

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE 35th MEETING IN PUBLIC OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2005 AT 2:00 PM IN GALGORM MANOR HOTEL, BALLYMENA

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Mr Denis Bradley (Vice-Chairman)
Mr Alex Attwood
Viscount Brookeborough
Mr Joe Byrne
Mr Fred Cobain
Mr Brian Dougherty
Mr Sam Foster
Mr Barry Gilligan
Mr William Hay
Mrs Pauline McCabe
Mr Alan McFarland
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
Mr Suneil Sharma
Mr Sammy Wilson

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

Sir Hugh Orde, (Chief Constable)
Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief
Constable)
Mrs Judith Gillespie (ACC Criminal
Justice)
Mr Sam Kinkaid (ACC Crime Operations)
Mr Duncan McCausland (ACC Urban
Region)
Mr Peter Sheridan (ACC Rural Region)
Mr Joe Stewart (Director of Human
Resources)
Ms Sinead McSweeney (Head of Media)
DCU Commander, Ballymena
Chief Inspector, Command Secretariat

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
Mr Peter Holt (Director of
Communications)
Mr David Jackson (Director of
Community Affairs)
Mr Sam Hagen, (Director of Corporate
Services)
Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
Mrs Sinead Simpson (Director of Policy)
3 Board Officials

Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Mr Kelly, Mr McGrady and Mrs Moore.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Welcome to the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

The Board is delighted to be here today and in particular we welcome the members of DPPs within the area. Before we get down to business, I would like to say a few words about the Board's work, the work of the PSNI and the events over the summer.

The role of the Board is first, to support the police towards the ends of effective and efficient policing and secondly, through the Chief Constable, hold the PSNI to account for the delivery of effective and efficient policing. This Board recognises the difficult and demanding tasks which the Chief Constable and his officers have to carry out in our society and would express appreciation for all that is being done on our behalf. Having said that, the performance of the PSNI has been the subject of some comment and criticism in recent days. Through today's meeting and the questions to be put by Members, the Board will hold, through the Chief Constable, the PSNI to account at this meeting today.

This Board and its Members are increasingly alarmed by the summer's catalogue of sectarian attacks within our communities and not far from here today, in Ballymena

and Ahoghill, we have witnessed such attacks against people and against property. In the rest of Northern Ireland, attacks have been directed at Catholics and at Protestants. People and property have been attacked, paint bombs, blast bombs, petrol bombs, stones, indeed it is a miracle that death or serious injury has not occurred. This onslaught must not be allowed to continue. Condemnations from all sides are to be welcomed, but words must be followed through with commitment within communities to work, to promote understanding and respect for all shades of opinion, with secondly, a commitment to work with the police.

This society has also witnessed murders and a number of other very serious incidents which are to be totalled abhorred. The murder of North Belfast school boy Thomas Devlin springs to mind. Murders also from the loyalist feud and the rape in West Belfast of a young girl. Over the summer, we also witnessed violence directed by paramilitaries, including the loyalist feud. This cannot be tolerated and in addition to ensuring that the Chief Constable meets his responsibilities in bringing those who carry out such attacks to justice, this Board would urge all those with influence in the communities to use their power to help stop the scourge of paramilitaries.

In August, Board Members received a briefing from the Chief Constable and his colleagues on the policing of the parades season. The agreements reached in the city of Derry / Londonderry provide learning for all. Whilst overall there were few disturbances, it is disappointing that the streets of Belfast witnessed such violent scenes resulting in the discharge of water cannon and of impact rounds. One hundred and eighty eight officers have been injured as a result of public order situation, some seriously. One hundred and eighty eight officers who should be dealing with crime and criminality. Respect for life, respect for each other, respect for diversity and culture and a desire to eradicate violence from all our communities must be fully embraced by everyone.

This Board's term of office was due to expire on 5 October 2005 and since our last meeting at the end of June, the Secretary of State has announced that he intends to roll forward existing membership for up to a 12 month period to maintain stability and continuity, while leaving the door open to early reconstitution. The Board has noted that decision and will be getting on with its important business.

In moving forward the policing agenda, the Board has been true to Patten and met the tasks set for it. Much progress has been made, both the PSNI and this Board has got on with the work of delivering effective and efficient policing.

Many members of the community are alarmed I know by recent speculation and negotiations on future membership requirements for police officers. Let me remind all of us, that Patten clearly states that people with serious criminal or terrorist backgrounds should not be considered for Police Service. In that context, as Chairman of the Board, I will be urging the Board's Sub-Group on Part-Time Policing to reach a conclusion and recommendations for the Board, sooner rather than later.

The 28 July 2005 statement from the leadership of the IRA ordered an end to the armed campaign and instructed all volunteers to assist the development of purely political and democratic programmes through exclusively peaceful means and that has to be welcomed. It is, however, to be regretted that Sinn Fein have still not addressed the issue of policing.

In conclusion, this Board will not allow progress, progress that has been made by the PSNI and the Board and the DPPs, we will not allow that to slip.

I now introduce the Chief Constable to make his remarks.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman. By way of opening remarks, we have a number of issues I would like to cover before we move to questions and, indeed, the Deputy Chief Constable has a short presentation on our Estates Strategy. But before that, one of the issues that has very much been at the forefront of our efforts, both at a local level and indeed at Crime Operations Group level, has been the issue of the attacks that you refer to, certainly in the area where we find ourselves today and my Superintendent Terry Shevlin is here to give a short update on the effort that the Police Service has put in to deal with those, but I think there are some wider issues that I would like to touch on first.

First of all, it is important I think that we place on record, our thanks to those members of the community, be they elected community representatives, members of churches, that have been working with us to deal with this issue, overtly and behind the scenes. In particular the condemnation that has been publicly voiced by Alderman Tommy Nichol and Councillor Declan O'Loan as well as other public figures, to ensure that this type of activity is brought to an end.

We are very much up for playing our role, we are very clear what our role is and we are determined to enforce the law and bring those responsible for this series of attacks to justice. I can update the Board, and no doubt Chief Superintendent Shevlin will touch on it, but it was only a couple of days ago that we charged someone with the attack on the school, that individual is 13 years old. I will update the Board shortly on another case in Lisburn, where the 2 people reported to the Director are 14 years old. As I mentioned at the private session of the Board, much of the disorder on the small number of parades where disorder occurred, the disorder was being perpetrated by people of a very young age. In other words, what we have been seeing this year is a trend across a number of events where police officers or communities are attacked, where very young people are engaging in criminal activity which I think makes it a problem that is far wider and far more complicated than a simple policing solution, which is why we welcome the support by those people who I have already mentioned and others who are trying to make this unacceptable behaviour within communities as well as a policing response. But, it may be useful if Superintendent Shevlin gives an update on what we have been doing.

Superintendent Terry Shevlin:

Chief Constable, thank you and Chair of the Policing Board and indeed welcome to Ballymena district. I am going to give a short presentation on the issues that we have been facing in Ballymena over the summer time and, in fact, back to March. There are slides which will assist in that and I will refer to the slides rather than notes.

The first slide gives the context for those visitors to Ballymena, if you have not been into the area where we are actually at and some geography very briefly. You can see Ballymena town and out towards the left of the map Ahoghill Village which

is about 5 miles away. We are sitting in Galgorm which is here. The next slide will show you slightly more detail of Ballymena town area and just giving you some idea of where some of the more significant incidents have been happening in terms of the local town area and you can see the centre of Ballymena and the Larne Road, where the pointer is indicating, Harryville Chapel, St Mary's School, at the roundabout at the Show Grounds, at the left is All Saints Church and then here is North Ballymena Dunclug area. St Louise School between the Cullybackey Road and the Ballymoney Road and those are just some geographical backgrounds to some of the incidents, as I say, Ahoghill 5 miles out the road.

The next slide will indicate from 1 March to 31 August of this year, these are the significant sectarian incidents. You will see at the bottom of the slide, that the statistics do not include minor incidents, and I mean by minor incidents, maybe name calling and other incidents that people perceive to be sectarian but not of the nature of the top slides. You can see quite patently we have had some very serious incidents from paint bombs and it shows you the perceived and indeed the actually religious breakdown of the victim – 7 Roman Catholic, 1 Protestant. Petrol bombs – 2 Roman Catholic, 2 Protestant, Criminal Damage – 9 Roman Catholic, 4 Protestant, Intimidation – 3 Roman Catholic, 4 Protestant, Sectarian Assaults – 2 Roman Catholic, 3 Protestant, Arson Attacks, which is not petrol bombs but using petrol or some other inflammable liquid to set fire to homes and so forth – 5 on Roman Catholic victims, 2 we are considering as attempted murders, the houses were occupied at the time and people had very narrow escapes. The total incidents then of significance during that period was 42 – 28 on Roman Catholic victims and 14 on Protestant victims. In the Ahoghill general areas you can see there were 15 attacks and incidents on Roman Catholics.

The next slide will indicate what were we doing about, what was the PSNI's response, right back in March when the first signs of sectarianism were starting to grip this year. 'Operation Striker' which the media were out with us last night, it seemed perhaps that this was a new initiative. We launched 'Operation Striker' on the 24 March of this year and that was dedicated local officers, anywhere between 4 and 6 on a nightly basis on high visibility patrolling in those areas where we have sectarian issues.

As well as that, the Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sheridan gave me on 25 occasions over the past 2 months, a tactical support group team at night time into the early hours in Ballymena to patrol, now that team comes on the strength on average of an Inspector, 4 Sergeants and about 20 Constables, so it equates to 625 officers additional in the Ballymena area over the past few months to tackle some of these problems. Additionally, we also put community beat officers who know the communities and are good at gathering community intelligence and information and we had 2 beat officers dedicated in Ahoghill during the hours of darkness. We also increased the strength of our community beat officers in North Ballymena in which we were suffering issues, from 4 to 10 to reflect the difficulties there. Covert operations were employed, technical options including police cameras and equipment, directed surveillance and that is under the regulation of Investigatory Powers Act which I have to authorise for that sort of surveillance.

The next slide continues, forensic examination detail of every incident and scene that we have had and indeed we have some items still in forensics to evaluate. Intelligence gathering, not only from police officers perspective but from community intelligence that we were using. Community consultation and partnership working, right from the word go there was a number of different people across the community, local councillors and politicians. community workers, clergy and others that have helped us along the way to try and do something about this. However, it is a very difficult thing and I have to say, in terms of civic leadership in Ballymena, there has been no ambivalence about condoning incidents. However, it is important that civic leadership is seen to be together in terms of the issues in Ballymena and sometimes the report in papers can set a tone for a community as well. It is just something I think we all need to work at in the future in terms of what actually we read in the papers and how that affects out on the streets.

Crime prevention and practical advice, obviously that was a standard type of issue, that when a person was victimised that they would get that advice, an informative media strategy so that people in the community knew what was going on and what we were facing. The use of CCTV cameras, including town centres CCTV and the new PSNI helicopter which we first used recently in the Ahoghill area and over Ballymena for some issues we have been having.

Have our tactics worked? Recently we have had a question from the press. You have brought extra resources last night but what about recently? From the 15 August until 30 August 2005, there was one significant attack on a Roman Catholic property in the Ahoghill area, a broken window. In that incident we arrested and have charged a person who is now in custody and arrested 4 other persons for that particular incident. We also had a paint bomb attack on a Protestant property in the North of Ballymena. So for a period of about 2 weeks prior to the recent primary school attacks, we have been free in a sense of sectarian attacks in the Ballymena area, I think that demonstrates not only the policing effort that has gone into it but the community effort that was about real impairment and sending a signal to people in Ballymena community that this sort of behaviour is just not tolerated by anyone, so there was a parade if you like but there was plenty of breathing space for others to work.

The total arrests, and we have been asked this question, we have had 11 arrests and that was updated this morning when we arrested a third person for an attack on St Louise Primary School, and that is a 15 year old so for that particular incident on St Louise, we have had a 13 year old charged and in custody and at the moment I have two 15 year old young male persons in custody being interviewed about that. Three persons have been charged with serious offences over this period, 2 of which are in custody, 2 currently on bail and 2 to be reported to the Public Prosecution Service.

The breakdown of the arrests, you can see one male person was charged for attempted intimidation of Brookvale Gardens, that is the initial Ahoghill incident when this kicked off in March past and early on we arrested and charged a person for that. Two males were also arrested for attempted murder on the petrol bombing at Laurel Park, unfortunately, they had to be released unconditionally and sometimes when the public hear that they ask 'what is going on'. But again, you have to realise we have evidential standards to present to the Public Prosecution Service and to the courts and if we have not got that, we cannot go with it, so it is important that as much assistance from the community to add to that is important. Also one male person charged and in custody for 4 accounts of criminal damage and that is the broken window that I have related to. Two females arrested in that

incident as well and then at the bottom of the slide, 2 arrests which is now 3 arrests for the St Louise incident.

Related issues this summer. This does not happen outside of context if you like, there are other issues that we have had to police and the community have had to grapple with in Ballymena over the summer time. Initially, earlier in the summer we have had tensions starting to creep in around loyalist parades. We have had very high tensions and I have used that word deliberately, high community tensions in relation to the announcement of Ballymena's first republican parade. There were, significantly, 18 sectarian incidents in the 4 weeks prior to that parade, in other words, when the parade was announced until it happened there was like an epicentre of sectarian reaction to that and that was significant for the community to handle.

The loyalist feud also visited Ballymena in terms of 3 serious explosive incidents, 2 on one particular dwelling and one in another in Ballymena, so the problems that have emanated in other parts have visited us on that, so we have had that to look after human life to try and protect in that sphere as well.

Public disorder visited us then as well on the 15 August 2005 in the Dunclug area where again there were scenes of devastation in terms of vehicles burnt and so forth and disorder in and around that. Disruption to the business of the District Policing Partnership, we have had that issue as well this summer to contend with and also one that has been with us for a while and maybe indicative of the nature of the young people that we are arresting. Loyalist and republican youths, the Night Time Economy in Ballymena on Friday and Saturday night, we have to have quite strong operations to ensure that young republicans and young loyalists do not meet, particularly if they have had drink on them because it can turn into quite serious types of assaults so there is an atmosphere in and around that as well. But normal policing continues and I think this is an important message for not only the citizens of Ballymena but the citizens of Northern Ireland in general. While all this goes on and we have to attend the very serious sectarian incidents, we also have other business to do.

In the last week from the 23 August 2005, this week in Ballymena, 2 persons were arrested for robbery at knife point, 2 persons arrested for a very serious arson attack at Ballymena Council with about £1/2m worth of damage, 4 persons arrested for drugs offences, 2 youths arrested for assault and actual bodily harm, an arrest for an aggravated assault, GBH and aggravated domestic burglary and so forth and there is a 'but'.

At the moment and as you saw last night in the media we have had high visibility reassurance policing on Roman Catholic properties, this is very important for me as a District Commander to do at this moment in time, to actually to be seen very visible and very static at properties and so forth because of the community impact. Albeit we saw a period of 2 weeks where nothing was happening but an attack on a primary school hits at the core of local society. It is an attack on all schools, it is an attack on all people so therefore, we must demonstrate and demonstrate very visibly that we are going to do something about in terms of proactive policing.

But there is a complexity to this situation that perhaps you have grasped. With the issues going on in the background and also the opportunities for all good people in the Borough to galvanise together their goodwill and actually do tangible things as well to support policing. We will be doing our very best as we have demonstrated. If you ask me have we done enough or are we satisfied? I am never satisfied unless we catch all the perpetrators, but we have to act within the law and use all the tools and techniques that are available to us within the law and we will do that. Thank you.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Chief Constable, you go to your report now.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Hopefully what that does, is reassures members of the community who are here and the wider community that this is the level of commitment we are placing, not just in Ballymena, but in other places where this is identified. I think this is important to note, that whilst press interest has been fairly recent, this was identified by police officers and local communities way back in March and these

operations have been running since March, this is not some 'flash in the pan' this is a dedicated and determined police response over a substantial period of time.

In relation to a number of matters I will touch on. Just to update you on the parades situation. As you are aware, we have over 3,000 parades per year to police, so far between the 1 April and 29 August this year we have had 2,165 parades, the vast majority of those passing off peacefully and many with minimal policing. So far there has been disorder at 17 and some of that has been of a very minor nature and some as has been seen by Members here as far more substantial and far more worrying.

In terms of the legal versus illegal parades, there has been one illegal parade this year. In terms of determinations, 36 parades have been re-routed, 52 parades had conditions imposed by the Parades Commission and I said 17 had disorder, so whilst we are very mindful of the recurring problems and the themes which seem to be persistent year on year, despite the efforts by us to minimise the impact, there is a lot of positive information that suggests most of the parades go off peacefully and do not cause huge difficulties. I am very mindful that that has only been achieved through substantial work, not just by police officers but certainly by community members, councillors, elected representatives working behind the scenes to secure local agreements. I think we have proved beyond doubt, that it is good to talk in these situations so agreement and respect for everyone's rights can be achieved.

In terms of the Organised Crime Squad, it is important to note that on the 18 August 2005 we arrested 2 people, this is for criminal activity but it is also part of our disruptive strategy on the loyalist feud, they have been charged with extortion, blackmail, membership of the UVF and possession of firearms, so where we can we are arresting people for substantial criminal offences.

The Financial Investigation Unit has since the last Policing Board meeting put restraint on a further £400,000 as a result of a drugs operation. In terms of cocaine seizures, we have seized cash of over £59,000 as a result of the Drugs Squad and Financial Investigation Unit operation. We have certificates from Antrim Crown Court to realise assets of £47,000 and convicted drug dealers we

have seized a further £42,000 and restraint on an LVF member, again another tactic for dealing with the feud, a Restraint Order for £350,000 which we say are proceeds of crime, so again I think it shows we are using all the tactics available to us to deal with issues slightly wider than just the simple criminal activity.

Colleagues and members of the public may have seen the news coverage last night on probably one of the most substantial PSNI drugs operations in history frankly. One man, Colin Lees was sentenced to 25 years in prison at Liverpool Crown Court, that was a Police Service of Northern Ireland operation in conjunction with colleagues from other Forces across the United Kingdom. We seized £36m of amphetamine and ecstasy, now much of those drugs we believe were destined for markets in Northern Ireland and in wider Great Britain but it shows again our commitment to dealing with drugs in a very organised way. That was a massive operation from a policing perspective point of view.

More recently on the 11 August 2005, we raided premises in Kingsland Park, East Belfast where we recovered nearly £60,000 in cash and 49 kilograms of amphetamines and 156 kilograms of cannabis was seized. As a result of further searches, another 6 vehicles were seized, those searches span Northern Ireland and indeed areas in Great Manchester where we work with colleagues from Greater Manchester.

At a local level, I think it is important to look at the range of activities that have been undertaken by our District Commanders, bearing in mind the comments made by Superintendent Shevlin around cross community activity.

Newtownabbey held an initiative that was driven by the sector officers to hold a cross community football day working with contacts in Liverpool Football Club which has been deemed hugely successful and young people from across the divide spent a day receiving coaching from some of the best coaches in the country and it was well supported by both communities and I think that the comments that were made earlier by Superintendent Shevlin and myself around the age of some of the people engaged in this criminal activity, this sort of activity is vital if we are to achieve a longer term solution.

I can also report to Members in terms of Newry. An operation they have been running has reduced burglary this year by 15.6%.

I think very importantly because of the high profile nature of the case in terms of the media and the press, the recent rape case in Lisburn, 2 men are now charged with the following offences – armed robbery, false imprisonment, rape, indecent assault and grievous bodily harm as well as aiding and abetting rape in the case of the other individual. Now I think that case, whilst it was very high profile and rightly so, the police response was, in my judgement, very effective and professional and very rapid and the people charged, and it did engage an international investigation, people were charged within a matter of days for that offence and it shows how quickly and determined my officers were to bring those people to justice for that particularly appalling crime.

I did touch on the damage to St Patrick's Chapel in Lisburn and can report that 2 people were arrested. That was an investigation undertaken by a local Reserve Constable who put huge effort into viewing CCTV, follow-up enquiries, investigations, speaking to a number of people where people have been identified and charged with damage which comes to a sum of £2,000.

Chairman, I could go on but I will not as I am conscious of the time. I think the point I am trying to make is that officers across Northern Ireland are utterly determined to protect all communities at all levels, be it the more serious offences I have touched on or be it community initiatives that are aimed at achieving long term solutions to community issues and community problems which our officers so often find themselves in the middle of. Our commitment I think is unquestioned. I challenge, just as I know Mr Leighton my Deputy Chief Constable, who indeed was himself in Ahoghill during the height of this particular issue, we will continue to challenge our District Commanders to work very closely with communities and what we do ask for and we frequently receive, is huge support from community players, local councillors, people from the churches to achieve a far safer Northern Ireland, and if the question is asked 'is it working, is Northern Ireland a safer place to live'?

I did make a point on News Night last night but unfortunately they edited it out, Northern Ireland is one of the safer places in United Kingdom but as a result of the activities of our officers and people working with our officers, this year again crime is currently down by 4.1%. Burglary – domestic burglary one of the key issues that we get from every District Policing Partnership quite properly is down by 13.5%, vehicle crime is down by 26% and violent crime is down by 6%, I think that is a fair reflection, these are not just statistics as some commentators chose to make out, these are people who are not victims as a result of shared police and community activity. If it helps, before we go into the questions, DCC Leighton will give a short update on the Estates Strategy.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Chairman, you will be aware that at a previous Board meeting, Members requested a presentation on how we are doing things differently, how we are starting to do things differently with regard to estates and this presentation is designed simply to illustrate some of the small beginnings that we have in working in the community.

I thought I would start by reading some quotes about police stations which come from a public policy research document about re-inventing the police station. *“It is just a cop shop, their business is to bang people up, you do not go there unless you have to. I think they have designed it on purpose to be as impersonal as possible, it is not a friendly place. The community aspect is way down their list of priorities I would imagine. They are not particularly user friendly buildings, a lot of police stations are intimidating, I felt like I was being punished as well. Who goes into the foyer of a police station, very few people. Whatever message the police have has to be disseminated throughout the community. It is just a place really, who wants to have lunch outside a police station. Not the kind of place you want to go and sit down in, I definitely would not, I walk past it as fast as I can”.*

Now the interesting thing for me is, those are quotes not about our police stations in Northern Ireland but English police stations. Bear in mind that our estate is a lot older than most English estates and we come from the legacy of troubles and fortification that we all know about and that we are trying to tackle under Patten 53.

So set in that context what do we need to do? We need to be more accessible to the public, we need to make our police stations more accessible and we need to reach out. What I have done is run through some small examples of where we have started to do this. Hopefully, you had a chance earlier to look at the mobile station which was parked outside, unfortunately it has had to go now but that mobile police station is actually a model for what we are using in the future and several have been commissioned by different DCUs around the province. It has already been used in West Belfast.

On 17-19 May 2005 we mounted an anti-vehicle crime initiative at the Royal Victoria Hospital. It was well visited both by staff and by visitors to the hospital and the officers there were well received and said that their message got across to a lot of people, they were very interested. It also went to a community football festival in West Belfast at the request of the organisers, and it did a burglary and car crime initiative in one of the local estates.

In Armagh, we have a Constable who is working out of a 'drop in' shop, principally related to domestic violence but who has formed relationships with the Citizens Advice Bureau and Women's Aid through that work.

In Newtownards, we are regularly using Council property, it is actually a Health Centre in Ballywalter to mount surgeries and that is planned to extend to another village outside Newtownards in the near future.

In Ballymena where we are, a police surgery in Ballykeel Community House has proven very popular. It is run every Thursday, except during the summer when it can only be manned once a month, but it is manned with NIHE and also with CAB and the DHSS, so several people involved there, a very popular initiative.

In Castlereagh, we have had joint surgeries in NIHE and Council properties at local community centres. We are working to try and get inside a primary school and work from a primary school where an officer will be based there and use that as the community focus from which to work and patrol.

In Coleraine, we have an officer working from a Family Centre. It started out in the Family Centre and it has now moved to Council premises. This is a tremendous initiative, it is very very welcomed by the females on the estate where there is a high incident of domestic violence, and the officer in the first week he was there, cleared 13 criminal damages so it definitely is improving the flow of information.

In North Down, police officers are to be based in participating secondary level schools. We have 6 schools who are participating with us in this. They will delivery a Citizen and Safety Education Programme in the schools, but they will also be there for parents and other people who are coming into the schools and we have police surgeries in 6 local Community Centres. The one in Rathgael has actually lead to worldwide connections with the Worldwide Women's Network in dealing with problems, not just of a local nature.

In Down, we used the mobile station, it is actually Newry and Mourne's mobile station but Down have used it very effectively and DPP members have been present when it has been used and have been very favourable in their comments.

In Larne, we have a police surgery in Craigyhill. This is in NIHE Housing Executive premises. The Citizens Advice people are also present along with NIHE staff and this has lead to quite an improvement in the quality of life for the people in the area, so much so, that Larne are now looking at another multi-agency site.

In Fermanagh, we have already commissioned another custom built mobile police station and that will be used throughout the county. We are looking also at communities around the county.

In South Belfast, we have regular police surgeries in Sandy Row and Ballynafeigh Community Centres and we have used the mobile police station in Belfast City Centre, in Boucher Road and in Finaghy and at the King's Hall for major events.

Now we recognise that these are small beginnings, but these and other initiatives are about working with the community and reaching out, making ourselves more accessible to the public. We realise we do not have all the answers but some of the things we are thinking about in the future, and we would welcome suggestions

from members of the audience or from anyone who can come forward to a DCU Commander with an idea as to how the police can become more accessible. We are thinking more about working in schools. This is happening in other parts of the country where police are using schools as bases to patrol local areas, they are not policing the schools but it means that they are available to the local community, they are not seen by the children as a confrontational figure, they are seen by the children as part of life and they actually become much more accepted and much more known to everyone in the community.

We are looking at police surgeries in shopping centres and in leisure centres. We have initiatives ongoing to improve the relationship between the police and leisure centre staff and shopping centre staff throughout the province and hopefully that will develop.

We are developing partnerships once the review of public administration is finished. Of course, the whole structure of Northern Ireland will probably change and we will have to look at that to see how we develop our estates and what property we look to share, because certainly that is a way forward for us. We are looking at the use of mobile phone text systems and other electronic systems to keep people informed of where crime is happening, when it is happening and what they can do to prevent themselves becoming victims of it.

We will look to the further development of Community Watch and Community Forum schemes. These are already existing in many parts of the province and we want to see them develop. Plenty of ideas, but we are keen to learn. We want to receive suggestions from Board Members, DPP members or members of the public, so if you have anything that you think might be a "goer", please let us know.

Chairman, that is just a brief overview of where we are at the moment.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

That was very helpful, thank you.

You did not say anything Chief Constable about performance against plan, but I know that Ian Paisley Jnr has a question against that.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Thank you Chairman and I echo the welcome that has already been given.

We have the Performance Summary Plan in front of us and I note the comments that the Chief Constable has made in terms of their major success against a drug dealer and a drug operation and that is, of course, is welcomed. Looking at the finer print of the report, there are still some worrying trends. As we note that rural crime is up yet the perception within the community is, that there is going to be a withdrawal of policing from the rural community with a number of police station closures. I also note from the performance summary, that the clearance rate for all crime and in particular, for violent crime is down, once again raising the spectre of the criticism that was made earlier in the year by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, that the police are becoming more and more a crime recording agency as opposed to a crime stopping agency and indeed, it also raises the criticism that was made by the person who you followed in the post, Mr Colin Cramphorn, who said that Northern Ireland will be like Sicily with self policing by Mafia type organisations. Now I think the community requires re-assurance and indeed, an indication from you that the manpower changes that are taking place and all the other changes that are taking place, are not at the detriment of being able to beat crime because the perception, more and more on the street, is that the police are less able to deal with the serious crime that we are witnessing and indeed with the complexity of crimes that we are witnessing and I hope that you are able to focus on that and indicate to us what effort the police can do. I appreciate the comments that have been made that there are efforts that the community must do, this is about a partnership. There are efforts that the politicians must do and their efforts that the general community must do also but today, if we could focus on the policing strategy to ensure that the next time you bring a performance summary to us, that it indicates that rural crime is actually being conquered.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I understand the statement. In terms of Sicily, the people who comment on policing in Northern Ireland from outside Northern Ireland cannot be expected to be fully informed on what we have just described to the Board which I think is, on record, hard facts across the place of what police officers are doing daily to protect

communities in Northern Ireland and I think, as I have said ad nauseam, we would far rather have less victims of crime than a higher clear up rate. You have to deal with it at both ends. You have to deal with clear up rates and we are very aware of where clear up rates are not as good as they should be, although last year, we did come in very close, in fact slightly above the national average on our overall clear up rate and in relation to violent crime. So, this is not a Force who are doing substantially differently from the vast majority of Forces in the United Kingdom but where we have been different is, that we have been reducing crime by a far greater percentage from most Forces in the United Kingdom and that is very much a function of, not just police work, although a lot of it is around police work, it is around police and communities working together.

Now in terms of how we get better, I am convinced there is room for improvement on the clear up rate, it is something I discuss regularly with my Assistant Chief Constables and they may wish to comment on how they cascade that down to their District Commanders, but we are committed to protecting all communities, we are achieving it I think very effectively, that does not mean there is not room for improvement.

In terms of resources, 8,700 officers currently, the Patten report is clear, we are allowed to have 7,500 we have managed to keep it above that level by working with the Board around the Full-Time Reserve issue and keeping a number of officers over and above those to which we are entitled. That was done on a very logical and sensible basis and I think it has allowed us to show we do have the resources to deliver at the front end of policing but I am mindful of the fact that many people in this room will remember a Police Service of 13,500 officers where we were far more available to do far more things. We have to be focused which is why District Policing Partnerships are so important so we know we are delivering against the things that really concern local communities and those things which are less important to the communities can fall a bit further down the priority list. This organisation is committed to protecting communities, I do not know if my regional Assistant Chief Constables may wish to comment on the specifics.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, in rural region overall crime is up just over 2% currently this year but burglary in rural region is down by 6%, violent crime is down by almost 5% and vehicle crime those crimes that affect the individuals are down by almost 12% so there are huge efforts. I have the next round of accountability meetings coming up with District Commanders where we will be examining what others things we need to do to make sure we increase the detection rate over the next 6 months.

Mr Paisley quite rightly said, that in some areas people have the perception that police are withdrawn because of the closure of police stations. If one looks at crime in Fermanagh that is up 23% that is exactly the reason why I want to free-up officers who are guarding bricks and mortar to actually deal with crime in Fermanagh.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

If I could just comment in relation to urban region and rather than saying a percentage, I think it is more realistic to say there are 4,500 less people in my region that have been victims of crime as we sit here today compared to this time last year which I think is a significant development. My burglary rate is down, almost 1 in 4 less people are being burgled in urban region. Now we do not sit on our laurels, we are constantly working to try and improve the whole situation but for me and I know for Assistant Chief Constable Sheridan and the Chief Constable, it is also the fear of crime which is a critical issue which we need to get over and to address. As the Chief Constable has said on numerous occasions, we now have potentially 3 years of reducing crime figures but we need to ensure people are confident in the Police Service and the delivery of the services to them on the ground and that is what we are constantly pushing District Commanders and the DPPs play a critical role in that in holding them accountable at a local level.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

My responsibility is for serious crime and there are a couple of issues I would make in relation to what Mr Paisley has said. I served as senior detective in the

Royal Ulster Constabulary and also I am in charge of detectives in the PSNI. The average resourcing of murder investigations in the RUC in no way compares with what is now given on serious crime and murder investigations in the PSNI. There never was as well resourced investigations in the RUC, so even with the extra staff there were so many things happening it was impossible to do so. I have actually benefited since the last 2 years the resource movement inside the PSNI has been from ACC Sheridan and ACC McCausland to my world. There are an extra 200 detectives that the Chief Constable has authorised to be put in by reduction of uniform posts, so consequently, if you look at it, we are running our serious crime investigations to national standards. That has given us benefits in terms of being able to go back and look at older cases but also to put more resources into, for example, attempted murders or failed attacks which very often had to be ignored in the past. We have had significant, in the last 18 months, charging of dissident republicans right across the province, on in-depth forensic examinations for example that we have been able to put resources into, primarily because Assistant Chief Constables Sheridan and McCausland have been allowing and adding to my resource pool, not just in numbers but actually in financial resources to allow to be carried out significant forensic *(tape unclear)*... there are murder figures here today so you could not actually talk about, there are in the 100% detections but that is just the statistical anomalies that happen when you get clearances in one year that happened 2, 3 or 4 years ago.

The last point, as Assistant Chief Constable McCausland said, we are not complacent. Clearly there are issues about detections that you want to deal with. Yes, you want fewer murders but you also have a responsibility to the parents and the friends of the person who is murdered to try and clear that particular case and I think that is an important issue for us as well.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Suneil Sharma and then Mr Joe Byrne.

Mr Suneil Sharma:

Chief Constable, there is still a perception in Northern Ireland that the use of drugs is increasing, could you comment on the substantial reduction in the cannabis, amphetamine and cocaine seizures. Is this as a direct consequence of the

disruption of the supply chain or are criminals more devious in how they supply their victims?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I will ask Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid to cover.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

It has been notoriously difficult over the last 2 or 3 years to get targets in the drugs world and that is not just for us, for other Police Forces, that actually shows success as distinct from activity. For example, the arrest and now imprisonment for 25 years of Mr Lees will have an impact on the amount of drugs that we seize, simply that he is not putting them on the market and he was a major supplier, so consequently, simply counting arrests or counting seizures can be quite difficult. The figures you have there for example, do not include the amphetamine seizures that were done earlier this month in South and East Belfast and they were quite significant.

The other thing that is running through this, of course, is not so much the cannabis but the concern for us long term of these figures, which is the real thing, is the cocaine increase and that is one thing that both the Board and the PSNI have to pay close attention to, because the cocaine increase when it happened in other parts of Great Britain has sometimes lead into crack and that has lead to some very serious community problems, but that has not happened yet in Northern Ireland. It is the cocaine issue that really concerns us, as distinct from the cannabis which can go up and down depending on how well you are taking certain dealers out of it at one particular time.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Joe Byrne and then Sammy Wilson and that is the last one I am going to take on these performance figures.

Mr Joe Byrne:

Chairman, I want to thank the police for the update they have given on the general situation, but I think it is fair to say that over the last 3 or 4 months, the general law

abiding community would be concerned at some of the pictures and some of the issues that have been prevailing. The Garnerville situation was very disturbing, the attacks in Ahoghill very disturbing, some of the Fountain attacks in Derry and I think Chairman the public at large want the reassurance that the police are totally committed to enforcing and they are not going to be restrained or constrained in how they handle some of the paramilitary related activity. I think the public are looking for a constant reassurance that the police are going to work unencumbered and enforce the law.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I have no difficulty with what Mr Byrne says, we will update Members through a question on the loyalist feud and indeed, there is a question on Garnerville, so I will cover those specifics that you raised.

I can assure Board Members, there is no attempt nor has there been in the 3 years exactly I have been here, by any politician to influence how we do the policing. What we do obviously has implications for the politicians, but no politician has attempted to influence how the Police Service of Northern Ireland undertakes its business nor will it as long I am the Chief Constable, that would be a breach of the system, we are responsible for policing delivery and we are held accountable to this Board.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Last question on this section, Sammy Wilson.

Mr Sammy Wilson:

Just on the performance targets. If we look at the clearance rates or detection rates, only 6 in clearance rates, in violent crime only 5 of the DCUs out of 29 actually achieved their targets. Some DCUs have obviously done far better than others, there are some startling figures, for example Castlereagh where domestic burglary up 111%, West Belfast where the only target was met and I suspect it was because of the joint operation, was the reduction in vehicle crime but all of the others were up quite substantially. What happens in a situation like that, given the autonomy that DCU Commanders have, is there any intervention from the top where it is seen that a DCU is perhaps under-performing, what methods do the

police at Headquarters use to try and ensure that performances are improved the next time round?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

That is any interesting question. First of all, Members will be aware that both my Regional Assistant Chief Constables hold every district to account for routine performance meetings, which I have been to many of and indeed, I know Board Members have been to these and Board Members are most welcome to go to and see how the process is undertaken but it might be helpful if very briefly Assistant Chief Constable Sheridan and McCausland on how that works.

In terms of the numbers, it is also important to note that some of the percentages are around very small numbers in the first place so one needs to put it into context.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

I think I would have to say Chief Constable in Castlereagh's defence, that is the case. They were very very small baseline last year, therefore if you are starting with very low numbers in burglaries and there is an increase it can suddenly become a percentage figure, that it why sometimes it is better to see the actual numbers. In terms of Castlereagh, what we did centrally was, we organised 6 districts and it is mainly around creeper burglaries which is a creeper burglary problem. We organised 6 districts and ran a major operation across 6 districts in Belfast to assist Castlereagh and other districts suffering from creeper burglaries and arrested 15 prolific all in the one day and that was 'Operation Wakeup' that the press covered a number of months ago and that was to help in terms of direct intervention in terms of performance. So it is fair to say that these figures are monitored on a weekly if not monthly basis with Commanders and where there needs to be direct intervention there is direct intervention. As Superintendent Shevlin has pointed out, through regional resources which both Assistant Constable Sheridan and myself control.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

In practical terms Mr Wilson, what happens at an accountability meeting and Board Members who have been there will be aware of this, that one of the things I do at an accountability meeting is identify best practice, so if a district is doing well in

burglaries then I will try to pick up what it is that they are doing well and share that at the next accountability meeting with a district that is perhaps not doing as well and then we put that on the Intranet within the Service so that people can pick up on it so that best practice is shared.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Castlereagh lead the best practice results last year and had the most significant reduction in burglaries, they actually locked up a number of their prolific burglars, they have now been released having done their time and you are starting to see the effects.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 21, Mr Attwood his question relates to the strategy for tackling sectarian incidents.

Mr Alex Attwood:

I think Chief Constable, your colleague District Commander outlined the breadth of the strategy and I think that was useful and that may build some further confidence but having said that, it does not appear I think to the community that following 42 sectarian incidents in a district command area, that 11 arrests have arisen and that is despite the covert activity, the intelligence gathering, the extra resources, there seems to be some tension between that amount of activity of a sectarian nature and the resultant arrests.

The second thing was, on 2 occasions the District Commander referred to the republican parade and that there were 14 sectarian incidents in the 4 week period in and around that. Now I will have found that parade sectarian or offensive or provocative but I think that the police need to be more fully acknowledging that there is a campaign of sectarianism at play, that yes, incidents like a republican parade may be a catalyst for some further hostile and aggressive activity but that a sectarian campaign is at play, it is vicious and aggressive in its nature, that it is manifest in loyalist attacks upon vulnerable catholics, it is manifest by attacks upon protestant communities in Dunclug but that has to be recognised first and foremost as central to what is happening rather than on occasions identify reasons why

things have suddenly happened as opposed to something much more deep and much more cultural in society.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Two things, one is the figures that Superintendent Shevlin put up showed that this is an issue that is affecting both sides. The presentation also recognises this all happens within a context and certain activities by one side or the other can have a knock-on effect in terms of a response from the other side and hopefully what we have done, through that presentation, shown what we are doing as a Police Service to deal with that problem. In terms of the number of arrests, 11 arrests in relation to 42 offences is what we have achieved through proper, professional policing within the rule of law and whilst we may have a lot of intelligence there is the key issue, as we all know, of turning intelligence into evidence which is where other players come in.

I think the other point which is significant in the sense that it is not just around these sort of activities but is the age of some of the people being brought into custody, be it for this, for rioting in Belfast by loyalists or for rioting at the Ardoyne shop fronts by republicans, these are the next generation who will be responsible for the well being of Northern Ireland who are running the risk of being criminalised at a very early age. There are questions around how we bring a controlled strategy in that is a far wider issue for policing of people at that age.

Now, I did describe one initiative that Newtownabbey put into place around cross community activity to try and build relationships at that level. We have talked about police in schools, very important not just to deliver the schools programme but to be available for people to come and seek help, for parents to come and seek help. What is not happening currently are these 13, 14, 15 year olds are not being brought in by their parents, by their relatives to say my son, daughter or nephew has done this we need to sort it out and I think when we start to see that sort of activity, i.e. this is unacceptable then the community will then start to see this thing move on a lot more quickly.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could I ask all Members to put their questions succinctly, if you do, we are likely to cover more questions. Ian Paisley Jnr, you have a supplementary to question 21.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Thank you Chairman. I too welcome the very good and balanced report that was brought to us by the Superintendent, Mr Shevlin and again I think it is important to put on the record that there is no ambivalence, certainly at this side of the table, any act of violence must be condemned totally.

I wonder however, if the police could explore this issue of context a little further. Chief Superintendent Shevlin did set the context of some of this violence and I hope that the Chief Constable agrees with me that the republican parade has set community relations back quite considerably and if he could may be indicate that next year, if such a similar parade is organised again, that efforts will be taken to ensure that that parade does not take place. It will not be up to the Parades Commission, the Secretary of State can ban these parades, but he can do so only on the basis of security advice and given the detrimental impact that that parade has had on community relations, I hope that the Chief Constable or the chief of police in Ballymena would be allowed to make that case to the Secretary of State.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Very briefly, we take all parades very seriously. People are very aware of the process the Parades Commission determine how the parade will take place and we are responsible for policing that determination and unless, as you point out, an issue of almost national security levels, that we cannot police it then people are entitled to march. They are also entitled to demonstrate and I think it very appropriately highlights the difficulty my officers so frequently find themselves in, not just in Ballymena but in Belfast, the Ardoyne shop fronts. So often it is the case that we find ourselves in between people who want to exercise their particular rights, sometimes not particularly regarding the rights of other people. That is what we are charged with doing and that is what we will do to the very best of our ability.

Sadly, on one of 2 occasions this year, it degenerated into serious violence but as I pointed out in the beginning, the vast majority of parades were properly policed and if I was to pick out one success factor I think, which is not a policing issue, where communities worked together to ensure the peoples rights to march were allowed and peoples rights to demonstrate were allowed and they tolerated each other. We had a far more successful parade or demonstration taking place than where communities refused to engage and if there was a message I think from the policing side of it, it is good to talk and the more we get engagement and understanding, the less police I will have to deploy in public order situations which gives those police officers back to my regional Assistant Chief Constables to do the sort of policing that we described earlier.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question on the knife culture, question 13 Mrs McCabe.

Mrs Pauline McCabe:

Could the Chief Constable updated Members on the police investigation into the shocking murder of Thomas Devlin and the brutal attack on Gary Devlin. Could the Chief Constable also comment on whether he thinks there is a knife culture given that this year so far we have had 579 knife crimes which is a 15% increase on last year. If so, are you content with the current powers available to police in Northern Ireland to deal with this. Do you for example, think there is merit in considering the introduction of specific laws to deal with knife culture along the lines of those that have been proposed in Scotland?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid to deal with that, but in broad terms, as you have pointed out, we have about 80 knife crimes per month which is 2½ a day so whilst this is too many, in terms of a Police Force area it is still quite low but Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid will cover the specifics.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

Can I make a few general comments first in relation to the murder of Thomas Devlin. This was a dreadful event which brought tremendous distress to his family, the wider community in North Belfast and I think too many people here

in this room who are parents in relation to how this young fellow came to his death. We take this investigation particularly seriously as we do all murders, but in this one we have put considerable amount of resources into it. To date, we have arrested 4 persons. I have noted a considerable amount of press speculation which is trying to pull us on to a punch of saying that this was a sectarian murder. Let me say clearly it is a significant line of the inquiry that there is a possibility that this was a sectarian murder but not everybody who was arrested was of a different religion that the young person who died and that point has to be made. We have carried out 4 arrests, 8 house searches, 14 searches of other properties, extensive area searches, various implements and knives have been recovered, none in forensic have been able to be matched to the wounds that he has.

In terms of whether a knife culture exists in Northern Ireland and I am not particularly keen in getting into the press terms that are used, a number of observations could be made. Recently analysis indicates, that overall knife crime in Northern Ireland has been stable over the last couple of years, as the Chief Constable has said, it has been running somewhere around 80 incidents a month. Those do not all involve people being injured but it is the showing or possession of a knife at a particular crime.

In a typical year there could be anywhere up to 10 knife murders in Northern Ireland. It is important to appreciate that, if you take firearms, beatings and knives it has roughly been running a third of each, that is similar numbers for each in the province. If you go back clearly over the Troubles, about 12 times as many people have been killed with firearms as knives. The main cause of death that is not currently in existence is death due to explosives which clearly reflects the change in the security situation.

When you talk about a knife culture, people often talk about knife culture as something involving, like for example the Devlin case, a person meeting a stranger in the street who produces a knife. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of knife murders are between victims and offenders who have a known relationship between them. Many victims of knife murders are domestic related and involve partners and spouses. Many involve the use of what we call domestic items. You see often pictures of specialist shops who have knives and clearly I am not saying that some of those

specialist knives are not used in murders, but in my experience as a detective before I was an Assistant Chief Constable, many of the murders involved knives that we are close to hand, things that were in everybody's kitchen here in this room. We recently had a series of stabbings for example at a football match and what was used there was Stanley blades, again something that can be purchased for normal and legal activities.

Clearly in Northern Ireland in terms of knife crime, young males are particularly at risk, both as the victims of those offences and also as the offenders. We have noted across the water in Great Britain a growing problem of knife carrying at schools, we are not receiving many complaints to indicate that this is a problem in Northern Ireland. Now that may be simply because the knives are not being shown but we are not receiving reports in relation to that. We have considerable powers at our disposal to deal with knife crimes should persons be found with knives and we have already taken steps at the top team to review our stop and search usage in areas where most knife crime is reported and in particular, that would be areas like North Belfast.

I am aware that the Scottish Executive has announced a 5 point plan aimed at taking the first steps in changing the trend in knife crime in Scotland where I believe it is a major problem. I understand that it is the police proposals to increase the penalties for possession of a knife in a public place, increase use of stop and search, which we are looking at, and widening the powers of arrest raising to 18 from 16, the minimum age at which a knife can be sold and proposals to make it more difficult to purchase some types of knives and swords. Several months ago, before the murder of young Devlin, we asked our analytical team to look seriously at the whole issue of knives. They did an internal report for us but also as part of that report, to look at some these initiatives that were being done across the water to see in which cases, if any of them, could be something that we could ask the NIO if it is a need for a legislative change or change some of our internal tactics and processes. For example, the reflection and the encouragement

on districts to increase their stop and search for knives shows us trying to respond, you do not always need to have a legislative change to make a difference, it is a matter of trying to get the districts to appreciate the matters in front of them. We appreciate that many of these issues are not issues as we have said before of sectarianism, that we alone can deal with. We welcome any new proposals from DPP members, from people in the community who are, for example, working in the education fields, that advise and help us to reduce the risk of attacks by those carrying knives, make them less prevalent, particular among young males and improve the quality and the approach that we take in terms of detection.

I spoke this morning to the senior detective on this investigation. Clearly we have many things in Crime Operations particular that we are looking at from the feud through to other issues to do with dissident republicans, but this particular murder in North Belfast is one that, bearing in mind the number of detectives who are parents, I have had no problem motivating people in relation to the investigation. We have worked closely with the family and to ensure that this is a quality investigation and try to bring to justice those who carried this out. Overall in the long term, our aim should be to reduce the number of murders where knives take place to prevent further offences happening like what happened to the Devlin family.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Three questions relating to IRA activity, question 8 from Mr Willie Hay, question 16 and 17 from Mr Sam Foster. That is 8, 16 and 17.

Mr Willie Hay:

Chairman, in the light of the recent IRA statement in July, could the Chief Constable update the Board on all IRA activity plus criminality as well and basically from the IRA statement, is anything changing within the organisation or is the situation worse?

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Mr Foster.

Mr Sam Foster:

Chairman, the PIRA recently stated that their war is over, Sinn Fein constantly give their backing to that statement, will you Chief Constable and the security forces continue to pursue relentlessly the evil terrorist PIRA or do they and their supporters now become immune from the law and Her Majesty's Forces. It must not be forgotten that there is at least £26 million still in their coffers to name but one of their many heinous over the years.

The Colombian trio, so called tourists, who travelled on false passports, are free and moving about in the Republic of Ireland with impunity. It is certain there are being assisted by elements in that community, some elected in their concealment. Do you consider that those in this jurisdiction, who collude in that concealment, are subject to the law by withholding information from the forces of the law as to their whereabouts?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid to cover that but just as an overall statement, no-one is immune from the law in Northern Ireland, so if people commit a criminal offence we will very much deal with it and we report to the Board on how we do it which is what we have been doing today.

In terms of the IRA and where they are going, I will ask Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid to touch on some issue where we can.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

In relation to the first question, clearly it is too early to make any sort of definitive statement on what is happening inside the Provisional Movement at present. We continue to closely monitor their activities and will be intending to report our findings to the IMC who will then share that, both with the Secretary of State and the wider public, that report to do done around October 2005.

In relation to the Columbian visitors who arrived on false passports that you mentioned, this brings into question for us, major issues in relation to international law. You asked specifically about offences that might be committed in this jurisdiction by their presence in the Republic of Ireland. There can be no offence

of collusion or withholding of information in Northern Ireland about something that is currently not illegal in the Republic of Ireland. On the wider point, if the 3 individuals concerned were to come to Northern Ireland the situation would be different, in that the United Kingdom does have a Treaty of Extradition with Columbia, namely under the 2003 Extradition Treaty. If they were to arrive in Northern Ireland and we were aware of it, we would clearly be able to take active steps to arrest them under that particular legislation and that would have to be done in co-operation with our colleagues in the Columbian Government.

Mr Willie Hay:

Chairman, just to come back on that. Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid is not telling us anything here, he is being very vague and I really have to say that Chairman. We have had an IRA statement, we have had a number of government announcements on the back of the IRA statement and now is Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid saying to us that that IRA statement, at this moment in time, is still not backed up with actions. For all these announcements in security and everything else going on, we are being told this Policing Board has to wait on an IMC Report. Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid is not telling us anything here and he is being very evasive of the question.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

A couple of points. I said after the statement, we will wait and see and we are still waiting, you are right. Had there been any other activity to give any confidence to anyone in Northern Ireland that, for example, decommissioning has taken place, no it has not. Is there any evidence to show that Sinn Fein are engaging with policing, be on this Board or be it at the local level, no there is not, so there is no evidence of positive shifts which we expect to happen on the back of that IRA statement, nothing has happened.

In terms of what is going on currently referred to as demilitarisation, optimisation, normalisation, we are taking no decisions operationally that will compromise our ability to deliver effective policing. The towers that are being removed, we do not need medieval towers to deliver 21st century policing. We have given examples across the piece of the sort of activity our officers are undertaking, supported by the military where they need to be to deliver effective policing, we are ahead of the

curve for the want of a better description, but nothing that is going on is being driven by me, it is my District Commanders deciding how they can police in the way they want to police and in the way their communities want to be policed.

The IMC is a critical stage in this and I have not been backwards in coming forward and attributing things when it has been appropriate to do so, that is for operational reasons. I did it for Northern Bank, if it needs to happen I will do it again but it will be for operational and not political reasons. We will report and we are obliged to report to the IMC. We will do that, we will fully brief them, they will then go and speak to all the other people and report that and that will be public and that is the right way of doing this bit of business.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 22 relates to the management of parades, Mr Attwood.

Mr Alex Attwood:

That is a written answer Chair.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 11 relating to rapes, Pauline McCabe followed by Suneil Sharma.

Mrs Pauline McCabe:

Following the double rape of a 15 year old girl in West Belfast and the sexual assault of a young woman in Enniskillen, could you tell us how many convictions for rape there have been in Northern Ireland for each of the last 3 years and what proportion of reported cases this represents and could you also comment on the police approach to encouraging more women to report this crime and the approach of the police to resourcing and investigating the cases that are reported?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

Assistant Chief Constables Kinkaid and Gillespie will cover that. We cannot comment obviously in relation to specific cases where 2 people have been charged and are currently awaiting trial but I think the point of making that

particular point is, that that is how seriously we take it. We are well resourced, very professional investigation that came to a very quick conclusion. I have already touched on it before so I will not dwell on it but will ask my colleagues to explain the detail.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

If I could just start by talking about the statistics in relation to some of the approaches that we are currently taking in the investigations and then Assistant Chief Constable Gillespie wants to talk about the 'SARC Project' which I think is particularly important.

We currently record the number of reported rapes, reported clearances and percentage cleared on a yearly basis. That for example, if you take the year 2003/2004 shows 354 recorded rapes, 182 cleared, 51% clearance rate but you have to ask the question "what does clearance mean" in those situations? Because if you look at the way a rape can be deemed to be cleared, it can be clearly because someone has been charged, it can be that the complainant later declines to prosecute or it can be, for example, that the PPS directions no prosecution because of the evidence that is available. If you look for example, in terms of complainant declining to prosecute, that can be a substantial, 30 or 40% sometimes of the yearly figures. You have to understand that for many complainants there may be very good reasons why they decide they do not want to go ahead with the case. I would use the example of people who come from very strict religious communities, who historically there has been a problem getting them to be prepared to go forward and have the whole publicity of a trial. One of the things we are trying to do clearly is reduce the number of situations where a complainant declines to prosecute because sometimes those cases can have very strong evidence that we would like to take forward to trial.

In relation to the actual clearances, the problem with the clearance figures is, that as it often takes 18 months for the case to come from the incident through to the court, the clearances in one year do not relate to the rapes in that year and that is the reason why, throughout the United Kingdom, the police have not, in terms of the number of convictions, have not been counting convictions as convictions do not often relate to a rape that happened in that particular year. If we look for

example at some of the figures, it is clear that in 2003 there were 10 convictions and full trials in the courts in Northern Ireland, but there could have been up to 67 charges of rape, attempted rape successfully dealt with at the court because sometimes some of the offenders have multiple charges up in front of them.

The investigation of rape and other sexual offences is the responsibility of specially trained care officers who work for myself in Crime Operations and detectives attached to both districts and to Crime Operations departments. All victims of sexual assault are taken to special examination centres to enable a forensic medical examination to take place. The quality of the witness interviews is up to national standards as we currently have. We now interview all the victims using the guidelines of ABE which is called Achieving Best Evidence. ABE potentially allows victims to give their evidence at court via video, if that is accepted and we have a number of specialist examination suites, strategically located around Northern Ireland in which victims can feel more comfortable. Facilities are located at Garnerville, Coleraine, Maydown, Enniskillen and Ardmore and a new facility is planned for Portadown.

Officers who deal with victims receive training in carrying out these interviews, including training in Rape Trauma Syndrome and the officers' focus is very much on the victim. It is important to appreciate too that these are groups of officers too that we have to take a long term interest in, in terms of their welfare, they have to get special counselling advice. The nature of the area of work that they are working on means, that people attached to Joe Stewart's department have to regularly check up on them and it is one of those areas that you can have a tenure system having to work, simply on the basis that some people have been working in that area far too long and need to move on to somewhere else. So there is a significant amount of resources and training put in to these types of investigations.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mrs Judith Gillespie:

I think this is an issue for the wider Criminal Justice System as has been recognised in the various reports that have been produced and most recently by the report by the Northern Ireland Criminal Justice Inspector on victims and witnesses but we liaise with a number of Victim Focus Groups, that is both male and female because of course rape is not just exclusively a female issue. We

want to learn more and receive more feedback on how we could encourage victims to come forward and we genuinely do want to improve our service to victims and we are open to any ideas as to how we could improve the service we provide.

We also work with a number of other agencies including on various Working Groups, The Vulnerable and Intimidated Witnesses Working Group and The Joint Inter-Departmental Working Group on Sexual Violence. That particular Working Group is looking at 3 areas that is, Prevention of Sexual Violence, Protection from Sexual Violence and Support for Victims of Sexual Violence. One of the most interesting and even exciting developments from that group, is the possibility of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Northern Ireland and basically this would be a one stop shop for victims of sexual assault which would include the opportunity to give a statement to police, to be examined by a doctor, to speak to other counselling and long term assistant agencies under one roof. There are a number of SARCS as they are called already established in England and Wales and we would like to take something like that forward here, all available under one roof in Northern Ireland.

All Police Services, not just the PSNI have concerns about attrition in rapes in relations to sexual offences and rape in particular, but police here provide the victims with a fully supportive service and as much information as possible so that they can make an informed decision as to whether they want to go through the whole criminal justice process and I think it has to be acknowledged that not every rape victim will want to go through that process for a variety of reasons and that is their choice, but of course, it is our job to make sure as many victims as possible can be supported through the process. We also give them a lot of information about other long term support and advice that is available to them which the police obviously cannot give in the longer term.

Mr Suneil Sharma:

Chief Constable, in the light of what Assistant Chief Constables Kinkaid and Gillespie have just informed us, do you agree that the crime of rape should be constituted as a separate and specific target in the Policing Plan and to monitor i.e the charging conviction of rape etc and that is also in the light of the shameful and dramatic fall in the rates of the rest of the GB.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I think that would be very useful to raise that at our 'Away Day' we have planned to look at the next performance figures and I know that Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid wants to touch on that now.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

Currently it is included in the violent crime figures but I accept what you are saying. It is the second most serious crime that we investigate after murder and I think there is a case to look at, it is thrown in amongst GBH and other types of crime and I think that would be making a statement in terms of our response to try and improve.

It is important to appreciate too, that issues like the loyalist feud and other things like that happening displace our resources and energies away from carrying out investigations of this nature. The feud has hit us but that does not mean to say that we do not take all these things seriously but there is a proactive role that you can take in relation to serious sexual offences, particularly those that may be linked. We are currently looking in Crime Operations with one particular senior detective looking at ways to improve our detection figures against repetitive rapists which can be a problem, particularly in and around licensed premises in parts of Belfast and that is something that we are currently looking at and clearly we could consider that later in the year as to whether or not a target in this particular area would somehow or other assist the police to concentrate resources in that area.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 20 refers to the management of events at Garnerville, Mr Attwood.

Mr Alex Attwood:

I think Chief Constable you do acknowledge, in the view of many in the North, the events at Garnerville had damaged the standard of the police at that time and continued to have a enduring impact upon confidence in policing, and I acknowledge that Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid in particular in recent days

has publicly commented about that, but I think it is important that in the first public meeting of the Board since early July, that you would comment upon the events at Garnerville and comment upon what learning there has been within the PSNI in respect of all of that and how these situations might be managed in the future in order to convince everybody that in all parts of the North, rule of law will prevail.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I certainly agree with the question that the images portrayed on the television did do huge damage to what the Police Service was doing there and Members will be aware, because we briefed them at length, in full, on the whole situation at Garnerville in a private meeting recently which was carried in the press to some extent as a result of your own observations about that meeting, but we are able to do there, which we are constrained from doing currently, due to the fact that we are determined to investigate any potential offences that took place that day and there clearly were offences that took place that day. Board Members were shown pictures of what the officers were faced with at the time, which were not the pictures that were shown to the public and that is why I think the importance was the totality of that event had to be described and was described to the Board, because we felt it was absolutely right the Board was reassured of our determination to deal with this.

There was no deal or understanding between criminal groups and people were evicted from their homes before police officers arrived on the scene and were faced with a large crowd of people who were actually casually dressed and not wearing hoods at that particular time and they did their best to deal with the situation with the resources they had.

We are very mindful here that every action has a reaction and in terms of our determination to deal with the loyalist feud, which I am mindful is a question in its own right, many of our officers have been injured because we have not stood back, we have searched houses, we have arrested people, we have shown that we are absolutely committed to fixing this feud in a policing sense. The consequence of that have been riots and disorder by those who do not like what we are doing because we are hurting them and we are taking their people out of circulation. I can give you my absolute guarantee that will continue to happen.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 19, Mr Alex Attwood.

It is the wider question for the Chief Constable to confirm the number of murders, attempted murders, pipe bomb attacks and other incidents that you can attribute to the UVF since 1 May 2005. Also for the Chief Constable to comment, if the Secretary of State has asked the Chief Constable for a report outlining if the nature and number of incidents since 1 May 2005 can be attributed to the UVF and, if so, assuming that the Chief Constable must have asked you for that report, when did he do so?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid to cover the detail.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

A general point initially about this feud and I think it is better if we answer this question in relation to the feud that rather to just concentrate on the UVF, I am not keen in getting into one sided response in this regard.

As long as proscribed organisations exist in Northern Ireland, we are going to continue to have feuds and this one is slightly different from some of the previous ones, because it does not involve the usual turf war over drugs or criminality nor is it a sectarian feud between different groups, these are 2 groups, the UVF and LVF who were once part of the same group. You could deem it to be a 'family' dispute between people who were all at once stage have a history in the UVF.

It started in 1996 with the expulsion of Billy Wright. It has stopped and started since that date and both sides at different times have restarted it. The LVF, as much as the UVF, have been instigators at restarting this particular feud. The current round of the feud kicked off in mid 2004 with the murder of Brian Stewart in East Belfast. Since that date there have been 4 further murders, numerous attempted murders, shootings and intimidation. Roughly on the ratio that has currently been running since the death of Brian Stewart, two thirds of the incidents

have been carried out by the Ulster Volunteer Force, one third by the Loyalist Volunteer Force.

What has the police response been to this, it has been considerable. If I take my own department, Crime Operations, what we are currently looking at is that a considerable amount of resources in C2, the Serious Crime Unit are carrying out investigations in relation to that. Those are teams who are concentrating on the murder investigations and who are trying to co-ordinate responses to the various attempted murders and shooting incidents. We also have a situation whereby our C3 Intelligence Units have been providing significant amount of intelligence to the people running the investigations and our special teams in C4. As you can also appreciate we have taken up a lot of resources of our forensic from the Crime Scene Investigators, analysts working on this and also as the Chief Constable said earlier, we have had some significant disruptions of the various groups through organised crime investigations, from money laundering to extortion.

We have had to deliver a considerable number of threats to people, real time has saved lives in the sense that we have been able to tell people that they have been under actual threat. In other cases, some of the people who were told they were under threat were then attacked at a later date because from our perspective they have not changed their life style significantly.

We have carried out a considerable number of operations that have successfully disrupted the operations being planned by both sides, not just the covert side that I manage but as Assistant Chief Constable will be talking soon in terms of the search and uniform branch, support that has been to my officers, which I have to say has been tremendous in relation to this operation. There have been over 100 searches carried out. Some of these have involved a significant amount of resources, some have ended up with serious rioting as you may have been aware on the television, over 45 arrests have taken place and over 15 charges have been laid. There is a significant commitment that has been given in relation to this investigation. We believe, that clearly at this particular stage, these 2

organisations are basically hell bent in continuing to attack each other, but we are hopeful that we will be able to see some community based mediation develop which will allow us to stop this. This particular feud has stopped at different times due to the intervention of people of goodwill, who have come along with the police to try and prevent this happening and clearly we have an interest in preventing further attacks to take place.

Long term I have to say that it is important that the Board, who have a responsibility to oversee our efficiency and effectiveness, they must realise that the policing of this feud, which is a serious matter for many communities in Northern Ireland, does take significant resources at times from other parts of policing. Now that does not mean to say when you have the drugs thing come up you clearly do not ignore opportunities to take on major drug seizures, but what it does mean is that some of the things you would be doing proactively in other investigations and investing in investigations, has to stop because clearly there is a life and death issue here in relation to this feud.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

Chairman, in relation to the uniform side. I deploy over 160 additional uniform officers on a daily basis to combat proactively and overtly any activities which we feel may or may not be going to happen, particularly in the areas that we have identified that there is a potential for people taking the law into their own hands or carrying out this feud. In relation to this, it is a difficult situation.

Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid has already outlined the generalities of it and I think it is fair to say that we would appeal to all those with influence to use their influence to help bring this activity to an end. We the police feel we are doing all we can but we need help from the local communities. If people do not want to live in fear and under intimidation they really have to come forward and help us bring this to a stop once and for all. I think it has been very clear that these people tend to set themselves up as the protectors of the loyalist community, for me and for the Police Service of Northern Ireland, they are in effect just literally leeches feeding off the loyalist community and they are not protecting anyone.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 15, Alex Attwood.

Mr Alex Attwood:

I asked, has the Secretary of State requested a report from the police in relation to, among other things, the number and nature of UVF

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

(tape unclear)...occurring and I gave a breakdown of the type of incidents where they were occurring and also which organisations they could be attributed to and that was forwarded on to the Northern Ireland Office and to the Chief Constable's office. There is a forthcoming IMC Report coming out as well and we have been briefing them in relation to the attributions and what exactly is happening in this round. Yes, we have forwarded statistical office to the Northern Ireland Office and we would be regularly in contact with them in relation as to who is doing what.

I believe it was sent up end of July / early August, I can find out the date for you.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question 14 relating to the murder of Robert McCartney, Mrs McCabe.

Mrs Pauline McCabe:

It was to ask the police for a progress report on the investigation into the murder of Robert McCartney.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I will ask Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid to deal with this but again this is a case where 2 people are charged so what we can say is limited, but the important point is that 2 people are charged.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

This sort of question does raise the general point that charges have been laid and there is very limited information I can give the Board in a public session. Two persons have been charged as the Chief Constable has said and a prosecution file is being prepared for submission to the PPS. Clearly we would still be looking for

any witnesses who can come forward and give us any assistance in relation to that. Just because we have charged people does not mean to say we are not still listening and prepared to listen to anybody who witnessed the events.

Contact has been kept with the family and we have been giving them support in relation to the incidents of intimidation that happened at a previous date. Clearly the media profile of the case is lowered due to the reporting restrictions post charge and I have to respect those restrictions.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Question relating to the republican parade in Strabane on Sunday, 20 February 2005, question 15 Sammy Wilson.

Mr Sammy Wilson:

Could I just take your guidance on this because there are actually 2 parts to the question, it is not just the parade in Strabane, there is also the parade on the 12 July 2005. Do you want me to deal with one first and then the other one second or altogether?

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Take Strabane and then the other question.

Mr Sammy Wilson:

Before I raise the question, could I thank the Chief Constable for his candour in relation to the question on IRA terrorism.

Maybe the Chief Constable would like to come back in his reply to the Strabane question when he says that no-one is above the law, does that include Sean Kelly as well as the people who engaged in a parade which clearly broke Parade Commission restrictions in Strabane on the 20 February 2005.

This I think is the 5th time I have asked this question and I hope that the answer will be a bit different this time. First of all, there were pictures in 3 newspapers of at least 12 people unmasked, far clear than some of the video evidence I have seen at Ardoyne where you have been able to charge 17 people. Have the police

interviewed any of those people who were pictured at the Strabane parade on the 20 February 2005 where paramilitary uniforms were worn and where there was violence, if they have interviewed any of them has a file been prepared for the DPP and if the police in relation to what happened on the 20 February 2005, if there is such a parade asked for through Strabane next year, because I understand this is an annual parade, will the police on this occasion be making representation to the Parades Commission for restrictions to be made on the parade?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Sheridan:

Chairman, as the Board is aware I have updated the Board on a number of occasions about this particular parade and I have explained some of the complexities of it and just by way of evidence that one type of parade, whether it is republican, is not dealt with any differently than loyalist or Orange Order or Apprentice Boys parades. Two other republican illegal gatherings in Strabane have already been sent to the DPP in relation to incidents on 21 June and 10 February.

The parade on the 20 February 2005 has complexities to it and as I explained to the Board previously, we have had a number of meetings with the PPS and sought prosecutorial advice as to how to proceed on this one. We did identify with the PPS, 3 potential people that we should seek to identify and interview to progress the investigation. That has been done and one of those 3 individuals has been identified, has been interviewed and a file will be sent to the PPS within the next 3 weeks. In so far as the other 2 people, they have not yet been identified but work will continue to try and identify those people but we believe that the PPS has the first file it will give us an indication of what the standard of evidence has been and whether there is sufficient to proceed on it.

In relation to the Parades Commission, a full report has been forwarded to the Parades Commission regarding police observations about the parade and if there is a further parade next year in relation to that, yes the District Commander has advised me that he will be seeking to meet with the Commission in regard to the parade.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could we return to the Ardoyne question please.

Mr Sammy Wilson:

I do not think we are any further forward that we were 2 months ago on this one. We still have no files sent and no prosecutions pending and I do not know what these complexities are, the photographs of the people who were engaged in this parade are far clearer than the pictures of the Ardoyne and I cannot understand why there is still no interviews being made with 12 of the people who were in the newspapers and the pictures that I saw.

I think that it is pleasing that the police have now apprehended 17 people for the riots at Ardoyne and I hope that the courts will actually impose stiff sentences on them as a message to people. Could I just ask, there were a number of concerns raised by police officers and about the fact that 105 were injured and that a number of requests went to fire plastic baton rounds before permission was granted. Now I know it has been explained to the Board as to the sequence that has to be gone through and I am satisfied that within the rules which the police currently operate under, the Commanders on the ground made the right decision. But I am asking the Chief Constable, given the fact that there was a 40 minute period between the first request and the rounds being actually fired and the fact that there were 105 officers injured, I accept not all of them seriously, but there have been concerns raised by the officers on the ground about the effect of the rules. Do you have any plans to look at the rules on the firing of plastic baton rounds with a view to perhaps changing them so that officers are not placed in a situation where, under the rules, it takes some time before permission can be granted to fire them?

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Order:

A number of issues but the main one in terms of the process, there is nothing wrong with the process of authority, it is fairly well established. We have looked at it, I have met with ACC McCausland and all the TSG Inspectors in the same week to discuss the particular issues, where as you rightly pointed out, over 100 officers were injured but fortunately, none of them seriously. Two went to hospital and I

spoke to both of them that evening, they both discharged themselves by the end of that day so the good news is that no-one was seriously injured.

It was a very serious and dangerous situation, this is the only part of the United Kingdom where blast bombs are thrown in public order situations, unfortunately. They do have good equipment, we have given them all the equipment we can possibly give to protect them and Assistant Chief Constable McCausland may want to touch on some of the issues. What I do not want to do is second guess the investigation by the Police Ombudsman, who you will be aware, investigates every case where impact rounds are fired. If there is any learning from that in the operational sense we will take it very seriously and we will look at it.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Duncan McCausland:

The only additional point that we would want to make Chief Constable would be we carried out a very intense debrief 3 days afterwards with all relevant people, including the Police Federation. As a result of that a review panel has been set up under my deputy who will look at the tactics and that review will also look at the issue of the service guidance in terms of the use of the AEP rounds.

We also are actively working with the Health and Safety Executive who are also carrying out a similar investigation along with the Ombudsman's Office and we fully co-operated with the Ombudsman's Office in relation to the matter, but the bottom line is, we do not want to be put in a position where we have to use this piece of equipment or water cannon or anything because in effect, it is failure on the part of us all, police, community, everybody to resolve these parading issues and the Chief Constable has mentioned this, but we will not hesitate to have to use them to protect our officers. Both myself and Assistant Chief Constable Sheridan have discussed this with the Chief Constable. We will not hesitate within the rules to authorise the use of this piece of equipment to protect our officers.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

A question may be received from a member of the public which will be put to the Chief Constable by a Board Member. Two such questions have been received, one from Charlotte Vij and I will read the question.

When were the PSNI aware that the vast majority of racist attacks made in Northern Ireland were being committed by loyalists and what attempts have the PSNI made to infiltrate Combat 18, BNP, Nazi fascist groups, which reside in Protestant areas of Northern Ireland?

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

Chairman, I welcome this question as it raises a number of important issues, which particularly in Northern Ireland can often be overlooked as we tend to often concentrate on the issues relating to protestant, catholic, republican and loyalist.

It is fair to say that for a long time racist attacks did not feature much in terms of the media or police attention which basically was through the Troubles. I have to emphasise that did not mean to say that such issues were not happening, I am sure if you spoke to members of ethnic minorities who live in the province in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s it was part of their daily experience but because of the Troubles it did not feature much.

I have to say too, that not every racist attack that happens in Northern Ireland is from a paramilitary source. There are a considerable number of incidents still in Northern Ireland, like you heard earlier, the Chief Constable highlighting the sectarian attacks involve children and some attacks, for example, on migrant workers that have been happening in parts of the province have not involved paramilitary groups but have involved interaction with some of the local communities amongst whom they are living.

In relation to paramilitary racist attacks, certain areas of the province have had high levels of such attacks. There clearly have been a number of attacks in South Belfast that we in the PSNI associate with the Ulster Volunteer Force. There have been attacks in mid Ulster, clearly associated with the Loyalist Volunteer Force and throughout different parts of County Antrim and parts of Belfast, there have been racist attacks associated members of the Ulster Defence Association. So individuals from different loyalist groups have been involved at different times in paramilitary attacks involving racism.

The other point to mention before we talk about the issue of what we can do to infiltrate it, it is certain areas with low paramilitary attacks in relation to racism have had higher types of attacks on other ethnic or minority groups. For example, there have not been many reports of racist attacks in parts of the West Bank of the Foyle but there have been considerable homophobic attacks in areas which indicates a different choice of local minority group being targeted. In my experience, there is often a tendency in Northern Ireland to see this, put bluntly, as a protestant thing, yes it is associated with loyalist paramilitaries, but let me assure everybody here, there is no shortage of catholics at times in this community also prepared to attack a minority group and in the experience in Foyle, it has been homophobic attacks often from nationalist youths has been the experience of the police in that area.

If we talk specifically about connections between paramilitaries and racist organisations like those that Charlotte mentioned, Combat 18, BNP other nationalist fascist groups, yes there has been a history in terms of our investigations of finding connections, particularly at volunteer level between certain persons inside loyalist paramilitaries and these outside groups. In my own experience, I was in charge of one prosecution where there was a clear link between a member of the LVF and Combat 18. There have found to be links too between certain members of the UVF in parts of Belfast and Combat 18. A number of situations that searches of UDA houses, where we are searching for ammunitions, we have come across racist publications found in those houses. We are aware in the police a number of times of loyalist persons attached to loyalist groups attending racist conferences and groups across Europe. Clearly there is interchange of intelligence and information that happens between ourselves, our English and Welsh colleagues and also colleagues in the Continent feeding back to us, particularly trips to Germany of people at times who may go to various fascist and Nazi conferences that are happening there.

You asked an interesting question, the extent to which attempts in your words are being made to infiltrate, let us change that to attempts are being made to run covert operations in relation to this. We, under the National Intelligence Model have to set down our priorities from what we are going to use our intelligence resources on. Things that feature on it now would be no surprise to this Board, issues like the feud, dissident republican attacks but 6 months ago we made a

number of changes to some of our intelligence operations to bring in intelligence in relation to paramilitary involvement in racist attacks. Now to be blunt, the covert type is not going to deal with 3 or 4 - 14 year olds in an estate who decide to attack a local Hindu or Muslim shopkeeper, those are going to be spontaneous attacks they are not the sort of thing you run against covert, but there have been significant racist attacks in areas like Dungannon, Portadown and parts of South and North Belfast conducted by people who are attached to paramilitary groups who we believe we can use some of our specialist end of policing in relation to this. We have raised this up as a priority inside Crime Operations and in discussion with my regional colleagues, so where there are opportunities for us to run covert operations against people involved in organised racist attacks, we clearly will take them on board and that is something that we are currently examining and looking at.

Interruption from the floor.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

There is another question in from Mr James Irons, Mr Irons are you here? Could you maybe see the Chief Constable and Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid afterwards because you raise a number of issues. At this particular point what the Chief Constable would like to say through Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid is a general point dealing with historical inquiries.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

The question is specifically related to an historic case that currently is being investigated by our C8 branch. The only point I was going to make was, we have been given resources by Her Majesty's Government of approximately £26 million to look at these over the next 6 years.

It is a general point to members of the public and the Board. If specific questions are being asked about these we will not be in a position to answer them because clearly, in many of these cases they are being slotted into a timetable over 6 years to be dealt with and part of that timetable frankly involves the first conversation to be with the relatives of those involved in the particular atrocity, then over the next number of weeks the case will be reviewed and then they will go back and speak

to them. What I have to do is to speak the Chief Executive of the Board and see how we fit this into any briefing that comes to the Board, as clearly we will not want to be talking about the details of how these cases are being reviewed in public sessions when we have not gone and spoken to the individual's relatives who were murdered

Interruption from the floor.

Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde:

I think the point made by the gentleman from the floor is exactly the right one. When I took over this job, there were 2000 unsolved murders across the Troubles in Northern Ireland and you are right, very little had been done about a number of those and there are all sorts of understandable reasons, when a Service the size of the RUC was trying to deal with up to 500 murders per year, it is understandable to see why the level of expertise we can now deploy, was not deployed.

I believe I am right in saying that this is the first time a Chief Constable or a Police Service has gone to government and said whatever else is going on we are not prepared to accept this, this is unfinished business for us, can you please fund and resource us so we can deal with it and that is what we are doing. It has not been done before. I think it is wrong to criticise the officers who stood up and did the work to date to make sure this does happen, in fact I am meeting the C8 senior officers after this meeting who are driving this forward.

In terms of the paperwork, I can reassure the gentleman that, I currently have 23 individuals searching every single police building, station, outpost, sangar and anything else we own to collate every single scrap of evidence, intelligence, exhibit that we can get because that will all go to C8. We have actually built a brand new store to collect it all into, that will be proven the most advanced research facility in the United Kingdom. That is the commitment of the Police Service of Northern Ireland to dealing with historic cases. I think it is unprecedented, I do not think any other Police Service has done it or even attempted to do it, it is difficult territory. I have met with many families of these crimes who do want answers and an outcome and this is the Service that will deliver it.

Interruption from the floor.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Could I say to you, in respect of what the Chief Constable has said, this Chief Constable has embraced this issue of past cases. He has argued for the resources in order to investigate them and this Board congratulates him for that. What we are saying to you today, we have offered you that the contact point will be established and it will be established after this meeting and Assistant Chief Constable Kinkaid will explain to you the process so that you can be assured that this issue of past cases and we recognise in this Board that in these past cases, there is enormous hurt still there, understandable hurt.

The money has been set aside, the unit has been set up and the contact can be established by you today.

Interruption from the floor.

Chairman, Professor Sir Desmond Rea:

Can I say to all of you, I hope you found this a fruitful session and I know it has been tiring, it has certainly been tiring for us. Thank you.