

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE 23rd PUBLIC MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY 2004 AT 12:00 NOON IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Mr Denis Bradley (Vice-Chairman)
Mr Alex Attwood
Mr Joe Byrne
Mr Brian Dougherty
Mr Sam Foster
Mr Barry Gilligan
Mr William Hay
Mr Tom Kelly
Mrs Pauline McCabe
Mr Alan McFarland
Mr Eddie McGrady
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
Mr Suneil Sharma
Mr Sammy Wilson

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)
Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief Constable)
Mr Sam Kinkaid (Assistant Chief Constable
Crime Operations)
Mr Joe Stewart (Director of Human
Resources)
Mr David Best (Director of Finance and
Support Services)
Acting Director of Media
Chief Inspector, Command Secretariat

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
Director of Community Affairs
Director of Corporate Services
Director of Policy & Accountability
Two Board Officials

Apologies

Apologies were received from Viscount Brookeborough.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

On behalf of the Policing Board I am delighted to welcome members of the public and journalists to the 30th meeting of the Board. I welcome also the Chief Constable and his team and also members of the third estate on the right hand side. Chief Constable your introductory remarks please before the presentation. Perhaps you could introduce your colleague and say something about what he is going to say, in your introductory comments.

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

Thank you Chairman. In terms of police performance this month, because we have the annual figures out and the national figures are embargoed until tomorrow, when there will be a full presentation to interest Members and the media, I will leave our overall performance out of the discussion this morning. Albeit, apart from saying, that I am confident the Board will be suitably impressed in the overall performance of the Police Service of Northern Ireland over this year.

In terms of specifics, a couple of issues I would like to touch on before I ask David Best, my Director of Finance and Support Services to give a short presentation on the budgetary pressures we have been facing. It is worth reflecting, that in a period of 7 days between 21-27 April we arrested 10 individuals in relation to dissident republican activity, some of whom are currently charged. Those 2 operations led to the recovery of a sniper rifle and rounds of ammunition, which in our assessment may well have been used against security forces and also a substantial recovery of incendiary type devices in a residential area of Strabane. I think that shows how effective our Special Branch intelligence gathering agencies and our uniform colleagues and Crime Operations have been against those particular groups that are causing such problems in the community.

Apart from that, I would like to ask David Best to give a short presentation on budgetary pressures.

PSNI Finance and Support Services Director, Mr David Best:

My subject is budgetary pressures facing PSNI and I will cover this under 5 headings. First of all Expenditure Budgets, where do we spend the money and what are some of the past and future trends? What are some of the current

pressures we are likely to be facing in this coming year? What are some of the developments with DCUs and DPPs? What are the areas of pressure beyond that looking into future years. We will look briefly at resource allocation, if we have the process for planning for changing resource demands and pressures, we can better manage them in the future. The last point is, the management of the pressures, what are we doing to address those pressures?

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Excuse me David, can everyone hear you. No they cannot, so can we do something about the sound.

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

These are the main areas of expenditure during the past year just finished, up to March 2004. Our main area of grant is the Main Police Grant itself, Revenue - £647m. Those are our running costs, pay to police and civilians, for overtime and for other expenses. We spent £20m on capital, those are buildings, new buildings, new vehicles, what we call infrastructure. Then we have got separate monies for Patten severance for 82 officers who went through the early retirement severance scheme. Then we have specific monies for other than Patten severance, new water cannons that were recently purchased, payment to agencies for the recruitment of our new police officers and IT infrastructure, we spent £31m there. The last area for those officers that have left, pension payments of £102m were spent, altogether £800m plus. We are a big player, a big spender in the Northern Ireland economy. These figures are not going to be difficult to follow but just to show and point out some of the key things in our trends. This is our revenue and our capital grant, our main funding block.

Looking back over the last 4 years and if you look at the bottom line our expenditure has only gone up 2% on the baseline of 1999-2000.

If you look at inflation over that period it was 10%, if you look into future years, our plan is that our expenditure would go up 9% over the full 8 year period and we have put in a bid for funding for that. If you compare that to inflation over that 8 year period, it would be 20%, so policing costs, relatively speaking, are coming down.

Just some of the figures that I have mentioned on the areas of expenditure. Civilian pay over the 8 year period is likely to go up 66%, that reflects that we are employing more civilians to free up police officers for combat policing. Police pay is expected to be down 10% that reflects a reduction on police numbers. Telecommunications and IT, big investment in that area, 86% expected increase and also in estates, 50%. The last figure I have mentioned is capital, our investment in our infrastructure is anticipated to go up by over 100% during that period of time.

Some significant savings have been achieved to date, we spend a lot of money but there are savings. Our regular police numbers are down from 8,372 in December 2000, down to 7,100 in December 2003, that is an estimated annual saving of £60m. Our Full-Time Reserve numbers are down from 2,500 in December 2000 down to 1,600 in December 2003, estimated annual savings of £38m. The area of overtime, going back to the start of the peace process, we had 17,200 average daily hours (ADH) of overtime and over this past year, that has been reduced down to 9,476 an estimated annual saving of £40m.

What are the likely pressures we are now going to face over this coming year that begins in April 2004? We have already addressed £16.8m, the planning process obviously starts well in advance of the year. Last September / October when we looked at all of our demands, we had a shortfall of £16.8m and we have taken firm action to cut budgets on certain other areas to ensure that we have a balanced budget at the start of the year and we have already taken considerable action. We expect there could be pressures on the overtime budget but that again is dependant on the public order situation and that may and often is outside our control.

Special investigations, the Stevens Inquiry continues, there is still some work on the report and what may arise under Cory, there are big resource demands in this area.

Security work, post Castlereagh break-in, there has been a review of all of our estates to tighten up on security and there is significant expenditure arising from that.

I would just highlight criminal justice, we are reviewing that process to create electronic case preparation, that is short-term investment of our resources, hopefully to generate long term savings, i.e. free up a lot of police officers who are tied up on that activity so they can go out and work on frontline activities.

Another few points to note on current pressures. The way we dealing with those pressures is changing, there is less direction coming from the centre. There is now more pressure coming from the DPPs regarding a fair allocation of resources to their DCU and through the local financial management process that we have introduced. Pay and non-pay budgets are being devolved to local Commanders who having more freedom to allocate their existing resources in response to local priorities and they are balancing more the pressures and the easements at the local level because local people know best.

The last point of note, there is also competing demands for resources between the DCUs, frontline and the centre. The tension is always there, but what we can note is, there is more of a movement to the DCU and that movement will continue, more resources will be given down to the DCU to manage.

So looking beyond this year to the future years. Police numbers in Northern Ireland compared to England and Wales, what are they? PSNI population per police officer is 189 and that compares to the English and Welsh average published figures of 406, this is for the year 2002 / 03. However, the gap is narrowing, because if we go back 3 or 4 years to 1999 / 2000 in the PSNI

population per police officer was 152 it has gone up to 189 and the average for England and Wales is going the other way, it was 429 then and is now 406 i.e. there are fewer police officers in Northern Ireland and there are more police officers across the water per head of population. Why I mention that is, that as a result policing in Northern Ireland is more than twice as expensive compared to England and Wales. There is pressure coming to us from the Treasury to narrow that gap and that pressure will continue. There was recently an announced Government initiative called "The Gershon Review", these are efficiency reviews and this will be applied to us to generate real cash savings and that will continue to apply to us.

Future years, these are just some of the key pressures. Over 80% of our costs are in fact fixed, they are bodies, police officers and civilians and Patten has recommended 7,500 and 2,500 Part-Time Reserve, we have to pay their pay, including pay inflationary increases, we cannot avoid that.

IT and telecommunications costs are increasing fairly significantly. We anticipate pressures from custody suites both building of new suites and the upgrade of existing suites. We are engaging in the process of acquiring a helicopter, all forces across the water, I understand, have access to helicopter support, there is also a pressure there to replace the fixed winged aircraft which is aging. I would also highlight the national Schengen Initiative, this is an initiative where we will be sharing information with other countries across national boundaries and there are significant IT costs there. Historical case reviews, additional funding will be needed here. There are a large number of case reviews and our baseline funding would not support those reviews and in addition to that, the number of inquiries that there currently are and may be in the future. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, there is an unknown here. The cost could be very significant, a figure of £100m has been mentioned but it may or not be anything of that scale.

The last area referred to is the Patten non-severance funding, we do receive funding from Government but as time moves on, the Treasury may decide that they will not continue to provide the support in future to the same level as they have in the past.

A few comments on resource allocation, if we plan to meet pressures and allocate our resources in advance, that helps to manage the pressures themselves. Just to note, our human and other resources are allocated out at the start of the year to balance our books. We engage in a considerable process of aligning our financial planning with police operational planning. There is a Resource Allocation Group that make these decisions and that involves all chief officers. There is a transparent process now in operation within PSNI about how we allocate our resources to meet competing demands. Just to note that we do allocate lots of bases of allocation of police officers across DCUs, civilian staff, overtime, non-pay budgets, we have lots of different criteria in how we allocate budgets and we engage with DCUs and Commanders.

Resource allocation, what did all that produce for this coming year? Where have we allocated our resources? If you look at this slide you will see the first column of figures called Devolved, we have allocated £547m to DCUs and departments. We have allocated over 80% of our budgets away from the centre into the control of others. Corporate budgets reflect £125m which we have still retained in the centre and then how do we split that between the various main departments?

Urban have got 28% of our resources, Rural region have 29%, Crime Operations 12%, Human Resources 5% (that includes training), Finance and Support Services 13% (that includes transport, estates and supplies) and that is a result of the process that we went through last year and we are working to these figures in this current year.

The last heading that I mentioned was to do with management of the processes themselves. What are we doing to ensure that we can live with the pressures in the future? I have touched on a few of these points, local financial management, we are devolving resources down to the DCU level. Local people know best and working particularly with the DPPs they should have a much greater influence as to where the resources go in response to needs, rather than the centre and they need to be freed up from the centre. Annually, we have a

transparent resource allocation process, it is not only top down, it is becoming much more bottom up. There are also some reserves retained at regions for the unforeseen and there are easements that arise during the year, including in the HQ department. For example, compensation budget was not spent last year thankfully, and we were able to re-divert that resource during the year to other pressures.

Opportunities for in-year bids can be made to the NIO but these must be demonstrated to be pressures that are outside the control of PSNI and 2 areas I have referred to, overtime with public order situation deteriorating, if it were to, we would put in the bid for more overtime to NIO. Or if there are needs for Inquiries we would tend to bid for funding for that.

Spending Reviews, we do bid for funds looking into the future and we have just recently submitted our bid to government for the years 2006/07 and 2007/08 and that is quite a detailed process and that is bidding for funds for the future, we try to predict what the pressures are and put in a bid to meet those demands.

My last slide, what initiatives do we carry out. I have talked about the process for managing resources looking into the future, what initiatives is PSNI carrying out. First of all, we are engaging in a process of carrying out corporate efficiency reviews and the aim of these is to reduce bureaucracy and improve our processes, have better efficiency and effectiveness, and that will cross departmental boundaries.

Activity based costing, we are engaging in a process of visiting our DCUs and finding out where the police officers spend their time and then comparing that between DCUs. One of the objectives of this exercise is to identify what are the Northern Ireland factors, why do we cost more, why do we have more police officers and hopefully continue to justify our existing level of funding.

Civilianisation, that is basically to get civilians to carry out duties that were previously carried out by police officers and to free those up for frontline policing.

Clustering and brigading, we have 29 DCUs that are expensive to administer, can we do that more efficiently?

Movement of resources from HQ to DCUs and freeing up police officers for frontline duties.

The last item referred to again is the Criminal Justice Project, hopefully that project will also free up a lot of police officers from HQ to go out to work in DCUs.

That completes my presentation Mr Chairman.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Thank you very much, any questions. Mr Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Thank you for your very interesting presentation. Indeed, I think you have delivered a blow to some of the illogical positions that Patten put up and I thank you for that.

In summary, you have fewer police officers, saving £millions. You have fewer Full-Time Reserve officers saving £millions. Yet if you set that against the facts that there is lower detection of crime at this point, that there is a high level of fear of crime and the question is, is the money saved worth the level of crime and fear of crime that is not being solved in our country?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I think it would be more appropriate for me to answer that Mr Chairman.

A number of things, one is, as I mentioned the figures are out tomorrow so are somewhat embargoed. So if you just take the first 11 month figures the clear-up figures are actually up not down, so that is just a matter of information.

The Organised Crime Task Force was launched yesterday, I note your comments but if you look at page 56 onwards it shows what substantial inroads have been made against crime. Tomorrow I am confident we will be able to record there are substantially less victims of crime in Northern Ireland. So on the issue that David has raised is that of efficiency and how much can we justify the public expenditure in relation to the levels of policing we enjoy here, compared to the levels of policing in other parts of England and Wales. What we are showing is that by maximising the efficiency of our officers, by getting them out of the station and onto the streets, by reviewing our whole estate strategy to make sure that we only have the right number of buildings to delivery effective and efficient policing, we are going to make sure that the public in Northern Ireland get the best possible police service and certainly one that compares very favourably in terms of response and commitment to any other part of England and Wales. It is a complex mixture.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Your figures do not add up. Last time the Organised Crime Task Force reported there were 80 identified criminal gangs in Northern Ireland, mainly paramilitary. They say they have beaten 60 of them. There is now 200 according to the report. Crime is increasing, no matter what spin or statistic you put on it. There is also an increasing level of fear of crime, all the surveys show that and the logical position we are now in is reduce policing. Reduced policing is not working and I think that is the fact that has come out, we need more police officers and we need more sophisticated policing.

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I think what you are getting in Northern Ireland is extremely sophisticated policing and I understand you are impatient to wait until tomorrow. In terms of the numbers, maths was never my strong point but the sophistication of the Organised Crime Assessment means we are identifying more gangs. There has not been an increase in the period of one year of 120 criminal gangs from 80 to over 200, that is simply not the case. If one looks at the number of gangs that have been disrupted, the number of seizures and the number of extremely sophisticated operations that have been run by officers under my command and by Customs and Excise and by Immigration, I am very confident that we are more than fit for purpose.

In terms of the surveys, they do not all show an increase in fear of crime, the last independent one I read actually reflected the fact that the majority of communities do not feel they are in areas where crime is increasing, not my words it is the words of the survey and do not feel in the way that you have described.

I am fully aware of the issues around the fear of crime and we are not taking them lightly at all but it is a mixed picture, but overall, the levels of crime in Northern Ireland are substantially lower than in many other parts of the United Kingdom. We can get better and what David has described is a process whereby we are ensuring we are as efficient for purpose as we can be with the resources allocated to us by Government.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Mr Tom Kelly.

Mr Tom Kelly:

Thank you for the presentation, it was very informative but I think it is important for the confidence of the public that the political question is taken out of it. Could you confirm that we actually have twice as many officers as any other part of the United Kingdom and that is a reassurance to the Northern Ireland public, and that you intend fast-tracking your civilianisation programme to make sure that having twice as many police officers, that police officers are going to be doing jobs which the public want them to do which is policing and not desk jobs.

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

It is a slightly mixed picture because some Metropolitan Forces have more officers than the national average but it is without doubt, that if you compare us with any other Force with a comfortable population size, we have over the double the number. If you look at Avon and Somerset or Northumbria which have comparable population sizes we have over double the number. What we have to do and this is why we need to be ahead of the game, is make sure we are in a position to justify that number and this is a very different policing environment to say Bristol or Newcastle. This is still a very complex policing environment, but we all know that.

In terms of civilianisation, we will civilianise as many posts as we can commensurate with the budget that we have and that is what is going on. We are coming from a lower starting place as many of our colleague forces, again because of history. We are now looking at, with additional legislation coming online for example, civilian custody officers in addition to criminal justice processes, we have over 300 officers tied up in criminal justice, the new electronic file transfer will free up a lot of those officers. Yes we are absolutely committed to civilianising as quickly as we can commensurate with the money we have got.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

I am going to move to the general questions before I do so, on behalf of the Board, thank you David on your presentation.

Rosaleen Moore has a question relating to intimidation.

Mrs Rosaleen Moore:

Chief Constable, recently the Newry and Mourne District Policing Partnership had to abandon their attempt to decentralise their consultative exercise and abandon their meeting in a local village, Forkhill, in South Armagh. This is because 3 members of the local partnership had received bullets through the post, we assume from dissident republican elements. As well as that, local Sinn Fein representatives have thrown their weight behind what is seen as a statement of public opinion against holding the meeting in the village. I come from this area and I know the area very and I have had nothing but support from the people in that area for my membership of the Policing Board. I on a daily basis, I hear an expressed need for policing in that area. As recently as the last couple of weeks, a local family who experienced a tragedy, road traffic accident, felt free enough to acknowledge in the local press the help, encouragement and sensitivity of the local PSNI to them. Now the Sinn Fein attitude I find hard to understand because it is in marked contrast to some of the statements that have been emanating from USA visits recently where they would appear to be talking about positive changes in policing. I ask the question basically to see what your own assessment is about holding meetings in areas where difficulties like these may arise.

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I think a number of issues really arise from that. One is, in the long term intimidation will not work. In relation to that particular case, as I understand it, the District Policing Partnership quite properly was looking at becoming more open and more available to local communities by moving around and not just staying in Newry which is something to be commended. I think by working closely with the District Commander down there, it is something they will achieve, it may take a little longer than they had hoped. As I understand it, in this case they have cancelled this meeting with a view to carrying out their own survey, which I think is a sensible thing to do, to make sure they get a true assessment of the feelings of that particular village as to how these things should go on. We will support totally District Policing Partnerships and we will certainly attend wherever they want to hold them and that is guaranteed, whether it is in Newry or somewhere else. My officers are committed to doing that because it is a very important strand of local accountability.

Issues like bullets in the post are to be condemned and the reflection I made earlier on our successes and our commitment to effective policing of dissident republican groups who we would attribute that activity to will continue. It is to be deplored, it gets in the way of democratic control of policing and we will do whatever we can to support the District Policing Partnership in going to wherever it wants to go to hold meetings within those communities.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

A question from Mr Joe Byrne relating to the Cory Reports.

Mr Joe Byrne:

Chairman, first of all I want to thank the Chief Constable for his report in relation to what has happened in Strabane recently, I think it is reassuring to those who serve on Strabane DPP.

Could the Chief Constable advise if, following his initial consideration of the Cory Reports, there are any issues that the PSNI need to address that are not already being addressed through implementation of recommendations flowing from the external reports like the Crompton Report or the Blakely Report.

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I think it is important to remember that the Cory Report was a fairly short-term investigation into 4 cases to then decide whether something else should take place. We have a full review of those cases and that is what he has decided and I have already said we will fully support those but until those Inquiries have taken place, I do not think there is anything I would want to do on the back of a report that is a fairly short, sharp look but said no more than something else needs to happen. That having been said, I have read the Cory Reports, all 4 of them, I am comfortable that they, if you look at the timeline around those cases and how far back they go, the reports we currently have, the work we are currently doing and the reorganisation that has taken place to a substantial degree, post those events, will deal with any of the issues that are likely to come up under Cory. If there is something else that we have not anticipated, of course we will respond to it but I am confident at the moment that our reform process, the reports you mentioned and the new structures we have in place deal more than adequately with anything that is likely to emerge from those investigations, in terms of current policing practice.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Question 2 relates to any new developments in the newly established Crime Operations Department. Mr Alan McFarland.

Mr Alan McFarland:

Chief Constable, could I ask you to update the Board on any new developments there have been within the newly established Crime Operations Department?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I will ask ACC Kinkaid to deal with that.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr S Kinkaid:

Chairman, it has been agreed that on the 20 May 2004 that myself and members of the HMI staff will give a full briefing to the Corporate Policy Committee and I

think the invitation has been extended to other Board Members, covering the new department and issues relating to the implementation of the Stevens, Blakely and Crompton reports.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Question from Willie Hay regarding the recent government announcement in the formation of Serious and Organised Crime Agency.

Mr William Hay:

Will the Chief comment on the recent government announcement on the formation of the Serious and Organised Crime Agency and how that will impact on crime operations within the Department?

Chief Constable, Mr High Orde:

I will ask Sam to cover that in detail but in broad terms, some parts of the new agency (SOCA) as it is so called, will have application over here. For example, in relation to the National Criminal Intelligence Service as it currently is, the Customs and Excise. Other parts will not, like the National Crime Squad as it currently is, the new SOCA will not have jurisdiction in that regard but the Organised Crime Task Force and the PSNI will lead for Northern Ireland.

It is also I think, important to remember and I will hand over to Sam after this point, that it is not due to be implemented until sometime in 2006 at the earliest, so there is a little bit of a time lag but Sam can deal with some of the details.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

Chairman, this all came from the White Paper (*tape unclear*)... Rescue Agency called SOCA (Serious and Organised Crime Agency) now it is proposed this Agency will have a United Kingdom wide remit. However, the Home Office has confirmed that its creation should not affect current arrangements under which the PSNI here in Northern Ireland would carry out similar functions to those that the National Crime Squad would undertake in England and Wales and basically, PSNI will remain the lead agency in organised crime. As the Chief Constable has said, the Serious and Organised Crime Agency will incorporate a variety of different bodies that currently work independently in England and Wales, the National

Crime Squad, the National Criminal Intelligence Services, parts of the Immigration Services and parts of Customs and Excise. In relation to how it affects the numbers and we will deal with this obviously in greater detail on the 20 May.

On the changes that currently focus in on the resourcing, there is an increased number of officers in the next few months being moved into the Organised Crime Branch of Crime Operations Department, that will in particular include a number of additional financial investigators who are highly specialised, to deal with money laundering and other types of investigations and that will increase the amount of resources that we are putting in for example in support of Alan McQuillan in the Assets Recovery Agency.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Question 4 relating to guidelines for C3 Branch in Crime Operations Department, Mr Barry Gilligan.

Mr Barry Gilligan:

Thank you Chairman. We await the presentation from ACC Kinkaid on the Crime Operations Department, in the meantime Chief Constable can you tell us if you will consider publishing the guidelines for C3 Branch within that Department and if that is your intention, will that include such information as its purpose, scope, legislative framework, security context, structure and functions.

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

Again I will ask Sam to cover this.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

Chairman, Special Branch Guidelines, that is the formal name, that has been approved for them by the Home Secretary, the Scottish Ministries and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, these were recently published and I have them available if Members would like to see them. These set out in a national way, the role and responsibilities of Special Branch officers and the legislative framework within which they work. The national agreements specifically talk about Northern Ireland and do highlight the fact that within Northern Ireland the role of gathering intelligence on national security and organised crime lies within C3

Intelligence Branch, so they are caught up within those national Special Branch guidelines.

In relation to the areas that you asked, I see no problem. The PSNI believe that specific guidelines on the role of C3 along the lines suggested could certainly be drawn up, discussed with the Board and perhaps published on the PSNI external internet site.

Certainly at next week's meeting we can talk about some of the issues and I could go into greater detail and we can discuss how the Board would like it presented. We have no difficulty with putting out the guidelines and the range of responsibilities that C3 have.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

I will take the Chief Constable and his colleagues to question 7. This question relates to the correlation between punishment beating attacks and general election campaigns. Mr Ian Paisley Jnr.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Thank you Chairman and indeed I refer to the 20 April 2004 report by the IMC where they indicate that paramilitary violence is authorised and I want to know Chief Constable if you can comment on the correlation between punishment beating attacks and the general election campaigns. Does any significant alteration in the number of punishment attacks, perpetrated in particular by republicans, indicate a centralised control over these attacks and how high up the chain of command does that authorisation actually go within the republican movement?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I will take it in a slightly broader context, the IMC covers attacks in general and it is a lengthy answer but it is quite a complicated issue. We have had some analysis done and produced some graphs that we are happy to show to Members, if they would find them useful.

Over the last 6 years, there have been fluctuations in the volume of republican paramilitary punishment attacks, most notably around the time of Assembly elections and to coincide also with statements that have been issued publicly by Sinn Fein condemning violence and conflict, there is a correlation in both. Most republican assaults are committed by the Provisional IRA, there have been 613 since January 1998. The trend in the attacks over the last 6 years is very slightly upwards but it is a very small increase over that period of time. A couple of examples, September 1998 there was a statement which Sinn Fein issued saying they believe that the violence we have seen must all now be a thing of the past and at that point the attacks dropped to 2 in that same month.

In November 1999 there was a statement from Sinn Fein recognising the importance of a political process in making conflict a thing of the past. In the 3 month period between November and January there was a total of only 2 attacks that we would attribute to republican paramilitary groups, which shows a steep reduction compared with normal levels of activity.

In November 2003 the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections which was a point also made by the IMC, attacks dropped to 2 in December and there were no attacks in the period October to December 2003.

By way of a comparison, if one looks at loyalist paramilitary attacks for the same period of time, there have been numerous peaks and troughs during that period. A total of 1,083 attacks since January 1998, the trends in the loyalist paramilitary punishment attacks in the last 6 years is significantly upwards, the average number of monthly attacks is almost double during that period.

If you look at the Assembly campaigns, they appear to have little impact from loyalist groups. In fact, there was an increase which coincided with the elections in 2001 and 2003 but any correlation is weak. The important point is there is no real correlation, which one could say suggests less control on that side of the paramilitary divide to the other side of the paramilitary divide. Again a couple of examples, 7 June 2001 the general and local elections, paramilitary attacks from loyalists rose 15 to 21 during the months of June to July, in August the number dropped to 13 but in November 2003 the Northern Ireland elections, there was an

upsurge in paramilitary attacks from 9 in August to 23 in September and 22 in October. The number increased further to a total of 28 in November but dropped again in December to 15. So, it is a different picture on different sides of the divide but one could draw a conclusion from that, there is more organisation on the republican side and less control on the loyalist side.

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr:

Thank you very much, that information is most helpful. I am wondering, are you expecting a reduction in authorised republican paramilitary attacks given the fact that there is going to be a European election in the next 4 or 5 weeks.

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

We will have to wait and see what the trends shows. In terms of our view, people have not got the right to authorise grievous bodily harm against anyone and my officers work very hard to prevent them. The difficulty we have is well known. It is difficult to get witnesses who are prepared to give evidence against the people who have shot them in the knee caps or who have given them such a brutal beating and that applies universally to both sides of the sectarian divide. What we are doing is targeting people under the National Intelligence Model who we think are responsible and arresting them where we can in conditions where we control the evidence rather than the victims, but again it is something that needs to be condemned across the communities and we will continue to work as hard as we can to reduce.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

At this moment in time in this public session, I have much pleasure in welcoming our visitors who join as members of the public, 4 are from Boston and one is, although a native of Boston works in Washington, he is the Executive Director of the Police Executive Research Forum, the others are the Reverend Eugene Rivers, Pentecostal Church Minister from Dorchester in Massachusetts and Mr Bill Warzack who co-founded the Square Health Centre in Dorchester and Sergeant Herbert White of the Boston Police Department and a friend from Boston College as well, you are very welcome to this public session.

During the month Chief Constable, the Neil Jarman / Rachael Monaghan Report of September 2003 on Racial Harassment came into my possession. I found this an excellent document, I commend it to the wider public and all Board Members have received copies and Suneil Sharma has a question.

Mr Suneil Sharma:

Good afternoon Chief Constable. With the increasing numbers of racial attacks, the Neil Jarman and Rachael Monaghan Report of September 2003 on Racial Harassment made a number of recommendations. One of which was reviewing the current approaches to recording racist incidents and to establish a standardised and integrated multi-agency approach, that would allow for reporting in varied locations on a 24 hour per day basis. An addendum to that, in a further update of the report in April 2004 there was a recommendation that the process for application from minority ethnic communities should no longer be included in the "protestant and other" block and there should be a distinct category for these people. Would you support a shift away from this bipolar classification arrangement for catholics and protestants to rectify what is clearly a deficiency in the Patten Recommendations, which would also reflect a more diverse society within Northern Ireland.

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I will ask my Deputy, but in very broad terms I think that Report shows our determination not only to understand the issue more fully but to deal with it through innovative ways of crime reporting. In very broad terms, on the Patten Recommendations obviously that is a matter for the Government but I would be happy to enter the debate and the dialogue around other ways. If that needs to be looked at, then it would need to be a process that we take to government and use that in a way to encourage more people to join us. I know there is another question on this slightly later but Paul if you would like to cover the main issue.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

Just looking at some of the initiatives that we have and are in the process of developing with regard to the reporting of racist incidents. We have already instigated the reporting of Third Party Reports through Crimestoppers and this has been developed. This enables victims to report incidents anonymously and

witnesses to come forward with information to assist police to detect perpetrators. In conjunction with this, what we did was distribute 29,000 hate crime leaflets in South Belfast informing people of this service and the increase in racially motivated incidents which have been reported has been noticeable.

Others that are in process at the minute. We are currently developing Third Party Reporting Centres, this is a concept which we have already done with lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans-sexual groups and we are hoping that we can expand that and develop it in a way that will apply to racist incidents.

Internet reporting of hate crime is being developed at this time and this will enable victims to report incidents on line via the Police Service website anonymously if they choose to do so. We sought agreement with the various support groups to place links onto their website so that people can automatically get into ours and already we have placed the details of all our Minority Liaison Officers on our website so that people can go in, find out who the person is they need to speak to in their local police area.

Our Community Safety Unit are working along with a number of other statutory and voluntary agencies and they are developing an internet based multi-agency reporting system which will be based on the links. This will permit any agency who is a member of the scheme to report hate related incidents via a secure website to a central location where the incident information will be available for analysis. As already mentioned, the Minority Liaison Officer system is in place now in each and every district and works to support and advice all victims of hate crime.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

I will take Members to question 9 and Chief Constable this relates to a specialist unit dealing with domestic violence. Brian Dougherty.

Mr Brian Dougherty:

A good news story you will be glad to hear. As I am sure you are aware, there is a unique specialist unit dedicated to dealing with domestic violence opened in Strand Road, Londonderry recently, could you tell us more about it?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

It is one of the many good news stories but I will ask Paul to cover the details but it is interesting to note that, for our guests who have just arrived, that at the Community Police Awards yesterday, I was talking to an officer who was put forward for this particular approach and they had just been to Boston to learn from Best Practice there but if Paul could cover the details I would be grateful.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

This is another excellent example of how we have focused on a problem, identified the problem and tried to deal with it.

Foyle identified that they had the highest reported incidence of domestic violence in Northern Ireland. In 2001 they recorded 1,336 incidents and in 2002 it was 1,394, obviously a very high reporting rate. What they did was, they sat down and clarified their goals. Their goals came out as to reduce repeat victimisation through the application of new procedures, to increase the intervention level between repeat victims of domestic violence and offenders, to extend the partnership approach to victims to improve the quality of service provided, to raise community awareness and increase community confidence. To raise police and agency awareness to ensure that the most effective response to victims and offenders was delivered and that the Unit fully investigative from complaint made to prosecution in court. Then they undertook joint research with Foyle's Women's Aid and that has recently been completed, as the Chief referred to in Boston, to plan the next steps in the progressive approach.

It is a good news story as has been alluded to you. At this minute in time, it is staffed by 3 constables and one administrative assistant. It is anticipated that a sergeant's post will be advertised in the near future. It has been reallocated to larger offices, separate from the main building so that we have a Care Suite type reception where people can come in, feel safe and talk to officers about their incident. We see this as good practice and we will be hoping to spread it throughout the Province in the near future.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Question 5 relating to training, Mr Sam Foster.

Mr Sam Foster:

The Human Resources Committee at its last meeting was interested to hear of the many positive issues in relation to the training strategy from the Director of Training. The achievements appear to be very good in spite of the poor training facilities at Garnerville. The Committee are aware that some funds will be directed for short-term remedial work at Garnerville, can you Chief Constable please give an update on what work is on-going at Garnerville, when it will be completed and what is the present situation overall?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I will ask my Deputy to cover details and the good news is, as everyone is aware we now have a new site for the new college so the vision is there it is just how we can do some short-term stuff to make it slightly more bearable for our officers currently, as we are not allowed to train them in fields in tents. I will now ask Paul to cover the details.

Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Paul Leighton:

We are working on the short-term improvements to the shower blocks and such like, hopefully that will progress in about 3 months time when we have identified some funding from our current funding stream. The good news is, that the new mattresses are on their way and will be with us in 3 weeks time so we have 'cushioned' the blow for all new recruits.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Question 12, liaising with families who have suffered serious crime, Rosaleen Moore.

Mrs Rosaleen Moore:

Chief Constable, what is the PSNI policy for liaising with families who have suffered serious crime? Are there guidelines for keeping families informed as to

progress with investigations and are there procedures for dealing with questions and concerns raised by these families?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I will ask Sam to deal with that, but we do comply with national guidelines.

Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Sam Kinkaid:

There are 2 levels to this. There are national guidelines in relation to the appointment of Family Liaison Officers in certain types of cases, in particular murder cases and certainly on the 20 May that will be one of the issues that will be discussed because there were recent recommendations as to how we should improve our performance in that area. We have recently appointed a Family Liaison Co-ordinator to try to ensure that throughout the Province, in all the murder investigations that we are running, that there is proper support for the Family Liaison Officers, which is a particularly difficult job and we have appointed a detective sergeant to oversee that.

In relation to other investigations, we do not have a dedicated FLO, it is of course the responsibility of the investigating officer to keep the injured parties informed of the state of investigations, particularly where there are changes in the investigation and cases are likely to be coming to court. We have reflected that for example, in Article 2(1) of the PSNI Code of Ethics, which was drawn up by the Board to ensure that officers are aware of that and it does feature sometimes in discipline investigations where officers have not done that. There are internal systems in place to try and update people through different types of letters and approaches although we do try and encourage officers as much as possible to use the personal approach, as distinct to writing to people.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Question 13, agency staff, Mr Eddie McGrady.

Mr Eddie McGrady:

Chief Constable, we have discussed this morning the future of expenditure and personnel. Could I take you back to the last fiscal year 2003/04, and could you give me some estimate of the total expenditure in engaging agency staff. How

many agency staff are employed by the PSNI, how many of those are ex police officers and how were the actual agency contracts awarded in the first place?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I think this more a personnel question than finance, so I will ask Joe Stewart to deal with these issues. A broad point I would make is when we are trying to manage the amount of change that we are, means that the organisation is such a state of flux that there are occasions when it makes extremely good business sense to appoint people on short term employment, so that we do not actually create problems further down the line, which is why an agency staff provide that sort of flexibility but I will ask Joe to cover the detail.

PSNI Director of Human Resources, Mr Joe Stewart:

Chairman and Members, the total expenditure in the last fiscal year on agency staff was £7.9m. The average number and I say average because as the Chief as indicated, these staff go up and down, the average number of staff engaged over that period was 464. We need to be a bit careful about the number of those with policing background because that is not always known to us or to our agents. We reckon that that number average around 130 out of those 464 and some of those are working on special programmes in assistance with my colleague ACC Kinkaid.

As far as the award of the contracts, the contracts were all subject to a tender action and procurement strictly in accordance with the government procurement guidelines and we had professional advice on that as we entered into the contractual arrangements.

Mr Eddie McGrady:

Could I have a supplementary on one aspect of the answer and that is, some hesitancy or doubt about the determination of whether the agency staff were ex police officers or not, surely an organisation which is employing staff, even through an agency, must know what the past experiences of the proposed employee would be to perform the function for which he is engaged and therefore must surely know whether or not they were engaged in the Police Service before they applied for re-employment.

PSNI Human Resources Director, Mr Joe Stewart:

As you have indicated, we do not directly engage these folk and some people because of concerns over their own security are reluctant to release full details of their personnel background. Staff of course that work for us in some of these areas are subject to vetting and therefore in terms of the overall capability of working in a police environment, vetting picks up any issues attaching their conduct or behaviour in the past. But, there is reluctance among some people to disclose past security involvement in their background and that is why we cannot guarantee that in each case we have the full numbers but we reckon it is around 130.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

There are 2 questions of which the Chief Constable does not have notice. One is in the sensitive area of the Brown case, Alex Attwood.

Mr Alex Attwood:

Just a comment on the last question by Eddie McGrady. I hope it is not the case that the PSNI are employing people whose past employment records are not known because that was the logical conclusion of Mr Stewart's last answer. It would not be acceptable employment practice that any organisation in the North, including the PSNI, was employing people whose past records were not known. Secondly, given that you indicated that for example, Sam Kinkaid's office has agency staff working therein, it would be helpful for the Board if we knew of those 400 odd people who are employed, what areas of policing are they employed in. I am not asking for an answer to that now, but it would be helpful to know that for a future meeting or to create certainty about this matter.

Could I welcome the comments made by the police in respect of putting into the public domain details about intelligence branch and its operations in the future and the commitment from the Chief Constable in respect of taking forward anything in Cory that has not been implemented at this time, if there is anything. Both of those measures build confidence, but what also builds confidence is the response of the police to the Police Ombudsman's Report in respect of the murder of the prominent GAA official Sean Brown. There has been some recent media speculation or comment about what may have been agreed between the PSNI and

the family. Could the Chief Constable share that which is appropriate to share with the Board and the wider public in terms of what arrangements are now in place for taking forward that investigation and for taking forward the building of public confidence in relation to this matter?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I reckon there has been some speculation and I do not want to raise issues that would cause the family any distress but we have worked closely with the family to set up an investigative process that is a re-investigation of that particular crime. It is an investigation lead by a senior investigating officer and detectives from my own organisation. We have asked a senior detective, in the same way as for example as Omagh, to be available as a consultant to that investigating officer should the family require to speak to him. In keeping with best practice elsewhere in the United Kingdom we have agreed to have an advisory group which we will brief because that is a way of increasing re-assurance within the wider community or so we believe. What we are saying really is that the Police Ombudsman was asked to investigate and she investigated it. I am absolutely committed when the Police Ombudsman makes recommendations to act properly on them otherwise the whole process falls over and that is why we have taken that action in this case. It has taken a little time to set up but that is because we want, something that is fit for purpose and has the confidence of the victim's family, I think that is what we have achieved and obviously we will keep the family fully informed of progress in the investigation.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Question from Sammy Wilson relating to unsolved murders.

Mr Sammy Wilson:

Is the Chief Constable aware of the speech that was given by the Chairman of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to the UN when he claimed that there were 2,000 unsolved murders in Northern Ireland which had not been effectively investigated.

First of all, do the police regard this as a fair or helpful comment given the fact that it was made on the international stage? Secondly, is this assessment based on a

discussion which the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission have had with the police on each of the individual cases to determine whether or not the cases had been discussed or investigated effectively and if not, have the police enquired from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission the grounds on which they made such a sweeping headline grabbing allegation?

Chief Constable, Mr Hugh Orde:

I am on record as saying there are around 1,800 unsolved murders and as a matter of fact that is actually correct. There are other unsolved, if I could broaden the term to homicide i.e. death, there are it is true over 2,000 that includes for example, people killed during the troubles by security forces and the spectrum of

that would range from people shot by plastic bullets through to people shot on the way to commit armed attacks on security forces. If you include that spectrum in the history, you do get to the number of over 2,000 of unexplained deaths, so perhaps that will explain those figures.

In terms of effective investigation well there is a spectrum. I have not looked at and it is physically impossible, which is why we are having the debate, to look at 2,000 plus unsolved cases, if I could use that expression. That having been said, I spent the weekend reading through a couple of particular cases, one I would have said was a thoroughly professional, solid investigation conducted in very difficult circumstances that lead to no conclusion. The other one was I think a lot more could have been done, so I think that is the spectrum. I am on record as saying this needs to be dealt with in a thoughtful, intelligent and rational way and our chances of achieving success in over 2,000 cases in a judicial sense will not work which is why the debate I think has now started. We need to look at other ways of bringing some form of conclusion to the families.

The comments of the Human Rights Commissioner are indeed a matter for Brice Dickson and not for me but I am not aware of any enquiry before the statement was made that asked for an assessment of the adequacy of those investigations. I think it is also important to note, for example at the Lawrence Inquiry, when you judge an organisation by current standards for cases undertaken in the past in any police environment, let alone the complex one in Northern Ireland, matters will be

found wanting. I am more than prepared, where we find those cases and some have been brought to our attention by the Ombudsman, then we readily accept that we could have done better and we look at ways of moving on.

I think in terms of hope for the future, the serious case review set up that we now have in place, which includes a senior detective superintendent, a number of senior detectives officers and 12 officers re-employed under strict criteria, who have detective skills and great credibility to research some of the cases. We will start and bring some sort of assessment on what we have to deal with. We will start to look at the cases where we think we have some chance of success, that will not deal with the unexplained murders of 30 years.

Chairman, Professor Desmond Rea:

Earlier in this meeting I mentioned our visitors from the United States, they are here on a week long visit to help us consider the implications of policing as a civic endeavour which supports reconciliation in Northern Ireland. That is the return part of a visit which took place to the United States back in September of last year. That was largely sponsored by the State Department, Members of District Policing Partnerships, representatives of managers of DPPs, representatives of the PSNI and of the Board took part in that visit and it was facilitated by Media Network.

Could I say thank you to members of the public for their attendance at this meeting and to members of the press and above all thank you to the Chief Constable and his colleagues for taking our questions.