

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING IN PUBLIC OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2006 AT 1:30PM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Mr Barry Gilligan (Vice Chairman)
Mr Alex Attwood
Mr Joe Byrne
Mr Fred Cobain
Mr Willie Hay
Mr Danny Kennedy
Ms Deirdre Mac Bride
Mrs Pauline McCabe
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
Mr Brian Rea
Mr Trevor Ringland

PSNI IN ATTENDANCE:

Sir Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)
Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief Constable)
Mrs Judith Gillespie (ACC Rural Region)
Mr Duncan McCausland (ACC Urban Region)
Mr Drew Harris (ACC Criminal Justice Department)
Mr Peter Sheridan (ACC Crime Operations)
Mr Roy Toner (ACC Operational Support)
Mr Joe Stewart, Director of Human Resources
Superintendent, Dungannon DCU
Superintendent, Newtownabbey DCU
Superintendent, Urban OCU
Chief Inspector, Command Secretariat
1 representative, Press Office
1 representative, Command Secretariat
2 representatives, Analysis Centre

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
Dr Debbie Donnelly (Deputy Chief
Executive)
Mr Sam Hagen (Director of Corporate
Services)
Mr David Jackson (Director of Community
Affairs)
Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
Mrs Sinead Simpson (Director of Policy)
Board Officials

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Good afternoon everyone. Chief Constable, senior officers, members of the public and the press, welcome to this meeting of the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

Let me remind you, that the role of this Board is first of all to support the police towards the ends of effective and efficient policing and secondly, to hold them to account for the delivery of those ends and typically we do this in public session but we also do it in private session which is immediately prior to this particular meeting.

In a few moments I will hand over to the Chief Constable to provide his policing report and an overview of the PSNI's performance for this year to date.

In line with that second role of the Board, Board Members will then question the Chief Constable on the performance of the PSNI. Before we do that, I would like to say to the Chief Constable that the Board has concerns, as he knows, about the rise in recorded crime and the lower clearance rates in Northern Ireland. Although, as he would point out to this Board and to you, this is still one of the safest places to live in the United Kingdom, the fact remains, that crime in Northern Ireland is increasing and this is something that the Board and the PSNI must work together to address. As announced earlier this week, the Board has agreed to commission jointly with the PSNI, independent research into the reasons for this rise in recorded crime. We hope that this research will help us to understand the factors contributing to this increase and to realign our Policing Plans to address these factors.

I also had the opportunity to attend on behalf of the Board, the Chief Constable's conference on 'District Command Unit Performance' in Fermanagh which took place on Tuesday morning. This conference was attended by District Commanders and Crime

Managers, the Chief Analyst, the Senior Statistician, 2 Assistant Chief Constables, Rural and Urban and the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable. It was a very significant and important occasion that one could only, as Chairman of this Board, be very proud of the way in which they were going about that work. At looking at performance, trying to decide how to improve the performance across the board, so it clear that good work is being done within DCUs to reverse current performance trends.

Since the last meeting of the Board, there has been as you are all aware, a particularly brutal murder in Ballymena. All our sympathies go to the family of Shirley Finlay and I would urge anyone with any information that may help the police track down those responsible to come forward. Later in this meeting, the Chief Constable will be asked for an update on the police investigation into this brutal murder.

Yesterday, the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) published its latest report and since then it has been the subject of much discussion and comment, and Board Members considered the report earlier. Chief Constable, you may wish to offer comment in your opening remarks and Board Members may have some questions to put to you. However, as Board Members know from their meeting with the IMC last week, for the benefit of members of the public and the press, the Board did have a private meeting with IMC on their role on their current work. The IMC as a body, obviously, very obviously take their responsibility seriously and the report published yesterday is significant in its assessments. It is now down to the politics, down to the politicians to get on with the debate and the discussion, and no doubt that report will form an input to it. But let there be doubt, that we as a Board, as is the PSNI, we understand that policing is central to much of what is likely to take place as we approach and go through the November 24 deadline for a political agreement. Indeed in this, there has been much speculation as to Sinn Fein's position on policing. Indeed this morning on the radio, Mr Adams is quoted when questioned on and here I quote the interviewer coming into line on the policing issue he said, "well with respect, we are in line, we just have higher standards than perhaps do some of the other parties". No doubt the other parties will respond to that. "We also have been victims of bad policing for a long time, so what we want is a publicly accountable system of policing which is under civic control". I would suggest to Mr Adams, that he should come along to this Board and sit with the members of the public and he will see accountability in action and he will see it month on month. Devolution of policing and justice is, of course, the

final piece of the policing jigsaw but I think it is obvious that Members of this Board will disagree with this statement.

As the political parties, the British Government and Irish Government prepare for negotiations, I would urge all those involved to remember the significant changes that have taken place in policing here in the last few years, and recognise the progress that has been made. Al Hutchinson, the Oversight Commissioner, has reported that of the 175 recommendations, well over two thirds have been completed. Mr Hutchinson also made an important recent observation it remains the case that collective politics has failed policing in Northern Ireland and not the reverse. This collective failure and its resulting vacuum, have a clear impact on the success of further policing reforms and on the well being of communities in Northern Ireland. Policing should no longer be used as a political football. The policing issue must be sorted out once and for all and it must be put squarely and firmly in the back of the net. Seven years on from the report of the Independent Commission, with all the change that has taken place, it is no longer acceptable that full support for policing is still not forthcoming. Five years on since the establishment of the PSNI and the Board, we have one of the most accountable police services in the world with a human rights based approach to policing that is second to none.

District Policing Partnerships have been working in communities throughout Northern Ireland, giving local people a genuine voice in the policing of their communities. Applicants to join policing have exceeded over 50,000. One in 5 regular police officers come from the catholic/nationalist community and 20% of police officers are women. The community in Northern Ireland is voting with its feet. Change has been complex, far reaching and often controversial. Change not for the sake of change, change that has put in place a model of international best practice. The work continues, as of course do the controversies. More recently, the legitimate public interest over the transfer of responsibility for national intelligence from the PSNI to the Security Service, MI5. The Chief Constable has assured the Board that he will not sign up to anything that weakens the stringent standards in police accountability that have been put in place by the PSNI. These are based on 5 non-negotiable principles that will underpin the agreement with the Security Services on the management and dissemination of intelligence, on the handling of informants, principles that are grounded in

accountability and in human rights and this Board will be working to ensure that these principles are adhered to.

So, as the Policing Board continues to deliver accountable policing, it is time for the politicians to deliver on the politics. The coming weeks present an opportunity for real movement towards full political support for policing and that opportunity should not be lost.

Last week, it emerged that a substantial quantity of ecstasy tablets handed over to a Sinn Fein representative by concerned members of public were not handed in directly to the police. As such, valuable evidence and the opportunity to prosecute those involved in drug dealing, may, certainly the former may have been lost and the latter was lost. This is just one example of how the absence of full public and political support for the police prevents criminals from being brought to justice. As long as this continues, these criminals and others like them will continue to operate in our communities. The support of the whole community is essential if we are to make Northern Ireland a safer place for everyone to live in, and I would remind all those involved in the upcoming negotiations to be aware of their role in securing this support.

On Sunday, the Vice Chairman and I attended the National Police Memorial Day in Belfast. This important event commemorated and honoured the contribution officers from police services throughout the UK, including that the PSNI and the RUC have made to civic society; and paid respect to those who, in doing so, have lost their lives. It is particularly significant that this event came to Northern Ireland, where so many officers lost their lives or suffered serious injury whilst working for the benefit of the community, and this Board pays particular tribute to the families and loved ones who have suffered so much because of their loss.

Finally, before I finish, I would like to mention the Police College and the recent speculation on the future of plans to build the new PSNI training college at Cookstown. At this point I would like to hand over to the Board's Vice Chairman, Barry Gilligan who is the Policing Board's representative on the Police College Project Board, to update you on the Board's position on this matter.

Vice-Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you Chairman.

As you have said, there has been a lot of speculation recently, both about the location of the college and the proposed funding of the college, and I think it is right that we take this opportunity to reiterate the Board's position on this matter.

The Police College Project Board, which is chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, has been working hard to bring this vision of a Police College into reality and maybe I should say something about the composition of the Project Board. It is a Tripartite Board made up of representatives of this Board who will own the college, the PSNI who will operate the college and the Northern Ireland Office when they get around to it, who will fund the college. That Project Board recommended, after a lengthy procurement exercise where we had significant expressions of interest, I think some 26 sites from around the province, and unanimously the Project Board chose Cookstown as the preferred location for the college. This Board then also unanimously accepted that recommendation back in February 2004.

We then went on to develop a detailed specification and Outline Business Case for the College at that site in Desertcreat and that was approved by this Board in November 2005 and submitted to the Minister.

Since then, we have had the situation where we have been told that of the £131m that we require to build this college, only £90m is available, which is some £41m short of the capital cost of the project. We have been working since then to try and persuade Government to honour the commitment that they made to this Board sometime ago and pay for that college in full. We have lobbied at the highest levels of Government, and reluctantly I have to say, we have sought to explore other funding opportunities from outside the province and it is also our intention to raise this matter with the Secretary of State when he meets the Board at a meeting next week. So again, for the avoidance of doubt, I reiterate the Board's position and it is to see a world class Policing College developed at Desertcreat near Cookstown. I note there is a question later in the meeting and no doubt the police service will outline their position on the matter.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Chief Constable.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman. As you rightly pointed out, this is the Performance Review Quarter for the Board. We have put up a number of slides, I will go through the bigger picture and I will then have 3 colleagues who will make short presentations just to highlight some of the things we are doing.

If we go to the first slide, that shows the 4 year trend in overall total recorded crime in Northern Ireland and as of yesterday, crime in Northern Ireland is now up 1.3% year on year. Members will remember at the beginning of the year, we were roughly at 4½ or 5%. If I want to look at the average number of crimes committed between April and August this year, for the same period 4 years ago you would see a decrease in the average number of crimes per day, currently it stands at 346 compared to 4 years ago when it stood at 409. As I pointed out Chairman, we did start the year with a greater increase in overall recorded crime. Since then, you pointed out that you attended with the Chief Executive, our crime performance meeting a couple of days ago. That was the second of those, we have put a lot of effort between the Senior Management Team, our District Commanders and our specialist units to make sure that dealing with crime and reducing it, in accordance with the Policing Plan target, is right at the front of every officer's mind as they go about their daily duties and I think, to some extent, that additional focus has been reflected in the reduction in the increase this year to date.

If we move on to the next slide, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary groups police forces and this is the comparative group put together by the HMI against whom we are judged. As you see there is the total number of reported crimes in Northern Ireland, for the first 5 months of this year compared to other forces, the comparative material is only available up to the last day of August this year. The figure is self explanatory. As you can see, our crime rates increased by 3% but if you look at the total number of recorded crimes, balanced against the population, we are still at the lower end of the spectrum. That is not mitigation, we do take, as I have said earlier our determination to reduce crime very seriously and even from those figures you have seen a reduction in the last couple of months.

Again, if you look at some of the specific targets that were set by the Policing Board against our comparative forces. Domestic burglary in the Police Service of Northern Ireland is down 4% year on year and the current figure stands at 2,785. Vehicle crime is down 7% year on year and you can see the comparative figures there with other forces. It is worth pointing out I think, the overall number of vehicle crimes compared to other places and I will come to it in slightly more detail, is a real success story for Northern Ireland over a prolonged period of time. Violent crime clearance rate is low, as you see there we are the lowest of our comparative forces by some considerable way and I will touch on that again in a moment. It is an area of real concern, that is not good enough.

I mentioned at our first performance meeting Chairman which took place on 27 June 2006 and if we were to start the year at that date, where we really reinvigorated the process for the want of a better description and really got our District Commanders and their teams to focus on what we were doing in case we thought we may have taken our eye of the ball slightly, crime is down from that date to this date compared to last year. So I think we are moving in the right direction and by maintaining that focus I hope to be able to confirm in 3 months time that we have maintained that trend. What I can assure you is, it is a substantial part of my day, it takes up a substantial part of my District Commanders days, we are making sure we are not missing opportunities. The whole purpose of the performance meetings is to allow colleagues, not only to see the bigger picture but also to learn and look at best practice in other districts to make sure we are sharing the best possible practice where we possibly can.

Again if we go into all crime the next slide shows trends in crime. The red line is obviously this year compared to the green line which is obviously last year and this shows what some predictive work that has been done and made available to all districts. If you look at the peak the green peak which was the marching season and with disorder last year compared to the marching season this year or that time, you will see a substantial decrease in crime. What is more interesting is, if you look at the red line where it ends, the finishing point is much lower than last year which is a positive sign again, it does not mean we are being complacent but it does show that things are starting to look at little bit better.

Our next real concern, the spike there is Halloween, an awful lot of work is already going on, especially in relation to fireworks which is one of the main causes of criminal damage during the Halloween period and all districts are working up local plans, working with local partners to make sure that we can deal as best we can and as effectively as we can with that next spike in crime. The one after that is the pre Christmas increase and much of that will be around burglary and again I will touch on that perhaps a little bit later. I think the main message in that slide is to show, that by using our analysts, who are available to every district and specialist unit we are looking ahead of the game to make sure we are actually thinking and planning, not just for today but for tomorrow and indeed a few months ahead.

Now on to the more worrying part of the equation, the clearance rates. You will see a fundamental drop at the beginning of this recording year, now that shows a more vigorous approach to counting rules to make sure that non-sanctioned detections, those are detections that do not end in a criminal justice outcome, to be in simple terms it does not end in someone going to court, someone being cautioned for example, these are non-sanctioned detections and that is where our major drop is. We have put in a lot of work to make sure all detections are properly sanctioned when necessary and indeed, some classifications are no longer available to us. The Superintendent from Newtownabbey DCU, who I think you visited recently Chairman, is here to explain what that means in a slightly more graphic way perhaps after this presentation, but we will continue to make sure that all crimes are subject of rigorous assessment in our system to make sure that only ones that can properly be cleared are claimed as cleared.

If I move on to domestic burglary. Again, I think this is a very positive story over a substantial period of time and we go back to 2002 which shows a continuing downward trend, although the downward trend has eased slightly. If we compare the average number of domestic burglaries between April and August this year, for the same period 4 years ago, you would see a decrease to an average now of 18 burglaries per day in the whole of Northern Ireland compared to 28 burglaries a day 4 years ago.

The table on the right corner of that slide shows again, our comparator forces benchmarked against burglaries per 10,000 households which levels the playing field against populations for example, and you will see we are at the bottom of that league which is a very good place to be, it means there are less victims of burglary here than in

any of our comparator forces. If one was to look at a couple of districts here, in Cookstown DCU for example, domestic burglary is decreased this year from 33 to 22 that is in the whole of Cookstown and I think any Chief Constable anywhere in the United Kingdom would be very pleased to have a district with such a small number of burglaries, that does not mean to say we are taking the 22 lightly. If you look at the reasons behind that we would certainly argue around much analytical work undertaken by the district looking at predicting where burglaries were going to take place to make sure resources were deployed in the areas where they thought crimes would be committed and we think that has had a substantial effect. Neighbourhood Watch schemes have also been set up in local areas, it is vitally important to surround local support for local policing and indeed some of our recent successes in Belfast have been a direct result of members of the public ringing in having seen something suspicious and us responding quickly to make sure we deal with those suspects and indeed arrest them, in those cases for burglary.

If we move on to vehicle crime, another target set for us by the Policing Board, again that is a 4 year trend which I think can be rightly described as significant. There are over 700 fewer vehicle crimes in August this year compared to the same month 4 years ago in 2002. That does not mean we are not focusing on vehicle crime, we still do put effort in, it is a Policing Board objective. Newry and Mourne have managed to reduce their vehicle crime from 346 crimes in last year's reporting season to 217 in this year's reporting season. Much of that is around crime prevention as well as crime detection, certainly working in car parks and identifying hotspots. Members may have read the Irish News today where my West Belfast District Commander highlighted the work they were doing with the hospital to reduce crimes in a hotspot in their car parks when people are visiting patients.

If you look at criminal damage, this is not a policing priority but the increase in criminal damage has had a substantial increase in our overall reported crime, which means districts are taking it very seriously and all have projects certainly around the Halloween period, where you will see the spikes has been identified. Again that is just another example of predictive work being undertaken by our analysts in the districts to highlight where our officers should be and what they should be doing.

Criminal damage is very much an offence of force, what we loosely call anti social behaviour and the next slide really explains a joint partnership pilot scheme being run between Belfast City Council and our police service. It is self explanatory really what is on the slide and that is work in progress. The initiative will commence this year. It is very much aimed at dealing with young people gathering around facilities which the public tell us they find intimidating that they do not want to go into. It is aimed at, certainly around parks, it is aimed at drug and alcohol abuse, vandalism and verbal and physical abuse of council employees. The city centre has funded 2 police officers as well so I think that is another excellent example of partnership, a real added value to working with the business community in that area. ACC McCausland will be happy to report back to the Board on the success of that or the issues around it when it is up and running.

Moving on to violent crime. Not such a good news story here, 2.7% increase on the same period last year. Offences against the person have increased, it is a mixed bag. Offences against the person have increased by 3.6%, much of that we would link to alcohol abuse. Sexual offences have increased by 1.5%, robbery has decreased by 13.4%. Again my colleagues will touch on that during your questions. It is an area we take seriously and we are looking to do more on it.

Moving on to the next slide. In terms of numbers of violent crimes per day, it is important when we talk about violent crimes that we actually get it into some sort of context. All we try to do to illustrate this is not around about 100 serious assaults taking place in Northern Ireland per day, we would say 3 crimes that would merit the classification of grievous bodily harm on a daily period so we need to get it into perspective, so we do not raise the fear of crime and 68 assaults of a more minor nature. What is interesting or slightly worrying, is the increase in assaults on police. We think much of that is down to the late night economy, and the fact that we are getting more and more officers on to the streets to deal with those issues, and of course they do come into conflict with people who do not want to behave whilst they are out enjoying themselves.

Within those figures I identified robbery in particular as a reduction. If we go onto the next slide, violent crime at the top end, cash in transit robberies, again substantial partnership work, working very closely with the cash in transit companies to make sure

we are in the right place to protect their deliveries as they are made has had a substantial impact on this particular sort of crime. Also we have been successful in arresting people. Nine people have been arrested in this reporting year, 4 of whom were charged and currently in custody, but there is more work to do there, it is not something we have taken our eye off the ball but there are some success stories within that in terms of the large cash seizures that we were suffering over time.

Looking at drugs which was mentioned briefly in the private session. We continue to increase our seizures of heroin and cocaine and something quite interesting going on here. One is the volume of cocaine has increased, our biggest seizure was at Belfast International Airport in June which was 13 kilos, a substantial haul although we think intended for use outwith Northern Ireland, and the number of people arrested and charged have also gone up. What we have put in there just by way of interest is the cost of drugs in Northern Ireland compared to elsewhere and we think the fact that it is substantially more expensive to buy drugs in Northern Ireland is because we are impacting on the supply chain quite substantially. There have been some substantial heat seizures which have had an effect on the price and I can assure you we do not create these prices, they are the nationally accepted way of looking at the price of drugs across the United Kingdom.

Finally, on custody and bail which is a Policing Board target, I am pleased to report that at long last we have now managed to get and achieve the target set us by the Board, that has been hard work and I think also we have benefited from increasing computerisation in catching up with other forces in terms of electronic file transfer and becoming more successful working with the PPS as another new organisation has come on line behind us.

Chairman, those are the bigger picture issues and I can happily pause there and take questions on that or, if it is helpful, I will ask Superintendent Newtownabbey to touch very briefly and elaborate slightly on the clear up issue. Superintendent Dungannon will then touch on work in Dungannon and Superintendent Urban to touch on work on our Level 2 Organised Crime Squad.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I think we will take the presentations.

Superintendent Kerr, Dungannon District Command Unit:

Thank you Chairman, Members of the Board, Chief Constable. Can I offer first of all a quick apology for not being in uniform. I have a murder trial running in the Crime Court at the moment from which I have come and to which I am returning, so apologies for that.

The Chief Constable has touched upon differences from 1 April 2006 to the Home Office counting rules on how we record sanctions, but more particularly, non-sanction clearances. Non-sanction clearances, just to clarify exactly what those are, they are the types that do not involve any form of judicial direction or disposal. The predominant non-sanction clearance type is completed but declines to prosecute which is self explanatory. But it also includes when the suspect is under the age of criminal responsibility, or no prosecution directive to the PPS or where the suspect has died before criminal proceedings could be commenced. As a practical illustration, I would like to take the next 5 minutes and show you some slides which illustrate how the changes from 1 April this year to how we record non-sanction clearances has impacted on one crime category, which is violent crime, both for my own district in Newtownabbey and also for the service in general and they show how dramatic that impact has been.

Violent crime just to explain includes, robberies, sexual offences but the largest crime area in violent crime is offences against the person which are the assault categories. The impact of this change has been particularly dramatic in those districts where historically there has been a higher percentage or higher proportion of non-sanctioned clearances in previous years. There is a number of reasons for that breakdown between sanction and non-sanctions and a number of variables that would impact on that include prevalent local crime types, but certainly in Newtownabbey, just to put it in context, last year over 51% of all clearances would have been the claimant declines to prosecute non-sanctioned crime type.

Last year violent crime, this year to date we have had 689 violent crime incidents in Newtownabbey which is a reduction of some 4% on last year. You will see what is very marked is the considerable reduction in the number of violent crimes cleared this year to date compared to last year, 319 violent crimes cleared last year, 100 cleared this year. I have broken that down into sanctioned and non-sanctioned to make the point

more clearly. Last year there were 94 sanctioned clearances for violent crime, this year 85, so the sanctioned clearance rate is reasonably on a par if you consider the 4% reduction in overall violent crime in my district this year but the massive difference is in the number of non-sanctioned clearances, 225 up to the same period last year, 15 in the reporting period this year, that represents Newtownabbey has had just under 2,800 crimes to date, that represents some 8% of a drop in overall clearance for my district.

For the service what does that work out to. Well for violent crime, as the Chief Constable has just touched on, 7506 violent crimes last year and a slight increase to 7,874 this year. Again a considerable reduction in the number of overall clearances from just over 9,300 last year to just under 5,000 this year. Sanctioned clearance rate remains reasonably on a constant, 3,500 last year compared to just over 3,600 this year but the massive difference again is in the non-sanctioned clearance rate, a difference of nearly 4,300 crimes and last year we had just under 5,700 non-sanctioned clearances for violent crime last year, this year it is only just under 1,400.

For Newtownabbey violent crime, I have broken that down again in the last series of slides just to show the percentage breakdown between sanctioned and non-sanctioned crime. Last year, non-sanctioned clearances in the violent crime area accounted for just over 70% of all clearances for that crime type, this year that is considerably down to 15%. So last year the sanctioned clearances for violent crime were just under 30%, this year it is up to 85% so it shows you the breakdown and the difference in percentages between last year and this year which I think is very significant.

How does that work out in terms of service figures? Well again, last year 61% of all violent crime clearances for the whole service were non-sanctioned, that has reduced significantly to just over 28% this year. Last year 39% of all violent crime clearances were sanctioned, that has increased significantly to 71.5% this year, I think those percentages tell a story in themselves.

The last slide and I appreciate I only have a very short presentation and I hope it has been a graphic illustration of the impact that the changes to the Home Office Counting rules from 1 April this year have had on one very large crime area. But there was one last thing I would like to finish on and that is the issue about files coming back from the

Public Prosecution Service, recordable crimes files and the impact they can have on my detection and particularly in Newtownabbey.

This year to date my district officers have submitted just over 500 files to the Public Prosecution Service for direction but, this year to date, I am still awaiting 135 recordable crime files back from the Public Prosecution Service. That represents nearly 5% of my overall sanctioned clearance rate this year, some of those crime files awaiting direction are up to over 6 months old and obviously that is having a considerable impact as well.

Ladies and gentlemen thank you very much, I am now going to hand over to Superintendent Frances Nolan.

Superintendent Frances Nolan, Dungannon District Command Unit:

Chairman, Members of the Board, Chief Constable, I am the District Commander in Dungannon and South Tyrone and at the beginning of the previous year 2005/06 I had some reasons for concern and those reasons were quite clearly an increase in reported crime which is a reason for any District Commander to worry and particularly in a small rural area.

Our clearance rate had gone down quite significantly, we had a huge turnover in staff in that we had probationers and line managers who were new. Sickness levels were increasing, at that stage I had approximately 29 officers on the sick on a daily basis and accountability, responsibility or ownership of the problem seemed to rest with me or my deputy.

How did I intend to tackle the issues, quite clearly we had to decide what our priorities were as any district would do. I then identify priority managers, before this stage we had a fragmented approach to any issue, everybody had some responsibility for it and nobody had overall responsibility, so now one inspector has one individual area of concern and he or she deals with that. They are held accountable, there is a performance matrix for the inspectors, identify the strategy and what we are going to do about it. Those inspectors report on a monthly basis to me at a performance meeting, what they are doing or what they are not doing, why they are achieving or why they are not achieving and share best practice with others. But there was a greater problem in

that that was fine, the accountability with the inspectors worked and the inspectors did work hard at it but we needed to drive accountability down. The operational officer on the ground needed to know where he or she fitted into this and just what responsibility or accountability they had. We decided that we should develop a sergeant's accountability framework and I will show you this very briefly.

It includes performance and areas of concern and I will explain that as I show you the framework. It links very clearly to our local policing targets and the targets set by the Board, and it identifies management of attendance because I had to make the sergeants very aware that they were responsible for their officers and sickness levels in their officers. The accountability matrix we came up with and as you can see, each section sergeant or each unit sergeant had to complete this on a daily basis and on a quarterly basis they were brought in front of me in my office to account for their performance. It identified officers who were not performing, it identified officers who were performing well. The areas that we did identify were those areas of greatest concern to us, for example, at this stage violent crime was a huge issue for us, so violent crime was on the matrix. We to date have 7 people killed on our roads in Dungannon and South Tyrone so you can see the whole raft of driving issues that are there.

The neighbourhood policing teams were also involved. The number of hours spent on the beat, the number of cycle patrols and whatever else they were held responsible for, they also have to complete the matrix. Most importantly, was this area at the end which is greyed out in their framework, is not completed by them it is completed by someone else so what I am getting is quality not quantity. For example, Pace 1/TA they complete that proforma when they stop an individual, so it would be quite easy to stand out and stop everybody who was going along and I wanted the quality not the quantity and the total number of days sick, as you can see, is included. It certainly did work with the officers in that, I now on a daily basis have somewhere between 6 and 8 officers on the sick on a daily basis.

On top of that I decide that I should quality assure what was going on and I do admit that I had some difficulty reassuring my officers that this simply was not a "checking up", this was supporting them to a degree, it is also supporting the victim and it was also allaying fears or allegations that we were not calling back, so we have a Telephone

Call Back proforma. Two sergeants on a weekly basis call the victims of crime to ask them questions such as, how long did it take the police to get to you, what did the police do when they arrived, do you know how your investigation has progressed, has the officer been in touch with you? There were various other questions on it that we can ask if we so wish and that maybe around, was the officer polite, were they professional and we would ask those questions on occasions when officers had been the subject of complaints against the police, to reassure us that there was not a trend.

IRFs are the proformas which are completed when a crime is committed. On a monthly basis, each inspector will withdraw 5 of those IRFs and they will quality assure those, that would be 20 in total, 4 inspectors so they would withdraw 5 each.

The Crime Manager who is also an inspector, is then required to withdraw a further 6 and what he is quality assuring for is "has every investigative avenue been followed, have they done everything possible to make somebody amenable for that crime".

How has it worked in the district? Those are our figures to date and I suppose they do speak for themselves. It shows a reduction in overall crime, it shows a reduction in violent crime, domestic burglary, commercial burglary and criminal damage. We have improved our clearance rate in domestic and commercial burglary and in criminal damage. The overall crime clearance rate is still down but I can identify with my colleague from Newtownabbey, that at any time I would have somewhere between 140 to 150 files with the Public Prosecution Service awaiting decision. The violent crime clearance rate is down, it is traditionally slow to clear and I am quite convinced that I can stand here at the end of the year and say I have met my target.

Superintendent Mark Hamilton, Urban Operational Command Unit:

Chairman, Members of the Board, Chief Constable. My name is Mark Hamilton and I am the Operations Manager for the Urban Region Operational Command Unit and I am going to talk to you today briefly about 3 matters. The first thing is the problem with level 2 crime. Secondly, how we at the Urban and Rural region Operation Command Units are dressing level 2 crime and thirdly, to share with you some of the results that we have achieved to date.

So what is level 2 criminality? Our Analysis Centre has identified this as being criminals that operate across a number of districts or regions and where there is no obvious lead District Command Unit to take ownership of the problem, that is level 2 criminality. So, if you can image the picture of the criminals living in one area but committing crimes across the province or across cities in other areas and the difficulties for District Commanders to focus his or her resources on addressing this specific problem.

In addition, the Analysis Centre has identified for us that there are many criminal gangs operating across the districts. These gangs are involved in a number of crimes. The ones that interest us particular are the like of creeper burglaries where these people are breaking into our homes, stealing our car keys and then stealing our family cars. They are also involved in commercial burglaries and significantly they are also involved in crimes against the elderly again breaking into their homes and stealing from them. They are involved in the supply of drugs, the theft of plant equipment and also very interestingly the handling of stolen goods and we are very interested in not only trying to catch burglars but catch those who supply the market for them by buying on their products.

So what have we done in Rural and Urban region? One of the steps we have taken is to form 2 Tactical Crime Units. These units are led by a Detective Inspector and they have up to 29 officers. The Belfast unit was formed in October last year and is now at full strength, the Rural unit was formed in June. We have 3 key focuses. Firstly, we focus on crime that crosses district boundaries. Secondly, we proactively investigate, arrest and disrupt level 2 gangs and thirdly, we supply extra support to District Commanders and Crime Operations Department with specialist capabilities.

So what types of things can we do? Here are some of our tactics. We can bring specialist protracted investigation toward a crime. We can use crime intelligence and analysis to help us identify suspects and then we will plan operations and deploy against them. We can use static observation, foot surveillance, mobile surveillance, covert photography. The use of automatic number plate recognition technologies, we also have specialist vehicle examiners who can examine vehicles which have been ringed to look like legitimate vehicles to prove their original authenticity. We then mount

an operation designed to search, arrest and disrupt these gangs. So, if we could share with you now some examples of the type of work we undertake.

This first example, I mentioned at the start about creeper burglaries. We focused an operation on a creeper burglary team with 5 people. After a lengthy operation we arrested the 5 persons, charged them and remanded in custody. This second burglary team was daytime burglary team who were focusing upon crimes against the elderly. We identified the first suspect that led us to the second one, both were arrested, charged and remanded in custody.

A different type of operation was mounted against a criminal family who were operating. The arrest of several members of that family resulted in the recovery of a shotgun, weapons, stolen vehicles and stolen plant. Just shifting tact slightly, we have also focused operations on counterfeit goods. A recent operation resulted in the arrest of one person and the recovery of £40,000 worth of counterfeit material. Again shifting tact we also work on the drug supply problem. An operation that crossed the entire width of Northern Ireland finished in Fermanagh with 2 arrests and the seizure of £50,000 worth drugs. However, recently we were very delighted when we identified a prolific handler and recovered from that person £70,000 worth of jewellery and figurines stolen from homes in domestic burglaries.

This last operation which is currently running in Rural region had recovered 38 motor homes which were stolen. The value of these motor homes at face value is £750,000 when you add on insurance values and then the monies spent by innocent purchasers buying these stolen vehicles, we reckon the economic damage is at least £1.75 million. If I could finish with some quick statistics for you, just to show you what we have achieved in the last year. From October last year, we have disrupted 13 crime gangs. We have recovered 6 firearms, we have engaged in 45 planned operations and 7 proceeds of crime investigations. We have effected 70 arrests, 70 criminals in custody and we have recovered 71 vehicles, carried out 58 searches and taken £121,000 worth of drugs of the street market. When we add together the vehicles and the property that we have recovered, we reckon it to be in excess of £1 million.

Finally and perhaps most relevant to the conversation about clearances, we have cleared 134 crimes, and I am reliably informed by our teams that we have another 70 in the immediate pipeline.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I hope that puts a bit of a flavour on the figures I presented at the beginning and the first one is to highlight an issue around raising the standard for non-sanctioned clear ups, there will be a dip, that does not mean I am satisfied with the primary clear up rate which is the one we are really interested in the sanctioned one, there is a lot of work to do to improve that and that was very much the purpose of the performance meeting that you were at this week. There are some issues that we are working on in terms of delay in the prosecution system, that is getting better as the PPS and us are getting better at working together and electronic systems come on to play.

Very briefly, I think the second presentation that Superintendent Nolan gave is something around showing that by involving every single member of staff, from top to bottom, we can make a significant difference and what was really interesting, you have the clear up figures there is we can maintain a fairly significant clear up rate with that amount of effort, I describe it as having a grip on the day to day running of the business. The third point really was simply around recognising that with 29 districts we have to have an overlaying structure and the structure we set up we think is pretty fit for purpose.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Chief Constable, through you thanks to Superintendents Kerr, Nolan and Hamilton for their most informative, their very succinct presentations and we wish them well in their work. We move to questions now on your initial presentation Chief Constable, Deirdre Mac Bride, question 1 on the increase in violent crimes and violent crimes against children.

Ms Deirdre Mac Bride:

Thank you for those excellent and very interesting presentations and we return to this question again in relation to the increase in violent crimes and particularly violent crimes against children are a continuing concern to the Board.

Can the Chief Constable outline please the additional efforts that are being made by PSNI to reduce violent crime.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you, I will ask my 2 colleagues from Rural and Urban Regions to deal with the detail. There are a number of points, we do acknowledge that violent crime has increased which is again back to the refocusing our efforts. It is a slightly complex picture if you take the whole of violent crimes. I pointed out we had 100 less robberies this year than last year which is a reduction of just under 14%. Increases are in assault and assaults on police, an additional 151 this year have been injured. Again, analysis shows that the main problem is still town centres, problems at pub closing times and the majority of assaults of police all involve alcohol by those who are the assailants. It is also I think worth pointing out that 20% of all violent crime in both regions interestingly, have a domestic motivation. So it is domestic violence, the work the Chairman referred we are doing together may give us a better picture on are more people tell us about this sort of crime which is a key area of concern for us or is there a real underlying trend in increase in violence towards women in our communities.

On that I will ask ACC Gillespie and then ACC McCausland to touch on what they are doing to deal with it.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

Chairman, violent crime in Rural Region is down in 4 districts, that is Ballymena, Down, Foyle and Dungannon but across the region in general there has been an increase of just under 3%. As the Chief Constable has said, 20% of violent crime in Rural Region also has a domestic motivation. If I concentrate on a number of details in relation to the districts, Coleraine DCU has seen a significant increase in offences against the person and much of that can be down to the night time economy and the influx during, especially the summer months, of visitors to Coleraine DCU to the nightclubs and bars and holiday homes and caravans. We also had a very major event recently in June, the Fat Boy Slim concert which attracted thousands of young people into Coleraine DCU. In general that was very peaceful but of course it does attract revellers which can, as the Chief Constable has said, point to alcohol related assaults.

There has been an extension to CCTV in Coleraine town centre. They have also developed a radio link between the pubs to identify potential situations and nipping them in the bud at a very early stage.

They have also in Coleraine and in other DCUs developed initiatives like buses to get the late night revellers home and other issues like a big screen in Magherafelt and Newry and Mourne districts where crime prevention messages are put onto the screen in the town centres and in other places like hot foot outlets where young people will see those messages. We also have mobile CCTV in some DCUs which is very successful in identifying violent offenders.

Some districts would put the increase in assaults on police down to a direct result of police being in more direct contact with the public. Getting out of vehicles, getting onto the beat and getting out onto the ground. 91 additional assaults on police happened in Rural Region and that accounts for 1/5th of the increase in violent crime in this region.

In relation to the number of violent crimes against children, that is down in 5 Rural DCUs, Ballymena, Down, Dungannon, Magherafelt and Foyle but there is an increase generally across the region. Strabane DCU has taken some specific initiatives in relation to this and have moved case trained officers into delivering programmes within schools because a lot of assaults actually occur within school premises. Cookstown also did some initiatives around bullying at the start of the school term and went into schools to deliver lessons on bullying in an attempt to reduce those offences. Ballymena were also involved in schemes with prefects on school buses and at bus stations. Coleraine developed a CD Rom specifically for young people and have piloted that in 3 local secondary schools.

We also developed a very successful protocol with the local children's home where a large number of children are regularly going missing. These were obviously vulnerable children and we have, with that protocol, helped to reduce the number of children going missing and enhanced the relationship between those vulnerable children and local police and that has been shared as best practice right across Northern Ireland.

Dungannon developed a midnight soccer league which was very successful in reducing criminal damage and providing some useful activity for young people to become involved in with local police.

Finally, Ballymena DCU has been involved in this Multi-Agency Risk Assessment conference with domestic violence victims which also concentrates on child protection issues with regard to domestic violence and it is ultimately aimed at reducing domestic violence and better protecting victims.

I have in my last round of accountability meetings, focused on the PSNI Policing Children and Young People Policy and have asked for specific initiatives to be developed around that and I will be reviewing that in this next round of accountability meetings which is coming up at the end of this month.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, in relation to Urban Region, violent crime has risen by 2% which in reality terms means another 184 victims in terms of the community. The highest rise again is offences against the person at 4.2% and that equates to 328 more victims. In relation to my districts, 12 in total make up Urban Region, 6 are down and 6 are up. It ranges from a 15% increase in North Down to a 4% reduction in Newtownabbey. A lot of the issues that ACC Gillespie mentioned we have replicated in Urban Region because there has been a considerable amount of best practice sharing across both districts, but if I can highlight, rather than going around my districts, the key features that we think are relevant in terms of this increase.

A lot of violent crime relates to particularly alcohol consumption between the hours of 11pm and 3am in the morning and the night time economy plays a significant part in relation to this. We have as I have demonstrated to you before, set up a considerable partnership working with various town centre management teams and various businesses across Urban Region, particularly for example, "The Get Home Safe" project in Belfast city centre, that is now being replicated in Bangor against night time disorder. Again, the key issue is to concentrate on the hotspot areas which are identified by our analysts in terms of where the violent crime is taking place and then by using additional resources, our Public Order Units, the technology ACC Gillespie mentioned, our Neighbourhood Officers and our Community Safety Officers potentially

going out to try and prevent the disorder in the first place from happening, we have been making inroads into the detection and the prevention level. Our enforcement policy has been very much a graduated process where we will warn people, we will try to divert people away, particularly from the hotspot areas, we will try to talk to licensees and encourage them not to continue to have the problems or to take action themselves to prevent the problems happening at their own licensed premises. So really in summary, it is early intervention particularly in relation to on street drinking which we feel is the key to potentially make inroads into what is happening.

We also have increased police resources during peak periods and have, as you may have seen recently in the press, announced a number of major initiatives particularly in Belfast city centre where we will be moving to a series of what we call “super night life” where we will be putting an extra 30 to 50 officers over and above those that would be there anyway, to have a robust enforcement policy in terms of ensuring that the night time economy and that Belfast for example, and other cities and towns outside of Belfast, are safe for people to come and enjoy themselves, but also to enjoy themselves in a sensible and practical way. We have done that by particularly encouraging the work with the licensees to take a responsible approach in terms of how they are selling drink and providing drink on their premises.

The last point I would make Chairman is very clear, we need the co-operation of the public to report incidents of violent assault and where they witnessed that, to come forward and give us evidence that we can in effect take people before the courts, that I think is critical in reality to make Northern Ireland a safer place.

ACC Gillespie mentioned the issue, as did the Chief Constable, of domestic violence. In Urban Region, domestic violence would amount in some of my districts between 30% and 40% of the actual violent crime that we are dealing with. That is an issue which we are constantly working on and attempting to drive down but it is something that, as confidence builds in the community, it is being reported more and more but we have got to continue to double our efforts in that area.

Chairman, that would be the report from Urban Region.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

A question relating to the numbers killed or seriously injured on the road, Barry Gilligan, question 3.

Vice-Chairman, Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you Chairman. Members are concerned Chief Constable at the increase so far this year in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the road and have particular concern, if my maths are right, is in Urban Region where in 5 months to date it is a 27% increase in that. If you look at the tragedy behind the statistics in real terms, we have had 68 children killed or seriously injured on our roads in the 5 months ended 31 August 2006. Can you tell us what steps you are taking in partnership with other agencies to try and reverse this trend during the remainder of the financial year?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Toner to deal with that. In terms of overall numbers killed which is obviously one distilled out of those killed and seriously injured, I am pleased to report that currently we have slightly less killed, it is down from 67 to 62 the overall increase is in other areas but ACC Toner if you would touch on what is going on as a substantial amount of our effort is being put into this particular area.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Roy Toner:

It is a very apt question, because it runs on the topic and very much on everyone's mind and again this week we launched a joint campaign with An Garda Síochána on seat belt wearing. Basically the number of people killed on our roads this financial year is down by about 5. The number of people slightly injured is also significantly down, but unfortunately the number of serious injuries are up and indeed that is something that is giving us some concern.

To give the Board and indeed the public a flavour of what we are actually doing in Northern Ireland at the moment by ourselves and other in conjunction with other agencies. The operational focus has been very much based upon where we are steered towards the main causation factors, and indeed this is driving the Roads Policing teams out to key areas at key times where the risks are.

We have run Operation Road Safe every single bank holiday weekend because the statistics tell us that that is a time when there is more death and carnage on our roads. One key aspect has been, if you look at the bank holiday weekend at the end of August 2006, over that 4 day period the Roads Policing teams and the DCU personnel detected nearly 1700 offences, that is 1700 offences in 4 days and if you realise that nearly 600 of those were people who are still driving too fast. We had 52 people arrested for drink driving during that 4 day period as well and indeed. It amazes me as well, that we had nearly 320 people who were caught not wearing their seat belt and this is a message that the public really need to get a grip on in that, police officers cannot be everywhere and the result is, if you make it home safe without having a seat belt on you are a very lucky person indeed, because seat belts do save lives and indeed, do save serious injuries.

We are currently working with the regions in pre-planning towards the Christmas Anti Drink Driving Campaign which will have an enforcement on it as usual, but it will also have a heavy advertising message as well.

We will also be looking again towards the deployment of the safety cameras. We have 4 static cameras and a number of mobile cameras around the province and again focusing these on areas where the killed and seriously injured statistics indicate that there is a risk there.

I briefly mentioned earlier the seat belt campaign which An Garda Síochána and ourselves have launched with the Road Safety Authority in Southern Ireland and the Department of Regional Development up here. This is to try and target those people, again mainly the 17 to 24 year olds who do not wear seat belts in vehicles. It is an area that we significantly have to do more work on, but unfortunately for us, we have got to a stage where it is going to have to be very robust enforcement for people who are not wearing their seat belts.

We run a number of multi-agency operations with other bodies such as the Driver and Vehicle Training Agency, the Customs & Excise Authority and Vehicle Licensing and indeed the Immigration Service and we have run a number of operations there with un-roadworthy vehicles and education as well to people about their requirements for insurance, driving licence and other requirements.

Primarily now for the future, we have also been looking towards the Tyre Safety Week which is an important element about vehicle maintenance this time each year, and indeed, we have been running the Bike Safe events throughout the year for motorcyclists. The PSNI Road Safe Road Show which is supported by AXA Insurance has been running throughout the year, and to give one example, in a recent event in Fermanagh over 1400 young people attended that, these are young people who are currently young drivers or about to be young drivers.

We continue working towards the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy in delivering in those targets, but on the Policing Board Strategy Event which is coming up this month, we are going to propose a piece of work where we will actually set up an Enforcement Strategy for PSNI to try and get this altogether into one codified structure to try and actually link to the KSI figures. There is an awful lot of work going on by the PSNI and other agencies involved in this. We also think there has to be an awful lot more done by the drivers and the people on the road themselves.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much indeed. Question relating to clearance rates, Rosaleen Moore, question 2.

Mrs Rosaleen Moore:

I would commend the 3 presentations, they were very impressive and obviously have taken a bit of steam out of this question. Obviously Chief Constable, improving crime investigations and detection is a priority for us all, the public, the police and the Policing Board. Can you give some reasons then why the clearance rates remain doggedly below Policing Plan targets and try to reassure us that adequate resources have been provided to improve the clearance rates and again, in view of our presentations, what is the rollout in terms of learning from good practice and trying to roll this out into other DCU areas?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

On the last point first. One of the main reasons for getting every district together, twice already just on performance, was to make sure that the work going on in one place is shared across the others, and there is another performance meeting planned for January 2007 but I may well bring that forward depending on how we are going, so I

think there is much work in progress around that. There is this change in how we monitor these things to make sure what we get are very robustly tested. It is no longer good enough for example, where a defendant declines to prosecute which is quite often the case sadly in Northern Ireland, which in essence may put an end to the case where historically that would be allowed, it is no longer allowed, one would actually have to go through a substantial amount of work to see if we can actually convince to the Prosecution level, do we still have a case that would be legitimately cleared up and that is hopefully what the objective of Superintendent Kerr's presentation was.

If it helps the Board, I will happily ask ACC Toner and Tony Matheson, Head of Statistics, to come and give a more detailed explanation at the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee to give more detail on it.

That is where we are. Every district has had people trained by an external consultant on how you properly audit crime, that is for 2 reasons. One is to make sure we only legitimately clear up the crime we can clear up but also to make sure we do not miss any. We have found also there is evidence of some under claims as well as over claims so we have to make sure we get the right things.

The other way of looking at this and 2 forces have gone down this route. Because of the effort required for a non-sanctioned protection which frankly is important as a measure of police activity, because substantial effort can go into a crime where someone steps back at the last minute, may be for very good reasons in a domestic violence case where we cannot prosecute, that is recorded somewhere in police statistics. Two forces, Avon & Somerset and Devon & Cornwall only now monitor primary sanction clear ups, as in ones that have a judicial outcome, and I happy to engage with the Board on a discussion around that because that may be a more sensible and pragmatic way forward.

In terms of targets set by the Board, it is fair to say it is challenging and we all do our best to rise to that challenge. If we succeeded it would put us pretty much at the top of UK policing in terms of clear ups so it is a challenge, but one we will do our very best to meet.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Questions typically come from individual members of the Board or Committees of the Board or they come in from members of the public. We would encourage members of the public to submit questions, but they must bear in mind that if it is a question that relates primarily to their immediate district, they should bring them to the DPP. This is a question that has come in from a member of the public and is a regional question.

Could the Chief Constable explain why the PSNI are not making best use of Anti Social Behaviour Orders in Northern Ireland. As of the 6 April 2006, only 6 out of 9 ASBOs in Northern Ireland since 2004 had some PSNI involvement. Does the Board and the Chief Constable agree with the then Criminal Justice Minister, John Spellar when he said on the 25 August 2004 "Government is pleased to be introducing this important piece of legislation which provides another tool in dealing with behaviour of this kind which can ruin lives and local communities. It compliments measures which already exist and lets those who act in an anti social behaviour way know that they will face firm sanctions. We will be working with the agencies to make sure this legislation is issued early and effectively", and this is the question: In light of the above statement by the Criminal Justice Minister, have ASBOs been used early and effectively?

Sir Hugh Orde, Chief Constable

I will ask ACC Harris to go into detail. Just in the bigger picture of course, we asked for legislation from Government. It was some 3 or 4 years behind the rest of the United Kingdom but it was driven very much by us with the support of the Policing Board and I will ask ACC Harris to give the details. We have some issue with the numbers raised.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

The short answer to this question is yes as well. We are using them effectively and they are being used early and appropriately in the process as well. Our figures at the moment are that 34 have been taken out in total by the statutory agencies. Police have very much led the way in this and have taken 29 of those 34. ASBOs are part of a graduated response towards anti social behaviour and we have heard today already of other work going on in DCUs to tackle anti social behaviour. So ASBOs is one tactic in a graduated response towards dealing with anti social behaviour. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts are another tactic which is used particularly around young people. We are encouraged by the partnership approach. Our relationship with the other

agencies in taking forward ASBOs is developing, but in the same period in England and Wales when the ASBO legislation was brought in, 100 ASBOs were taken out. Now if you take into account the scale between Northern Ireland and England and Wales you can see that we have been active in dealing with anti social behaviour through ASBOs, and this is despite the fact that the process was stalled by a legal challenge. We still have 34 ASBOs in Northern Ireland and again 29 of which were led on by the police.

Professor Sir Desmond Rea, Chairman

Supplementary from Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Thank you Chairman. Can I say that, whilst I appreciate that you have taken out 34 ASBOs, there is a view that you could walk down some streets in this city or indeed other parts of Northern Ireland and identify 34 delinquents who are causing major nuisance to a lot of people and who you should be putting these ASBOs on and enforcing against them as urgently and as harshly as possible. Because it is this nuisance crime, which I believe creates a great deal of the fear of crime and then affects the overall statistics in the bigger area. I really want to know is there is a particular threshold that a person has to get to in terms of really annoying the general public before the police are prepared to slap an ASBO on them? Or is it another concern that the Public Prosecutor is slowing this process down or does that not come into it? Explain a little bit to us about the criteria about how you actually apply these.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

The ASBO is, I suppose almost at the end of the road in terms of someone's behaviour. It is a graduated response. We have to be proportionate to what we find. We have to convince a court that an ASBO is required in the circumstances and therefore, there is a body of evidence that is required around what else has been tried, what other disposals have been put in place in respect of an individual. In terms of young people, we are working through with the Youth Justice Agency at the moment, Alternative Disposals and Early Intervention by the Youth Justice Agency around young people, crimes committed by young people and anti social behaviour and so, there is not as such a threshold that we have identified, but it is around what is proportionate to the individual circumstances we face. We also need a partner to sign one off with us. So there has to be one of the other statutory bodies involved in this decision making

process. So there is a body of evidence needed and a momentum around a particular individual's behaviour. There is Alternative Disposals that we use and we use widely and as I say, the ASBO is towards the higher end of the scale in responding to this.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Is it possible to widen out the partner element in this. If you cannot for example, use the Housing Executive, say for example shopkeepers or businesses, can they be brought into the equation? A lot of this revolves around people maybe staying outside people's businesses, urinating up against their business, doing all sorts of really annoying nuisance behaviour and businessmen, members of the public who walk past and see this, get really offended by it and want to know, can the police not deal with this and deal with it very very severely?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

The statutory agencies are laid down with legislation. It also requires one of them to agree that the ASBO is the way forward when the police are leading on this and we have supported the other agencies when they have wanted to take out ASBOs. It is not a process open to private members of the public to support us, but what I would say is, that if people make complaints, if there is regular nuisance, then there is a series of tactical options we have to deal with anti social behaviour. We recognise its link into criminal damage and other crime including violence and under-age drinking and so it is a priority for the organisation. ASBOs is one method of disposal. We have a whole array of tools at our disposal that we can use and it is not just the magic remedy that people might put forward and it has in some ways fallen in disrepute in England and Wales in terms of some of the obscure ASBOs that have been brought in place. We want to avoid the position where the ASBO process is brought into disrepute. We have to be proportionate in its use and respectful of the human rights of everyone in the community when taking these forward.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

One of the domains in this Performance Report relates to resource usage and there is a part in it that relates to absenteeism, question 6, Rosaleen Moore.

Mrs Rosaleen Moore:

Chief Constable, could you provide the Board with an estimation of the total bill incurred by the Service last year and this year to date on police and support staff sickness absences and comment a little of the cost.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask Joe Stewart to deal with that question.

Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

Chairman and Members of the Board, the numbers are indeed very significant and as you know we have a struggle with sickness absence and for 2005/2006 we estimate that the total cost of sickness by both police staff and police officers is in the region £22½ million, that is split £18 million towards police officers and £4½ million towards police staff. For this year to date, we are looking at sickness totals of about £5.8 million for police officers and £1.2 million for police staff making a grand total of just over £7 million year to date. I think the figures are very stark but I should say that all of us in the Command Team are acutely aware of the struggle here and the cost of sickness absence. Those figures do include around 15% injury on duties, where our officers have been involved in fracas and so on in trying to defend the public here in Northern Ireland. Although we have achieved the Board target for 2005/06 for police officers, we are by no means in any complacent and this year alone, we have taken forward no less than 14 separate initiatives quite apart from those you heard from Superintendent Nolan at district level. These range from, improving our information technology systems so there is ease of access about information pertaining to absence, benchmarking against outside services, although this is the police service where it is difficult as they do not all calculate absences in the same way, reviewing the role of our Occupational Health Unit to bring forward referrals to Occupational Health more rapidly and reviewing our inefficiency procedures for both police and police staff, and in some case we need regulations to amend those.

There have been very positive trends in reduction of sickness absence since 2003 for example, when we launched some of this work. The average police absenteeism this month in 2003 was 14.6%, this month is 9.3% and police staff average absenteeism at that point in time was 12.5% at the moment it is 9.2% and we are keeping a very close eye on that. We continue to campaign on this centrally with my colleagues here on the

Operational Command and in the districts and we are determined that we will continue to drive this figure down.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Supplementary, Mrs Pauline McCabe.

Mrs Pauline McCabe:

It was really just a comment that I wanted to make and Mr Stewart touched upon it. That performance in this area has been a huge concern to all of us over a long period of time and I was just very struck by Superintendent Nolan's presentation today, because what her model seems to do, is achieve a focus and accountability at sergeant level which seems to me to be the key to actually getting performance improvements. She has given us some really stark figures in terms of over a relatively short period of time, some very dramatic reductions in sickness absence and it was really, you talked Chief Constable through the performance review mechanism of rolling out best practice, but it seems to me what she has shared with us today, is as worth rolling out as anything I have heard for a long time.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

That was rolled out at the meeting the Chairman was at, but it is not the first time. I think the key in the last 4 years and the key to success has been to driving it down to the lowest possible level and I think what that graphically illustrates is what you can deliver, you go from 29 days to 8 or 9 in a very short space of time but we are very aware of the issue and it is one we do discuss at HR Committee on a frequent basis and will continue to do so.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

A question relating to the provision of IT and the rollout of the IS Strategy, Joe Byrne, question 7.

Mr Joe Byrne:

Would the Chief Constable advise Members if he is content that the PSNI have considered how plans for the provision of a new IT System and rollout of the IS Strategy over the next 3 years will combine with the work schedules contained in the

Estate Strategy and that unnecessary or wasteful provision will not occur, given that the RPA will have implications for DCU structures and the number of councils.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I ask Roy if he will touch on that one please.

Assistant Chief Constable Roy Toner

It is an important question Chairman because it is about tax payers money and not wasting tax payers money. We report on a regular basis to the Resources & Improvement Committee of the Northern Ireland Policing Board on the Information System Strategy. A couple of points that I would say is that the Strategy is very closely aligned to all other agencies and departments in PSNI. So for example, on all the major project boards we will have representation from Estates Services and indeed also from Human Resources Department and other parts of the organisation. So it is very much a collegiate approach in relation to each of the projects in turn. One example at the moment where this has worked particularly well is in relation to Viper, which is the video identification suites. So rather than having an ID parade of the old style we now do it electronically and indeed we have worked very closely with Estates Services to make that happen in our designated Custody Suites across Northern Ireland. What we have been planning to the future Mr Byrne is absolutely correct, that are issues in the future in relation to 8 District Command Units and we don't want any nugatory work in relation to new builds and new developments in support of the IT Strategy when we may not necessarily need that in place. One of the key projects is Project Unity which is the Call Management Project for PSNI and indeed I have written to the Board and I am offering up a detailed presentation to the Corporate Policy Committee on that particular issue between now and Christmas.

Just to summarise every single one of the 28 live IT projects in PSNI at the moment has an input from Estates Services and indeed Human Resources and other Departments and we cross-reference before the final options are signed off on the way forward to make sure that the work is not nugatory and we future proof the new 8 DCU Structure.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question from a member of the public. Question 21. The PSNI paid out an unprecedented sum of damages to the Sunday Times Northern Ireland Editor and his

wife on 18 September 2006. May I add, says the member of the public, tax payers money. What lessons have been learned from this incident and will any police officers be disciplined?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman. The amount paid out we are not allowed to comment on because part of the agreement was that. So I cannot comment on how much it was.

In terms of the investigation and the key finding from the Ombudsman was that the wrong warrant was applied for which, was the basic root cause of the issues that then flowed from that and action was recommended against 8 officers, all of whom have received advice and guidance from us regarding conduct of a search of the Clarke home and the Sunday Times offices and associated matters.

I think more importantly on the question about what can be done about it, well there were 6 specific recommendations that came out from the investigation, all of those have been implemented. They refer to a Critical Incident Policy on methodology, that is a way of training people on difficult issues, involves police officers in various disciplines of various ranks. We have implemented that, there have already been 9 courses, a total of 108 senior officers have been trained in that training which is a one and a half days duration. Priority has, for obvious reasons, been given to Chief Inspectors and above because those are the ones responsible for planning those sorts of events. Indeed one of those was attended by Sammy Wilson as a Member of the Board before he left us. An issue around policy logs has also been dealt with and that new policy is now out. Searches where it is believed or anticipated a female may be present, a female officer should attend and that is also now part of the search manual and indeed the revised form officers take with them to remind them. Planning of operations needs to take into account the pressures on staff, particularly senior staff to ensure the need for excessive hours of duty was avoided. That is also included in the policy. No 5 was, that policy be implemented regarding the need to conduct and record risk assessments that is also now in our search manual.

Finally, new legislation with operational impact should be prioritised for circulation and that is also done and is now in training as a priority.

Mr Alex Attwood

I do not know if I quite agree with you Chief Constable, that more important out of this incident is the learning. I think that was equally important to the nature of the incident itself. So therefore, I want to ask you a question about this incident and it is this.

Looking back on this situation, was there not a much better way in terms of investigating this matter and interviewing people who you want to interview rather than turn up in the early hours of the morning at their home? Was there not a better way for this to be managed by the police and is that not the fundamental learning that should arise from this matter?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

There was a number of issues around this which were around evidence recovery, so each case I think has to be looked at in an individual way and the finding in this one was one of the key issues was the wrong warrant was obtained, so there is a lot of learning around how you plan for these operations. Now if the planning is right and the circumstances demand it, it may well be that the right approach was to search with the right warrant. It would be wrong to comment in more detail. It may well have been equally, if that process had been right, that an alternative way may have been taken and there may have been another way of doing it.

Mr Alex Attwood:

Chief Constable, that is not answering the question. The question is, when it comes to interviewing members of the public, including this case, members of the media, was there not a better approach to invite those people to come, make themselves available for interviews and make their properties available for search rather than turning up in the early hours of the morning to do so?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I thought I made it clear, I am sorry. If the issue is around evidence recovery you have to look at all the possible scenarios around different cases so if the decisions were in a case the priority is to recover evidence and by carrying out an operation in a more open or invitational way, may negate that, then you would have to do it in a search warrant way, but if you are going to do it in a search warrant way make sure you have got the right search warrant, I think was the message in this case. The fact that we settled this

matter out of court suggests we accept fully that we did not get the search warrant bit right and we fully accept that.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

A question relating to the co-operation by police officers or former police officers with the Ombudsman's Office, question 20 Mrs McCabe.

Mrs Pauline McCabe:

Members this month Chief Constable considered the Ombudsman's report into the abduction and murder of Jean McConville. In the report it is recorded that the officer who led the belated investigation into the murder in 1995 refused to co-operate with the Ombudsman's investigation. Could the Chief Constable comment on this. Does he believe that the Ombudsman should be given the legal authority to require retired officers to co-operate with investigations or does he think there is some other way that this can be addressed?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will my Deputy Chief Constable to deal with the detail, but from a personal point of view I would expect and encourage any retired police officer to assist the Police Ombudsman with her investigation because that is how the system should work, but my Deputy Chief Constable will deal with the difficulties and the issues you particularly raised.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Retirement from the police service gives no protection at all from criminal investigation. Criminal investigation can proceed and any allegation of criminal conduct which is currently investigated by police and can be reported to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). In section 56(3) of the Police of Northern Ireland Act, gives the Police Ombudsman's officers powers of a constable to conduct those investigations so they can actually conduct criminal investigations into ex members should they wish to do so, should they have enough evidence or line to follow to do that. However, their powers to report someone to the PPS for prosecution are restricted to serving police officers only. However they could, working with us, the PSNI could then report to the PPS, so that methodology is still there and that is open.

The issue that you raised is around of course, retired officers co-operating with the Ombudsman. We encourage, at every opportunity retired officers to co-operate with the Ombudsman, we have done this on many occasions. There is no legal power you are quite right, to enforce them to co-operate with the Ombudsman and that is a matter for the Government. There may be, and I believe there probably are, some human rights issues there. I think what is important is, that we increase confidence in the Ombudsman's Office and indeed that is one of her prime rolls and the statutory responsibility upon her to actually increase the confidence of the police service in her Office and we are working very closely with the Ombudsman's Office to increase confidence of the police service in her Office and there are several things that we do and when we meeting regularly we have several plans to actually improve that confidence.

In a recent survey of officers who had been dealt with by the Ombudsman's Office, 96% of those who had been dealt with by the Ombudsman's Office felt that they had been dealt with professionally by her Office. Now I think that is a step forward and that is part of the way of getting retired officers to co-operate is to increase that confidence, so I think there are measures we can take.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

I referred to in my opening remarks to the Shirley Finlay murder, question 18 relating to that, Mr Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

I was very interested in that last question given the fact that confidence in the Ombudsman's Office is of course essential and I am sure that are former police officers like Johnty Brown who do not have much confidence, given the way they were treated and may be working to get that confidence built up you could get what the Deputy Chief Constable has identified.

Turning to my own question, in terms of the Shirley Finlay murder in Ballymena which is a terribly said murder given the fact that Shirley herself had a very sad background and family circumstance and I wonder Chief Constable if you are able to update the Board on the investigation into this murder. Have you any primary leads and is an arrest

imminent or is there any help the public can now give that they have not given to date that would lead to a result in this very sad and tragic case?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Sheridan to deal with question as Head of Crime Operations.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, as Mr Paisley has said and we would want to be associated with your remarks on the death of Shirley Finlay. Her body was found in a car park in Mount Street in Ballymena on the afternoon of Tuesday, 19 September 2006, it was found wrapped in a duvet cover. The investigation currently is very much still alive and the investigation team is still based in Ballymena. She was a 24 year old single female and can best be described as a vulnerable adult. The post mortem results show that the cause of her death was strangulation. We are looking at a number of motives and one line of enquiry is sexual and there are a number of other lines of enquiry and we continue to do house to house in Ballymena, and a trawl of the CCTV system around the town to try and identify her movements that day. There is a lot of forensic work currently going on and that may in the end, lead to an arrest. We have been back to the scene and did some media interviews, we have not had any arrests to date but I hope in the future that that will change.

Detectives in Ballymena have said they have had a very good response from people in Ballymena but they do look in their investigation and the focus of their investigation is to recover some of her clothing that we have not been able to recover. Again, I would ask members of the public if they know anything about or they see the likes of footwear, which may possibly be trainers, jeans or a black corduroy tracksuit bottoms, we would be very interested if members of the public come across those anywhere in the Ballymena area.

We also need assistance specifically from people in the Harryville area of Ballymena who may have seen Shirley on the afternoon or the evening of Monday, 18 September 2006. She may have been with a 6ft tall slim male and we would be very interested in talking to that person, so again we would encourage people, but as I say it continues to be a very much alive investigation.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to knife crime, question 8 Mrs McCabe.

Mrs Pauline McCabe:

One reason that young people put forward for carrying a knife is that they fear being attacked or threatened. How are you addressing that fear as part of the overall strategy for targeting knife crime?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

ACC McCausland is head of our knife crime initiatives.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Thank you Chief Constable. As Board Members will be aware, we gave an extensive presentation to the Board earlier this month and again, one of the key issues that we are approaching in relation to tackling the fear and the issue of knife crime is, that knife crime is a multi agency approach. As the Board will be aware, we have almost 50 officers trained now to particularly go into schools and provide our education package in relation to young people to encourage them not to carry knives in the first instance and that goes hand in hand with what the Board has already heard here today of our Citizen and Safety Education Programme.

There are almost 151,000 primary pupils in the education system in Northern Ireland, to date we have in the last 3 weeks of the summer term, presented our presentation to 4,000 primary school pupils and we have actively restarted that presentation, with the education authorities, right across Northern Ireland. We are trying to encourage with that presentation and with the education package, an awareness of the dangers has already been highlighted of actually carrying or facing somewhere armed with a knife. Board Members are aware, and this Board has supported actively our advertisement campaign which has been aimed at 11 to 18 year olds. We are going back to readdress that process come November 2006 where we will be focusing particularly on parents and encouraging parents when we relaunch our Disposal Policy for 3 weeks where people can dispose of knives.

You have already heard comment about the issues of attempting to deal with anti social behaviour and many of the features that you heard discussed then are relevant to this

knife campaign. Particularly pastoral care provided by authorities in schools, information on bullying and the issues of offences of bullying and to discourage people from bullying because in reality, we want to tackle the underlying features that cause people to carry knives. Now in effect, the police have a part to play in this but so has the education authorities so has the whole community. It cannot just be done by us alone and that is why we are putting the emphasis on our side in terms of issues such as our 'Your Zone' website where we are encouraging young people to look at and be aware of the dangers of carrying knives and what in effect can happen to them.

Obviously our Youth Diversion Scheme very much pushes the emphasis towards a restorative process to take young people out of the criminal justice system if they are found with knives, for example, just recently we had in Superintendent Nolan's district of Dungannon where a young person was actually apprehended in a school with 2 knives. We also have established Youth Independent Advisory Groups which are in the process of being formed and they are in effect to allow the young people to help or work with us in terms of schemes that they feel we should undertake with the education authorities and with other multi agency groups to prevent and address this issue of the fear of crime, particularly among the young.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to the seriousness of people trafficking in Northern Ireland, question 23 Willie Hay.

Mr Willie Hay:

Can the Chief Constable update the Board on the seriousness of people trafficking in Northern Ireland and just to add to that Chairman, can the Chief Constable indicate to us, is it organised criminal gangs that are behind the trafficking or is there any paramilitary issues relating to people trafficking in Northern Ireland?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Maybe Chairman if I could widen it out slightly, and then I will answer the question directly about Northern Ireland, but just to say something about the United Kingdom first of all in general. There is a perception sometimes when we are talking about human trafficking that we are only talking about sexual exploitation but it is also important to remember that it also involves trafficking people for labour exploitation, trafficking of

children and trafficking with respect to donation of organs. We know that the United Kingdom is a prime destination for victims; the majority of victims come from Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Far East, China and Thailand and recently there has been a growth in victims of trafficking into prostitution originating from within the EU, and in particular from Lithuania and West Africa, and notably Nigeria. The majority of people that the police come across who are trafficked are vulnerable women. By and large they have been deceived into coming into the United Kingdom with promises of a better life and once they get here, they are frightened to co-operate with authorities, they are put into debt by these people and are told that if they go to the police, then their families will suffer, there will be ramifications for them and their families, and indeed rape is used as a punishment against particularly young girls who disobey them.

Operation Pentameter which was a United Kingdom wide operation which the PSNI was part of, was probably the law enforcement's biggest response to people trafficking in the United Kingdom and out of the 84 people who were rescued, about 25 of them were from European countries. One or two were from emerging European countries, but the vast majority were from member states or people within the EU. On the 3rd of this month, earlier this week, the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre opened in England, London, and it is a police led Multi Agency Unit to direct research into training and intelligence gathering to combat human trafficking in the UK and to play a role in co-ordinating police forces activities across the country. The new Unit will have a wider remit than that that Operation Pentameter had and it will not only be focusing on trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation but as I said for domestic servitude, forced labour, child trafficking.

As far as Northern Ireland is concerned, there is no evidence of large scale people smuggling operations in Northern Ireland, nor I am aware of paramilitary involvement in people trafficking. There is however, evidence of Northern Ireland being used as a transit route between here and the Republic of Ireland and between here and the rest of the United Kingdom. It is a pressing issue in Northern Ireland and I do have some concerns that in terms of, particularly in the sex trade in Northern Ireland, that it will be fuelled by human trafficking. It is interesting to note that the year 2007 is the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery and what we are seeing in human trafficking, right across Europe, is actually 21st century slavery again.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to the work of the Historical Enquiries Team (HET), question 19 Mr Attwood.

Mr Alex Attwood:

Just before I come to that Chairman, there was a question I asked the Chief Constable at the last public session, so I think it is reasonable to raise it at this public session and namely issues around the withdrawal of charges in a high profile case at that time

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Can you leave that question to the end? If you stick to the HET question and then I will take your question at the end.

Mr Alex Attwood:

As long as the Chief Constable is on notice that I am going to be asking this question again at the end of the session.

There has been some comment, Chief Constable, in recent times, some of the comment I think is ill informed in relation to lost files arising from the work around the HET. So I think in order to have public confidence, it is important that you indicate what is the situation in respect of the files, the 3000 and more cases that are to be referred to the HET, and to be upfront about what files which may have been destroyed, because of the activities of illegal organisations or files that have been lost through other reasons, or files that at the moment, the whereabouts cannot be identified. Because given that the HET is such an important initiative and the way things are going at the moment, and you may want to comment upon this Chief Constable, one of the few initiatives in dealing with the recovery of the truth of the past, because the British Government refuses to face up to this issue. You may want to comment about the state of the files and you may want to comment also about the state of truth recovery given that we are facing St Andrews next week.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will deal with Historical Enquiry Team question first and an update on the work and then the issues around the missing files. Members will be aware that the team is in place and 150 people are fully employed looking at these historic cases. The 3268

cases during the times of the Troubles and of those, 2516 of ones undertaken by the Historical Enquiry Team. It is quite interesting to note that a total list of victims did not even exist when that work began so a substantial piece of work to actually scope the level of the problem.

Currently there are 280 cases underway, 284 families have been contacted. The Historical Enquiry Team is currently engaged in 137 of those and in terms of resolution, we are currently working on 40 cases at the final stages of the reinvestigation process, so we are now seeing some cases come out at the far end. Members will be aware that independence is key to part of this investigation and one of the two enquiry teams is made up of officers who have no experience or history of policing in Northern Ireland.

In terms of the files, well the very first thing the HET had to do was try and recover as much information as it possibly could. That was, it would be fair to say, a significant exercise undertaken at considerable expense and led to a physical searching of every single police property in Northern Ireland to recover anything we possibly could that was in relation to these old enquiries. It is right to recognise that procedures in the past were different, there were no computers. Methods of recording data were somewhat more limited than they are now and strange as it may seem to us now, in the days before computers, cataloguing central archives, it was not uncommon practice for files to move with a police officer as he or she went around a different post in Northern Ireland, the files tended to go with them. So in terms of audit trails, a huge effort has been put in, and of course all of this was going on at a time when there was unprecedented demand in terms of major crime enquiries.

By way of example, in 1972 there was 10,631 shootings, 1853 devices were used, 470 people were killed and that included 17 police and 131 soldiers and almost 5000 people were injured, that is just one year as a snapshot. Now figures for the so called missing files in the media are now well out of date and they represent a snapshot in time. The Enquiry Team does not give up if they cannot find a file, but it is certainly fair to say, we have certainly not recovered everything we had hoped to recover through the search we have undertaken. We do not just search police stations, we have also look at the Forensic Services records, public records, inquests, courts and open source, including media archives to try and pull together whatever we can from each case, so it is not just the file. As a result of that, we have found some relevant documentation for nearly

every single case and police documentation for over 92% of the 3268 cases. Now given the passage of time, that I do not think is a bad result. It obviously could be better. Every family we engage with will be told exactly what we have recovered and what we think is missing. In terms of storage, I think we now have, and Members would be most welcome to visit it, a secure central store at one of our sites which is completely independent of any investigative team, substantial auditing for anyone entering and exiting. Material is not allowed to be removed without authority of a Chief Inspector and we have I think now, at least secured whatever we are going to get. That was a huge task.

In addition to the written records, we have over 3500 exhibits and there are a further 3500 exhibits with the Forensic Services for Northern Ireland. In terms of back record conversion, we have converted 70,000 palm prints recovered during the times of the Troubles onto a computerised system, so that we can search against them should we get any other forensic opportunities and 30,000 marked relevant scenes are now all collated. So that is where we are. In terms of individual cases, there is no sort of trend that suggests only certain cases that files are missing from, I think the reality is that the stuff is just missing. Now within that, was some stuff destroyed? Yes, I am sure it was. We have had examples of where officers would take stuff home with them. Officers have since died and that stuff is probably lost for ever. I know in one case, my previous example that that officer on retirement did destroy an awful lot of material that he had in his possession before he retired and I am sure he was not alone in that.

I guess the important point for me is, whatever happened in the media, the reality is that there are over 3,000 families out there who as a result of the Historical Enquiry Team will get more information than they had historically on what happened. That does not mean we will give them a judicial conclusion, and I think it is very much we will judge our success by what the families think of how we did. But it is at best and you did make the point at the beginning, it is a best effort focused on families to deliver something. There is nothing else currently to my knowledge being driven through Government which was, quite frankly, my hope at the beginning was this would deal a part of the history. It was never designed to be the fix of all of history and I think I saw this as our contribution and I was hopeful that a wider solution or a range of opportunities would be available to people that did not have confidence for whatever reason in what we were doing. That has yet to come to pass.

Mr Alex Attwood.

Thank you Chair. But do you not think, Chief Constable, that given that you thought this would be part of the truth recovery process, that the police are now left swinging out there, because of the failure of the British Government to respond to the need for some wider truth recovery mechanism whereby anybody and everybody can be called to account for what they did.

Secondly, could I just welcome, and I think it is important to welcome the fact that the Chief Constable has said that the families will be told exactly what the police do or do not have and whilst it is disappointing that maybe up to 300 murder files may not be recovered in any shape or form, nonetheless, the fact that families will be told exactly what the police do or do not have, is another step in building some level of confidence with those families who engage with the HET.

Sir Hugh Orde, Chief Constable

In terms of am I left swinging? We are doing our bit. It is the bit I can control. It is the bit that in fairness the Government funded us for and it was substantial funding, and we have been determined to do it from the word go. I do think if we are going to move policing on, we need to deal with the past once and for all and whatever success means to people will be different. I am absolutely clear that the Historical Enquiry Team will not be the solution for some families, I accept that fully which is why I was hopeful that there would be a range of options available to people who could actually look at other ways of dealing with this. It may have been us, it may be truth recovery, it may be story telling, it may be all sorts of things, I do not know. I am certainly not the expert on this, but at the moment we are committed to delivering this, we are committed to continuing with this process, we are committed to seek out whatever documents we can find and we may find some more over time but that is probably as far I should comment.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Whilst acknowledging Chief Constable that families and victims have to have a priority here, I think there are also some public interest priorities. Are you able to comment on

a report that a Member of Parliament is implicated in an investigation of the murder of Hasslet and Cunningham, two police constables who were murdered in the early 1970s. Do you accept that if that is the case, it is in the public interest that that detail is released to the public?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Well that particular case and those of Hasslet and Cunningham is a matter for the Historical Enquiry Team. There is much speculation in the media. It is an ongoing investigation. If there is something that I think I could take to a judicial conclusion, as I have said with absolute clarity, we will take that to a judicial conclusion regardless of who the individual is. The individual is not the point, if we have evidence we will take it to the Director with a view to prosecution.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

The fact that perhaps a Member of Parliament is implicated in that, is it in the public interest that the public knows that a Member of Parliament is being investigated given their public profile and public role?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

At the stage of investigation where I am comfortable if that is the case, if it needs to be said, it will be said.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Can I take you to a comment in the report published yesterday of the IMC, Chief Constable. It states, we believe, that is the IMC that the leadership of PIRA does not consider a return to terrorism as in any way a viable option and that it continues to direct its members not to engage in criminal activity. Do you concur with that assessment?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

We concur broadly with the whole report from the IMC and we are of course engaged with IMC prior to it making the report public yesterday. In broad terms yes, I do not see Provisional IRA or have no evidence as to suggest that they have any intention of going back to an armed struggle in any way, shape or form. In terms of activities, the grey area as ever, will be activities undertaken by people who are members of the

Provisional IRA which we would class as criminal and the question is always was that for the organisation or was that for the individual. But in broad terms, I accept what the IMC has said.

Mr Willie Hay:

Just to follow up on that. There was great speak made as opposed to the assets that the republican movement had gathered over the years from whatever source. I know Michael McDowell in the South of Ireland raised this issue a number of months ago and all of a sudden for whatever reason, it is now taken off the radar screen and I am just wondering why from your own security opinions, why that should have happened because that huge resource must be there somewhere and how that is going to be dealt with?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Sheridan to deal with current operations. In broad terms, over the last 35 years or so, much money that was illegitimate over that period of time will have become legitimate in a way that to try and go back and retrace it would be simply impossible and unachievable, but in terms of current operations, any intelligence we get we certainly drive into the Assets Recovery Agency and we certainly do operations on them and I will ask ACC Sheridan to cover the detail.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Just to reassure Members that where there is information and we will continue to follow through whether that is going back 10 or 15 years that our Economic Crime Unit, along with the Assets Recovery and along with Criminal Assets Bureau in the South, will continue to follow any opportunities around money laundering.

Mr Alex Attwood:

Given that there is some good work going on in respect of the leadership of respective loyalists organisations, much more on the UVF's side and the UDA, I think the public will have been a little taken aback by the rigour of the IMC comments in respect of continued terrorist and criminal activity by the UDA and the UVF. I think it would be useful if you could put some character around all of that.

Secondly, you said that you agreed with the broad thrust of what the IMC said in respect of the IRA, a report that was, in my view, justifiably positive but just to confirm that you agree both with the assessment and with the details outlined in the IMC report in respect of where the IRA currently reside.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I accept fully that they are going in the right direction. I think a debate maybe around that sort of area of how much crime, are they still committing crime on behalf of the organisation, are they committing crime of themselves, now I think the trend is unstoppable. I do not think everyone is particularly happy the way they are going, so I do expect there will be some kickback at some stage, but in broad terms I am more than happy with where they are going. In terms of the loyalists, ACC Sheridan if you just want to touch on that side of business.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

The answer is broadly the same. The UVF and UDA are some years back. The UVF is probably further forward down this road of turning into a community based organisation than the UDA is. But it is clear that there are people in both organisations at the leadership level who want to try and move the organisation in a different direction, but it is also absolutely clear there are people in the organisation still involved in extortion and drugs and in all of the things that were suggested in the IMC report. I think they are in a position that PIRA were in some years ago and they are on that road, but by no means anywhere near the finishing track yet.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Ian Paisley Jnr, supplementary.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

I must say I appreciate the candour, Chief Constable that you have given on this. I think that the Police Board and the public would have expected more of a build up to the report that landed on our desks yesterday in terms of the issue of crime. This grey area of measuring of how much involvement the Provisionals and their leadership has in directing crime and I think that there is still considerable work to be done there and there is still considerable distance by republicans to travel away from crime, where they have, what has been euphemistically been referred to as their clean bill of health. But

could you perhaps comment on the issue. What does it look like to have a republican organisation supporting the police. For your officers, for your Command Team on a day to day basis, what does it look like to have republicans supporting the police, because that is essentially the rubicon that has to be crossed here. The no going back mark and in terms of statements that have to be made by people, in terms of associations and assistance given, in terms of evidence delivered to the police, in terms of even stopping to use the proceeds of crime that they have gained through years of criminality, what does it actually look like in real terms for you to put your hand on your heart and say “these people have changed, they have switched it off, they are now supporting this organisation”. What has to happen?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

The notion that all republicans do not support policing, that is a flawed one. We know we get support. My officers get support on a daily basis from people, many of whom do not feel able to say some of the stuff publicly but certainly do engage in policing. But I have been boringly consistent on this. Sinn Fein need to join the Policing Board. Nothing else is good enough in my judgement. That is the first stage I think, and they need to engage fully with the processes of the Board and hold me to account, as the Chairman said at the beginning through the processes of the Board, which in my judgement are pretty effective. I also think they have got to send a very clear message out to engage in policing at every single level. My officers have a right to be supported at the front end because what we are trying to do is protect those communities. I do think the more people that engage with us, the more opportunities we have to show that we are determined to protect them and then it is up to us if we are given that opportunity to do the very best we can, because that is how you build confidence over time. Other things will happen as a consequence of that and I think that will be around an issue where we may see an increase in crime, as people feel more willing to tell us stuff, but are yet to move down that track and actually engage with us on how we solve it, but that is fine. I can live with that. It is as simple as that. I think if we had Sinn Fein on the Policing Board, we had a willingness to engage or an expression that it is okay to engage with policing publicly, I think we will move on hugely. I think it would be a really good thing.

Professor Sir Desmond Rea, Chairman

In the content of this discussion Mr Paisley, would you ask your question 24.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

It does refer back to your earlier reports and I must say I think that the emphasis that was put on earlier reports was very positive and be very persuasive. But a lot of people do not live in a comparative world when it comes to crime. They live in a relative world. on average 97 crimes are committed in Northern Ireland each day, what percentage can be attributed to paramilitary organisations or to members of paramilitary groups?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Sheridan to deal with that but as we pointed out at the beginning that is violent crime, if you look at all crime we are talking about 330 a day.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

As the Chief Constable says, there are about 338 recorded crimes a day in the province. We do not collate crime figures or attribute crime figures in that way and I will give you an explanation why. I think it is important you understand why. If there is someone involved in a road traffic collision, involved in dangerous driving causing death and we happen to know or suspected that person was a member of a paramilitary organisation, would we record that as a crime involving a paramilitary organisation or would you record it as a road traffic accident or road traffic collision. So it becomes very difficult to try and define to collate details in that way. The way they are currently collated is that from 1 January 2006 up to 31 August 2006 there was just over 82,000 crimes in Northern Ireland and out of that 23,000 odd were classified as violent crimes. When we break those down into crime involving paramilitaries, 95 of those crime incidents involve paramilitaries, that was 66 paramilitary style attacks, 10 bombing incidents and 19 shooting incidents. So in total in the way we record paramilitary activity, as a percentage of the total of crime in Northern Ireland, paramilitary crime was recorded about 0.08%.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

What you are really saying to us is that is actually not an accurate reflection, paramilitary involvement in crime or direction of crime.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

It is accurate in terms of where violent crime is concerned. It becomes very difficult to try and collate details or attribute details in any other way; it is just not possible to do it in that way.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to protecting the public from high risk sex offenders, question 22 Mrs McCabe.

Mrs Pauline McCabe:

Following the restrictions imposed by Larne Magistrates Court on a high risk sex offender, could the Chief Constable explain the scope and range of restrictions that can be applied for under the Sexual Crimes Prevention Order and explain how these help to protect the public from high risk sex offenders living in the community and Bail Hostels which is obviously hugely topical at the moment, not least is evidenced by the demonstrations yesterday.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Drew Harris:

Chairman, the Sexual Offences Prevention Orders is a legislative tool which comes from the Sexual Offences Act 2003. It applies to a qualifying offender and that is someone who has a sex conviction and there is a long list of sexual offences for which it can be taken out on. The only one really it does not include is indecent exposure, but all other sexual offences including trafficking, images and all sorts of sexual assaults are included.

A SOPO is taken out if it is necessary to protect the public or any individual from serious sexual harm and the decision making process flows through the MASRAM process and that is the process by which we deal with registered sex offenders. What we would look at is the likelihood of an offence being committed, the imminence of the risk, how approximate it is to an attack and the seriousness of the harm to be taken out. The examples that we have at the moment just to give an idea of what is being asked for and granted, one offender is not allowed to leave the boundaries of his home town without the prior permission of the local police superintendent. One offender is prohibited from entering a county where his previous victim resides. Another offender is prohibited from fishing as police suspected he may use this activity for grooming and

one offender is prohibited from forming relationships with women without verified disclosure to them of his previous serious sex offending. So it is around restricting activity, we cannot compel activity such as reporting at a police station but we can restrict behaviour and activity, it is all about managing individual risk that specific sex offenders pose.

This year we have applied for 23 SOPOs and those have been granted. The courts have supported us in this. It is a Civil Order although we find in our experiences that they are bitterly contested. They run for a minimum of 5 years, there is no upper limit on the length of a SOPO and if they are breached, at the Magistrates Court, it can carry a maximum of 6 months imprisonment, at the Crown Court a maximum of 5 years imprisonment and we have no cases of a SOPO being breached as of yet within Northern Ireland. So it is a very useful tool, it is one of the legislative tools we have for managing the risk of sex offenders and we apply it where appropriate to protect the public from specific risks posed by a sex offender.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 12 relating to the future of the Police College, Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Chief Constable, can you comment on the future of the Police College, will it in your view be built in Cookstown?

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Well the Chairman has already made the Board's views clear at the very beginning and we are at one with the Board on this as we made the decision jointly. Yes it will be built at Cookstown. Desertcreat is the only site under consideration, it was selected after a rigorous process which included targeting social need and a full equality impact assessment. It would be very difficult to move away from that process now as it was an open process for the whole province, so yes it will be built at Desertcreat.

The current position is that we, as the Vice Chairman has already outlined, there is insufficient money on the table for us to build the college that we want. We are looking at various options, the Strategic Investment Board are now involved in looking at other public sector estates and they have 2 consultants or experts over from England at the

minute looking at our Outline Business Case to see if it is still valid. As time moves on of course, even we realise our Outline Business Case needs to change but we are confident that there will be a college at Desertcreat.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

With reference to the Oversight Commissioner's recent report, question about local accountability, question 14 Mr Alex Attwood.

Mr Alex Attwood:

Just a quick follow up on the last question Chief Constable. Do you not think that it is about time that the British Government concluded this matter and that given that maybe or maybe not other matters are going to be concluded in the next week or two that this issue needs to be resolved once and for all in the next week or two. Secondly, not to bring you into the political world, might it help if the Irish Government and the Irish Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern by way of donation or by way of gifts or by some other means were to contribute to the funding of a police college in Cookstown, is that not one way to get this over the line.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

We will take money from anyone. I think if Lord Patten was to come back to look at where we are with this, he would be disappointed not to see the college. When I arrived here and unsurprisingly having researched the Patten report quite considerably, it struck me as one of the things that should have been right at the beginning because it is obviously the long term, big build, big cost thing is sadly one of the last. It does not mean we are not determined to build it, the Deputy Chief Constable has done an outstanding job with the Board to get to where we are. It is frustrating that we are so near yet so far and probably the motivation for your question Mr Attwood is, I did say I was not leaving until it was built and this maybe an area of concern you have, so I may be here for another 5 years yet.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 26 relating to police motorcycles, Mr Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Chief Constable, I understand that there are 42 police motorcycles in the police driving pool that are not being used. Can you comment on that and tell us, if these Honda bikes will ever be used or will you be looking at alternative vehicles.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

There are 27 Honda motorcycles that are currently not being used after a speed wobble was detected in one of these bikes. We have undergone extensive testing with Honda, we do not take any risks obviously with our motor cyclists. Honda have been across, they have done a complete check with each one of the 27 motorcycles, no faults were found in any one of the 27 motorcycles. This is a national problem for all police services using the SD1300 Honda. Honda are working with that code to try and produce guidelines for the use of the bikes and we hope they will be out on the road again very soon, we will abide by the ACPO guidance. The good thing to say is, that by using older their bikes and by keeping bikes in service longer we have not have to cancel any operations which involve motor bikes.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Attwood, I said I would come back to your question, this is the last question.

Mr Alex Attwood:

It is arising from the last meeting Chief Constable, at the public session, where I asked you a question about whether essentially you and the Public Prosecution Service, agreed with the withdrawal of charges in respect of a high profile prosecution and the importance of this obviously is, that when charges get withdrawn then that can have an impact upon public confidence in the administration of justice. At that stage, you said in respect of that high profile prosecution that had just been withdrawn, that you had asked with a meeting of the Deputy Director of the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), that he was more than willing to have that meeting, and that you would be able to answer the question after you have had that meeting. Have you had the meeting and what is the answer to the question whether or not you and the PPS are on the same page when it comes to the dropping of charges in respect of that high profile prosecution?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I have had a meeting with the Director of Public Prosecution on it with my senior investigating officer to talk through what were the issues that caused them concern and caused them to withdraw and there are a number. That does not mean I am not at one with the final outcome but that is fine, we present our case and the Director makes the decision and stands over that decision and it would be fair to say and I am still somewhat limited on what I can say because there are still matters outstanding in relation to other charges so that makes it a bit more difficult. I think the big learning is, it is very important to engage early to get pre-prosecutorial advice. I know it is something that is routine in the rest of the United Kingdom and becoming more routine here, so my investigating officers can ring and seek advice before we charge. I think we also need to look at cases where, if we think they are very complicated the value of charging against value of reporting. So where a case is likely to be a difficult one and it is appropriate to report rather than prosecute, it does give other people more time to consider the evidence, but on this particular case I think it would be fair to say that we agreed to differ.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could I say thank you everybody, that concludes the session.