue that has been of serious public interest, was the Independent Review Report of agency involvement with Mr Arthur McElhill, Ms Lorraine McGovern and their children. The Board would wish to acknowledge the suffering of the McElhill and McGovern families as a result of the tragic events. The published report recorded recommendations for the PSNI and I would ask you to report to the Board on the police response to the review findings as they relate to the PSNI.

Since its last meeting, the Board has appointed a new ACC, David Jones. He will be joining the PSNI from Greater Manchester Police. The Board congratulates ACC Jones on his appointment and looks forward to working with him.

This is ACC Sheridan's last meeting at this Board. He joined what was then the RUC some 30 years ago and at a very tender age I have to add. So on behalf of the Board we wish you well in your new role. You say something, where are you going? You are going to Co-operation Ireland.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

I am taking over as Chief Executive, Co-operation Ireland joining it on 8 September 2008. I leave this organisation on 7 September 2008, so as I told the Chief Constable, I am going home early that day.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

We wish you well.

The Board also I should say, this is its Chief Executive's last meeting, Trevor Reaney. You are going to, what is the official title?

Chief Executive, Mr Trevor Reaney:

Chairman, it is Clerk and Director General of the Assembly. A grand title, I will wait and see whether the job is as grand as that!

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I will not say anything about whether it is likely to be less ruly or more ruly than this.

Finally, Chief Constable. This week I received a letter from a young woman praising 3 police officers who provided assistance following a recent Portrush concert, during which her sister was lost. The actions of the officers, that she wished these officers and there were 3 of them, to be commended and I will pass on a copy of that letter to you.

On a more serious note, as the PSNI start enforcement action on underage drinking, we are all very aware of the impact alcohol has, and as a community we need to work together to tackle the problems associated with young people and alcohol and in part, the letter from that young woman arose from alcohol that had been taken by her sister. But, nevertheless, there is strong thanks in the letter to the PSNI for the way in which they related to her and her boyfriend and, indeed, eventually the discovery of her sister.

Over to you Chief Constable.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman and thank you for your observations in relation to those officers, I will make sure those are forwarded.

Chairman, it has been a busy month so I have a little to say before we go into the performance side.

Firstly, I note your comments in relation to the attempted murder of 2 officers in Rosslea and of course, it is worth reflecting that the courage and commitment of officers has been particularly demonstrated and tested in the face of this continuing threat. It is not the job of me or anyone here to give them, this small group, a platform for publicity but it is important I think to make a couple of points.

Firstly, whilst they are few in number, they have shown themselves to be dangerous. They did try to kill 2 officers at Rosslea and, of course, we have had 5 officers targeted in the last 6 months. The 2 officers at Rosslea were simply answering a call for assistance from their community and I have to say their sense of service is in sharp contrast to the murderous intent of those who tried to kill them.

Secondly, the dissidents have been linked to the murder of Emmett Shiels in Derry, and I think the point needs to be made that none of these actions will ever progress any cause they think they may have. They have been clearly rejected by the community, and that is evident, by not only the outrage of that particular murder, but the support my officers are getting in their enquires and I think that is a very powerful statement that these people should take notice of. We will continue to put the maximum effort into disrupting and arresting these people and protect the community by so doing.

Before leaving that particular incident, and indeed Mr Shiels murder, I would take some issue and I think it is worth putting on record, our concerns throughout some observations from some politicians and commentators who have used the media to criticise the initial police response. Let me be extremely clear about this, we are working to catch the murders of Emmett Shiels full-time. Our major enquiry teams are determined to bring the people to justice. Currently, a person has been charged with perverting the course of justice, 4 people are currently in custody, 3 of which are on extended detention authorised by a court. That having been said, we have to police carefully and proportionately and there is no point putting other people at unnecessary risk of death or serious injury. We will continue to do our duty and continue to serve the whole community, but if sensible precautions need to be taken, they will have to be taken. Dead police officers provide no service whatsoever.

It is also important I think to put on record that we fully understand that this is a tiny minority of people trying to do this Chairman, but of course it has a wider impact. Could I just support also some your comments you made Chairman in relation to the collective effort in condemning this. Not only from politicians of every party and from policing, the clergy community and community groups. I think by combining that effort at every level to move these people on before they murder more fellow citizens is a critical part of the overall strategy. We will deliver our bit but we look to others to support others. To date it is worth reflecting what ACC Sheridan said only a couple of days, that the Dissident

Republican contribution to the island of Ireland recently has been to murder Edward Burns, to murder Joseph Jones, to murder Anthony Burns, to murder Emmett Shiels and to attempt to murder 5 police officers and that is why we take it so seriously. It never worked and it will not work now.

Chairman, moving on to organised crime. I touched last month on cannabis factories. There have been further major operations against what is the industrial production of cannabis in Northern Ireland. Members will be aware that since the last meeting we have had some other major seizures, in particular, a fortnight ago in Castlewellan 3,500 cannabis plants, one of the biggest operations we have uncovered, that is about £1.5m worth of material seized and 3 people have been arrested. This is an ongoing and major operation. It is not confined to Northern Ireland, it is being committed and carried out by international criminals.

So far in Northern Ireland, over £13m worth of cannabis has been seized by the Drugs Squad and, indeed, District colleagues working together. These factories when they are discovered are dangerous places, this is not a crime without a victim. Never mind the drugs side, these factories are dangerous and they are embedded in communities in empty houses and we have had huge amounts of public information which has supported us in carrying out these operations.

It is worth also pointing out Chairman, that whilst 77 people have been arrested and 59 people have been charged, these are people from outwith the communities of Northern Ireland. They are all Chinese, Vietnamese or South East Asian and have been arrested and come from other places, the overwhelming majority of which are indeed illegal immigrants. Eight two searches have currently been carried out, 61 of those leading to seizures.

Chairman, you touched on the Omagh fatal fire report. The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety reported by the Health Minister, Mr McGimpsey into aspects of that fire in Lammy Crescent. As you are aware, the team was led by Henry Turner QC and it was a very important piece of work which this organisation takes extremely seriously.

The report as you know as know has made 64 recommendations of which 3 relate directly to this police service. I am very clear that every organisation needs to learn from this and work together to make sure we can do all we can to prevent these outrages when they do take place, that was recognised in the report that this was unforeseeable. The police investigation is ongoing but close I have to say to a conclusion.

In relation to the recommendations that we have, we do take them extremely seriously. Certainly the establishment of Public Protection Units (PPUs) I think show just how seriously we take it. They are up and running and specialist teams of police officers, who are committed to protecting the most vulnerable in the community are already in existence. We welcome the recommendation around the secondment of Social Services to our PPU's and, indeed, our RPPTs, we have difficulty with that and will work with Social Services to see how that can be brought forward as a matter of urgency.

Chairman, also since the last visit, we had the visit of President Bush and the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach. Whilst it was only 4 hours on the ground, it was a major operation that took over a week of police security operations and planning, and it would be right to say the planning was subject to frequent changes right to the last minute which, of course, put additional impact on our policing resource. Our job was to protect not only the principals, but just as important, the guests and everyone else involved in that operation in the face of the current threat and intelligence we had in our possession.

I think it would be right to say it was a success, albeit it an expensive one. We have costed the additional cost to police for that visit, not just for the 3 hours 50 mins the President was with us and the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, but for the whole policing operation for security and maintaining security at many many sites, in the region of £340,000, that is in addition to ordinary police time deployed by officers on duty. We will have a fuller breakdown figure for the Board if it would be helpful which we will send to you once it has all been finalised.

Chairman, you touched on the issues around drink. I can report to the Board in relation to 'Operation Snapper' which is our operation against preventing alcohol in public places led by ACC McCausland who you would have seen in the papers today, being

very serious, holding a bottle of Buckfast or something equally appalling. His Deputy, Chief Superintendent Mark Hamilton is here to describe in detail the operation if Members would find it helpful during question time. The enforcement arm of this campaign does involve, not just us, the Department of Health and others, it relates mainly to underage drinking, on the street drinking and alcohol related anti social behaviour. It will run over all 8 Districts at weekends throughout the summer months and in areas which have been designated 'hot spots' by our analysts and indeed the Housing Executive and councils, so it is very much a partnership operation. It will include confiscating alcohol from underage drinkers and detecting underage drinking in public places. It will also, of course, pursue people supplying to underage drinking and to people who are being asked to provide alcohol to those who should not be drinking it at all let alone in public.

Chairman, you touched on the murders on the 25th of last month, the murder of Mr McKee. One person has been charged with that particular offence on 27 June 2008, and I have already touched on the murder of Mr Shiels and I have said 4 are in custody currently, 1 charged with perverting the course of justice. More recently the murder of Mr William Spence there is a major major enquiry team operation currently underway and I would like to think that we will get a successful conclusion to that one in time. All those operations are being run by ACC Sheridan and his officers from the Crime Operations Group so it minimises the impact on District resources and I think if there is one success or a great success of Crime Ops was exactly that, regardless of where the crimes take place, the central resource takes in and provides that essential support to Districts.

Chairman, I have a presentation for you on performance and I do not want to pre-empt that, but in the financial year to date we believe is a 1.9% reduction in crime overall, that is about 480 fewer crimes. Violent crime is down by about 14%, criminal damage down by about 10%, burglary however is a less successful story and that is actually showing a slight increase of about an extra crime per day in the first quarter, that is on our current statistics.

The bottom line is Chairman, we are facing competing demands with limited resources. I have described some of the pressures being currently placed on this organisation in addition to dealing with our bread and butter work around organised crime. Of course

we are marching into the marching season, we have had several marches to date which have gone relatively smoothly. We are confident, that by working together with the communities, we will deliver a successful and peaceful marching season, and all credit to all people who have engaged at every level, from community level through to most senior politicians to help that take place. Of course, the more resource I place on public order, the less resource I have to do community policing.

Chairman, an additional point I think this year on the marching season, which I do think has made a difference, has been the co-operation of the marching orders to our zero tolerance or extremely low tolerance of drinking during the marching season. That will continue on 12 July 2008 and the message is clear, do not bring drink into public because (a) it is illegal and (b) we will seize it. Hundreds of cans and bottles of drink have already been seized by my officers working with marshals and that will continue and I am looking to a very vigorous approach on 12 July 2008 to maintain that peaceful carnival atmosphere which we all aspire to, so everyone can have a good day out without getting drunk in public places.

Chairman, finally from me, ACC Peter Sheridan does retire after over 30 years service and we wish him all the best in the future, as does your Chief Executive, Trevor Reaney and Trevor on behalf of my service can I thank you for your contribution to policing and support and my organisation and in holding us to account. I have to say the words 'frying pan' and 'fire' spring to mind in terms of your next job.

Chairman, thank you for your help so I will go onto my presentation.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you. Question on dissident threat, Dolores Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, my question is not on the dissident threat.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Anyone on the dissident threat.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Chief Constable, there have been some reports in the press about these organisations, CIRA and RIRA coming together and collaborating and having a summer blitz. Could you maybe indicate to us and it is really to put out a very strong public message, first of all so that the public are aware of the personal threat against police officers at the present time. Could you maybe say something about that? Secondly, could you maybe say something about the action plan that you and your officers have and are going to put in place over the summer, to prevent them having their wicked way and maybe a longer term view in terms of how we are going to nip this in the bud and wipe this dissident threat out.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Sheridan to do the detail. In terms of how it is dealt with I think, as I have said in my opening, it is a collective effort to making these people completely unwanted and ostracised in their communities and I do think the role of the politicians and the churches and the community groups are equally important in that voice and very clear evidence from the last murder, that the tolerance and the disgust around what was going on was very powerful. I think the collective effort will marginalise these people even more and eventually they will realise it is not going to work. From a policing perspective it will not work, it has never worked. The Federation was very clear after the attempted murder of the officers in June 2008 that they were never going to be intimidated into preventing doing policing, but the reality is, the targets are police officers and they are looking to kill a police officer, let us be absolutely clear on that. The work of ACC Sheridan's people which is 110% flat out, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is to stop that happening and in a way it is very hard to put on record nothing when we have achieved so much to disrupt so many determined attempts over the last year or so. But I will ask ACC Sheridan to do the detail if that helps.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Just in terms of the groupings. Sometimes there is a difficulty in seeing these groupings, like military organisations that they have specific channels and functions themselves and of course, they are like many other criminal gangs, they weave in and out through one and other and they are not as distinct sometimes as the impression is given. Just because we put a label on them Real IRA or Continuity IRA that they sit in separate camps in separate silos. They come from similar areas and they frequent the

same places and the same establishments, so it is sometimes not just as clear that they sit in separate organisations. I have no doubt they would aspire to be one organisation, but there are too many agendas among them, there are too many criminals among them to be able to agree on anything in that regard and I do not see that happening and we will continue to make all the efforts we can to ensure that does not happen.

Your second point, yes we have a lot of effort and energy and you would not expect me to say in this public forum what we are doing about it. I think our plea, and the Chief Constable's plea, is to what other parts of society and what wider strategy, other than the security force response, can be brought to bear on it and that is the point the Chief Constable is making, about can churches do anything and more than condemnation. There actually has to be some physical effort to try and interrupt what these people are doing before they do become successful and they kill somebody.

In terms of the longer term threat. They are clearly continuing to make preparations for further attacks and that remains a strong possibility there will be further attacks, but the collective effort of people in this community, coupled with the work of the police can prevent them doing that.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

You have nothing to lose now, and I congratulate you for your decades of service but on reflection, can these people be beaten? As you have nothing to lose, can you tell us now as you leave the service, these people can be beaten, they can be put out of business and we can move to a normal society.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Actually, I have never been more clear that that can be the case because there is little or no community supporting. You only have to look at the response in the community around Emmett Shiels' murder to see that there is a huge wind of change out there and I have seen it in a number of the investigations in Edward Burns and Joseph Jones' murder up in Belfast, completely different response on the ground to what the police required. I have never been more sure that they can be beaten in this, but it will be the more sustained effort by, not just the police but that huge effort by other parts of the community to stop these people will have that success.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I will come in a moment to the murders. I am trying to take it in the order of the report of the Chief Constable. The cannabis factories was the second area you talked about. You said in an aside about the illegals, that these factories were primarily in the hands of illegals, could you say something more about that? Where are they coming from?

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

As I described, Chinese nationals would be the overwhelming majority of individuals being caught here. I think my first point is, to make it absolutely clear that these are not people from within our own Chinese community. I think that is an important point to stress because these people come in to actually commit damage to our communities rather than be part of them, and ACC Gillespie has had the most recent successes if you want to give an update on your view take on it.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

It was very clear over the last few weeks that this was a widespread operation right across Northern Ireland and as a result, I came in as Gold Commander for it and took over the co-ordination of the resources to tackle the whole investigation. The Chief Constable has already mentioned the 77 arrests that have been made and all of those were Chinese, Vietnamese or South East Asian nationals. Many of them here as gardeners used by organised criminals, not here with any papers or passports, here as illegal immigrants and in some ways, victims of organised crime because paid a very small amount and kept very much in ignorance in the properties that they were held in, so they were as much victims as anything else.

We were also very very careful to ensure that there were no repercussions with our local Chinese community here and all District Commanders have written out to Chairs of District Policing Partnerships to make sure they are engaged in promoting that message, that this is not the local Chinese community that are involved. We also engaged with the Chinese Welfare Association and Anna Lo to make sure that they were aware what was going on and that the investigation was involving, in the main, organised criminals from outside of Northern Ireland.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Any question on the Omagh fire?

No, that takes us then to Operation Snapper which is the fourth area you covered, any questions on that? Mary McKee.

Ms Mary McKee:

I suppose my question relates to Operation Snapper and the marching season and you very eloquently set out the zero tolerance to parades. Is there going to be a zero tolerance to alcohol on bonfires?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

As you know, it is a complicated world here. As best we can we will enforce it with the resources I have got. In fairness, over the last 5 or 6 years there has been a great step forward in many bonfires. Some remain remarkably resilient to all the help and offers they have had and they are, without doubt in some places, very intimidating to the community.

'Snapper' is a wider issue than just the marching season. I think in fairness to the marching orders, they certainly have engaged and 'Snapper' is around a relentless pursuit of drinking in the routine. There is a specific initiative around the marches because I think that is the next step around the marching season which we can now move on, whereas perhaps 4 or 5 years ago, it would have been more challenging.

In terms of the bonfires in Belfast if Chief Superintendent Hamilton wants to add anything in terms of the alcohol enforcement.

Chief Superintendent Mark Hamilton:

I think it is fair to say we are trying to push the boundaries this year around all alcohol use in the street and we have specific initiatives around general on street drinking and have worked very closely with the loyal orders around the parades. There has been no specific initiatives as yet with organisers of bonfires, but if there are opportunities again to do that and to push those boundaries and to make them a safer event for all concerned, then we will absolutely try our best to do so.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

If that helps Chairman, I will certainly take that back to our planning and have a look to see if we can do something in the short order.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Questions then on the recent murders, Dolores Kelly are you in that? Then Ms Anderson and then Peter Weir.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I would like to add my thanks and appreciation to ACC Sheridan. My colleagues in Derry had many years of working with and alongside him and have nothing but praise and I would like to pay tribute to his service over the years, and indeed, wish Trevor Reaney well in his new post, he will need all the good wishes he can get.

Chairman, I want to welcome the increased co-operation that we are finding and today's survey across the community in relation to many incidents of crime, but in particular Emmett Shields murder. I also welcome the fact that the police are using the charge of perverting the course of justice but I do have to ask why, given that there are over 70 people who were potential witnesses in the murder of Robert McCartney, why has no-one been charged with either withholding information or perverting the course of justice? Particularly given that when we saw the murder in Liverpool of Rhys Jones, where police, months after the murder, are still rounding up individuals and charging them in connection with the crime and not letting anyone escape, I think justice was not served last week in Belfast. Justice was served in so far as the evidence presented against the individuals, but surely over 70 people in the community are still not coming forward and what are the police going to do about that?

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Chief Constable.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

I have had that discussion. As part of what happens after the course case is a review panel is set up and we will look specifically if there are any outstanding offences, obviously there were a number of people arrested at the time but to have a charge of perverting the course of justice, requires some reasonable suspicion and reasonable grounds that you have to prove. I know the issues in the Rhys Jones case which are very different in the McCartney case, but nevertheless, we will, as part of the review process, re-examine that again to see if there are any other lines of enquiry, any other areas that we can take forward.

The case is not closed and of course we would welcome anybody in the community coming forward, because what will make that case is when we get witnesses to come forward and give evidence in it.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Is yours relating to the McCartney case? Okay follow up, Martina Anderson is next.

Mr Trevor Ringland:

Picking up on that point. It is an indictment of our society the McCartney case, with that number of potential witnesses, that nobody has come forward and it is a challenge to the community that they do so. But can I also ask, looking at a couple of other murders that are a lot on our current position where we find in Northern Ireland. In the Thomas Devlin case and the Quinn murder, are you reinvigorating the investigations of those to see if we can bring somebody to justice?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Yes, you will be aware in the Thomas Devlin case, we did charge somebody and there were a number of arrests recently, but again that case is similar in that people in the community are required to step forward with witness evidence and that is what will put people before the court. We can do our best with forensic evidence and circumstantial evidence but if we can get witnesses who come forward in any of these cases, of course that changes the ground that we are on.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

I think we would want to be assured that there are no protected species out in our community in terms of witnesses.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, I can assure of that. The other point, just because someone does not come forward does not mean in law we are going to get a conviction for perverting the course of justice, none co-operation does not interfere, it does interfere but it is not that criminal, it is not a criminal matter you have to prove to a very high standard that someone has consciously, deliberately misled or conspired to actually pervert rather than simply not step forward and do their public duty.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Ms Martina Anderson.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Thank you Chair. I want to associate myself with the expressions of sympathy that has been sent out to Emmett Shiel's family and particularly to his girlfriend who had a baby boy a few days ago. I also want to acknowledge, as the Chief Constable as done, the response from the community in supporting and backing the family and also reiterating the family's concern that there would be no retaliation against anyone within our community who is allegedly involved in that offence and that those people who are charged and the families of those people, the mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters are also supported by our community.

I also think Chief Constable that you made reference to the fact that there was a time lapse which was over 2½ hours from young Emmett was taken to hospital and the PSNI arriving. I would like to ask you, do you not think a bit of work needs done locally by the PSNI and I have been in touch with the PSNI myself with regards to this, so that the understanding of that time lapse can be at least shared more widely in the community so that if there has been a reaction, and there has been to the fact, that it was 2½ hours, 4 o'clock in the morning the incident happened after 1 o'clock when you arrived, then I think that in terms of trust needing to be built within our community, that work also needs to be done from yourselves in relation to that. I think it is important to say that we are not going to allow the social fabric of our community to be destroyed by

those people within our community, who have guns in our community and we have sent out a very strong message to those people, across our community from civic society in every walk and shade of life, to get their guns out of our community, that they are not welcome in our community. However, the initial response from the PSNI has caused concern and I think there is work that needs to be done by yourselves and the people of Derry to assist in that kind of understanding.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I am happy to do more. I know readers and radio very soon afterwards ran those concerns. As I understand it, the families understood the issues that the officers faced at the time, but certainly happy to do more and happy to have a conversation about how you take that forward.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Sorry Mr Weir.

Mr Peter Weir:

First of all, could I add my best wishes and thanks to both ACC Sheridan and Trevor Reaney.

You mentioned Chief Constable, the recent brutal murder of Billy Spence in Bangor. I do not know if there is anything you can add to what you have already said, but obviously that has raised major public concerns and reinvigorated major concerns around knife crime. I just wondered if there is anything you can provide by way of public reassurance today in terms of the actions that the police are taking on the issue of knife crime?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

It is obviously a very recent, in crime investigation terms, offence and it is getting a maximum input from our organisation.

The first thing is, that anyone who knows anything about it needs to come forward and speak to the police. I think it would be right to say, without causing any particular difficulties, we are following a number of very clear lines of enquiry and hopefully will bring it to a successful conclusion fairly quickly.

In terms of knife crime. Knife crime on the street and knife crime in these particularly tragic and terrible circumstances are slightly different, but we are currently running a major initiative around trying to advertise, in keeping with the rest of the United Kingdom, to raise the awareness of the dangers of carrying knives around young people and it would be right to say that knife crime in Northern Ireland has increased since 2007, we are seeing an increase in trend in crimes where knives have been used. Our campaign will begin on the 18th of this month and it is mainly around cinema, radio and posters and targeting people between the 11 and 18 year old age group which is the group that is most vulnerable to carrying these and, of course, most vulnerable in terms of then using them.

That all having been said, in terms of context, knife crime here is certainly lower than my in my previous role in the Metropolitan police, so it is not at the levels of epidemic but it is something we need to take very seriously. It is a cultural thing as much as a policing thing. Major initiatives in Belfast which Chief Superintendent Hamilton and his team do, many of our officers have these metal detectors. We do major initiatives in the areas where drink is prevalent because drink and knives are probably the most dangerous combination, but that is different to for example murders. Most domestic murders would be seen as knives; that is knives in the context of the home rather than knives being carried.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Brian Rea.

Mr Brian Rea:

Thank you Chairman. I am going back just a couple of points. Chief Constable, you said that the people responsible for the cannabis factories were mostly illegal immigrants. Can you tell us where they are entering the country and if so, if they are entering by the land border with the Republic of Ireland, would this not be a case for ensuring that policing around the border with the Republic of Ireland is increased?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

These are intelligence operations. We work very closely with the Guards who have had some seizures themselves. This is not unique to Northern Ireland, this is a far wider problem but in terms of points of entry, the border is one of them. Obviously, there are all the other traditional routes, ports and, indeed, aeroplanes. We have put a major commitment to the Immigration Services. I have officers attached full-time to the Immigration Agency who you will quite often see at the ports, who are very successful. It would not be unusual on a weekend for 50 or 60 people to be interdicted through the airports and indeed through the ports, so that is where they are coming in. I do not know if ACC Toner wants to add anything to that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

We currently have a Detective Chief Inspector and 2 Detective Sergeants and a number of uniform Constables seconded full-time to the Borders and Immigration Agencies specifically to address those points and it works very closely with officers and Districts in relation to specifically the type of operations that were mentioned earlier in relation to the cannabis factories. We also have had, and frequently do have, a Sergeant from the An Garda Síochána on permanent secondment with that team, working with the Borders and Immigration Agencies specifically on the cross border aspects where the land borders, and An Garda Síochána have primacy in the south in relation to immigration aspects which we do not because the Borders and Immigration Agency have that primacy. They have had some phenomenally good results in that and it links in very clearly to early identification of these individuals and also the routes back through that these individuals make their way into Northern Ireland.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Can we move Chief Constable to your thematic presentation please.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman and I will try and keep this fairly brief. I have written to you to discuss and I am open to suggestions on any ways the Board would find this if they feel they need to change this sort of presentation around the performance to add more value to them. But if I go through the position to date, of course 3 months in.

Crime rates, if you look at the trend in crimes rates over the last 6 years and as I have said, crime currently this year is showing a small decrease over the same time last year, it is 1.5% which is about 404 fewer crimes. That is the worst case scenario because, of course, in terms of a churn there are a number of matters which have yet to be put onto the system, so that is the worst case, it could be slightly better than that but it is too early to tell.

I am going to touch, whilst I am on this, on clearance rates for the first 3 months which is an area I know the Board is very interested in and a huge amount of effort is going in from my organisation to see how we can improve them. The current gap between the first 3 months of this year and the first 3 months of last year is 2½% currently we stand at 16.4% compared to 18.9% that is a slight change on the figures you would have had Chairman of a 4% gap. It is always the case that in the early months of the year that the figures are below what you end up with simply because of cases going through the courts and the results are yet to be put onto our system, so there is a process going on. That having been said, we are doing a huge amount in relation to trying to improve our clear-up rate. I personally had a meeting with my Detective Chief Inspectors in Urban Region 2 weeks ago and we are looking at putting more resources into dealing with the clear-ups, more analysts into looking at similar offences so when we do arrest a burglar, for example, we are looking at similar cases, modus operandi and putting more cases to that individual to see if we can pick up trends and patterns and, indeed, charge people with more than one offence every time they are indeed arrested.

The Volume Crime Seminar which we also hold across all Districts provides an opportunity around information sharing across the Districts. We had one of those on 3 June 2008 and it is worth noting there is some disparity among the Districts. 'F' District for example, has a clearance rate of 29% and much of that they have put down to the effective use of Volume Crime Model, intelligence and maximising of forensic opportunities and that learning has been taken away by all the Districts.

We had a seminar on 'offences being taken into consideration' and we brought expertise from outside Northern Ireland into that to give officers other ways and other ideas about how to become more effective. We are also looking, certainly at the frontend, in terms of forensic recovery, making sure that exhibits are properly handled, packaged and quickly delivered to the Forensic Services, and indeed recently, we have

had some very fast turnarounds, in particular DNA, which has allowed us to identify prolific offenders and then go and arrest them very quickly after the offences through our Converter Teams, who also use fingerprint evidence indeed in the same way.

I have touched on the outstanding results from the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), we do believe, because we put a lot of effort into getting the maximum number crimes on the machine as quickly as we can, some effort has gone off putting on the results, so I do think the gap I have just referred to will decrease fairly quickly.

If I move on to the next slide around violent crime. Again, violent crime this year is showing a reduction. That could change and become slightly less impacted depending on the undercounts. These following slides do not include the undercount because they simply do not know what particular crimes are in there and we have about 500 matters yet to be put onto the system across the whole of Northern Ireland. But again, what it does show is a fairly satisfactory trend, at least it is holding steady and going down a bit, and within that, crimes against younger people, against persons under the age of 18, is also lower.

In relation to robbery, which I think has been a particular success story in Northern Ireland, there have been 122 fewer offences in the first 3 months of this year than last year.

Within that, just bearing in mind the conversations we have had earlier on the political context, the next slide will show casualties of paramilitary assaults and, indeed, paramilitary shootings. They are insignificant in terms of numbers, which I think if you were to go back 5 or 6 years you would have a very different picture, but Chairman it is unusual to have more than 1 or 2 paramilitary assaults being reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland over the last year, and on shootings, which generally are reported, because they are far more obvious and they are reported in other ways, again very low and on many months there have been no shootings related to the paramilitary situation that we still have in parts of Northern Ireland.

Moving onto burglary please. A less successful story, despite the effort and believe me there is a huge effort going into this particular offence because we know it is one that concerns all District Policing Partnerships, the Policing Board and, indeed, ourselves. Currently showing an increase of about an extra burglary per day in the first 3 months of this year. Now, that may seem insignificant but, of course, cumulatively it should be something we are taking very real, notice of and indeed we are. There are major anti burglary initiatives across the whole of Urban Region led by ACC McCausland. The focus is very much on prolific offenders, targeting those, keeping them under surveillance and maximising our forensic opportunities as I have already described. Whilst it is currently up, compared to last year, the overall trend is still lower but it is still something we should be very worried about and something we do take, I assure you, very seriously indeed.

If the Board is interesting in meeting any of the officers involved, specifically in the burglary initiatives, I would be happy to organise that and have a presentation to the Board by the officers to explain exactly what they are doing on a day to day basis, because I think that may give the Board a greater understanding of the determination to deal with this as effectively as we possibly can.

Chairman, I can now report to you an improvement in our computing systems, the killed the seriously injured statistics for last year. The good news is they are down, 18 fewer people died on the roads in Northern Ireland last year than the year before, and the number of people seriously injured also dropped. That is not to say we are being complacent, the number of children killed, that is people under 16 in its definition not under 18, also was down by 2 and seriously injured was down by 25.

Chairman, I think it is worth putting on record, that having been out recently with my Roads Policing Unit and I know my Deputy Chief Constable has as well, and again Board Members are welcome to visit them to hear what they are doing on a day to day basis. I have every confidence in their ability to deliver an effective service. They are officers who are highly trained, highly professional and very determined to deal with this issue, as part of a far wider arrangements around engineering and indeed education.

There have been some unhelpful comments frankly in the press recently, that have been over critical of the determination of my officers to deal with it and I rebut those comments completely.

Looking at the longer term trend on those killed and seriously injured, it is worth reflecting that the number of people killed on the roads now, compared to 10 years ago or 20 years ago, are substantially less. Twenty years ago about 50% more people died on the roads in Northern Ireland than they do now, so it shows the trend overall is good, we will work hard with our partner agencies to do more, but of course we are engaged in education as well as enforcement and our Road Safe Road Show has won many awards in trying to get young people to understand the dangers of driving quickly.

Chairman, the next 2 slides are a slight move away from performance but important nonetheless, because I think it just illustrates another reason why we are putting huge effort into dealing with other issues, and this one is around recommendations from the various oversight bodies that play in our rather complicated world. The graph shows the number of completed recommendations that come from as wide as from HMI reports through to Ombudsman reports through to Best Value reports through to Criminal Justice for Northern Ireland reports and, indeed, the human rights recommendations from the Board here to name but a few.

What it shows is, that since we have got more organised, we now have all competing and collective recommendations on one database which is supervised and led by people of my Senior Management Team, depending on the areas of responsibility. A determination to 'sign off', to complete to a satisfactory level which is accepted by the reporting agency, to complete to completion a vast number of recommendations and as you can see, we are now reporting that over 1400 recommendations have been dealt with and discharged in the past 18 months.

There are 2 examples there of a breadth I think of the number of recommendations we are facing. One of course is a clear key strategic one in relation to child abuse which led to the Public Protection Units (PPUs), a major piece of work for the organisation. At the other end, something as fairly straightforward as simply changing the name, but the breadth is enormous.

The next graph will show what remains to be done and it shows that we still have a huge amount of work to do. Every organisation that reports on policing feels the need to make recommendations, sometimes 1, sometimes 20s or 30s all of which we have to look at and, of course, all of which we have to act on and make sure they do not compete with each other. But what we are seeing now, at long last, I think it would be right to say, is a definite downward trend in actually bringing a large number of these to a satisfactory conclusion.

Again, some examples of some of the recommendations we have received at 2 ends of the spectrum. The Armed Response Vehicle initiative which we are currently planning and preparing for, a major piece of work and then a slightly more administrative one, through Internal Audit, at the other end, but again a vast spectrum of work that we have to deal with. It is also right to say Chairman, that we do not always accept all the recommendations that are made to us, and there are occasions when we have to disagree.

Just to take 2 examples, if one looks at Best Value recommendations around charging hauliers for abnormal loads, a lot of work goes into actually something which is simply unachievable, because it is not an option that is legal at this present moment in time, and, of course, another recommendation was, that we stop doing road safety education and pass all of that to the Department of Environment (DoE). Well, actually we think we have a legitimate role to play and we are very proud of our Road Safety Road Show, bearing in mind the importance we place on deaths on the road.

Chairman, that is all I have to say. I am happy to answer any questions around performance in detail Members may have.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you Chief Constable. Two questions on the order paper, we will take those first, question 3 on the screens for the benefit of Members of the public and the journalists.

Q3 - Despite settling a challenging target to increase the overall clearance rate by 5% points, the clearance rate is actually more than 4% points lower than the same period last year. Can the Chief Constable explain why this is the case and what he plans to do to address this trend?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, I thought I had covered that in my opening but I will go into it in a little bit more detail.

First of all, the gap currently I can report is 2½% not 4%, that is because we have our most up to date figures as of today, which shows the trend we are closing the gap. In terms of within that group there are some good news stories. Certainly our clearance rate around sectarian crime is up by nearly 2 percentage points, and racist crime by almost 1 percentage point. Clear-up rates for homophobic crimes is up 3½ percentage points so there is some complexity within the figures. But, as I have said, the first stage is to get more organised and I think the effort we have put into that is substantial.

Detective Chief Inspectors meet routinely, I meet at my Crime Performance conference routinely and we bring in expertise from outside. Of course, we also rely on public co-operation in terms of the more information we get, the more chance we got of clearing things up.

If Members are interested in visiting or attending any of those meetings, they are indeed most welcome, and I think it may paint a picture which would give them some reassurance around our determination to continue to drive the clear-up debate as fast and as quickly and as effectively as we can. I have touched on exhibit handling in my opening. The footwear database is also something I am happy to provide a presentation on, that is also important and has led to some convictions in its own right.

The Convertor Teams, these are teams that work purely on the forensics building up the cases to give to Detectives to go and investigate, are also well established and in place and the speed of turnaround of fingerprints and DNA is getting better month by month.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 4, the processing of custody bail, indictable and summary cases.

Q4 - Can the Chief Constable explain why PSNI are currently processing proportionally fewer custody, bail, indictable and summary cases within administrative time limits compared to the same period last year?

Chief Superintendent Brian Maguire:

If I can just start on that one Chairman, I would comment that in the past year in every policing District we have established new Occurrence and Case Management Teams. They are responsible at local level on file submission issues, and as with any change process, there have been some process and resourcing issues that are still being worked through. Criminal Justice Department has appointed 6 dedicated Liaison Officers who, for the most part, are co-located with our partners in the Public Prosecution Service and they have proved invaluable in improving lines of communication with our partners and in smoothing the path of file submissions. Some of the issues around file submission are linked to IT issues so I will be passing to my colleague, ACC Toner.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

As colleagues will know, we have moved in line with the Causeway Programme to a new case preparation system, using the NICHE software this year. For us to meet our requirements as a member of the Causeway initiative, we had to have an all encompassing system across the whole of PSNI, we call it Project Horizon. We have done a rollout of that case preparation across all the Districts and are finalising it now in the Headquarter Department to submit prosecution files. Now with any new system there is a bedding in period in this. Some of it will be people who need some additional training, some will be reviewing some of the business processes and getting that to bed down, so it is not an unreasonable expectation on the first quarter of the year that there will be a slight drop in performance in relation to the submitting of files.

There is also a technical issue in relation to Causeway itself through the information sharing hub that we were getting inaccurate statistical information back on how we were performing. Those are all being addressed and I would welcome the opportunity

to come down and brief the Board in more detail on Project Horizon in its entirety at some stage in the not too distant future.

So, we are fairly optimistic that this is a short term blip that will be adequately addressed as people become more au fait with the new case management system. Whenever we introduced the old case management system about 18 months to 2 years ago, there was a similar blip at that time until people got used to it and got settled down and the training bedded in. We have a number of initiatives out around the Districts where we are going out and we are going to floor walk and work with the Occurrence and Case Management Teams to address any of their concerns. We think we could make the product slightly better and improve a few aspects of the business processes that are involved, but we are absolutely confident that this is a short term blip that we will definitely be able to address in the forthcoming quarters.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mrs Kelly.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I wonder can that be quantified in any sense in terms of a District by District basis. I was told, that in Armagh for example, there were 11 enforcement notices or summons issued in April in this year, but over 100 last year and some solicitors are saying whenever they are in some of the stations that some drawers are lying full of summons or enforcement notices that are not being addressed. Other reports suggest that some officers are not actually being able to put the data onto the PC and it is very much a training issue. So, what are the timescales actually for getting to grip with this because particularly in the case where there is a lot of repeat offenders, people are just wondering what on earth is going on?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

A number of things. I cannot comment on Armagh and individual cases, but I am happy to provide the figures for you if it adds some value. I think there is a bigger issue here actually which is one which is continually skirted around. It is the sheer amount of volume of material required to be put onto the system before a decision can be made, and I think there is a very real debate to be had around how can we make that process more efficient and part of that frankly is around the continual remands of people, who

when they are prosecuted, the number of delays and remands in the whole system, which is being addressed collectively through a criminal justice network.

My personal view is, we can make it an awful lot quicker in the vast majority of cases, where frankly people are arrested because they are guilty and you want to get the case dealt with and got through far faster than is currently achievable in Northern Ireland. I think there are some significant changes on the way around delay, one of which I think will be a change in the legal aid rules which I am told is going to happen in October/November 2008 which may focus minds on effective justice but speedy justice which is currently denied to many people here in my judgement. I do not know if Chief Superintendent Maguire wants to touch on some of the other detail.

Chief Superintendent Brian Maguire:

Yes, just briefly. What I would say is, that the message that is constantly reinforced at District level, is the importance of getting it right first time. There is no point putting a file in if it is not right and it gets sent back and that is a problem we have got ourselves into in the past and it clogs up the entire system, not just the police service. On that point and by way of illustration, in May of this year of all the files submitted to PPS, 79% were of an acceptable standard and that is quite a commendable figure when you look at where we were in the past on that aspect, and of those that were returned, it was not necessarily because the files were of a poor standard, it was because further information was required in terms of for example, CCTV trawls or further evidence, so 79% for the month of May just by way of illustration.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Chief Constable, this Board has gained the impression that the working between the PSNI and the Prosecution Service in terms of criminal cases is not as close as it is on the side of the water. That the Prosecution Service in England works much more closely with the police and is involved in cases from their very inception. Now, can you say something about that?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

It would be right to say that they are different systems. It would not be unusual to see Crown Prosecutors in England and Wales in police stations, that does not happen here, that frankly is a matter outside my control. I think the public generally see the

prosecution of offenders as a continuum rather than silos, they see them arrested by police who then contribute to a case and a decision is made by prosecutors who then take into the judicial system. Here we tend to be pretty distinct units. We provide the material in its totality, a decision is then made. My personal view is and I am on record repeatedly as saying, I think we can do a lot better. We have a pilot running in Ballymena which I will ask ACC Gillespie to touch on. Frankly it should not be a pilot, it should rollout overnight.

I am happy, if it would help the Board to have a greater understanding of what is going on in England and Wales, a good friend of mine who leads the Metropolitan police in speedy justice, ACC Tim Gobbin, who would be more than happy to come over and talk the Board through what happens in London in the routine of cases currently, that may be able to inform your judgement better on what is achievable, but it requires a collective effort.

I sit at a meeting Chair by the Secretary of State on how we can make the system more efficient and I think that all adds value but it is around working together without compromising the integrity of any part of it, I do not see it as a needing to be so distinct. I do not think you compromise the integrity of the decision makers if you work closely together that is how they would see as entirely logical.

It may be worth ACC Gillespie just touching on the speedy justice process.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

In Ballymena there is a pilot ongoing called the Speedy Justice Pilot and interestingly, as you mentioned Chairman, it involves a Senior Assistant Director from the PPS who has previous experience from working in England with the CPS. The pilot basically involves earlier advice to investigating officers, discussion at an early stage in case preparation and the acceptance of a slimmer case file, especially in minor offences and that is really important from the point of view of officer motivation and making sure minor offences are dealt with as quickly as possible.

The Evaluation Report has just been published and I am sure the District Commander and perhaps the Senior Assistant Director involved will be happy to come down and give a presentation to the Board, but one of the recommendations of the Pilot Report is,

that it ought to be extended beyond 'H' District into other parts of Northern Ireland, but I am sure they would be very happy to give you that presentation.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed. Question 5, it is a question in the name of Mr Gilligan the Vice Chairman and it is on behalf of the Community Engagement Committee.

Q5 - In recent months the problems of underage drinking and binge drinking and the impact on levels of anti-social behaviour have been the focus of community concern particularly in relation to the fear of crime. Government has already announced a task force on the issue and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is to bring forward an action plan in the Autumn to help deal in a more coordinated way with issues connected to the problem including education, treatment, social responsibility and of course enforcement. Can the Chief Constable update the Board on the enforcement work PSNI will be taking forward over the next few months and any legislative issues that require amendment to help police deal with the issue?

Chief Superintendent Mark Hamilton:

Thank you Chairman. Yes, the Chief Constable has already indicated that a significant effort is going to be made this summer to address the scourge of on-street drinking and underage drinking across the community. The last NISRA survey did indicate that 42% of respondents felt that underage drinking was a problem in their area and this response was equal to burglary.

ACC McCausland has taken this on board and has launched a new operation for the summer called Operation Snapper, already referred to by the Chief Constable, supporting no alcohol in public places through partnership enforcement and regulation. Now, it is a significant enterprise from the Police Service in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Department of Social Development through Neighbourhood Renewal and all other concerned bodies, to identify key hotspot areas and to launch 6 operations between now and the start of September 2008 to reduce the levels of alcohol related violent crime, reduce the percentage of the public who perceive drunk and rowdy behaviour to be a problem in their area and reduce the chronic and acute ill health caused by alcohol related incidents and hospital omissions.

Additional funding of £120,000 has been made available for the operation so that each District Commander can put extra resources to these operations. The focus will be upon removing alcohol from people who are illegally drinking it, to detect persons who are illegally supplying alcohol to young people and to detect license premises also who maybe selling alcohol to young people, and overall to provide reassurance to the public that the police are committed, both in the short term through Operation Snapper, and the long term through working through with partner agencies, to addressing this issue in an even more robust fashion.

We are also working with the Federation of the Retail License Traders through their Challenge 21 scheme to encourage all license traders to challenge people who appear to be under 21 before alcohol is sold to them.

We are looking forward to taking part in the Task Force announced by the Minister in relation to young people and drinking, and looking forward to other initiatives after the summer time to push forward this issue. Just by way of information to the Board, we are awaiting 2 pieces of legislation to assist with these operations. Test Purchasing legislation which was laid before Parliament in February 2008 and is soon to be enacted will allow the police to conduct some test purchase operations with volunteers under 18 with their parents consent, and Drinking in Public legislation which will be a police only power which hopes to be enacted shortly, will require councils to consult with the police to establish designated 'no alcohol' zones. Within these zones, the focus will not only be on consuming alcohol but also on anti social behaviour and disorderly behaviour. It will allow the police to require persons not to consume alcohol and to surrender alcohol. Refusal to do so will be an offence punishable upon summary conviction with up £500 fine. We are also seeking the availability of Fixed Penalty tickets to issue on the spot fines of £50 to those who are in contravention, and again, if any of the Members of the Board would like to witness or observe these observations during the summer, they would be more than welcome to come with us.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Vice Chairman.

Vice Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you for that Chief Superintendent Hamilton. When ACC McCausland brought this to the Committee it was welcomed as an initiative, but some Members raised the point "should this not be going on all the time". I know you have outlined some measures that will continue after this particular Snapper initiative, but can you give this Board assurance, given the concerns that Members expressed to ACC McCausland about this, that those issues will be ongoing after Operation Snapper has been wound down.

Chief Superintendent Mark Hamilton:

I can categorically assure the Board that the issue of underage drinking is a priority for all the District Commanders and it is something that we are now trying to get the place to focus on in even more robust way, not just through Operation Snapper. What Snapper allows us to do is very similar to some of the Roads Safety Operations, is to take fixed periods where we focus upon things to highlight the issue. Not just to the public but also to our officers, so initiatives such as this will also put it more firmly on the radar of officers, give them more impetus to address this on a day to day basis, but we would also just seek generally the support of the public in all the communities when we are doing this. This initiative will only succeed with the co-operation of parents, teachers and local communities and it will involve a large amount of challenging young people and challenging people who are behaving inappropriately and what we are trying to do now is encourage everyone to work with us in that process.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Okay, Chief Constable, the Vice Chairman has a question that I should have called earlier that relates to the report up to 25 June 2008, maybe you could put it now.

Vice Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you Chairman. Just for the benefit of the public and the media, this is about the performance summary which is for the period 1 April 2008 to 25 June 2008, and my question is about what is missing there Chief Constable. We do not have any information on the statistics around those killed and seriously injured on the road and I know there are bedding in issues around NICHE and RMS software, but the fact is, that we as a Board have not received those statistics since I think April 2007. Now, I know you reported on the killed and seriously injured for 2007/08 and we welcome the

downward trend, but the reality is still, that over 20 people a week are either killed or seriously injured on our roads and this Board, as you will know, have expressed serious concern about that over the course of its life. So, can you tell us something about the record of the last 3 months in respect of killed and seriously injured?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Toner to do the detail. In terms of killed it currently stands at 21 which again is a decrease on last year.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

Whenever we get to the end of year figures we have to take our staff of the day to day counting aspects and put them in to do the end of year figures aspects, so we give assurance that we are going to give these updates now on a regular basis to the Board in relation to killed and seriously injured.

There is actually, for the last calendar year, we had about 136 or 139 killed or seriously injured across the province. You are right, there is about 20 a week primarily which are seriously injured aspects. Looking at the first quarter of this financial year there is a downward trend again which is very very welcome, and we are seeing a continuing steady downward trend. I think that is partly due to the awareness campaign with ourselves and the Minister and also the aspect that there is a larger enforcement element out on the ground as well in relation to the 3 main causation factors of excess speed inattention and, of course, drink driving. But we have got to keep the trend going in the downward aspect and this is something that will not go away. For the calendar year to date, that is from January to date, we are sitting at 48 fatalities. It is the first time in the past 35 years that half way through the year, we have less than 50 people killed and that is still a dreadful scenario for this province to be in when actually we look at the killed and seriously injured figures.

As a short note we will update those and provide more regular information and update in relation to the killed and seriously injured aspects, we provide that to the DoE and DRD as well. We must all keep our efforts together, and we especially ask for the work of the District Policing Partnerships in support of this because we think they can contribute an awful lot at local level to promoting the road safety message that I think we should all endorse.

Vice Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Will we have the figures then in our next quarterly report ACC Toner?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

Yes.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 6 relates to accountability arrangements in respect of SOCA, it is in from Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee and it is from Mrs Kelly. Maybe in your reply you could say something about the work of SOCA. Chief Constable.

Q6 - Could the Chief Constable please outline the accountability arrangements for police officers working on cases led by SOCA?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, the short answer to it is, the same accountability regime applies as normally and in fact, SOCA when they are in Northern Ireland, are subject to the Ombudsman, so if they are involved in investigations and people have a complaint to make about somebody in SOCA, their behaviour or performance or whatever, then that complaint is made to the Ombudsman who have the right to investigate, so it does not change.

In terms of it being lead, there have not been any operations lead by SOCA, they have assisted us in operations and I do not see in the short or medium term, SOCA leading on operations in Northern Ireland. I think they will continue to support the police over here in their operations.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

You say Serious and Organised Crime, just for the benefit of the members of the public and journalists.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

When I talk about SOCA, I mean Serious and Organised Crime Agency.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Which has subsumed within it now the old Assets Recovery Agency (ARA).

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Where they do add real value is in the international world and there is a question later on on the Turkish fraud, where we used the Offices of SOCA to gain access into other countries, so they do provide enormous support to us in those international drugs operations that we have been involved in. Smuggling operations, surveillance operations across the UK and right into Europe where they seek the assistance of other countries in it, so they provide enormous value in that to us. Their role here in Northern Ireland is largely that, to be supportive of us and it is in those Level 3 operations, the higher level crime operations.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary, okay. Question 7 relates to under representation of police trainees from working classes areas, it is in the name of Rosaleen Moore and it is from the Human Resources Committee.

Q7 - The Board, as does the Chief Constable, recognises that there is an under-representation in police trainees from working class areas. I would welcome a briefing from the Chief Constable on the outreach work that he and his contractors undertake to ensure that he is attracting recruits from all areas and backgrounds. Further, can the Chief Constable tell the Board how he uses postcode analysis in respect of such outreach work?

Mrs Rosaleen Moore:

Briefly Chief Constable, there has also been extra concern expressed by some of the Belfast DPPs on this matter as well.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, this is a hugely complicated area which I am happy to have a more detailed meeting on so I am not sure even I am satisfied with what we are doing.

I think the first point to make is, if you look at the incredible competition for a very small number of posts we have already got, raising the hopes of people who, for all sorts of other complicated reasons may be less likely to be successful, is something that needs to be carefully managed I think. I do not think simply clever advertising campaigns are necessarily the way we should go, although certainly the Patten compliance around this recommendation, the Oversight Commissioners were satisfied that we were delivering a focused campaign that was trying to target the more hard to reach groups.

What I am more interested in are more practical examples, such as careers fairs in places like Ballysillan, because I think it is around face to face contact rather than clever advertising and also, certainly in terms of other harder to reach groups, by always being at for example, the Mela and Diwali festivals and places like that where we can get that message across seems to certainly raise interest, what it does not do, is actually raise applications. So my bottom line is, what we are doing currently is not working in getting people from working class areas confident that they can put in and they can play and they can play with an opportunity of succeeding.

That all having been said, in fairness to Consensia who do this on our behalf, recruiting, again a result of Patten recommendations, they do put a lot of effort into where they target their advertising and are very mindful of the concerns that have been raised, not just by this Board in relation to this, but also by myself and some of my senior colleagues. Career fairs and those sorts of places I think add value, schools add value, I am not sure advertising just by itself does. So, I think we have more work to do frankly whereas I am happy to engage to be on it because I am really not convinced it is actually something we have got a clear understanding of, notwithstanding the overwhelming number of recruits we have for a very small number of places.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Two supplementaries, Mr Daithí McKay and Mr David Rose.

Mr Daithí McKay:

Thank you Chairman. Well I think clearly there is an issue around the under representation of people from both Protestant and Catholic working class areas, but has the PSNI carried out or could it carry out, a survey or audit of the existing workforce

within the PSNI to ascertain not only their background in terms of class, but also the communities in which they live now?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

The short answer is no, there is probably some law which means I cannot do it. I am happy to have a conversation about it Mr McKay to try understanding more where they come from now rather than understanding where we are looking to recruit from now, is that what you are saying?

Mr Daithí McKay:

In terms of their background, in terms of what percentage of members of PSNI actually come from working class areas and once they join the PSNI, do they actually stay within those communities or do they move into more affluent communities?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I am happy to have a look at it and work out where that would add value, bearing in mind people moving. The complexity around it I think it would be quite a difficult thing to pull off, it does not mean we should not have a go if you think it would add value in the forward thinking.

What I am really interested in doing is actually trying to get a better understanding of why people from working class communities do not want to join policing? I think that is not achieved by advertising, I think that might be a far more grass roots approach, maybe using DPPs some of whom have youth groups and IAG. It is not unique to here. Traditionally, police officers are drawn from the top end of working class, the bottom end of middle class and if one goes back to research from the 1980s onwards, I do not think it has changed significantly frankly, but I am happy to look at it.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr David Rose.

Mr David Rose:

Chief Constable, I think that I agree with a lot of what you have said and I think with communities that have traditionally been difficult to reach, one of the most positive messages a police force can send out, is that they understand the difficulties that young

people from those areas face whenever they would come to consider a career in policing. From the perspective, especially of education, I think that the under achievement of people in those communities is quite often, not necessarily to do with the individual, but to do with the system, which is a whole different debate. But tying it in with Recommendation 116 of the Patten report which raised the possibility of establishing cadet schemes, and I know in restrained budgets and all the grand scheme is not necessarily the right answer, but would you consider ever thinking about some form of scheme that might actually take a group of young people on a regular basis and perhaps prepare them to be able to at least have a fair run of getting into the police? Because at the moment I think there is an awful lot of cultural and educational barriers which are up and outside their control and maybe we might have to look at potential rather than their actual ability to meet the requirements as laid down on paper at the moment.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

That is a very interesting point and it is worth noting ACC Sheridan was a cadet before joining the police service.

Around cadets again the debate is an interesting one. With money where it is, it is something that would have to be balanced against all the other efforts we have. It is a very good argument also, that people who are older and have other experiences bring something different to policing through life experience. Of course one of the other ways of looking at engaging people from their own communities in policing was the plan around Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), currently on hold simply due to the financial position.

Experience in other forces show, that many people who join as PCSOs, are people who traditionally would not have thought of joining policing, but having been a PCSO then apply to be a police officer and in essence, what you have achieved is a cadet scheme but in a different way. It gives people an 'in' to understanding what goes on and then encouraging them to step forward into that, and that is a debate I know we are going to have with the Board around the budget in its broader context, can we do something around money to actually make some recruiting of PCSOs happen which of course, that is rooted in geography as much as rooted in the 50:50 issue, so I think that is another way.

I agree with you on the education front, I think you are absolutely right. If people have talked themselves out of seeing as achievable, however clever our advertising is, however how many career fairs we go to, they are simply not going to have the confidence to step forward, especially when they know we get 8,000 applications for 440 jobs.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry and the loss of a computer disc, question 8 is in the name of Mr Trevor Ringland.

Q8 - Does the losing of a computer disc containing confidential information at the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry cause you concern regarding the handling and storage of such information, bearing in mind the potential risk to the security of individuals connected to that Inquiry? In that you have responsibility to those individuals in respect of their safety, can you assure me that that can be guaranteed in this and other Inquiries?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Alistair Finlay:

Thank you very much. Chairman, the loss of a computer disc containing confidential information does cause us concern, and indeed it causes the Government concern. The matter is treated very seriously and indeed, the Secretary of State has instigated a review of security procedures in respect of all the Public Inquiries as a consequence of this.

By coincidence, around the same time, we were submitting evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, who were looking at the broad effect of dealing with the past and public inquiries etc on the police service, and in the course of that we have made some submissions to them regarding the obligations that we are under in terms of sharing information and the proper storage, safe keeping and handling of that. One of the things we did suggest is, that this should be subject of some Independent Oversight, just as we are subject to Independent Oversight by the Surveillance Commissioner, then perhaps that body or another body should provide oversight to

inquiries under these circumstances to give us the confidence that handling procedures that are the same as our own.

In this current context, in terms of any information that is handed over, if it is outwith our control, we cannot offer guarantees because we are not controlling it. However, I am absolutely confident that the Inquiries take this matter very very seriously indeed and that they have co-operated entirely and fully with the current Inquiry and we trust that that, and the result of the consideration by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, who are to report on Monday as I understand, may produce some new protocols which would be appropriate.

In this particular case, and I cannot comment on the particular circumstances, however, in this particular case we are confident that the loss of that information has not affected the risk or compromised any particular individual as a consequence of that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 9, this is in the name of Mr Peter Weir and it relates to the recent Roads Policing report recently published by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate of Northern Ireland (CJINI) in co-operation with HMIC.

Q9 - To ask the Chief Constable what his reaction was to the publication of the Roads Policing report and what changes in police policy and practice will be put in place as a result of the report?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

We welcome the report and I have to say I think it is an excellent report and it does set out some clarity in relation to a way ahead around road traffic collision or fatal road traffic collision investigation and serious road traffic collision investigation. What PSNI and partner agencies have been doing for the past 30 plus years, has been focusing on prevention, reducing the number of people who are killed or seriously injured on our roads.

In 2007 we have 18 less fatalities and approximately 118 less seriously injured, so that is a significant number of victims of the road has been reduced. But the time is now right to take a look at how we can improve our investigative capacity and our ability to

deliver high quality investigations in this area. We have been working alongside the CJINI and HMIC during their inspection, and indeed, you will see at page 56 – 58 of the report, our action plans are already included in there and we had discussed that with CJINI as they were compiling the report, so rather than wait for the report we are slightly ahead of the game and we have been implementing some of this stuff initially.

We are moving in October this year, it is planned to move all Roads Policing under one operation command of one ACC which will be within my Department, and there is a team currently working through CORE to centralise that aspect. That is to provide a more cohesive service across the whole of the organisation with 8 Districts, and to provide a better service to those 8 Districts through Roads Policing Units and we will be utilising the models that the 2 agencies currently do.

With regards to reducing speed thresholds, this is one that has a knock-on effect because, if you reduce speed thresholds too rapidly then you have a bigger impact on your fixed penalty processing centre. We have got to take a look at how we manage that because we do not want a huge backlog on that particular process, but we will be reducing our thresholds. In other words, the discretionary element we have over and above the miles per hour on the sign on the road, we will be reducing that to meet the national standards.

We have a joint protocol with An Garda Siochana currently operating and it is very very effective at the operational level and we meet on a regular basis with senior colleagues from the An Garda Siochana Traffic Core, and indeed, we do quite a lot of work with the Roads Safety Agency in Southern Ireland as well.

We will have fully functional Collision Investigation Units in place by April 2010. That plan is already working and we are going to have an interim measure using Senior Investigating Officers as an interim holding position during that period of time.

The final aspect is in relation to joint work between ourselves and Roads Service in relation to traffic management and planning around traffic management, and we are looking at that in relation to critical and serious incidents on the road and how we can manage that. There is always this conflicting aspect that that becomes a crime scene, it is up to us to make sure it is properly investigated. The Coroner requires us to do

that, the Public Prosecution Service requires us to do that and, indeed, the family of any of the victims will want to know that a thorough investigation had taken place, that competes with the aspect of unfortunately having to close roads, but there are some things we could do with Roads Service to make that more efficient in the way that we do it.

Finally, in relation to an automatic number plate recognition, we are looking at how we can enhance the capability of that unit. Outside of the Metropolitan police, we have the largest number of Automatic Number Plate Units out anywhere in the country.

Mr Peter Weir:

Obviously the pretence of this issue has obviously been brought home to a lot of us today with the fatal crash at West Belfast overnight. As I understand it Mr Chairman, we are going to be coming back to this issue in the next couple of months in a much more detailed fashion so I am happy to not pursue any supplementaries at this stage until we have looked at the issue in much further detail.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question that relates to the use of armoured land rovers and 2 recommendations of the Patten Commission, question 10 Ms Anderson.

Q10 - To ask the Chief Constable to comment on the progress towards implementing Patten recommendations 55 and 56 regarding the use of armoured Landrovers, and when he expects all such vehicles to be moved to depots and kept in reserve for use in public order situations only.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

If I give the strategic big picture stuff in relation to the 2 recommendations which are in relation to withdrawing armoured land rovers into a strategic reserve and making sure that they are not used as the default position.

We have moved a substantial number of land rovers into the strategic reserve. In fact, we are not at a position where there are more land rovers in the strategic reserve than there are on normal operational duty. We also have a specific service procedure, a General Order, which provides the administrative procedures for Districts and TSGs etc

to withdraw those land rovers from the strategic reserve. At this time of the year we can expect the strategic reserve to reduce as we anticipate there may be some public order challenges over the next few weeks with the marching season. However, that is constantly risk assessed and in fact, in Rural Region, the default position is salon cars or armoured salons commensurate with the threat. There is many areas of Rural Region that simply are not suitable for patrol in armoured land rovers and so the default position there generally is salon vehicles and armoured salons. Chief Superintendent Hamilton will give the picture in Urban Region.

Chief Superintendent Mark Hamilton:

Mr Chairman, it probably is fair to say that the vast majority of armoured land rover use is in the Urban Region, particularly in 'A' District which would be North and West Belfast. Unfortunately, even in the year 2007/08 they were 390 attacks on police vehicles within that District, and as such, there is still a reasonably heavy reliance upon armoured vehicles to protect officers from stone throwers and other objects that are thrown at them. That said, this month 'A' District have released 15 armoured land rovers back to the strategic reserve in line with the Patten recommendations.

Across the city, the others Districts do retain a small amount of armoured land rovers for use at the interfaces, if necessary, and also to supply Police Support Units in support of major operations.

The TSG in the Urban Region use land rovers are their default vehicle because it does afford them protection from stone throwers, however, we have recently purchased for them a number of other vehicles similar to the configuration in England and Wales which have softer armour which should protect from stone throwers, particularly when we are carrying out searches and so forth.

Unfortunately, even events this week have shown that the level of protection afforded by those vehicles is not quite sufficient to protect the officers inside and one officer this week was taken to hospital this week with glass injuries, who was in one of those vehicles. But there is a general drive to reduce these vehicles and I think it is fair to say that the officers do not find them terribly comfortable either. They are not terribly efficient to run in the current fuel climate and we are putting a lot of pressure on to try and reduce the usage generally.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Martina Anderson.

Ms Martina Anderson:

Thank you for that comment and answer. Can you confirm that there has been no more procurement or there will be no more procurement of these kind of land rovers for the time ahead? Also, is it true that they have to be serviced every 6 weeks and the cost incurred in running the land rovers is very costly across the board for the entire organisation, and even though you are saying that there is so many of them on the strategic reserve list, but in areas where I come in the Bogside in Derry, I have to say there seems to be a lot not just in 'A' District, but also in 'G' District and around the republican nationalist community that we feel there is a lot of deployment and a lot of use of them and they are not always necessary as far as we can ascertain from some of the usage that we can see from going from (a) to (b) that, for instance, that maybe just more routine than anything else.

I also would like maybe to comment on the whole armoured fleet if possible, because there is some concern I think building up that there are some people with armoured cars that are reluctant to give them up. That maybe at one time, whilst they were issued with them for protection, that that may not be the case and, that therefore, that there are some people with those kind of vehicles and there is just a general reluctance for them to release those kind of vehicles and they are still using them. So I think, in terms of the armoured fleet, that I would like to have some comment on that, but also the cost incurred in running the land rovers, I think it is of major concern to us.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

I will comment first, then some of my colleagues may want to add to what I say. But we have certainly reduced the overall number of the armoured fleet and there are no plans immediately to purchase any more vehicles and ACC Toner will probably want to comment in more detail on the servicing arrangements and what not.

In relation to 'G' District, I was out with the TSG recently and their usual patrolling pattern is to leave the land rovers in Strand Road and patrol in salon vehicles unless there is some sporadic public disorder that emerges and then they will go back to Strand Road and change into the land rovers. So the default position is very clearly

salon vehicles. If that needs to be challenged more, then I am happy to do that and if the feedback that you are giving me is, that the perception is that land rovers are the default position then we need to tackle that perception, but certainly the TSG there are very clear that the armoured land rovers are only used when there is a specific threat or there is sporadic public disorder, there default position is salon vehicles.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ACC Toner to cover on the servicing. On your point, we have continually tried to get into ordinary vehicles, the cost of damage to the ordinary vehicles, then it is stone throwing that causes huge damage to routine vehicles which have to be routinely serviced or continually repaired simply because we have tried this step. We have pushed the edge, we got it wrong, we have had to retreat so it is going to take time I think to get to where we would want to be, which is not using them and they are extremely expensive to service as well.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

Health and Safety requirements, because an average vehicle require a servicing anywhere between 6 and 8 weeks depending on the mileage and we do that within our workshops which Finance and Support Services run. We also have moved, over the last 5 years in relation for example, having all the land rovers livered. There are no grey land rovers anymore. Making them more user friendly for the officers inside, but they are still not ideal, and also as well, moving them to diesel engines which in the longer term are more efficient than the old petrol engine version which was the old 3.5 element. There is no new purchase whatsoever of armoured land rovers and we have maintained the fleet at that level, but we have this dichotomy which no other police service in these islands have, is that we have to maintain an armoured fleet commensurate with the threat that our officers face on a daily basis. For example, the officers in Rosslea, an armoured vehicle would have been very handy if that device would have fully exploded because it would have provided protection and saved lives. So, I agree with you, if you are in Derry at the weekends as I am frequently you will see 2 officers out in bicycles as well, it is getting the right vehicle for the right officers on the ground commensurate with what the threat is at that particular time.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 12 relates to the shortfall in the number of detectives, Mr Ian Paisley Jnr.

Q12 - Could the Chief Constable outline the reason why there is a shortfall in the number of Detectives and if it has any reflection on police clearance rates of crime?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, the very structure of policing means that uniform officers who join the service that is where they start, so what happens is, the more senior people in the organisation are in the Detective Branch and then people who join CID tend to stay in it and so, therefore, they are more senior in service. As a result of that then obviously the Patten implementation has had a disproportionate impact on Detectives, and that is Detectives not just in Crime Operations but Detectives in Districts, although it would be fair to say that the difficulty around the shortages of Detectives is not unique to the PSNI, it is a problem throughout the United Kingdom. In fact, when we went recruiting across the United Kingdom, I had several calls from colleagues over there challenging me for stealing officers from their forces.

In terms of numbers, as of 23 June 2008, there were 147 Detectives short in Crime Operations but through a combination of recruitment campaigns across the UK and the Republic of Ireland and internally we will replace those with 117 over the next 4 months. But the posts are not necessarily vacant and another area the Board continually ask about is agency staff, and so to fill some of those skill gaps, I do use agency staff on a short term basis, but as those 117 new officers move into Crime Operations, then people who are there on agency staff basis will leave. But if you take this week alone, or the last 8 or 9 days, we had 3 murders which takes a huge resource effort from this branch. So, I had Detectives from Belfast in Derry most of the week and the next day then the murder in Portrush and having to supply more Detectives to that and then the murder in Bangor and all of those are continuing to run as live investigations. So some of those Detective posts that are vacant currently are filled by agency staff.

But on a positive note, we are training and developing a new generation of officers to fill those posts and contrary to some opinion, there is plenty of bright, energetic talent out there coming into the organisation and will be there for the future in it.

The second part of the question is a bit more difficult to answer, you could have a gut feeling that says, if you have a shortage of Detectives and experience it is bound to impact on your clearance rates. I do not know how you measure, it is difficult to measure because since the Patten report we have had the change in Crime Operations, the business processes in terms of how we investigate has changed and that will have impacted on clearance rates. The Home Office counting rules have impacted on clearance rates. If, for example you take last year's overall clearance, it was down 3.1% on the previous year, but when you look at sanction clearance, that is where we were able to charge or report people for prosecution or caution them, the sanction clearance rate was up slightly by almost 1%, so I do not know how you measure and judge has an impact on it, I think it is a subjective judgement you could make on it.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Well, as making a subjective judgement on it ACC Sheridan. Any business that makes an investment in people, and people are obviously the strongest part of any business, and any business that makes investment in people and gives them years of training and hones those skills to the point where they are skilled Detectives and then a regime comes in which has a disproportionate effect on that body of people and puts them out essentially, we could have that circular debate. What I want to get back to, is there any way in which we can ensure that we maintain that skill level which those senior officers do have and that it is not lost to the police? Is there anyway in which those officers can be brought back in terms of giving back into the service by way of training or by teaching new officers and giving them a real insight into the ABC of how they were able to get results, so that the subjective judgement cannot be made?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

What we are talking about here is a problem that has dogged policing for 31 years. I remember when I joined there was still a crisis in the lack of Detectives. It will always be the case because people always fall off the end, they tend to be the more experienced. It is exaggerated here by Patten severance, but of course, the benefit is we are getting a lot of new people in who want to be Detectives in the future.

A couple of points are worth making, certainly in terms of our sign-up to the Training Investigators Programme which is called PIP. We were one of the first forces to sign up and so the people who are being trained are being trained to the best level anywhere in the United Kingdom, so the product for the future I think is looking extremely good. I also think looking at the figures of Detectives deployed in Districts compared to the establishment, the gap is far less severe than it is in Crime Ops. In most Districts there are only a few officers light from their establishment on Detectives, so in terms of the routine crime, that of course is the bulk of crime, and its impact on clear-ups there up to a reasonable level.

Of course deploying large numbers of Detectives on one crime will not have a huge impact on the clearance rate. The most serious crimes have the most Detectives, whereas many many Detectives on the murders we will only get one clear-up if we solve all of them through outstanding investigative work over a period of time, so I am not so fused about the clearance rate bit.

The other side you raised is not losing that corporate knowledge. As ACC Sheridan rightly pointed out, we do use retired colleagues to fill gaps where we do, although that has to be seen as a short term measure because at some stage those people will want to go. What severance does, it brings people's retirement forward but in essence, at 30 years I still have the same problem. Many forces in the UK are employing retired Detectives but the focus tends to be, for example, in murder reviews rather than frontline work where our Historic Enquiries Team is a classic example of that, albeit to a far greater magnitude. I do not know if ACC Sheridan wants to add any other points.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sherdian:

I think in some ways that has happened by default because we have had to fill those posts with ex Detectives. I lost 114 last year and will lose another 91 in this incoming year in severance, so by bringing back those Detectives and some of them will be involved in background work on the current murder cases, taking statements and so on that allows Detectives to frontline, so that skill base that they had does pass on. I think it has been probably one of the benefits of the agency staff that we have not necessarily lost it, so in other words, those Detectives that I lost last year, I did not

loose the whole bulk of them or the whole skill base because I brought some of them back in on short term contracts to do some of the work where the vacancies arose.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, that is very much the short term option, and given that there is over 2,000 unresolved murders in the North and hence the HET, one has to ask just about the ability of some as well, so let us hope they are picking the best.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

In your opening remarks you referred to the attack on the officers at Rosslea and you referred to it a moment or two ago, Mr Peter Weir has a question in respect of that, question 13.

Q13 - To ask the Chief Constable if the failure to react immediately to the attack in Rosslea, in terms of sealing of the roads and the surrounding area, was a direct consequence of limited resources within that District Command Unit, and if the delay was not because of a lack of resources what was the reason for the delay?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I touched on it in my opening but I will ask ACC Gillespie to give a bit more detail if it helps the Board have a greater understanding of the issues we were facing.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

Thank you. I think it is very important to say first of all that response to an incident of this type requires very careful planning and careful consideration between a number of agencies, and so we were not going to rush into this. But after police initially responded at 1.10am to a report of criminal damage, they were there very quickly and they believed that the perpetrator was still nearby and they carried out a very cursory search. Whilst they were doing that, they were down at a little bridge just at the bottom of the garden of the property to which they were called, there was a loud bang which they thought was a shot and so they, of course, immediately left the area.

Then there was planning commenced to do a follow-up operation in daylight because obviously a follow-up operation in the hours of darkness would have been very very difficult, and also from a security perspective, very unwise. So, that afternoon there

was a telephone call from the resident who had checked his fields beside the bridge and discovered what he thought was a creamery can with a wire coming from it. So at that point that was the first instance in which we actually realised we may be dealing with a device rather than a shot fired in the area. So, to minimise the risk, we contacted local residents, we contacted a number of other agencies including Social Services, Fermanagh District Council to make sure that there was alternative accommodation should this be a protracted operation, and then at 5:25pm that evening, we received a call from UTV to say that someone claiming to be from the Real IRA had said that RIRA had abandoned a landmine which had failed to go off.

So, we then entered another phase of planning with other agencies, including army technical officers and the scene was finally declared safe shortly after midnight on Monday morning in the early hours. A number of items were recovered, an attempted murder investigation is ongoing and, of course in all of these things, the safety of the public, the officers attending and the other agencies attending was paramount. So whilst we did not arrive at the device until the Sunday morning, resources had been deployed in the general area to make sure that the public were safe and that those people responding were also safe.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Peter Weir.

Mr Peter Weir:

Thank you, that was a very illuminating answer on it. Could I just ask in relation to the attack in terms of what your assessment of the level of co-operation from the local community has been since the attack? Because obviously it has been highlighted by the Chief Constable with this and obviously the death up in Londonderry, that these are obviously strategically very significant issues as well as important but that action is taken. But I wonder if you could just highlight what the level of community co-operation has been in this.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

We have had really good co-operation from the local community and also from our colleagues in Garda who very quickly set up control measures on the other side of the border, but there were many people who were very quick to come out and condemn

this and say they wanted nothing to do with this, in particular in the local Rosslea area and I think the neighbourhood officers down there have been very encouraged by the amount of criticism locally that this incident has provoked.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Chairman, there is just one other point I think is worth making because it has been quite high profile in terms of police response. At ten past one in the morning, mindful of the prevailing threat which I have been on record as saying was very high, these officers chose not to wait until the morning to go and respond to this call for help, which was criminal damage, but they took it very serious and they made a conscious decision to go to deal with that straight away. Then of course the thing unravelled and some measures had to be put in place, but there was no lack of determination from officers at the frontline to respond to call routinely, mindful of the threat they are currently facing.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

That brings us to the final question which relates to something already referred to, the Turkish villas scandal, it is in Mrs Kelly's name, question 15.

Q15 - To ask the Chief Constable what action is being taken by the PSNI regarding (a named individual) and the Turkish Villas scandal which has left 67 claimants, the majority of which are from Northern Ireland, with a loss of more than £4million?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

It is entirely appropriate that ACC Sheridan has the last word at this Board meeting.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

I understand this question because there is quite a lot of frustration among the victims in this, not least because they have lost a considerable amount of money in it. But fraud investigations, by their very nature are complex, but when they involve international and other countries they become even more complex.

This particular investigation has 64 complaints in it and in fact the last one was made on 5 June 2008. We have conducted searches and have asked for Production Orders and obtained Production Orders for 10 financial institutions. We have carried out

interviews with a suspect on 12 separate occasions and that has necessitated 51 interview tapes and each tape can run to 45 minutes. We made initial contact with the Turkish authorities on 31 May 2007 to establish some information and we continued that contact with them until 20 July but we are informed by the Turkish authorities that they would not permit the PSNI to enter Turkey until the Turkish police had completed their enquiries and, in fact, they designated their enquiry confidential so we could get no further information from them. Clearly, what happened in Turkey is crucial to our enquiries in terms of trying to see if there is deception in this.

On 24 October last year, we began procedures for an International Letter of Request, seeking evidence. That is a letter that passes between countries seeking evidence, asking for enquiries and investigations to be carried out, but it goes through a judicial route, so we asked the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), who send it to the UK Central Authority. It goes from the UK Central Authority to the Turkish Central Authority through their judicial system down to their police then to carry out the enquiries. It is quite a complex procedure because you have to list exactly what you want them to do, what enquiries you want them to make and, therefore, if you are requesting them to use coercive powers it becomes even more complex.

But the International Letter of Request was sent by the PPS to the UK Central Authority on 31 January this year and was then sent for onward transmission to Turkey. Once that International Letter of Request is initiated, we can make no further informal enquiries with the other country because you then compromise the admissibility of evidence, so we are not allowed to do that.

We have sought prosecutorial advice on this case from the PPS and an interim file has been prepared at the request of the PPS to be submitted to them. We have also sought assistance from SOCA. As of yesterday, coincidentally on the back of this question, the PPS contacted us to say that the Turkish authorities have said that they cannot find the International Letter of Request that was sent to them and they have asked for it to be resubmitted in Turkish this time to them, and so we will have to do that process, but I understand the frustration in the families around it but a huge amount of effort has went into this investigation so far by the Economic Crime Bureau.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much.

Mrs Dolores Kelly:

Chairman, I appreciate the effort in terms of the police and the judiciary in relation to this. ACC Sheridan is quite right to say about the victims of this and I had some in my constituency office last week and some have had to remortgage properties. I just wonder in terms of diplomatic contact, has there been any co-operation or is that a possibility in terms of whether it is First or Deputy First Minister or British Diplomats or Ambassadors in Turkey, have they any influence to bear or has there been any dialogue with them?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

I think they are quite clear on it, because in their views, some of the fraud has happened over there, they are going to carry out their investigation before they let us. In other words if they asked for the extradition of the suspects in this case, we would probably be doing the opposite, we would be holding on because there are offences in this country, so it is more complex than that. I think they are doing their best around it. I do not know how the document was lost over there but enquiries will have to be made by the Turkish police and the process of evidence will have to be followed, and I am not sure if there is any way of quickening the process around that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Ms Anderson.

Ms Martina Anderson:

ACC Sheridan, I just want to comment given you have been given the last word, it strikes me that you are leaving an organisation in a partition state to go into an organisation in an All Ireland state and I am sure you will discover that the way forward for the north is to unite the country, so I wish to well.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Given that it is my last word, I have always been interested in uniting people rather than territory.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could I say in conclusion, we said thank you and gave our best wishes to ACC Sheridan and to Trevor Reaney earlier. Kit Chivers has slipped into the meeting, he also is retiring from the Criminal Justice Inspectorate and we wish him well too, thank you very much indeed for all the work that you have done.

Thank you everybody, Chief Constable and your colleagues.